



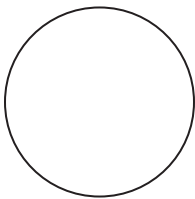
Workbook of Affinities

Updating the Grand Tour.
Memory and Invention of the
European Built Environment

The *Workbook of Affinities* comprises 7 sections that synthesise the results of the exercises undertaken by the UpGranT Consortium in the conception of a learning by travelling pedagogical model, re-empowering the Grand Tour's long-standing practice.

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- Section 3 Faculty of Architecture – University of Porto · FAUP
- Section 4 Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna · UNIBO
- Section 5 Art Academy of Latvia · LMA
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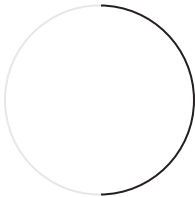
Wall Atlas

In the “Workbook of Affinities”, the Wall Atlas corresponds to a visual essay where a specific UpGranT topic is debated through a collection of selected images.

The “*in situ* Wall Atlas” addresses the core of the project that lies in placing into practice four geographically distinct updated Grand Tours. These Grand Tours are hosted jointly, or individually, by the UpGranT partners: #1 Milan and Bologna (January 2024); #2 Riga and Tallinn (June 2024); #3 Porto (June 2025); #4 Thessaloniki (June 2026).

Each Grand Tour, with specific graphic material, includes curated itineraries, team meetings, training sessions and an open seminar, in which at least two members of each partner institution participated. The Porto Grand Tour also includes an Intensive Programme for Learners.

Images	Credits
1-8 Grand Tour #1: Milan and Bologna (Cesena), 12-15 January 2024.	3, 20, 28 POLIMI Team, UpGranT Archive.
9-16 Grand Tour #2: Riga and Tallinn, 08-12 June 2024.	1, 6, 12, 22, 23, 32 FAUP Team, UpGranT Archive.
17-24 Grand Tour #3: Porto, 05-14 June 2025.	7, 8, 13, 16 UNIBO Team, UpGranT Archive.
25-32 Intensive Programme for Learners within GT#3: Porto, 09-14 June 2025.	4, 5 LMA Team, UpGranT Archive.
	2, 9, 18, 27, 29, 30, 31 AUTH Team, UpGranT Archive.
	10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 24, 25, 26 EKA Team, UpGranT Archive.



3 Toward an UpGranT method

The Intensive Programme for Learners

– Helder Casal Ribeiro,
Silvia Ramos

In 2025, from June 9 to June 14, as part of the UpGranT Grand Tour to Porto, the UpGranT Intensive Programme for Learners (IPL) took place at the Faculty of Architecture – University of Porto (FAUP).

The IPL was a six-day international workshop specifically focused on the Architectural Design Process, organised between the UpGranT Consortium, with the participation of 36 students and 12 professors.

The IPL’s main objective was to experiment and test an *in situ* pedagogical model of learning by travelling through real spaces/buildings. IPL aimed to engage open, sensorial, and comprehensive *in loco* readings to go beyond available published information or digital dissemination and to identify the sense of the whole, the composition, the scale, the space, and the context, among other aspects. This re-reading of the building served as material for the elaboration of souvenirs, understood as physical objects that could be taken home as a remembrance of the design solutions experienced.

The proposed methodology

IPL is based on a fieldwork learning methodology, grounded in case study(s) and supported by a brief booklet and a selection of recommended readings. In the pursuit of the most immersive experience for students, a single case study with full open access was considered, with the IPL venue serving as the case study.

The FAUP ensemble, designed by Álvaro Siza (1979-1996), was understood as a paradigmatic case study with a specific poetics that can be (re)visited through a heightened sensorial and *in situ* comprehension of fundamental design themes and details that are difficult to perceive or even understand through published literature or media dissemination.

FAUP is thematically dense, able to be broken down into diverse, universal, and, at the same time, authorial themes at different design levels. FAUP addresses: (1) a broad context comprehension and insertion; (2) a vast number and variety of design problems versus design solutions; (3) the author’s extensive body of work and architectural references that it calls upon.

