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# Proceedings

## EURAU 2016

European Symposium on Research  
in Architecture and Urban Design

Ion Mincu University of  
Architecture and Urbanism  
Bucharest, Romania



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Bucharest, September 28 - 30th, 2016

# IN BETWEEN SCALES

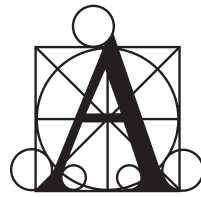




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# Proceedings



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**EURAU 2016 European Symposium on Research in Architecture and Urban Design: In Between Scales**

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## Introduction

The eighth edition of the European Symposium on Research in Architecture and Urban Design will be held from the 28th to the 30th of September 2016 in Bucharest.

The seminar will take place at the "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urban Planning from Bucharest in collaboration with the institutions that organized the previous editions:

École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Marseille, on doctoral research (2004);

École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et Paysage de Lille, on large scale (2005);

Association des Instituts Supérieurs Brussels-Liège-Mons (IESA), on cultural heritage (2006);

Escuela Superior de Arquitectura de la Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, under the theme cultural landscape (2008);

Facoltà di Architettura dell'Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, under the theme venustas (2010);

Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, on public space and contemporary city (2012);

Faculty of Architecture of the Istanbul Technical University, on composite cities (2014).

The project EURAU is constituted within a network of schools and researchers in Architecture and Urbanism, meeting every two years to share the status of their investigation. In the long-term, it is intended to lead to the creation of a physical meeting and deposit space with all the research undertaken and ongoing in Europe to facilitate the sharing of resources and deepening of knowledge in these scientific areas.

The main concern of the EURAU is to establish itself as a place of debate and discussion of thematic disciplines of Architecture, City and Town Planning.

The theme of EURAU 2016 is "In Between Scales."

*Assoc.Prof. Beatrice-Gabriela JÖGER, Arch, PhD, UAUIM, Bucharest, Romania*

# IN BETWEEN SCALES

Bucharest, September 28-30th 2016

## History

The EURAU project was initiated by the French Ministry of Culture, when, in 2004, it launched the proposal of an annual symposium for researchers dealing with Research in Architecture and Urbanism. The various editions were organized by different European schools of Architecture with a coordinated effort by a broad group of university professors and researchers.

The purpose of this initiative is to enable the confrontation between researchers concerned with the Architecture and the City on the European scene.

The acronym EURAU describes the congregation of the objectives which motivate these events: EU for "European Union", R for "Research", A for "Architecture" and U for "Urbanism".

## Important Dates

December 2015	Call for papers
January 15th, 2016	Abstract and registration possible
April 15th, 2016	Abstract Submission Deadline
May 5th, 2016	Notification of acceptance
June 30th, 2016	Deadline for Final Paper submission for the publication of the proceedings
June 30th, 2016	Registration Deadline for Authors
September 28th-30th 2016	Conference dates
October 1st-2nd 2016	Post-Conference Tours

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# projects, methods, results

Most researches whether would be in architecture or in interdisciplinary field are usually guided by these steps- introduction, methods, results and conclusions. What are the specific methods for architecture projects in design, urbanism, restoration, rehabilitation or for interdisciplinary projects? Today architecture collaborates with fields increasingly various, from social-humanities- sociology, psychology, philosophy, communication to realistic fields- engineering, medicine, IT, mathematics etc.

This section is dedicated to the researches into the field of architecture and urbanism with all specialities- restoration, rehabilitation, design, landscaping but also to the niche areas, interdisciplinary with architecture.



## FROM "IN-BETWEEN" TO "THROUGH" SPACE. SCENARIOS FOR TODAY'S PADOVA

**Luigi Stendardo**

*University of Padova - Department of Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering (ITALY)  
luigi.stendardo@unipd.it*

### **Abstract**

The problem of *in-between space* has been the main topic over a long period of reflection on contemporary architecture and cities, and has produced a significant accumulation of thoughts on the form of contemporary space. The basic premise to the problem of in-between space is the possibility of identifying homogeneous and finite parts, on which the concept of a city of parts may be founded.

The concept of in-between space is based on the idea that there is an essentially void and formally non-structured space between solid objects, i.e., an “otherness” between empty space and formed matter. “In-between” is thus defined by negation. The only possible measure of it is, strictly speaking, the distance between its non-edges: this dimension, while reacting with the dimensions and shapes of the boundaries, generates a number of formal features of in-between space.

In-between space has been a necessary complement to the finiteness of the parts, which lie on it as shapes on the background; at the same time, it has been the unresolved portion of urban composition, where aporias arise within the urban space of a compact city. It might be described as a non-structured field, fluid and elusive, on the borders of which non-interacting solids rise.

