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Infinite Atmospheres? Ethic Dimensions of and for the Design of Public Spaces

Session 7 – Introduction

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The proposed title of the session aims to encounter theoretical proposals based on the subjective dimensions of the atmospheres, and on the ethical and political consequences resulting from their architectural creation. These fundamental questions applied on the design of public spaces, contribute to the discussion about the qualities of the contemporary public space which are capable to build “commons.” How does atmospheres participate in the definition of “common” in the design of public spaces and what ethics does it engage on the part of the designers - users? The cultural dimension of this question allows the selection of papers from different countries and the comparison between European (French and Danish) and American (Brazil and California) case studies. This chapter therefore brings together 5 contributions that we propose to put in dialogue:

Evangelia Paxinou, with her paper about the **Infinite Atmospheres**, questions the architectural and urban practices of the *Encore Heureux* collective and shows how these projects contribute to a praxeology of the creation of atmospheres, which opens to infinity the potentials of public spaces to produce new forms of commons. This paper responds to the one of Ole B. Jensen who shows how, on the contrary, dark design produces **Atmospheres of Rejection** in order to exclude homeless people from public space. These two proposals provoke the discussion about the creation of flexible spaces with possibilities of actions, without restrictions, suitable for everyone. In this sense, Marina Chavez’s Brezillian proposal on **Entangled Ambiance** invites readers to study everyday bodily practices as a tool for understanding and designing public space.

The above papers are based on a series of in-situ case studies with living atmospheres, while the two last ones work on non-realized projects with projecting atmospheres. The paper of Jennifer A. E. Shields, entitled **Displacement, architectural collage**, is about a studio exercise in architecture, where collage techniques are used to investigate the arising atmospheres of a heritage project. In other words, the author shows how collage techniques in architecture can activate contemporary atmospheres inspired by the stories and writings of the past. The paper of Nicolas Remy and Evangelia

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Paxinou attempts to redefine the canons of underground spaces by working with the **Happy Atmospheres**, as the author defines them. Both papers question the ethical dimension of the architectural design of public spaces, on an analysis axis that crosses the question of the rehabilitation of the atmospheres of the past and the creation of happy atmospheres in public places.

This session thus provides a series of discussions through the comparative and cumulative reading of these papers.