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***Prof. Astra Zariņa | A Force
of Nature***

Abstract

Prof. Astra Zarina teaching shaped the careers and perspectives of many students including renowned architect Steven Holl. Astra Zariņa the director of the University of Washington architecture program in Rome, had been among Holl's earliest mentors. He was one of six students to attend the 1970 inaugural program in Rome. Zariņa's teachings shaped the careers and perspectives of many students and their careers.

Steven Holl identified seven key values that defined her approach to teaching architects these values include the importance of urban space, field work, social agency, myth & ritual, nature and cuisine. Though her influence was international few know of her impact, and pioneering approach and methods to teaching design. In recent years a resurgence to investigate her pedagogical process and methodology has emerged.

In 1960, Zariņa was the first women to receive the Rome Prize from The American academy in Rome and a year later received the Fulbright fellowship. Zariņa's architectural focus shifted, she became deeply influenced by her time in Rome, where she re-evaluated her modernist convictions and career direction. Zarina initiated and directed the UW program in Rome for thirty years and later started parallel Italian hilltop village program in Civita di Bagnoregio.

Astra Zariņa's created tripartite teaching methodology, which she developed throughout her career as: knowledge, action, and reflection. Zariņa's pedagogical approach transcended the traditional classroom setting, bringing learning into real-world contexts and her pioneering methods preceded David Kolb's, Experiential Learning Theory (ELT). Experience and reflection are essential to the learning process and the subject on hand and Zarina added culture and context

Zarina's teaching legacy profoundly impacted her students, shaping both their lives and their careers as skilled architects. Today, a new generation of architecture students is being introduced to her pioneering tripartite experiential teaching method: knowledge, action, and reflection.

Introduction

“In one of my letters sent back to my mom and dad, I said this lady is so demanding and egotistical, I don’t think I can ever be alone with her” (Sudermann, 2020)

Steven Holl, 1971

On July 10, 2022, after a demanding semester and an extensive accreditation process, I was looking to unwind. Unable to find a decent movie, I settled on a YouTube lecture titled *Steven Holl: Architects, Not Architecture*. As I listened, I learned that Astra Zariņa had been Steven Holl’s teacher. Zariņa, the director of the University of Washington’s architecture program in Rome, had been among Holl’s earliest mentors.

Holl explained that he was one of just six students to attend the inaugural Rome program in 1970. The story might have passed me by if not for a moment when Holl mispronounced her name. I paused the video, rewound, and was taken aback to realize that he was referring to Astra Zariņa, a Latvian architect whose influence on Holl’s career was profound. His respectful reflection on her impact piqued my curiosity and introduced me to an architect, preservationist, and educator whose story had long remained untold.

Astra Zariņa’s teachings shaped the perspectives of many students and career architects like Ed Weinstein and Tom Kunding along with Holl, who identified seven key values that defined her approach to both architecture and education. These principles — ranging from the importance of urban space to a commitment to community and sustainability — set her apart as a teacher and had a lasting influence on Holl’s own architectural journey.

Astra Zariņa immersed her students in a rich blend of architecture, art, history, philosophy, food, and culture. Steven Holl, one of her most notable students, identified seven core values that defined her teaching

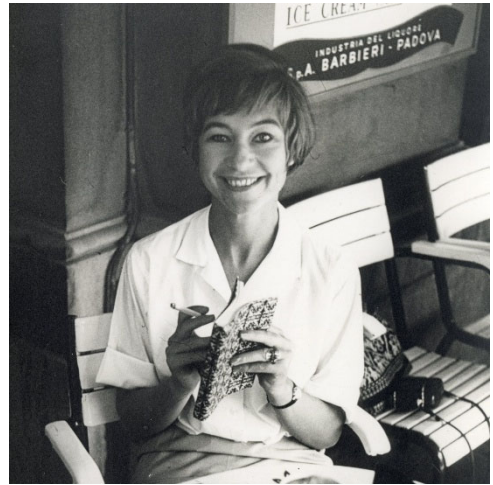


Figure 1. Astra Zariņa in the café.
<https://magazine.washington.edu/feature/astra-zarina-visionary-uw-architecture-professor/>

approach: the significance of urban space, the study of maps and fieldwork, community agency in architecture, the importance of myth and ritual, and a contemporary understanding of sustainability that encompasses plants, animals, and indigenous foods. (fig.1)

