

Kinetic City

Research Seminar on Temporal Urbanism

GSD 09129

Harvard University, Spring 2013

Wednesday 3pm-6pm

40 Kirkland 1D

Instructor: Rahul Mehrotra

Teaching Assistant: Felipe Vera

Objectives and Outcomes

This research seminar class will explore the questions that surround the issue of temporal urbanism. The intention of the course is to expose students to the existing literature of the subject as well as to construct new ways and methods to map, understand and theorize how 'temporality' can inform current debates on urbanism more broadly.

Topics Covered

The topics that will be covered are: issues related to temporary urbanism, informality, questions of rapid urbanization in the global south. Issues of everyday urbanism, conservation, urbanism related to sacred sites among other related issues that might emerge in the course of the discussions and research explorations.

Course Format

The class will be formatted such that each student will pick a research project in the first three weeks of the class and this will be developed through discussion throughout the semester. The research projects will range from looking at settlement design as a result of, or in response to, emergencies – both man made as well as natural disasters. These would then range from refugee camps and responses to earthquakes and floods as well as celebratory and religious gatherings such as Haj and the Burning Man Festival, etc. The intent of this research will be to inform and analyze the *Kumbh Mela* – a religious festival that occurs in India every 12 years and involves creating a settlement for 55 days to house 11 million people. A team from the GSD that will participated in a documentation project during the J term (2013) will also form part of the class, and will work on this as theory case study project.

Evaluation

The students will be graded on their final term paper, final presentation (in the form of 20 minute / or 50 slide PPT) as well as participation in class. The final term paper will be 5000 words, double spaced, with the relevant visual material.

Themes

For the second decision each student should express interest in one of the 3 thematic areas proposed below. During the following weeks it is expected that all students propose and curate cases and readings in the selected topic.

1 Kumbh Mela / Sacredness

There are multiple cases of ephemeral cities that emerge with religious motifs. These are characterized by process of iteration governed by significant dates and rituals. Practically in all major religions of East and West religions, with the exception of Buddhism, are such cases in the form of massive pilgrimages with time and distance variables. The Kumbh Mela is one of these festivities and has the record in terms of assistants.

Some Suggested Cases (to be complemented with cases found by each group)

La Tirana - 250.000
Nuestra Señora de Andacollo 150.000
Lo Vázquez - 300.000
Essaouira Gnaoua - 500.000
Godavari Pushkaram - 34.000.000
Karbala - 14.000.000
Manila - 7.000.000
Hajj - 4.000.000
Attukal - 2.000.000

2 Celebratory

Massive music events are a never-ending source of ephemeral cities of short duration. From Woodstock, which was an ephemeral city virtually without planning, people come together for periods of time that normally range from one to 15 days bringing together thousands of people. These congregations are similar to those found in the Kumbh morphologies and process.

Some Suggested Cases (to be complemented with cases found by each group)

Glastonbury - 350.000
Roskilde 330.000
Werochter - 220.000
T in the Park (Scotland) - 255.000
Exit (Serbia) - 300.000
Coachella - 225.000
Sziget - 630.000
Pink Pop 180.000
Burning Man 50.000
Key Cities 840.000
Fuji Rock 40.000
Donington 37.000
Benicassim 96.000
Wireless 30.000

3 Disasters and Emergencies

According to figures published by the UN natural disaster and war displaced persons currently has 47 million people. These refugees are located in ephemeral cities that even though they differ from the other two categories in not having a limited duration, presented the same components and are seen as transitional settlements. Much of the elements reviewed at the Kumbh Mela are repeated in this type of settlement.

