

Unveiling the Transtemporal Entities Along San Isidro

Plotting the Time of a Terrain Over Space

AR3A010
Research Plan

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Fascination

The Myth: Athena and the Olive Tree

The gods Poseidon and Athena fought for Athens' favour thousands of years ago. Poseidon allegedly shattered the earth with his trident to create a salt spring, but the sage Athena presented a more useful gift by planting an olive tree atop the Acropolis. The inhabitants of the city decided on Athena, and the same olive tree may be seen there even now.¹



Figure 1. Painting of the myth of Athena and Poseidon's Contest for Attica.

The Monuments: Erechtheion and Parthenon

The Parthenon was a part of an architectural history that evolved over hundreds of years, notwithstanding its innovations. It combined the physical structure and the sculptural story into a unified ensemble and was formal and orderly, while the Erechtheion, which was built at the same time as it, broke from this pattern by fusing a number of artefacts and religiously significant locations in an outlandishly irregular arrangement.²



Figure 2. The Parthenon on the Acropolis hill

The Ritual: The Offering of the Woven Cloak to Athena

An ancient ritual that was depicted on the Parthenon frieze but came to an end in the Erechtheion with the offering of the woven cloak to Athena was inseparably associated with the two temples.³ The two temples' architecture, their works of art, the religious practises they



Figure 3. The Erechtheion, north of the Acropolis hill

¹ Papazarkadas, Nikolaos. *Sacred and public land in ancient Athens*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, p.261

² Psarra, Sophia. *Architecture and narrative: The formation of space and cultural meaning*. London: Routledge, 2009, p. 19

³ Ibid, p. 19



Figure 4. Woven robe of Athena statue

represented, and the overall plan they were a part of will be claimed to have been intricately intertwined and equally accountable for creating their cultural message. This message consisted of two layers: a religious layer relating to the city's old traditions, and a profane one referencing the city's modern identity.⁴

Keywords

Rituals, everyday-protocols, everydayness
Interpretation, representation
Non-discursive
Spatial configuration
Trans-temporalities

⁴ Psarra Sophia, 2009, p. 26

Introduction

San Isidro and the Rituals Surrounding It

San Isidro hermitage has played an essential role in the city's development. It signified the importance of water during the droughts, expanding the then-old city of Madrid on the other side of the Manzanares river to connect it with water springs. It marked the beginning of the growth and accumulation of existing and new networks. As the city and its networks developed, the different characters along the San Isidro pilgrimage began to fade as they lost their connection to contemporary structures and practices. Its rituals adapted to these changes, too.

From an architectural perspective, this creates an interesting field of inquiry regarding the rituals and everyday protocols or, as Roland Barthes states, the 'myths of today'. The stratification of historical and cultural layers has generated visually obscure situations that lead to discontinuities, disruptions and fragilities. The research hypothesizes that through calibrated actions on the local scale it is possible to restore the balance between the parts and the whole, between what is inherited and what belongs to the urban character.

Research Questions

Research Question

How is the development of the ritual itself and the conditions around it constituted in spatial relations? What influence has the ritual's progress had on the synergy between meaning, space and society?

Sub-question 1.

Where does a relationship, between actor(s) and ritual reside when not actualized? How does it await its moment?

Sub-question 2.

Who takes part in the contemporary myths? Is there any overlapping between actors (human and non-human) within everydayness?

Sub-question 3.

Which are the values (historical, cultural) that a ritual encloses in space? How can they be traced (re)discovered?

Sub-question 4.

How can an architectural intervention be curated in such a way to be still a part of changing rituals? How can architecture reach beyond the very specific ritual itself and tie it into everyday rituals?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical Framework used for this research has the aim to provide a better understanding of the conditions along the threefold of San Isidro hermitage, Manzanares and the old city of Madrid, through the local rituals, defining its architectural components and fragilities, but also to which are the values that enclose the site. The framework is based upon theories interconnected through the understanding of space through human perception and spatial alteration through historical and cultural layering. It guides the thematic understanding of the synergies between meaning, space and society and how the rituals and the conditions around them have evolved through accumulation. This will be the base for further design research. Moreover, readings on the site, history, and context will also be considered while constructing the theoretical framework.