“If you want to be an architect you need to learn how to cook”, this uncustomary requirement challenged Steven Holl, one of seven principles attributed to Astra Zariņa. These principles align closely with the work of today’s social urbanists, cultural planners, and advocates for “adaptive reuse” and “historic preservation.” Zariņa’s holistic and socially engaged approach to architecture continues to resonate in current practices that emphasize both the preservation of heritage and the integration of sustainable, community-driven design.

Astra Zariņa’s life work as an architect, educator, and cultural advocate was a significant yet largely unrecognized legacy— one that I, too, was unaware of for many years. Despite being a lifelong friend and collaborator of renowned Latvian architect Gunnar Birkerts, I had never made the connection between them. It is now time to bring Astra Zariņa’s remarkable contributions to light for Latvian architects, students, and the broader public.

Astra's Journey

Astra Zariņa's journey began in the early years of World War II when her family fled Latvia and emigrated to the United States, passing through Austria, Esslingen (Germany), and finally settling in Washington State. Zariņa went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from the University of Washington (UW) in Seattle in 1953, followed by a Master's degree in Architecture at MIT in 1955, where she graduated at the top of her class. During her time in the United States, Zariņa worked with renowned architect Minoru Yamasaki in Detroit, where she met Gunnar Birkerts, also a Latvian immigrant, who would become a lifelong collaborator and friend.

Zariņa and Birkerts both worked for Yamasaki, a modernist architect known for designing the Twin Towers, in the late 1950s. Yamasaki himself recognized Zariņa's exceptional talent, acknowledging her the best designer he had ever worked with—one of many accolades she received throughout her career. In 1960, Zariņa became the first woman to win a prestigious American Academy in Rome fellowship, and the following year, she received a Fulbright Fellowship. These opportunities allowed her to further refine her approach to architecture and teaching. Despite diverging professional paths, she continued collaborating with Birkerts on various international competition projects, and their friendship remained strong throughout their careers.

As Zariņa's architectural focus shifted, she became deeply influenced by her time in Rome, where she re-evaluated her modernist convictions and that which she learned at MIT and UW. (Sudermann, 2020) This experience prompted her to embrace a more holistic view of architecture, one that integrated the cultural, historical, and social aspects of the built environment. In Rome, Zariņa's career took a pivotal turn. Between 1970 and 1980, she split her time between Rome and Seattle, teaching a groundbreaking program she developed at

Washington State University. She spent her days studying the city's architecture, its urban spaces, and its people, and her teaching grew from these explorations.

In 1976, Zariņa established the Civita Hill Town Program, where she published *Tetti di Roma: La Terrazze, Le Altane, Il Belvedere* (The Roof Tops of Rome), a seminal work that analyzed the concept of the "roofscape." She argued that rooftops were not just architectural elements, but social spaces that blurred the boundaries between private and public. The book, which she co-produced with famed photographer Baltazar Korab, beautifully captured the social life of Rome's rooftops and became an essential reference for architects and urban planners.

In 1980, Zariņa developed the idea for a permanent UW location in Rome at Palazzo Pio. She founded and directed the UW Rome Center at Palazzo Pio from 1984 to 1995 while continuing to teach her Civita program. Meanwhile, the buildings Zariņa restored with her husband, Anthony Heywood, in Civita de Bagnoregio served as the center for the second program developed by Zariņa. Her vision for Civita involved restoring dilapidated historical buildings, repurposing them with new functions, and breathing new life into the hilltop village. Zariņa's creative approach helped inspire local families to return, revitalizing the community and establishing Civita as a place where architecture, history, and social life intersected.

Zariņa also convinced Birkerts to invest in Civita de Bagnoregio, where he purchased a derelict property and worked with Zariņa to restore it into a beautiful hilltop villa. Their collaboration on these restoration projects exemplified her commitment to using authentic materials and preserving the historical integrity of buildings while adapting them to contemporary needs. Zariņa inspired local residents to understand the value of their properties and encouraged them to reconstruct. This approach contributed significantly to the revitalization of Civita.

