

*Master 1
Visit. Prof. Anuschka Kutz
Campus Brussels / Remote
Engagement Urban Cultures
Academic year 2022-2023*

*The studio will run in a hybrid mode
operating roughly 50/50 on campus / remotely.*

Studio Urban Field Lab

Projects for Bucha



Image from Google Earth.

"You can take away people's homes, unfortunately, but not their dignity."

The Ukrainian Architect Slava Balbelk in an interview with Dezeen, April 2022.

Focus and Context

“Urbicide ... is a fundamentally political matter since it represents the violent foreclosure of the possibility of the political.”

Martin Coward, *Urbicide. The Politics of Urban Destruction*, Routledge, 2009, p.43.

The atrocities committed in the Ukrainian city of Bucha and nearby Irpin during the occupation by Russian military forces from the end of February to the end of March 2022 is edged into our collective minds. Small cities and unassuming suburbs of Kyiv became a terrifying global news story.

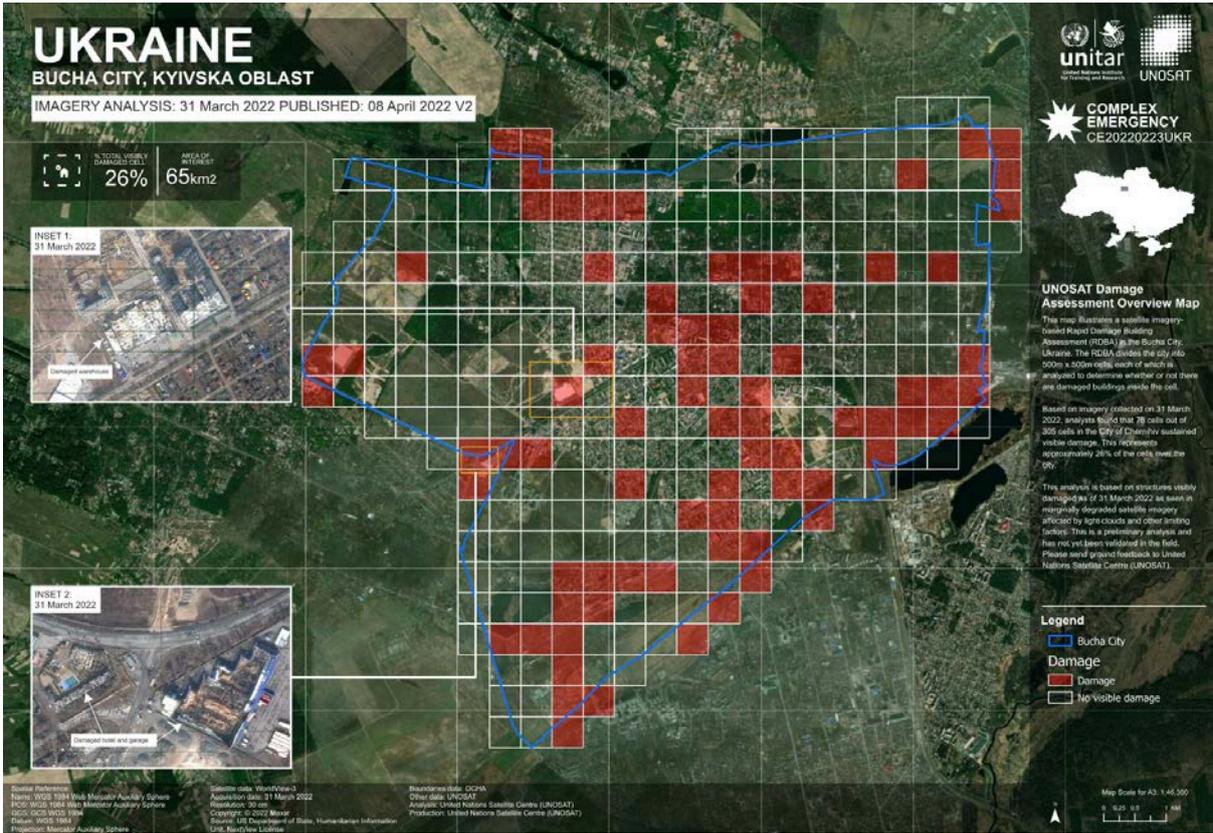


© BBC / Lee Durant, April 2022

“Before the invasion, Bucha was well known in Kyiv as a place to get away, to drop kids off at the summer camp for a couple of weeks or take them to a ropes course called the Crazy Squirrel. Now Bucha is a byword for war crimes, like Srebrenica or My Lai.”