Site & Space

The pilgrimage-path to San Isidro is a **constructed site** which has been re-appropriated due to the expansion and growth of the city. Carol J. Burns argues that stratification built up throughout time is not seen as separate layers, nor do their manifestations seem to be. Their physical and spatial coextensiveness causes interruptions simultaneity, discontinuity, fragmentation and disruption; they only come together coherently in abrupt juxtapositions, which makes them visually obscure.⁵ This perspective solicits a deciphering of the conditions of the triptych through the concept of **layered and networked territory**. By combining multi-scale data, the layered territory *'stratifies its environment into a series of separate layers and systems, and looks at their overlays'*. In contrast, the networked territory *'understands the sites as hubs within much larger territory'*.⁶ With this approach, I aim to search for exceptions and the unknowable qualities embedded in the **genius loci** of the Manzanares's cityscape.

Social Interaction

In addition, the theoretical framework needs to take into consideration types of social interaction of those sites. The pilgrimage to San Isidro, during the years, has been comprised of smaller rituals, which can be traced in the daily protocols of the area. For this reason, Bill Hilliers **'spatial configuration'**, tracing the **non-discursive aspects** of space and form can be a useful lens for analysis. This calls for the categorisation of the actions between **long and short term situations**. Specifically, in a long model situation-**ritual** 'space is adapted to support the rules' while in a short model situation-**party**, 'space evolves to structure, and often to maximise, encounter density'.⁷

⁵ Kahn, Andrea, and Carol J. Burns. "On Site: Architecture Preoccupations." Essay. In *Drawing/Building/Text: Essays in Architectural Theory*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991.

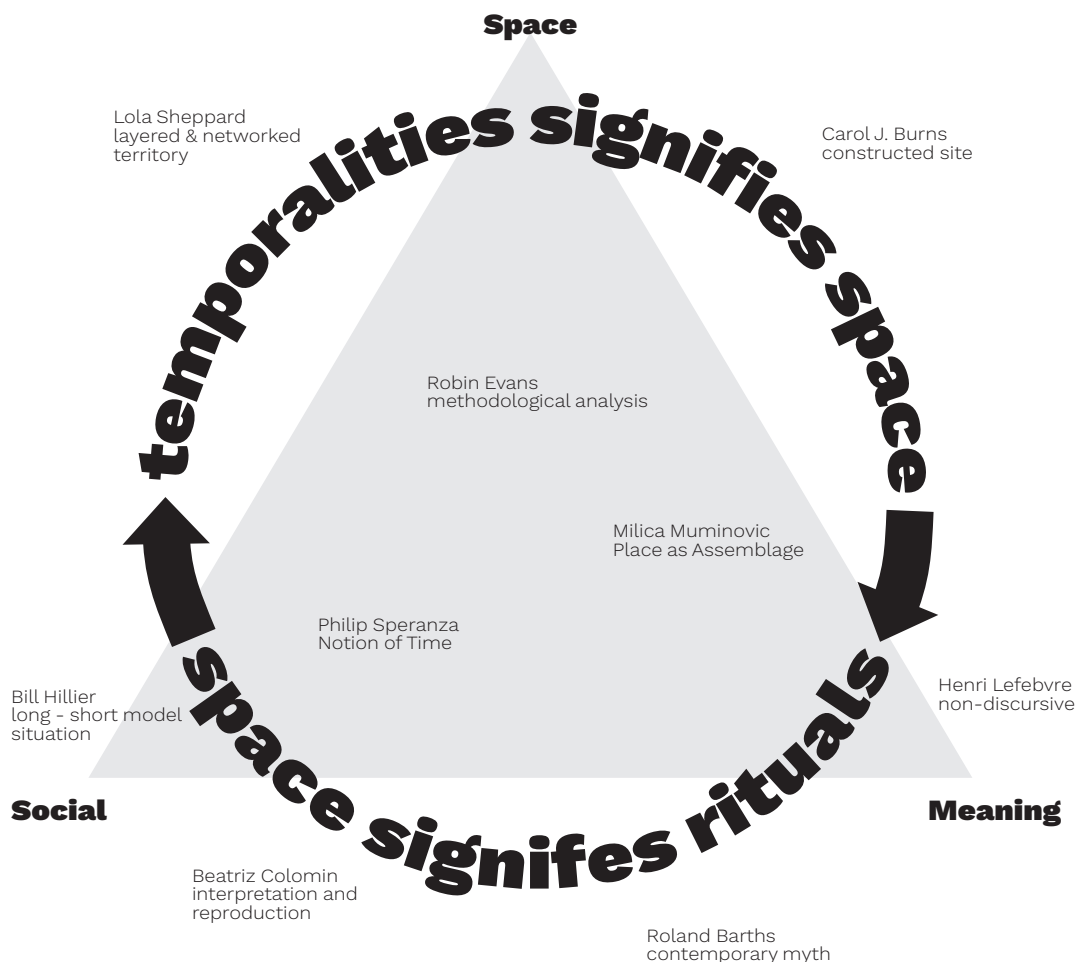
⁶ Sheppard, Lola, and Mason White. "States of Disassembly." In *Imminent Commons: The Expanded City: Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism 2017*. Actar D, Inc., 2017.

