

ARCHITECTURE SUMMERSCHOOL – ECOLOGIES OF ENCOUNTER

between Ghent and Kanazawa



CONTEXT

Ghent (BE) and Kanazawa (JP) have been sister cities since 1971, fostering deep cultural, academic, and artistic ties. Both Ghent and Kanazawa are relatively small cities within their respective contexts. Both cities face parallel challenges. Both cities are confronted with the question of how to deal with their heritage, such as preservation and/or reconversion, with (over)tourism, the green-blue network, flooding, climate axes in the city, urban landscape and biodiversity but also on a smaller scale with the quality of public space, the integration of a huge student population, how to deal with the growing elderly population, ...

How can we look for, and create, places of encounter in the city?

In this first summer school between Ghent and Kanazawa we will focus on getting to know each other, in the context of the city of Ghent, within an intercultural dialogue.

ECOLOGIES OF ENCOUNTER

Cities are alive, 'urban' is almost a synonym to bustle, movement, encounter. Historically, cities are often situated at crossroads, marketplaces or ports: spaces of encounter. As cities grow these spaces multiply – public spaces pulse with the changes in use between day and night, specific places are full of meaning for the communities that use them, some spaces are out of sight: hidden spaces become meeting spots for young people, a piece of wasteland suddenly becomes a flower garden, a window sill becomes a meeting space... Space, seasonality, age, use – all these contribute to a network, an ecology of encounter within the city. How to capture the stories created in such encounters? How to discover the qualities of hidden spaces?

Can they be designed? How can we shape spaces of encounter?

During this summer school we invite students to learn by doing, to learn from each other and to practice in creating spaces of encounter.

16 students from Ghent will form teams with 16 students from Kanazawa, along a series of tracks – exploring encounters along different scales and practices.



Layla Aerts - Gentbrugse Meersen



Ghent - historical map



Geert Peymen en Pleuntje Jellema - Luwteplekken



Paardenbloem evolueert mee met hete stad - Nederlands Instituut voor Ecologie

TRACK 1. boundary encounters (edges) (city scale)

Where does the city end, and who do you meet there?

This simple question is the starting point for a mapping and storytelling exercise with bikes; maps; drawings.

TRACK 2. encounters in time (temporary moments, history...) (city scale)

Where did the city begin, and where can we meet with different histories?

Using archives, site visits, drawings and mapping tools we look for the relation between different layers of time and rhythms of use in the city, throughout history.

TRACK 3. urban garden encounters (lee spaces) (neighborhood scale)

Where can we find moments of peace and encounter with ourselves and nature?

We search for lee spaces, gardens, dead ends, quiet spots, eddies in the flow of daily life. Through these spaces interventions are designed for rest, meditation...

TRACK 4. plants / animals (neighborhood scale)

What if the next city guid is not human, but animal (other-than-human) or plant?

How to follow the dandelion and learn from its relation to the urban ecosystem as designers?



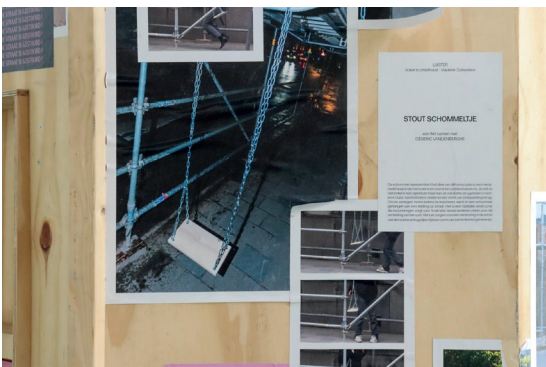
Nur Celikoz - masterproef: Discovering Doma



Stadshal Gent



Alain Scarpa - Verloren Bekisting "DOOR" - intervention at WD40



Leonie Overmeire + Jutter Lannoo - Kiosk

TRACK 5. intergenerational / young-old encounters (building / street scale)

Ghent, like Kanazawa, is a student city – but also a city with a growing elderly population. These groups live isolated from each other, their lives following different rhythms and using different parts of the city.

But what if encounter did happen? How could we strengthen the other?

Through the question of the house in the middle of the street, we will look at intergenerational encounters in the city.

TRACK 6. public interiors (building scale)

In our rainy climates public interiors play an important role as hospitable public spaces in the city.

Where can you just hang, meet, be – without needing to consume – in public? And on what scales can this be an urban element?

TRACK 7. window sills (detail / furniture scale)

On the level of the individual building, details make all the difference. A window to sit in, a porch to meet – or sit on too, a place to rest and put down the groceries, to share a moment, even if it is only one short catch of the eye.

This track will explore urban details for encounter: the window sill, the door, the pavement.

TRACK 8. play / furniture / architecture as found (detail / furniture scale)

Moving through the city on foot, we realise how much space is reserved for speed: cars; bikes; everything is on the move.

What if we stop and watch for a minute, what if we create small ad hoc spaces that challenge the rush and invite people to play?

TIMING

20.05.2026 application deadline

22.05.2026 participant selection

Mid June: Orientation meeting between Ghent and Kanazawa (online)

Early July: Introduction of participants, introduction and discussion of each city (online), team formation

End August: Preliminary online work to shape up and share basic ideas

September:
Workshop 14 Sep (Mon) – 20 Sep (Sun) 2026

Exhibition in Vitrine (20/9 – 29/9 + 06/10) of workshop results.

October 6:

- visit of exhibition by the mayors of Kanazawa and Ghent
- presentation of the results of the workshop during the symposium to a broader public

November: exhibition in Kanazawa of workshop results, Municipal Hall during the Architecture Month Kanazawa.



Archipel - workshop Urban Wild Ecology 2025

A DAY OF ENCOUNTERS?

MORNING

general input:
lecture to start the day

track input:
site visit
workshop
guest teacher review

COMMUNAL TABLE

AFTERNOON

track workshops:
research, design, build

track review with track tutors

COMMUNAL TABLE

EVENING

side tracks:
movienight
fusion cooking night
nocturnal animal walk
public lecture



Archipel - workshop MOMENT - 2025

EVENT LOCATIONS

1. LEIEKAAI studios KU Leuven/ Sint Lucas
For main work in tracks: studio and presentation space, close to different urban fragments:
Groenevalleipark, Brugse Poort, Rabot neighbourhood, historical centre, Boerse Poort gardens, ...
2. KUL, Hoogstraat 51, Gent
For talks, lectures, ...
within the city center

PARTNERS

This summer school is organised as a friendship exchange between Ghent and Kanazawa

from Ghent side: by KU Leuven, Department of Architecture, Sint-Lucas Ghent in collaboration with Archipel vzw, Archipel Maalstroom and the Ghent Architecture Platform.

Teaching team Ghent: Hera Van Sande, Wim Goes, Kana Arioka (KUL) Martha Meijer (Archipel), Leila Zahedi (Maalstroom)

from Kanazawa side: by Kanazawa Institute of Technology and Kanazawa College of Art

Teaching team Kanazawa URBAN CULTURES: Shinichi Takeuchi, Motoki Katsuhara (KIT), Koki Nishimoto (KCA)



Archipel - workshops The Young City/ De Jonge Stad 2024



APPLICATION

Ecologies of encounter is open to students from all schools, who want to engage in intercultural dialogue, to open up their way of thinking, by interweaving different cultures. It relates to Research by Design in combination with Urbanism of encounter. It involves a range of individual disciplines, from design, architecture, film, poetry, time-based arts to the urban scale.

Send a short motivation letter before **31.05.2026** to hera.vansande@kuleuven.be

The summerschool is worth 3 ECTS credits for KULeuven students and registration is free of charge.