Some Suggested Cases (to be complemented with cases found by each group)

Cote d'Ivoire 1.5 mll.
Breidjing Camp 250,000
Buduburam refugee camp 12,000
Camps in the south of Chad 50,000
Dadaab refugee camps in North Eastern Kenya
Sri Lankan Tamils 560,000
Ras Ajdir refugee camp 30,000

Class Schedule

The class will meet on Wednesday between 3 and 6 pm in room 40 Kirkland 1C

Jan, 30	Introductory Class – Kinetic City Presentation, Kumbh Presentation
Feb, 6	Research Project Formulations
Feb, 13	Kumbh Detailed Presentation, Student Research Projects
Feb, 20	Seminar Discussions – Readings On Temporality
Feb, 27	Seminar Discussions - Readings On Preservation
March, 6	Seminar Discussion - Readings On Emergency Settlements
March, 13	Seminar Discussion - Readings On Sacredness
March, 20	Spring Break
March, 27	Student Presentations On Research Projects
April, 3	Seminar Discussions – Readings On Temporal Celebrations
April, 10	Guest Seminar To Present Work
April, 17	Final Student Presentations
April, 24	Final Student Presentations

Some Key Dates

Jan, 6	Each student should select one of the thematic areas for the research (Sacred, Emergency, Celebration)
Feb, 19	Team working on Kumbh Mela and Sacredness should upload the readings for the following week
Feb, 26	Team working on Emergency Settlements should upload the readings for the following week

Mar, 25 Team working on Temporal Celebrations should upload the readings for the following week

Readings for Discussion Sessions

The instructor will upload Readings for 1st, 3rd and 10th sessions to Isites. The readings for the discussion sessions will be proposed and curated by each team. It is responsibility of each team to send the scanned readings to the Teaching Assistant the week before the discussion session in order to be uploaded to the page of the course. Each team should propose four basic readings and two complementary readings might be provided by the instructor.

Feb, 20 Seminar Discussions – Readings On Temporality

Basic Readings

Negotiating the Static and Kinetic Cities

Mehrotra, Rahul. In *Urban imaginaries* edited by Andreas Huyssen

Five stages of squatting

Mehrotra, R. online at <http://encounteringurbanism.blogspot.com/2009/09/five-stages-of-squatting.html>.

Nabian, N. and Ratti, C., “Living Architectures” – manuscript, download available at <http://realtimocities.wikispaces.com/file/detail/W01-1+Nashid+Nabian+and+Carlo+Ratti-Living+Architectures.docx>.

Nabian, N. and Ratti, C.

“Virtual Space: The City to Come,” in: Frank Moss and Todd Machover (eds.), *Innovation: Perspectives for the 21st Century*, Madrid: BBVA, 2010, pp. 383-397. Online at <http://realtimocities.wikispaces.com/file/view/W01-3+Nashid+Nabian+and+Carlo+Ratti-City+To+Come.pdf>.

Ephemeral City Project Introduction

IRHA Symposium (Part 1,2,3)

<http://vimeo.com/28665573>

<http://vimeo.com/28665775>

<http://vimeo.com/28679752>

“In Time,”

Architecture Depends, Jeremy Till (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2009), 93–116.

Feb, 13 Kumbh Mela Readings
Readings to be posted by Instructor

Feb, 27 Seminar Discussions: Readings On Preservation

William Morris, “Manifesto of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings,” in *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 1996).

Rem Koolhaas, "Preservation is Overtaking Us," *Future Anterior* 1, No. 2 (Fall 2004): 1-3.

Maurice Halbwachs, excerpts from *The Collective Memory* [1950], trans. Francis Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper, 1980).

Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7-24.

- Mar, 6** **Seminar Discussion: Readings On Emergency Settlements**
To be proposed by the teams before Feb, 25
- Mar, 13** **Seminar Discussion: Readings On Sacredness**
To be proposed by the teams before Mar, 05
- Apr, 3** **Seminar Discussions: Readings On Temporal Celebrations**
To be proposed by the teams before Mar, 25
- April, 10** **Background Readings for Guest Speaker Lecture**
To be posted by instructor

Course Reference Readings

On Ephemerality

The Temporary City

Peter Bishop, Lesley Williams. March, 2012

Architecture and Portable Surroundings.

Echeverria, Pilar. Portable
Barcelona, Spain. Links International. 2006

Studies in Temporal Urbanism. The UrbanTick Experiment.