⁷ Hillier, Bill. *Space is the machine: A configurational theory of architecture*. Cambridge: Space Syntax, 2007.

Henry Lefebvre provides a complementary reading to the act of configuration, with his theory of a social sphere acting as the passive ground of social interaction, bringing site-territory and social interactions in the same plane. It is found at the centre of his conceptual triad of the **actual space** (physical), **discursive** (representation), and **lived space** (via human experience).⁸ To further study this view, we will implement Roland Barthes's approach to the definition of the **contemporary myth**. Through **semiological analysis**, he investigates the meanings present in our day-to-day practices and events. However, the study of semiotics is not the examination of the **sign** but the general theory of **signification**.⁹ In this way, the objective does not become merely reading or interpreting space, but rather, it is a means of living in the space.¹⁰

The research themes may examine architectural narratives and sequences of spaces over the San Isidro ritual; however, the focus is on accounting for the growth and change of the space and the actors over time.^{11 12} These positions will not only guide the understanding of Madrid and its genius loci within this study but also sets precedence for a new architectural example for **plotting the time of terrain over space**.

Theoretical Diagram



⁸ Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

⁹ Barthes, Roland. "Myth Today." Essay. In *Mythologies*, 109–59. New York: Hill & Wang Pub, 1993.

¹⁰ Colomina, Beatriz, and Joan Ockman. "Introduction: On Architecture, Production and Reproduction." Essay. In *Architectureproduction*, 7–23. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988.

¹¹ Speranza, Philip. "Time as a Medium: Early Work of Miralles." *Architectural Design* 86, no. 1 (2016): 60–65. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ad.2002>.

¹² Evans, Robin. *Translations from drawing to building*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997.

Methodology and Methods

'Ordinary things contain the deepest mysteries.'

Robin Evans¹³

This research aims to investigate the current structure and social protocols constituting the Manzanares landscapes between the old city and the hermitage of San Isidro. Through the lens of the ritual of San Isidro, I aim to reveal the connections between human, space, and socio-political forces in the themes of yearly requiring cycles and the everydayness, to decipher the genius loci in the mentioned areas of the city. The analysis is to be conducted on three complementary scales, allowing for an understanding of particular locations through their urban and local impacts. The research hypothesis is that extensive layering and apparent modifications in the San Isidro area of Manzanares, dictated by necessity of expansion, have created a change in its rituals. This provides the opportunity to reflect on the territory, which consequently will prevail on the fabric through new specialized forms and characterised by new functions. This will be ventured through the following methods.