At some point, from once being a residual background, in-between space has become resourceful, overwhelming in its potential, differences and diversity: it has been chosen as a favourite culture medium for research on urban public spaces which were presumed to be freed, unforeseen, capable of hosting various and unexpected relationships; it has been acknowledged as both urban space and collective territory. It is unaccomplished, open, malleable space, available for manipulation and transformation.

If the formal crystallisation of finite and composed parts fits the principle of Alberti's *concinnitas*, and is extremely unlikely to add or subtract anything without undermining the Vitruvian symmetry between the whole and its parts, the incorporeity of in-between space allows it to host any object and to be activated, transformed, "tidied up". Although all this is in fact consistent in the hypothesis of the clear-cut otherness between shaped matter and amorphous immateriality, the solidity of such a Manichean separation begins to break down.

The hypothesis of a less clear duality between space and matter – which finds some uncertain similarities in the theory of relativity and in quantum physics – together with the hypothesis of the increasing liquidity of contemporariness presents us with new models of architectural and urban space, in which the fundamental requisites of the idea of in-between space are invalidated. The loss of finiteness of architectural objects and their shapes and the chaotic sprawl of built matter, all mean that it is increasingly difficult to fit the parts within the whole; the solid parts appear less as lithospheric plates surrounded by stagnant waters, and more as rafts floating on fluid, slowly drifting masses. The idea of the city of parts is replaced by that of the city of layers, and the dual paradigm of figure and background is replaced by a model composed of borderless, extensive layers, which overlap, intersect, fuse and react with each other. Tidy built matter appears as a temporary

concretion, a state of excitation of an extensive space-time continuum which is revealed when it is [de-]formed by differences of density and energy. The idea of the otherness between space and matter, as well as that of an interaction in the distance between massive bodies through in-between space, is replaced by a vision moulded according to the physical concept of the field which permeates anything and can be bent, folded, thickened or thinned; be elastically or plastically weak, revealing its softness; it may harden into stiff segments, solidify or liquefy, and yet keep its consistency. The urban space between objects becomes a blurred mixture across things and implies a shift from a paratactic composition, in which discrete distances between finite parts may be measured, towards a composition of layers, which works on the space of sprawling, overlapping and intersecting entities, accommodating many unexpected relationships. Besides eroding and breaking the boundaries of in-between space in order to extend it greatly, such a model amplifies the system of possible formal and functional relationships and multiplies the number of scalar ratios within the field; it defines a complex structure, which is, *par excellence*, able to generate collective space for contemporary society.

As a *forma urbis* parallel text to this vision, we briefly describe here a project ongoing at the Research Laboratory on Architectural Design, Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering, University of Padova, designing scenarios for transforming an area of Padova which is emblematic of the condition of in-between space today.

The area of our case study covers about 300 hectares north-east of the city centre of Padova. Its northern boundary is flanked by the Padova-Venice railway line, and the whole area already contains several expressways, complex junctions and roundabouts, as well as industrial districts, shopping malls and residential urban fabric. According to our hypothesis, planned transformations include: a new city hospital for Padova and a university campus for medical studies and research, implementation of infrastructures to improve accessibility with new facilities such as parking lots, intermodal hubs, a local railway stations, densification of residential fabrics, recycling of former industrial districts, and an urban park with sports, leisure and healthcare facilities.

This large-scale project will work on urban and landscape areas, overlapping and intersecting at several layers on differing scales, such as green areas, water networks, infrastructural paths with urban forms and irregular fragments and textures, which [de-]form open ground to create scenarios of public space for today's city.

**Keywords:** in-between space, through space, city of parts, city of layers, Padova.

## 1 VISION: FROM “IN-BETWEEN” TO “THROUGH” SPACE

The problem of *in-between space* has been the main topic over a long period of reflection on contemporary architecture and cities, and has produced a significant accumulation of thoughts on the form of contemporary space. The basic premise to the problem of in-between space is the possibility of identifying homogeneous and finite parts, on which the concept of a city of parts may be founded [1].

The concept of in-between space is based on the idea that there is an essentially void and formally non-structured space between solid objects, i.e., an “otherness” between empty space and formed matter. “In-between” is thus defined by negation. The only possible measure of it is, strictly speaking, the distance between its non-edges: this dimension, while reacting with the dimensions and shapes of the boundaries, generates a number of formal features of in-between space.

In-between space has been a necessary complement to the finiteness of the parts, which lie on it as shapes on the background; at the same time, it has been the unresolved portion of urban composition, where aporias arise within the urban space of a compact city. It may be described as a non-structured field, fluid and elusive, on the borders of which non-interacting solids rise.

At some point, from once being a residual background, in-between space has become resourceful, overwhelming in its potential, differences and diversity: it has been chosen as a favourite culture



medium for research on urban public spaces which were presumed to be freed, unforeseen, capable of hosting various and unexpected relationships; it has been acknowledged as both urban space and collective territory. It is unaccomplished, open, malleable space, available for manipulation and transformation.