Simon Shuster, *Time*, April 13 2022.

The mental and physical damage that the city incurred are huge.



Satellite imagery-based Rapid Damage Building Assessment (RDBA) Bucha, Ukraine, unitar 6 April 2022.



Image, Fulco Treffers, 2022.



Image, Fulco Treffers, 2022.

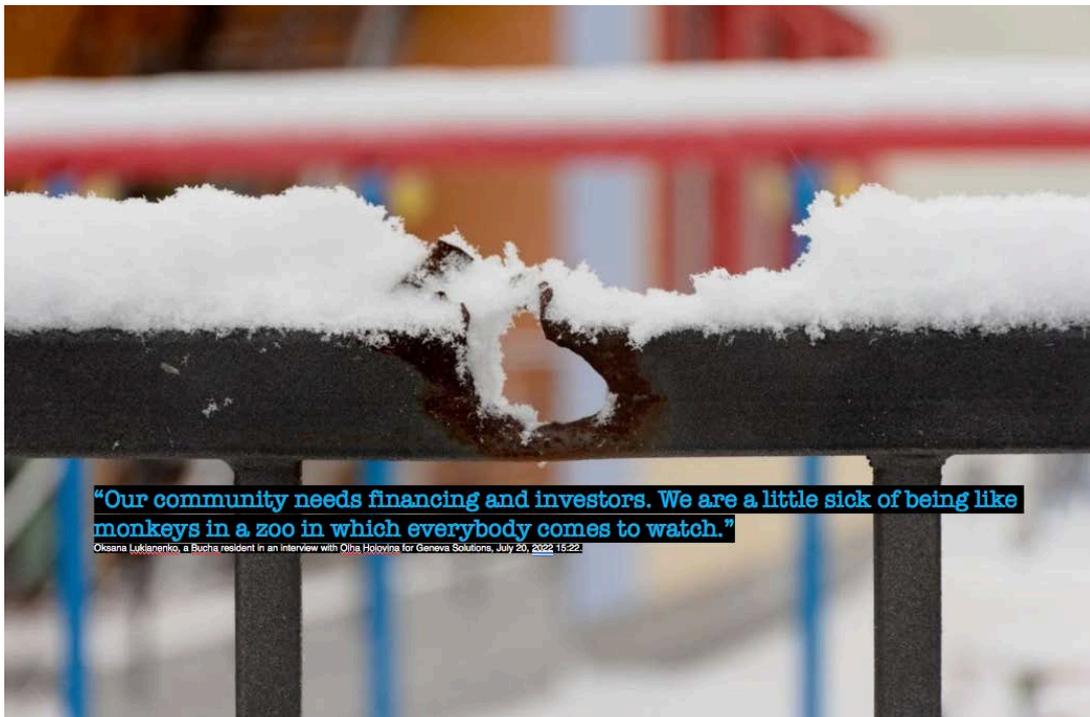
Before the conflict, Bucha had a population of about 36,000. Today it is difficult to ascertain how many people are living in Bucha as many residents have sought refuge elsewhere. Being only 27km from Kyiv, the town is also known as the leafy suburb of Kyiv, alongside Irpin, characterized by pine forests and high-quality natural surroundings, which also characterize part of the cityscape. It was a popular place to live.



Image, Google Streetview.

Sadly, some of these spaces of leisure and also ordinary residential streets are now the scene for investigations over potential war crimes committed.

The atrocities will stay with Bucha. The scars run deep, both in terms of physical but also psychological trauma and destruction. The war is not over and the situation in Ukraine remains uncertain. Despite this, Bucha is not just a tragedy edged into our memory, Bucha is also a living city, with people and livelihoods. The city wants to move on without forgetting lives lost and despite the ongoing uncertainty.



Image, Fulco Treffers, 2022.



Image, Fulco Treffers.

How will the city move on from this tragedy without leaving the tragedy behind? What are immediate needs, what are projected futures? What can the international community of urban thinkers and architects contribute?

