

Architectural visions and future demands (student workshop)



"Imagine there 's no heaven

It 's easy if you try

No hell below us

above us, only sky

[...]

Imagine all the people

Living life in peace ... "

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John Lennon's song "Imagine", arguably one of the best pop songs of all times¹, is essentially an enumeration of absences. These absences, however, suggest new possibilities, alternative societies and systems: new utopias.

UTOPIA, the OU-TOPOS, this "place that cannot be"² is liberated from probabilities and reasonabilities – it is a place of ideas and ideals.

In times of crises UTOPIAS boom, as they provide a dialectic service of comfort and empowerment: We escape reality by imagining alternative worlds and orders – this gives us comfort. At the same time, through this escape, we gain trust and confidence in the idea that a better reality is possible. This notion provides us with guidance and power for change.

If LESS IS MUST – which utopias slumber in LESS? In John Lennon's song, the paradigm of less goes beyond renunciation and deficiency. It elevates and liberates – it creates an abundance of possibilities.

In the framework of the 2024 EAAE conference in Münster, we invited participants to discuss how utopias or scenarios of less can contribute to our common effort to overcome the multiple crises we face today.

1 - Until 2010 the song was ranked no. 3 in the Rolling Stone Magazine list of 500 greatest songs of all times. In 2021 it still ranks in the top 20 – over 50 years after its first launch.

2 - The English statesman (and humanist author) Thomas More coined the utopian concept as an ideal non-place (ou-topos) as early as 1516 in his work „De optimo statu rei publicae deque nova insula Utopia (Of the best constitution of the state and of the new island of Utopia)“.