



Editorial

Dear Reader,

On behalf of the Editorial Board, it is my pleasure to present to you the first issue of the *Loci Communes. International Journal of Studies on Spaces in Arts and Humanities, Anthropology and Architecture*. It is a scientific journal focusing on the contemporary research on the cultural and anthropological aspects of newly created spaces, the modernisations of already existing ones, and the newest methodologies of design in urbanism and architecture. Through the journal treated as a platform for exchanging ideas, we would like to stimulate the discussion on the latest research findings in different contexts and between the abovementioned disciplines.

The articles we publish in this issue focus on three thematic areas. The first is shifting away from designing and building objects distanced from people in favour of more human-centred design which is based on understanding human perception, cultural and geographical conditions, and everyday life needs. The second – the inspiration for architectural design coming from art. The third area is the place and understanding of the environment and cultural landscape in design processes.

The author of the first article, Zuzanna Bogucka, introduces the reader to the issue of perception from the perspective of behavioural psychology. The author analyses two important qualities of space perception: legibility and coherence, their understanding and functioning in architecture and urban planning, environmental psychology, and subjective user experiences. In architecture, the author emphasises a tendency to treat legibility as an objective visual quality, a feature of a space organised according to specific patterns. Coherence, in turn, is understood by architecture and urban planning as resulting from the relations existing between parts within the whole space (Lynch, 1960). Environmental psychology, however, treats both the qualities not as objective features of the environment but rather as features perceived by users, subjectively experienced.

Subjectively experienced legibility and coherence, the author emphasises, are used in studies of users' spatial functioning (spatial orientation, navigation, and mental maps). They also determine users' aesthetic and spatial preferences, along with two other qualities – the mystery and complexity of space. According to the researchers, Bogucka emphasises, coherence gives us an immediate understanding of space, while complexity encourages exploration. Legibility is the quality that we infer from the perceived characteristics of the environment. It facilitates the prediction of the features of the environment, understanding its layout, orientation as to what is outside the visible zone. The legibility and coherence of spaces strengthen our sense of independence, supporting our mobility and participation in society.

The issues of independence, mobility, and participation in social life referred to by Bogucka are further examined, this time in the social context, in the text co-authored by Acoyani Adame Castillo, Linda Moreno Sanchez, and Norma Riveros Monsalve, as well as in the article by Eva Alvarez and Carlos Gomez. The authors consider the issues mentioned above illustrating them by describing examples of the situation of women – both as architects and users of space. What is stressed by Adame Castillo et al. is the way we experience our cities. The everyday lives of men and women differ in terms of experience, which often results from their place of residence, belonging to a specific social group or profession. The authors indicate the need and possibilities of reintegrating the public and private spheres into a whole and considering human corporeality as a vital point of reference in design processes. People get closer, understand, and appropriate the space inhabited through the body and perception. According to the authors, urban planning does not recognise the diversity of inhabitants, turning cities into territories for the few.

An important issue that should be reflected in the architecture and urban planning is the daily care of dependent people. In this regard, the authors of both the mentioned articles refer to the feminist ethics of care. If a city facilitates care and, at the same time, champions the autonomy of dependent people, it helps to reconcile private and public lives of men and women, which is made visible in the emotions that the authors treat as indicators of “well-being,” the fundamental analytical axis of the feminist critique of the right to the city.

Alvarez and Gomez, in turn, emphasise the need to introduce gender-sensitive criteria into designing buildings and architectural and urban spaces. As a conceptual framework for developing such standards, the authors adopt the methodology proposed by Bernard Tschumi, treating “theory” as “practice”. Tschumi claims that “theory is the practice of concepts.” In their article, the authors understand the need for and a way to reconstruct the theory of design, especially the concept of space based on

real life. They argue that a theory derived from the needs of everyday life can help redefine quality standards in architectural design and create more inclusive and equitable spaces.

The perspective of the following two articles is set by the relationship between architecture and fine arts, already well-established both in theory and in design practice. Agnieszka Kurkowska considers the possibilities of using artistic activities to integrate the inhabitants of prefabricated housing estates. The author postulates the use of art in the sphere of mental influence, in spaces beyond the tangible physicality and geometrical properties of architectural objects, the sphere of experiences and reflections, ideas and meetings. The space of ideas is a particular category of architecture that requires imagination and combining facts with experiences, ideas preceding a built object. In the areas built-up with prefabricated housing estates deficiencies can be observed, among other things, in the traditional values of the space or the degree of identification with the surroundings felt by inhabitants. Such areas constitute a potential space for activities strengthening the local community in values. The author claims that architectural space, in which the intentions of residents, different perceptions and leading design concepts are combined, are conveyed by the architect to the recipients through the erected object.

Marie Ulber, Mona Mahall, and Asli Serbest present an example of the use of visual arts in redefining the concept of the built environment. To this end, they analyse Allan Kaprow's spatial installations, entitled "Environments", created in the 1960s. According to the authors, they changed the concept of modern art, which extended the idea of a finite object or Closed Form (the Hansens) to a more open process. "Environments" were open both spatially and conceptually. It was possible to enter them – they were conducive to immersive experiences, transformation after joining; briefly put, they provided many alternative ways of becoming. "Environments" were created to blur the lines between production and perception of art, the artist and the viewer, art and life. According to the authors, in today's architecture, a similar spatial and relational change is necessary; it can be made as part of open processes of adaptation of architectural objects while questioning the modernist perception of space. Still, to meet the challenges of the global climate crisis, they must again adapt to new "environments" in order to dynamically react – change over time – along with their users and in line with current social and environmental challenges.

In her article devoted to the issues of the archaeological landscape, Tessa Matteini analyses several vital problems in the field of protection, planning, and management of archaeological landscapes. Taking the landscape architecture approach, the author proposes a set of conceptual and operational tools developed in accordance with the recommendations of

the European Landscape Convention (Florence 2000). According to Matteini, contemporary design culture must focus on the interaction between ruins and vegetation in the archaeological environment. The author focuses on the functions and importance of plant biodiversity in the landscape of archaeological sites and suggests the concept of temporal diversity as crucial for the interpretation and planning of layered landscapes.

Technological progress in the first and second decades of the 21st century made it possible to understand better the human response to environmental stimuli, including cultural and social ones. For that designers try to balance the architecture with ecology and human potential. The Editorial Board of *Loci Communes* hope that articles published in the current issue would encourage the Readers to look at how ecology, human and cultural knowledge, and technology interpenetrate and how their “symbiosis” affect the heritage.

We wish you enjoyable and fruitful reading.

On behalf of the journal’s Editorial Board,
Małgorzata Kądziela,
Editor-in-chief