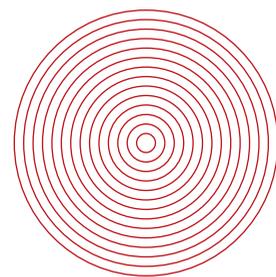
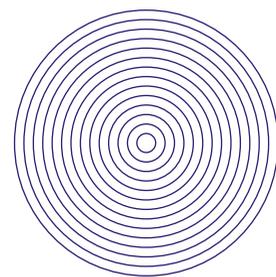
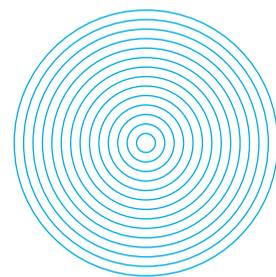


CCP 07
ARCHITECTURES IN TRANSITION
LUXEMBOURG – GRAND EST



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LIFE AMONG THE RUINS

CÉSAR REYES NÁJERA

[EN] Between 2001 and 2007, a peculiar entrepreneurial venture transformed the *Terre Rouges* site in Esch-sur-Alzette, located in southwestern Luxembourg near the French border, into a replica of Venice. Spanning an area of 22,500 m², approximately 200 workers from across Europe constructed one of the largest open-air film sets ever built in Europe on an abandoned plot owned by ARBED.¹ However, the high maintenance costs of this unique adventure led to the dismantling of the set in 2007 and the cessation of operations of the promoting company in 2014. From a historical perspective, this unusual reconversion can be seen as a rushed yet original attempt to introduce economic activity into the brownfields of the steel industry.

Around the same time and very close to this “Venice-sur-Alzette,” a bigger-scale reconversion was taking shape in Belval. Here, a masterplan conceived in 2002, projected 1,350,000 square meters of gross floor area for retail, housing, and private and public office spaces. Under financial logics, the operation can be considered a success, as by 2023, 89% of the total gross floor area has been sold.²

FROM DECLINE TO RECONVERSION

The region of Minett, known for its red iron ore deposits, embodies the heights of Luxembourg’s industrial and economic success but also left the scars of extractive capitalism. The decline of the steel industry in the 1970s left the region with tracts of degraded land, toxic remnants of industrial processes and the dissolution of once-thriving communities of steelworkers.

Urban redevelopment efforts in the Minett region have largely focused on economic revitalization through new infrastructural and residential projects, such as the aforementioned Belval masterplan and the planned “Metzeschmelz” neighborhood. However, these projects set focus on the immediate economic value of land over slow regeneration of the soil, often choosing to displace or seal contaminated soils. At the same time, initiatives such as the Minett UNESCO Biosphere project aim to protect and celebrate the feral ecosystems that have emerged in the aftermath of industrial decline. However, even these preservationist strategies risk neglecting the interconnected needs of human and non-human soil communities.³ For the geographers Stephen Graham and Nigel

Thrift the repair of broken systems involves elements of adaptation and improvisation.⁴ In this context, what would be a better strategy of adaptation in the region?

SHELTERING RELATIONSHIPS

The landscapes of extraction in the Greater Region present significant challenges but also opportunities for reimagining urban and ecological futures. Beyond the conservative criteria of rehabilitation, they represent the possibility of envisioning new programs adapted to the environmental and social challenges of our time. Challenges that financial logics are unable to detect. The projects in the CCP 07 selection represent the possibility of an architecture that values harnessing the grey energy contained in existing buildings. They prioritize rehabilitation, reuse, and restitution over novelty and the environmental waste of indiscriminate demolition.

Viewed as a whole, the brownfields, industrial remnants, and existing architecture in the region constitute a network. With a clear long-term strategy, this infrastructure of extraction could be transformed into an infrastructure of restitution. This exciting challenge for regional

planning, urbanism, and architecture requires political will and relational architectures that prioritize the reproductive dimension of societies. It also requires new institutions and governance models to channel citizen initiatives committed to regenerating cities that care for the common good.

In this task, it is important to create spaces for discussion, forums where new ideas and critical positions can be debated, and experiences shared. In this sense, the cultural work promoted by LUCA contributes to articulating a coherent discourse necessary to rethink regeneration processes beyond the vagaries of the market.