“Reconstruction forces us to think about life beyond, or in spite of, war. Reconstruction forces us to see things from the ground and from the perspective of the community, rather than from a distance or above. Reconstruction forces us to consider longer temporalities of transformations, rather than short-lived events cultivated by the media.”

Alessandro Petti (2019), ‘Destruction, Displacement, Reconstruction, and Return’ in Hilal, Sandi and Alessandro Petti *Permanent Temporariness*, Stockholm: Art and Theory Stockholm, p.348.

“It makes a big, big difference in reconstructing a city if there is proper local input,” Pullan says. “There's just no point in doing a reconstruction if you're blind to the political and social realities of the city.”

Prof. Wendy Pullan in an interview with France24, featured on 16 May 2022.

Studio Urban Field Lab will not mandate what will happen in Bucha, this will ultimately be decided by Ukrainians themselves. Our aim is to develop ideas for Bucha, for the immediate future and the wider future in a time of great uncertainty. Our work is not about creating fixed masterplans or importing ready-baked visions, but about assembling spatial and strategic ideas in diverse scales, timeframes and with diverse scope, as a contribution to a growing international archive of ideas.

Collaborations

The studio will work in collaboration with Ro3kvit, Urban Coalition for Ukraine (www.ro3kvit.com), an open-source network of organizations and specialists – both Ukrainian and International - working on a non-profit basis. As a member of its Task Force, I will provide the link between our studio work and the NGO. Ukrainian and international members of the NGO, in particular members of the working group on Bucha within Ro3kvit, will link into the studio work.

<h3>WHO?</h3> <p>We are a coalition of experts in urban planning, regional planning, housing, heritage and related topics as economy, law, energy, circularity, sociology and policy making. Ro3kvit work as an open-source network in close collaboration with students and citizens who can join with ideas, expertise and organisation. We are a mixed team of specialists both Ukrainians and internationals with work experience in Ukraine.</p>	<h3>WHAT?</h3> <p>Ro3kvit, will develop a methodology for rebuilding Ukraine's (physical) infrastructure and cities. We will design for urgent needs in cities now and connect this to future strategies. Learning from the past, we are developing new, future oriented ways of urban design co-creative organisation and sustainable development. We organise public debates, stimulate local action plans and create new plans and strategies for cities in urgent need of revitalising, from an integrated viewpoint.</p>
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From the Ro3kvit Website

The screenshot shows the Ro3kvit website with a grid of 24 team members. Each member's name and nationality are listed below their portrait. The website header includes the logo 'ro3kvit urban coalition for Ukraine' and navigation links for 'About', 'Events', and social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Email, and LinkedIn.

Name	Nationality
Олег Дроздов Oleg Drozdov	UA
Фулко Треффферс Fulco Treffers	NL/UA
Наталі Самовіч Natalie Samovic	LV/PT/UA
Тігран Хаас Tigran Haas	SWE
Ліллет Бредделс Lillet Breddels	NL
Флоріс Алкемаде Floris Alkemade	NL
Філін Мойсер Philipp Meuser	GER/UA
Наталія Мисак Natalia Mysak	UA
Роберт Малл Robert Mull	UK/US/SWE
Маріо ван Шайк Marjo van Schaik	NL/UA
Райан Брент Brent D. Ryan	USA/UA
Анастасія Пономарьова Anastasiya Ponomaryova	UA
Томмі Мекінен Tommi Mäkuinen	FIN/UA
Мартін де Мезенер Martine de Maeseneer	BE
Анuşка Куц Anuska Kutz	GER
Володимир Куліков Volodymyr Kulikov	UA/NU
Дора Мерай Dora Merai	HU/UA
Міръям Німейер Mirjam Niemeyer	CH/DE/UA
Єгор Власенко Yegor Vlasenko	
Іріс Глейхман Iris Gleichmann	
Катерина Лопатюк Kateryna Lopatiuk	
Юліан Чаплінський Julian Chaplinsky	
Олена Чернишова Olena Chernyshova	
Тетяна Гавриш Tetiana Gavrysh	

A snapshot of some of the Task Force members of Ro3kvit. You find more info on www.ro3kvit.com.

We are also currently working on a possible exhibition / conference on *Architecture of Peace* in Sept 2023 at Venice International University. This would provide you with an international framework to exhibit your work.

