

# Space Speculation 2017

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## Keywords

Recycle territories, economic transition and circularity, productive ecosystems, urban metabolism, social innovation, brownfield remediation

## Introduction

Space Speculation is a research by design studio link to the Laboratory of Urbanism, Infrastructure and Ecologies (LoUIsE). Space speculation addresses the socio-economic and ecologic transition of the existing city and its hinterland as condition for a sustainable future. Our approach to this question is grounded in a multi-scalar reflexion about the material flows and stocks of the urban landscape and the processes contributing to articulate it. We therefore claim for architects a role that would both encompass the design of places and identify, connect and disentangle the diverse material flows (materials, energy and water), stocks and resources.

The urban landscape is a complex, extensive and interactive ecosystem that operates continuously to meet the needs of its residents. Flows of materials, for example food, energy and water have a major impact on the functioning of our cities, and therefore on our environment, our health, well-being and economic robustness. In the present linear system, raw materials are transformed into products to be destroyed at the end of their lives. Within a circular economy perspective, the ambition consists of maximizing the reuse of products, components and raw materials in order to minimize value destruction. Urban metabolism and circular economy offers many opportunities for entrepreneurs, businesses and industries: the more you try to understand the cycles and the chains operating within every productive ecosystem, the lesser resources will be consumed and waste be generated, contributing indirectly to innovation.

Space speculation considers that in any inhabited territories, the stakes of economic transition and ecosystems balances create opportunities for social innovations, community values and projects. Urban design is a tool to explore these emerging social innovations and community values.

Space Speculation is a studio fully in English, giving its participants a chance to practice this language (speaking, reading and writing). A minimum level of A2 to B1 is expected to undertake the studio.

During this second semester of 2016-17, we will focus on the transition of the former industrial area of a medium-size city, Vilvoorde, located on the North of Brussels and along the canal.

This research by design will be conducted in collaboration with the Laboratorio d'Urbanism de Barcelona (LUB) de l'Escola Tècnica Superior de Arquitectura de Barcelona (ETSAB) and the Università luav di Venezia in the framwork of the programme Erasmus+ « Integrated urban design e-studio for XXIst century sustainable metropolitan region ».

The goal of this inter-University project is to exchange design knowledge relating to ecosystems urban design and European metropolitan region. Communication will take place through a web platform where students will upload their projects and discuss with colleagues : <http://www.metropolitan-estudio.eu>

The goal will be to redefine the living and productive ecosystems of this medium-size city in relation to its social, spatial and natural context, assuming that the combination of small and old human settlements and large scale industrial infrastructure could become the right trigger of socio-economic and spatial innovation. The theme is shared by the 3 design studios (IUAV, ETSAB and ULB) : medium-size old industrial towns, located next to dynamic urban areas, facing economic and spatial quality challenges. In addition to Vilvoorde (Belgium), the inter-university collaboration will work on Tarragona (Spain) and Porto Marguera, Mestre (Italy).

This project is a continuation of the former project *Upcycle Barcelona – cogenerative design strategies for sustainable urban metabolism* (<http://difusion.ulb.ac.be/vufind/Record/ULB-DIPOT:oai:dipot.ulb.ac.be:2013/205878/Holdings> ).

## Methodology & planning

This year, space speculation will experiment a new methodology and planning in order for students to advance as efficient as possible from analysis and description to the individual project (new requirement). This methodology is organized in 5 phases: FRAMING, CHANNELING, POSITIONING, REFINING and REALIZING.

1) FRAMING (2 weeks, group work) : In the past we started with a long analysis phase, but this year students should discover the topics they want to dive into as they get into their proposal. The first phase of FRAMING will therefore a collectively work on:

- Physical model (as big as the classroom) and digital model (3D, CAD plan and sections)
  - Photo essay, sorting pictures out according to topics and places
  - scenario 0 : map and make fiches of ongoing plans and projects, indicating timing, actors, budget, and a short description.
  - analysis of the productive and natural ecosystem(s) → starting from the material we got, analyze and map: flows (incoming and outgoing, frequency of transit, type of flows, volume of flows, transport mode, transfers between transport modes...), actors and stakeholders (companies, associations, policy makers...), synergies among actors, plans, economic transition and the demands this poses.
- and review organize as a pin up.

2) CHANNELING (1 week, individual work): MOODBOARD, every student selects a topic and place fascinating him/her spatially in order to work further (references are allowed, given that they explain the reasons behind the choice of references). This step is oriented to start build up a narrative of project.

Individual work and review organize as a pin up.

3) POSITIONING (2 weeks, individual work): HUNCH PROJECT, every student is supposed to represent with the help of a model or a collage the kind on unmissable spatial intervention for the site she has chosen, based on their MOODBOARD.

4) REFINING (2 weeks, group work): students will group into thematic teams and refine their initial intuitions with some specific research around programme, technical requirements, context data, etc.

5) REALIZING (6 weeks): getting to develop individually a SPATIAL DESIGN for the study area (possibly including documents at scale 1/100). An intermediary presentation in order to make sure that the working pace stays efficient.

### **Studytrip to Barcelona**

As part of the metropolitan e-studio a study trip and workshop in Barcelona will be organized during Easter holidays from 3rd to 7th April 2017. This study trip is organized jointly with colleagues from ETSAB and IUAV. It is not mandatory. Participants from Space Speculation is limited to 15 . Registration and selection of students will be made during the first week of the semester. Travel and accommodation fees are included in the Erasmus+ budget for this inter-university collaboration.

### **Assessment**

The assessment will focus on the coherence and relevance of the project seen in its relation to the semester's topic and location. The quality of the design and of the documents delivered in order to support and represent it (plans, collages, narrative,...) will be an important part of the final mark . The narrative is also a key element for the evaluation. Because our studio methodology relies on intense dialogue and exchange among the studio participants, marks will be weighed according to participation in the different activities planned during the semester.

The global grade is the average of the final jury grade (50%) and the semester grade (50%).