In the wake of the European project a new set of spaces are being transformed, territories extended, power relations reshaped and reconfigured, connections severed and reorganised. The new dynamics and scales of the spaces that are transformed, the shifting relations between human spaces and the material processes they modify are operating at unprecedented scales and intensity. New territories are connecting the changing grounds of Europe to its new forms of cohabitation. Diploma 4 sets out to think about architecture’s interaction with these new, vast, powerful and consistent forms.

Architecture is a technology of borders: it encloses or opens up paths, it organises visibility, it frames operations and lays out configurations of exchange and interaction. It is a primordial practice of organisation of cohabitation. The very act of construction is an exclusion of an interior from an exterior. Architecture is the agent of the relations between the forms of polities and the forms of material space.

As the European project is reshaped by global circulations and connections, its territories and architectures are undergoing vast reconfigurations. Projects of Diploma 4 operate along the multiple fracture lines, the many borders and boundaries that mark contemporary Europe, where these dynamics become more visible and more intense: along its coasts.

The European peninsula is set spinning from forces operating both from above the state - international institutions, the European Union, global flows of capital - and from beneath - individuals, groups, NGOs, enterprises and corporations. Europe is a space in rapid transformation, marked and wrought by a diversity of accelerations, decays, erosions, consolidations and expansions. It is a space in constant transformation.
As a work in progress, the notion of Europe challenges us to redefine contemporary space beyond continuous and extensive territorial entities, beyond the hierarchies and certainties of the nation and beyond the sweeping urbanisation processes: it holds back on them and reorganises the inhabited space in a series of differentiated individual transformations and disetaneous changes. A series of innovative processes – that reshape the links between the physical environment and the societies that inhabit them – contributes to the construction of the European space as an assemblage of layered and asynchronous environments in transformation. The work at Diploma 4 envisions how architecture can connect to these processes and enter, take up or lay down these rhythms.

When architecture acts to transform the city, it challenges the relations between individuals, collectivities and their spaces of operation. It questions well established patterns of perception and expectations and calls for a re-evaluation of citizenship, cohabitation, governance and agency. The mental and material spaces of contemporary Europe are a mixture transformed by a multiplicity of agents where architecture acts as a sectoral rationality amongst other practices. The projects developed at Diploma 4 inquire into the capacity of architecture to affect and be affected by these multiple rationalities and differential speeds, and take the form of complex integrated plans that operate at different scales and across multiple timelines.

Architecture is today confronted with a complex condition, where the situational analysis of the present cannot be disjoined and independently understood from a diagnostic bearing on the possibilities of transformation. The research investigates two strands of this development: on one side we inquire into how new remote-sensing technologies and surveying procedures are shaping contemporary spaces of operation as well as individual and state sovereignty, and on the other side we focus on the agency that these new technologies of control elicit and entail.

Thinking through what are the capacities and potencies of architecture to affect and be affected by real-world issues, the unit re-thinks and re-imagines the spaces of contemporary Europe through a series of specific and precise territorial architectures designed to unfold over differentiated timelines and operating in the midst of complex material systems.

The design process explores how architecture can envision the construction of contemporary space at a time of cosmopolitanisation, reshaping of notions of citizenship and redefinition of technological agency.

When we think of the contemporary territories as architecture, i.e. as a complex construction over time, our focus is on the study of the compositions of relations, or capacities between different elements and things that don’t proceed at the same pace and speed. In this sense, architecture is both the object and the method of our work.

Diploma 4 works for integrated and sustained transformations of the contemporary inhabited landscapes of Europe. Your projects will combine the design of precise and contained architectural devices with new forms of assembly and complex visualisations of territorial transformations. You will achieve a capacity to analyse and strategically design real-world territorial architectures and integrated plans.
The Coast of Europe is a set of territories open on all sides, where international and non-state polities are reshaping the forms of cohabitation and construction of human landscapes. These landscapes are continuously re-written, reshaped and reconfigured to form a stratification process, a non-centred space where post-almost-quasi-semi-neo colonial practices undo and reconnect authorities and territories.

Today the coast of Europe is not only marked and shaped by natural forces: it is a complex mixture and accumulation of biological, geological, social, cultural, economic, technical and urban structures that form a crucial system that is re-negotiating and adapting its material forms in the face of the pressures of globalization and geopolitical changes. It is a complex contemporary urban and metropolitan system ensconced within a number of rapidly changing natural forces and processes: an architecture.

The 136106 km of European coastline, ranging over four seas – the Mediterranean, the North Sea, the Baltic and the Black Sea – and two oceans – the Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean – are almost equal in length to the Equator. With almost 50% of the nearly 500 million inhabitants of the EU-22 coastal countries, the coast of Europe is a vital and strategic element for its future.