Theoretical and Conceptual Approach

The literature review establishes a starting point for the relations between place and everydayness through a historical and cultural lens in Madrid. A visual representation will be provided through a series of historical and present paintings, images and maps stretching over the city and its connection with the local ritual. In particular, Goyaesque Madrid will be dissected as a set of types and places framed in the geographical, historical and sociological setting present in the work of Francisco de Goya starring the people of Madrid. Furthermore, the position of Henry Lefebvre will be utilised to establish a diagram giving insight into the materialisation of development on the West bank of the river, altering the San Isidro ritual through a three-part dialectic between everyday practices and perceptions, representations and spatial imaginary of the time. These methods uncover the continuities and discontinuities transforming the 'line' – pilgrimage to San Isidro into a node of attraction and its insertion into the cycle of everyday life. This will be followed by related thematic literature about the contemporary myth, rituals and everydayness as their interpretation and representation in a contemporary context.

As the literature review progresses, a distinction between the types of rituals will be made between parties – short model events (yearly celebrations) and rituals – long model events (everydayness). In addition, the Actor-Network Theory by Latour will be utilised to establish a diagram giving insight into human and non-human actors and will uncover the cross-disciplinary actor layers of the San Isidro-old city route.¹⁴ These methods uncover the social role of the short and long model situations and initiate an understanding of the synergy between cultural and historical meaning and the city. It initiates an understanding of various occurrences and will be followed by selective mappings bounded by the triptych's path. These mappings allow uncovering elements and relations to understand the occurrence and placement of certain spatial conditions. This will be further investigated by linear surveys

¹⁴ Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008.



Foreground:
 A very dynamic group
 of figures are chatting
 animatedly



Intermediate plane-
Manzanares:
 The hubbub of the smaller
 and smaller crowd getting
 lost on the left on the river
 bank.



Background-Old city:
 The great dome of San
 Francisco el Grande and
 the mass of the then new
 Royal Palace

Figure 5. 'The Meadow of San Isidro' deconstructed.

along the triptych into the three routes-crossings of the river, showcasing its sectional rhythm, variety in use, continuities and discontinuities.

All discovered knowledge will be merged to replicate the conditions of the banks in Manzanares based on the understanding of local occurrences, situations, relations and fragilities. By layering and dissecting, spatial analysis becomes projective as it assembles sets of relationships that are dynamic and spatial, the trajectories of which offer an index of possible sites for architectural intervention.

Contextual Approach

The found potential locations will be isolated to uncover their influence and role of the contemporary myths along the San Isidro pilgrimage and urban collective on the territorial level. The everydayness of this locations will be composed in a series of drawings attempting to highlight the fragilities and juxtapositions in the relations of object, human and event actors, in a dynamic manner in a new reciprocity and conflict. Case studies as the Bernard Tschumi's 'Manhattan Transcripts', Aldo Rossi's 'Analogous City' and Guy Debord's 'Naked City' will be analysed and used as a methodological tool for mapping the place-time entities.^{15 16 17} These will be the following steps in understanding local long and short model events and conditions and has a higher chance of uncovering needs and potential. The layered system of everyday practices and perceptions, representations and spatial imaginary implies that architecture enters into a state of trans-disciplinarity, enabling the activation of the map as an instrument of architectural construct.

The sites will then be ordered and presented in a ritualistic event catalogue showing their location, type, historical development, social, public and economic aspects, stress and potential. Hence, by comparing the typologies of sites will trace the fragilities within the sites, which solicit precise and selective intervention to preserve the inherited qualities of the Manzanares' banks through the growth and redevelopment of the city to regenerate the more extensive system.

