

ENGENDERING THE CITY

CRAFTING NEW NARRATIVES THROUGH VISUAL ESSAYS

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Cities are engendered - produced and provoked - through the interaction of various, more or less contesting actors. These negotiate and continuously change culturally constructed hierarchies that determine the distribution of roles in a community and in urban space, and the forms of power and exclusion that operate within it. Gender is a central category of social, cultural and political life that influences normative and nonconformist everyday experiences and practices. The city is both a stage for the (dis)play of power structures and gendered dynamics, as well as a direct actor in distributing resources and access. The current political climate has in many ways heightened the nature of public space as a contested sphere along the lines of contemporary urban gender issues.

Content

Questioning categories of gender and sexuality is the **first step** we took in deconstructing the spatial and political regimes which manifest these categories.

Second, we unveiled how uneven power structures and intersectionality play out in architecture, landscape and urban space.

Third, we constructed critical narratives of gender and space through our visual essays and thereby engaged with the fluent, porous and contested nature not just of gender as a category, but also cities and bodies, which undergo constant redefinition and negotiation.

With a focus on current debates and local developments, we discussed Feminist and Queer theory and practices in the context of architecture, landscape architecture, urban theory and geography. We related readings to current events, discussed and workshopped together.

Service Learning

The course constituted a **platform for exchange and critical reflection**, and was intended to bring us together as a team of as learners at different stages: as a **community of practice** around our shared interests in an interdisciplinary approach to complex, intersectional issues. We began our critical engagement with a social urban tour led by SURPRISE. Through this tour, and the team members' individual involvement with further social actors over the course, we explored various narratives that engender the city. Inviting other scholars and practitioners to share their experience with us, we received their input and collaborated.

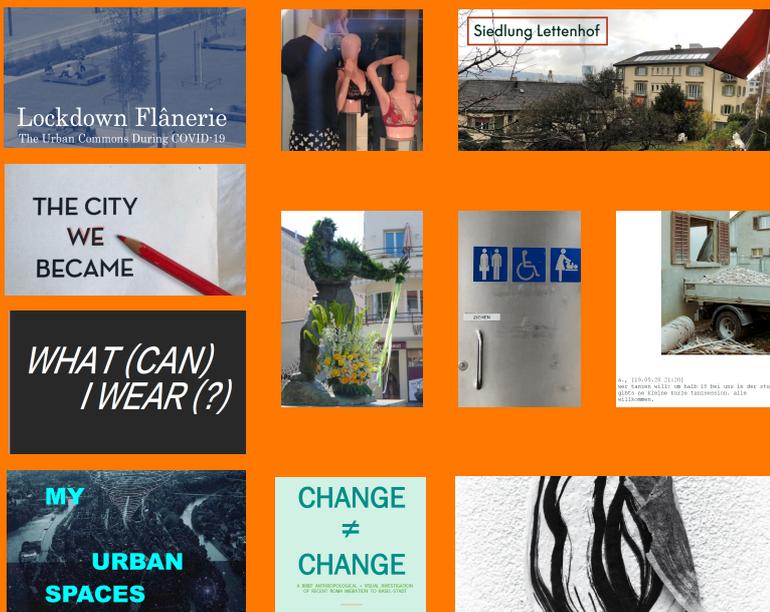
Methodological explorations include a "fieldwork kit" and spatial and participant observation, mapping, creative writing exercises, visual communication. We critically considered the interaction of ethnographic content and visual form in multimodal projects. We explored the visual essay genre as an alternative to text-only formats, and a way to craft new narratives in the context of visual material, addressing wider audiences.

Achievements

- Through this course, we gained the following:
- _an ability to critically reflect on the entanglement of gender and urban space
 - _an understanding of interdisciplinary approaches
 - _skills in fieldwork methods and visual communication
 - _experience in developing independent research projects
 - _creatively communicating research to wider audiences

Participants

Jonas Baum	Muguette Müller	Linus Sutter
Karin Gromann	Vivian Nhieu	Pietro Vitali
Nuria Honauer	Laura Pol	Philippe Widmer
Leta Honegger	Damiana Rudolph	Tracey Woodley
Tomoko Latteier	Nora Seebach	Anna Zweifel
Frances Lucas	Selina Schönholzer	



This course had as its key elements the critical engagement with theory and practice through collaboration with local partners, scholars, practitioners, as well as the exploration of multimodal genres of knowledge production. To implement and realize this key elements, we were supported through IMPULS, a program of the University of Basel and U-Change: www.unibas.ch/impuls

Working with local actors, critically reflecting on gender issues and the inclusivity of urban spaces and communities, we mainly addressed the following Sustainable Development Goals (goals 5, 10, 11 integrated into course content, SDG 4 raised in student feedback; some projects also addressed SDG 1, 2, 3 as intertwined issues):



Source for SDG icons: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>

Source for images: taken from participants' submissions, one as exemplary for each visual essay