



# ambiances.net

international ambiances network

letter N°4 autumn 2011

## éditorial

### As the network goes from strength to strength...

This is our fourth newsletter and it will deal with the growth of the network and a number of key upcoming projects. So there are a few surprises in store!

2011 witnessed two major events. First, the Munich Urban Design and Urban Society Conference and Workshop presented in more detail below by Damien Masson and Rainer Kazig. It was conducted wholly in English.

Second, the Video & Ambiance Seminar (Séminaire Vidéo & Ambiance) co-organised in Grenoble by Aurore Bonnet and Laure Brayer in October and conducted entirely in French. Sound recordings of both events will be posted on the ambiances.net website together with a detailed presentation of each participant.

A number of major projects that will take place over the next few years were also announced in 2011.

- the Second International Congress on Ambiances will be organised in the Canadian Center for Architecture, Montreal, from 19 to 22 September 2012, around the theme of ambiances in action. This newsletter includes a concise presentation of the Congress and the call for papers may be downloaded from our website.

- The second project concerns the imminent launch of a bilingual French-English scientific review: Ambiances. Revue Internationale sur l'Environnement Sensible, l'Architecture et l'Espace Urbain / International Journal of Sensory Environment, Architecture and Urban Space. The review is presented in more detail below and a call for articles will be going out very soon.

We also wish to give the ambiances.net website a makeover and we have begun to consider ways in which we could boost its attractiveness by changing its layout and

## contents

2011 - 2012

Past events  
and upcoming projects

adding headings and functionalities. We are confident that the new-look website should be up and running in 2012... watch this space!

Just a brief overview of our network: it currently comprises 300 individual members and about 20 international research teams. Incidentally, you will shortly receive - or you may already have received - an e-mail to help us update our files requesting a few short pieces of information: your academic or professional institution, physical location, five key reference words and a personal photo. Thank you in advance for supplying this information to Marion. It will help us all to get to know one another better and facilitate exchanges and cooperation. You should also bear in mind that if your research team wishes to join the network or co-organise an annual conference, this can always be arranged. Last but not least: the editorials. They are a source of pride for the network and almost 50 have appeared to date, this work is still going on... Ambiances' horizons are getting broader all the time, a constant reminder of the diverse approaches and intense passions that it is capable of unlocking.

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## blogs

### Alingsås lighting design workshop blog

Vincent Laganier coordinates a blog for the lighting design workshops that have been organised in Alingsås (Sweden) over the past 11 years. It covers events and carries pictures of the installations or interviews with lighting designers and is a key resource for providing the latest lighting design news.

Feel the light - The church day-night report (lighting designer head, Stefan Graf, United States)  
[https://community.lighting.philips.com/blogs/alingsas\\_workshops/2011/10/12/feel-the-light--the-church-day-night-report](https://community.lighting.philips.com/blogs/alingsas_workshops/2011/10/12/feel-the-light--the-church-day-night-report)

Video, presentation and article posts  
Use of LED lighting in the PLDA Alingsås Workshops, 2011  
[https://community.lighting.philips.com/blogs/alingsas\\_workshops/2011/10/14/use-of-led-lighting-in-the-plda-alings%C3%A5s-workshops-2011](https://community.lighting.philips.com/blogs/alingsas_workshops/2011/10/14/use-of-led-lighting-in-the-plda-alings%C3%A5s-workshops-2011)

URL of blog : [https://community.lighting.philips.com/blogs/alingsas\\_workshops](https://community.lighting.philips.com/blogs/alingsas_workshops)  
Contact: [vincent.laganier@philips.com](mailto:vincent.laganier@philips.com)



### A new danish network

Atmosphere: A Network for Research and Experiment

A new informal network. They have held 4 meetings in the spring, all informal, presenting the different interests of the members. One meeting is planned for the autumn for which we have a room to our disposal to make experimental interventions into.

So far it doesn't have a webpage, but they made an experiment with using facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/183693435019016/>  
Contact : [carsten.friberg@gmail.com](mailto:carsten.friberg@gmail.com)

### Leblogdelaville (city blog)

Latest news, conferences, photos, research, readings, initiatives, meanderings and impressions of all things urban...