Anthropologist Ana Tsing reminds us that the history of capitalism is also a history of alienation, in which people and objects become assets to produce goods and the relations between them matter little. When a singular good can no longer be produced, a place can be abandoned. When the wood has been cut, the water depleted, or the soil no longer yields enough to make steel, this search for assets resumes elsewhere. This simplification for alienation produces ruins,

spaces of abandonment for the production of assets. In a global state of precariousness, we have no choice but to look for life in these ruins.⁵ To do this, we need sensitive manoeuvres rather than groping; we need an awareness of our interdependence with the environment and strategies of care for relationships that overcome the “scenery” proposed by the narratives of progress.

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4. Shannon Mattern, “Maintenance and Care,” *Places Journal*, November 2018. <https://doi.org/10.22269/181120> Accessed Jan 4th, 2025.

5. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The mushroom at the end of the world. On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015, 5–6

LA VIE AU MILIEU DES RUINES

CÉSAR REYES NÁJERA

[FR] Entre 2001 et 2007, une initiative entrepreneuriale singulière a transformé le site des Terre Rouges à Esch-sur-Alzette, situé dans le sud-ouest du Luxembourg près de la frontière française, en une réplique de Venise. S'étendant sur une superficie de 22.500 m², environ 200 ouvriers venus de toute l'Europe ont construit l'un des plus grands plateaux de tournage en plein air jamais réalisés en Europe sur une parcelle abandonnée appartenant à ARBED.¹ Cependant, les coûts d'entretien élevés de ce projet hors du commun ont conduit au démantèlement du décor en 2007 et à la cessation d'activité de l'entreprise promotrice en 2014. D'un point de vue historique, cette reconversion inhabituelle peut être perçue comme une tentative précipitée mais originale d'introduire une activité économique dans les friches industrielles de la sidérurgie.

À peu près à la même époque, et très près de cette "Venise-sur-Alzette", une reconversion de plus grande envergure prenait forme à Belval. Ici, un plan directeur conçu en 2002 prévoyait 1.350.000 mètres carrés de surface brute de plancher destinés aux commerces, au logement, ainsi qu'aux espaces de bureaux privés et publics. Selon des logiques financières, l'opération peut être considérée comme un succès, car en 2023, 89 % de la surface brute totale avait été vendue.²

DU DÉCLIN À LA RECONVERSION

La région du Minett, réputée pour ses gisements de minerai de fer rouge, incarne à la fois l'apogée du succès industriel et économique du Luxembourg et les stigmates du capitalisme extractif. Le déclin de l'industrie sidérurgique dans les années 1970 a laissé derrière lui des étendues de terres dégradées, des vestiges toxiques des processus industriels et la désagrégation des communautés ouvrières autrefois prospères.

Les efforts de réaménagement urbain dans la région du Minett se sont principalement concentrés sur la revitalisation économique à travers de nouveaux projets d'infrastructures et de logements, comme le plan directeur de Belval mentionné précédemment, et le futur quartier "Metzeschmelz". Cependant, ces projets mettent l'accent sur la valeur économique immédiate des terres plutôt que sur la régénération lente des sols, choisissant souvent de déplacer ou d'imperméabiliser les sols contaminés. Parallèlement, des initiatives telles que le projet de Réserve de Biosphère UNESCO du Minett visent à protéger et valoriser les écosystèmes sauvages qui ont émergé dans le sillage du déclin industriel. Néanmoins, même ces stratégies axées sur la préservation risquent d'ignorer les besoins interconnectés des communautés humaines et non humaines

dépendant des sols³. Pour les géographes Stephen Graham et Nigel Thrift, la réparation des systèmes endommagés implique des éléments d'adaptation et d'improvisation⁴. Dans ce contexte, quelle stratégie d'adaptation serait la plus appropriée pour la région ?

ABRITER LES RELATIONS

Les paysages d'extraction dans la Grande Région posent des défis majeurs, mais offrent également des opportunités pour repenser les futurs urbains et écologiques. Au-delà des approches conventionnelles de réhabilitation, ils représentent la possibilité d'imaginer de nouveaux programmes adaptés aux enjeux environnementaux et sociaux de notre époque—des enjeux que les logiques financières sont incapables de percevoir. Les projets de la sélection CCP 07 démontrent la possibilité d'une architecture valorisant l'énergie grise contenue dans les bâtiments existants. Ils privilégient la réhabilitation, la réutilisation et la restitution plutôt que la nouveauté et le gaspillage environnemental causé par des démolitions arbitraires.

