

Reflection Report

Yifei Zhang-5294134

BORDERS & TERRITORIES - GRADUATION STUDIO

TRANSIENT LIQUIDITIES ALONG THE NEW SILK ROAD

The content of the result of the initial collective cartographic reflection. Our group used the fragments of the city of Marseille to compose a light and strange mapping of the city, which is like the invisible city in which each of the fragmentary cities depicted by Calvino together form an impression of the city of Venice. The perspective of the city changes in an interesting way to my eyes - they are no longer macroscopic monoliths, but fragmented pieces, each one seemingly different from the others but with similar parts. This made me interested in Marseille.

After visiting Marseille, the city brought me a very special experience - even though I thought I had done enough research, within a few days of research I still felt that urban studies should be seen with the eyes, touched with the hands and felt with the body, not just on a macro scale, marked on Google Earth. Marseille as a multi-cultural and migrant city, where communities are always in conflict with each other in terms of gathering and living, cultural transgression assumes that the clear borders of established communities can be traversed, that we can establish common borders, produce ways of behaviour and contact through gaze, and then unite internal and external borders in openness and closure and transparency transgression. and, this also leads to boundaries of privacy that are blurred and easily violated. I saw in Marseille the richness of such an urban space - the different openness, the different heights and the different slits that forced me to visit the city in various positions and angles. Sometimes I had to bend down and poke my body out in order to see the other side of a bridge hole, and sometimes I had to step up a few steps to see the other side of a wall. The experience of the city tour further enhanced and changed my understanding of the space of the gaze, the subject of my research. The physical and visual experience of the gaze later became an understanding and overview of the urban space of Marseille. My theme is about the space of the gaze, trying to study and observe the city through the lens of the term gaze. In my research I found that the constituent elements of the space of the gaze in this city make it unique, the closed windows, the constant height difference, the narrow streets, the cluttered urban order, the high incidence of crime, the omnipresent gaze, the hidden security cameras. They are translated into each small part of the space, which then together form a collection of Marseille's space of the gaze.

During the three weeks of modi operandi modelling, I experimented with ideas in terms of transparency. These ideas don't really point directly to the idea of a space, but more to the level of a medium, and I lost my grasp of space for a while. But this was not without help, and through various attempts at transparency I found a means by which the layers and meanings of space could be further enhanced. Transparency then became an extremely important part of the space of the gaze space.

After P2 I was lost for a long time, as I was preoccupied with understanding the terminology itself and neglected that I should relate it more to the actual space. This led to a very difficult process of deriving my research into architectural solutions. After this, I kept making various attempts to try to establish the relationship between the space and the subject matter. And I thought again about how we initially represented the city in collective mapping, and actually to represent the space of the gaze of the city, which is to go to the city and find these particular, similar and different pieces and then organise them, I think it could be called a collection that expresses the complexity of the gaze. I started to sort out this logic and asked myself: why am I studying gaze, what does gaze mean for Marseille, what elements make up the space of the gaze, what can be put into the eventory of my architectural project, and as these questions became clearer, so did my project.

For the moment, the quality of the small spaces in the project could be further improved if there was time. But the space I want to shape and what I want to express is no longer as vague and difficult to explain as it was before. In the next phase, I will continue to deepen the expression and the quality of the space and develop the building to be more precise and refined.