

## **Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?**

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Urban abandoned structures as framework for housing development

- **Format:**

Written paper / verbal presentation

- **Author(s) Name:**

ABENIA Tiphaine

- **University or Company Affiliation:**

Université de Montréal, Québec, CANADA

Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Toulouse, FRANCE

- **Abstract (300 words):**

This phenomenon of the abandonment of entire city fragments can be seen in most major cities today. With long periods of abandonment, these architectures do not belong to conventional cycles of regeneration; they remain unconsidered in major urban projects and act as parasites to urban planning endeavours. Instead of considering these structures as pathological objects, we call into question their capacity to renew the urban fabric: to what extent could abandoned urban structures play a role in the housing crisis faced in some cities?

The presentation proposes to investigate the potential of abandoned large urban structures in the making of the contemporary city. Specifically, it focuses on the possibility for those structures to become physical and mental framework for housing development. The concept of 'structure', theorised in the late 1960s (H. Hertzberger, A. Rossi), is updated to current issues. Indeed, nowadays it is often less a question of designing new structures than that of reading the potential of existing ones. As a result,

the distinction of support and infill levels in housing design (N.J Habraken) reaches a particular relevance when applied to abandoned structures.

Three levels of analysis will be explored in this presentation (illustrated by case study examples):

1. The structure as a proto-architecture: a concrete skeleton offering a preexisting material framework. This framework is seen as a guide, as an organisational basis for the design process. It incurs less costs and a greater speed for the project implementation.

2. The structure as a collective palimpsest: a site that encapsulates -despite its abandonment- histories and myths. It forms the repositories of a community or a social group's living memory.

3. The structure as a catalyst for interpretations: an open grid in which a multiplicity of projects and solutions can be developed in parallel, like an "exquisite corpse".

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Tiphaine Abenia is a french architect and civil engineer. She is working, since September 2014, on a Ph.D within the Ph.D. Program in Architecture of the University of Montréal. Her PhD research project is under a cotutelle agreement between Canada (University of Montreal – Laboratory LEAP) and France (ENSA Toulouse - laboratory LRA), she is working under the joint direction of Jean-Pierre Chupin and Daniel Estevez.

Tiphaine graduated in civil engineering from the Institut National des Sciences Appliquées de Toulouse (INSA) in 2011. In 2013, she obtained her master degree in architecture from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture of Toulouse. She dedicated her master degree project in architecture to an extensive feasibility study for the rehabilitation of an emblematic abandoned building of Buenos Aires: *El Elefante Blanco*. In 2014, Tiphaine was laureate of the European architecture competition "Talent de demain" with her graduation project (Architecture Biennale Bordeaux).

Beneficiary of a 3-year PhD contract granted by the french Ministry of Culture, she is pursuing her PhD research, focusing on the potential of abandoned large urban structures. Her work aims to develop a classification system for large urban structures based on their potentials for the contemporary city.