

MARC KIRSCHBAUM, BELEN ZEVALLOS (EDS.)

LEARN

IN

a matter of space

NEIDELBERGER HOCHSCHULVERLAG

MARC KIRSCHBAUM, BELEN ZEVALLOS (EDS.)

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Foreword

This E-book provides an overview of our DAAD-financed LEARN[IN] project in 2019-2020 that dealt with the “re-definition of learning spaces as a key factor of 21st century education”. In the first year, we intensively worked together in the cities of Heidelberg, Florence and Guimarães, we being the three participating universities, along with professors and students and guest speakers, involved in the project. In the second year, we worked on the LEARN[IN] manifesto, we compiled this publication and we also worked on common projects and research applications.

At SRH University in Heidelberg, we have been conducting research in the field of learning spaces for some years now. We are doing so for mainly two reasons: first, studying and teaching have significantly changed over the last few years, and second, the implications of those changes need to be integrated into the conceptions of spaces in which learning takes place. Another important objective of this project is to build up networks and academic alliances within Europe; this is more relevant than ever. Therefore, the subtitle is: “A European approach” and we wholeheartedly support this.

As is known, the challenges that our world is facing can usually only be targeted with a holistic approach and only with a grounding in scientific facts and human sincerity. Be it climate change, digitalization or the COVID-19 pandemic, our students need to learn how to work in an always changing environment, in interdisciplinary teams as well as in international contexts, to address these challenges.

At the same time, learning spaces and educational environments have to transform and adapt to this new educational curriculum with innovative approaches. After two years of an ongoing exchange of ideas, we believe that LEARN[IN] is a rather small but good step in that direction. We would like to thank all participants and colleagues who have made this project possible and exciting. This gratitude extends especially to the students who trusted us on this journey and made us proud with their performance during the symposium and labs I and II. The new Erasmus partnerships that have been built up and an ongoing and collaborative PhD programme are proof of the rewarding work that took place in unforgettable encounters in Heidelberg, Florence, Guimarães, and now and then via Skype.

This dialogue helped us to reflect on our issues and explore new possibilities, while the change of perspective through interdisciplinarity and international contexts gave us the feedback we need to grow and improve our research and educational strategies.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to our university and to the Heidelberger Hochschulverlag.

We are looking forward to continuing our research in our upcoming project “LEARN[IN] II: Digital Learning Spaces”.

Heidelberg, December 2020
Marc Kirschbaum & Belen Zevallos



ABOUT LEARN [IN] <i>Marc Kirschbaum, Belen Zevallos</i>	9
LEARN [IN] Symposium <i>Belen Zevallos, Marc Kirschbaum</i>	23
Abstracts <i>Belen Zevallos, Marc Kirschbaum</i>	27
Linking research & teaching <i>Belen Zevallos, Marc Kirschbaum</i>	31
Workshop & world café <i>Belen Zevallos, Marc Kirschbaum</i>	43
LEARN [IN] Lab I <i>Francesco Collotti, Eliana Martinelli, Giada Cerri</i>	61
Learning outside of the classroom <i>Giada Cerri, Eliana Martinelli</i>	79
Learning with(in) the city <i>Belen Zevallos</i>	97
LEARN [IN] Lab II <i>Cidália Silva, João Cabeleira</i>	109
Organisms in mutation	127
<i>Leonardo Gori, Paula Martins, Adriana Oliveira, Inês Oliveira, Aleksandra Panic, Katharina Pritsch</i>	
Fragmentation	135
<i>João Bandeira, Lucas Cerqueira, Carolina Madureira, Mesut Nada, Rute Silva, Chiara Simoncini</i>	
Identity/evolution/levels	145
<i>Nicolas Ctvrtnik, Raissa Fonseca, Ana Margarida Mota, Viviana Maria Privitera, Fabrizio Taricone</i>	
Intentional drawing	155
<i>André Abreu, Luís Caldas, Morgan Conner, Cláudia Pando, Giulia Peixoto Moschi, Jacqueline Wirth</i>	
LEARN [IN] MANIFESTO <i>Marc Kirschbaum, Belen Zevallos</i>	161
A – ME/WE <i>Marc Kirschbaum, Belen Zevallos</i>	163
B – LEARNING FROM THE ORDINARY <i>Cidália Silva, João Cabeleira</i>	173
C – PATHS OF DEVIATION <i>Mónica Faria, Natacha Antão Moutinho</i>	187
D – LEARN [OUT] [IN] <i>Eliana Martinelli, Giada Cerri</i>	197
Final Words <i>Marc Kirschbaum, Belen Zevallos</i>	213
LEARN [IN] Team	215

