

## Urban Body Rotterdam

AR0305 Exploring 3 ECTS

AR0325 Mapping the Urban, Social and Cultural Texture 6 ECTS

AR0335 Transformations 6 ECTS

## Urban Fresco Removal

*Researching the material surface to uncover its immaterial value*



## Spontaneous Communication in the City

Bans, public posting, graffiti, wall drawings or personal messages are used by public bodies, private companies or individuals to communicate with a large number of people and to influence their behaviour and/or actions. Private and public companies use this kind of open-communication to remind individuals of their duties and limitations but they rarely take time to remind people of their rights. Individuals use public communication to externalise their thoughts in a more informal and original way: from graffiti to large urban space interventions. Still the objective of both is to spread their message in the most efficient way.

The whole of these messages creates a communicative body, a collective cultural identity of a certain society. If suddenly, one morning we woke up with no recollection of our lives, one would only have to walk around town to regain sense of belonging to the community, with rights and duties annexed. Looking around we can catch a huge amount of messages, adverts and slogans. This shows us how the contemporary communicative system is able to create a constantly refreshing consciousness.

We can ask ourselves what is the importance of these messages and what is their real purpose. The analysis of social behaviours makes us wonder how this form of communication is used to print a message in our heads.

This form of communication and our daily exposure to it can have both negative and positive effects on our behaviour. It is mostly the negative meaning of these communications, which automatically attributes bad behaviour to anyone placing an unauthorised message in a public space or standing in front of a public sign, as well as the diffuse sense of oppression by the many regulatory signs, which usually stands out. Another unpleasant situation is given by the use of spray paint to tag monuments and places of interest which will then have to be restored and conserved.

Through public communication we get to a unified message, which makes our communities identifiable for their forms of communication. Moreover, the debate about the aesthetic quality of this kind of messages is still open: some find it offensive for the urban landscape; others think they're a form of art (conceptual or figurative). We can add up other considerations on the aesthetic criteria which they represent: the public sign posts or the wall writings which often represent the medium used by an individual to communicate one's position on issues which the media don't tackle, fearing unpopularity.

### **Concept**

This studio attempts to focus on the non-institutionalised messages, to trace messages of spontaneous communication and discuss the creative communication that these wall writings may represent. We will begin by considering that wall writings generally refer to a political group or tendency, a cultural, musical or other movement, which are deeply representative of the culture of the last few decades: differentiation of the groups and relative sense of belonging.

As a consequence we can ask ourselves how many of these messages are truly in our daily living and investigate how many people they represent (tens, hundreds, thousands) and how many people they address: especially when the messages bear a criticising content. In this way we collect the memories of the city and return it to its people through public events and discussions

### **Program Brief**

18 April – 4 June 2011: Studying the Spontaneous Communication in the City

The first six weeks are dedicated to the sharpening of the conceptual and analytical tools as well as to the understanding and embodiment of an experiential and action based approach. Students will have to analyse visible communication in many of the town's roads and investigate the messages, their style and goals of those who create it. Focusing on the whole town will also help us to get a clearer picture to

understand a culture. Touring the city of Rotterdam will help locating the best practices of territorial appropriation in the city. During this period, the locations of possible fresco removals will be tracked down, after the collective analysis of the tour results.

Film projections, Pecha Kucha presentations and lectures by invited guests from partner institutions will complement the program.

#### 4 -12 June 2011: Fresco Removal Workshop

The second part of the program involves forms the main core of the course. It is the actual removal of the frescos.

The fresco removal process needs to take place preferably in closed spaces, protected from the weather conditions and starts with the application of glue of the wall. After 2-3 days that the glue needs to dry a big public event is organised for the transfer of the texts from the wall on the canvas. All participants, students and public, can go through this procedure and create their own fresco. The event is concluded with a large public dinner.

The participants can keep the frescoes they have removed and take this piece of city in their homes.

#### 13-17 June 2011: Post Production

The days following the workshop students will have the time to process the video and images and reflect on the results of the spontaneous communication and fresco removal workshop. At the end of this period a public exhibition will be organized with all the removed frescoes.

#### 21 June 2011: Final Presentations

#### **Partnering Institutions:**

TU Delft

XX Multiple Gallery

Historisch Museum Rotterdam

Tent Rotterdam

CBK, Centrum Beeldende Kunst, Rotterdam

#### **Additional Information:**

**[www.urbanbody.org](http://www.urbanbody.org)**

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