



Source: 'Edge Effects in Urban Ecotones', SCRIPTS FU Berlin and Walter Gropius Chair FADU-UBA Buenos Aires, 2024

### ::: Title

Designing for Democracy | Edge Effects in Urban Ecotones

### ::: Theme and site

This studio invites students to design a transscalar network of everyday spaces of encounter as infrastructures for democracy around the Ex-Flower Market in Berlin's Southern Friedrichstadt district. The Ex-Flower Market urban project was developed on an abandoned post-industrial site through an experimental process initiated by the Berlin Senate after the fall of the Wall. From urban periphery to urban centre, this district now stands out as an illustration of the highly fragmented contemporary city, where the unnoticed disappearance of spaces of encounter threatens the conditions of democratic coexistence. The studio immerses students in the urban spaces and actor networks of the district, with the aim to develop eco-socio-spatial ideas for the places where people experience differences and yet perceive others and other forms of life as equal, where they can learn to tolerate, debate and comprise. The urban landscape will be conceived as a critical foundation of everyday democracy: challenged, vulnerable, yet crucial.

### ::: Research question, theory and methods

Building on the research workshop 'Edge effects in urban ecotones – fostering resiliency in contemporary urban redevelopment projects in Berlin, Buenos Aires and beyond\*', the studio proposes to address the

interstices of today's spatially, socially, and ecologically fragmented urban landscapes as 'urban ecotones', a metaphor drawn from urban ecology. The studio focuses on the study of 'edge effects' that unleash positive forces from the encounter of different social groups in a shared spatial arena. Theories of democracy are mobilised for landscape architectural interpretation based on a reading of sociologist Rainald Manthe's writings on everyday meeting spaces. Fieldwork along the *Travelling Transect* method, defined by landscape scholars Lisa Diedrich and Gini Lee, will form the basis for the development of a *plan-guide*, an adaptive 'anti-masterplan', inspired by landscape architect Alexandre Chemetoff. Students will also study landscape architectural theory and contemporary examples drawn from professional literature, inter alia the *Landscape Architecture Europe* book series. They will sketch out plans, tour the district, talk to stakeholders, sample findings, deviate from their initial ideas, find new ones, record them, compose in-studio artistic installations, deploy on-site space activations, exchange ideas online with students from the University of Buenos Aires who work on the same topic but at different sites, and they will draw a strategic design for a network of squares, streets, parks, empty lots, libraries, schools, cafés, supermarkets, museums or else, which, as infrastructures for encounters are places to promote our democratic coexistence.

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### ::: Aim

In this studio students will design a *plan-guide* presenting a network of spaces that unleash edge effects in selected urban ecotones of Southern Friedrichstadt, including an in-situ space activation during the WIA Women in Architecture Festival (19-29 June 2025).

### ::: Excursion

The studio includes fieldwork and stakeholder visits in Berlin's Southern Friedrichstadt district and an excursion to the Copenhagen-Malmö metropolitan area from 16-20 June 2025 (week 25).

### ::: Supervision

Lisa Diedrich (head of Chair) and Inci Sagirbas (tutor at the Chair).