Leblogdelaville is intended to boost reflective thinking and to serve as a self-training and knowledge sharing platform. Exploration, analysis and dissemination are what underpin this area of research where issues interweave, collide or blend together to provide a snapshot of urban knowledge, perceptions and practices at a given time. The blog tracks information gleaned from journalists, artists, researchers, professionals and citizens who are constantly dealing with urban issues. Leblogdelaville was started in 2006 by Nicole Guichard who continues to update it by trawling the web as well as the social network sites (Facebook and Twitter) for relevant material.

For more information, go to  
<http://leblogdelaville.canalblog.com/>  
Contact: [nicole.guichard@neuf.fr](mailto:nicole.guichard@neuf.fr)

### Video & ambiance seminar

«Vidéo & Ambiance - Approches vidéographiques dans la recherche urbaine à travers le rythme» [Video & Ambiance - rhythm-based approaches to using video in urban research] was held in Grenoble on 25-26 October 2011 and brought together between 60-80 people every day at the ENSA Grenoble.

Anthropologists, ethnologists, architects, geographers, and video and film makers all came together to present how they use video in urban research.

This stimulating cross-disciplinary dialogue opened up possibilities for research into architectural and urban ambiances in terms of the theoretical and methodological definition of video practices and the processes involved in combining video and ambiance from a rhythm and multi-sensorial perspective.

You can find details of the programme and a short CV for each participant at Ambiances.net (<http://www.ambiances.net/index.php/fr/conferences/270>).

The sound and video proceedings from the seminar will be posted in early 2012 on Ambiances.net.  
<http://www.ambiances.net/index.php/fr/conferences/270>

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## Ambiances in action

The International Congress on Ambiances will be held under the aegis of the Ambiances international network. The congress, organized every four years, is one of the network's main events, an international gathering for researchers, artists and players engaged in analyzing the ambiance-related dimensions of the built environment and in the sensory construction of the contemporary world.

Many approaches are at work in the field of architectural and urban ambiance, and these multiple contributions nurture its rich diversity. The International Congress on Ambiances aims to give voice to this activity, feeding on work exploring new forms of exchange between what is designed and what is experienced, between the measured and the qualified, the projected and the tested, the material and the immaterial.

The Congress will be held for four days at the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA), in Montreal, from 19 to 22 September 2012. It will seek to express advances in learning and new hypotheses proposed by the various disciplines and fields of activity which address the question of ambiances.

### Congress theme

After the first International Congress on Ambiances, "Faire une ambiance / Creating an atmosphere" (Grenoble, 2008), our second congress will focus on "Ambiances en acte(s) / Ambiances in action".

We aim to explore the various operational registers of ambiance, be they of an architectural, urban, social, aesthetic, artistic, political, technical, environmental or pedagogical order. In what framework(s) and by what process(es) do ambiances take effect? In what respect do ambiances contribute to transforming the built environment and changes in the contemporary urban world? How can we conceptualize ambiance on the basis of the effects it produces and the consequences it entails?

### Topics

- The many ways of writing ambiance
- The technologies of ambiance
- Sharing ambiance
- Forms of urbanity in ambiance
- The performances of ambiance
- The pedagogy of ambiance
- The ecology of ambiance

The congress is jointly organized by the Ambiances international network ([www.ambiances.net](http://www.ambiances.net)), the Ambiances Architecturales et Urbaines laboratory (UMR CNRS 1563, France) and the CCA.

### Schedule

Dec. 31, 2011 Deadline for initial proposals.

Feb. 15, 2012 End of reviewing, response to authors.

Apr. 30, 2012 Deadline for receipt of papers (6 p).

May 25, 2012 Response to authors for final versions.

Jun. 15, 2012 Deadline for final versions.

### Publication of proceedings

The papers received and validated will be printed and distributed to participants at the congress. Contributors may publish their papers in English, French or jointly in both languages.

The organizing committee of the congress will suggest to some authors that they submit an extended version of their paper for publication in a new international journal dedicated to the field of ambiances (journal being developed).

Conference review

## Urban Design & Urban Society,

**The emergence of urban atmospheres between design practice and social invention.**

Damien Masson et Rainer Kzig

After Rio de Janeiro (Shared Ambiances, November 2009) and Aarhus (SoundActs, September 2010), the third annual international conference of the Ambiances Network, Urban Design & Urban Society, took place in Munich from 6-8 October. The theme was the emergence of urban atmospheres between design practice and social invention.

