

[Whose space is it? Interstices and urban commons: the city from an interdisciplinary perspective](#)

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CALL FOR PAPER

MSH Val de Loire - Research Cluster "City and Urban Studies" - University of Tours (France)

Call for papers

Whose space is it? Interstices and urban commons: the city from an interdisciplinary perspective

Tours, France, 10-11 December 2020

Full text: <https://espacesasaisir.sciencesconf.org/>

As part of the research cluster "Cities and urban studies" at the *Maison des sciences de l'Homme Val-de-Loire*, a group of scholars from different fields and various centers of research, we are organizing an international conference entitled "Whose space is it?- Interstices and urban commons"^[1]. The conference, alternating plenary meetings with thematic presentations, will offer the opportunity to exchange methods and theoretical frameworks throughout the various human and social sciences dealing specifically with these spaces.

From their very beginnings, cities have included ambiguous spaces void of any particular function or status, spaces which confuse and defy previously established limits, alternating between public and private, and between the city center and its peripheries. The study of urban "fabric" has mainly focused upon the processes of its formal realization, and as determined by public authorities. It hardly takes notice of interstitial spaces or peripheries, those places which have been abandoned and lack a specific identity, and which are waiting to be identified and appropriated. These spaces in fact deserve greater attention. Whether empty or occupied, vacant or built upon, these spaces are coveted, menaced, occupied, etc. They may well become public spaces again, but also may not. Just as they may be occupied physically, they may also be appropriated intellectually. As these spaces are constantly involved in the transformational processes of the city, we should benefit from an examination of the informal forces at work, taking into consideration the regulations bearing upon

them which were established prior to their use, as well as looking into the process of institutionalization which remains beyond the reach of public agencies. These spaces may in fact help us to understand academic positions regarding the city, whether they be historical, sociological, geographical, legal, literary, or philosophical, etc.

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