

# INTEGRATED PROJECT III

5th year\_1º semester

Team:

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## *City, Housing & Commons*

### FRAMEWORK | OBJECTIVES

The course unit *Integrated Project III* takes place in the 1st semester of the 5th and final year of the Integrated Master's in Architecture, with a specialization in Architecture, Urbanism, City, and Territory. It lays the foundations for the development of the Final Master's Thesis, either in the design or dissertation track.

At the conclusion of the academic path, the semester proposes the study of a complex urban territory through a central theme of contemporary international debate, assuming the project as a tool for analysis, reflection, and proposition.

This triad — **complex territory | critical reflection on contemporary issues | the project as a tool for research and intervention** — enables students to articulate disciplinary theory and practice, to understand the dynamic nature of the urban, and to develop a vision, a strategy, and a project (at multiple scales) for the city's territory.

The aim of the course, understood as a space for both reflection and action, is to use the project as a working process for the presentation of multi-scalar proposals, envisioning the design of a city for all, starting from the existing city.

Additional objectives include:

- Stimulating permanent curiosity;
- Exposing students to international debate on the various dimensions of the urban, based on the structures and systems that compose it, while fostering critical reflection;
- Engaging students with complex territories, promoting the skills and analytical tools required for accurate analysis, comprehension of reality, and understanding of the processes that shape it;
- Equipping students for the professional practice of architecture, through the discipline's tools, with particular emphasis on systemic, multi-scalar project thinking.

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*“And this [social] commitment of the architect implies improving the habitat of the greatest number, seeking the maximum reproducibility of his invention, moving agilely from the individual to the collective – and what field addresses this more meaningfully than that of the city?”*

*(1969) A Cidade como Arquitectura, Nuno Portas*

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Public policies have shown significant limitations in fostering greater social, spatial, and material justice in cities, with particular emphasis on the growing challenge of ensuring access to housing. Social inequalities are increasingly visible in urban space—whether through the absence or hostility of public spaces, or through the inaccessibility of housing (enshrined as a right in Article 65 of the Portuguese Constitution). In this context, the claim to the “*Right to the City*” (Lefebvre, 1968) remains highly relevant today. At the same time, cities continue to attract more and increasingly diverse populations—young and old, nationals and foreigners, traditional families and reconfigured households—while fewer accessible public and housing spaces are available to accommodate them.

Internationally, the European Commission launched in 2021 the challenge of a **New European Bauhaus**<sup>1</sup> (NEB) culture, proposing actions guided by the concepts of “Beautiful, Sustainable, and Inclusive,” with the aim of building a new European culture defined as **#NextGenerationEU**<sup>2</sup>. This initiative is also aligned with **SDG 11** — making cities and communities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable<sup>3</sup>.

At the same time, the perspective of the **Urban Commons** concept is being debated. It encompasses space, infrastructures, material and immaterial resources — including housing — as well as urban practices, as part of a system of sharing. This model emerges as an organizational and constructive alternative for fostering a more inclusive, sustainable, and democratic urban life. Positioned as a middle ground between the public/State and the private/market, this model fosters the rethinking of complex urban territories while promoting inclusivity, sustainability, and democracy.

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<sup>1</sup> New European Bauhaus - [https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>2</sup> Next Generation EU - [https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>3</sup> Sustainable Development Goals - [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/sustainable-development-goals\\_en?ettrans=pt&ettransnolive=1](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/sustainable-development-goals_en?ettrans=pt&ettransnolive=1)

In this context, the **social function of the architect** (Artigas, 1989) gains renewed significance. The architect is called upon to design systems, structures, and urban and built spaces that are more equitable, meeting the needs of present and future communities. This responsibility entails promoting safety, comfort, sustainability, and social inclusion, while incorporating the **Commoning Ethos** as a guiding principle of disciplinary practice.

*[What if?]*

*What if the **landscape**, the **urban space**, the **ecological systems**, the **infrastructures**, or **housing** were considered a **COMMON**? What if housing were regarded as a common good? What if **beauty, sustainability, and inclusion** guided urban intervention? What kind of city would we build? What urban and housing models would become possible?*

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*“(...) the new architects to be trained (...) must be **challenged** to understand what is implied in the almost mythical drive to give structure and form to every scale of architectural space, revealing it as both continuous and differentiated at once – from the object that moves within the environment, to the building that defines it, to the city that ultimately links it to the territory beyond.”*

*(1969) A Cidade como Arquitectura, Nuno Portas*

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The search for more inclusive, beautiful, and sustainable spaces, approached from the perspective of the **Commons**, will focus on a territory within the municipality of **Vila Franca de Xira—Póvoa de Santa Iria**. Complex in the definition of its physical boundaries, diverse in its urban and natural configuration, and rich in its social fabric, this territory represents a landscape in transformation.

The occupation of **Póvoa de Santa Iria** has evolved over a long historical process and is currently undergoing significant change through the redevelopment of its former industrial areas along the riverfront. Its spatial structure is characterized by systemic discontinuities and natural and urban ruptures, resulting from successive processes of territorial infrastructuring and the consequent shaping of the urban landscape.

