

PROFESSUR
CHARBONNET
HEIZ

VOLUPTAS
VOYAGE PITTORESQUE III
GENEVA

DEAD RINGERS

MARCHE MIGROS

UNLIKE OTHER CITIES, GENEVA HAS NO EMPHASIS. PARIS IS NOT UNAWARE THAT SHE IS PARIS. BENEVOLENT LONDON KNOWS THAT SHE IS LONDON. GENEVA, HOWEVER, BARELY REALIZES THAT SHE IS GENEVA. (JORGE LUIS BORGES)

VOYAGE PITTORESQUE is a playful seminar launched by VOLUPTAS which focuses on the infinite and often hidden complexity in our immediate environment. Over the coming years, VOYAGE PITTORESQUE will bring us to specific territories and neighbourhoods that are closely related to the teaching team of VOLUPTAS. Thanks to the precise geographical boundaries and the local connections, VOYAGE PITTORESQUE offers time and knowledge to critically engage with an environment.

Unlike other cities, Geneva has no emphasis. Paris is not unaware that she is Paris. Benevolent London knows that she is London. Geneva, however, barely realizes that she is Geneva. Here are the towering shadows of Calvin, Rousseau, Amiel and Ferdinand Hodler, but no one speaks of them to the traveller passing through.

JORGE LUIS BORGES, ATLAS (1984)

Geneva, like few other cities, offers a kaleidoscopic prism of history and the world. Due to its location on the

very periphery of Switzerland, it has always been in intense contact with wider European influences. This in-between character has made Geneva a site of radical exchange and collision. Acutely receptive to the great cultural trends of the time, this city has long been on the forefront of historical turning points. A crossroads of cultures and worldviews, its identity is impossible to pin down.

Geneva wants to belong to the world. It reaches for the horizon, incessantly striving to become something other than itself. Even if it mostly falls short of worldly grandeur, Geneva's attempts at greatness present some of the most striking architectural examples of any given epoch. Venice shimmers in its decadent Rococo ornament, New York flickers in its glazed facades. An echo of Vienna in its stern modernism. For a second there, I thought I was in Paris. Geneva: a gate to the world!

Along a series of specific paths, we will discover passages through the urban fabric and its historical shadows. Through the art of walking, we aim to

experience the city from the shifting vantage points of promenading aristocrats, stout Protestants, exiled intellectuals, foreign merchants, and secretive diplomats. We will witness the Reformation, the rise of the bourgeoisie, and the establishment of a new world order – all through their reverberations in the architecture of Geneva. From severe Classicism to elaborate eclecticism, refined Beaux-Arts to the cusp of Modernism, we will discern a city through veneers, specters, guises, and reflections. Sometimes the copy is truer than the original.

Liberated from the primacy of originality in form-making, this idiosyncratic city shifts our focus towards the infinite architectural knowledge and nuance to be discovered in the existing. In an intense, joyful stroll through its streets, gardens, and hallways, we will aim to decipher what Geneva's emulations tell us about the world, and, ultimately, what its attempts at disguise tell us about itself. We will see the world through Geneva, and, with some luck, catch a glimpse of Geneva through the eyes of the world.

DATES

March 18th – 22nd, 2024

LOCATION

Geneva

COST

Category B, CHF 250–500. This covers entrances, accommodation, one dinner and reader. Individual transportation to and from Geneva is not included!

ENQUIRIES

Joshua Guinness, guinness@arch.ethz.ch

CREDIT

VOLUPTAS, 2024