

# Waterscapes in transformation

Summerschool from 27th of August till 6th of September 2018, Blankenberge and Ghent (BE)  
Faculty of Architecture, University of Leuven



Aerial view on the Uitkerkse Polder - VLM

How can we define intervention strategies to bridge the gap between large scale and long term planning with short term and small scale interventions that reconfigure the accessibility of a waterscape in transformation as a result of climate change?

The landscapes of coastal zones will be confronted first with **effects due to climate change**. The most influential changes for the coastal zones will be: sea level rising, increase of the temperature, changing rainfall patterns, floods, fragmentation of the ecological system, salinization of the soil and reduced drainage capabilities to sea. A thoughtful planning policy forms the necessary key to a sustainable development. As an answer to the challenge of climate change in the Belgian coast, policies and plans have been developed and implemented at a European, national, regional and local level. These policies and plans lead to the formulation of spatial proposals for mitigation and adaptation, to executed by major infrastructural works planned for the next decades. Most of these infrastructures, conceived at a large scale generate a different model of accessibility for the Belgian Coastal landscape: the relation dry/wet is often inverted, topographic changes imply discontinuities in the landscape, roadways and paths need to be reconfigured to guarantee connectivity. **These measures change the overall accessibility and permeability of the region and will change drastically this landscape.** It is becoming increasingly clear that these open areas between urban coastal zones will play a crucial role in the future of our coastal landscape. How resilient are they and how can these areas absorb the inevitable climate shocks?

The objective of the summerschool is to **provide answers to how climatological pressure will manifest itself on the landscape** in a more specific area like the *Uitkerkse Polder* and to what extent the pressure will have an impact on access to agricultural, urbanised or natural systems.

In the summerschool we investigate models and different types of waterscapes through looking at references, concrete case studies and theoretical reflections, based on external input of experts and local actors. The *Uitkerkse Polder* is a representative area of pressure on water landscapes in terms of resilient planning and design for the Belgian coastal zone. The *Uitkerkse Polder* is an open area situated between coastal city Blankenberge and coastal village Wenduine and is going landward until Bruges. Three quarters of the amount of rainfallwater in the triangle Oostende - Brugge - Blankenberge is gravitarily drained towards

sea through the *Uitkerkse Polder*. The landscape of the *Uitkerkse polder* is characterized by typical elements of a polderlandscape; open view, no trees or hedges, small topographic differences. The area is also known because of the wetlands, due to the dense network of canals and ditches. The *Blankenbergse Vaart* forms the wet vein of the landscape. The area embraces urban zones, rural zones and natural zones, the interaction between those zones will be studied through analysing existing systems like water management, land values, property rights, real estate logics, agriculture, ecosystems, mobility, ... **A clear analysis of the interaction of the existing systems is needed to see how the pressure on the landscape (effects of climate change) will interact and change the connection and value ratio of those systems. With experiments and tests the changing spatial configuration will be projected on the actual landscape.**

**During a ten day summerschool, students are confronted with this context and challenged to take position. In different working groups three existing coastal defence principles (Protect – Accommodate – Retreat) will be projected to the future horizon of 2100. For each scenario a design intervention will be created on two crucial locations in the Uitkerkse Polder.** Using the format of an international classroom the summerschool will be a combination of fieldtrips, lectures, design studios, desktop critics and reviews. To enrich the students' experience, a collaboration is setup with 4 universities, giving them the possibility to work together with students from Istanbul, Barcelona, Porto and Ghent.

5 credits can be given to KU Leuven students when participating the elective 'deelname internationaal project 2017-2018'. English is the used language during the summerschool.

## Fee info:

This summerschool is free of charge and offers you  
- Overnight stays (youth hostel) + travelling with bicycle  
- Breakfast & lunch during working days  
- All necessary materials to work (e.g. printing, cardboard, tracing paper,...) + tutoring  
- Excursion

The summerschool is intended for master students architecture and urban design. Candidates are asked to send a short CV and motivation to [sis.pillen@kuleuven.be](mailto:sis.pillen@kuleuven.be) and [erik.vandaele@kuleuven.be](mailto:erik.vandaele@kuleuven.be) (before 1 April)