

Press release

The new edition of UIC Barcelona's Vertical Workshop revives the living memory of the Capella de la Misericòrdia

Under the title "Silent walls. Reusing the Capella de la Misericòrdia", students from the UIC Barcelona School of Architecture will convey their ideas for the desacralised church

This year's workshop is directed by Ricardo Gómez Val, holder of a PhD in Architecture, and is based on the principles of service to society, reuse, memory and innovation



Barcelona, 28 August 2019.- On 3 September, the UIC Barcelona School of Architecture will commence a new academic year, and, like every year, it will do so with the inauguration of a new edition of the Vertical Workshop. From 3 to 7 September, under the title "Silent walls. Reusing the Capella de la Misericòrdia", students from years two through five from the Bachelor's Degree in Architecture will be split into teams and, working together, devise new uses for the Capella de la Misericòrdia, or Chapel or Mercy, located in Barcelona's Raval district. Over the past few months, this desacralised church has been at the centre of an intense debate surrounding its future use, in light of the Northern Raval Neighbourhood Association's opposition to the site being used as an extension of the Contemporary Art Museum of Barcelona (MACBA). District residents and the Barcelona City Council are pushing for the chapel to be used as the home for the new Northern Raval Primary Care Centre (CAP).

This new edition of the Vertical Workshop will be directed by Ricardo Gómez Val and coordinated by Íñigo Ugalde, both of who hold a PhD in Architecture and are lecturers in the UIC Barcelona School of Architecture. Over the five days the workshop is due to last, the students will be divided into work groups coordinated by renowned professionals such as Leopoldo Gil, director of Heritage for the Provincial Council of Navarre; Alba Arboix, member of the teaching staff at the Higher Technical School of Architecture of Barcelona (ETSAB) and the University of Girona; Joan Argemí, from the Argemí-Ballbè studio; Enrique Arenas, from the firm Arenas Basabe Palacios Arquitectos; and Eduardo Delgado Orusco, a lecturer in the School of Architecture at the University of Zaragoza.

Full-scale installations

The primary focus of the workshop is to subject the Capella de la Misericòrdia to a process of reflection in order to, on the one hand, devise new uses for the site that preserve its historical

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relevance and, on the other, provide an answer to the multiple challenges it currently faces. “In midst of the discussion on the future use of the chapel, we want to offer a new perspective on the site, recovering the place’s historical relevance as a place of gathering and reflection for people from the neighbourhood”, explains Ricardo Gómez Val.

The workshop will begin with a series of lectures that will help students contextualise their work and provide further details on some of the chapel’s most relevant aspects. In this regard, Marc Aureli Santos, director of the Barcelona City Council’s Architectural Heritage Service, will be on hand to discuss the building’s heritage features and the district’s architectural history. The students will also have the opportunity to get a first-hand look at the current controversy surrounding the chapel’s future use by taking part in events organised by the Northern Raval Neighbourhood Association and representatives from MACBA.

Split into five teams, the students will develop their installations based on a site survey carried out during an inspection visit on the first day of the workshop, and offer residents a look at potential new uses for the building. To do so, they will use recycled materials in line with the site’s heritage value.

On Saturday 7 September, the students’ full-scale models will be raised and installed, *in situ*, in the Capella de la Misericòrdia, where they will be assessed by a jury including Marc Aureli Santos and Javier Viver, sculptor and winner of the Spanish National Fine Arts Award, among others. The students’ own “making of” videos will also be shown.

According to Ricardo Gómez Val, “In today’s society, the speed of information and developments in technology seem to have done away with fora for reflection. Cultural exchanges result in horizontal enrichment across different parts of the planet. However, aspects such as history and time inevitably fade in these processes. This is the context in which the work of architecture in historically-relevant sites gains particular importance”.

This year’s Vertical Workshop will be sponsored by the companies URCOTEX and SIKA and the Cooperativa d’Arquitectes Jordi Capell.

About the UIC Barcelona School of Architecture

The UIC Barcelona School of Architecture is a school of architecture committed to the intellectual, professional and personal growth of all those who form part of it. It implements a teaching model based on individual attention, practical learning in all areas of knowledge, cutting-edge technology and a teaching staff with international experience. The UIC Barcelona School of Architecture creates architects capable of facing the challenges of today’s society.

About the Vertical Workshop

The Vertical Workshop is a workshop for students that takes place at the UIC Barcelona School of Architecture in the first week of the academic year and lasts approximately ten days. It has been one of the School’s most important and emblematic events since its founding in 1997. The Vertical Workshop mixes students in years two through five into different teams, each directed by a pair of young renowned Spanish architects. Together they work on a real architecture project based on one of the strategic principles of the School: innovation, sustainability and service to society.

For more information:

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