

instant

Riga Technical University
International Summer School
July 23 – August 6, 2016
Cesis, Latvia

Topic

In 2015, for the first time ever, Oxford Dictionaries declared a pictograph — 🥲 or the 'Face with Tears of Joy' emoji — to be the Word of the Year. Conventional language, allegedly, is impoverished and lagging behind the times, whereas emojis are increasingly recognised as a nuanced form of expression that crosses cultural barriers. Emotional, direct and iconic communication is no longer limited to teenagers — even the BBC and the White House have started using emojis to stay relevant.

Architectural language too is under pressure to get up to date. Between the last and next financial bubble architects and clients alike are often bogged down by the permanent short-term, shifting goals and financial precariousness. From contemporary art to commerce, housing and humanitarian aid, small-scale instant architecture is proving to be an adaptable, diverse and resilient answer to the urgent needs of today. Coarse and imperfect, containers, kiosks, pop-ups, scaffolding and other ephemeral structures have become the mainstay of many architectural practices. Like emoji, these spatial interventions are symptomatic and temperamental protagonists of the architecture of now.

The Summer School invites participants to research, write and improve the rudimentary vocabulary of instant architecture. What are the programmatic, morphological and social underpinnings of unpolished and liminal interventions? Are they as inclusive, open and mobile as we believe them to be? Do emoji-like structures flatten the emotional impact of architecture or add more flavour to it? Can instant architecture help architects open up new channels of communication to the public?

Location

The Summer School is based in Cesis, a mid-sized town in the Vidzeme region near the winding valley of river Gauja. Cesis is located within the Gauja National Park, which is the largest protected natural area in Latvia. Cesis takes pride in its rich medieval heritage and keeps up an attractive cultural life that brings a lively buzz into the streets.

The Summer School will be accommodated in the cosy Rucka manor, located just outside the town's centre and surrounded by a scenic 18th century park. Cesis' most iconic industrial building — the old beer brewery — will become a construction site for our workshops.

Programme

We offer an intensive two-week programme of lectures, discussions and workshops, as well as sightseeing trips and parties. The programme will be conducted by an international team of architects, urbanists and designers, representing both practice and academia. The tutors will work alongside the participants guiding them through a complete architectural project — research, design, prototyping and construction of life-size installations in public spaces.

The projects completed during the course will be a valuable contribution to participants' portfolios. For the city of Cesis it is a chance to collect fresh ideas and discover new territories and directions for future development. Results of the Summer School will be presented to the local public and authorities, and receive wide publicity.

Workshops

During the course, work will be organised in 3 thematic studios, each of them employing a different approach to research and design. The participants are free to take part in the workshop that best corresponds to their interests and abilities. The units are going to study the physical, socio-economic and political realities of Cesis proceeding to design, test and build ephemeral installations in the public realm. Participants will work hands-on with creating actual events and spatial structures that accommodate public interactions.

Eligibility

During the Summer School, participants work in a multidisciplinary and international environment. Focus of the course is architecture, urbanism and design, but we also welcome students and young professionals of related disciplines — geography, sociology, design, arts etc.

Applicants should have completed at least one year of studies by the beginning of the course, speak English fluently and enjoy working in a team. The age limit for the Summer School is 18–35 years.

Participation fee

The fee of the Summer School is € 880 and it includes:

- accommodation,
- meals,
- tuition,
- materials and tools for workshops,
- field trips and parties.

In addition, participants should cover their own travelling expenses and health insurance.

We will award a limited number of scholarships to excellent applicants. A scholarship can cover up to 80% of the tuition fee; the amount of financial support depends on the number of applications received. Applicants will be evaluated based on their motivation and previous work. The scholarships are provided by State Education Development Agency and the organisers.

Academic credits

Participants will be awarded a Certificate of Riga Technical University and 3 ECTS points upon successful completion of the course.

Application

Applicants are asked to fill in an online application form and upload the following files:

- CV (PDF, max 2MB),
- motivation letter (PDF, max 800 words / 2MB),
- small portfolio (PDF, size A4, max 3 pages / 3MB).

Deadline for submitting applications is May 1, 2016, 23.59 CET.

Applicants will be notified of the selection results personally by the end of May, 2016.

The Summer School begins on July 23 and ends on August 6, 2016.

Contact information

Read more and apply online: www.rtusummerschool.lv

Follow regular updates: www.fb.me/rtu.summer.school

Send your questions to: instant@fold.lv

Organisers

Riga Technical University Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning

Online platform for Latvian creative industries FOLD