

THE BOOK OF SINS

LUST

Barcelona's Barrio Xino: The Architectures of Illicit Love

Critic: Cristina Goberna Pesudo

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Barcelona's Barrio Xino: The Architectures of Illicit Love

Columbia University GSAPP
M.S of Advanced Architectural Design, Master of Architecture
Spring 2017, Mondays and Thursdays 1:30-6:30 pm, Fridays 3:00-5:00 pm
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Imaginaries are historical constructions defined by the interactions of subjects in society...and the set of values, institutions, laws and symbols that are common to a particular social group.¹

Jean-Paul Sartre

The Book of Sins: LUST

The Book of Sins is a design investigation that explores spaces related to what are commonly understood as immoral acts and therefore, architectural typologies that are often forbidden, forgotten, hidden, not publically revealed or insufficiently explored by the discipline. Past instalments of this studio has been GREED (Sydney's Gambling Scene), SLOTH (Barcelona's Party Scene) and ANGER (Medellin's post-narco war urbanism). This instalment of the Book of Sins we will explore the architectures related to sexuality in Barcelona's Barrio Xino o Raval, the city's historical red district, in the verge of a potential prostitution regulation change.

Architectural Agonism. The Construction of Urban Imaginaries

The concept of *The Imaginary* has been studied by authors like Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault, Cornelius Castoriadis or Charles Taylor, who defines Modern Social Imaginaries as "the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with each other, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underline these expectations"². Yet if we talk about *Urban Imaginaries* we could say that they are the construction of the desired idea of cities that their inhabitants consciously produce, a system conformed by social relations, architectural operations, urban policies and the ideology behind them.

The Urban Imaginary Project studies the construction of the desired idea of a city that its inhabitants consciously produce—through their urban configuration, policies, disciplinary discourse and certain architectural typologies—before and after relevant events in history such as revolutions, wars, the opening to specific markets, political revolts, economic crashes, changes in regulations etc. It vindicates the role of the architect as a *Public Intellectual*, that is, a designer that participates in the public debate that shape the city, risking his or her own position by questioning institutions, received ideas and the general status quo.

¹ Sartre, Jean-Paul, *L'Imaginaire: Psychologie Phénoménologique de l'Imagination*, Paris: Gallimard, 1940.

² Taylor, Charles, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2004

This studio is part of a collection of courses that explore the potential of *Agonism* to opening unexpected paths for the identification, confrontation and discussion of current polemics in architecture. It takes architecture as a *Semi-Autonomous* field, studying not only its disciplinary advances but also their reverberation in society at large.

Modus Operandi: Workshop in Barcelona, an International Consulting Agency of Infiltrated Agents

This studio will operate as an international urban consulting agency, that is, as a group of experts or independent observers able to deliver a current diagnosis and potential future for the city of Barcelona in the form of an *Urban Imaginary* based in urban configurations, programmatic strategies and architectural typological operations. We will travel to Barcelona during the first week of February in order to participate in a program of visits and talks hosted in different architectural offices, cultural centres and academic institutions. Once in location we will study the past, recent history and current challenges of the city; interview the main local actors that have been involved in the creation of the current urban imaginary (politicians, architects, urban designers, artists, magazines, curators, neighbour associations etc.); we will tour in different speeds and means of transportation; study its geographical, urban and social fabric and we will work in conclusions. We will, in other words, work as a group of infiltrated agents that ultimately, will design together a potential future *Urban Imaginary for Barcelona*, unveiling in doing so, issues that require public discussion inside and outside the architectural discipline.

Critical Pedagogy. Competition versus Collaboration

This studio will work with a methodology based in *Critical Pedagogy* and in the idea of less competition and more collaboration between its participants. The students will be trained to develop independent critical skills that they will apply agonistically, that is, taking strong positions and learning to defend them graphically, orally and in the general construction of strong and well-studied arguments. The class will celebrate experimental pedagogical sessions with talks, debates, acting workshops and time constrained games/exercises in order to advance in the students' critical skills, analysis and proposals. From the Midterm on, the class will work together in the completion of a single urban imaginary for Barcelona's illicit love life, in the construction of a collection of *Architectural Typological Sex Machines* and in the design of a *Final Review* event that could incorporate a professional exhibition, a theatre play or other non-traditional formats.

****The students that are interested in this studio should quickly investigate if they require a visa in order to travel to Spain, and in that case, if it is possible for them to acquire it in approximately one week time.***

****PLEASE NOTICE THAT THE STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THIS COURSE WILL BE EXPOSED TO EXPLICIT MATERIAL.**