LEARN [IN] Manifesto

The manifesto was developed in an ongoing process influenced by the input and production of knowledge during the three events; LEARN [IN] Symposium (Heidelberg), LEARN [IN] Lab I (Florence) and LEARN [IN] Lab II (Guimarães), and the year afterwards for reflection and discussion of the ideas and perspectives on the topics.

This manifesto stands as a platform created throughout and within our dialogue, and it is not to be understood as final, but as an interactive practice that we want to further improve. The following statements are the reflection of the common ground we found within the international and interdisciplinary LEARN [IN] team; this would not have been possible without the events, the face-to-face encounters, workshops, the input of all actors involved in the project such as the students, invited speakers, researchers, locals from the respective countries, and, last but not least, the context, the *in situ* experience where we had the opportunity to confront the different realities with hands-on exercises.

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8.

Travelling, Drawing, Learning: a process from outside to inside. This inverted method reflects a design approach which considers the city as an open book to be read, understood and used as a tool for developing ideas in general, but also architectural and urban projects.

As already illustrated in the LEARN[IN] Lab I chapter, one of the most important issues of the workshops was *learning by doing*. The sense of the work of an architect is in the construction, but learning how to build implies having seen and identified a lot of wise constructions. As travel literature is a writing exercise, architecture can be experienced only through travel drawings. For this reason, the travel journal, the sketchbook, is an essential element in the training of every architect.

Le Corbusier stated that he was a great *voleur d'architecture* (thief of architecture). He stole it during his travels, reporting the loot in his carnet. Architecture's masters have always used travels as tools for the design (Collotti et al. 2009: 15). The 19th-century *Italienische Reise* (Italian Journey) and the 20th-century *Prix de Rome*, reserved for young architects from Germany and France, were important steps in architectural training. One of the most relevant experiences was that of Karl Friedrich Schinkel. His drawings, made during

his travels in Italy, demonstrate a wise understanding of places: he did not choose to classify ancient architectural features and ornaments; rather he interrogated the sites with sketches on a landscape scale. The most paradigmatic samples in this sense are the drawings he made in the Valley of the Temples in Sicily.

From the experiences of such important architects, students should first understand that the antique has the capacity to generate contemporary design, as long as architecture is not a question of style. Travel gives to the architects the opportunity to visit and know the ancient ruins, in order to better understand the relationship between ancient and contemporary, between pre-existence and new, that is a crucial issue to deal with for the architect's work.

The notion of classic should be considered a fundamental lesson for every architect, with the aim of recognizing figures of the past, which can become materials

for the design. The difference between invention and design research consists of this.

As stated by Giorgio Grassi, travel can be considered a transposition of objects reproducible from an original matrix to another. The sense of architecture lies in this transposition, which selects recurring figures common to different cultures and places. Their unchanged value is that of belonging to the human being and of answering general anthropological questions. Therefore the city, as the more complex artifact, can become the best place for learning: it is the richer book, where a catalogue of types and samples useful for the practice of every architect is collected.

9.

Keep calm and observe: the hyper-connected world requires fast and immediate answers; in the opposite way, slow reflective knowledge forces us to think about and question space and ourselves. However, without some degree of slowness, there is no useful rapidity.

Travelling is an essential instrument of education for architects, who always have to adapt their work to different cultural contexts. However, architects should look at the world as curious researchers, not as simple tourists. In this sense, education should train us to gaze at the world, with the aim of developing architecture by references.

As theorized by Rossi's *Movimento della Tendenza* (1969), architecture is an exercise of analogy: after having recognized elements and forms of reality, these can be transposed to the design. Within the tradition of the Italian architectural school, which also influenced different approaches in Europe, architecture is conceived of as only starting from the city, not vice versa (Rossi 1966; Grassi 1967). Therefore, the first reading of the site is necessary to collect technical tools proper to architects. The observation procedure implies an interpretation of the site, filtered by our eyes and measured by our body, and it represents a strictly pedagogical

method. As an exercise, it trains our personality and our capacity of relationship to the world itself.