The European space is transformed by accumulation, addition, superimposition, intensification and consolidation, rarely by outright replacement or elimination. The project for the re-modernisation of Europe investigates how architecture can engage with the layered and differentiated modalities of growth and change – combining intensification, preservation, modernisation, stagnation, downturn, stasis, decay, growth, conservation, dispersal, abandonment, erosion, consolidation, densification – that are reshaping the territories of Europe and its Seas. The project is defined by the arrangements of motions into which it enters, which is always composed and recomposed by individuals and collectivities.

What are the patterns of these changes? How can architecture affect them? How are inhabited spaces shaped by the multiple uncoordinated initiatives and forces that characterise today’s European connection and relations? How to fathom their differences? How does architecture interact with their internal form-generating processes? How to modify, accelerate, hinder, divert, consolidate or shift them? How can architecture guide innovation in the relation between space and society? What is needed for something new to appear?

Europe’s landform is marked by two vast depressions to the north and to the south, flooded by the oceans to form two parallel chains of seas that penetrate deep into the interior.

The European peninsula, with its outreaches, bays, meanders, and straits is a unique set of environments, urban structures and political organisations in constant transformation. It is defined in the north by the North Sea – Baltic Sea lane that connects the Atlantic to Russia. In the south the Mediterranean – Black Sea chain stretches from Gibraltar to the Caucasus.
Think Tank Learning at Diploma 4

Diploma 4 acts as a think tank on the potentials of re-modernisation of the coast of Europe. Our research work starts with the hypothesis that the contemporary spaces of the coast of Europe can be much more than what they are.

How can we identify the current transformation processes that are shaping and moulding the inhabited spaces of the coasts of Europe? How can we activate architecture intelligence to surpass them and produce sites that are beyond what we already know?

Diploma 4 cherishes individual initiatives and interests, it is set up as a collaborative environment where different forms of learning architecture can find synergies and profit from individual differences and independent approaches.

The learning at Diploma 4 is a complex set of exposures to current debates and technical advancements in a plurality of domains and is aimed at moving the profession away from a technocratic condition. While directly activating specific proficiencies and techniques, expertise is considered as a tool to achieve integrated visions and to question what are the potentials for innovation in the spatial configurations and dynamics of contemporary Europe.

The unit is conceived as a conjunction of expert trajectories, where the role of the architect is constantly questioned and reconfigured in relation to the development of real-world problems. In this sense the unit advocates for an ecology of practices, where constant negotiations between a diversity of knowledges generates a reformulation of notions of the brief. Inherited questions are what seems to characterise the current cultural horizon, and the unit works are aimed at reconsidering what an agenda for change can be and what are the necessary conditions that need to be set in motion to bring change into being.

At Diploma 4 your work will be embedded in a vast network of researchers, designers, thinkers and practitioners that are at the forefront of the discussion on the transformations of contemporary space. Diploma 4 operates as a think tank, connected to a number of European and international institutions such as the Anthropocene Observatory, House of World Cultures Berlin, Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, University of London; the ZKM/HfG Karlsruhe, AHO Oslo, et al.

Through a rigorous observation, analysis and modelling of the transformations apparatuses that inform contemporary space, our research and design Unit will operate directly in the field, envisioning architectures and integrated spatial plans not as final and stable configurations, rather as shared spaces of reference for the multiple initiatives that contribute to innovation. We will be thinking architectural research not as a preliminary to action, rather as a mode of enquiry of the internal, autopoietic form-generating process and agencies of the contemporary territories.

You will work on specific architectural and territorial devices that can be used as tactical markers in the strategy envisioned by the integrated plan. The emphasis will be on potential of revision, adaptation within a framework of non-ambiguity. The different designs will mark the limits, alternatives and possible new horizons for the sustainable future of the coast of Europe. The architecture of the plan will be specified in detail, using different modes of representation.

The unit is aimed at students who are interested in developing independent and individual design and research, ready to engage in debates on the future of architecture intelligence and the potentials of the European space and its geopolitical structures. You will have a strong background in architectural culture and design, excellent visualisation skills and a vivid curiosity in exploring contemporary cultural practices and transformation processes.

www.aadip4.net
Territories in Transformation

Your work will investigate the potentialities of architecture intelligence to address the challenges that Europe is facing at the outset of the 21st Century.

We will operate directly in the field, using design to evaluate, test and analyse the current state of affairs of a series of territories: the Coast of Europe is an assemblage of liminal areas facing a liquid space crossed by a multiplicity of trajectories, circulations, migrations, exchanges, trades, conflicts and re-negotiations.

You will work on a selected stretch of the Coast of Europe, contributing to a general project that envisions innovative paths for the re-modernisation of its territories combining differentiated intensities in the urban and natural spaces.

The following is a general outline of the interests of the unit that will be further developed during the progress of the works.

