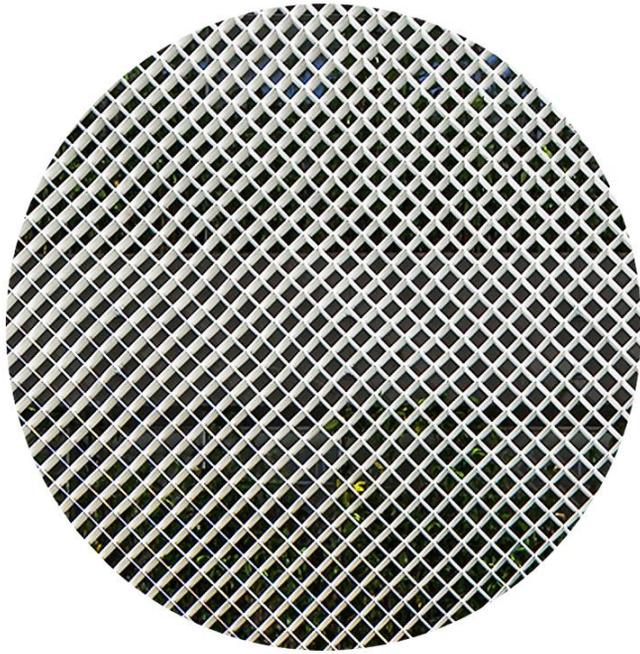


THE WALL, THE SCREEN, THE ARCHITECT
Negotiating Spatial Limits



Spatial limits and social functions

Making architecture means structuring a habitus or intervening into a habitus of people. In architecture spaces are defined by using simple elements, like walls, which deliver complex social functions: they delimit, exclude or include subjects or social groups. Setting a wall in place means ordering who and what is placed in each one of its two sides. But the very form of the wall, the articulation, the materiality and the permeability of its constitutive parts, are not more nor less than the negotiating tools in the making of the material limits that are shaping our everyday life.

The architect while working in his/her studio, is assigned with understanding what are the social effects of the spatial order that he or she sets in motion through design. What we simply call 'inside' or 'outside', our cognitive perception of the binary dialog between 'inside' and 'outside' are not just spatial properties but they imply social connotations for those included or excluded by the respective spatial/design arrangements. The practice of architecture thus implies powerful actions in reality and carries the responsibility of working in tandem with culture: it can follow or denounce it. The formation of the architect should prepare him/her for understanding the social implications of design outcomes.

Plural structures: improvisation and negotiation

While technologies have always (historically) enriched design processes and transformed the architectural profession by providing designers with new possibilities of formulation, with new tools for material construction and new geometric techniques, with facilitating combinations and the creation and materialization of complex shapes, structures and objects, we tend to forget a basic principle: architecture is not a self-oriented process, it is not an end to itself.

Architecture is rather a means, a process in enabling people to live, work, enjoy. Architecture is a material and habitual process that facilitates people to be alone, together or both things at the same time. Sophisticated design delivers plural structures, meaning structures that can be activated in various ways through the spontaneous and improvised everyday lives of people where limits and borders can be negotiated and changed through the patterns of their social co-existence in space.

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Designing the Wall, the Screen

The studio will focus firstly on the social and cultural aspects of some fundamental steps in the design process and, secondly will proceed in implementing in full scale the delivered design outcomes.

What kind of elements usually defines spaces? The contouring lines on a tracing paper or on an electronic screen are simple or complex geometrical projections. They will be transformed through materials (and their respective production processes) and technical skills into socially defined structures for use like walls, fences, limits on a pavement.

While the drawn design element can be solid or dotted on the tracing paper/the screen it will become a thick or a perforated wall when materialized in space; it will be a transparent glass panel or a heavy compact stone wall; it will enable, impede or provide partial views for people inside to look outside and vice versa. Who are the people provided the prospect to see but not be seen?

Sharing discussions on various examples of types of buildings such as the house and the prison, emblematic modern built manifestos such as the E1027 (1929) by Eileen Gray and the Müller House (1930) by Adolf Loos and vernacular solutions on material delimitations ('trellis' or the 'mesandria' séparée), students will be asked to design a wall providing a) contextual references i.e. where the wall sits, what it separates or unites and how, what social circumstances are considered its context and b) geometrical configurations and material variations as patterns of social negotiations i.e. how the organization of movement and views, the functions of the wall can work as regulators of relationships between the subjects residing in both its sides.

Studio program

[*Day 1 \(Wednesday April 11\):*](#)

[*Introduction of the concept / Collecting examples*](#)

[*Day 2 \(Thursday April 12\):*](#)

[*The concepts of visibility/permeability/isovist*](#)

[*Day 3 \(Friday, April 13\):*](#)

[*Analysis of examples / Formal and cultural aspects*](#)

[*Day 4 \(Saturday, April 14\):*](#)

[*Screen Design*](#)

[*Day 5 \(Sunday, April 15\):*](#)

[*Screen Design / variations*](#)

[*Day 6 \(Monday, April 16\):*](#)

[*Screen Design / combined variations*](#)

[*Day 7 \(Tuesday, April 17\):*](#)

[*Laser cutter process, printing posters, photos*](#)

[*Day 8 \(Wednesday, April 18\):*](#)

[*Exhibition*](#)