It was organised jointly by the Department of Geography of the University of Ludwig Maximilians and the International Ambiances Network and hosted about 40 participants (over half of whom delivered a paper). This was testimony to the keen interest in ambiances in Northern Europe and many researchers were present from Germany, Denmark, the UK and the Netherlands. Moreover, by harnessing the notion of ambiances to (active and reactive) innovative social practices and «tidy» spatial (design) practices, this conference - in addition to stressing the network's geographical openness - provided three complementary ways of observing the scope of the whole notion of ambiance.

First, in terms of the disciplinary fields represented. Whereas in France the notion of ambiance is mostly the preserve of architecture and urbanism, the Munich Conference stressed its interest for the social sciences and philosophy. Geographers, sociologists, anthropologists, musicologists and philosophers spent three days exchanging with architects and urbanists around the theme of architectural and urban ambiances. The papers given and the related discussions both illustrated how much disciplinary approaches influence the theoretical conception of the notion of ambiance, sometimes triggering heated debates (for example, can we design ambiances in the same way as we project architectural forms? Does ambiance exist outside of our experience of it?). In particular, the debates pointed up the opposite conundrum, namely, how the notion of ambiance questions disciplines themselves from the inside-out, which is especially clear based on objects and methods.

Second, in terms of the objects dealt with and methodologies deployed. The conference was split into five sessions that focused on: (i) the conception (or design) of ambiances; (ii) ways of perceiving the notion of ambiance



in the social sciences and the humanities that get beyond the issue of their design; (iii) the role of ambiances in safeguarding spaces; (iv) assessing urban spaces that are fragmented and dispersed by ambiances; and (v) ways in which ambiances become embodied in bodies (especially resistant bodies). Using these five themes - all based around the meeting of ambiance, design, and societies - a diverse body of research was presented on a whole host of topics including: the creation of an impression of a warm ambiance in cafés; being put in a specific mood in a given situation; using ambiances as a social and political governance tool; the role of ambiances in a theoretical understanding of periurban spatial phenomena; and «provocation» (of space, behaviour) by the use of bodies. These were all a testimony to the broad thematic scope of «ambiance-centric» research. In the same vein, the conference was an opportunity for putting forward methodological proposals that illustrate the effort necessary (auto-ethnographics, video editing, theatre, etc.) for adapting objects considered by approaches emanating from recognised disciplinary fields. Moreover, the focus on the methods used highlights the epistemological scope of the notion of ambiances even more clearly, especially when it shakes up disciplinary methodologies (and by extension, the very ways in which they develop knowledge) and the range of issues addressed.

Third, in terms of theoretical references and considerations. The high proportion of Northern European researchers has combined with a mismatch between bibliographical and theoretical sources around the notion



of *ambiance* (for French-speaking researchers at least), frequently identified with the philosophical acceptations of Gernot Böhme and Hermann Schmitz and the sociological approach of Martina Löw. The conference also generated fruitful debates that focused on practical considerations of the notion of *ambiance* (i.e., how can the notion of *ambiance* become a socio-political analytical tool?) as well as more theoretical matters (how to assess *ambiances* from a post-phenomenological perspective? what role can *ambiance* play in neo-Marxist approaches? How can Actor Network Theory help us assess social and sensorial situations, etc.)

The conference witnessed intense debates over the reach and scope of the notion of *ambiance*, thanks in part to the large number of papers that presented theoretical research findings. Conversely, fewer papers were presented on empirical approaches and field research findings and these mostly came from doctoral candidates and young doctoral researchers. Moreover, this observation needs to be qualified: for a start, much of the research presented related to work in progress with as yet relatively few «deliverables» and three workshops organised during the conference focusing on field research experiments helped make up for the lack of practical material.

So, three workshops reinforced the pleasant *ambiance* created during the conference and got all of the participants involved by setting up micro-research units into (i) digital technology in cafés; (ii) finding one's way with a map vs. using a Smartphone; and (iii) actions involving

digital practices on-the-move. The conference participants spent an entire afternoon trawling the streets of Munich to find the best café for surfing the net, the navigation methods involved in using a map vs. GPS, and the specific postures and urban figures involved in using roaming digital devices. Everyone then presented their findings during brief presentation-discussion sessions that, while less formal and academic, nevertheless opened up the whole *ambiances* topic to the themes of the digital city. The evening meals were just as pleasant and enabled participants to «remain in the *ambiance*». Munich's contrasting *ambiances* - from Bavarian taverns to post-industrial lounges - were used as complementary fields of investigation on the way to new research horizons...