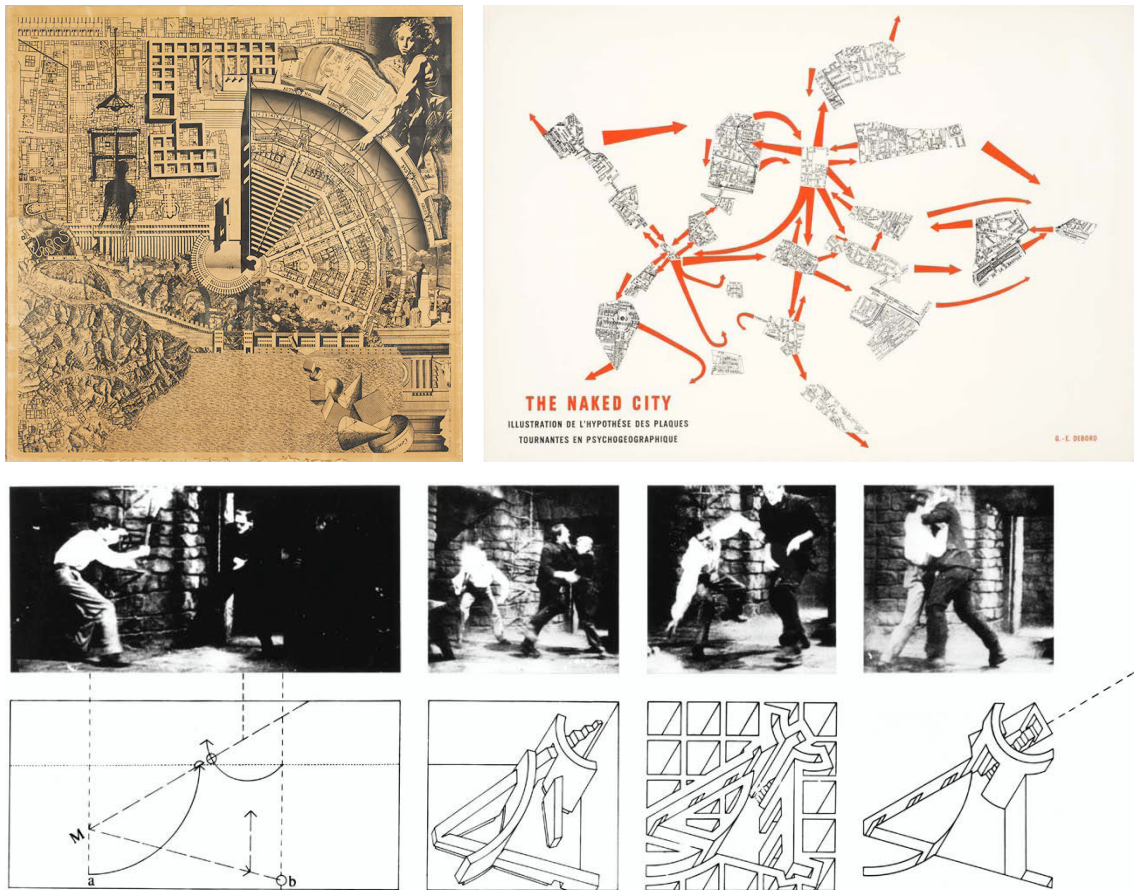


Figure 7. Top-left: 'The Analogous City,' by Aldo Rossi, top-right: 'The Naked City,' by Guy Debord and bottom: 'The Manhattan Transcripts,' by Bernard Tschumi.

¹⁵ Tschumi, Bernard, and Robert Young. *The Manhattan transcripts*. London: Academy Editions, 1994.

¹⁶ Geers, Kersten, Jelena Pančević, and Stefano Graziani. *The urban fact: A reference book on Aldo Rossi*. Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König, 2021.

¹⁷ McDonough, Thomas R. *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*. Cambridge: MIT, 2002.

Design Approach

The tools and mechanisms for a moderating architectural intervention will be initiated by focusing on locating the inherited values and curating discontinuities through the architectural elements of program and form.

