

KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture
Campus Sint-Lucas Brussels
maib14
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Lars Fischer

Landing (The Farm)



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“[...] there is nothing more innovative, nothing more present, subtle, technical, and artificial (in the positive sense of the word), nothing less rustic and rural, nothing more creative, nothing more contemporary than to negotiate landing on some ground.”

Bruno Latour, *Down to Earth*.

Today's environment is defined more and more by an uncertainty and an indeterminacy. A multitude of troubles, from weather extremes, economic crises, and political turmoils evidence that the straight path forward charted by modernism is not viable and alternative ways of living, and understanding the environment we live in are needed. But finding a way within these “new” complexities and often contradictions is complicated.

Landing offers a redress, explicitly and extensively referring to a deep engagement with terrain, with context, with people, and with different ecologies, from a local, and a global perspective. It suggests concerning ourselves with our present through transformation and not through production. This involves negotiating with the various agents and actors around us, human and more than human, and embracing the unpredictability of these encounters. It means being open towards indeterminacy and creating more a livable present through the shared making and meaning of our environment. In landing the environmental and the social cannot be thought apart.

In this studio we will explore together what positions architecture can take in embracing indeterminacy and what transformation means for design. We will approach architecture from a decidedly ecological and social perspective. In looking at different ways in which our bodies engage with our surrounding the studio is also inherently political.

Departing from the site, an active organic vegetable farm dating from 1866 in rural Flanders, this studio will take a detailed look at how the architecture of the farm is defined and created by its terrain, beyond the mere technical and historical. We will search for the stories that are told by various actors and agents and try out how these stories can guide us. The farmstead will be the site of both exploration and experimentation.

The farm is a particularly pertinent case study as farms historically have not been designed by architects. Despite the occasional foray of architects such as Le Corbusier (*La ferme radieuse*) or Cedric Price (*Westpen*) farm buildings have generally been conceived and constructed by craftspeople, but more recently with industrialized prefabricated ele-

ments. On the other hand, the farm has been a test ground for numerous experiments that go “beyond sustainability” such as permaculture. This makes the confluence of architecture and agriculture an especially relevant place to study alternatives for a more ecological and social architecture.

This will be context for a new school, that operates outside the confines of the institution. This school is a project initiated by NDRGRND to engage alternative forms of learning (and unlearning) from and with the farm, a place where a complex layering of life and work (human/non-human), history, and future converge. We will look at how we can intervene architecturally, to create a new context for learning on the farm. The aim is to together conceive an architecture not only for learning, but of learning, from and with the farm and to “negotiate landing on some ground.”

The studio is broken down into three phases. The first phase, the Critique, is broadly concerned with different notions of engaging with our context and will take a critical look at how this may be thought in architecture and theory by reading relevant texts. The Critique phase will conclude with a collected archive of reference images and texts that acts as a shared resource for the semester.

The second phase, the Analysis, will build on the Critique to frame and express a specific view(point) on architecture in the context of indeterminacy. We will visit the farm, observe the farm and work on the farm, studying the buildings, the environment, the cultural, historical, and social context, the materiality and architectural typologies. Special focus will be put on the encounters that define the architecture and keep it active. We will interrogate how our bodies depend on and impact different actors and agencies in and around the farm and what sorts interactions are formed. The analysis will be organized according to different scales ranging from 1:100.000 to 1:1 and will be developed both theoretically and empirically. A strong emphasis will be put on documenting, recording, and describing the process of learning from and with the space and the experience of the farm. Through this act of representation an aesthetic language should be developed that communicates your personal viewpoint and that will inform the final phase.



Equipped with research, analysis, and representations of the farmstead, you will identify a thematic focus, a terrain, and scale to be addressed. With this focus relevant habits and conventions will be examined and questioned, to take a critical position in relation to the farm as a learning environment, and associated notions of architecture within the broader framework of the state of the world, and the current state of architecture specifically.

In the last phase, the Design, specific architectural interventions towards a learning environment at the studied farmstead will be developed. These interventions, building on the positions, can take on different forms and media. The designs should articulate a specific relationship towards learning and an engagement with the specific ecologies of the farm. Special attention should be paid to the interplay of various design tasks going beyond the primarily visual, and connecting with the domain of sensual experiences and bodily practices, as well as the social and the societal.

The representations of the project should build on the aesthetic language explored in the analysis phase. The manner in which the project is represented and communicated will play a crucial role in defining your position and in advancing a convincing design.

By focusing on the negotiation of landing on the farm to develop an ecological architectural project, alternatives beyond conventional practices will be advanced. Through means of observation, documentation, analysis, design and ultimately representation the projects will build new narratives and propositions that inform architecture engaging the local and global processes that shape our environment.

“Because of its concrete properties and material conditions, agrarian life is necessarily the basis of any alternative economy, any alternative society.”

Kristin Ross, *The Commune Form*, 41.



Timing

Week 01/24.09.23	Introduction	CRITIQUE
Week 02/01.10.23	Associative Archive	
Week 03/07+08.10.23	Farm Workshop	ANALYSIS
Week 04/15.10.23	Farm Analysis (Context)	
Week 05/22.10.23	Farm Representations	
Week 06/29.10.23	Farm Speculations	DESIGN
Week 07/05.11.23	Farm Positions	
Week 08/12.11.23	Farm References	
Week 09/19.11.23	Project Development	
Week 10/26.11.23	Project Development	
Week 11/03.12.23	Project Development	
Week 12/10.12.23	Final (P)review	
Week 13/17.12.23	Final Review	
Winter Break	No Studio	
Winter Break	No Studio	
Week 14/07.01.24	Exhibition	

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