

INTRODUCTION

Sloth is a deadly sin defined by an aversion to work, laziness, talkativeness, and the fulfillment of desire, including dangerous activities such as *daydreaming*.

Through a loose interpretation of the idea of sloth, we examined spaces in Rome that are underdefined and ambiguous, calling into question the binary differentiation of public and private space. These *unkempt*, everyday spaces with unclear meanings are often appropriated for leisure, relaxing, game playing, as well as more transgressive or contraband activities. Curiously, through practices of reappropriation, these places may be performed as actual public spaces, though they are not officially sanctioned to serve this purpose. Are these public spaces created by accident?

Together, we considered sloth as a twofold concept: (1) the absence of interest and governmental care in communal spaces; and (2) a process of social reappropriation, produced by actions redefining *empty* spaces as sites of possibility, but also open to the subversion of doing nothing, enjoying, and loitering.

THEMATICS

Loose space is understood as a “space appropriated by citizens to pursue activities not set by a predetermined program. Appropriation is therefore a defining feature of all loose space.”² Feelings, impressions, perspectives, interpretation of spaces not clearly defined constitute a question much more than an answer to specific social and urban needs. Who uses these spaces and why? What potentialities might they express? What kind of emptiness do they represent? Is there such a thing as empty space in a city?

Space as a social process: draws on the theories of Henri Lefebvre³ to examine the way that the built (and unbuilt) environment is an artifact of social, economic and cultural relations, constantly reinscribed over time.

Reappropriation: What does it mean to change the use, meaning, and configuration of urban spaces without official sanctioning? Participants and tutors explored the ways in which people give meaning to “loose spaces” through observation, interaction, and multimedia documentation.

Blurred boundaries: What makes a space public? The workshop stimulated a reflection concerning the nature of “publicness” in urban space, and the role of everyday social practices in opening new spatial possibilities and potentialities.

2 K. A. Franck and Q. Stevens, “Tying Down Loose Space,” in *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life*, eds. K. A. Franck and Q. Stevens (Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2006), 1–34.

3 H. Lefebvre, “The Everyday of Everydayness,” in *Architecture of the Everyday*, eds. S. Harris and D. Berke (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 32–38.

AIMS

Through direct experience in *loose spaces*, participants encourage the exploration of their own perception of these spaces' potentiality by investigating perspectives and perceptions of spatial users.

The main goal is to interrogate the idea of *loose space* in relation to the nature of *publicness*, particularly through investigating the role of social and spatial reappropriation. In other words, the aims of the workshop seek to challenge the idea of public space as functional and full of meaning, to explore the rise of possibilities in emptiness, and to explore the possibilities of *daydreaming*.

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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IMAGES

