

# URBAN INTERMEDIA: CITY, ARCHIVE, NARRATIVE

Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative and Graduate School of Design, Harvard University

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An investigation of new media-rich methods of interdisciplinary urban study, developed at Harvard with the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, *Urban Intermedia: City, Archive, Narrative* is on view at SALT Galata, March 7-April 1.

*Urban Intermedia: City, Archive, Narrative* presents innovative methods of interdisciplinary urban study developed in the context of the [Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative](#). A four-year investigation funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Initiative brings together scholars and designers to propose new approaches to the study of urban environments, societies, and cultures. Through four city-based research projects in Berlin, Boston, Istanbul, and Mumbai, *Urban Intermedia* explores topics and themes that are outside the conventional narratives and dominant conceptual frameworks of urban research. They use a range of technologies to bring physical and digital media –archival documents, digital data sets, photography, cartography, architectural drawing, graphics, text, animation, film, and video– into dialogue and registration with each other.

## **Concept**

*Urban Intermedia* emphasizes the importance of communication and collaboration across professional boundaries and academic disciplines. Each practice and discipline produces its own forms of knowledge, but also has its “blind spots” that can only be approached through other frameworks. Those blind spots are the focus of both the investigation and the exhibition.

Through new media-rich research methods introduced by the Initiative, the distinct languages of various media interact at the deepest structural levels. They hybridize, exchange properties and techniques, and, in the process, generate new “intermedia” languages that provide novel ways of acquiring and producing knowledge about cities. These methods enable examination of complex and dynamic urban phenomena from multiple critical lenses, as well as visualization of densely layered narratives.

## **Exhibition**

The research projects in Berlin, Boston, Istanbul, and Mumbai serve as “portals” into three key themes that structure the exhibition: the interdependence of the planned and the unplanned, formal and informal practices; the urban imprint of migration and mobility, modalities of inclusion and exclusion; and the interrelation of nature and technology, urban ecologies and infrastructures.

*Urban Intermedia* is a research project, an experiment in methodology, and an interface that brings into association the three components of the work: city, archive, and narrative. Each narrative explores contemporary issues historically, spatially, and through dense intermedial matrices that challenge our understanding of urban environments and processes. The stories they tell are radically open to interpretation, elaboration, and the interactive construction of meaning with viewers of the exhibition. In the archive, each piece of media used in the narratives is identified and documented along with its source, so that each document, photograph, map, film and video clip –gathered through fieldwork and archival research– retains its historical and material integrity as an object. Synchronized with the narratives, the archival register is projected onto the screen where it constitutes a rolling repository from which –the exhibition suggests– a multitude of different narratives could be constructed.

Following its presentations at AEDES Architecture Forum, Berlin (January 27-February 21) and at SALT Galata, Istanbul (March 7-April 1), this exhibition will travel to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS), Mumbai (April 15-May 9).

## **Images**

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