

Re-visiting Urbino

How would a visitor see Urbino when entering the town for the first time. He would see a typical Italian medieval town, peacefully resting on a hilltop. What distinguishes this town from any other hilltop town in the area, like for instance Perugia.

One of the main attractions Urbino has to offer is the biggest and best preserved Renaissance palace in Europe. With this palace Urbino is able to attract visitors to come to the town. The palace is a dead body now, it's an artefact from another time. We could still enter and wander through the large rooms, and imagine how it once must have been, fully operational, centuries ago. Only by looking at the size of the kitchen, and imagine the amounts of food that had to be brought in, and the amount of animals that had to be slaughtered, and you can realize how much the impact must have been on the lives of the people living in the Urbino region. Like a modern day factory town.

The awareness of the town's history is its sake, but also its burden. Although the palace doesn't function anymore as such, it dominates the cultural identity of Urbino. Like all cities and towns with a rich, but dead, history, it has to recognize and preserve its past, but also has to reinvent itself and think of what else it is, or can be.

So, what is Urbino today? What else is there, that can contribute to Urbino's (cultural) identity. What could Urbino exploit as well as being typical for the town, the area, Italy, the world. Why else would you come here.

What we ask you is to investigate Urbino in its present time.

Be the visitor, the outsider, who sees things for the first time and therefore differently. Make advantage of your 'not knowing' Urbino. Let Urbino look at itself again in a new and different way. What is Urbino more than the palace? Or what else can the palace offer to Urbino than what it offers now. Could also the palace reinvent itself, are there hidden stories, that should be revealed. Urbino can be defined as much by what it is, as by what it is not. For sure it's not Amsterdam, it's not your hometown, it's not even a nearby town, like Rimini or Pesaro. So tell us what it is to you, make us aware of the things no one noticed, have your focus on its cultural diversity and help to define what could become an alternative cultural identity.

In what aspects does a cultural identity express itself. It's either by its people, how they live, behave, talk, dress, what they do, as by its physical appearance, architecture, road signs, factories, garbage, shops, empty streets, etc. When you think for example of the city of Amsterdam, it is much more diverse than what the brochures tell you. It is indeed the red light district, it will be coffee shops, the Van Gogh museum, Rembrandt, the canals, etc. What contributes to its identity as well are the tourists themselves who define the city, as much as the (multi-cultural) citizens, the PC Hooftstraat (the luxury shopping street for the 'new rich'), Viktor & Rolf (the international fashion label), the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, and for instance the newly developed urban areas on the waterfront.

An American visitor once said that all houses on the canals look the same, of course he was wrong, all houses on the canals are different, not one is alike another, but on the other hand he was right, he was generalizing, and in generalizing he saw clearly what made it a family.

The longer you live in a city, the more diverse it is, and the harder it gets to define what the city's cultural identity actual is. You can no longer nail down this city by

giving a description in a few sentences. We can imagine you can sum up an equal amount of aspects about your hometown, being typical, that forms its cultural identity.

Urbino is small, are you able to see Urbino in more than one way?

See your study as developing a 'concept car', it's not important that the car can't drive, it's more important that it shows what you have in mind. What we want to say with this is, don't worry if your ideas can or can not be applied, it's not important, what is important is that you do something that makes sense to you, when it makes sense to you it will make sense to others, in the end all good ideas will find their way into the real world, no matter how unrealistic they first seem to be.

What to do

Stroll the streets of Urbino, check out the bicycle repair man, attend the library, go for dinner, hang out, see what you can find on internet, talk to local people and choose a topic that you want to investigate, something that is close to your own interests, something that is personal. Avoid doing things you've done before. Use the summer school as a opportunity to make new work, try out new things.

You can either write, collect, draw, map, film, or photograph whatever you think is relevant to get your content.

Present your project in any medium you like. We won't define how big or small your project has to be. A small gesture can be stronger than an extensive survey. What matters is, what is meaningful, how strong is your concept, and what does it need. Never overdesign, nor underdesign, use design as a method to reveal your ideas in the most direct and precise way. We should all be able to read your mind and understand your thinking by looking at the work you did instead of hearing your explanation. The secret of your success lies in the strength of your idea. Design is there to help you making your idea come to life, design in itself can never be the goal, but is the method.

