Urban Violence Laboratory

Seminar Terminal Prep +
Advanced Architectural Design Thesis Studio

Elisandra Garcia / Visiting Assistant Professor
Elisandra Garcia (Eli)

(she/her/hers)

Mexican-born
Designer + Activist + Educator
LGBTQIA2S+

Eli Studio est. 2015

Creative Practice

Architectural and Urban Design
Art and Fashion
Research
Activism
Fundraising
Community Organizing

US + Mexico

@_elistudio

Visiting Assistant Professor of Architecture
Design for Spatial Justice Fellow
Portland Architecture Program
University of Oregon
What is the most pressing need in Portland, Oregon?
Is a building always a solution?

**How can we work with social and physical structures to mitigate and prevent violence in our urban environment?**

*Gun violence, addiction, opioid epidemic, petroleum pipelines, police brutality, climate and violence refugees, public school system, healthcare inequality, modern-day slavery, gang violence, incarceration rates, racial and sexual violence, mass immigration, domestic violence, confrontations, mass shootings, suicide, mental health, policy, resources, food deserts, hunger, disease, environmental abuse, division, hatred, pain, anxiety, depression, poverty, hunger, corruption, disease, pollution, toxicity.*

Students and faculty are the agents of change, but the community is the EXPERT.

Research = reading, writing, DRAWING, CONNECTING, proposing
Architecture and Urban Violence

Seen, unseen, visible, invisible, embedded, constructed.

"Even a casual glance at the repertoire of the built environment reveals that structures (from palaces to illegal settlements, from propaganda exhibitions to jails, from barracks to detention centers, from suburban complexes to slaughterhouses, and from separation walls to concentration camps) either sanction violence or give it a spatial ground to thrive."

Architecture and Violence, Bechir Kerzari

"Urban violence (and the fear thereof) can be said to emerge out of the intersections between structures, processes, narratives, practices and bodies that constitute the urban and this is particularly relevant in the so-called information age, in which the speed, scale and dimension of the circulation of representations, discourses and ideas make the interplay between direct, structural and cultural violence increasingly more complex."

What is Urban Violence, Simon Tulumello

Figure 2. Text analysis of abstracts of articles about urban violence in Scopus (our elaboration; tool: KH Coder).

Violence, however, is not only visible and felt. The current urban chaos is also the result of “nested socio-political, legal, and economical structures” that create oppression and inequity.

The urban is then, “also a social and existential condition”.
Research, Draw, Research, Draw

How can we employ research and representational tools to understand urban violence?
Students develop project themes responding to an Urban Violence issue in Portland, Oregon. Local site, research, and community group.
Drawing as research.

Data Visualization

How to inform and motivate?
Drawing as research.