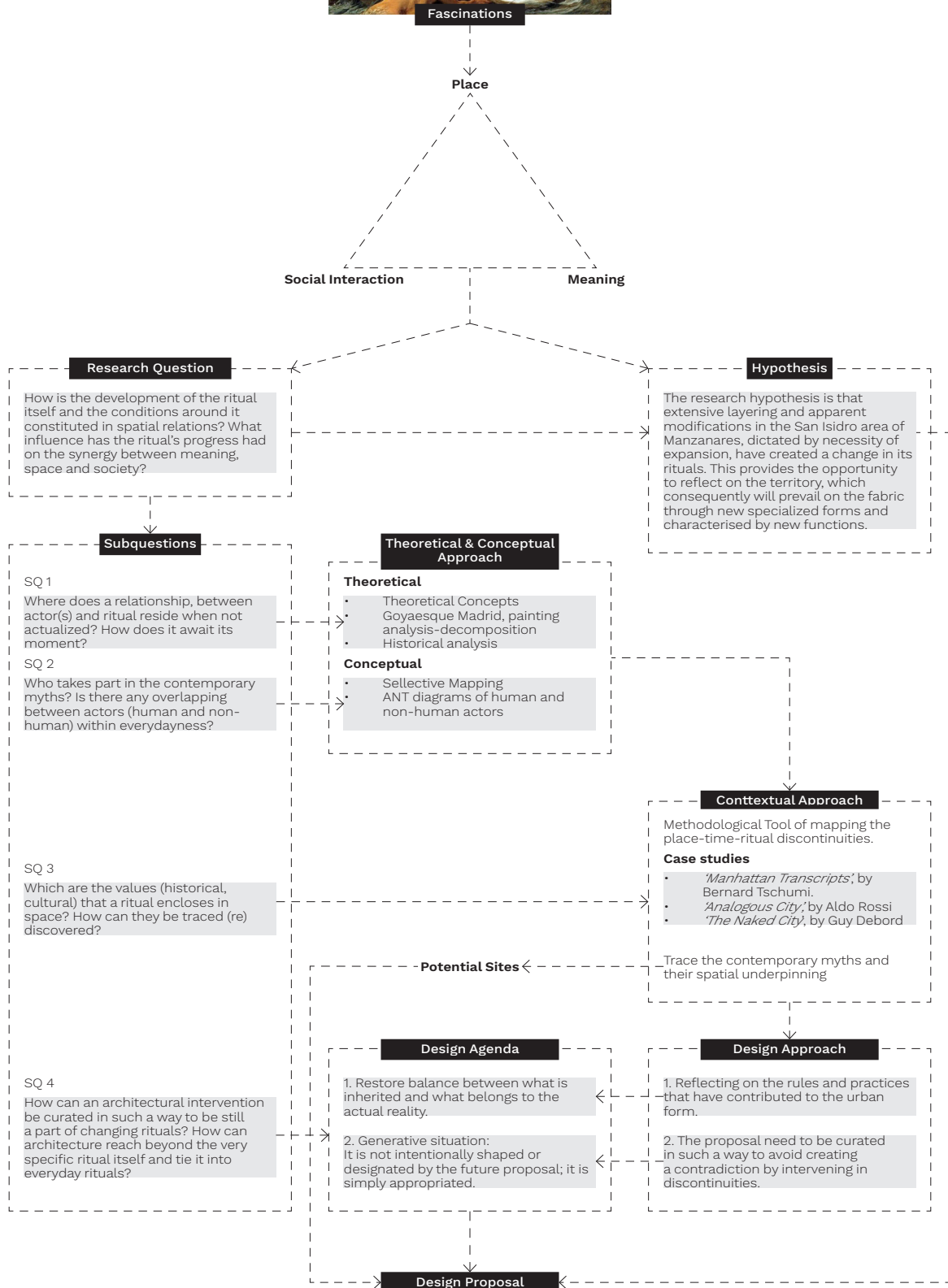
The design approach will have two main directions:

1. By considering the rules and practices that have contributed to the urban form, we may attempt, on a local level, to reflect between the parts and the whole, between what is inherited and what is part of the actual reality, more general urban reality.
2. The proposal needs to be curated in such a way as to avoid creating a contradiction by intervening in discontinuities in the historic fabric of the city. The existing situation needs to be seen as generative. It is not intentionally shaped or designed by the future proposal; it is appropriated.

