



TRANSGRESSION – A NEW PARADIGM

European Architectural History Network (EAHN) and Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Bretagne (ENSAB)
Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Bretagne, Rennes, November 17-21, 2021
Session D: Fluid methods/ fluid city

Towards the recreational city?

PLAYFUL AND TRANSGRESSIVE URBAN LEISURE TO
RETHINK DWELLING, CITY PLANNING AND URBANITY

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Introduction: Parkour and urbex, transgressive urban leisure to reflect on the recreational city

Parkour? Urbex?

Materials and methods

Transgressive leisure activities to rethink the city



1. The constructive aspect of transgression

1.a. Deconstructing the “negative” vision of transgression

Representational dissonance between of the (in)appropriateness of individuals and their actions

Transgression reveals the contours of normality

Resistance ≠ desire of opposition: positive and constructive force in society



1. The constructive aspect of transgression

1.b. Transgression as an alternative vector of citizenship

Transgression = a political action

Non-confrontational transgression ⇔ expectations of public authorities

Transgression as a form of citizenship: being an active member of society

1. The constructive aspect of transgression

1.c. The construction of habitability through transgression

Transgression answers to “overmodernity” constructing alternative forms of dwelling

Simple things: aestheticism and physicality + ecological sensitivity + quality of life

Spatial appropriation → strengthening of habitability

2. Urban planning and unforeseen uses: towards indeterminate spaces

2.a. Going beyond the specifically adapted space

Dedicated spaces as “paradoxical spaces”

Dedicated spaces are not enough → public spaces rather than sports facilities

Alternatives to dedicated spaces: friendly-spaces + integrated and not-specialised spaces

2. Urban planning and unforeseen uses: towards indeterminate spaces

2.b. Planning is not necessarily scheduling/organizing

Spatial planning: “scheduling/organizing” ≠ “design” → urbanistic letting go

Leaving room for play in the urban making: uncertainty + indeterminacy + exposure to otherness

Loose space = accepting the possibility of the unforeseen event: disorder + risk + unexpected creativity

Public open space as an unfinished space

2. Urban planning and unforeseen uses: towards indeterminate spaces

2.c. Towards an open design of spaces and open spaces

Play lies less in the solution designed by city planners but in indeterminacy, incompleteness, looseness, and risk

→ open design = space as a recreational stimulator + urbanistic flexibility

Indetermined space = open to the unforeseen + offering a lot of opportunities and potentials
↔ awkward space

→ open spaces = public spaces accessible to the diversity of meanings attributed to it

3. The recreational city, a territory of diffuse recreation

3.a. The city as a playground

Play unveils the recreational potential of sanitised urban spaces



The city as a territory of diffuse recreation = the whole city as a playground + playful parallel city

3. The recreational city, a territory of diffuse recreation

3.b. Concrete elements of urban design across the city

Paradox: not recreational planned spaces have a stronger recreational potential



2 conclusions: urban planning guide considering recreation in a large majority of spaces + artefacts spreading throughout the city which encourage creative and playful uses

Conclusion: the recreational city, a not so transgressive city

Lessons from transgressive leisure practices: freedom, serendipity and looser relationship to social codes in urban planning

The city could stimulate more recreation if it is willing to design spaces that are open to the unexpected rather than for recreation



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