Neuhaus, Fabian (Ed.) 2011, 283 p.
Du vêtement à l'architecture : Une esthétique de l'éphémère

Specta(c)teurs éphémères

<http://irhanet.org/ephemeralcity/essays/essay-2/>

Ephemeral City Project Introduction

IRHA Symposium (Part 1)
<http://vimeo.com/28665573>

On Refugee Camps

The refugee camp: ecological disaster of today, metropolis of tomorrow

Author(s): Gans, Deborah; Jelacic, Matthew

Source: Architectural design, 2004 Mar.-Apr., v.74, n.2, p.82-86, maps, site plans, diagrams, axonometric drawings

An urbanity of exile: Palestinian refugee camps

Author(s): Sheikh Hassan Ismae'l

Source: A10: new European architecture, 2009 May-June, n.27, p.60-62, photographs, elevations, plans, maps, site plans, computer drawings

A simple toolkit improves Thai refugee housing

Author(s): Slavid, Ruth

Source: Architects' journal, 2007 Sept.27, v.226, p.36-38, photographs, illustrations, sketches

Short-term gains: working on temporary structures allows architects to develop ideas that go beyond the conventional

Author(s): Beames, Simon

Source: RIBA journal, 2007 Aug., v.114, n.8, p.16, portraits

Under cover: shelter and construction in an East African refugee camp

Author(s): Manfield, Peter

Source: Scroope: Cambridge architecture journal, 2000-2001, n.12, p.100-105, photographs, drawings, sketches, details, maps

Record invites designers to redefine the refugee experience

Author(s): Sokol, David

Source: Architectural record, 2008 Oct., v.196, n.10, p.[94]-[99], illustrations, maps, site plans, computer drawings

Afghan refugee housing

Detail Only Available. By: Scherrer, Olivier. Mimar: architecture in development, 1990 Mar., v.10, no.1(34), p.[42]-49. (journal article) (English)

Evolving approaches to planning and management of refugee settlements: the Tanzanian experience

Author(s): Armstrong, Allen

Source: Ekistics, 1990 May-Aug., v.57, no.342-343, p.195-204, elevation, sketch, maps, plans, photographs, bibliography

Displacement: the Realpolitik of Utopia

Author(s): Gans, Deborah; Jelacic, Matthew

Source: Perspecta, 2003, n.34, p.118-125, photographs, illustrations

**Developing humanitarian guidelines for transitional settlement:
shelterproject.org**

Source: Scroope: Cambridge architectural journal, 2003, n.15, p.33-35,
photographs, models

**Safe haven: disasters and war have left millions homeless around the
world - can architects help?**

Author(s): Lang Ho, Cathy

Source: Architecture, 2002 Nov., v.91, n.11, p.80-83, photographs, illustrations,
sections, plans, diagrams, computer drawings

Managing the Undesirables

Michel Agier

Publisher: Polity; 1 edition (February 2, 2011)

**Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps (The
Ethnography of Political Violence)**

Julie Peteet (Author)

Publisher: University of Pennsylvania Press (July 25, 2009)

Holy metamorphosis! the incremental urbanism of the Hindu temple

Bharne, Vinayak

Marg, 2012 Mar., v.63, n.3, p.30-43, photographs, plans, site plans

Other Related Cases

Boxpark, The world's first temporary shopping mall

<http://www.boxpark.co.uk>

<http://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/boxpark-the-worlds-first-temporary-shopping-mall-6365331.html><http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/7302>

On Government

Temporary Urbanism Initiative

The district of Columbia

<http://planning.dc.gov/DC/Planning/Across+the+City/Other+Citywide+Initiatives/Temporary+Urbanism+Initiative>

On the Occupy Movement

Controversy as Urbanism, Andres Jaque

<http://www.domusweb.it/en/op-ed/15m-and-yes-we-camp-controversy-as-urbanism/>

Other Related Links

<http://thesocietypages.org/citings/2012/05/02/utopias-and-temporary-urbanism/>

<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/design/2012/05/rise-temporary-city/1865/>

<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/topics/temporary-urbanism/>
<http://www.udg.org.uk/events/temporary-urbanism>
<http://yuriartibise.com/blog/temporary-urbanism-incubating-new-ideas-for-city-living/>
<http://www.reai.harvard.edu/temporary-urbanism>
<http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/7302>
<http://jamesstarky.blogspot.com/p/sheffields-temporal-urbanism.html>