

Atlas of Thresholds

Spatial Narratives of Displacement

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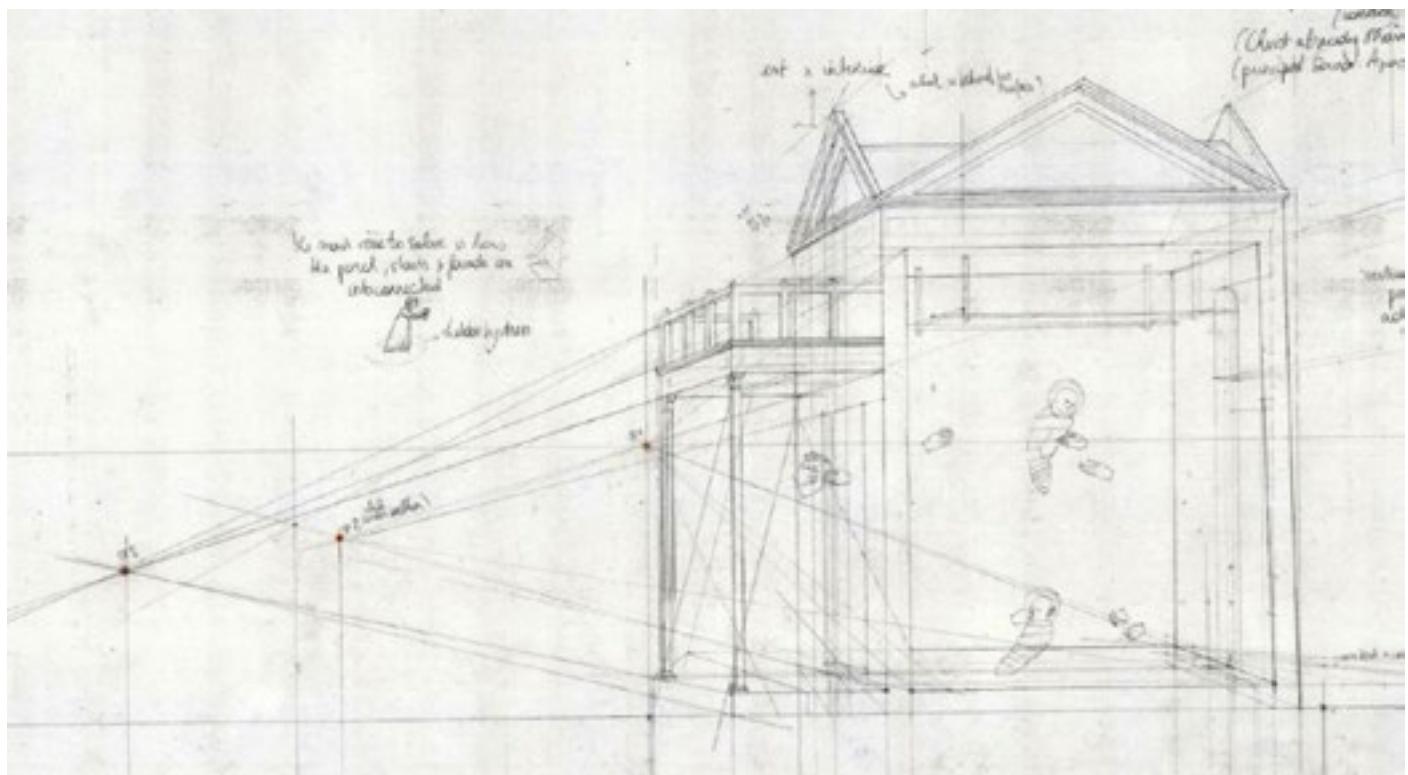
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Conference for Artistic and Architectural Research <CA²RE>

POSSIBILITY OF A VILLAGE

“Thinking and working on design of dense urban communities for tomorrow with a new social order and communicate this with appropriate tools.”

Frank Delmulle

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Abstract. How can we provide quality space, in a world evolving towards a man-centered planet (the Anthropocene), for 9 - 12 billion people by 2050? Can architecture play an important role in this necessary evolution?

In Architecture man continually seeks to attain the exact relationship between the rational and the irrational. The goal is “completeness”, always based on man himself as a poetic rational being. The most important motive in the search is the perception of the environment. The site, the shape, the technicity, the program are all interwoven in a unison oneness within the most ultimate possibilities, out of which emerges a fascinating beauty, growing stronger while gaining accuracy.

