CRITICAL PRACTICE IN AN AGE OF COMPLEXITY - AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CRITIQUE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

• Paper / Proposal Title:
City as Mediation

• Format:
Written paper + verbal presentation with slides and videos during presentation
Additional video screening available

• Author(s) Name:
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• University or Company Affiliation:
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• Abstract (300 words):
Contemporary urban territories oblige us to look at the city with different eyes to those of twentieth century modernity. The contemporary project calls for work with movement, with multiple points of view, with large changes of scale and with the unpredictable. They invite us to invent new conceptual tools and multidisciplinary representations, bringing together time and space, the intentional and the accidental, built form and social functions. If cinema doesn’t hesitate to conflate heterogeneous facts in order to represent life, can it not then contribute, with the technological arts, to transforming architectural design into an open-ended process, engaging an intimate bond with society?

Installations and projects on public space, medialabAU’s spatial and media explorations are in the tradition of the conceptualization of architecture in its relationship to the city, the landscape and the territory, explorations conducted through work on drawings and images. For 15 years, the team has explored a vast kaleidoscope of techniques in the
digital arts in order to further explore the collective unconscious of new forms of architecture, detecting their signals and traces in light, sound, in fleeting moments, in events and in memories. Taking over video in order to create space means exploring the relationship between the moving image and architecture, observing in the tradition of these exchanges the perpetual evolution of contemporary space. Adopting this perspective, I will present our work by highlighting three working methods developed by the laboratory: the moving collage, the interactive landscape and the video/construction. If they assume multiple functions in the different productions - sometimes becoming interpretations of urban space, artworks and landscapes, sometimes becoming the tools of the architectural project and finally becoming architecture itself - the three techniques are a tireless attempt to create a territory whereby the environment and human activity become impossible to dissociate from the apprehension of space.

We teach this method in our studio. In the pedagogical context (Master's program in architecture at UdeM) our approach seeks to open new sensibilities to the public sphere, to stimulate the imagination on the territory of the common, to discover new forms of being together. We seek to expand (and/or modify) the territory of the «sensible» following Jacques Rancière for whom the political importance of art resides in its potential of openings previously closed sensibilities. We try to position the architecture in the field of the Félix Guattari’s ecosophy seeking to build heterogeneous space with students.

www.medialabAU.umontreal.ca

Irena Latek - Video-construction - installations *Flux* and *Intervals*
*Intervales* audiovisual installation, 9 screens projection, video 40 minutes,
Cinémathèque québécoise, Montréal, Dec 3, 2015 – Feb 7 2016
https://youtu.be/SZ2CUwNSyLo
*FLUX*, installation immersive audiovisuelle, projection sur l’écran Moebius, vidéo numérique, 21 minutes. CEUM, Montréal, 28 janvier -15 mars 2015
https://vimeo.com/121259393

students work
*Effingō*, vidéo 14’ 36”, réalisée par Alexis Charbonneau et Sophie Duval
https://vimeo.com/216171081/11c1d88f15
*Villes effilées*, vidéo 10’ 41”, réalisée par Othmane Laraki et Maud Thery
https://vimeo.com/216227692/ef009f389c

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

Irena Latek, Canadian architect and artist, is professor at the school of Architecture of l’*Université de Montréal*, director of the laboratory of research-creation «*medialabAU* ». Architect graduated from the Polytechnic School of Warsaw, director of the Research Institute for the History of Architecture (Canadian Centre for Architecture, *Université de Montréal* and the University McGill) from 1997 to 2000, she directed the publication *Peter Collins et l’histoire critique de l’architecture moderne*, Peter Collins and the Critical
History of Modern Architecture (IRHA, 2002). Irena Latek now situates her research at the junction of architecture and the numerical arts. Founding Member of the Institute Art Culture Technologie of l’Université de Montréal, the projects she has realised with the «medialabAU» team in video, or through interactive interfaces, take the form of installations questioning contemporary urbanities. She developed the idea of the «collage mouvant», an original method for the conception of architecture and the interpretation of space through video. Her work has been exhibited in Canada, Spain, Germany and France; notably she presented monographic exhibitions: Intervalles, Montreal, Cinémathèque québécoise, 2015-2016, Flux, Montreal, Centre d’Exposition, UdeM, 2015, Trans-porters Ecotopia-Utopia, Montréal au Centre d’Exposition, UdeM, 2009, Ubiquités publiques Desynchronized Public Spaces présenté, Montréal, SAT, 2005, Espaces mouvants Soft Public Spaces, Montréal, SAT, 2003 and Barcelona, Galerie Ras. 2004

Irena Latek presents her work in numerous articles and recently published monographic book. His work has been the subject of several articles and press reviews. Her most recent publications:

Irena Latek, Flux et Intervalles - Irena Latek, Antheism-BookArt, Montreal, 2017