If the formal crystallisation of finite and composed parts fits the principle of Alberti's *concinnitas* [2], and is extremely unlikely to add or subtract anything without undermining the Vitruvian symmetry between the whole and its parts, the incorporeity of in-between space allows it to host any object and to be activated, transformed, "tidied up". Although all this is in fact consistent in the hypothesis of the clear-cut otherness between shaped matter and amorphous immateriality, the solidity of such a Manichean separation begins to break down.

The hypothesis of a less clear duality between space and matter – which finds some uncertain similarities in the theory of relativity and in quantum physics [3, 4] – together with the hypothesis of the increasing liquidity of contemporariness, presents us with new models of architectural and urban space, in which the fundamental requisites of the idea of in-between space are invalidated. The loss of finiteness of architectural objects and their shapes and the chaotic sprawl of built matter, all mean that it is increasingly difficult to fit the parts within the whole; the solid parts appear less as lithospheric plates surrounded by stagnant waters, and more as rafts floating on fluid, slowly drifting masses. The idea of the city of parts is replaced by that of the city of layers [5], and the dual paradigm of figure and background is replaced by a model composed of borderless, extensive layers, which overlap, intersect, fuse and react with each other. Tidy built matter appears as a temporary concretion, a state of excitation of an extensive space-time continuum which is revealed when it is [de-]formed by differences of density and energy. The idea of the otherness between space and matter, as well as that of an interaction in the distance between massive bodies through in-between space, is replaced by a vision moulded according to the physical concept of the field [3] which permeates anything and can be bent, folded, thickened or thinned; be elastically or plastically weak, revealing its softness; it may harden into stiff segments, solidify or liquefy, and yet keep its consistency. The urban space between objects becomes a blurred mixture across things and implies a shift from a paratactic composition, in which discrete distances between finite parts may be measured, towards a composition of layers, which works on the space of sprawling, overlapping and intersecting entities, accommodating many unexpected relationships. Besides eroding and breaking the boundaries of in-between space in order to extend it greatly, such a model amplifies the system of possible formal and functional relationships and multiplies the number of scalar ratios within the field; it defines a complex structure, which is, *par excellence*, able to generate collective space for contemporary society.

## 2 CASE STUDY: THE AREA OF SAN LAZZARO IN PADOVA

As a *forma urbis* parallel text to this vision, we briefly describe here a project ongoing at the Research Laboratory on Architectural Design, Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering, University of Padova, designing scenarios for transforming an area of Padova which is emblematic of the condition of in-between space today.

Our research through design on the topic of in-between space, meant as through space, is being developed on a study area that covers about 300 hectares north-east of the city centre of Padova.

This area [Fig. 1] is set amid differing parts of the city, the historical centre in the south-west, the post-war neighbourhoods of Arcella and Mortise that have been spreading since the 1950s and the 1960s in the north, the neighbourhood of San Lazzaro, the shopping malls and the industrial districts in the south. Its northern boundary is flanked by the Padova-Venice railway line, and the whole area already contains several expressways, complex junctions and roundabouts [Fig. 2].

It may appear fringe located if seen from the historical centre of the city of Padova, and yet it is rather central if related to the present extension of the city; the place looks abandoned since there are no significant fluxes or functions inside the area, and the infrastructural lines that surround this wide void do actually stand as barriers, preventing any smooth accessibility, and emphasize the



Figure 1. The case study area of San Lazzaro (yellow), North-East of the city centre of Padova (white)



Figure 2. The case study area. The in-between space South of the railway line

waste look of those spaces. Yet, actually owing to the presence of a rich infrastructural network, this area is potentially well accessible, through different means of transport. It is a fringe area, cut away from the main urban fluxes, a cul-de-sac, which although is likely to become an important north-east gate of the whole city of Padova, owing to the closeness of the motorway junction of Padova Est that is one of the main way into the city, as well as to the possibility to create a hub at the crossing point of national and regional railways, a system of expressways that is being built and the network of the public urban transports.

At a first glance this area lies as a huge, mostly non-built void, around which different urban elements rise, but none of them establishes any relationship of complementarity with it. The void is a waste and does not seem to mirror any formal feature from the surrounding built environment. This state of abandonment, or maybe indifference, is emphasized by the development of a *tiers paysage* [6], which is also fostered by the presence of mostly uncontrolled waters. In conclusion, it is a typical extensive in-between space, which has long remained neglected by the interests of citizens, but now

different stakeholders are watching it with a certain appetite, in a context where a coherent and wide perspective on the complexity of today's city is actually lacking. Many stakeholders are putting forward proposals of occupation of this land [7, 8, 9], which are based on settlement layouts referring to a decayed paradigm of the city of parts, or properly speaking, to the reasons of the functionalist and/or economical zoning. These masterplans aim to parcel out the land, to increase the number of subdivisions, to share burdens and profits, to multiply weak, rambling and unproductive in-between spaces, while building closed systems that are autistic towards any possible relationship with any other alien system, and finally restricting the possibility to develop public space inside precincts that look like fish tanks. There is actually a trend to break and minimize the in-between space, since it is considered as waste, rather than rearrange and enhance it as a resource.

