

## 'Space Composition'

Space Composition, Department of Public Building Design, 2019



(Carel Visser, Concrete Sculpture, Hague, 1966)

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*Instructor*

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*Inspiration*

*The Banana Leaf Parable*

'There's sort of a parable I'd like to . . . In India . . . I guess it's a parable: In India, sort of the lowest, the poorest, the, those, those without and the lowest in caste, eat very often-particularly in southern India-they eat off of a banana leaf. And those a little bit up the scale, eat off of a sort of a un . . . a low-fired ceramic dish.

And a little bit higher, why, they have a glaze on-a thing they call a "tali"-they use a banana leaf and then the ceramic as atali upon which they put all the food. And there get to be some fairly elegant glazed talis, but it graduates to-if you're up the scale a little bit more-why, a brass tali, and a bell-bronze tali is absolutely marvelous, it has a sort of a ring to it.

And then things get to be a little questionable. There are things like silver-plated talis and there are solid silver talis and I suppose some nut has had a goldtali that he's eaten off of, but I've never seen one.

But you can go beyond that and the guys that have not only means, but a certain amount of knowledge and understanding, go the next step and they eat off of a banana leaf.

And I think that in these times when we fall back and regroup, that somehow or other, the banana leaf parable sort of got to get working there, because I'm not prepared to say that the banana leaf that one eats off of is the same as the other eats off of, but it's that process that has happened within the man that changes the banana leaf."

Charles Eames, Harvard University, 1970

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*Purpose of the Course*

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*Space composition is the creative course of the preparatory year's first semester (5 classes/week). Students study the basics of architectural space composition during the classes. The aim of the course is to develop creativity, and to provide a deeper knowledge of the nature of creating architectural spaces through space-composition exercises.*

*The assignments of the course serve as opportunities - students solve abstract space creation problems through constructional assignments. While working on these problems and during their thorough evaluation, they become familiar with the basic concepts of architectural space, standard types of constructed spaces and the basics of architectural design and modeling. Another important goal of the course is that the students understand the meaning of architectural concept and learn how to elaborate on it consistently. This knowledge will be the base of the process of architectural design in the forthcoming semesters.*

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*Course Overview*

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*'Space Composition' the subtitle of the semester already offers a glimpse into the type of work to be expected during the sessions. Active workshop participation is the foundation of the course, with a quick series of questions and answers. These are likely to spark conversations and debates. The assignments are related to five main topics - the sub-groups of space composition. These topics organize the sessions into 2-week units. At the beginning of the semester, when more mentoring is required, the focus is on guided problem solution and workshop sessions. As we progress in the semester, individual work gains more emphasis in the assignments. The bi-weekly rhythm of the course is set by the setting out and completion of the main assignments.*

*The interim courses support individual work and deeper engagement with the home assignments. The semester is concluded with an in-class design assignment, which is both the summary of knowledge gained during the semester and a preparation for the design course of the forthcoming semester.*

*Both the workshop sessions and the main home assignments can be supplemented with individual work (photos, drawings, descriptions, video footage, music, etc.).*

*The workshop sessions are based on the realization of the current assignment. At the beginning of the session students receive a short introduction to the task before starting the work. During these sessions instructors circulate among the groups, assisting the students.*

*In case of the main assignments the setting and completion of the assignment sets the pattern of the classes. All students present their work individually and the presentations are followed by group evaluation.*

*The purpose is to create a workshop environment which creates the opportunity to receive feedback from fellow students.*

*Besides developing creativity, the other main goal of this study session is to convey early on, that architectural work is communal by nature. Co-operation, building upon and inspiring each other's work are key, as is the conflicting and merging of different opinions.*

*Course leaders may change the methods of the workshop sessions and home assignments, however, they have to notify students on such changes previously.*

*It is useful to document the work of the workshop sessions. Both students and instructors are recommended to take photos of the work during the interim course. These photos will be exhibited at the final, year-closing exhibition and can also become parts of student portfolios.*

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#### *Grades&Evaluation*

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*Evaluation is based on the points that students receive for their work during the semester.*

*The final grade consists of the credit points received for the workshop sessions' activity (50%), the 3 main assignments (30%), the in class assignment (10%) and the portfolio (10%) submitted at the end of the year.*

*All home assignments and workshop sessions are graded according to criteria previously defined by the lead instructor of the given class. Bonus points can be granted for active participation or for other tasks previously defined by the instructors.*