Ambition / Work

We will work on three core pieces of work

- Research, evidence gathering and analysis of an evolving situation. This will result in a *Collective Spatial Compendium*.
- Collective urban thinking to create starting points for potential scenarios in uncertain times and to coordinate studio-based ideas, expressed through large-scale interactive collective drawings / models.
- *Small-group* projects that tackle specific ideas and themes.

Phases

The semester will be structured into 3 parts that build up on one-another.

Phase 1 (week 1 – 4) – *Collective Spatial Compendium*

With individual and collective efforts, we will create a *Collective Spatial Compendium* consisting of research, analysis and investigations. We will cover multiple strands from spatial to political, societal and environmental. We will not be able to go on site, but we will benefit from material collated by the Ro3kvit working group and other available material. The idea is to create multi-scalar drawings but also models, undertake rigorous investigative research, using a variety of techniques, from analysis, critical mapping, film, testimonies, ethnographic and environmental readings, literature, etc. We will also investigate particular themes and lines of enquiry and create mappings that are of a different nature to traditional analytical maps.

Phase 2 (week 4 – 6) – Strategies & Scenarios

Collectively and in small group work we will create starting points for potential scenarios in uncertain times and to coordinate studio-based ideas. The collective urban thinking will express itself through large-scale models and / or drawings that bring forward specific themes and opportunities.

Week 6 / 7 – Interim Review (tbc)

Phase 3 (week 7/8 -13) – Intervention / Project proposal – Small group projects

We will form small groups of 2 students per group (depending on the actual numbers in the studio) to develop more concrete project proposals. The projects should be of a spatial nature, but they do not necessarily have to result in a building. The idea is to cover themes and ideas that were brought forward by the collective and individual research. Likely themes

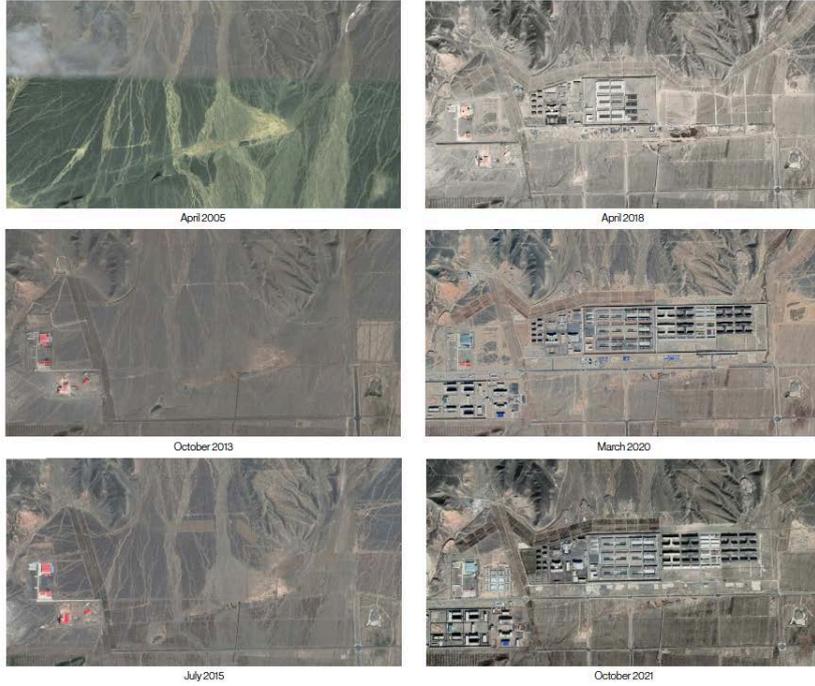
will be: Public and civic spaces within the city, in residential neighbourhoods and on the fringe. Projects that work on environmental issues and aspects of nature, spaces which on one hand has a lot of potential but on the other hand has suffered a lot during the conflict with huge environmental damage and with natural environments having turned become no-go areas. These are likely to be projects that consider the larger scale as well as the close up, forensic scale. There will be projects that deal with mundane and everyday needs, such as housing (both new-built and rebuild or repair), cultural spaces and spaces for work. And there will probably be a group that deals with memory and heritage, working on questions of personal and collective memory and how to address these, as well as places for healing. Lastly, there is likely to be a group working on future potentials of the city-region Bucha, Irpin and Homestál. The aim is to address multiple issues and questions and to work in very contrasting scales, from the macro to the very detailed and close-up.

