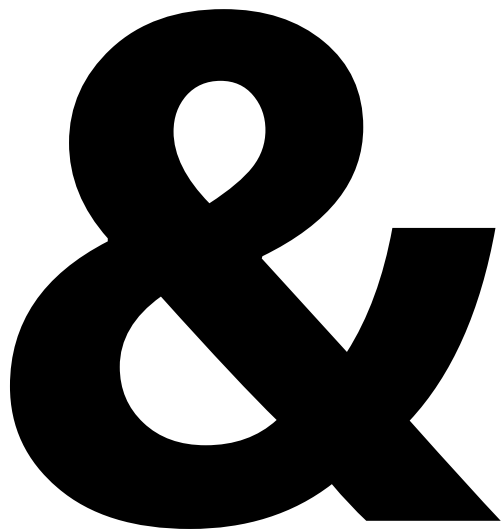


BORDER CONDITIONS



TERRITORIES

MSC_PROGRAM AY2011-2012

BORDER CONDITIONS and TERRITORIES (BC&T)

Experimental Architecture in Socio-Political Territorial Contexts

1 Theme: Architecture in Socio-Political Contexts within the Territory; a new form of contextualism

The BC&T program focuses on the study of complex spatial mechanisms and systems within the contemporary city and territory, as they constitute the theoretical and contextual basis of architectural interventions. The urban and territorial **conditions** are considered the prime forces of influence for contemporary architectural reflection and production. The understanding of the underlying philosophical, cultural, political and aesthetic systems that influence the production of architectural form is considered of vital importance. The 'Border Conditions & Territories' group aims **to chart** this 'field' in order to establish the rules for and the reasons behind architectural conjectures in the context of the emerging territory and the spatial conditions around borders and in territories.

Within this program, the specific, at times emergent, spatial conditions found in contemporary cities and territories are considered to be a rich field in need of exploration and ultimately comprehension. Metropolitan city-regions as well as specific urban border conditions will be investigated in order to determine the rules and minimal preconditions underlying their construction, which is simultaneously considered essential for an informed operation of design practice in this context. Within the contemporary built environment, the architectural object does not stand in isolation nor has it emerged out of architectural considerations solely. Fundamentally, architecture operates in an 'in-between' field that is unstable, complex, fragmented and non-hierarchical.

1.1 Operational Field within Architecture

As this research program enquires the intrinsic nature of the architectural project (and its conceptual and theoretical construction), within the context of regional territories and urban border zones, the research project positions itself within the entire scale palette from the region to urban localities. The program will investigate how questions of space across borders and territories can inform the architectural project, which is regarded as the concrete instance where regional logistics meet with local conditions.

The particular field of study in 'Border Conditions & Territories' deals specifically with spatial boundaries and fields of operation within a framework that relates theory to practice and research to design. This framing of architectural operations is investigated in four distinctive ways:

- (1) Reflection on architectural space and form within a multi- and trans-disciplinary framework (discussing the similarities and differences between disciplines such as urbanism, geography, art, technology, philosophy, etc.);
- (2) Development of the architectural form as an object situated within the spatial conditions of the (urban) territory;
- (3) Employment and testing of different, trans-disciplinary means in order to conduct experimentation in architectural design;
- (4) Development of specific methodologies and instruments informing the architectural project.

2 Practice: Experimentation in Research and Design

The research into the specific characteristics of contemporary border conditions and territories is seen here as relevant for architecture, since it gives a very consistent insight into

contemporary spatial **practices**, while simultaneously providing tools to question the positioning of our discipline. Architecture can thus rediscover also its instrumentality. Throughout its history, architectural vision and creation have managed to escape the controlling instruments of planning by avoiding the 'application' of architecture to 'problem-solving' exclusively. In this context, borders are a means to **define** the territory but also one of the most important instruments that determine our perception of space. Borders can be physical, psychological, socio-economic, and/or political.

The 'Border Conditions & Territory' studios provide the means and the adequate context for students to pursue **in-depth** architectural investigations, while simultaneously encouraging the **critical** reflection upon possible relations between developing projects and the contemporary **questions** of the discipline. In order to establish such a platform, the BC&T studios adopt a broad inclusive **perspective** toward the notion of design, with a strong emphasis on process-oriented (in contrast to object-oriented) investigations. The primary emphasis is on navigating a specific course while remaining open for unforeseen **discoveries**. By mapping and exploring the various overlapping entities and modalities of spatial conditions, the BC&T studios emphasise the critical inclusiveness of adjacent and peripheral ideas rendered material for the design process. This approach stresses the importance of projecting the design process into **tectonic** and spatial constructs, all of which form an important basis in the understanding of a project.

