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 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 ml.
- 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, 3st and 10th sessions to Isites. The readings for the discussion sessions will be proposed and curated by each team. 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


Ephemeral City Project Introduction
IRHA Symposium (Part 1,2,3)
http://vimeo.com/28665573
http://vimeo.com/28665775
http://vimeo.com/28679752

“In Time,”

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

Feb, 27 Seminar Discussions: Readings On Preservation


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.*  

*Studies in Temporal Urbanism. The UrbanTick Experiment.*  
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

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

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

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/