



Urban Legends

Porto

The Gay Menzel Studio addresses the context as a source of development of a narrative linked to the site itself.

This highlighting tool reveals the inherent qualities of the place and integrates projections or personal aspirations into it, with the broad ambition of reconnection to the environment. Students will develop housing projects in Lausanne and clubs in Porto.

Urban legends are short fictions that come close to myths, contemporary tales, which spread in popular culture by oral transmission and proliferate through social networks. These stories that circulate and that everyone knows. Your uncle told you about that alligator living in the sewers of New York, your father's girlfriend confirmed it.

These legends are mysterious, terrifying or funny.

They are adapted to the local folklore by word of mouth, through hearsay. Each city produces these murmurs. Like an echo.



Contextual imaginary

Gay Menzel Studio's approach perceives architectural intervention stemming from a first desire, by defining its character in advance. We call it contextual imaginary.

The studio explores the way the project operates. It studies how the design process is constructed and develops keys of reading for the establishment of a coherent discourse. The narrative becomes the tool for the fabrication of the architectural project.

In reality, any intervention implies extracting the potential of the site. First by observation, then by selection of qualities likely to generate promising particularities. This reflection originates from the existing, is enriched by its complexity. In the concern of the economy of means, the given is to be shown or even enhanced by fiction. The history of the place, or what it emanates, is confronted with the personal imaginary of the architect: travels, experiences, culture, dreams.

The project balances these influences to offer a promise, crystallized by an evocation through the detail. Several scales are crossed by the establishment of this founding idea, from the great landscape to the concrete, with a view to global coherence.

The objective is to develop the faculty of observation, the reading of the site's complexity, the imagination, and the ambition to create, in spite of all the constraints of the project. The outcome will be an architecture which refers to something, which revives collective and shared experiences.



Unveiling Narratives

The development of a project strategy is addressed through the narrative, as a crystallization of a specific site vision (understanding) and personal imagination. How does the architect, as a person, as a user, influences and generates anchor points to make places legible, porous and appropriable in order to give them meaning?

The studio explores the way the project operates. It studies how the design process is constructed and develops reading keys for the establishment of a coherent discourse. The narrative becomes the tool for the fabrication of the architectural project.

The objective is to develop the proficiencies of observation, reading of site complexity, and imagination. Furthermore it is the ambition to create, in spite of all the constraints of the project, an architecture which refers to something and which revives collective and shared experiences.

The studio develops a coherent idea of a project starting from the territory and its landscape all the way up to the very detail.

A prototype of a lamp will reflect these influences and enable evocation. This is an opportunity for you, students, to assess what you can contribute to architecture by revealing your secrets.



Transpositions

Porto, perched along the northwest coast of Portugal, commands the banks of the Douro River and stretches inland toward the scenic hills of vineyards. Since the Celtic era, the city has thrived as a significant port, acting as an important gateway to the maritime commerce of the Peninsula. Its location has fostered a vibrant environment, encouraging commerce, culture exchange, and the arts, making it a city of great historical importance. Porto leverages a unique urban composition that allowed a specific and opportunistic growth.

Porto will provide us with the opportunity to explore architecture. Throughout the semester, fragments of the city's history, embodied in its courtyards and backyards, will serve as a foundation for analysis and inspiration. These spaces, with their intricate designs, historical and communal significance, will be studied. They will become starting points for the development of ideas that will be transposed in Lausanne.

The first semester will start with the site(s) visit. The site of retrieval (Porto) and the site of transposition (Lausanne). Students will receive one of the various courtyards selected in Porto. The specific revealed qualities of these spaces will be transposed to a site in Lausanne in order to develop housing projects in similar environment. In the second semester a project of larger scale (clubs and gardens) will be developed for Porto. Projects will be developed both individually and in groups of two.