2.1 Methods and Techniques: Notations & Codifications; Drawing; Mapping; Surveys and Navigations

In order to capture the **complexity** of contemporary spatial conditions and to relate them to the socio-political contexts and territorial settings in which they are situated, we will use tools and techniques of sampling, cataloguing, cartography and navigation. The map is a means to investigate the local (situated within the global) as a field in which various elements and **forces** on various scales exercise their influence. Mapping introduces a specific technique of urban analysis that engages the **multiplicity** of conditions that surround the architectural object. It also reveals different levels of **complexities** from conventional analytical architectural drawings. The technique of mapping is being developed for this purpose and introduces a set of rules and instruments that permit the **exposure** of invisible actualities and hidden processes behind the object-oriented reading of the city. By mapping the objective and the subjective, relevant conclusions can be **formulated** with respect to spatial conditions. As such, the critical and operative function of mapping offers a typical spatial ordering that is developed through a system of notations.

3 Programme: THE IN-BETWEEN in ARCHITECTURE

Mies van der Rohe once defined architecture as 'the spatial expression of a spiritual commitment'. Mies' definition beautifully describes the intrinsic relationship within architecture between reflection and theory on the one hand and design and practice on the other. Without an attempt to reflect on the knowledge, tools and design strategies of architecture, any proposed design process or intervention would be mere formalistic play. Each architectural project is measured by both its spatial aspects and its theoretical and critical intent.

The 'Border Conditions & Territory' program regards architecture as an in-between condition. Architecture operates in-between design and theory, in-between art and science, in-between the rational and irrational, in-between logic and intuition. The space of the in-between is where the border transforms from a spatial element that implements segregation and division into a space of encounter within a territorial setting. The in-between is that temporary, complex and dynamic space in transition, a space that is 'shared'.

We encourage students to search and cross the border between objective and subjective knowledge, between rationality and intuition, between theory and design. This means going beyond the inventory act towards interpretation or even speculation about the spatial context. We thus hope that the architect (and architecture) will rediscover the meaning of the expression within the design.

3.1 Organisation

The BC&T studios are organised around both **thematic** theoretical topics and a specific selection of cities for investigation. This investigation will form the basis for the **development** of the students' projects in the BC&T research framework. In the past, the BC&T studios **explored** cities such as Berlin, New York, Kaliningrad, Havana and Kiev. In the selected cities, the investigations focus on **analysing** the characteristics and forms of the locally imbedded spatial conditions. In all cities, the students, in consultation with the studios' instructors, shall determine the precise topic and course of the individual projects.

4 Academic Year 2011-12

For the AY2011-2012, the BC&T programme will offer the following courses and projects:

MSc. 1 Studios & Seminars

AR1Ap011 (3 studios in Fall; 1 studio in Spring) 12 ECTS
ea.

AR1Am040 & AR1Am030 (3 seminars in Fall; 1 seminar in Spring) 3 ECTS ea.

Instructors:

Filip Geerts, Micha de Haas and Sang Lee (Studios)

Silvio Carta, Klaske Havik and Julien Merle (Seminars)

MSc. 2 Studio & Seminar

AR0310 (1 studio in spring) 12 ECTS

AR0475 (1 seminar in spring) 6 ECTS

Instructors: Klaske Havik and Sang Lee

MSc. 3 AR3Ap130-2 (2 projects in Fall, 1 in Spring)

Instructors: Henriette Bier, Stefano Milani, Oscar Rommens and Marc Schoonderbeek

Studio 1 Territory in Transit: *Un dimanche après-midi au Maasvlakte*
Instructor: Filip Geerts

The design studio deals with 'the large dimension' of territory through the lens of architecture. What seems often to be considered the exclusive realm of planning and landscaping, becomes the site for architectural experiment: the city-region is understood as consisting of architectural strategies with a certain autonomy and peripheral conditions are privileged sites for meaningful modification.

(INFRASTRUCTURE ARCHITECTURALLY RECONSIDERED) The coming semester deals with the 'territory' produced by something far greater than the infrastructuralised periphery of the city-region: a territory that IS infrastructure. The architectural project needs to go beyond celebrating, lamenting or qualifying this condition. The territory in question provides the material for geographic reinvention by means of architecture and is the site of the architectural project.