As the intervention has a twofold aim, both the tracing and mapping of the contemporary myths and the regeneration of Madrid's endangered genius loci should be included.

The presented methodology will result in an in-depth analysis of systems shaping the city's everyday practices and perceptions through the ritual of San Isidro. On a territorial level, along the river zones, it will expose the hidden discontinuities under the accumulation of historical and cultural layers. Finally, the research will lead to the formulating of a range architectural interventions, over the the greater area, to reflect on current values over spatial and cultural fragilities.

Research Diagram



Argument & Significance

Issue

The pilgrimage to San Isidro had a leading role in the development of Madrid. In particular, it was one of the first attempts of the old city of Madrid to expand over Manzanares. As the growth exceeded the boundaries, the role of the triptych, old city, river and hermitage-spring began to fade away. However, this situation not only leads to the readjustment of the ritual to contemporary standards but also causes emerging unintended side effects related to the water and the old city as products of neglect, denial, and arrogance of not recognizing the layers of historical and cultural development. This has an impact on the cultural, economic, and functional totality along the banks of Manzanares. The ignorance does not limit itself to the zones across the river but can be noticed along Madrid and other cities, with similar development, worldwide.

Why-How

As we rediscovered the ritual as a means for recuperation and contemplation, tensions between collective memory, cultural and economic layers have been posed. An urgent need for symbiosis along the Manzanares' banks rises as we shift towards a new typological significance and role of the project in the progressive adaptation of the constituent to the broader system. Here, it surfaces the potential of a spatial intervention as a mediating tool between the conditions found in the river's landscape. This research, therefore, becomes critical.

Aim-Broader Significance

By gathering knowledge, from the theoretical framework and methodology, I foresee being able to start answering why and how the ritual constituting the everyday life and the conditions around them have evolved, and what influence it has had on the synergy between meaning, space and society. This will establish an understanding of a purposeful site for intervention. In doing so, I express my intention of activating (a specific part along) the triptych by reflecting on the typology of rules and practices that have contributed to the urban form. The project endeavours to restore the balance between the parts and the whole, between what is inherited and what belongs to the actual reality, more general urban; this through actions also in discontinuity, but above all calibrated on the local dimension. Understanding the potential, application, and tools along the ritualistic procession to San Isidro will create a narrative that can be adjusted and merged into any other city with similar discontinuation conditions.

The research aims to create smaller interventions along the San Isidro and Manzanares zones by giving clear attention to the relevance it should have in the current society of Madrid while embedding its cultural and historic values in a prominent position. The outcome will provide a new perspective on the possibilities in a context characterized by heavy stratifications and conspicuous adjustments, dictated by the necessity of expansion and development.

Annotated Bibliography

Myth-Ritual-Everydayness

Barthes, Roland. "Myth Today." Essay. In *Mythologies*. 109–59. New York: Hill & Wang Pub, 1993.

Barthes refers to as "myth" is the way a society interprets and gives significance to its surroundings. Anything may be a myth, according to Barthes, and he uses this logic in all of the instances in *Mythologies*. Author's version of ideology in "Myth Today" holds that it is not totally hidden and may be examined through cultural expressions. These manifestations—mythologies—present themselves as "natural" and transparent as a result. Barthes' goal in analysing mythology is to expose the ideological basis of the underlying myth of culture.

Interpretation and Representation

Colomina, Beatriz, and Joan Ockman. "Introduction: On Architecture, Production and Reproduction." Essay. In *Architectureproduction*. 7–23. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988.

Beatriz Colomina in this essay focuses on the interpretation of an artefact when its rhetorical mechanism and principles are revealed. Interpretation as an integral act of projecting. Looking further the connections between producer and maker, the item - product, and the observer or user and consumer or viewer.

Methodological tool of analysis

Evans, Robin. *Translations from drawing to building*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997.