The shift of the focus from objects towards relationships, and from closed towards open system, which has been a main topic in architectural, urban and landscape research programmes in the latest decades, doesn't seem to have affected the processes of urban transforming in those contexts where alternative and challenging visions cannot succeed to arise and stimulate a demand of high quality public space that is supposed to be consistent with today's culture and thought.

### **3 METHODOLOGY: MODELS, MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES, TOOLS**

The research through design carried out onto the case study of San Lazzaro in Padova, is founded on the idea that in this in-between space that is apparently empty, amorphous and separated from the urban objects rising on it, some fields of form and matter can be individuated. These fields are supposed to be indefinitely extensive in all directions and therefore they do not meet any outline when touching any solid object on their way. Alien objects are rather crossed and collected by the fields that support them and, at the same time, are modified by them. According to this paradigm, the in-between space stops being a void among differing objects and becomes a space that flows across objects, a field where objects float and that gets deformed by those objects. Consistently with this vision some milestones of the classical art of architectural and urban composition become heavily altered: positional relationships, especially those referring to such antinomies as outside/inside and centre/boundary, because those former 'surrounding' objects are no more surrounding since they are now immersed in the fields and not around them; relationships of material consistency, i.e. those referring to the antinomy fullness/emptiness, since the former void is supposed to be made out of structured matter; hierarchies, first of all the juxtaposition of figure and background, since the void is no longer a screen where shapes stand out, on the contrary it is capable to act as a figure itself; proportions, significantly the relationship between the parts and the whole, since even if the parts are finite and discrete, though often fragmented, a boundary of the whole cannot be found; scalar ratios, which are based on the concept of measurability, since in the through space any object is actually immeasurable while referring to an indefinite whole [10, 11]. All these fundamentals of the art of composing must seriously be called into question, when dealing with such a paradigmatic mutation.

The fields that compose the through space interact with and modify each other. They can be considered as extensive layers that interweave with those layers collecting architectural and urban elements, which can be figured out as families or sets of discrete elements that may be tidied up according to formal structures of their own. These latter layers collect those elements that traditionally belong to the realm of urban studies: buildings, blocks, urban figures, urban fabric, landmarks and so on. These elements can be gathered, classified and compared, according to differing parameters, referring to their typology, shape, position, or to the formal order on which they are displayed, and can shift from one layer to the next or even belong to the intersection of two or more layers. With respect to these latter layers that are populated by discrete elements, the formers, which correspond to the through space fields, are characterized by a stronger continuity. On one side these fields are made out of matter that can be ordered and hierarchized through sequences, polarizations, while achieving a more solid either fluid consistency, clotting or fusing, thickening or thinning, and thus configuring spaces that differ in consistency, density, direction and orientation. On the other side they are supporting structures where fragments and finite elements, which are differently [in-]complete, solid, fragile, elastic, plastic, may anchor or run aground, while

deforming their landing place. The fields are made out of laid-out, extensive matter that can acquire differing configurations: masses, surfaces, lines, point clouds, with differing degrees of continuity and density and variable orientations. Matter can be shaped into fibres, clots, networks, meshes. Their features can vary [non-]homogeneously, depending on states, variables or parameters intrinsic to the nature of the field itself, but more often owing to the interaction among different layers that constantly modify each other and induce ever changing formal configurations. This variability, sometimes as slow as geological processes, sometimes fast and sudden, is very highlighted in the form of the through space, which constantly and fluidly modifies. This is the space of relationships, the public space, but also the space of the physical and cultural [im-]measurability in a frame of complex multi-scalar ratios.

These layers are physically made out of matter, endowed with a formal power of its own, malleable, available for mutation, capable to become a figure, fit to contain one or more figures. Yet it doesn't need to be contained, outlined by any drawing that would separate it, in order to become form. Samples of this matter are: waters, running or stagnant, shaped as masses, surfaces, thin layers, networks, canals, creeks, streams, rivulets, gutters, ponds, pools, gushes; ground, more or less cohesive, shaped as plains, heights, slopes, drops, dunes, furrows; greenery, cultivated or overrunning, shaped as green surfaces, lawns, fields, bushes, hedges, trunks, foliage, rows; air, meant as a blurred mixture of gas, vapours, particles in suspension, which is the main means of sound propagation as well as a medium that is constantly frescoed by the light, which takes on differing colours and nuances while crossing it. Besides, also the layers hosting urban fabrics and infrastructural networks can be led to this kind of fields. All these materials can be dismantled and re-composed in new formal layers made out of differing elements and matter, borrowed from different original layers. Each one of these materials requires its own know-how in order to control their form and qualities: with respect to water, you deal with slopes and thus with velocity, with supply and drainage plants, banks, canals, reservoirs; with respect to ground, you work at excavations, heaps, moulding, retaining; with respect to air, you control breezes, humidity, odours, temperatures, lights and shadows.