During the drawing workshops, students were required to take their own time to accomplish the task. The deadline for the submission coincided with the time available to stay at the specific site. The key factor to succeed in the exercise was asking questions and chasing doubts when on-site, and not later using photographs. Pictures are useful to preserve a memory of the whole experience, not to interrogate the places. Interpreting a site by drawings means making choices. It forces the students to observe the place, reasoning about what they are observing, summing up the information on a flat surface, the paper sheet, and figuring out how to fix such thoughts in a limited amount of space. Mistakes, if the student is aware of them, are welcomed. The very proper instrument for an architect is the hand-drawing.

The lockdown period stressed the relevance of the on-site visit and study. The importance and benefit of technology are beyond doubt. On the one hand, technological instruments allow the possibility of exploring the world and being connected while staying at home, while on the other hand, the impossibility of seeing a place means a loss of information. The lens of someone else's camera, although useful, is still someone else's point of view – an interpretation. Being on-site allows precious observations: how people use the place, certain dynamics and interactions, the kind of natural light, but also the sounds and the smells. At the moment, no advanced camera or virtual reality device is able to render such sensations and environments. The old fashioned ways of noting the information in the carnet and freezing the memories in our brain are still powerful instruments. To do this, it is necessary to take the time needed. It is an active moment of contemplation, longer than a click on the smartphone or a scroll on the touchpad.

10.

Back to paper: students should switch from digital to traditional drawings. Drawing by hand reflects choices and interpretation and is useful to practice and develop a design approach towards reality. Your brain, a pen, and a piece of paper – that is all!

The young generation of students is less and less trained in sketching. On the contrary, they seem to be addicted to digital representations. Young architects are used to using programmes for 2D and 3D digital drawings as direct tools for the design, without passing through sketches. The design is the result of a process, and not a product definable at first glance. We think that the design can be controlled, in the first step, only by free-hand drawings, which allow questions and doubts.

For this reason, we think that on-site drawing is an old-fashioned but still valid method of learning, particularly for young architects. Traditionally, architectural education was carried out by redrawing and copying other architecture collected in the treatises. Considering that the birth of the schools of architecture is a recent phenomenon in the 20th century, such practice accompanied the architect's education for a long time, besides those of the artists in the Academies of Fine Arts (Martinelli & Coricelli 2020). The focus was on

the drawing technique, rather than the object. With the claim of an autonomous branch of knowledge, a different conception of copying became a fundamental vehicle for transmitting architecture in most of the European schools. The copy became more properly the interpretation of typological and morphological references (ibid.). The reference, as a design tool, is different from the model. If the model can be conceived of as an object to reproduce *in toto*, the reference is the typological aspect, in its value of generality (Collotti 2002).

The goal of the “back to paper” exercises is transmitting the meaning of the act of drawing directly on paper. It is not an abstract academic exercise, but a basic, fundamental architectural tool. Indeed, the role of academia is that of giving to the students all the available instruments to conduct the profession. However, drawing is a written language and is the simplest way of communication, even in this global world. The sketch is a fundamental tool, too, in the design studio phases

and in the workshop sessions. The drawing technique can influence how architecture is conceived of and thought about. For this reason, the most important aspect is the learning process, where the sketches raise questions, rather than a final beautiful presentation of an object. Live drawings give space to mistakes and doubts, they question the site. By drawing on site, the architects identify, select, and summarize the reality in front of them, recovering the architecture's elements of generality. This procedure is the only way to deal with this learning problem.

Digital drawing is definitely necessary. It requires physical tools and software, allowing pre-selected operations and results. It should be used in different phases of the project, as a final packaging both for the reality reproduction and the project. The digital drawing states a final moment of design and understanding, whereas the drawing hand reveals the entire process.