In 1981, Astra and Anthony co-founded the Northwest Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies (NIAUS) in Seattle, which would later become known as The Civita Institute. Astra Zariņa passed away on August 31, 2008, leaving behind a lasting legacy. She and Anthony donated the properties they had restored in Civita, including a terrace, garden, library, and archive, to The Civita Institute. The Institute serves as a hub for post-professional education, research, and creative practice, offering residencies, academic workshops, topical seminars, and studio space for architects and students.

The Civita institute

Today, The Civita Institute continues to honor Zariņa's vision by fostering interdisciplinary learning and promoting sustainable, socially conscious architecture. The legacy of Astra Zariņa, her approach to architecture as a cultural and social force, and her work in restoring Civita de Bagnoregio remain central to the Institute's mission. Through these ongoing efforts, Astra's influence continues to shape the future of architecture and urbanism, ensuring that her profound impact on students, architecture, and the communities she touched endures for generations to come.

Astra Zariņa's connection to Latvia, and Latvia's connection to the Civita Institute, has recently been revitalized. In November 2023, the first group of teachers and students from Latvia traveled to Civita for an immersive workshop titled *Imagining My Civita*. This collaborative effort was initiated by the Arhiteksti Foundation and The Civita Institute, in partnership with the RISEBA University Faculty of Architecture & Design. The workshop marked the beginning of an annual teacher-student program, a tribute to Zariņa's pedagogical legacy, and to her unique approach to learning, creativity, and architectural engagement.

Civita 2023 Workshop

The *Imagining My Civita 2023* workshop brought together twenty-one participants—faculty members, architects, and students—for five transformative days in Civita de Bagnoregio. During this time, they engaged in an interdisciplinary exploration of the village, experiencing its architecture, culture, and landscapes through various creative and investigative teaching methods. The workshop was designed to help participants "see" Civita—not just as a physical place, but as an emotional and intellectual experience. Participants observed and interpreted the village through drawing, painting, writing, urban mapping, and even cooking, immersing themselves in the sensory and cultural richness of the surroundings. The purpose of the workshop was to connect Astra Zariņa's legacy to Latvia and structure a workshop based on Astra Zariņa design values and tripartite teaching method—knowledge, action and reflection.

Steven Holl, one of Astra Zariņa's most prominent students, articulated the enduring significance of her pedagogy at the RIXARCH Conference 2023 in Latvia. He identified seven core principles central to her architectural theory: the value of urban space; the sensory and cultural importance of organic food; the preservation of historic buildings; the social role of the urban roofscape; the importance of community; the integration of ceremony and myth; and the interconnectedness of the earth, plants, and animals.

Citing Steven Holl; "She taught us all these things that were central to being and architect. But then there was another dimension of learning – the cultural dimension" (Sudermann, 2020). These principles, unconventional in the 1970s, reflected Zariņa's foresight in approaching architecture as an interdisciplinary and culturally embedded practice. Zariņa implemented an innovative tripartite teaching methodology - knowledge, action and reflection, this gave her students the process to experience and unpack the urban

environment. Observation was central to engage deeply with urban spaces as dynamic, interconnected, layered and social entities. Her focus on the roofscapes of Rome as a transitional social space exemplified her attention to subtle architectural elements that shaped human interaction. Both Rome and Civita, she emphasized activities such as field measuring, excavation, sketching and journaling reflection to uncover the historical layers and social narratives embedded in material, texture, and form. Her field trips included visiting other hilltop villages, monuments and contemporary buildings.

Interdisciplinarity was another cornerstone of Zariņa's pedagogy. Her focus on organic food extended beyond sustenance, symbolizing the sensory and communal aspects of architecture, while her exploration of myth and ritual imbued spaces with cultural meaning. This holistic approach was applied in her Civita Hill Town Program, where students participated in preservation projects, learning to balance historical integrity with contemporary needs.