A significant point to keep in mind is that you can never achieve a total control of the form and of the features of such layers, neither with respect to their spatial nor to their temporal extension. It is rather a partial control, achieved through finite and limited segments, through fragmented portions that allow to temporarily tidying up even what escapes from the drawing, since they light up selective glances. It is like some kind of shift from the concept of a *hortus conclusus*, a garden, or even a traditional park, to the idea of landscape, which is available for a continuous re-composition through the ever-changing glance of human beings.

#### 4 RESEARCH THROUGH DESIGN: SCENARIOS FOR TODAY'S PADOVA

The research through design<sup>1</sup> carried out on the case study of San Lazzaro in Padova has been developed according to a programme for urban transformations that include a new city hospital for Padova and a university campus for medical studies and research, implementation of infrastructures to improve accessibility with new facilities such as parking lots, intermodal hubs, a local railway stations, densification of residential fabrics, recycling of former industrial districts, and an urban park with sports, leisure and healthcare facilities, as well as tertiary sector and retail.

The main purpose of this design experimentation was the production of scenarios for urban transforming, based on the possibility enhance the in-between space as a resource, while considering it as an extensive and pervading through space. Thus the main objective was to develop a number of different configurations of fields of form and matter, capable to positively interact with different layers of urban elements and figures, both already existing and forthcoming according to the programme.

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<sup>1</sup> The here presented research through design experimentation has been carried out in the frame of the Workshop of Architectural and Urban Design of the Master Degree in Building Engineering / Architecture at the Department of Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering, University of Padova, held by professors Luigi Stendardo, Paolo Ceccon and Luigi Siviero. The here presented scenarios were designed by the Students of the Workshop, tutored by the teaching staff, in the academic year 2015-2016.

The supporting layout of each scenario has been displayed as a through space, interwoven with different infrastructural layers in order to assure the required mobility through and accessibility to the area. Several sets of urban elements are spread through and immersed in this plot of fields, and are modified according to a number of variations: a slab, on which some linear bars rise, is conceived to be a hospital; an urban dock working as a mall for retail and hosting facilities for medical studies and research; along the dock, eight towers rise to host university departments and research labs; a compact urban figure, capable to gather and regenerate shreds of existing urban fabric, while providing a densification to enhance housing and facilities; an industrial district hosting steelworks that will be recycled in the future.

In each scenario – four have been finally drawn – the through space is represented in the form of a conceptual diagram [12]. It provides information about the intrinsic formal structure of the matter it is composed of and shows the deformations due to the presence of the urban solids. Each scenario shows as a temporary balance of architecture, urban space and landscape, and lets you foresee possible future accommodations of new elements and/or spatial transformations.

In the first scenario [Fig. 3] the through space is diagrammed by means of stripes and dunes. Some stripes are arrayed to become the formal structure of the hospital; one of them is stretched to make the urban dock supporting the towers along the railway, and finally grabs the steelworks on the west side; a second stripe bends to frame the existing urban fabric and a third one is the main axis of the central park. The dunes penetrate the rake-shaped hospital and clot into an urban cliff along the dock.

In the second scenario [Fig. 4] the through space is diagrammed as a set of fibres that gather into a thick rope while turning round the steelworks and spread into thin threads as they permeate the space north- and eastbound. The urban dock, split into a stiff fibre and a soft one, the hospital hills, and the grid that frames the existing urban fabric, are variations of the form, density and stiffness of the fibres.

In the third scenario [Fig. 5] the through space is diagrammed by means of earth clumps, water ponds and folded horizontal surfaces, interacting with each other. The hospital buildings rise on four basements made of clumps; the urban fabric is covered with a sheltering folded and cut surface; the clumps harden towards the railway line, to become solid modules measuring the length to the urban dock and supporting the towers.

