FLOAT
Designing with the dynamics of extreme water events

WHAT The studio aims to explore and design with the dynamics of extreme water events in the urban context. The studio will ask questions such as: How can we design with the forces of inundation? How can the possibilities of porosity and filtration be explored in urban Melbourne? How can we reconsider Melbourne’s street network as waterways? How can we reconsider flood zones to promote recreation?

Rivers are part of the ‘ecological backbone’ of a city but at the same time under high demand to provide public space for recreation and recovery. Preparing for floods (and also for droughts) asks for novel, ground-breaking, complex and critical design propositions, which provide a highly flexible response to water extremes and at the same time high quality public space and urban living.

The studio will ask for conceptual design ideas to align urban waterways to the increasing extremes of big rain events on the one hand and drought on the other. You will then be designing site specific projects for Melbourne’s waterways for adaptation to increasing weather and water extremes.

WHY Increasing extremes in dynamic processes characterise contemporary life in many areas whether it is the stock market, political changes, weather events or spatial developments. Unpredictability and uncertainty are phenomena we have to learn to deal with in a creative visionary way in the ever-growing complexity of 21st century’s life. These opportunities and constraints also apply to planning and designing our urban environment.

The recent big rain events across northern and eastern Australia are strong examples of highly dynamic weather extremes resulting from climate change. These events have clearly shown the need to re-think the relationship of rivers and their floodplains with their urbanised surrounding environments and to possibly expand the term “waterways” to other infrastructures.

HOW Taking the approach “as in the small so in the large” the studio will start with a thorough investigation of one of Melbourne’s waterways to eventually evince a deeper understanding of Melbourne’s water system and catchment. The studio group will meet up regularly on Fridays all day. The studio will start with clearly formulated assignments of creative investigations to be worked on from week to week. As students you will develop your own design projects. You will be asked to formulate your own design steps (in co-ordination myself as your tutor). Work constellations in this studio will shift between working individually, in small teams, and as the entire studio group.

There will be in-class-lectures by the tutor and guest as well as from students of the studio, on-site trips, in class debates, two workshops, 1:1 critiques, and regular short presentations. The studio will be understood as a continuing ‘learning workshop’, which requires an interactive engagement.

Regular Classes: Fri, 9.30 am to 4.00 pm
Workshops: Thu 24.03/Fri 25.03; Thu 12.05/Fri 13.05
Location: Building 45 B