Reflection completed Zariņa's tripartite teaching method, pushing students to critically assess their work's social and ecological implications. Holl credited Zariņa's principles with shaping his architectural philosophy, particularly her emphasis on the cultural and environmental dimensions of design. Her legacy, though once unconventional, continues to inspire discourse on sustainability, cultural preservation, and community-centered architecture, making her a model for architectural education.

Zarina's Experiential Pedagogy

Zariņa's pedagogical approach transcended the traditional classroom setting, bringing learning into real-world contexts. As researched by former Zariņa student Betty Torell, her didactic approach - knowledge, action and reflection; aligns with the Applied Learning model, which predates David Kolb's groundbreaking Experiential

Learning Theory (ELT) published in 1984. (Torell 2019). Applied learning pedagogies share a fundamental design principle: fostering learning and growth through a reflective, experiential process that moves students beyond conventional classroom environments. According to Ash and Clayton this approach is rooted in the belief that learning is most effective when it is active, engaged, and collaborative. (Ash & Clayton 2009)

Dr. David Kolb defined learning as a never ending process, a holistic process for creating knowledge through transforming experience. In 1974, Kolb developed his own learning model. He considered three classic influential learning models of the 20th. cen. – behaviorism (Kurt Lewin), cognitivism (John Dewey) and the constructivist (Jean Piaget) approach . These three models were total opposites in approach, to accept one was to reject the other. Dr. David Kolb claimed that learning requires a balanced approach to all three of these disparate learning models. Kolb argues in his experiential learning cycle that we learn best by experience which includes: doing, reflecting and thinking critically about it and then doing it again, which provides for a powerful feed back loop. This process is not linear we can jump into this cycle at any point. (EMS 2009)

Some see learning as a straight line from not knowing to knowing. Ideas and knowledge are not fixed we continue to experience things and our view of the world. According to Kolb we constantly learn and absorb these personal experiences. As such learning is in constant conflict between what we expect and what we experience. This point of conflict or occurrences in four stages: 1. Concrete experience -do, feel and see; 2. Reflective observation – start thinking about what happened; 3. Abstract conceptualization based on reflection; 4. Active experimentation – our new views are then tested. (Growth Engineering) (fig.2)

Zariņa's experiential approach required knowledge and action (doing, feeling and seeing). Observation required reflection

Kolb's Learning Cycle

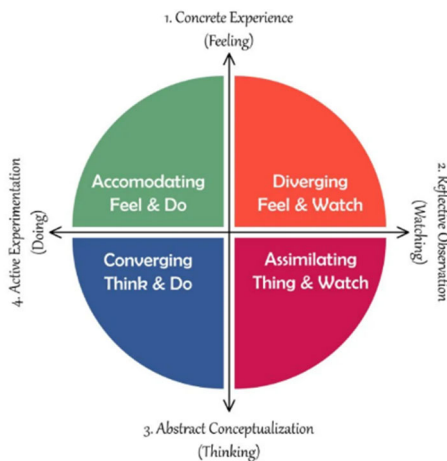


Figure 2. Kolb's Learning Cycle.
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html>

necessary for learning. Experience (doing) is not enough. For the student the learning and understanding process must include thinking and reflecting about it otherwise according to Ash and Clayton, citing Shanton, whenever reflection is weak students learning may be haphazard, accidental and superficial. (Ash & Clayton p.27)

Reflecting is essential component to gaining knowledge and action to ensuring a holistic learning process. The Civita 2023 workshop days were organized into three sessions: morning input talks, afternoon plein air sessions, and "show and tell" reflections before dinner. Each day began with a lecture or discussion on a specific topic, followed by hands-on sessions that encouraged participants to engage with the landscape and architecture of Civita and the surrounding rural landscape. Each day would close with informal reflections where everyone shared their insights (thoughts) by means of presenting their observations through drawing, sketching, painting and journaling.