M. F. M. M. M.

Ei que Mehuani

Bela Zulle

Soverano

Natasha Antão Moutinho

Luiz Manoel Leite

Mônica Faria Giada Ceri

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Marc Kirschbaum is an architect and architectural theorist, professor for architectural theory and design, as well as head of the architecture programme at SRH University Heidelberg. He was head of the inter- and transdisciplinary research project Reallabor STADT-RAUM-BILDUNG (Real World Laboratory CITY-SPACE-EDUCATION) and is intensively engaged in learning architectures and human-space relationships. He studied architecture and urban planning in Kassel and Manchester/GB, and, as a Fulbright scholar, architectural theory in Seattle/USA. Together with Prof. Kai Schuster, he is a founder and partner of pragmatopia | architecture.city.life in Kassel/Germany. In addition, he works as a reviewer, judge and consultant in university, research and practice contexts.

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Belen Zevallos holds a Master in Architecture from the School of Architecture of the University of Minho. She has also studied at the PUCP (Peru), and at Yildiz Technical University (Turkey). Her interest in landscape and its definitions, meanings and representations, as well as her attention to education, have led her to create Space Transcribers, which focuses on reflections, re-interpretations, representation and intervention of the landscape. She was part of the research project Reallabor STADT-RAUM-BILDUNG (Real World Laboratory CITY-SPACE-EDUCATION) funded by The Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts of the State of Baden-Württemberg. In 2019 she was invited as a Teaching Assistant at the Institute for Urban Design and Housing at KIT. Currently she is working on her PhD at the University of Minho and working as a Research Associate and Teaching Assistant at the School of Engineering and Architecture at the SRH University Heidelberg.

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Francesco Collotti is an architect and full professor at DiDA Università degli Studi di Firenze, promoting not only research into architectural identities, but also involved in international programmes of scientific and cross cultural fertilization. He is the Coordinator of the doctoral programme of architectural and urban composition. His activity is a link between research, professional work and teaching. He is interested in sustainable, site-specific and responsible contemporary architecture. He is a teacher at International Design Seminars “Naples, architecture and city” (Università degli Studi di Napoli, DOMUS, D.A.M. Frankfurt). Since 1997 he has been a member of the Scientific Committee of the Swiss reviews *Rivista tecnica* and (1998) *Archi*. His articles and essays have been published in the most important international architectural reviews (*Werk bauen+wohnen*, *Domus*, *Casabella*, *Archi*, *FirenzeArchitettura*).

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Eliana Martinelli is an architect and holds a PhD in Architectural Composition from the Università Luav di Venezia. Her PhD dissertation was the first in Italy on the work of the Turkish architect Turgut Cansever. She was adjunct professor at the EMADU – Université Euro-Méditerranéenne de Fès (Morocco), DESTEC – Università di Pisa and DiDA - Università degli Studi di Firenze. She is a member of the DiDA Research Unit *Dar_Med* and takes part in international conferences and publications on Euro-Mediterranean heritage and design. She has been a post-doctoral fellow at the DiDA since 2019. Her recent research activity has focused on architectural and urban regeneration design through participatory practices, in collaboration with different cultural and non-profit organizations (*Chille de la balanza* theater company, *Cospe Onlus*). After having worked as an architect in Leipzig (Germany), she carries on her professional activity in Italy, realizing architectural and interior designs in line with her research interests.

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Giada Cerri is an architect and holds a Ph.D. in Management and Development of Cultural Heritage. Her research interests focus mainly on museum design, seismic vulnerability and the safety of museum collections, and the management of cultural heritage. She carries on both research and professional activity, seeking for mutual and continuous inspiration. She was a post-doctoral fellow at the DIDA for three years, and is now part of the research project RESIMUS, a multidisciplinary study on resilience and museums. She works as a museum consultant and designer. Her experience encompasses collaborations with the Ceramic Museum of Montelupo Fiorentino and the MuDEV – Museo Empolese Valdelsa (Italy), the Museu da Casa Brasileira (Brazil) and the Bard Graduate Center Gallery (USA). She is Adjunct Professor of Interior Design in the Master in Interior Design programme at the DIDA Design Campus.