(-> MAASVLAKTE, PORT OF ROTTERDAM, FALL 2011) The creation of the Port of Rotterdam's Maasvlakte 2, extending the area of reclaimed land jutting out in the North Sea by another 2000ha, is well underway (since 2008). What started with planning, environmental impact studies, submarine archaeological survey teams, and a selection of the fine-fleur of port businesses to relocate to it, will soon become reality: new land, the port increased by 20% to 6000 hectare, capable of handling three times more containers in 2013. A 750ha nature compensation plan accompanies the plan: even nature is made. The port's dynamic environment always inspired architects. In 1997 OMA/Rem Koolhaas suggested to make the Maasvlakte a special-economic-zone, detaching it from Rotterdam (50km away) administratively: a free state not unlike the 1998 plan for Schiphol airport in the sea. The port's post-war modernization and growth towards the North Sea out-scaled the city's dimension: city and port moved apart. The port activity abandoned the old docks near the city one by one, giving rise to Rotterdam's regeneration on the waterfront since the 1980s: the 'stadshavens' are the latest generation of reshaping the land of stevedores into the post-industrial home for the 'creative class'. Not just confirming this development, but understanding the possibilities for architecture in the margin of the largest project in the Netherlands since the Delta Works is at stake. The port of Rotterdam is considered to be a territorial artefact of great diversity, literally the high ground (NAP+) on which a series of architectural projects can be inscribed in the tradition of man-made modification of the landscape.

(MEASURE&MODIFICATION, METHOD) First (groupwork), a series of investigative drawings and models is produced for the western extremity of the port of Rotterdam: the non-lieu, the terrain vague becomes a measured surface, despite the absence of urban fabric or landscape in the traditional sense. The conclusion of the first phase needs a threefold answer: (1) the definition of the residual of the Maasvlakte, where modification by means of architecture is possible, (2) Also, certain models are studied/analysed, that prefigure architectural solutions for public amenities in this context, and (3) the particular resistances, technicalities, materiality and performances of the area are made evident. Second (individual projects), a series of projects for the Maasvlakte is made, that engage the possibility of programming amenities geared to the (temporary) exigencies of a community that inhabits the Maasvlakte, either by playing or working. The project needs to be an architectural conjecture, strategically engaging with and re-combining the emerging territory, integrating the possibilities of the territory and with attention to the local effect. The particular project is to be expanded to include ideas of collectivity in this contemporary landscape: a very particular type of public ground where leisure and production converge into one. Not at all different from the pioneering urbanity that emerges on the sites of large construction projects as dams. The studio engages simultaneously with the very large scale and the 'built' scale, initially circumventing the conventional 'architectural' scales of the pure object in order to have this one as much informed as possible by its accommodating field and its constituent parts.

Studio 2 Socio-Political Contexts of Architecture: Memory, time and architecture.

Instructor: Micha De Haas

Some buildings and cities are memorable, some buildings are worth memorizing and some spaces are unforgettable. We value urban heritage and preserve historical buildings, we name good architecture timeless yet have a romantic weakness for decay and are fascinated by temporary structures. What does time mean for architecture? This studio deals with the influence of the notions of time, memory and history on urban conditions, the representation of these notions in architecture and urban planning and the influence they have on the personal individual design process of each project.

Our perception of our (built) environment is in many ways influenced by (collective) memory. Ground Zero is not just a building site – it is a former symbol for capitalistic power, a witness for a world trauma, and the background for millions of personal memorable moments. The competition proposals for this site (and certainly the winning Libeskind scheme) show just how much architects and planners relates to these issues – balancing between the banal and the meaningful. Yet, the mutual relation between architecture and (collective) memory is not only evident in dramatic locations like Ground Zero. It is almost everywhere. One can even argue that the process of designing – the construction of a complete building scheme starting with a vague conceptual image in the architect's mind – is very much comparable to the process of remembering. The Msc1 projects in this thematic series will address cities, locations and building programs with a specific historical context and content. In the first phase, students will map and analyse the relation between space, time, history and collective memory. During the second phase students will develop an informed personal position on the way these relations should be incorporated in the building concept. The third phase is the development of this building concept into a complete design.

The subject of the September 2011 semester would be a temporary (for a period of app. 5 years) building for the new Dutch National Historical Museum. The need for a national historical museum was basically a politic one. In a small land, immersed in process of globalisation, immigration and European collaboration, the issue of its national identity became suddenly relevant. The definition of a national historical canon became an urgent matter, and a museum for it was an obvious next step. Locations were suggested, programs written and eventually, due to powers struggles and the economical crisis, the plans were put on hold for an undefined period of time. We will address the speculative suggestion of building a temporary museum with an adjusted program.

