• Paper / Proposal Title:
From Flats to Policies: breaking the boundaries between disciplines - a joint ‘studio’ for architecture and planning students

• Author(s) Name:
Manuela Madeddu, Johanna Muszbek

• University or Company Affiliation:
University of Liverpool

• Abstract (300 words):
Urban and architectural design are interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary undertakings, drawing on different branches of knowledge and effectively combining approaches (from different disciplines) to problem-solve. Only by adhering to the principle of ‘interdisciplinarity’ can design interventions tackle the challenges of climate risk, global inequalities and securing sustainable economic futures. Partial views of urban processes are gained from separate disciplinary perspectives, and these do not provide the platform on which to assess and build required transformations. The providers of built environment education have a responsibility to raise awareness of the vital contributions made by other disciplines as well as generate methodologies that integrate a multi-scalar understanding of cities.

The Departments of Architecture and Planning at the University of Liverpool in London spent two years building an ‘interdisciplinary bridge’ via a joint design studio, addressing two problems in design intervention: first, the lack of broader design appreciation in UK planning schools (BBBBC, 2020) with resulting ‘space-less’ solutions (Arefi and Triantafillou, 2005); and second, the superficial treatment of urban context in architecture schools, leading to ‘place-less’ visions (Shuman, 2006). Planning and architecture students were brought together, given a common brief and tasked to jointly respond to key challenges: how future automation might reshape Canary Wharf’s economy and affect its urban
spaces; and how densification of a north London suburb, in response to the housing crisis, might be successfully realised. The aim was not only to formulate ‘good solutions’ but also reach a shared understanding of the contribution made by another discipline and by combined, multidisciplinary working: to understand how the ‘whole’ (of urban interventions) is constructed from more than the sum of separate parts. This presentation reflects on the experience of the studios and makes a case to deliver learning environments in which multidisciplinary and co-produced interventions could become the goal of future planning.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):
Manuela Madeddu is Senior Lecturer in Urban Design at the University of Liverpool. She joined Liverpool in August 2018 after 11 years at London South Bank University. Prior to that, she was a researcher at Politecnico di Torino (Italy) for five years. She qualified as an architect at the Politecnico di Torino and later completed a PhD in Town Planning and Local Development at the same university. Her PhD research focused on public engagement in pursuit of sustainable development through the UK planning system. This involved spending a year in the UK, studying at UCL Bartlett School of Planning. She also holds a Masters degree in Cultural Heritage Management from the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa (Italy). She is registered with the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and has practised as an architect and urban designer in Italy and the UK, working on building and interior design, master planning and design codes. She has extensive teaching experience, especially in the field of urban design. Her research focuses on cultural aspects of urban design and urban regulation: a first book addressing this topic, Feng Shui and the City, will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2021.

Johanna Muszbek received MSc in Advanced Architectural Design, Columbia University, USA, 2010 as a Fulbright Grantee, M.Arch Moholy-Nagy University of Arts and Design, Budapest, Hungary, 2006. She is an architect and landscape architect, currently a Lecturer in Architecture at the University of Liverpool. Johanna practiced architecture in New York City until 2015, where she led projects for Diller Scofidio + Renfro and Steven Holl Architects. She participated in projects such as the Ocean Museum in Biarritz, and the Millennium Park in Budapest, recipient of Europa Nostra Award. Her work has been exhibited at the Royal Institute of British Architects in London amongst others. She received the Golden Cross State Award of the Hungarian Republic. She was curator of Project Village, for Hello Wood, which received the Architizer’s Educational Program of the year in 2016. She is the co-founder of the Housing Research Group at the Liverpool Architecture School, currently leading the How do we Live? London-Santiago-Shanghai a collaborative research and pedagogic programme on housing. The project was exhibited in the 13th International Sao Paolo Biennale 2019, and has been invited to the Venice Biennale 2020.