Ensemble, les friches industrielles, les vestiges de l'industrie et les bâtiments existants de la région forment un réseau cohérent. Avec une stratégie claire et à long terme, cette infrastructure d'extraction pourrait être transformée en une

infrastructure de restitution. Ce défi stimulant pour l'aménagement régional, l'urbanisme et l'architecture nécessite une volonté politique et des architectures relationnelles qui mettent en avant la dimension reproductive des sociétés. Cela exige également de nouvelles institutions et des modèles de gouvernance capables de canaliser les initiatives citoyennes engagées dans la régénération des villes au service du bien commun.

Dans cette démarche, il est essentiel de créer des espaces de discussion—des forums où de nouvelles idées et des positions critiques peuvent être débattues, et où les expériences peuvent être partagées. En ce sens, le travail culturel promu par le LUCA contribue à articuler un discours cohérent nécessaire pour repenser les processus de régénération au-delà des aléas du marché.

L'anthropologue Ana Tsing nous rappelle que l'histoire du capitalisme est aussi une histoire d'aliénation, dans laquelle les individus et les objets deviennent des ressources pour produire des biens, et où les relations entre eux importent peu. Lorsqu'un bien singulier ne peut plus être produit, un lieu peut être abandonné. Lorsque le bois a été coupé, que l'eau est épuisée ou que le sol ne produit plus suffisamment pour fabriquer de l'acier, cette

quête de ressources reprend ailleurs. Cette simplification à des fins d'aliénation produit des ruines, des espaces abandonnés à la production de ressources. Dans un état global de précarité, nous n'avons d'autre choix que de chercher la vie dans ces ruines⁵. Pour cela, nous avons besoin de manœuvres sensibles plutôt que de tâtonnements ; nous avons besoin d'une conscience de notre interdépendance avec l'environnement et de stratégies de soin pour les relations, afin de dépasser les "décors" proposés par les récits du progrès.

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Département Géographie et aménagement du territoire, Université du Luxembourg.

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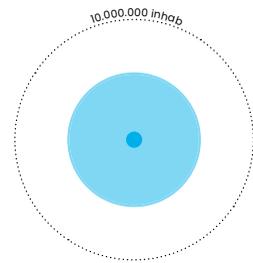
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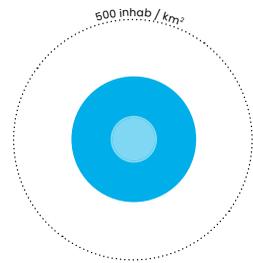
5. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The mushroom at the end of the world. On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2015, 5-6.

POPULATION |
POPULATION



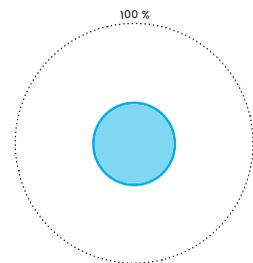
LUX: 672.050 inhab
GE: 5,568,711 inhab

AVERAGE DENSITY |
DENSITÉ MOYENNE

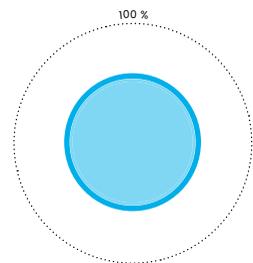


LUX: 260 inhab./km²
GE: 96.95 inhab./km²

TERRITORY AREAS ZONING |
PART DE TERRITOIRE OCCUPÉ PAR (2020)

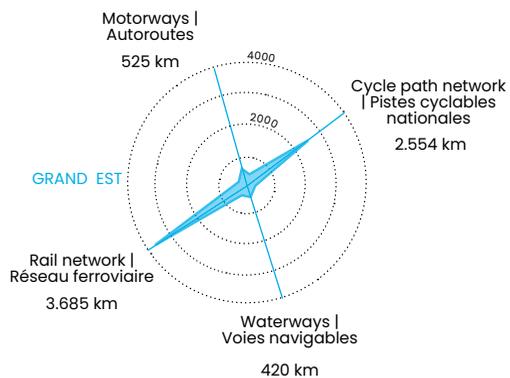
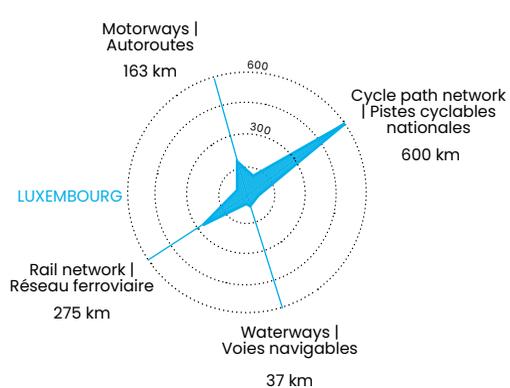


