

Call for papers Claustrophilia

The worlds of clausturation, between desires and transgressions

In psychiatry, claustrophilia can be defined as a morbid tendency to live in closed and isolated places. Elvio Facchinelli, who first theorised it, refers the causes to the primary need for fusion with parental figures, for a return to the enclosed space of the maternal womb, to the indomitable tension of shutting oneself up in a claustrum to protect oneself from an outside world perceived as dangerous. The claustrophilic impulse would lead one to project, in one's own home, the image of the protective, adherent, enveloping maternal womb, which would save one from the harshness of the world. From the very places of confinement, it happens that recluses no longer wants to leave. Turn to be agoraphobic, patients or prisoners both refuse and fear the outside world in order to stay in an ultra-protective interior. But this interior does not necessarily take on the small dimensions of *existenzminimum*. It is often the opposite that the claustrophile seeks: the generosity of the *existenzmaximum*.

This tendency had already been observed by Kafka in *The Burrow*. He portrays a creature (the narrator himself) who spends his solitary life improving the protective devices of a huge underground lair built by himself. This transformed interior, increasingly hermetic, soothed his terror of being attacked by enemies. In this story, the perception of time is completely disrupted. The protagonist lives in a timeless present, in an eternal place. The question of infinite time and the resulting "presentism" is also introduced by Facchinelli, who identifies a "claustrophilic zone" that excludes the temporal factor in psychoanalytic devices and where individuals lock themselves into an atemporal present.

More recently, the "writer in the bedroom" Bill Bryson, by imagining that he has infinite time at his disposal to travel from one corner of the planet to another, on board a time cursor that slides over the centuries, launches into the description of a world history without leaving his own home, the imagination becoming a capacity to project oneself outside the limits of one's own secure, watertight shell. The inner withdrawal, into one's protective cocoon of the 19th century bourgeois house or flat, in the sense of putting oneself in parentheses in these spaces saturated with objects, furniture and knick-knacks, in its hushed and upholstered ambiances, constitutes a sort of paroxysm of the taste for a voluntary and consensual confinement, where the interior universe becomes a protective refuge, a revelation and a mirror of the personality of its inhabitant.

Moreover, the histories of architecture and design present a sampling of very varied experiments, dreamt or realised, of places adhering to the body, introverted, dedicated to spatio-temporal immobility and isolation: *The Living Containers* that Sottsass created for the 1972 "New Domestic Landscape" exhibition at MoMA in New York, designed to counter the "fearfulness" of dystopian worlds; the colourful and ultra-modern *Mobile Housing Unit*, designed by Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper for the same exhibition, is presented as a "hi-tech household appliance" to be "intensely" inhabited; or the six proposals - unfinished between 1992 and 1994 - of *Cellules*, by the Franco-Israeli artist Absalon, intended to respond to the basic needs of their designer once projected on one of the six continents.

Other places besides the home also lend themselves to confinement. Claustrophiles express an infatuation for enclosed and heterotopic spaces, in the theatre and in the cinema, to the point that in the 1980's Quebec theatre developed claustrophilic dramas in which space and emotion are combined within a passionate subject. Indeed, these people show an extreme, even autistic, emotional attachment to the objects that populate and surround their enclosed spaces, to the materials that clothe them, to the architectural elements that make them up.

Containment may also not be literally "chosen", as a response to an impulse, but rather "agreed", as the price to be paid for psychological coping strategies. The envelopes of confinement then become matrices, in this case quite tangible, to guarantee the survival of individuals. These extreme environments thus host communities that find themselves living and working in isolation. In this sense, many extreme situations generate desired and desired conditions of confinement, whether in submarines, space stations, or Antarctic bases, producing on individuals physiological and psychological effects that modify their relationships to time and space, but also to their comrades, in a huis-clos that is too often a non-thought.

Another huis-clos, with the traumatic and global ordeal of confinement due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The lockdown, generalised to entire societies, makes us share the experience of a restricted spatiality and an altered relationship to time, experienced as a kind of revelation and accelerator of our civilisation. A revelation of our relationship to the "inside-outside", with also this, perhaps, equally singular experience of un-lockdown, of rediscovering the "outside" after having let oneself be surrounded by the protection of the "inside".

At the same time, this sanitary confinement brought to light a singular dimension of the computer tool, networks and services, in that online applications played a predominant and determining role, reinforcing and confirming new uses, particularly those of a sociability from within. A part of the population has discovered the isolation of confinement, and has even sometimes taken a liking to it, both accompanied by and reinforcing the uberization of services.

Finally, clausturation does not only have a physical dimension, as the walls can also be virtual and digital, assembled from bricks of the Internet, video games, social networks or chat or videoconference platforms. A whole immersive world at your fingertips and screen, self-sufficient, an outside world without leaving home. Recent studies have shown the enormous hypnotic power of screens, for their soothing function, infallible enough to reduce the user to a state of dependence, acting as a dissociative tool in relation to stimulation from the outside. The impulse to cross the membranes that isolate them from society, which is already very weakened in claustrophiliacs, is neutralised, as is the incessant desire to return to this pre-natal place, because the reassuring, almost uterine function is assumed by the technological object, whose attachment is exacerbated.