There exists an inextricable bond between “what” and “why” of Architecture and the development of a society. Through fascination for historical architectural phenomena as Abu Simbel, Chichén Itzá, Pienza, Tugendhat, Dantem and Passage, through extensive research of Ksar Tissergate, a historic village in southern Morocco and through experience with realised contemporary projects by Delmulle Delmulle Architects, we redesign a village in Flanders as an urban statement.

Many villages in Flanders have their own identity and are definitely an alternative to mitigate congestion and pollution in cities. However, villages suffer with depopulation and ultimately become desolated ghost towns. Human and social capital are an important factor in the exodus. The “active” population is looking for career in our capitalist “hurry” society and are therefore forced to live in cities. The inactive population remains behind in the villages or is dumped in nursing homes.

We redesign Elsegem as a village that can play again an important role in this new world. The implantation is situated in the centre of the village and is related to the church and ensures that there are compelling, useful, spatial qualitative, public spaces that binds the rest of the villages. This project is prospectivism and must be an effort to optimize the available space in a physical and human context.

Axonometric drawings of 5 squares around the Sint-Mauruschurch, a sentō, a multifunctional building, an automatic parking, a vertical farm, a liquid space, a mega solar disk and a proportion triangle are used as “interfaces”: through a kind of simplification, the drawing clarifies the relationship between humans and spaces. It is a search for new forms of communication that are specific to the discipline as an opportunity to explicate research accurately. It is a way how architecture can generate own insights, can use appropriate forms of knowledge and can experiment with own forms of discourse.

Keywords. prospectivism / social capital / human context / materiality / experience



Atlas of Thresholds

Spatial Narrative of Displacement

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Abstract. The continuous wars and conflicts combined with climate change, energy resources, and inequitable financial systems resulted in displaced populations spreading through different parts of the world, especially from the global south to the global north. According to UNCHR, 70.8 million people so far have been forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human right violations. Moreover, just in 2017, 4.4 million people sought protection abroad. These numbers prove that displacement is a more complex phenomenon that should be investigated concerning its political nature. To begin with, movement of displaced population across the international border(s) bring forth a more complex and comprehensible meaning to the concept of the border by the crossing act. Also, space can be lived, conceived, and perceived not only when it is fixed and stable, but also when it is movable and temporal. However, spatial strategies toward forced migration and refugees mostly seem to coincide with power relations. By exclusion or isolation from wider society, refugee narrative is built upon either on the humanitarian aids or the temporary solutions. The focal point of displacement and forced migration studies should be reconsidered because it is not isolated, uprooted or arrival environments that express and symbolize a person’s being and consciousness, but the common ground—including movement, journey and the stops along the way. Within this context, the research seeks to investigate the spatiality of forced movements and liminal phases by examining the mobility of border, its spatiotemporal constructions, and multiple formations throughout the journey of the refugee. Trying to expose political subjectivity of refugees and movement as a political act through spatial investigation, the time and space between arrival and uprooted living environment will be investigated. Critical mapping techniques and processes will be discussed to constitute a spatial narrative relying on both quantitative and qualitative data retrieved from Gaziantep and Izmir (cities of so-called transition country-Turkey), and they will be put into effect to represent the facts on the ground. At the intersection of migration, mapping, and border studies, there will be two additional parts of this research: an online platform to collect data and an “atlas” to contain that data. This process will include refugees and non-profit organization related to refugees. Undertaken by groups and networks, with feedback coming in from larger numbers of people, the result might be a process of creating a “common” territory from encountering difference/others. Hence, the participation of refugees is crucial in the research process. Even though atlases have been seen as a valuable source that provides information for the whole world, their content as maps, graphics, diagrams in various scales represents the world in terms of territorial divisions defined by nation-state borders. Thus, the main aim of the atlas is searching for “other” ways of documentation of displacement of beings/places/borders, which can also be understood as “suspended” in “betwixt and between” and trying to answer these questions: How data will be presented in relation with space, how a map/collection of maps can define a surface in interaction with its actors, and how multiple readings for the maps and their intended subjects can be produced?

Keywords. mapping, displacement, migration, border studies, liminality