Studio 3: Experimentation in Architectural Design

Instructor: Sang Lee

This studio consists of investigations on the expression of urban interaction and its boundaries in both reality and fiction. The studio will be conducted in two major sections of assignments that are designed to promote the use of drawings and models as a means of investigation, experiment and trials.

The first stage of the exercise will involve the construction of index models. The index models are the expression of, on one hand, urban activities in motion, and on the other speculations on the dynamic conditions as expressed in narrative media such as fiction and cinema. The overall objective of the design is to produce a public place in Rotterdam where the idea of contingency is a pronounced feature. Such places include many types of buildings in which the social encounters occur. These encounters may be planned (appointments and schedules: a congress centre or a movie theatre) or by chance (serendipity and spontaneity: a market, a bar or a club). Or it could simply be a transient place: intersections and passages where we just pass by (strolling or *passeggiata*: streets, malls and squares).

Resulting from this stage are various models as fragments that inform the indexicality and the contingency of movements. In the second stage, students shall investigate the formal qualities of the index models from the first stage and the programmatic nature of a theatre as a location of fictitious events.

Using the outcome of the programmatic investigation of the building type the students will be eventually asked to develop an architectural composition that reflects both the programmatic

components and the index models. Major emphasis will be given to the architectonic processes and techniques.

MSc. 2 Studio & Seminar AR0310 & AR0475 (Max. 30 students)

TRANSCRIPTIONS

AR0475 Theory Seminar 6 ECTS

Instructors: Klaske Havik and Sang Lee

The 'Transcriptions' seminar presents and discusses investigative and creative methods such as mapping, codification, literary techniques, analog and digital drawing and modeling, etc. applied to site research and architectural design. Transcription is seen, in this context, not only as a process of translation and conversion from one medium to another, but also as an investigation into several historical and contemporary techniques, which are positioned along the borders of the architectural profession and other disciplines such as art, literature, science and technology. The seminar includes both theoretical investigations, such as discussion of readings, critical analysis of existing experimental projects, films and documentaries, and active production of writings, drawings, models, etc.

AR0310 Design Studio 12 ECTS

Studio 1 Terristories

Instructor: Klaske Havik

This free-choice studio is connected to the msc2 seminar Transcriptions. The studio exercise will draw upon (trans-)scriptive techniques such as evocative description, narrative and scenario writing, in both site research and design.

Developing the skill of *evocative description* allows architects to take a receptive attitude to architectures poetic potential, by means of a close attention to materiality, atmosphere, and tactility- in other words, to the lived qualities that architecture can entail. In site interpretation, such an approach implies that site-specific characteristics regarding sensory perception and atmosphere can be mapped. The notion of *narrative* connects to the idea that space is socially produced. Architecture, in this way, is seen more as a process than as an object - a process in which various events can unfold in time, like in a literary narrative.

Scenario writing draws on the idea that design is by definition also an act of speculation.

Therefore, scenario writing is used in approaching architecture and the contemporary urban conditions as a kind of fictions that can be analyzed and re-written, or newly constructed.

The site research will result in a 'Terristories', which generates spatial and programmatic conditions for the design, while in the design project, the three approaches will result in simultaneous design activities on various scales, from architectural details to urban scenario's.

Studio 2 Tectonic Transformations

Instructor: Sang Lee

This free-choice studio deals with the tectonic making of surfaces and their applications. The studio exercise will rely on a syntactic approach in order to reflect and to register tectonic transformations vis-à-vis the site and programmatic variables. The primary focus is on the relationship between the tactile consideration of making and how to implement and articulate surface conditions. The initial process will be focused on the physical construction of the tactile units as an informant of architectonic configurations. Subsequently the design work will be focused on how the tactile units can be assembled and permutated according to given variables of the site and the program. This will primarily involve trans-scribing of urban conditions into architectonic elements using the units organized within a syntactic structure. The studio's primary objective is to produce the mediation between an urban context and the conception/production of architectonic transcriptions, and ultimately to propose a strategy of architectural construct that has given way from the clarity of static geometry to the complexity in dynamic variability, that of aggregate accumulation. Within the limited scope of the studio exercises, we will deal with a syntactic approach that consists of aggregate units organized and arranged so as to reflect and register tectonic transformations vis-à-vis the site

variables.

The primary component of the studio deals with the relationship between the tactile consideration of making and how it can be further implemented. The initial process will be centred on the physical construction of an aggregate tectonic unit as a pretext to its accumulated effects in structural configuration. Subsequently the investigation will be focused on how the aggregates can be assembled and permutated according to given variables derived from urban and territorial spatial conditions.