Woodland Areas |
Surfaces boisées
LUX: 87.000 ha – 36%
GE: 2.274.000 ha – 35%



Agricultural Areas |
Surfaces agricoles
LUX: 53%
GE: 50%

MOBILITY INFRASTRUCTURE |
INFRASTRUCTURE DE MOBILITÉ



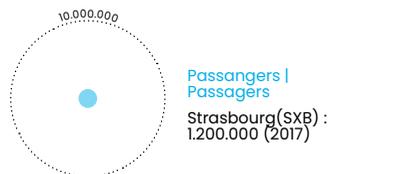
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS |
AÉROPORTS INTERNATIONAUX



Passengers |
Passagers
Luxembourg (LUX): 4.790.000 (2023)



Passengers |
Passagers
EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg (MLH/BSL) : 8.100.000 (2023)



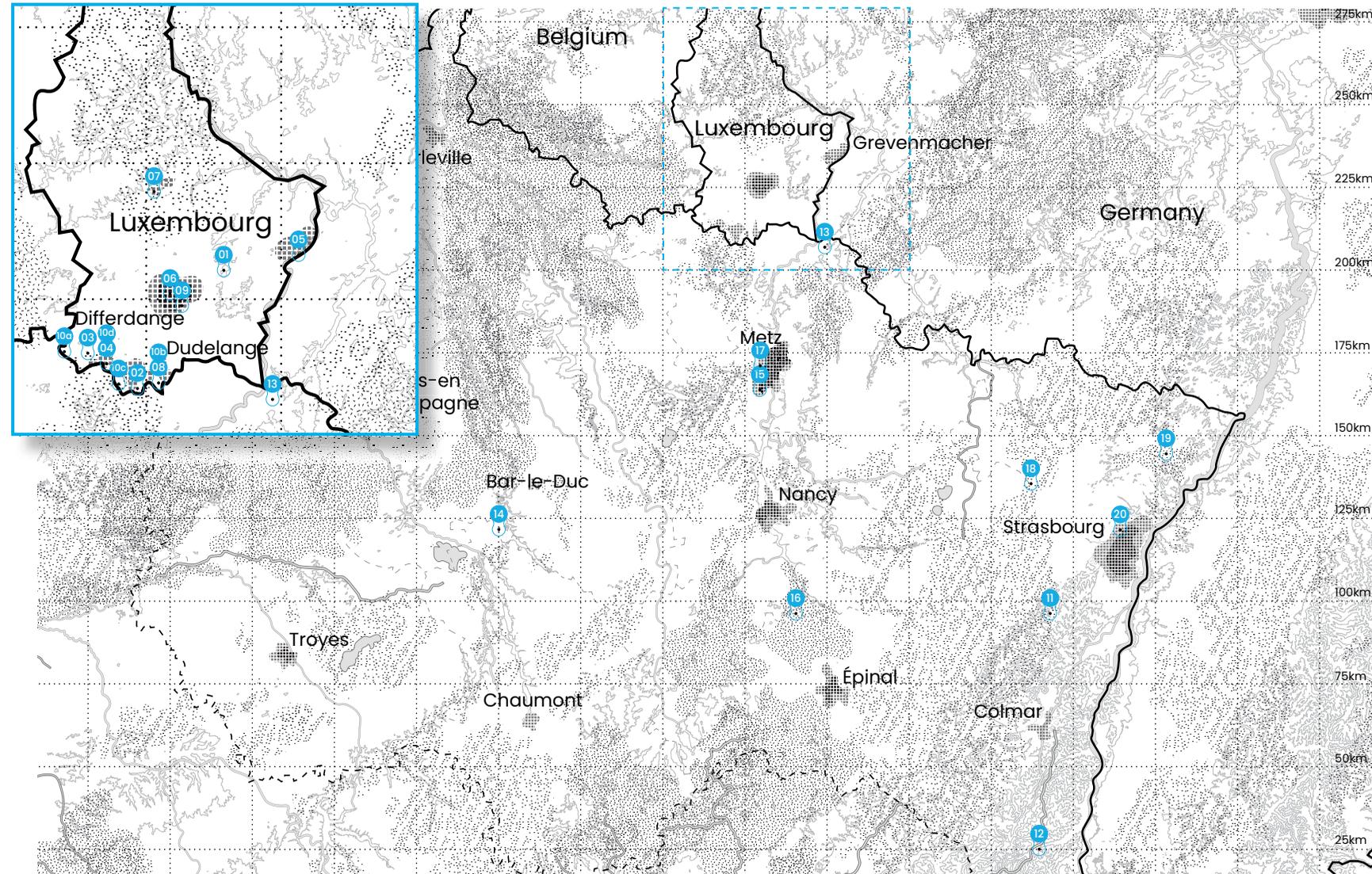
Passengers |
Passagers
Strasbourg (SXB) : 1.200.000 (2017)