Our Civita 2023 workshop project was organized based on Astra Zariņa's teaching

methodology. The six input talks during the workshop provided the intellectual framework for participants' explorations. The lecture topics included – a brief overview on Astra Zariņa’s legacy and teaching methods and ‘Observing through Painting’ - to capture the descriptive and emotive aspects of the city through paint. ‘Observing Through Drawing’- to explore the power of visual representation to capture the essence of a place. Italian Hill Top Villages, which looked at the cultural and historical significance of villages like Civita di Bagnoregio. The Poetry of Architecture & The Architecture of Poetry – an exploration of how architecture can evoke emotions and narratives, and how poetry can deepen the understanding of space. The Significance of Heritage – What is an Artifact? a discussion on the role of cultural heritage and the idea of artifacts in architectural practice. Finally, “Urban Mapping & Slow Food” - a session that explored how the slow food movement and urban mapping, the layers of symbols, signs and meaning that can offer deeper insights into community and place-making.

Each of these talks unpacked complex ideas and stimulated our group discussions, inspiring participants to observe the city and think about architecture and design not just as a technical exercise. Participating faculty and students were challenged to engage with the urban condition considering: materiality, space, nature, social, historical and cultural aspects. The workshop's emphasis on observation and reflection encouraged participants to discern and adopt new perspectives on the built environment, moving beyond the descriptive to the deeply perceptive and emotive.

Students were asked to think about the knowledge they received, observe through the means of drawings, painting and writing and then to reflect upon what they have learned or discovered. Reflection included brief presentation to the group and discussion. Workshop afternoon session



Figure 3. Ilze Paklone sketches. Civita 2023

included a plein air session were participants, left the studio to and engage with the village and their surroundings.

Observation is a primary mode for perceiving and mapping the city. Observation requires that we physically experience and engage with the city. Zariņa's didactic and investigative approach, required that students leave the studio, to experience and engage the city in real time to facilitate learning. Zariņa's, study program assignments included the study of Rome's Nirulli plan and selected sites throughout Rome. Students in Zariņa's Rome program and Italian Hill top village program physically experienced the village and public space through looking, measuring and sketching, not only engaging the physical city but also its inhabitants, customs and local cuisine. To observe and experience the city physically and emotionally are essential components to Zariņa's studio assignments.

Deliberate observation requires various means of investigation - spatial mapping, journaling, and sketching to gain a deeper understanding of Civita's history, artifacts,

and spatial condition, as well as its intricate details—rooftops, alleyways, gates and locks, edge conditions, textures, windows, doors and its light—through both artistic and analytical lenses. Cooking together, sharing meals, and experiencing food as a communal activity were also central to the group's experience, echoing Zariņa's belief in the importance of culture, food, and social engagement as integral parts of the architectural experience.

Our, "show and tell" sessions gave opportunity for each participant to share their observations, insights and discuss their findings. Each student expressed their own personal and emotional connection to Civita, offering a diverse and rich range of interpretations of the village. This reflective process helped to solidify the core teaching method that Astra Zariņa had established: the fusion of knowledge, action, and reflection, which fosters both intellectual growth and emotional engagement through action, collaboration and our group discussions. The group's observations—written journals, poems, sketches, and paintings from the workshop—have been compiled for publication, showcasing the

results of our first collaborative workshop with The Civita Institute. (fig.3)

Observation and Mapping

Sharon Mentyka (Astra Zarina 2012 fellow) in her research identified seven steps or elements of observation for mapping the city: discovering, navigating, symbolizing, preserving, describing, recording and imagining. Mentyka's lecture "Civita Immaginata: Mapping a Historic Landscape", inspired our workshop theme and input lectures.

Sharon Mentyka's, explains that mapping historical landscapes and the complex layers of information, may not actually be initially accessible or perceivable. She sees Civita as, "a different kind a place and different to many kinds of people". The goal is to simplify and redact all the visual information and data. When we make maps we chose what to add or what to leave out, we are editors. Mentyka states that in one sense to map something is to lie about it. We chose how to show the content, we chose the style of representation and add our experience, emotions and meaning to it. Just like a portrait artist may reflect his own character in the painting, rather than the sitters. (Mentyka, 2014)

Sharon Mentyka presents seven criteria in mapping the city: discovering, navigating, symbolizing, preserving, describing, recording and imagining. Sharon Mentyka simplifies the visual information and data to search for recognizable patterns. We caricature and understand places in straight lines rather than complex diagrams. We also impose our own personality and sensibilities in making maps. We may not depict every angle, twist or turn in representing a route. Mentyka's visual maps, describe and incorporate emotional experience and triggers: symbols and landmarks are added to help describe a route. (Mentyka, 2014)

Ilze Paklone PhD , in her talk on Observing Through Drawings, highlights the factual vs. the intangible and intuitive sensitivities in representation, mark making and mapping.