Objectives

This colloquium aims to bring to the table a wide range of disciplines that observe the phenomenon and universes of claustrophilia and its multiple effects on the design of spaces, on the way in which thresholds and borders between inside and outside are shaped, on uses, but also on the claustrophiles themselves and their way of inhabiting the space of their clausturation, whether it is tangible or intangible.

The aim is to approach these events in a transdisciplinary manner, by crossing and assembling points of view and expertise, in the manner of Studies, by means of scientific papers followed by round tables.

The proposals for papers may present case studies or address the phenomenon of claustrophilia from a more general point of view. They may concern history, contemporary issues or a theoretical dimension. They could be part of the following issues:

- What generates and produces the taste, the desire or the need for confinement? What are the conditions that produce claustrophilia? Who are the actors? What are the drivers and motivations?
- If the environment is a rigorous mirror of the investment of our psyche, how are these places of confinement organised and do they articulate the relationship between space and time? Does this particular relationship change the behaviour and the relationship to reality of claustrophiles?
- What is the nature of the spaces and objects of claustrophilia? Who designs them and for whom? Are they thought or unthought?
- Can claustrophilia be considered only as a morbid investment in limits? Is it also an accelerator of creative and conceptual processes?

International and transdisciplinary conference

The conference is aimed at architects, interior architects and designers involved in the design of "claustrophilic" places; historians, critics and experts in the human and social sciences, geographers, psychologists, psychiatrists, MD and neuroscientists, etc. involved in the exegesis and critical interpretation of these "interior landscapes" constructed in situations of confinement, whether voluntary or not. The colloquium is also open to contributions from artists, writers, photographers, directors, and those who reinterpret claustrophilic spaces through their art.

Call for papers

Proposals should not exceed 500 words and should last thirty minutes. They should be written in French or English and be accompanied by a short biography of the author of about 150 words. They should be sent before 10 February to the following e-mail address: manon.kalbez@ecolecamondo.net.

Provisional calendar

10 December 2021: Call for papers sent out.

10 February 2022: Receipt of proposals for papers.

15 March 2022: Selection of papers and announcement to speakers.

17-18 May 2022: Meetings at ÉNSA Versailles and Ecole Camondo-MAD (France).

Location(s)

ÉNSA Versailles, 5, avenue de Sceaux, 78000 Versailles, France.

Ecole Camondo-MAD, 266 Bd Raspail, 75014 Paris, France

Scientific Committee

- Javier Fernandez Contreras, architect and doctor in architecture (Madrid School of Architecture - ETSAM), associate professor and head of the Interior Architecture Department at HEAD - Geneva
- Imma Forino, architect, PhD in Interior Design and Interior Architecture from Politecnico di Milano, professor of Interior Architecture and Exhibition Design, Politecnico di Milano, AUIC School, researcher at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies - DASTU.
- Aurélien Fouillet, Doctor in Sociology from the University of Paris Descartes following a Master's degree in Philosophy and associate researcher at the Centre de Recherche en Design (ENS Paris Saclay/ENSCI).

- Alexis Markovics, PhD in the history of modern and contemporary architecture from the University of Versailles Saint-Quentin/ÉNSA Versailles, Ladrhaus, director of research and teacher at the Ecole Camondo, researcher at LéaV.
- Charlotte Poupon, designer, PhD in aesthetics and neuroscience from the University of Artois, director of pedagogy and teacher at the Camondo School, associate researcher at LéaV.
- Marion Trousselard, MD, HDR, associate professor at the Val-de-Grâce school in "neuroscience and cognitive sciences", director of the neurophysiology of stress unit at the Armed Forces Biomedical Research Institute (IRBA), researcher at the University of Lorraine, APEMAC UR 4360, Metz
- Annalisa Viati Navone, architect, PhD in architecture from the University of Geneva, professor of History and Architectural Cultures at ÉNSA Versailles, researcher at LéaV and at the Archivio del Moderno (Accademia di architettura - University of Italian Switzerland).

Scientific leaders

- Alexis Markovics, PhD in history of modern and contemporary architecture from the University of Versailles Saint-Quentin/ÉNSA Versailles, Ladrhaus, pedagogical coordinator and teacher at the Camondo School, researcher at LéaV.
- Charlotte Poupon, designer, PhD in aesthetics and neuroscience from the University of Artois and the Armed Forces Biomedical Research Institute, director of pedagogy and teacher at the Camondo School, associate researcher at LéaV.
- Annalisa Viati Navone, architect, doctor in architecture at the Institute of Architecture of the University of Geneva, professor of History and Architectural Cultures at ÉNSA-Versailles, researcher at LéaV and at the Archivio del Moderno (Accademia di architettura - University of Italian Switzerland).

Organizing Committee

- Pierre Louis Gimenez (Université Paris Saclay/LeaV-ÉNSA Versailles/Ecole Camondo-MAD)
- Manon Kalbez (Ecole Camondo-MAD)
- Florence Tajan (LéaV/ÉNSA Versailles)

Scientific secretariat (for any information request)

- ● Manon Kalbez / manon.kalbez@ecolecamondo.fr

The conference is launched by LéaV-ÉNSA Versailles in partnership with the Ecole de Camondo - MAD.