Extra note: from September 2011 onwards, Architecture graduate students can choose between the History thesis and Theory thesis, as an obligatory part of their MSc2-program. The BC&T program strongly recommends the Theory thesis and has made special arrangements for BC&T students with the **DSD** to offer this course starting September 2011. Please enlist for **AR2DSD820** in case you want to join the BC&T MSc3 studio in February 2012 (or later).

MSc. 3 AR3Ap130-2

(Max. 28 students)

Instructors: Henriette Bier, Stefano Milani, Oscar Rommens and Marc Schoonderbeek

Studio 1

Beirut

In cooperation with:

American University Beirut

Urban Asymmetries, DSD, TUD

The Beirut-studio will develop architectural research and design projects that are related to and situated in urban conditions as well as embedded in the larger scale of the territory. The exploration of the urban border conditions in Beirut will be combined with the (slow yet dynamic) time-related processes of the landscape as well as contemporary developments with respect to connectivity, infrastructure and the pre-war intense planning activities (during the golden years of the banking development before the war) and the post-war city reconstruction. Even though the studio will touch upon issues related to landscape urbanism, the increased attention to environmental and sustainable concerns and issues of conflict and post-conflicts, the main focus will remain, as in all BC&T projects, on exploring the specific spatial conditions to be found in cities and territories and how these conditions can inform, determine or result in architectural interventions and forms. Important will be to stress the threat the city is suffering from the building development of the years of the reconstruction and in its wildest dimension now.

Studio 2

MADRID PERIPHERIES

The Madrid-studio will focus on the peripheral urban areas of Madrid. The ongoing colonization and appropriation of the landscape around Madrid, partly through commercial housing projects, has resulted in a fragmented periphery where specific urban border conditions have emerged in a vast territorial setting and as a result of this seemingly ever-expanding urbanization in, around and of Madrid. As a consequence, the marginal is (nowadays) situated in unexpected locations within the city. As part of this BC&T studio, the contemporary debates in Spain and Europe, involving both social, ethnic, religious, societal and economic ('post-capitalist') developments, will be analyzed, as well as the specific forms of resistance that have an influence and effect on the spatial configuration of the city. Via several dérives of a to-be-determined zone in Madrid, collective and thematic explorations and mappings will be developed, also in this case with the specific aim of informing the architectural project.

After an initial phase of investigating the nature of borders as 'spaces of encounter', the second phase of the project explores the use of digital and analogue techniques as both pragmatic and conceptual instruments employed to explore complex systems of urban and architectural organization around borders as well as techniques of representation and specific tools for generating designs. It furthermore, investigates the potential and limitations of technology- and art-driven approaches to architecture with respect to their implications on design.

This studio focuses special attention on the technique of photography, film, and animation.

MSc3/4 projects:

The studio BC&T graduate projects will focus on the 'mapping of the city', which means both the uncovering of the invisible aspects of the city and an unveiling of different dimensions 'besides the obvious' will form the starting point of the studio. The mapping survey of marginal urban areas and the periphery of the designated cities are proposed as a means to inquire into urban spatial border conditions and territories. Rather than a means to produce striking representations, different techniques and methods of drawing and mapping will be developed as a way to 'scan' the urban field(s), investigating it via a specific apparatus. Within these projects, several relevant theoretical and philosophical texts will be discussed and several experts will be invited to lecture, discuss or give a workshop on the themes of the BC&T studio.

Literature list

MSc1

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in: Nesbitt (ed.), *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture; An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996
- Vittorio Gregotti, *The Form of the Territory*
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- Manfredo Tafuri, *Design and Utopia; Architecture and Capitalism*
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- Sanford Kwinter, 'The Complex and the Singular' and 'Modernist Space and Fragment'
in: *Architectures of Time; Toward a Theory of the Event in Modernist Culture*
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- Jeffrey Kipnis, 'Toward a New Architecture'
in: AD Folding and Pliancy, Academy Editions, London, 1993

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- Robin Evans, 'Standing in Front of Traces that leave nothing behind',
in: K Michael Hays (ed.), *Architecture Theory since 1968*,
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- Kevin Lynch, *Image of the City*
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- Denis Cosgrove (ed.), *Mappings*
London: Reaktion Books, 1999
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Lotus International n. 133, 2008; pp. 82-87
- Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes; Walking as an aesthetic practice*
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- Lize Mogel and Alexis Bhagat, *An Atlas of Radical Cartography*
Los Angeles: The Journal of Aesthetics Protest Press, 2007
- Peter Eisenman, *Diagram Diaries*
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available under <http://www.softcinema.net/>
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