Complementary, FAUP’s design process comprises an extensive archive of sketches, rigorous drawings and photographs that disclose the design’s inception and reveal different options for the same problems, extending from the urban reading and siting of the ensemble to the sequences of significant spaces and the meaning of the architectural elements, which can inform and enhance new readings when mirrored with the *in situ* experience. This extensive rendering can be considered as an empowering collection of problems, themes and spaces.

To enable a more fruitful exchange and transfer of knowledge and practices, the students were grouped into six-member teams, each comprising one student from each of the six participating educational institutions, challenging distinct cultures and practices.

Each group was assigned to one of the significant spaces in the FAUP collection that could be depicted through its design process: the courtyard, cafeteria, main lobby, museum, library lobby, or technical area. In each group interpretation, these significant spaces can be expanded beyond their limits and even overlap with one another. The key aim of IPL was to explore and convey a fresh and personal reading of these significant spaces through *in situ* contact, going beyond published references and Siza’s archive renderings.

The IPL appropriated FAUP’s central museum, transforming it into a laboratory space open to the school, featuring thematic work sessions, presentations, guest talks on “Travel with Grand Tourists”, a conference on “Architecture Travels” and parallel itineraries. The students were also encouraged to take self-discovery routes using the provided maps.

The IPL work sessions were structured into three moments – “recognise”, “propose” and “build” – according to the main intermediate actions to be addressed.

The first moment – “recognise” – lasted 2 days with a collective guided visit to the case study and autonomous group visits to the selected significant spaces. The second moment – “proposed” – lasted 1 day, with the conception and proposal set on personal *in situ* readings and intense group debate. The third moment – “build” – lasted 3 days, during which souvenir construction took place, culminating in a final presentation.

The IPL’s main outcome was presented as a “souvenir box” inspired by André Malraux’s “Le musée imaginaire” (1952) and Mansilla + Tuñón Architects’ “Playgrounds” (2008/2014).

Each group organised a pre-purchased cardboard box that can easily travel, containing an ensemble of authorial Grand Tour gifts, memories, and didactic lessons expressed through a postcard series, a kinetic narrative, and a totem, employing digital and analogical tools, in accordance with FAUP’s drawing practices. Within the UpGranT didactic framework, these souvenirs correspond to the creation of visual reinterpretations, architectural narratives and a model. The conception and elaboration of each of these components were monitored by a team of two professors from different academic institutions, thereby enhancing transversal contact and fostering mutual didactic and cultural exchange between professors and student groups.

A final presentation of all six souvenir boxes, showcasing the various materials, closed the didactic exchange, with each student receiving a certificate for their participation in the IPL.

On the achieved results

The approach pursued over six days was based on a didactic framework, with a specific case study and a matrix of problems and themes, from which students, prompted by informed *in situ* readings, were challenged to develop an authorial interpretation, thereby enhancing their autonomy and potential replicability. A framework set on a series of exercises designed to structure thought, question the design options or architectural narratives and allow for multiple responses within open cultural exchange.

Upon an overall glance at IPL, the expected outputs correspond to the achieved results – an improvement in the participants’ perception of architectural travel and the hypothesis of learning through travel from real spaces/buildings.

During the workshop, participants enthusiastically applied the proposed methodology, participated in all activities, and completed the IPL main outcomes within the dedicated time frame. Through the informed *in situ* readings and cross-functional contacts and collaborations, the majority of these outcomes successfully showcased original and authorial/personal ideas on the case study, thereby validating the proposed methodology.

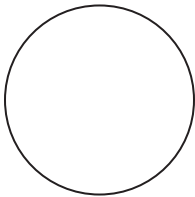
The IPL pilot programme was reloaded by the Consortium partners in different occasions.