Your project could result in a lecture, a performance, or an intervention in public space, as much as a film, a leaflet, a newspaper, book, or a (or a series of) poster(s), etc.

What else to do

We also want to receive a report of your project. First, because it's another way to think about presenting your work, second because we hope to be able to print your work in a publication, for the purpose of documenting the workshop. Do this on A4 size, portrait size, in two pages (= 1 spread = A3), with your name on it, the title (if any) of your project, a description of your project, and a representation of the final result (in which you could incorporate elements of your research). We need it as a high res. pdf (with embedded fonts and images).

Both project and report should be ready by friday 7th of august for the final presentation on friday the 7th of August at 3 pm.

Work in progress

Since we won't be together as tutors we want you to present your results at the end of each day on single A4 sheets, starting from wednesday, and hang them at a designated area on the wall.

From this day on, you have to do this every day (except in the weekend) until the second wednesday, in this case at least 6 A4 sheets will be on the wall. It will help you to control your process and enables us (and fellow students) to follow it.

Tutors

We are here for you, so the best advice is: use us as much as possible! The best you can get out of this workshop is to confront yourself to us and hear all our different opinions and suggestions. See us as much as possible, don't be afraid to ask us anything you like. We will have mainly individual meetings, we will help you when ever you need us, we let you rethink your work and mainly ask questions, why do you do this, what for, etc. Don't be afraid to get confused by hearing four times different opinions. Getting confused is the best thing to bring back home.

Sign up sheets

We will work with sign up sheets. You will have to sign up on time to let us know when you'd like to meet us. Please sign up the day before. o avoid that we will be there at 9am and no one is there. We'd like to know our schedule a bit in advance. Signing up gives you the freedom to work outside the school, but still have meetings with us at a time that suits you. Make use of it, let it not happen that you fail to talk to us. There should be enough time for each of you to have a meeting with one of us every day.

Schedule

week 1

Wednesday midday

Your area of interest and a preferred medium in which you want to work should be defined. After defining your topic, you can't change it any more, you are still free to shift your medium when your project moves in a certain direction you didn't expected. Ready by 2pm, and over pdf files, presentations 3pm.

Thursday to Sunday

Time for research, to collect your 'raw' material.

Ready by monday morning 9am.

week 2

Monday morning presentations 9am.

Monday to Wednesday

Visualise/design your project, be ready on wednesday by the end of the day.

Thursday

Time for alterations, improvements, finish the details, and think about how to present your project. Work on your spread, describe and represent your project.

Friday

Final presentations, 3pm.

In general, when you are ready before the given deadlines, please continue to the next step.

Group meetings

There will be a few moments that we want to meet as a group.

The first meeting would be this wednesday at 3pm. We want you to present very shortly your project description, and tell us in what medium you'd like to work. You don't have to defend your plan, it will be more like the presentation of last sunday, it can be a silent presentation. Please write down, or visualize your plan in any other way, make a pdf and hand it over to us, so we can group them all and project them again.

The second meeting will be monday morning in week 2, at 9 am, we will collect all your raw material, please prepare a pdf and we will show this from 10 am.

The third and last group meeting will be on friday afternoon for the final presentations.

Besides that we expect you to be there for the lectures.

Lectures

5 Lectures will be given, in te first week on wednesday Armand will speak, thursday Leonardo, and on friday Maureen. In te second week Karel will speak on monday and James on wednesday. Lectures start at 5pm.

Outside Urbino

For those interested in attending one of the most important contemporary art shows in the world, there is the Venice Biennial. When going there keep in mind it can easily take up to 4-5 hours when going by public transport (bus to Pesaro, train from Pesaro to Bologna, train from Bologna to Venice). You could spent the weekend in Venice, and stay overnight. Trains are fairly cheap, sometimes overbooked, which means you have to stand. You can reserve seats online. Going with a group, renting a van, would be the most convenient and likely cheapest option.

Or, if you want to relax. The beach is just 45 minutes away.