ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Learning from the European Metropolitan City in Absence

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• Abstract (300 words):
Less than one week before the TU Delft Bachelor course in Architecture Foundations 4 started, the Covid 19 virus deprived us from taking our 330 sophomore students abroad to experience the European Metropolis for one week, to learn how to read, understand and experience the built and lived city, to witness its complexity and to get a glimpse of its soul.

Seven booked trips had to be cancelled and the well prepared course, that was to be taught by 25 teachers in seminar groups, had to be converted into a full online version instantly.

The challenging question became if and how it was possible to approximate the original main learning objective of ‘city immersion’: the sensorial experience of place, scale, monuments, public life, backsides, culture, food, nightlife and so on.

An interesting kaleidoscope of pedagogies, offering alternatives to learn from the live experience of the city were developed, ranging from ‘get as close to the real’, ‘look through the eyes of a specific city researcher,’ ‘explore ways of imagination’, up to the
more basic, ‘start looking from your home differently’. In all of those cases internet proved to be a great medium. First, it allows to visit the city virtually. Secondly, it could be used as a rich and endless source to consult and work with information about the city. Finally, internet offered the possibility to exchange findings with fellow students and even a worldwide audience.

This contribution will evaluate alternative and creative ways to experience the city online by analyzing different studio approaches along with an exploration of theoretical notions to ‘learn from the city in absence’.

We are deeply convinced that a virtual excursion can never replace a real one, but, at least, we have expanded the education-toolkit with explorative creative forms of research, education and final outcomes.

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

Dr. Ir. Willemijn Wilms Floet (1962) is assistant professor at the Delft University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture, Chair of Methods and Analysis. She was a practicing architect 1988-2001; is teaching and researching at the TU Delft since 1990. She obtained a joint PhD degree Villard d’Honnecourt from Venice (IUAV) in 2012 and Delft (TU) 2014, for her research on the architectural secrets of the Dutch ‘Hofje’ (courtyard housing).

For years, her research, Bachelor and Master education programs have focused on knowledge-based creative analysis methods to study and in-forming design, in which the tools and media of architecture are explored. As coordinator and developer of the BSc Foundation course series 3 and 4, she is working on pedagogies for designerly ways of knowing in which the perspectives of architecture, urbanism, landscape and history are integrated.