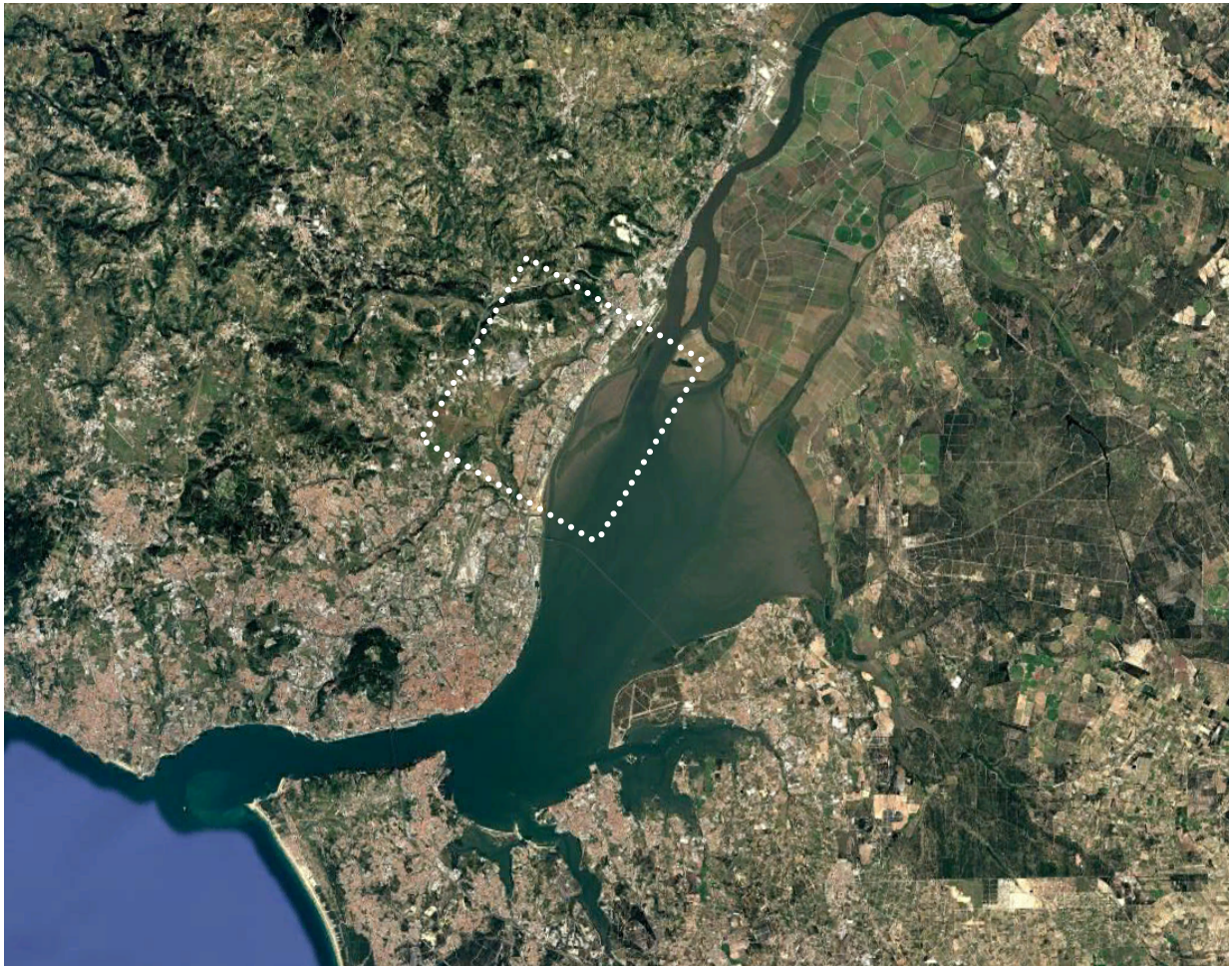
In light of current disputes over urban space, this territory emerges as an opportunity to define an urban strategy radically different from the one that has been implemented so far. Considering today's urban debates, this territory offers possibilities for designing the landscape as human habitat, for envisioning the city as a **Common Home** — whether through public space, the regeneration of existing built heritage, or the projection of new buildings — as well as through the reconfiguration of multiple urban structures and systems, spanning from the metropolitan scale down to the neighborhood scale.

*[Where?]*

*Which are the **opportunity spaces**? Which urban systems and structures — natural, built, infrastructural, and social — hold a **potential regenerative** role?*

## Study Area | Intervention Area

The exercise proposed for **Póvoa de Santa Iria** aims to examine the territory across multiple scales, promoting a systemic understanding of its urban structures and of the challenges they pose.



Póvoa de Santa Iria - Location

The '**study area**' is defined as a broad territory for analysis and strategic proposition, from which elements, infrastructures, and urban structures—as well as the relations and ruptures at the scale of the city and the metropolis—are perceived and revisited.

The '**intervention area**' is defined as a more limited territory, with boundaries to be set, where each student identifies a project site.



Póvoa de Santa Iria – study area & intervention area

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*“From the perspective of urban architecture, there can be no building that does not make city; that is, there is no typology that is not, by its very structure, permeated by an urban morphology. Outside this system there is nothing but individualism or technocratic illusion.”*

*(1969) A Cidade como Arquitectura, Nuno Portas*

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The debate is framed through different disciplinary perspectives — from issues of urban sociology, to the vision of natural and mobility systems, housing policy, economic activity, among others — requiring an articulated approach capable of fostering integrated work.

Internationally, best practices prioritize **design as an inclusive process**, urban regeneration, the promotion of active and sustainable mobility, the integration of green infrastructures, nature-based solutions, and circular economy principles to create more resilient urban structures, systems, and communities.

Architects, as professionals in urbanism, have both the opportunity and the obligation to reflect on today’s urban challenges and to seek new modes and models of organizing and constructing the urban and collective life. We aim to stimulate curiosity and empower the search for inspiring yet conscious and responsible proposals, in order to approach the city systemically, including the housing question, which is central to the current debate.

*[How?]*

*How can we, **through design** — territorial, urban, and architectural — build a vision and an urban strategy to promote urban areas and housing that are more **affordable, high-quality, connected, inclusive, and just for all?***