In the fourth scenario [Fig. 6] the through space is diagrammed by means of discontinuous lines displayed along differing directions. These lines can bend and thicken to arrange different objects and spaces. An array of segments, bent along their vertical section, shapes the hospital; a series of L-shaped lines provides the square plazas across the urban dock; a thick broken line embeds the existing urban fabric.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The scenarios designed in the frame of the research through design experimentation, based on the vision of the through space potential and of a strong interaction among built environment and public space, have been compared with the masterplans put forward by several stakeholders in the latest months, which are mostly conceived according to the principles of parcelling plans, subdivision of land, sharing of burden and profit, and above all on the basis of an intensive occupation of land parcels, while keeping a clear cut separation between autonomous built block and non-designed urban voids. Even a first quick comparison shows that, while the amount of covered surfaces and built volumes is about the same, the richness in terms of public space and complexity of positive relationships in the through space hypothesis is extremely significant and makes a considerably high added value both to economy and to civil and democratic social life in our cities. This research is still ongoing and will be enhanced in the next months, in order to widen the experimentations in different contexts and compare its vision, methodology and results with similar research projects.

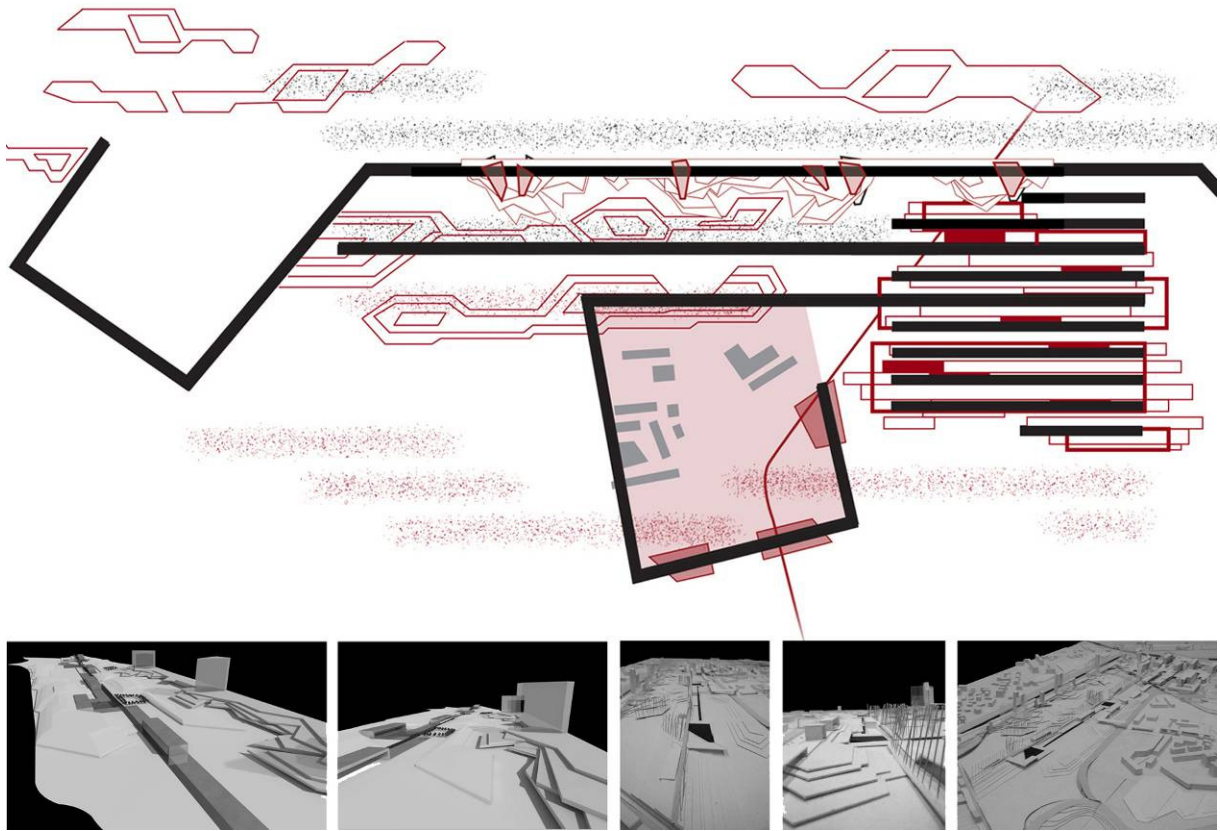


Figure 3. Scenario #1\_The through space is diagrammed by means of stripes and dunes