Mapping-'Analagous City'

Geers, Kersten, Jelena Pančevac, and Stefano Graziani. *The urban fact: A reference book on Aldo Rossi*. Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König, 2021.

Configuration, long-short social event

Hillier, Bill. *Space is the machine: A configurational theory of architecture*. Cambridge: Space Syntax, 2007.

Hillier's approach is analytic rather than normative theory of architecture. Concept of configuration according to Hillier: spatial configurations are "non-discursive." Although we have an intuitive understanding of them, we lack the language to discuss them in an analytical manner. This issue is present in various types of cultural expression as well as building.

Constructed site

Kahn, Andrea, and Carol J. Burns. "On Site: Architecture Preoccupations." Essay. In *Drawing/Building/Text: Essays in Architectural Theory*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991.

Site, according to Carol Burn's theory, is the meaning of the position of an object, building, monument, or town - landscape, on the other hand, can not be understood by the human eye in a single glance, introducing the concepts of clear site and created site.

Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

In the book, real space—the social and physical domains in which we all live—and mental space—the space of the philosophers—are attempted to be reconciled. Henri Lefebvre traverses from philosophical and ideological concerns of space's significance to its experience in the daily lives of home and city along the course of his investigation.

McDonough, Thomas R. *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*. Cambridge: MIT, 2002.

Psarra, Sophia. *Architecture and narrative: The formation of space and cultural meaning*. London: Routledge, 2009.

Sophia Psarra emphasises on the fundamental qualities of artefacts and their connections to domains of knowledge - conceptual structures outside of morphological systems. And examination of the morphology of buildings and the ways in which territories sustain or encapsulate an extra-spatial system of semantic linkages and abstractions.

Rossi, Aldo. *The architecture of the city*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2007.

In this book Rossi reintroduces the elements of history and typology, but not as a nostalgia for narrative or reductive scientism. In this approach, he aims to bridge the conflicts of modernist utopia - literally "no place" - and humanist reality - constructed "some place" - by abstraction type from history to build a connection between place and social perception.

Sheppard, Lola, and Mason White. "States of Disassembly." In *Imminent Commons: The Expanded City*. Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism 2017. Actar D, Inc., 2017.

Speranza, Philip. "Time as a Medium: Early Work of Miralles." *Architectural Design* 86, no. 1 (2016): 60–65. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ad.2002>.

Tschumi, Bernard, and Robert Young. *The Manhattan transcripts*. London: Academy Editions, 1994.

The Manhattan Transcripts aim to record a reality-based architectural perspective. They do this by employing a certain framework that is shown in pictures that either 'witness' or 'direct' occurrences. By breaking down and rebuilding the traditional architectural components along alternative axes, the Transcripts attempt to provide an original view of architecture in which space, movement, and events exist independently of one another while also taking on new meanings.

Actor Network Theory

Spatial underpinning

Situationist approach

Mapping

History and typology

Layered and networked Territory

Notion of time

Mapping - Analysis of sequential images and rhythms

List of Illustrations

Figure 1. Hallé, Noël. *The Dispute of Minerva (Athena) and Neptune (Poseidon)*, 1711. Louvre. Paris, France.

Figure 2. *Parthenon* (n.d.). Photograph. Athens, Greece, 1978. Athens, Greece.

Figure 3. *The Erechtheum, western side, Acropolis* (n.d.). Photograph. Athens, Greece, 2004. Athens, Greece.

Figure 4. *The personification of peace, Roman copy of Greek original by Kephisodotos, Roman, Early Imperial, Julio-Claudian*.(nd.) Photograph. New York, 2000. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 5. Authors own work based on 'The meadow of San Isidro' by Francisco Goya, 1788.

Figure 6. Top-left: Rodighiero, Dario. "The Analogous City." Copy of Aldo Rossi et al. 1976 collage, 1976. Museum Of Anthropocene Technology.
Top-right: Debord, Guy. "The Naked City." Map, 1957.
Bottom: Bernard Tschumi Manhattan Transcript, 1970.