For example, Paklone explains that Japan conceptualizes space as shared and heterogeneous, while the Greek idea of space, exemplified by the Agora, is more homogeneous and distinct.

Historical mapmaking precedents show that cities are not accurately represented as topographical maps, which record every detail of data. The Babylonian map from 500 B.C. (fig. 4) or the Etruscan mundi (fig. 5) conceives the ideal city scheme, dividing the heavens into four quarters. This best serves the Etruscan's in determining where to build their temples to please their gods. These maps do not serve a geographical purpose, rather abstractly represent a place or serve as organizational diagrams, to convey symbolic or religious information. Mentyka, explains while maps may not be geographically accurate, they convey a very different narrative about a place. They reveal symbols and their intricate interconnectedness, particularly in Civita, where Etruscan and Roman cultures shared and appropriated symbols of various



Figure 4. Babylonian Map of The World.
https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1882-0714-509

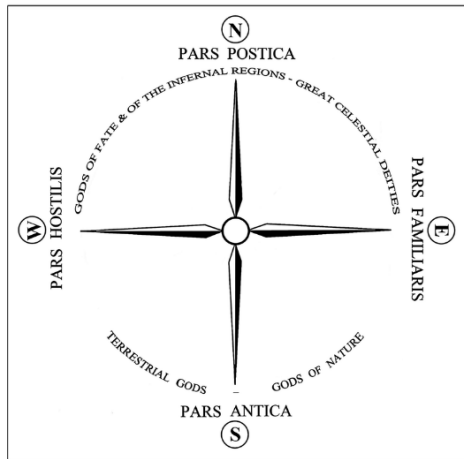


Figure 5. Etruscan mundi.
https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Etruscan-conception-of-the-heaven_fig2_320266628

categories-historic, religious and vernacular. (Mentyka, 2014)

Zariņa valued the study of physical space but also understood the overlapping social and cultural aspects components like symbolism, ritual, myth that make up the meaning of a place. Zariņa's students experience involved living with a local family, enjoying local foods and cooking to better understand the milieu of the neighborhood and the weekly beer or glass of wine with the father of the house. This important aspect of context and culture was missing from David Kolb's ELT learning model. While, a holistic model should include the social and cultural condition. Kolb's model does not consider emotive aspects such as emotion and motivation which also are necessary to facilitate engagement in the learning process. (Growth Engineering 2024).

Emotion and motivation are essential to the learning process. To fully understand the city we need to observe the physical city as well as understand the cultural and social milieu. The word *civitas* in Latin means city. The city must be perceived beyond its visual and physical form but also understand its social function and historical significance. Unwrapping the layers necessary to perceive the city to grasp its meaning

include symbols, rituals and myths which impact our subconscious and emotions.

Spirit of Place

Dr. Jana Jēkobsone, heritage protection specialist, researcher, and lecturer delivered a thought-provoking presentation focused on the concept of *Genius Loci*—the spirit of a place. Jēkobsone examined the complex relationship between an artifact, a monument, and the broader cultural and geographical context that defines its significance. Jēkobsone raised crucial questions about what truly constitutes the “spirit of place” and how we can protect it in the face of modern challenges. She cited Aldo Rossi, that the collective memory of the inhabitants resides in those artifacts and monuments that make up the city.