*The principles and criteria of grading, as well as the requirements for receiving points are explained to the students by the group instructor during the first session.*

*Final submission: consists of the models and portfolio submitted to the course leader as the summary and documentation of the semester's work.*

*The submission may contain drawings, photographs, descriptions and documentation of the workshop sessions. Students receive a separate grade for their portfolio book.*

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#### *Final Exhibition of the Faculty*

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*The semester is closed by a final exhibition where the works of the different workshops will be displayed as well as the most interesting problems and solutions that came up during the work process.*

## Syllabus and deadlines

CLAS S	DATE	PROGRAM	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
	12 September	(sport day)	-	-
1.	19 September	preparatory workshop session	SPACE MANIPULATION	introductory lecture SITE VISIT - on external location tasks of measurement-function- analysis
2.	26 September	workshop session		inspirational presentation SPACE INSTALLATION - external location
3.	3 October	workshop session	2D TO 3D	FOLDING&CUTTING
4.	10 October	workshop session		A WORK OF ART TRANSLATED INTO SPACE COMPOSITION  ASSIGNMENT: 1st main assignment SPACE COMPOSITIONS inspirational presentation
5.	17 October	workshop session	ADDITION-SUBTRACTION	ARCHING
	24 October	(sketch design week)	-	-
6.	31 October	SUBMISSION		SUBMISSION: Presentation and evaluation of 1st main assignment  ASSIGNMENT: 2nd main assignment MONTAGE inspirational presentation
7.	7 November	workshop session	3D TO 2D	REPRESENTATION
8.	14 November	SUBMISSION		SUBMISSION: presentation and evaluation of 2nd main assignment ASSIGNMENT: 3rd main assignment PROPORTION inspirational presentation
9.	21 November	SUBMISSION	UPSCALING- DOWNSIZING	SUBMISSION: presentation and evaluation of 3rd main assignment
10.	28 November	IN-CLASS DESIGN ASSIGNMENT		Design assignment: concept-plan- presentation
	5 December	processing week	-	-
	12 December	make up week		Re-take of in-class design assignment, portfolio submission
	17 December	exhibition		Exhibition opening, semester evaluation

## SPACE MANIPULATION

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### Class 1: introduction SITE VISIT

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*After a short introduction the lead instructors provide an overview of the purpose and topics of the course.*

*The first class begins with an introductory lecture in which the basic concepts of space manipulation (proportion, scale, rhythm, shape, color, light and composition) are defined.*

*In the second part of the class the instructors take the group for an organized site visit. We talk about basic architectural concepts through analyzing the visited buildings. Students carry out given measurement, function and analysis assignments related to the examined sites.*

*Suggested locations: Stations of Metro Line M4, Mushroom, Tranzit Café.*

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### Class 2: SPACE INSTALLATION

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*The class begins with an inspirational presentation.*

*Based on the thorough examination of a given location a tool, an object or an installation is has to be created that supports a phenomenon present at the given location, expands the scope of perception or transforms the phenomenon.*

*The installation has to be free-standing and easily destructible. It should not harm the building or its environment.*

*Keywords: thin, low, tall, wide, narrow, bright, dark...*

*Documentation of the work: photos, photo series or videos are required as part of the submission.*

*Suggested locations: University Yard, K building, Gellért Hill, Pagony, Lake Feneketlen, Bikás Park, Vérmező, Castle Hill (Logodi street)*

*Inspiration: Andy Goldsworthy, Pezo von Ellrichshausen, Partizán architecture, pontlabor - nano invasion, Ayse Erkmen The Gap, Martin Pfeifle rotemarcha, Mariana Abramovic...*

## 2D TO 3D

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### Class 3: FOLDING&CUTTING

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*In the first part of the class spatial situations are created by the means of cutting and folding. Changing surfaces and simple structures are built from 2D paper elements.*

*In the second part of the class we create space and body, including the shadow of the object.*

*Choice of materials: A4 size paper or cardboard. The surface of the paper sheets can be modified, colored. Different kinds of paper can be used.*

*Keywords: light, rhythm, structure, gap, pattern, section...*

*The works are recommended to be photographed in different light settings. Through these photos the role of light and shadow in architecture and the use of different light sources and light intensities can be discussed. Also the topics of direct and indirect light, natural and artificial lighting, sun path and orientation can be examined. The works can serve as the base of conversations on architectural photography.*

