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Inhabiting Insecurity. Practices and Representations

Session 8 – Introduction

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Within the current prevailing insecurity climate, humans develop and integrate, to their daily life, individual and collective strategies to continue living an ordinary life, to ensure a continuum of habits and corporality. These strategies, be they more refuge or navigation, rely on space devices, prosthesis, high-tech gadgets, specific movements and practices, etc. The immunity issue (Sloterdijk, 2005) underlies, more than ever, living practices in their uses, their representations and their cartographies of the place, the city, the world and their own body. How is this insecurity cartography built and what practices does it generate? What are their impacts on the construction/conception of both our paths (Virilio, 1996) and our interiors, that is to say, on our relationship to both the public and the private spaces? Can we say, like Virilio concerning speed, that insecurity is a milieu?

In order to answer these questions, we have proposed some clues for reflection :

Sense of Self and space representation

If inhabiting is a sense of self in space (Sloterdijk, 2005), how does insecurity impact this sense? What are their atmospheric determinants ? How do they affect our “body status” (Guisgand, 2012) ? what is the share of the factual and the psychological in our representations of territory security or insecurity?

Stays and paths in insecurity

In 1993, Morphosis published *Connected isolation*. The monography title sums, according to Sloterdijk, the big principle of modernity. Six centuries before, around 1300, Guillaume de Saint-Pathus distinguished two aspects of existence: the home and the ride (la demeure et la chevauchée). How is insecurity expressed through these modalities of existence: stay and journey, openness and isolation? For Sloterdijk (Sloterdijk, 2005), being is inhabiting an island, investing an interior. In the most private space to the most public one, in our staying spaces as on our paths, we are supposed to continually try to build interiors, bubbles. How are these atmospheric interiors shaped? How are their limits, their thresholds and their openness to the world defined?

Safeguard atmospheres

Due to the increase of insecurity, barricades are rising, surveillance is amplifying,

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“pacification,” security and labelling operations are widespread. What are the atmospheric consequences of security? Do they hinder our freedoms? Do they exacerbate inequalities or, on the contrary, do they smooth them out? Do they in fine change the feeling of insecurity? How do they affect our ways of being together? Can we really live in the “guarantee city” (Breviglieri, 2013)?

The papers presented here may have taken for thought, other routes. They show that insecurity perception is a matter of senses and sens more than a matter of reality. For Farzaneh Semati and Hamidreza Ghahremanpour but also for Isabel Barbas, the common hypothesis is probably the link between insecurity and incomprehension of space. Semati and Ghahremanpour show that the unknown lead to the emotion of fear while Barbas expose the capacity of ephemeral artistic practices to enlighten us about a world blurred by the virtual whose reality now escape us.

Ari Koivumäki confronts the field. His text shows the difficulties in constructing and complementing a method - especially in times of Covid 19 - to define the real factors of safety (and unsafety) sense.

But for all, the question remains the same, a question for designers : how to build a more livable city.

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