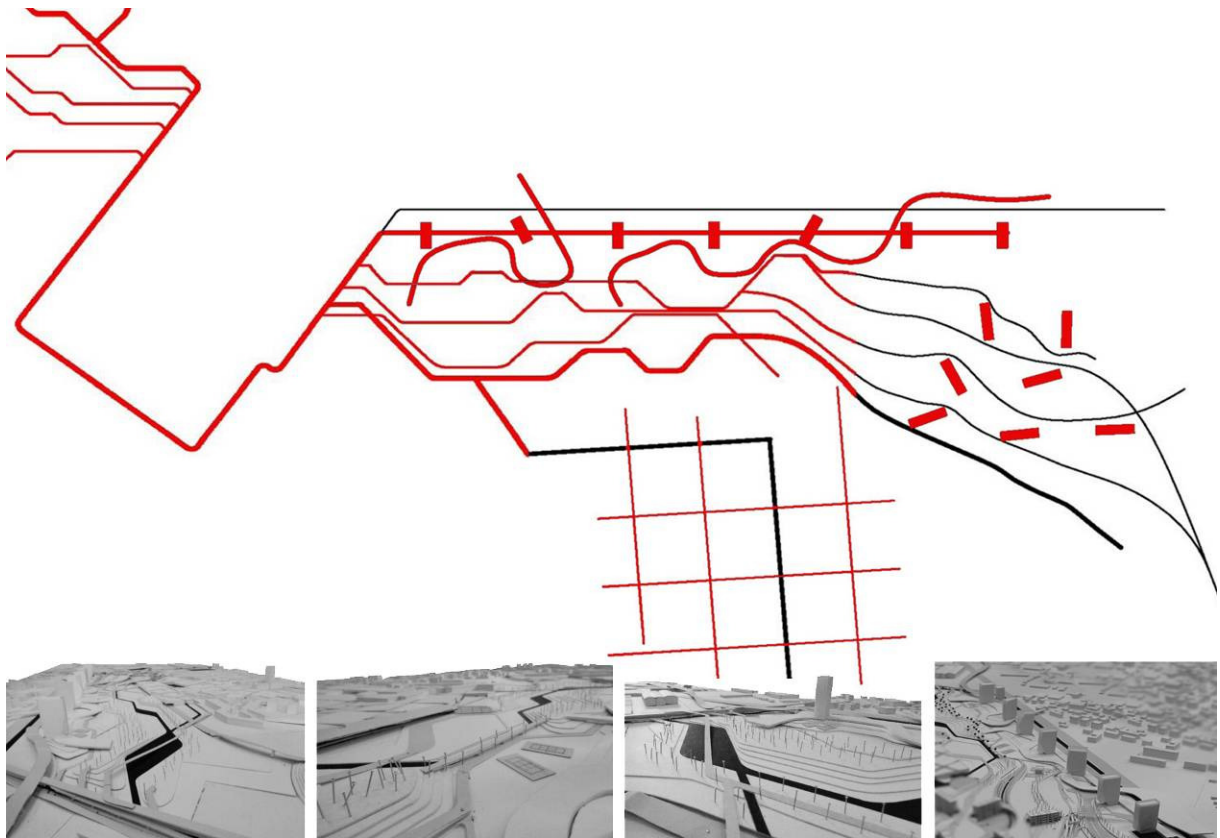


Figure 4. Scenario #2\_The through space is diagrammed as a set of fibres

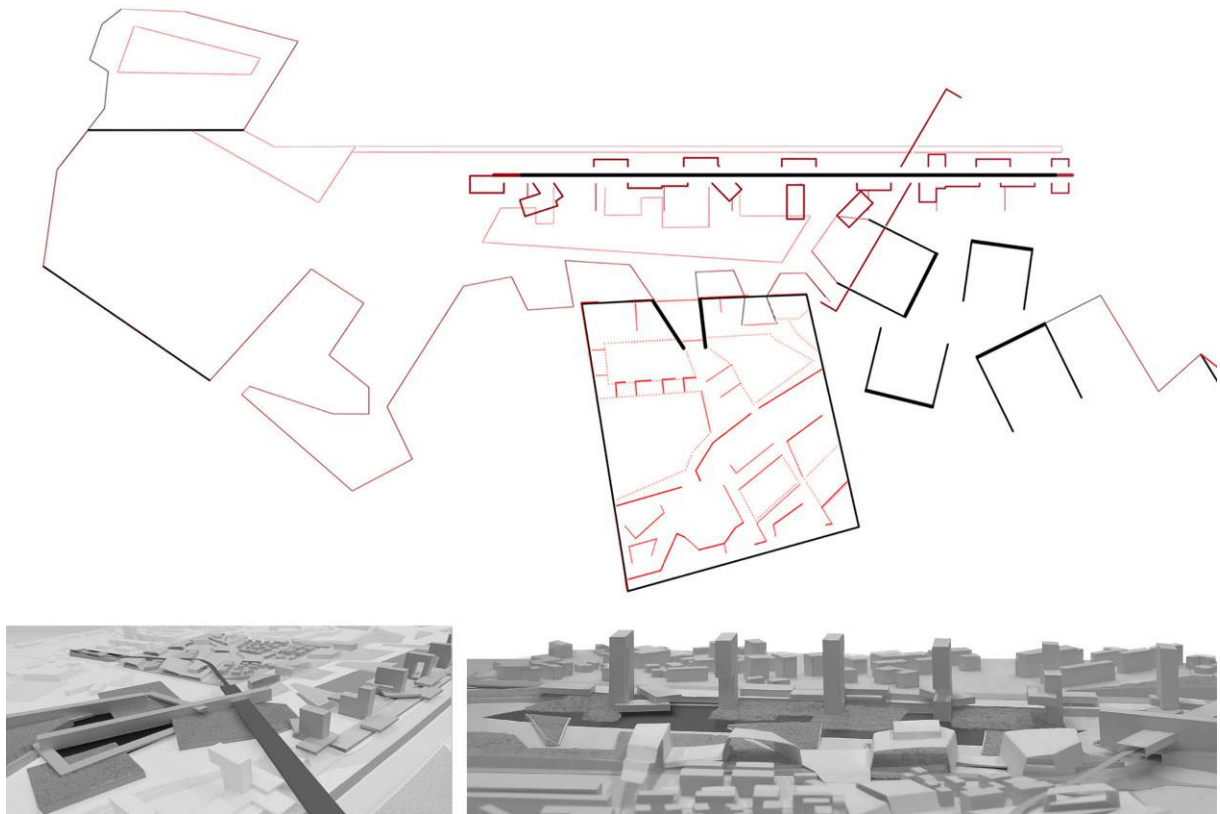


Figure 5. Scenario #3\_The through space is diagrammed by means of earth clumps, water ponds and folded surfaces