Week 13 / 14 – Final Review and Submission (tbc)



Extract from Jury Presentation, Beatriz Caon Amenta, Master Thesis Project 2021/22, Studio Urban Field Lab.

For months, Chinese officials had been denying the existence of such camps, even though there is massive evidence that these camps exist and that they expand at rapid rate. When these evidences piled up they tried a new track and started to normalize the camps as places for "free vocational training" (The Guardian, 2018). However, China has been accused of committing crimes against humanity at these camps. Still it disputes any allegations of human rights violations, claiming that the system of "re-education" camps are there to combat separatism and extremism in the region. In 2019 it claimed that all "trainees" have "graduated" and that future training will take place on a voluntary basis (Radio Free Asia, 2019). However, these "graduates" are transferred to factories under conditions that suggest forced labour (ASPI, 2020).



Dabancheng
 43°22'59.69"N 88°17'23.62"E
 It has the largest detention center in the country, being twice as large as Vatican City

19 | Satellite imagery of camp in Dabancheng, Google Earth

Detention Centre Dabanchang, Extract from Reflection Paper, Nargiz Nabirova, Master Thesis Project 2021/22, studio Urban Field Lab.



Road to Resilience. Resisting repression with transient. Spaces for Uyghurs in diaspora.
 Extract from Jury Presentation, Nargiz Nabirova, Master Thesis Project 2021/22, studio Urban Field Lab.

Mode

The studio will work in a *hybrid mode*. We will work remotely as well as on site at the Brussels campus, meeting on campus roughly every fortnight and working remotely the remaining time. You will however have a space on campus every week. We will meet on a weekly basis either on-site or remotely. This dual mode will permit us to integrate diverse online tools, such as Miro which we will use to generate an on-going digital archive of your developing work., and it will help us connect to the NGO. At the same time, we will use on-site sessions to engage in person and to produce hands-on work in situ. Please note that the intended 50/50 mode may have to shift to more remote delivery, depending on the trajectory of the pandemic. The studio language is English.

Links

The studio is situated in the Engagement Urban Cultures. The studio *Projects for Bucha* runs in parallel with the Master Thesis Studio *Fragilities*. There will be peer-review moments between both studios to provide opportunities for exchange and discussion beyond your studio. This is in addition to the Collaborative aspects with Ukraine.

Deliverables

The deliverables are outlined above and will be further refined as the studio proceeds according to project stance of each individual group. You are encouraged to work beyond ‘final outputs’, committing to in-depth, rigorous and critical ongoing research-driven work throughout. Stradling into other disciplines is actively encouraged.

Studio Culture

The studio will unfold in interaction with your projects. The studio will act as a supportive debate platform and workshop. Collective activities and peer debates will be as important as more tailored project discussions with your studio tutor. You will, of course, be supported, but you should also work on your project in a self-directed manner, supported by studio discussions.

Studio Ethos

Studio Urban Field Lab deals with real-world societal, political, economic and cultural transformations for which alternative spatial responses are sought. The studio sees itself as an advocate of our obligations towards the environment, the lifeworld, humanity and society. We need to develop creative ways beyond technical solution to redistribute, harness dormant opportunities, tackle spatial surpluses, deal with situations of conflict, post-conflict, uncertainty and precariousness, articulate mitigating tactics, edit, alter and shift, without conceding quality. We need to reconsider and widen our role and practice field as architects, engage in interdisciplinary work modes to tackle isolationist disciplinary responses, whilst at the same time showing the immense capabilities that our disciplinary field brings to the table. Your projects will need to integrate a clear stance and commitment by acting with conscience and care. We investigate and develop projects through critical practice and in-depth enquiry. This will lead us to coherent, comprehensive and ambitious strategic and spatial responses.

Methodology

We will work in an investigative and multi-scaler manner, relating diverse scales from the remote to the close-up, the global, national, regional, city-wide, localized, inhabited, but also the personal, intimate, close-up scale, linking everyday life experiences of people and their environments, to wider urban systems and in this instance the ongoing conflict. You will need to challenge known ways of working and embrace diverse and unfamiliar methodologies and knowledge fields across disciplines, such as, politics, conflict studies, ethnography, economy, urban geography, circularity, health, environmental studies, sociology and art. The studio is research driven *throughout*, including the design process.