*The basics of modeling is also part of the class. Students learn about the choice of modeling materials, tools and their sources as well as review several building models with the group. A number of shoeboxes filled with different modeling materials can be displayed.*

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**Class 4: A WORK OF ART TRANSLATED INTO SPACE COMPOSITION**

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*The workshop assignment of Class 4 is to create a dynamic space composition through which the basic qualities of space can be understood. Let's suppose that the space composition to be prepared is a side projection of a particular work of art.*

*Keywords: internal space, external space, temporary or intermediate space, borderline space (the basic types of constructed spaces).*

*Choice of materials: different papers and cardboards, corrugated fiberboard, micro corrugated cardboard, beer cardboard, grey cardboard, photo cardboard.*

*Suggested works of art - see Appendix 1.*

*In the other part of the class the 1st main assignment is set out and accompanied with an inspirational presentation.*

**1st MAIN ASSIGNMENT - SPACE COMPOSITIONS**

*Creating mass and space by means of subtraction and addition. The preparation of the object should relate to a motto - preferably chosen from the list of suggestions below. Students can also suggest mottos when previously discussed with the leaders of the assignment.*

*The material of the model is defined by the course leader. Technique: shapes moulded into formwork are expected as submissions. In the end two models should be prepared - one of the formworks and one of the moulded object. It is best if the formwork is also submitted as an independent object, but at least documented before the process of moulding.*

*The overall dimensions of the object are defined by the study course leaders, however, these are the same for all groups. Students have two weeks to complete the assignment. During the interim course students receive technical assistance with their space composition assignments and gain a better understanding of evaluation criteria. The interim course provides an opportunity for personal consultation, therefore the completed formwork is recommended to be brought to class.*

*Suggested mottos: steady, variable, interconnected, opposite, network, straight, homogeneous, heterogeneous, closed, open, transition*

*Inspiration: Eduardo Chillida, Peter Zumthor - Bruder Klaus Field Chapel*

**ADDITION-SUBTRACTION**

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**Class 5: Arching**

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*A modular structure created by multiplication that has an arching function. It is suggested to be built from rod elements, but other kinds of basic elements can also be used. The rods can be made of wooden skewers or sticks. It is important for the installation to have three dimensions, but it can have different orientations (vertical, horizontal). It can be either independent or connected to other spatial elements (e.g. the legs of a chair).*

*Inspiration: Amateur Architecture Studio: Decay of Dome, Ai Weiwei: Bang installation*

*During the class we discuss the concept of the first assignment. The learnings of the workshop assignment are worth summarizing as a takeaway for the forthcoming home assignment.*

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#### Class 6: SUBMISSION OF SPACE COMPOSITIONS

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*The class consists of two parts. The first part of the class is dedicated to the presentation and evaluation of the submitted works. It is important that each student gets the chance to shortly present their work and explain the underlying concept.*

*After the presentations the students and the group leads reflect on each work. Through these group reflections, students can cross the limits and challenges of their own solution and learn about the experience and problems of their fellow students.*

*In the remainder of the class the 2nd main assignment is set out and introduced with an inspirational presentation.*

#### 2nd MAIN ASSIGNMENT MONTAGE

*Based on the three notions of space composition, concept and perception and related to specific architectural works, we create a flat composition, a montage. Deliberation, abstraction and harmony of composition are key features. The task is a practice of architectural focus and is meant to improve compositional skills.*

*First of all, it is important to understand the architectural motives of the examples - the concept of the buildings, their character, function, applied structures and materials. While evaluating the montages we not only consider the degree of understanding of the chosen architectural example or the quality of representation of the selected detail, phenomenon or mood, but we also value the flat composition as an independent piece of art.*

*While working on the composition we aim to prepare future facade, surface and detail designs. This task is essentially a non-verbal, visually formulated description of a future work. The choice of materials is defined by the course leader. The submitted work should not exceed the size of 30x30 centimeters. Students have two weeks to complete the assignment. The interim course helps the interpretation of the chosen building, thus it becomes easier for the students to highlight relevant details*

*The interim course also provides an opportunity for personal consultation, therefore it is recommended to bring the draft version of the montage to class.*

*Suggested buildings:*

*The Therme Vals (Zumthor), Exeter Library (Kahn), Leça Swimming Pools (Siza), Barcelona pavilion (Mies van der Rohe), Ronchamp (Le Corbusier)*

*See drawings in Appendix 2*

*Inspiration: James Turrell: You who look, Serpentine Gallery Pavilion (Zumthor), Olafur Eliasson*