## Ambiances

International Journal of Sensory Environment, Architecture and Urban Space / Ambiances, Revue Internationale sur l'Environnement Sensible, l'Architecture et l'Espace Urbain.

The Ambiances journal is a by-product of the International Ambiances Network and is intended to present research works in the domain of architectural and urban ambiances. The aim is to put to the test how we live in places and conceive of the contemporary world with a sensory perspective. By introducing the human sensorium into architectural and urban spaces, the methods for designing and producing the built environment are presented in a fresh light, the inhabitant experiences and workaday urban situations are enhanced and the changes of the ecological and socio-aesthetic urban transformations can be evaluated.

### Pluri-sensorial.

The domain of ambiances has developed apace over the past twenty years or so, focusing in particular on material atmospheres, perceptive configurations, physical phenomena and "affective tonality" of places. It lies at the very heart of any sensorial approach of inhabited spaces and reflects the sheer diversity of the senses (light, sound, heat, smell, air flows, kinesthetic, touch, etc.). Obviously, pluri-sensorial and inter-sensory researches are especially welcome.

### Multi-disciplinary.

As research into ambiances lies at the juncture between sensorial, built and social forms it requires a multi-disciplinary perspective. It may focus on a physical context dealing with the propagation of signals in a built space, on a social aesthetic that examines shared sensorial experiences, or on project design and practice that focus on the sensorial aspects of built spaces. One of the core aims of this review is to forge multi-disciplinary research links between the social sciences, engineering sciences, architecture and urban planning.

### Multi-scale.

Although it is concerned with analyzing the sensorial world as it relates to built environments and spatial and other material planning approaches, this research field does not lay down any pre-determined - micro or macro - scalar hierarchy. It can be defined using multi-scalar - ergonomic, architectural, urban or territorial - criteria so that any built space or living pattern may be analyzed in sensorial terms.

Architectural and urban ambiances welcome any research that analyses the sensorial production of the contemporary world and they are characterised by diverse approaches and wide-ranging contributions that underpin their inherent richness. The Ambiances journal strives to provide a suitable forum by drawing research into new relationships between design and living, between what is measured and characterised, what is projected and actually experienced,

and between the tangible and the intangible.

This will be a freely-accessible bilingual (FR-ENG) «e-journal». It will publish original articles and a system of headings/key words may be used to search publications by theme.

The journal will have a scientific committee, an editorial committee, a desk editor and a peer-review committee.

There will be two different article formats: long articles of approximately 30,000 characters and shorter articles of around 12,000 characters. Other sections are also planned such as reading notes, republication of older, little-known articles, translations of foreign language articles, and brief reports of experiments related to on-line audio visual documents. Indeed, the whole theme of ambiances is well suited to web-based, multi-media resources (particularly sound clips, digital images and videos).

All articles will be subjected to a double blind peer-review process by two referees (both authors and referees remain anonymous throughout the process). The peer review committee will carry out a third review of the article and, once it has considered the remarks of the two referees, it will deliberate on publication possibilities and conditions.

## Lighting-Architecture research unit at ENSA Strasbourg

The creation of the Lighting-Architecture research unit (Laboratoire Lumière-Architecture) in 2007 was the brain-child of Dominique Laburte, lecturer at the Strasbourg ENSA institute of architecture. It offers first-year masters students a course based around experiments on architecture models and computer simulations. Coursework draws upon sample «lumbox» and architecture case studies from the twentieth or early twenty-first century. Experiments are prepared in Strasbourg and the models are then subjected to artificial sunbeams and sky conditions at the CSTC and Louvain-la-Neuve institute of architecture.

Final year students can also use these facilities to verify their end of coursework.

The extension to the Ensa Strasbourg campus will include buildings to house a simulation apparatus for models. The research unit will be used to teach courses on topics relating to natural light, sunshine or lighting ambiance and will also serve as a project workshop resource centre. A partnership arrangement with the University is currently being set up.

Contact: dominique.laburte@strasbourg.archi.fr



## Publications

### Faire une ambiance / Creating an atmosphere

Proceedings of the International Seminar, Grenoble, September 2008

Under the direction of Jean-François Augoyard.