Interactive Conversations between Master Students and members of the 'Make A Difference' Afro-Caribbean Elder Group, London, 2016/17.

Learning Results

Used for the evaluation of the design studio

LR1

The student has insight into different aspects of the architectural process such as context analysis, conceptualization, problem awareness and engagement, ethics and personal imagination.

LR2

The student is able to develop a relevant design project out of various spatial scale levels and the dimension of time. The student is able to act methodologically throughout the designing process in a creative manner.

LR3

The student is able to communicate his/her research from an artistic-architectural perspective in a visual and verbal way. The student is able to communicate his/her research to a wide range of stakeholders (international, cross-disciplinary, ...).

LR4

The student is able to develop a relevant design project out of a conceptual-programmatic logic.

LR5

The student is able to develop a relevant design, based on a complex cultural / societal context analysis.

LR6

The student is able to integrate visual and graphical competencies in the research process.

LR7

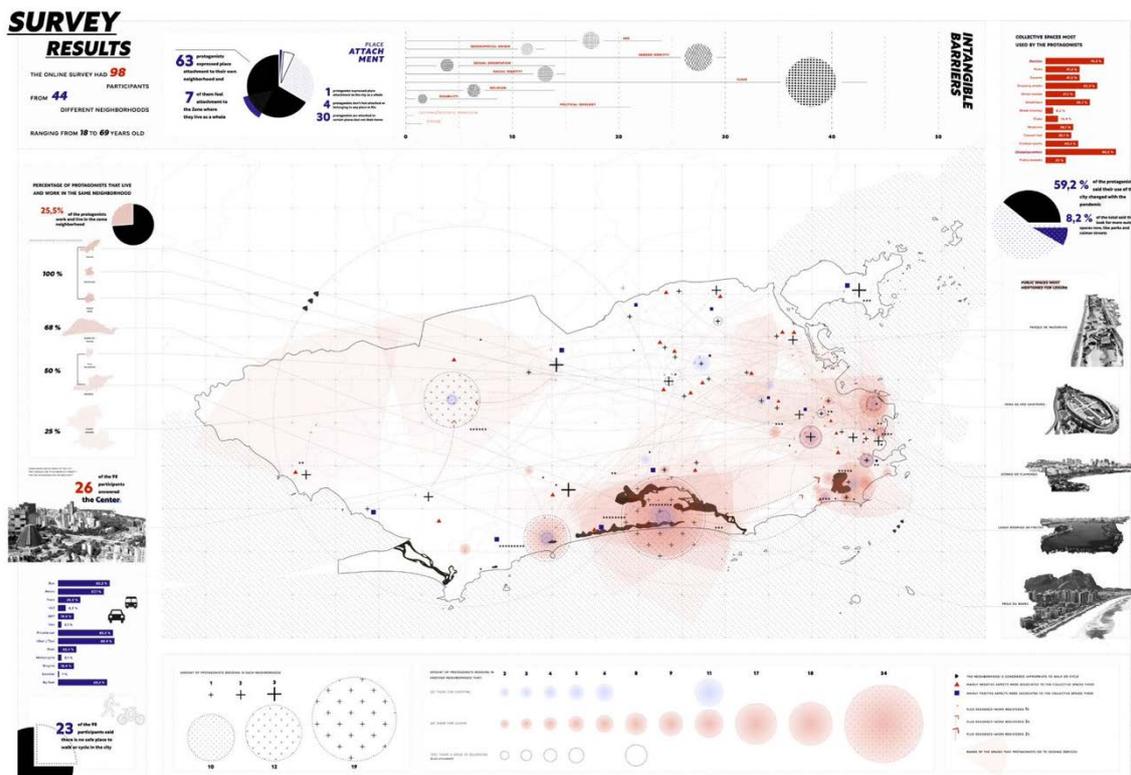
The student is able to gather and compare cultural-theoretical information from a wide range of international sources, focusing on their practical application. The student is able to develop alternatives from an (out of) multidisciplinary and intercultural perspective.

LR8

The student is able to expand his/her knowledge continuously and creatively.

Please email me should you have further questions, at: anuschka.kutz@kuleuven.be See previous work here <https://www.blog-archkuleuven.be/urban-field-lab/>

Thanks.



Intangible Barriers, Extract from Master Thesis Project, Beatz Caon Amena, Studio Urban Field Lab, 2021 / 22.