Jēkobsone emphasized that understanding heritage requires looking beyond the physical object to consider its context. “We can’t speak about the object without its context,” she said, stressing that heritage is not just about built form but also the intangible layers of meaning attached to it. This idea of context was part of Zariņa’s approach to deciphering the city and necessary for learning. She explained that heritage is constructed in our minds and attributed to multiple layers of significance, each of which must be carefully examined. These layers include historical, cultural, and social dimensions, all of which contribute to the artifact’s value. These social and cultural observation that contribute to the spirit of a place are beyond the visually perceivable objects. (fig.6)

Mentyka, explains that the mapping process includes discovering objects (visual elements) that can help us understand the urban context and can aid in navigating the city. When visually perceivable objects like symbols enter our subconscious we construct archetypes in our minds that guide us in particular behaviors. (fig.7)

John Hejduk (1929-2000), architect and former dean at Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture (Cooper Union) differentiates

monuments—nonfunctional relics. . Zariņa's values and methodology are distinctive and align with current ideas on preservation and original building value. These principles are clearly seen in her own work, , particularly in her approach to restoration and adaptive reuse of buildings in Civita.

Jēkobsone also addressed the concept of living heritage, emphasizing that heritage should be people-focused and should benefit the community. In this context, she asked, Who is benefitting from the current status of Civita? To truly protect the spirit of Civita, it is necessary to assess who the heritage serves today, not just who it served in the past. In Civita, as in many historic places, there is a delicate balance between preserving the past and adapting to present-day needs. The present commercial needs and tourism, for the inhabitants and businesses in Civita, are both a livelihood and a threat.

Our workshop discussion focused on Civita's unique context - its landscape, materiality, and relationship with nature and agriculture. The discussion highlighted the importance of Civita's geographical and geological features: the tufa stone upon which the town is built, the distinctive color palette of its materials, and the natural forces, such as earthquakes and erosion, that are constantly reshaping the landscape. The donkey, the caves, paths and basements form a building types that witness Civita's vibrant past connection to olive oil , chestnuts and wine production. These elements are integral to the spirit of Civita, and the challenge to preserving them critical to maintaining Civita's life blood.

Astra's Legacy

Astra Zariņa's legacy is one of profound significance. She taught us that architecture is not just about buildings—it is about the people who inhabit those spaces and the social functions those spaces serve. Her teaching emphasized the importance of observation and the act of seeing—not only with the eyes but with the heart, mind and emotions.



Figure 8. Imagining MY Civita 2023- group picture. Igors Maloviciskis 2023

Zarina saw the city is a continuum —a network of interconnected social spaces, from the public square to the private courtyard, extending through to the kitchen and beyond to the rooftop terrace. Her holistic approach to teaching and vision of architecture, often dubbed “architecture from city to spoon” by her former students, reflects her belief in the importance of integrating architecture with everyday life.

Astra was a true pioneer, an innovative and early urbanists who understood that architecture's role in cultural production must address both its historical significance and its relevance to contemporary society. Her didactic approach to teaching and experience based learning components - knowledge, action, reflection - align with David Kolb's ELT learning model and contemporary research validate her pioneering approach. Her methodology is unique and holistic to align with context and emotion which perfect the experiential learning process and valuable for deciphering the city and its multilayered meaning.

Our workshop based on Zariņa 's teaching methodology resulted in twenty one unique inquiries providing insightful portraits and revelations about Civita. Students experienced a new approach to learning and understood the value of observation. Input talks provoked thought and a catalysts for action and reflection. Students, experiencing Civita, learned to observe and perceive the hilltop village in their own unique styles, capturing descriptive and emotive information through sketching(fig. 3), photography, painting, journaling, and poetry. The Civita 2003 workshop output was incorporated into Astra Zariņa | Rome and The Teacher exhibit in Riga , Latvia, curated by Arhiteksti foundation and T-Space.

Zariņa was a visionary urbanist. She saw that adaptive reuse is necessary in preserving our heritage and place making. Reimagining spaces to accommodate the future while preserving their intrinsic value. Her approach to teaching and architecture was driven by a deep commitment to creating sustainable, socially integrated urban spaces. As we move forward, our hope is that Astra Zariņa's legacy will continue to inspire new generations of students and architects.

In the words of Jules Verne, "Look with all your eyes, look." By following her example of thoughtful observation and reflection, respect for heritage, and creative adaptation, we can ensure that the cities and towns we build and restore based on this approach will endure as vibrant, sustainable, and culturally rich places for the future.

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