



# Urban Legends

*Studio Gay Menzel addresses the complexity of the context as a source of development of a narrative linked to the site itself.*

*This highlighting tool reveals the inherent qualities of the place and integrates projections or personal aspirations into it, with the broad ambition of reconnection to the environment.*

Urban legends are short fictions that come close to myths, urban tales, contemporary legends, which spread in popular culture by oral transmission and proliferate through social networks. These stories that circulate and that everyone knows and that are considered to be true. Is what happened to your mother's friend, your uncle's girlfriend. It's all about that alligator living in the sewers of New York. These legends are mysterious, terrifying or funny. They are adapted to the local folklore by word of mouth, through hearsay.

Each city produces these murmurs, like an echo.

*Double exposure,  
photograph of Martigny site one and drawing of the underseaworld of the Crespo island,  
20000 leagues under the sea, 1870, Jules Verne*





# *The making of sense*

*In this time of crisis, and in the post-confinement, a reassessment of our way of life is essential.*

*The quality of our relationship with nature, with the territory, with our way of living is questioned. Maybe a solution would be “resonance”, of which the German sociologist Hartmut Rosa speaks, proposing us to redefine our relationship with the world, to create what he calls the axes of resonance?*

*Is it the “care” that Heidegger talks about that induces an exchange with the environment?*

*Are there other ways to be explored?*

Architects are actors at the heart of this fundamental problem. They have a role to play in implementing the vision of how to live / inhabit of the society as well as in shaping the context:

to establish a link, between people by promoting the “social”,  
to reconsider the relationship to the built and the non-built,  
to think of new strategies, in order to generate quality and meaning, in the current responsible and sustainable context.

# Unveiling narratives

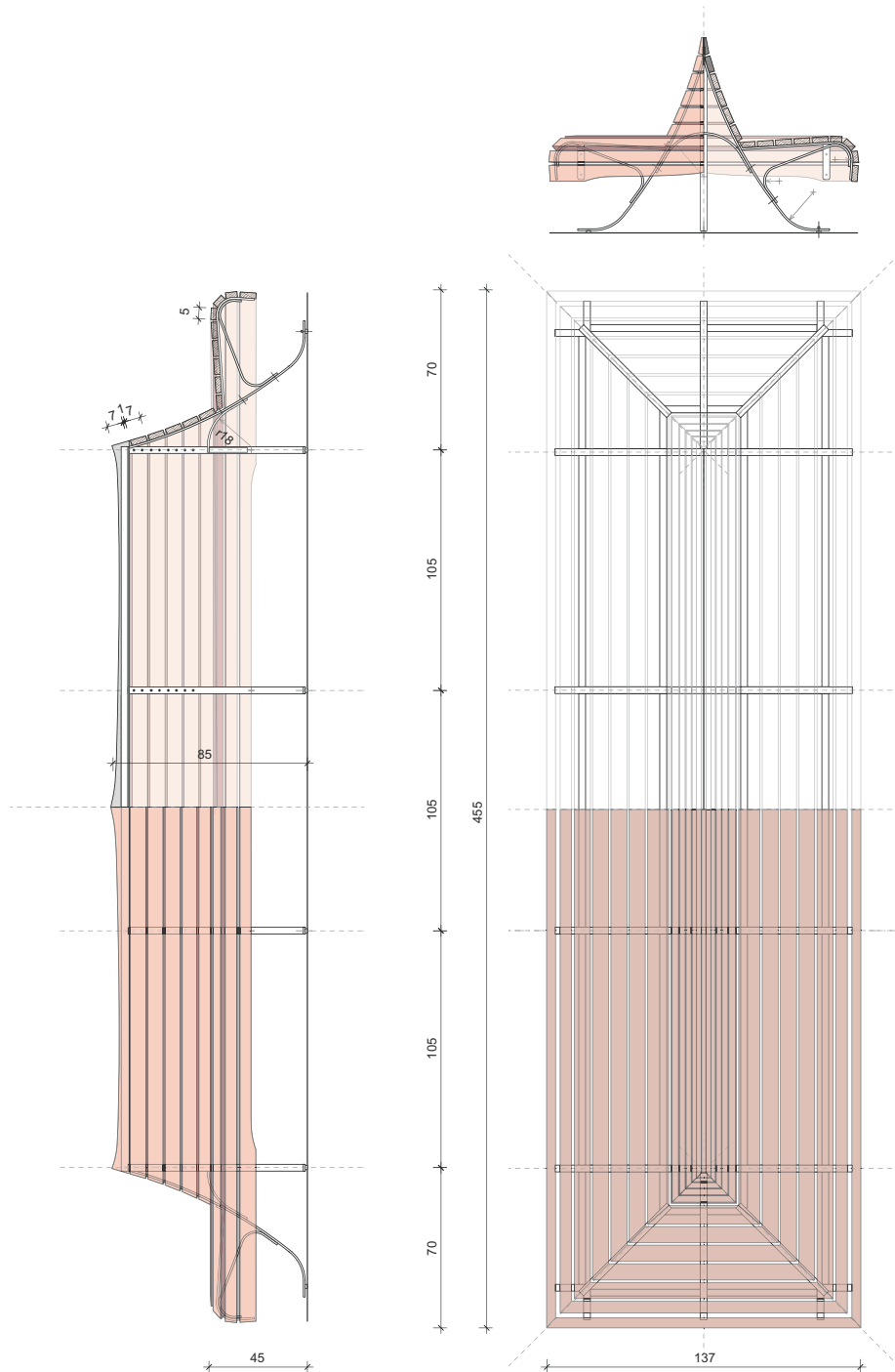
*The development of a project strategy is addressed through the narrative, as a crystallization of a specific site vision (understanding) and personal imagination. How does the architect, as a person, as a user, influences and generates anchor points to make places legible, porous and appropriable in order to give them meaning ?*

The studio explores the way the project operates, studies how the design process is constructed, develops reading keys for the establishment of a coherent discourse. The narrative becomes the tool that allows to develop a practical approach to projection in architecture.

The objective is to develop the observation, the reading of site complexity, the imagination, and the ambition to create, in spite of all the constraints of the project, an architecture which refers to something and which revives collective and shared experiences.

The studio develops a coherent idea starting from the territory and its landscape, with the infrastructures and constructions all the way up to the very detail that should reflect influences and enable evocation.

This is an opportunity to assess what you, the students, can bring in by intervening, revealing experiences (vécu) and secrets.



*Bench of the landing wharf of Port-Valais, construction drawing, bureau GayMenzel*





# *On the crossroad*

*The town of Martigny in Valais extends at the crossroads of mountains and traffic routes, between the inflection of the Rhône plain, the strategic rock of Batiaz and the valley which leads to Grand-St-Bernard. Its three points arise from this landscape with a strong topography, where historic passages, infrastructures and cultural community have always coexisted. The semester focuses on its peripheral zones, in relation to the great Alpine landscape.*

Strategic place for the Romans already in the first century, with the passage of Via Francigena, which leads pilgrims from Canterbury in England to Rome. These sites, rich in historical layers, are in close relation with the topography and infrastructures. The limits of the agglomeration's perimeter question the notion of sharing of these zones and provide the backdrop for the reflection of new forms of housing and production as a territorial issue. It is about a respectful, resilient and sustainable occupation of the territory, transposed through the architectural project.

In the second half of the year, we follow the now disused oil pipeline, which passes through Martigny, came from Genoa, a port and industrial city in northern Italy. The topography of this city as well as the importance of its industrial zones will be questioned, in continuity with the reflection initiated in the autumn semester.