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# Digital-Cultural Ecology and the Medium-Sized City

01-03 April 2016

## Abstract Submission Form

- 1. Paper / Proposal Title:** LX Factory – A Diverse, Open and Stigmergic Place by Design
- 2. Format:** Visual Essay
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- 5. University or Company Affiliation:** IADE-U – Laureate International Universities

### **6. Abstract (300 words):**

LX Factory is an old industrial site located at Alcântara, a borough in the west side of Lisboa, Portugal. In 2007, its 23 000 sqm were refurbished and filled with more than 200 creative companies, ranging from design to arts, architecture, film and video editing, performing arts, etc. LX Factory is now the most important creative hub in the city and positive case-study of the new paradigm of multidisciplinary spaces in the world. Being a Ph.D student on Design at IADE and the founder of the first coworking space in the country (Coworlisboa, 2010), I decided to investigate and research WHY all the wayfinding systems the managing company has tried to install (and impose) didn't work. Most of the time, the resident community just tag, overwrites, alter or even damage any attempt to "organize and inform" the visitors along the 23 000 sqm and its 3 main building. One "good side effect" is that people gets lost thus having to explore the whole complex in a much more natural way.

I was also interested in establish possible similarities with the community at Coworlisboa. It seemed obvious that some kind of colective behaviour was happening, with no one in charge and apparently no common goal. Eventually I got into the term Stigmergy<sup>1</sup>, a phenomenon mostly studied in entomology. But what was more intriguing to me was that this supposed colective and auto-organized behaviour was and still is perfectly

accepted and even defended. This visual essay might point these processes could be replicated in the resolution of other spaces/users designs.

<sup>1</sup> P.-P. Grassé 1959, in *Insectes Sociaux* VI. 62, from Gk. *stigm-oi* pricking + *erg-on* work; see -y3. ] The process by which the results of an insect's activity act as a stimulus to further activity.

## 7. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

I am designer graduated at IADE-U where I was also awarded a Master on Visual Culture and Photographic Studies. I currently study on the Doctoral Program on Design. I teach Communication Design; Design of the Photographic Image; and Photography Tendencies. I am the founder of the first and biggest coworking space in Portugal, LX Factory, which is the most important creative hub in the country. Previously I was a Design Director for several companies in Portugal, Spain and Germany, and was the editor of portuguese version of Computer Arts Magazine for its six first issues. In addition, I am a founding member of of CAIS (a homeless NGO with a monthly magazine) and Banco Alimentar (Food Banking) among other projects.

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