

UPDATING THE VISUAL LEXICON

Venice to Berlin

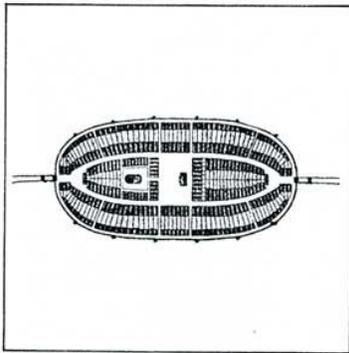
Laida Aguirre / Spring Travel 2018

Instructor: Laida Aguirre
Cities: Venice, Milan, Vienna, Prague and Berlin

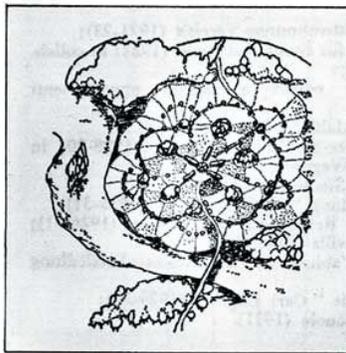
Overall itinerary:
Dates in Michigan:

5/21-23: Seminars on art and architecture.
6/19-20: Book compilation.
5/26 - 6/2: Venice - Milan
6/3 - 6/10 : Vienna - Prague
6/10 - 6/16 : Berlin

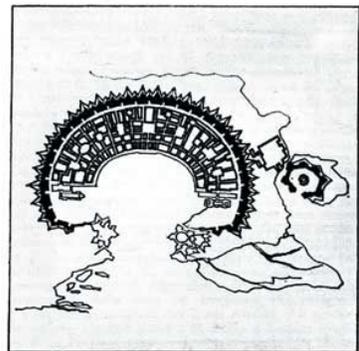
Dates abroad: 5/26 - 6/16 (21 nights)



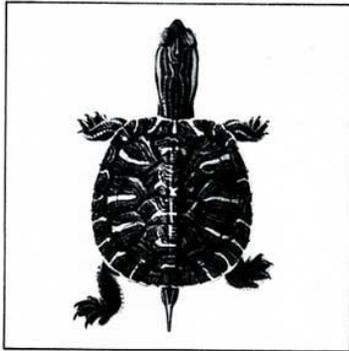
Colonial City, Germany 13th



Utopian City, B. Taut, 1919



City Project, Doria, 1732



Shielding

防御物

Экранирование

محافظت كردن

Blooming

開花

Выцветание

گل كردن

Unfurling

展開物

Развертывание

باز شدن

O.M. Ungers - City Metaphors

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"not to discover anything new but rather to see the discovered in my own way." - O.M. Ungers

"... the greatest creations of architecture are not so much the product of individual labour, rather the product of social endeavour... the strata deposited by the centuries, the lees of successive evaporations of human society, in short they are a kind of geological formation". - Victor Hugo

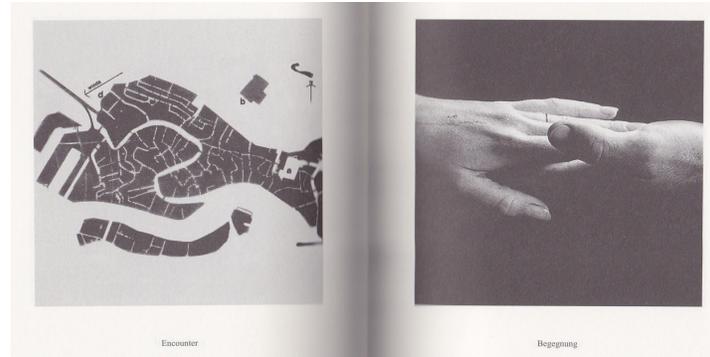


Image 2: 'Venice map as handshake' by O.M. Ungers

This studio will focus on developing an updated way of visual thinking within the contemporary city. We will look at the current urban condition as one where processes of history, gentrification and temporalities have written and rewritten tangled conditions of overlap and observe that rarely is anything simply one thing. We will come to understand that these complex new architectural patterns and aesthetics require a new spatial and aesthetic literacy aimed at pulling apart these layers of signification.

As students travel through Venice, Milan, Vienna, Prague and Berlin, they will compile their own survey of architectural 'lookalikes', or visual synonyms and other morphologically similar architectural elements and aesthetic patterns. We will visit permanent and temporary spatial conditions such as artist studios or architecture offices as well as canonical and non-canonical built environments. This trip will be bookended by two Biennales, the Tenth Berlin Art Biennale and the Architecture Biennale in Venice, which will offer students a chance to explore these concepts through attending site specific installations and performances. They will also offer an opportunity to understand each city's permanent structures against these more temporal layers, both of which deeply qualify an overall city's character.

Prior to departure, we will research specific buildings and aesthetic movements that have defined these cities over the years paying special attention to spatial articulations through material, form, habitation, signage, etc. In addition to historical research, this course will focus on methods of documentation and representation relative to contemporary and archival discourses. Among those, this studio will use visually extractive tactics such as those used by Bernard Tschumi in *'The Manhattan Transcripts'*, Charles Gaines in *'Gridworks'* and Christopher Alexander in *'A Pattern Language'*. Our main focus, however, will be on O.M. Ungers' *'City Metaphors'*, a vision-building project and creative visual cartography that juxtaposes more than one hundred various city maps with images of flora, fauna and other scenes of natural order. This device of pairing images, for example, likens the city divisions of Venice to a handshake and the 1809 plan of St. Gallen to a womb. (See *img. 2*)

Students will create their own methods of visual literacy by focusing on the identification of threads of interconnectivity between historic and contemporary uses of space and program. We will create our own book of typologies based on a visual lexicon of our own making. Through this visual grammar students will develop the capacity to deconstruct and critique spatial power structures and identify ruling aesthetic conventions.

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Proposed Travel Route

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Fondazione Prada - OMA

WORK:

During our travels we will be producing a pictorial and diagrammatic research catalog. We will use this to organize our observations of morphological and organizational architectural typologies. As a conclusion to the travel course and upon our return to Michigan we will compile a single format book for print. Each student will contribute to this book. This book should be considered a kind of encyclopedic update to the visual metaphors of O.M.Ungers.

READINGS:

O.M. Ungers - 'City Metaphor'

Christopher Alexander - 'A pattern language'

Rem Koolhaas - 'Junkspace'

John May - 'Everything is already an image'

Gaston Bachelard - 'The dialectics of Outside and Inside', 'The Poetics of space' pp. 211-231

Timothy Rohan - 'Rendering the Surface'

Jorge Luis Borges - 'The Library of Babel'

George Perec - 'Exhausting a corner in Paris'

Sylvia Lavin - 'Architecture in Extremis'

'How to read buildings/churches/houses...' series

Graham Harman - 'The Quadruple object'

Owen Hopkins - 'Reading architecture: A visual lexicon'