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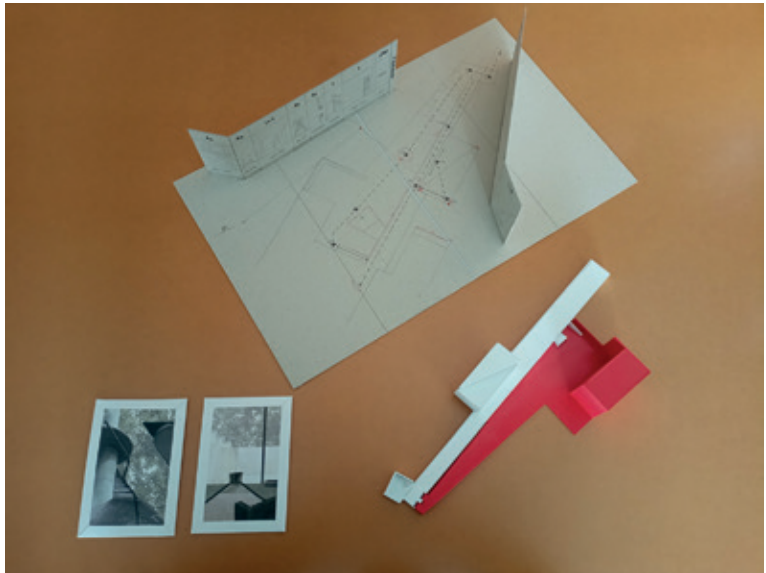
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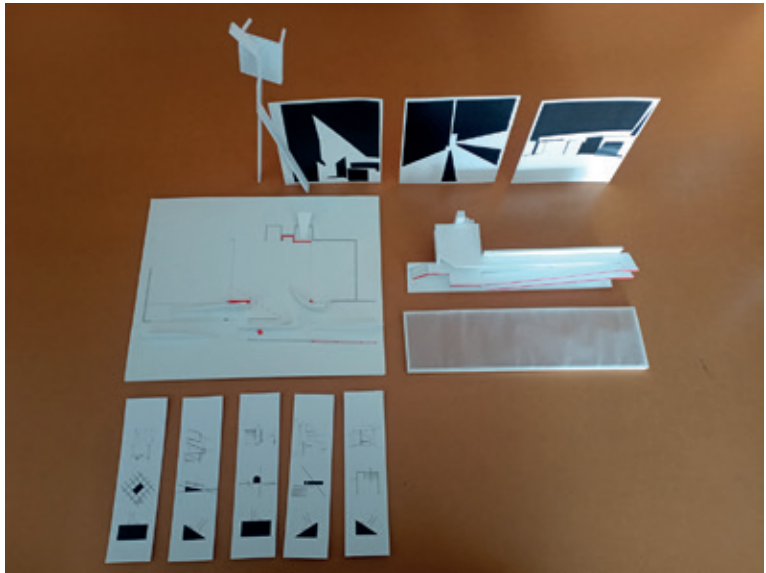
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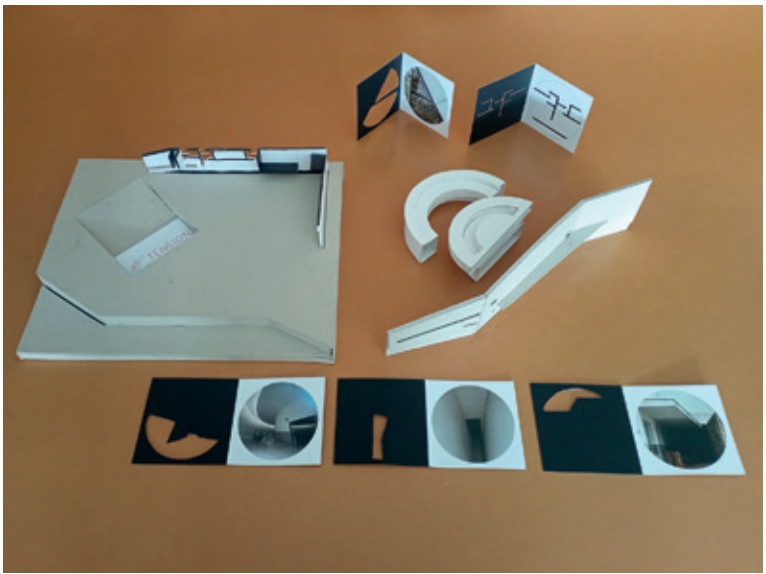
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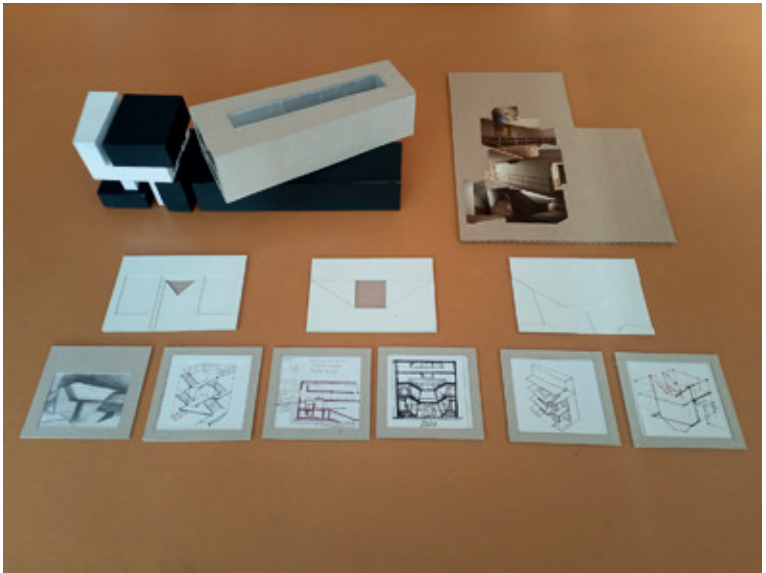
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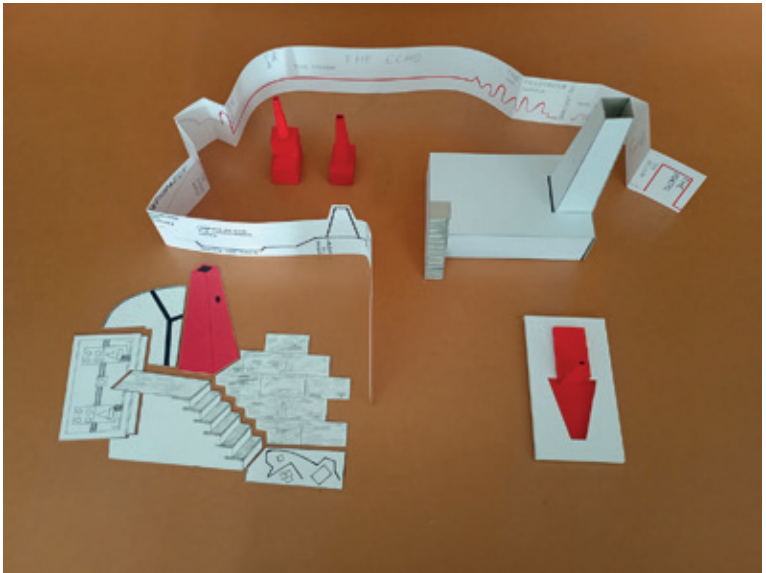
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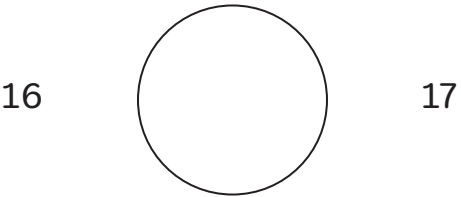
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7



