

Workshop Title: Self-Reflection on “Urban Deck”

Instructors

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Workshop Information

“The figure is creating, forming, re-creating, continuously forming itself by the forces of the deck and the ship within the atmosphere of its habitus... The figure exists with its past, with its now and with its future; with its background formed by the school of thought, by the role-figures.” MateriART | The Figure- April 2018, Ankara | Workshop Theme 1

MATERIART workshop series aims at focusing on three thematic processes; which are *the figure*, *the deck*, and *the habitus*. The first part of these workshop series that was “*the figure*” focused on the ways in which he/she constructs his/her architectural identity through many forces like educational background and experiences. Identity building is *continuous*, that is to say, it is a never-ending process of *becoming* because changing or reconstructing is indispensable in every different encounterings. Hereupon, the second part of the workshop series investigates and elaborates “*the deck*” in regard to *the locus*, *conceptualization*, and *anchoring*.

Contemporary life requires different integrations of looking and understanding *the locus*, which basically means a place. It should be kept in mind that *the locus* cannot be considered as how Aldo Rossi did in regard to today’s technology that brings new tools and media. Rossi defines *the locus* as the relationship between the building and the specific location that it is located on. He emphasizes the importance of the conditions and qualities of a space underlined by *the locus*, which is essential for understanding an urban artifact. In this manner, *the locus* is determined by its space, its time, its topographical dimensions, its form, along with its relations to ancient and recent events and its memory (Rossi, 2007). Accordingly, both Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman regard *the locus*, which is the place of presence, as the architecture and a language of communication and meaning

(Hoteit, 2015). Yet, this meaning is very complex and dynamic in city scale, as Christopher Alexander explains, the city brings into existence its coherence as a unit consisted of its own elements together and the dynamic coherence of the larger 'living system' including the fixed and invariant parts (Karatani, 1995). *The figure* perceives, gives meaning to the fixed elements and puts them together. The relationship between the figure, the urban artifact and the place creates this dynamic 'living system' in which the figure hovers between the artifact and its place visually and establishes that relationship over and over again corporeally. This togetherness shows alterations for each figure existing in the city, which creates numerous variations in meaning within the 'living system'. That is to say, this 'living system' has potentials to be anchored, and by this, the aim of this workshop is to construe/uncover and map this 'living system' by means of the perception of each *figure* in relation to the changing tools such as social media of contemporary life.

At this point, it is essential to consider "*the deck*" as a ground structure, which supports a wide range of invariant and variant activities and elements in the city. This structure is called as '*urban surface*' by Wall (1999). The urban surface is dynamic and responsive, that Wall calls as '*catalytic emulsion*', in which the surface locates situations in time. As a bound to the situation, understanding the meaning of *anchoring* becomes necessary, which is previously defined by Steven Holl in 1996. In architecture, the site of a building is more than an ingredient of its conception, indeed, it consists of both physical and metaphysical foundation. By means of metaphysical aspects, Holl (1996) emphasizes experiencing a place as *anchoring*. When the experience becomes a part of the *anchoring* process, the interaction between *the figure* of architect and *the figure* of architecture (urban artifact) comes forward once again. At this point, the figure does not always indicate the architect, indeed, it may become any person that perceives and constructs. Accordingly, Harvey (2000) explains *the figure* as follows:

"[...] *there is a sense in which we can all equally well see ourselves as architects of a sort. To construe ourselves as 'architects of our own fates and fortunes' is to adopt the figure of the architect as a metaphor for our own agency as we go about our daily practices and through them effectively preserve, construct, and re-construct our life-world.*" (Harvey, 2000, p.200).

With the support of this understanding of *the figure*, anchoring continues as long as the figure compares, reconstructs and even deconstructs the relationship between the urban artifact and its place according to his/her own perception (Çağlar & Aksu, 2017). Comprehension of the artifact-place relationship via daily living includes getting involved in daily life which requires a certain amount of time. Each figure needs time for perceiving and developing a sense of belonging to a

place that he/she firstly encounters. It is only possible in this way to comprehend the elements of the place and discover/realize them. The elements of this place will differ according to the habitus, which consists of the figure's view, perception, vision, and daily habits.

One of the main aims of this workshop is to investigate the anchoring of the figures on certain locations of the urban deck by means of different media and tools of the contemporary. While mentioning the location, it is referred to the plurality of spaces which are not occupied by the figure yet. *The figure*, who brings the elements of the city together, both invariants and variants, is the determinant of the act of the anchoring. In this manner, location is plural whereas the place represents a singularity due to the figure's actions (Tanyeli, 2017). In anchoring process, *the figure* is the one who makes this plurality singular by converting a location into a place over her/his perception. This perception has evolved/shifted with the changing definitions of the place/figure/locus/anchoring in respect to the digital medium.