## 3D TO 2D

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### Class 7: REPRESENTATION

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*The aim of the drawing task related to the 2nd main assignment is that the student understands the architectural representation of spatial relationships in the architecturally significant examples.*

*This is not a passive kind of understanding, but active interpretation achieved during the completion of the assigned drawing task.*

*The class opens the opportunity for conversation about the theoretical background and physical realization of the 2nd main assignment.*

*The learnings of the workshop assignment are also worth summarizing as a takeaway for the forthcoming home assignment.*

*The topic of drawing as such also belongs to this class. Students learn about the choice of drawing papers, tools and their sources, as well as review a number of architectural drawings with the group.*

*Different kinds of cardboard samples can be displayed, and the use of tracing paper introduced and put into practice.*

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### Class 8: SUBMISSION OF MONTAGE

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*The class consists of two parts. The first part of the class is dedicated to the presentation and evaluation of the submitted works. It is important that each student gets the chance to shortly present their work and explain the underlying concept.*

*After the presentations the students and the group leads reflect on each work.*

*Through these group reflections, students can cross the limits and challenges of their own solution and learn about the experience and problems of their fellows.*

*In the remainder of the class the 3rd main assignment is set out and introduced with an inspirational presentation.*

#### 3rd MAIN ASSIGNMENT PROPORTION

*The task is to design and construct a model that can be interpreted at two or more scales, that has different functions and the ability to accommodate distinct spatial activities.*

*The model can represent a huge space and a tiny room, it can be an interior with a piece of furniture or an everyday object, or just an interior represented at different scales.*

*The object can be rotated, opened up or sectioned.*

*Keywords: scale, function, mass, space, rhythm, light, shadow...*

*The choice of materials is defined by the course leader. The submitted work should not exceed the size of 40x18x18 centimeters. Students have two weeks to complete the assignment. In this case there is no interim course.*

*Inspiration: Powers of Ten - Eames, Antony Gormley, Olafur Eliasson: Playing with space and light, Light is life, Anish Kapoor: Leviathan at Grand Palais Paris*



## UPSCALING-DOWNSIZING

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### Class 9: SUBMISSION OF THE PROPORTION ASSIGNMENT

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*The class consists of two parts. The first part of the class is dedicated to the presentation and evaluation of the submitted works. It is important that each student gets the chance to shortly present their work and explain the underlying concept.*

*After the presentations the students and the course leaders reflect on each work.*

*Through these group reflections, students can cross the limits and challenges of their own solution and learn about the experience and problems of their fellow students.*

*In the remainder of the class we discuss information related to the completion of the semester, we make plans for the final exhibition and talk about the portfolio.*

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### Class 10: IN-CLASS DESIGN ASSIGNMENT

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*Concept-plan-presentation. The assignment is to be defined later on.*

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### Class 11

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*Processing week. Re-take of in-class design assignment, portfolio submission.*

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### Class 12

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*The last class consists of two parts. The exhibition that presents the year's work is opened in the first part of the class. After the opening, each study group summarizes the semester separately and the lead instructors announce the grades.*

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### Collection of inspirations (these can be freely substituted with different sources in each study group):

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- Andy Goldsworthy –Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Working with Time, Trailer
- Andy Goldsworthy–Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Working with Time
- Ruth Asawa: Objects and Apparitions
- László Moholy-Nagy: Lightplay: Black-White-gray
- Eames: Powers of Ten
- The Body as a Found Object: Antony Gormley | Brilliant Ideas Ep. 40
- Antony Gormley: Sculpted space, within and without
- Antony Gormley: Second Body| Paris Pantin, 2015
- Antony Gormley: Breaking Bread, TateShots
- Olafur Eliasson: Playing with space and light
- Olafur Eliasson: Light is life
- Anish Kapoor: Leviathan at Grand Palais Paris
- James Turrell: You Who Look

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### Appendix for the semesters' assignments:

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- photos of works of art (for the 1st assignment)
- building documentations (for the 2nd assignment)

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### Suggested literature:

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- Ferenc Cságoly (2013): Three Books on Architecture 1.: Beauty. Akadémiai Kiadó Zrt., Budapest.
- Ferenc Cságoly (2014): Three Books on Architecture 2.: Utility. Akadémiai Kiadó Zrt., Budapest.
- Ferenc Cságoly (2014): Three Books on Architecture 3.: Durability. Akadémiai Kiadó Zrt., Budapest.

August, 2019