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Saverio Mecca, Architect and Full Professor of Building Production at the University of Florence, has been the Dean of the Department of Architecture DIDA of the University of Florence since January 2013; before that, he was Dean of the Faculty of Architecture from November 2009. He works actively in academic research on construction management and local and indigenous architectural heritage and architectural design. In more recent years, he has been working actively on European projects on vernacular architectural knowledge systems and on training in graduate courses and post-graduate courses in the Mediterranean regions. Since 2007 he has been Director of the Research Center for Innovation and Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems at the University of Florence, INN-LINK-S Research Center, oriented toward investigating local and traditional knowledge systems in the fields of architecture, agronomy and material cultures with an interdisciplinary scientific approach.

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João Cabeleira is an architect and Assistant Professor at the School of Architecture of the University of Minho (EAUM), being responsible for the courses of Geometry and Seminar 1C (History and Ucronia). Currently he is the vice-president of the architecture school, president of the school pedagogical council, coordinator of the group SpaceR_Lab2PT and a member of the EAUM scientific council. He holds a degree in Architecture (2002) and a Master's degree in Methodologies of Intervention upon the Architectural Heritage (2006), both granted by the Architecture Faculty of the University of Porto (FAUP). He concluded his PhD, at EAUM (2015) with a dissertation entitled "Imaginary Architecture: Real and Illusory Space in the Portuguese Baroque". In relation to his pedagogical and research activity, he has organized exhibitions, workshops, participated in the organizing committee and scientific committees, presented communications at national and international conferences and published in national and international journals. Currently he is involved in the research group on Architecture and Urbanism of the ProChild CoLAB – a Portuguese nationwide consortium with a transdisciplinary approach dedicated to combatting poverty and social exclusion in children from 0 to 10 years old.

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Natacha Antão is a draughtswoman and assistant professor at the School of Architecture of Minho University, being the current director of the Bachelor in Visual Arts programme, and a researcher in Lab2Pt - Landscape, Heritage and Territory Laboratory. She has worked at this school since 2005, teaching drawing in several courses, such as Architecture, Visual Arts, Design and Fashion. She holds a PhD in Fine Arts (2016) with specialization in drawing from Lisbon University Faculty of Fine Arts, with the thesis Colour in the Creative Process - the Space for Colour in Architectural Drawings. Her artistic and scientific research intersects with her pedagogical activity, focusing on areas such as drawing and colour and the practice of walking as a research methodology, having recently co-chaired the international meeting/conference Drifting Bodies/Fluent Spaces (2020).

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Quotes

1. Quote on page 15 from St. Augustin in:
WADE, J. (1825). Select proverbs of all nations illustrated with notes and comments, to which is added, a summary of ancient pastimes, holidays and customs. With an analysis of the wisdom of the ancients, and of the fathers of the church, the whole arranged on a new plan. New York, P. Covert. pp.216.
2. Quote on page 53 from Nietzsche in:
Nietzsche, F. W., & Polt, R. F. H. (1997): Twilight of the idols, or, How to philosophize with the hammer. Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Pub.p.10
3. Quote on page 101 from Bartalini, in:
Bartalini, Vladimir (2018): Criptopaisagens. Velar pelo que não se vê e mal se escuta, in Pedro Fidalgo (coord.), A Paisagem como Problema: Conhecer para Proteger, Gerir e Ordenar, , Vol. 5 (Lisboa: Instituto de História Contemporânea da Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa), pp. 398-410.

Images

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Photos of the Department of Architecture (DIDA),
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Pages 104-107
Photos of the School of Architecture EAUM,
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©Jane Jacobs 1968.



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The challenges that our world is facing can usually only be targeted with a holistic approach and only with a grounding in scientific facts and human sincerity. Be it climate change, digitalization or the COVID-19 pandemic, our students need to learn how to work in an always changing environment, in interdisciplinary teams as well as in international contexts, to address these challenges. At the same time, learning spaces and educational environments have to transform and adapt to this new educational curriculum with innovative approaches.

After two years of an ongoing exchange of ideas, we believe that LEARN[IN] is a rather small but good step in that direction. This E-book provides an overview of our DAAD-financed LEARN[IN] project in 2019–2020 that dealt with the “re-definition of learning spaces as a key factor of 21st century education.”

LEARN [IN] is a DAAD-financed project within the research programme “Hochschuldialog mit Südeuropa” (Higher Education Dialogue with Southern Europe). The project “LEARN[IN]” is conducted by SRH University Heidelberg/Germany, Università degli studi Firenze/Italy and Universidade do Minho/Portugal.

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