With the advancements in digital medium, the way the figure perceives the place has been changing. Within the scope of this workshop, it is aimed to investigate and explore the new ways and media of perceiving and reflecting the place. In this respect, Tramline no.28 is considered as a deck that holds such plurality. There are various ways and media that hold such plurality integrated as photography, texts, sketches, and video-recording. However, the most apparent representative and tool is the photography and the photographic images towards the anchoring process.

Photography, of the city or of the inhabitants, establishes a tool for information and awareness of the built and human reality (Sola-Morales, 1995). In the perception of a place on the dynamic urban deck, the parallel movement of the city is as important as the figure's movement, thus, a series of snapshots is required to catch this movement and he/she recomposes the collected elements in the figure's memory as a sequence of commentary (Auge, 1995). Besides, the photographic image directly reflects the figure's perception and might act as true representatives of the anchoring process. The sequential and even fictional relationship between the perception of the figures and the city brings a new place of understanding, and the locus and anchoring become possible in digital mediums. By means of the photographic images in the digital media, the figure captures signals and motivations that give a certain direction to construct an imaginary and reflect them on certain mediums to establish a place/city. At this point, an interrelation between the figure and the place will be proposed over photographic images in digital mediums, which constitutes the substantial aim of this workshop.

The Workshop Process:

The workshop will include lecture sessions at the beginning in order to provide students a background on the understanding of the locus/anchoring/figure/place/non-place/urban surface/deck and increase the knowledge/skills they have for expressing, developing and discussing their ideas by means of photography, mapping, collage, et cetera in digital mediums. The workshop lectures will be pursued as follows:

Lecture 1: Introductory | Defining Figure, Locus, and Anchoring

Lecture 2: The Change of Locus, Anchoring and Figure with the Tools of the Contemporary

Lecture 3: Tools and Skill-sets (Adobe XD, Premiere Pro, Photoshop and Illustrator)

A number of workshop tasks is planned for comprehending the urban deck from a new point of view. The urban deck will be re-produced/re-presented by different tools in different mediums. It is expected to explore the constantly changing relationship which they establish with the place by means of observation notes, sketches, and sequential photographs. The tasks are organized as follows:

Task 1: The research on the given location

Task 2: On site - Self-Reflection on the Location | Taking photographs of the location and writing observation notes

Task 3: Pin-up | Discussing the photographs and observation notes

Task 4: Determining the key concepts from the observation notes

Task 5: The preparation of the flipbooks

Task 6: The mapping of the locus/anchoring by means of digital medium

Task 7: Getting ready for the Exhibition | Set-up

The aim of the Task 1-2 is to provide enough time for students to develop an anchoring process and collect data (photographic and textual) from the selected locations. The organization/grouping of the photographs and determination of the selected concepts/words will be pursued during the Task 3-4. Task 5 is designated for representing the sequential impact of the photographic images while the use of digital mediums in the anchoring process will be experienced in the Task 6. The last task aims to organize all the collected/interpreted/produced data and prepare the final exhibition setting. At the end of this workshop, the figure will experience the anchoring process by means of

photographic images in different mediums, and the reflections on the urban surface will be represented by the use of different mapping techniques.

Workshop Materials

Please bring the items listed below.

- Camera
- Laptop with 2D / 3D programs
- Smartphones
- Sketch book, pencils
- Any other tools for further examination

Workshop Schedule

Day 1: April 4th | Site Visit and Lecture 1-2

Day 2: April 5th | Task 1: The research on the given location, **Task 2:** On site - Self-Reflection on the Location | Taking photographs of the location and writing observation notes

Day 3: April 6th | Task 3: Pin-up | Discussing the photographs and observation notes, **Task 4:** Determining the key concepts from the observation notes **Task 5:** The preparation of the flip-books and **Lecture 3**

Day 4: April 7th | Task 6: The mapping of the locus/anchoring by means of digital medium

Day 5: April 8th | Task 7: Getting ready for the Exhibition | Set-up

Day 6: April 9th | Exhibition

Additional Information and Resources

Auge, M. (1995). *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. (J. Howe, Trans.) London, New York: Verso.

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Rossi, A. (1982). The Locus. In A. Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (pp. 103-106). New York: The MIT Press.

Sola-Morales Rubio, I. (1995). Terrain Vague. *Anyplace*, 118-123.

Steenbergen, C., & Reh, W. (1996). *Architecture and Landscape: The Design Experiment of the Great European Garden and Landscapes*. Munich: Prestel.

Wall, A. (1999). Programming the Urban Surface. In J. Corner (Ed.), *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Theory* (pp. 233-249). New York: Princeton Architectural Press.