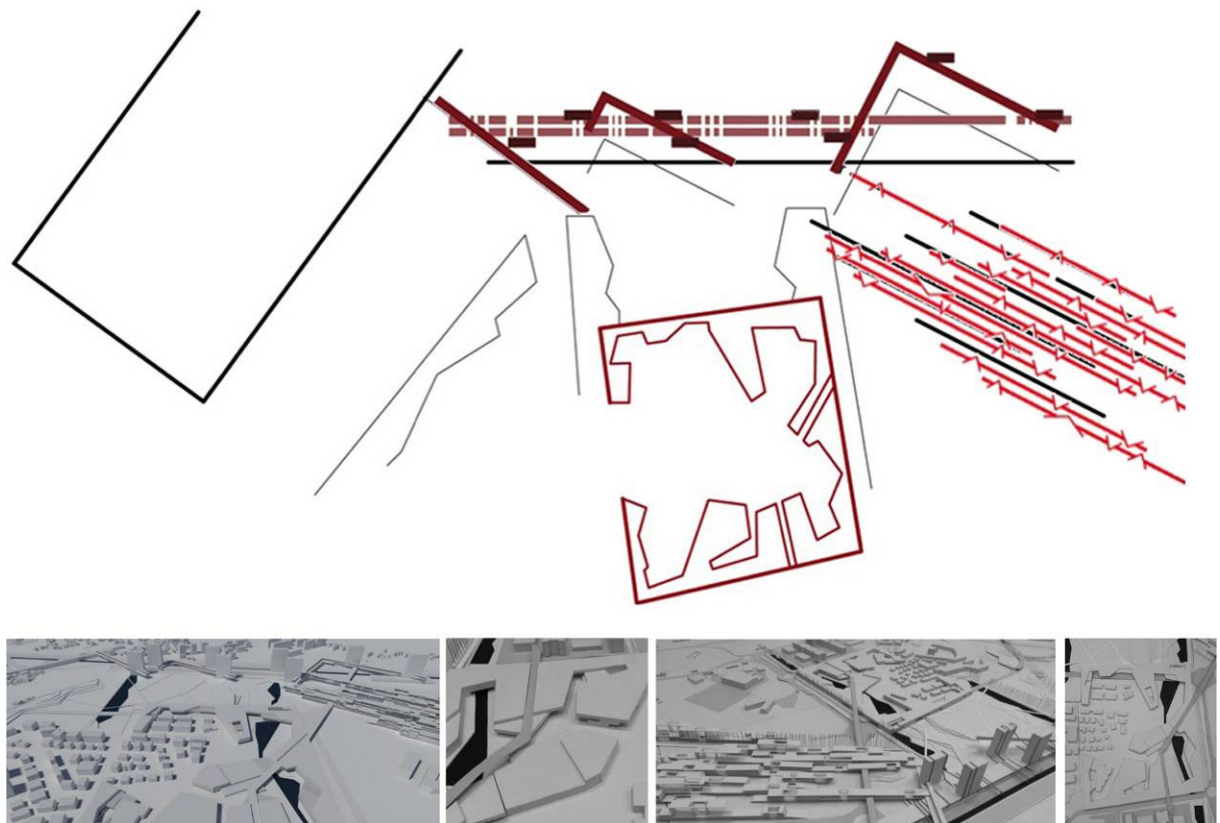


Figure 6. Scenario #4\_The through space is diagrammed by means of discontinuous lines displayed along differing directions

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# IN BETWEEN SCALES

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