Bernin, Editions la Croisée, 2010, 527 p. Collection «Ambiances, Ambiance»

What creates ambiance and how is it produced in today's cities?



This is a tricky question theoretically that frequently remains below the surface in the relevant professional practices, however, it has made considerable advances over the last ten years. We now know that simply applying technical and regulatory devices is no longer enough to design and handle ambiances and the

quality of built space. In response to new expectations of users, inhabitants and citizens, new project management, design and creation practices have emerged, coupled with a booming field of cross-disciplinary research.

A conference organised in September 2008 by Laboratoire Cresson (UMR [integrated research unit] 1563) around the theme of architectural and urban ambiances ("Ambiances architecturales et urbaines") [CNRS/MCC] provided an overview of the different practical and theoretical attitudes emerging worldwide that help nurture the International Ambiances Network. Architects, planners, landscapers, environmental designers, artists, neuro-knowledge engineers, philosophers, sociologists, geographers, historians and political scientists from over 60 countries, carried out an in-depth critical analysis, related their creative experiences and proposed approaches to research and action structured around the three axes concerning the nature of ambiance, how it is created, and exercising «control» over ambiance in public and private space. This book will interest anyone who is in any way tasked with creating and maintaining quality of life as well as those who worry about it and wish to know more about this new way of perceiving everyday space.

It may be ordered directly from the publisher:

editions@alacroisee.com

<http://www.alacroisee.com/>

Rainer Goetz / Stefan Graupner:

## Atmosphäre(n) 2.



Collection of the different papers presented at the 'Atmosphäre(n)' conference held at the University of Würzburg (Germany), edited by Rainer Goetz and Stefan Graupner.

Content (by extracts):

- Atmosphärische Räume (Hermann Schmitz)
- Atmosphären des Lichts - Medien des Urbanen? (Jürgen Hasse)
- Atmosphären - Wahrnehmungen im Umfeld der Kunst (Andreas Rauh)
- «Jede Stadt ist ein Seelenzustand» - Über städtische Vergesellschaftung und Identitätsanforderung (Martina Löw)

Prizewinning thesis:

## On the sonic image of the city.

Designing soundscapes in the contemporary city .

Radicchi, Antonella . School of Architecture and Planning at MIT (USA), and at the Faculty of Architecture in Florence (IT), 2010.

Awarded of the INU AWARD for the best dissertation in Urbanism in 2010

To support the integration of Soundscape Studies within the disciplinary field of Urbanism required Antonella to define a new subfield of Urbanism; that allowed her to identify in the realm of Sensuous Urbanism - whose origins can be found in the studies Kevin Lynch did at MIT in the Fifties along with Gyorgy Kepes - the theoretical frame from which she exposed the predominance of sight over the other senses; She also emphasized the importance of finding a holistic approach to the discipline of Urbanism, identifying the sonic dimension in particular as one of the possible paths leading to said objective.

She then explored both soundscapes mapping tools and soundscapes design tools within the disciplinary fields mentioned above to show their limits and potentialities.

In conclusion, she conceived and proposed the analytical tool of "tender sound map" (of Florence) and the design tool of "sonic niche" as a resource for a design process able to achieve the ideal synthesis in designing

physical and acoustic space in contemporary city.

The "tender sound map" of Florence ([www.firenze-soundmap.org](http://www.firenze-soundmap.org)) is an example of soundmap for the city of Florence, which she developed from scratch, where the sonic environment is interpreted from an emotional standpoint; the "sonic niche" is a design tool which she defined as "a relational sonic space of intimacy and sarin whose changing boundaries are defined each time by its own structural and sound qualities".

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[www.firenzesoundmap.org](http://www.firenzesoundmap.org)

Book published

## Risk Management in substandard housing

: Perceptions, new environments and new environments,  
Mendes Patricia, Annablume Ed., São Paulo, 2011  
[http://www.annablume.com.br/comercio/product\\_info.php?manufacturers\\_id=1247&products\\_id=1509](http://www.annablume.com.br/comercio/product_info.php?manufacturers_id=1247&products_id=1509)



Two projects of Patricia Mendes

- 2014 Bixiga :

A Safer neighborhood. / Un quartier plus sûr.

- Cabuçú Voices :

The contribution of the residents in urban planning of its territory / La contribution des résidents dans la conception de leur territoire.

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