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- IPL results
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Souvenir boxes.
- 3

Courtyard souvenir box, by Davide Santoro, Tomás Martins, Davide Renzulli, Areti Dafnia, Ulvi Tiit.
- 4

Cafetaria souvenir box, by Erdal Giacomo, Parisa Etemadi, Gina Celestini Radaelli, Kristīne Zane Čible, Christina Maria Konstantinidou, Rebeka Kollo.
- 5

Main lobby souvenir box, by Francesco Ramella, Maria Gíão, Giuseppe Buttazzo, Emīlija Anete Ozoliņa, Despoina Athanasiou, Liina Pärn.
- 6

Museum souvenir box, by Giulio Crispino, Joana Gastalho, Luciana Aloisio, Irini Antonakaki, Loukia Kotsifou, Markus Sig.
- 7

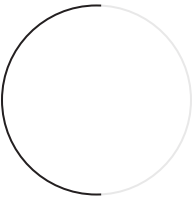
Library lobby souvenir box, by William Roat, Hugo Pereira, Mattia Criscione, Eleni Madourou, Jaan Repnikov.
- 8

Technical area souvenir box, by Quentin Pechinot, Anna Lopes, Sofia Tagliatesta, Ioannis Soufleris, Kristiina Theresa Kuusik, Gert Christjanson.