- Malta and the devices to regulate and modulate global circulations
- The Atlantic Coast of France: decentralisation and autonomy as energies of urban transformation
- Galicia and Asturias: alternative forms of land valuation and the transformation of the European periphery
- London and the Estuary
- The Channel Islands between contemporary financial circulations and long-term inhabitation
- The Adriatic coast of Italy: the architectural potentials of the province
- The margins: the reshaping of Poland and the EU-Russian relations
- Sicily and the reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy of Europe
- Denmark and the reshaping of the social-democratic modernity of Northern Europe
- The Delta of the Danube and the EU access to the Black Sea
- The Gulf of Finland and the remodernisation of St Petersburg
- The harbours of Spain: Barcelona and the rising transnational networks of Europe
- The Anatolian peninsula and the reshaping of post-ottoman networks
- Reinventing forests and parks as alternative spaces for modernisation
- The shared archives of the Mediterranean: how to re-activate the repository of the cultures of exchange and entanglement
- From Yalta to Sochi: international spaces from WW2 to the Olympics
- Odessa and the re-organisation of post-soviet space
- Iceland and the reshaping of democratic space after the global financial crisis
Reading list
Diploma 4

- Okwui Enwezor et al. (eds.) 'Democracy Unrealized. Documenta 11 Platform 1’, Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz 2002
- Laura Kurgan, ‘Close Up at a Distance’, New York: Zone Books 2013
- Donella H. Meadows et al., 'The Limits to Growth', Signet 1972
- Isabelle Stengers, ‘Cosmopolitics I’, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2010

8
The work will be a specific mixture of thinking and doing, with an emphasis on constructing complex thesis to influence and change the current state of affairs.

You will develop a strong architectural, theoretical, cultural, political, economic and technical argumentation and set forth an innovative way of shaping and re-organising architectural practice.
You will investigate how the deployment of automatic image production in remote-sensing technologies and measurement of material change allows for a reinvention of agency and action. Complex diagnostic technologies currently being developed entail new modes of measuring, testing and intervening into the complex material and organisational environments of contemporary human spaces. They have direct connections to the government and control of space. These technologies do not only advance the ways through which we can detect change and measure material transformation through time, they unfold new sets of procedures and modalities to control, contain, direct and modulate the interactions between human spaces and material structures. They form the basis of contemporary construction processes.

The TS work will investigate how this new landscape of automatic images to measure the built environment can be conceived along the same lines that X-Ray imaging, CT scans, Magnetic Resonance and other medical imaging technologies have transformed diagnostics and medicine at large.

The TS work will focus on construction processes and innovative satellite remote sensors, geodesy, thermal images, radar refraction, 3D point clouds and other innovative image technologies in order to envision how complex material systems act and design solutions for their integration in coherent spatial arrangements.

The aim of these investigations in image production is to conceive of innovative interventions in complex construction processes, infrastructural deployment and integration of resources. Through a tight connection between TS and the Unit project, you will achieve a deeper understanding of the modalities to conceive of complex material systems and their delivery.

TS at Diploma 4 is conceived as an activation of specific technical processes and expertise that will drive the integration aspects of the individual designs. Each student is expected to outline a measuring technology. The focus is on the consequences on the physical and material organisation of its field of intervention.

The TS work is seen as a key strategic and integrated component of the unit project.

The work at Diploma 4 conceives of contemporary space as a complex mixture of material and human processes of transformation. The focus for the Technical Studies is on the potentials of new imaging technology for managing resources and revaluate access to agency. Measuring transformations in the inhabited and built environment will be a key element of each TS work.

Survey and measurement are the way into the management, design and operation of complex infrastructural systems and construction processes. Your TS will investigate the full potential of these technologies for architecture.

Technical Studies 5
John Palmesino and Ann-Sofi Rönnskog established Territorial Agency, an independent organisation that combines architecture, analysis, advocacy and action for integrated spatial transformation of contemporary territories.

Recent projects include the international documentary project tracing the emerging thesis of the new man-made age - the Anthropocene Observatory, exhibited at HKW in Berlin 2013-14; Museum of Infrastructural Unconscious; North; Unfinishable Markermeer; Kiruna. They are research fellows at the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, University of London, where John also convenes the MA and researches for his PhD. He has been Research Advisor at the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht, and previously led the research activities of ETH Zurich/Studio Basel - Contemporary City Institute, and he is a founding member of Multiplicity. Ann-Sofi is a PhD research fellow at AHO in Oslo. She was previously a researcher at ETH Studio Basel.

Territorial Agency innovatively promotes and works for sustainable territorial transformations. Territorial Agency is engaged to strengthen the capacity of local and international communities in comprehensive spatial transformation management.

Territorial Agency’s projects channel available spatial resources towards the development of their full potential. Territorial Agency works for the establishment of instruments and methods for ensuring higher architectural and urban quality in the contemporary territories. Territorial Agency’s work builds on wide stakeholder networks.

The activities of Territorial Agency are grounded in extensive territorial analysis, that focus on complex representations of the transformations of the physical structures of contemporary inhabited territories; in comprehensive projects for the strengthening of regional performance and in the organisation of seminars and public events as a process of building capacity to innovate.

Contacts
research@territorialagency.com
www.territorialagency.com