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Social segregation - a form of covering the architecture

Through an analysis of European dense and culturally diverse neighborhoods this paper seeks to interrogate the role of the state—producing racial and territorial stigma in the gentrification process, and it asks how important is to stop this process of covering the identity of the urban space offered by cultural diversity. The urban fabric is often seen as the result of the demand, the increase or decrease of population, and industrial development, but it is also connected to racial and class stigmatization. I drew together studies on the stigma impact on urban fabric in cities like Timisoara, Berlin, and Valencia to show how administrative decisions and induced stigmatization lead to the risk of losing cultural diversity in the „hearts of cities”, meaning that these stigmatized communities are not vanishing but are pushed towards borders as the cities extend. Poor people can not be erased, forgotten, or displaced, as there can not exist “+” without “-”, cities need neighborhoods where these communities can survive and allow them to develop without covering their identity or replacing the people that live in it.

I relate to the theme of the biennale in this article in the sense of covering the history, the communities, and the diversity, but also in the sense of producing another image through the gentrification process. I seek to raise awareness on how it is affecting all of us to lose the authentic image of an urban fabric, offered through diversity, and to change it for financial growth, but also how important is to stop letting people live in poor urban conditions because of stigma (fig.1, 2).



Figure 1 – Marta Cristha Bacalu, „Detail of collective housing Timisoara” – dec.2022



Figure 2 – Marta Cristha Bacalu, „Gallaratese Quarter, Milan”- nov.2023