Credits

Porto Team, Archive UpGrant.

Partner Institutions monitored: postcard series (visual reinterpretation) - LMA and EKA; kinetic narratives (architectural narrative) - FAUP and AUTH; totem (model) - POLIMI and UNIBO.



Heuristic practices. Snapshots from Polytechnic Travels

– Aleksa Korolija, Cristina Pallini

1 Carlo Cattaneo (1801-1869), an Italian philosopher, political scientist, linguist, and writer educated in Enlightenment and positivist traditions, aimed at disseminating ongoing analysis of literature and technology, and emphasising the link between scientific and civil progress.

2 This process involved close collaboration with the Brera Academy of Fine Arts.

Quite often, the classical Grand Tour complemented formal academic training. Italy, a key destination, was perceived as an open-air museum of architecture and the most varied political forms, and a paradise for the senses (Brilli 2014, p. 19). Encountering difference and estrangement was woven into the educational value of travel. What remains of that idea at a time of easy, low-cost travel associated with cultural globalisation has hastened and flattened any recognition process? In architectural education, though, a crucial question persists: at what point does travel turn the traveller into a proactive, critical thinker?

Pedagogue Paulo Freire (1974, p. 39) linked “critical consciousness” to learning rooted in experience, a process in which reflection and dialogue project a cultural reality onto the tangible world. Travel may thus be understood not as an accumulation of impressions but as a generator of situated knowledge, particularly in a design-led perspective. This contribution raises further questions. Can travel be framed in “polytechnic terms”? May we contend that architects educated in a polytechnic tradition had a distinctive approach to travel and, more generally, to architectural learning? What follows is a tentative attempt to trace a thread, drawing on three examples from the past alongside our own Grand Tour in Latvia (2024).

Situating Pedagogy

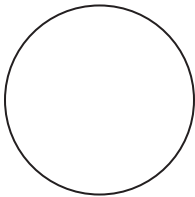
The question of “learning by travel” regained momentum in 19th-century Italy, where *Il Politecnico*, founded in 1829 by Carlo Cattaneo (with most contributors being engineers), heralded the rise of science-driven culture.¹ Over time, the gap with the prevailing positivist mindset among travellers from beyond the Alps gradually narrowed. In 1863, Milan’s Royal Higher Technical Institute (later Politecnico) was founded, and the School of Architecture was established in 1865 to complement engineering training by grounding future professionals in architectural history.² The launch of a programme that brought architects closer to engineers after Italy’s unification significantly raised expectations for the future elite. Thus, collective educational journeys were institutionalised: ranging from short scientific excursions to graduation trips, they became a core part of learning.

It cannot go unnoticed that institutionalised travel developed in parallel with the country’s own transformation. At the turn of the twentieth century, Italy was no longer the romanticised setting of the classical Grand Tour; rather, it was a large construction site “caught in action” (Selvafolta 2008b): tunnels, railway lines, ports, and industrial facilities offered engineers unprecedented opportunities to observe the transformation unfold. As monuments of the past became part of the built environment in the making, architects continued to study them within their specific contexts. When caught in transition, architecture evoked a sense of suspended certainty, prompting students to acknowledge that each building is part of a broader physical and cultural stratification. Ultimately, their understanding of how architecture functions across diverse natural and built environments fostered a responsible design ethos (Selvafolta 2008a, p. 57; 2008b).

The mutual influence between the polytechnic mindset and the problems at hand – such as grounding the search for a national style in specific historical periods – entailed a redefinition of history itself, thereby venturing into interpretation, and pinpointing identity features for new public buildings. Moving beyond contemplation and repertoires of forms, architects approached heritage as an operational force that design could engage with critically and creatively: both in debates about conservation and restoration and in questioning history to decode the secrets of practice. Examining ongoing projects offered greater insight into the fundamental design principles, revealing a clear epistemological perspective: architecture as a dynamic process

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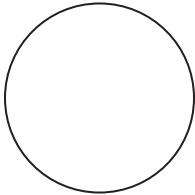
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