

WORKSHOP PROSPECTIVES : The Bio-digital city What does the future hold for living and digital technologies in the city ?

Context and problem

Grand Paris is a growing metropolis whose ambitious intensification objectives relating to activities, facilities and housing are an essential challenge. Grand Paris plans the construction of 70 000 dwellings per year, for around 50 000 new residents. Like in numerous metropolises, this growth raises the issue of urban sprawl : Shall we continue to expand the city, building new neighborhoods on rural peripheral grounds and taking part of the eroding of farmlands, which feed the same population ?

The 10 teams which consist of architects and town planners consulted in 2008 to draw possible futures of Grand Paris all agreed on the necessity of building the city on the city. The time of new towns is past and Grand Paris will promote the intensification of the existing city. However, due to the development of new public transportation systems, some unbuilt grounds will become strategic. In this context, it is necessary to imagine new modes of urbanization that are able to preserve most natural land and farmlands while at the same time intensifying the city.

Hypothesis of the prospective study

The workshop will develop a prospective approach which will imagine a future which confronts to the realities and tendencies of the evolution of territories, lifestyles and technologies. According to the problem exposed previously, the objective will be to test the hypothesis of a "hyper-collective" city, constituted by urban units of 5000 inhabitants. A 'hyper-dense' urbanism offering flexible and high quality lifestyles. The urban units will be conceived on the principles that numeric, robotic and biologic technologies that are developed nowadays would soon be generalized and integrated into urban daily life. In this perspective new technologies could maximize and optimize spaces and practices and solve in real time the problems of urban and fooding management, environmental prints, recycling and energy saving. The different projects will be implanted in strategic sites where questions of space economy, resources preservation and connectivity to networks are key.

Technologies, cultural tendencies and lifestyles

The new technologies which are able to be integrated in the city in the long term are those which support human tendencies and inhabitants desires, without generating additional constraints on the way of life. However, they will influence our lifestyles. Here are non-exhaustive themes which will be central in the workshop reflection.

Collective, collaborative, participative: In the history of cities, we may remark that growth and densification go with mutualization and sharing of spaces and functions, which are allowed by new tools and techniques. The digital technologies offer possibility of real time dialogue, co-management of spaces and objects in time. They open the way to new mutualizations and increasing of conviviality.

The real time: Thanks to markers, sensors, transmitters, or smart grids, we are able to measure, locate and follow in real time all kind of objects, phenomenon or fluxes. These technologies applied to the urban metabolism could potentially optimize and solve its problems of saturation.

Mobility and flexibility: Digital technologies are now mobile. People are capable of moving with many kinds of devices which transform their connection to the place. The feeling of being at home anywhere and at any time enhances spatial qualities such as flexibility, fluidity, versatility and accessibility.

Prosthesis and robotization: Mankind always conceived prosthesis to prolong his body in order to increase his capacity of action. Thanks to advances in the artificial intelligence field which extends the human nervous system, we may imagine automation and robotization of various urban activities.

Urban nature: Farms are now being observed by satellites and cultivated with the help of GPS. At the same time, citizens in most metropolises take possession of wastelands to cultivate collectively their kitchen gardens. The status of urban nature wavers between a productive environment, controlled and optimized by technics and a gardening culture.

Workshop application

Registrations are open until June 15th 2012 and are to be sent to the following address: workshop@ateliergrandparis.com

Students or young professionals who would like to participate should transmit:

- A 2000 characters text in order to specify their motivation, topics they would like to develop within the problematic of the workshop, and links they have already established between their speciality and the new digital tools.
- A curriculum vitae summing up works related to the theme.
- Illustrations, plans, drawings could be joined to the application.

The definitive list of participants will be settled June 15th 2012 by the organization team. A 50 euros guarantee check will be asked in order to confirm the participation.