

# Laboratoire Architecture Anthropologie

Laboratory of Architecture and Anthropology

Ecole nationale d'Architecture de Paris la Villette

<http://www.laa.archi.fr>

The aim of the Laboratory of Architecture and Anthropology is to investigate the correspondence between place and collective identity, a potent binomial that has become a problematic formula, which needs to be aggressively redressed. In the context of globalization, can we still insist that different places prefigure specific cultural identities?

## Scientific project

Or that today distinct identities call for particular places? Our anthropological practice takes on the city as a whole, considering its real, imaginary, spatial, and temporal dimensions from an interdisciplinary perspective. We approach the city as a complex of realities that span time and space and are continuously re-imagined, projected, rejected, and dreamed about by the people who live there. Urban and architectural forms are therefore the central object of LAA's analysis.

## Axes

- 1/ Representing Contemporary Worlds: Cities and Architectures in the Face of Globalization, coordinated by Alessia de Biase
- 2/ Time in Contemporary Cities, organized by Alain Guez
- 3/ New Methods for Research/ Methodology as a Scientific Subject, coordinated by Cristina Rossi

## Courant research Slice of city



A Slice of the City (Tranche de ville) is a methodology that LAA first implemented in 2005, while collaborating with APUR (Parisian urbanism atelier) on ways to define new indicators that would measure the quality of life in Paris. In this case, classical and functional indicators as well as the historical and administrative limits of neighborhoods were disregarded in favor of privileging

the residents' perception and use of the spaces in which they live. As a result, new criteria and cartographies that describe the quality of urban life began to emerge. Our team now uses this method to investigate other regional territories and has applied this approach to Mexico City, Salvador de Bahia, and London. Our findings are intended to play an important role in political decisions and evaluating city planning, as well as serve as a means to engage fundamental questions of urban life: What forces are at work in creating a suburb? What forces create a neighborhood? What, in the end, is a city made of?

## Courant research Re-enchantment of Banlieue



The aim of this interdisciplinary research is to understand the relationship between identity and place in the context of several successive building demolitions that mark categorically the process of urban renewal and development in "the 4000 south" of La Courneuve, a suburb of Paris. Here we are interested in the impact of past and future demolitions on the "urban imaginary".

How has the policy of demolition affected the memory and daily life of the residents? And what image of the city are promoters, for whom the demolitions are an essential step, cultivating? We are thus discovering La Courneuve through the process of dramatic physical transformation as it appears in narratives created by the media, politicians, and the people living and working in this complex area. For this project, we have developed a web site that acts as a place of sedimentation for what has become an unconventional history made of fragments, bits of memory, misunderstandings, paradoxes, crises, and love.

## Courant research Imagined Landscapes, constructed landscapes



This project analyzes the contemporary imaginary of the Alps. In the context of research at LAA we consider the Alps as a paradox: a region valorized by outsiders as a model natural, archaic, and elegiac environment, when, in fact, it is developed and heavily constructed, promoted to be sold and consumed, according to urban priorities. Therefore, we focused our research on the urban

and architectural dimension of this landscape. The hypothesis at the base of this work is that only a re-composition of images of the Alps, as an anthropological and geographical place, can clarify the present logic of this territory, a territory between local and global dimensions, and between everyday experience and its consequences on physical space. The way we look at mountain determines the way we act on the landscape.

## Research

2007-2008/ Trames agricoles, trames urbaines. Construction du plan territorial de Nansha dans le Delta de la rivière des Perles (Canton- Hongkong, Chine)

2007-2009/ Rayonnements. Essai de redéfinition de territoires culturels en Ile-de-France

2006-2008/ Les réenchantements de La Courneuve. De l'ancienne cité des 4000 sud aux futurs quartiers de la Tour et Les Clos

2005-2007/ Paysages imaginés et paysages construits. Enquête d'un imaginaire contemporain des Alpes

2005-2009/ Tranche de ville

2005-2009/ Autour de Ikea : mondialisation de l'imaginaire de l'habiter

## Colloquia

2003/ "Identités et Territoire"

2004/ "L'architecture, le site, le monde"

2007/ "L'Habiter dans sa poétique première", Cerisy-la-Salle

2009/ "Donner lieu au monde, la poétique de l'habiter.", Cerisy-la-Salle

## Courses

Séminaire "Architecture et ville face à la mondialisation"  
Ecole nationale supérieure d'architecture de Paris Belleville, sous la direction d'Alessia De Biase

Séminaire "L'Habiter dans sa poétique première"  
Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, sous la direction d'Augustin Berque, Philippe Bonnin et Alessia de Biase

## Publications

2007/ *L'espace Anthropologique. L'abécédaire anthropologique de l'architecture et de la ville.* Sous la direction de Alessia de Biase et Philippe Bonnin, Cahiers de la recherche architecturale et urbaine, n. 20-21, mars 2007

2006/ *Chez nous. Territoires et identités dans les mondes contemporains.* Sous la direction de Alessia de Biase et Cristina Rossi, Editions de la Villette, Collection Etudes et recherches

2006/ *Corpos e Cenarios urbanos.* Sous la direction de Henri Pierre Jeudy et Paola Berenstein-Jacques, EDUFBA, Salvador

2006/ *Corps et décors urbains* Sous la direction de Paola Berenstein-Jacques et Henri-Pierre Jeudy, L'Harmattan

2008/ *L'habiter dans sa poétique première.* Sous la direction de Alessia De Biase, Augustin Berque et Philippe Bonnin, Editions Donner Lieu

2008/ *L'espace en commun* Sous la direction de Alessia De Biase et Monica Coralli, L'Harmattan

**Research scholars :**  
Alessia de Biase/ Architect, Anthropologist (PhD)  
Christelle Robin/ Psychologist, sociologist (PhD)  
Olivier Boucheron/ architect  
Monica Coralli/ architect, city planner, geographer (PhD)  
Benoîte Decup-Pannier/ sociologist (PhD)  
Valérie Foucher-Dufoix/ political scientist (PhD)

Alain Guez/ architect, urbanist (PhD)  
Luis Lopez/ sociologist (PhD)  
Jean-Paul Loubes/ Architect, anthropologist (PhD)  
Nadja Monnet/ ethnologist  
Sandra Parvu/ architect, urbanist  
Cristina Rossi/ anthropologist (PhD)  
Alice Sotgia/ Historian, city planner (PhD)  
Virginie Thomas/ architect  
Piero Zanini/ Architect  
Liang Zhang/ architect (PhD)

**Research Partners :**  
Armin Linke/ cineast  
Renaldi Renato/ sound designer  
Eric Lacasa/ sound designer  
Thierry Lafont/ choregraph

**Doctoral Students :**  
Etienne Delprat/ architect  
Giulia Mensitieri/ anthropologist  
Nava Meron/ architect  
Maria Anita Palumbo/ anthropologist  
Monique Sanchez Marques/ architect

**Network :**  
L.I.E.U/ Logique Identités Urbanité Espaces (Coordinator laboratory)

**Financial Partners :**  
Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication  
BRAUP/ Bureau de la Recherche Architecturale, Urbaine et Paysagère  
PUCA, Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Durable development and territory aménagement  
APUR, Atelier Parisien d'URbanisme

## Team