Passengers |
Passagers
Metz-Nancy-Lorraine (ETZ) : 300.000

Sources Luxembourg:
Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.
Portail Des Travaux Publics.

Sources Grand Est:
Société nationale des chemins de fer.
Cerema.



- 01. Biomass Power Plant. Niederanven.
- 02. Spektrum. Rumelange.
- 03. 1535° Creative Hub. Differdange.
- 04. Möllerei. Belval.
- 05. Osbourg-House. Grevenmacher.

- 06. Guest House 50. Luxembourg
- 07. Former Bissen Railway Station. Bissen.
- 08. VEWA. Dudelange.
- 09. Hôtel Graace. Luxembourg.
- 10. Minett Trail. Luxembourg.

- 11. Town Hall And School. Dieffenbach-Au-Val.
- 12. La Jetée. Issenheim.
- 13. Maison Communale. Roussy-Le-Village.
- 14. Saint-Dizier's Market. Saint-Dizier.
- 15. HANGAR. Ancy-Dornot.

- 16. Closed Educational Center. Tonnoy.
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- 19. Kummer Hall Renovation. Bischwiller.
- 20. Compagnons Du Devoir. Strasbourg.

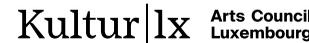
CITIES CONNECTION PROJECT 07

Architectures in Transition – Metropolitan Barcelona, Wallonia–Brussels, Luxembourg and Grand Est

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ABOUT CITIES CONNECTION PROJECT

The Cities Connection Project (CCP) is a connector between cities and their architecture, created by architects Nicola Regusci and Xavier Bustos, with the aim of generating synergies between architects, cultural agents, governments and universities among European cities.

The Cities Connection Project (CCP) was created with the desire to establish a cultural connection between European cities with an important architectural and cultural tradition. Architecture exhibitions are the focus of this project, which also includes lectures, networking, meetings between universities and the desire to create links between the architects involved. Each event, called Connection, consists firstly of an exhibition in Barcelona featuring guest city projects, followed by a second presentation of Barcelona projects in the guest city. Each new connection will offer a new theme that will always take into account the idiosyncrasies and the cultural and architectural background of the invited city or region. The Cities Connection Project has the support of foundations, universities, private sponsors and many public institutions of the cities involved.

www.citiesconnectionproject.com

ABOUT WALLONIE BRUXELLES ARCHITECTURES

Founded in 2010, WB A supports the international dissemination and promotion of practices in the architectural sector (architects, urban designers, landscape architects, photographers, graphic designers, etc.) from French-speaking Belgium. It also helps these creative professionals in their export process. Our activities:

- Organising exhibitions in key locations dedicated to architecture on an international scale.
- Setting up conference and debate programmes.
- Developing networking events.
- Facilitating international and press meetings, with foreign architects, potential clients and foreign decision-makers.
- Inviting important guests to Belgium to discover the potential in Wallonia–Brussels.
- Organising building tours in the presence of local architects.
- Creating promotion tools.
- Disseminating publications on architecture in Wallonia–Brussels.
- Directing firms towards various financial support and opportunities.

www.wbarchitectures.be

ABOUT LUCA – LUXEMBOURG CENTER FOR ARCHITECTURE

The LUCA – Luxembourg Center for Architecture is a private, non-profit foundation whose main mission is to promote architectural quality and culture.

Working in close collaboration with the main local players in the fields of architecture, urban planning, engineering, and heritage (OAI, INPA, MArch Uni.lu), LUCA addresses, through a multidisciplinary and multiscale approach, the issues raised by the production of the built environment. As the leading player in architectural culture in Luxembourg, LUCA has positioned itself as a platform for exchange and debate on architecture and its related disciplines. Each year, luca implements a cultural programme adapted to the diversity of its audiences: lectures, debates, exhibitions, workshops, study trips, screenings, etc.

www.luca.lu

IMPRESSUM

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