

## Students Experiences of Aachen Culture

**Ana Paulina** : My experience from Aachen is that of a small lively city, I can see that there are many things going on on a weekly basis (concerts, dance lessons, parties, university events) and that there is also a vast offer from public space to be enjoyed, just by walking small distances of 10-15 minutes you can find a different park/green area to sit and enjoy an apple.

**Tooba** : In Aachen the people are undoubtedly very friendly and it is comfortable for an outsider to move around the city. From the point of view of entertainment the city feels a little conservative, food and drinks seems to be maximum of the entertainment here.

**Laura** : My experience from Aachen is that of a small lively city, I can see that there are many things going on on a weekly basis (concerts, dance lessons, parties, university events) and that there is also a vast offer from public space to be enjoyed, just by walking small distances of 10-15 minutes you can find a different park/green area to sit and enjoy an apple.

## Associate “Third Space” in your imagination and how it relates to regenerative design?

**Cemre** : Third places can serve as hubs for promoting regenerative practices, such as hosting workshops on sustainable living, community gardens, or sharing resources for local environmental initiatives. In this way, they become not just social spaces but also centers for education and action towards a more regenerative future.

**Elies** : When considering regenerative design in the context of Third Spaces, the focus shifts towards creating environments that not only sustain themselves but also contribute positively to the well-being of individuals and the broader ecosystem.

## Students Experiences of Third Place in Aachen

**Jana** : There is great potential in Aachen to make culture more lively and especially more open with the help of third spaces. In my opinion, there is a lack of non-commercial meeting places in the city centre (apart from the surrounding parks). I think a good example of the demand for such places is the busy use of the temporary sandpit that is set up in Katschhof in the summer.

**Hsin-Hsuan Chen** : There is great potential in Aachen to make culture more lively and especially more open with the help of third spaces. In my opinion, there is a lack of non-commercial meeting places in the city centre (apart from the surrounding parks). I think a good example of the demand for such places is the busy use of the temporary sandpit that is set up in Katschhof in the summer.

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**Wanyung** : Impression of culture of Aachen: Firstly, aachen has a rich history dating back over 2,000 years. It was a prominent city in the Holy Roman Empire and served as the principal residence of Charlemagne, who established it as his imperial capital in the late 8th century. The city's historic center, with landmarks such as the Aachen Cathedral and the Palatine Chapel, reflects its importance during this period. Secondly, Aachen is known for its religious significance, particularly due to the Aachen Cathedral (Dom), a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Hsin-Hsuan Chen** : Aachen has a rich history dating back to Roman times. Located at the border between Germany and neighbouring countries, the city's culture is influenced also by Belgium and the Netherlands. This influence is evident in the city's architecture, cuisine, and local traditions, resulting in a unique blend of German, Dutch, and French elements that make Aachen a culturally rich destination.

**Kazi** : Aachen's culture, as I've experienced it during my time here, is a dynamic blend of historical richness, academic vibrancy, and seasonal shifts. Arriving in mid-January amidst the cold and snow, my initial impression was one of quietude, with the streets seeming somewhat empty and subdued. Walking through the snow to campus, I found myself wondering about the city's rhythm and where its people might be. However, as the weather warmed and March rolled around, a remarkable transformation occurred.

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**Lindy** : Aachen's culture, as I've experienced it during my time here, is a dynamic blend of historical richness, academic vibrancy, and seasonal shifts. Arriving in mid-January amidst the cold and snow, my initial impression was one of quietude, with the streets seeming somewhat empty and subdued. Walking through the snow to campus, I found myself wondering about the city's rhythm and where its people might be.

**Aquib** : People, that is something here you will find a lot of diversity in culture and heritages here, I have seen so many banners and whatnot where people invite you to come a celebrate there festivities and so on like Apolo club Aachen is Indian hub sometimes, people organize parties and events there and there I have seen people from almost every background and meet with some lovely people.

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**Qian** : The third space can serve as a link between different cultural aspects in Aachen. it's a little bit too much to say that we should search for a sense of belonging for everybody in Aachen, especially for international students or immigrants. But at least we can create third place from the perspective of participation. Insofar people are getting involved, then it could be a good start.

**Juliana** : Aachen currently offers a range of traditional Third spaces. However, there is an unexplored potential in many areas and buildings that have become obsolete and are in a run-down state. Through regenerative design strategies, these spaces could be repurposed and turned into new proposals for third space scenarios, where cultural activities can take place and meet with a new potential public.

**Elif Ertemiz**  
**The Role of Aachen's Groundwater in Urban Planning and Design**

Since arriving in Aachen, the absence of water in form of a river or a lake has been particularly striking to me, despite the city of Aachen is receiving considerable rainfall. Upon learning that water is transported through channel systems, I began to question certain aspects. For instance, the flooding of certain areas of Aachen and water spouting from drains indicated that the infrastructure may not be functioning well or that its capacity might be insufficient. Seeing open water in the street and how life in the area is connected to children's parks and green open spaces, appeared more vivid and welcoming compared to other streets.

As a city like Aachen, which constantly receives rainfall and has water resources, is obviously not able to fully utilize this potential, blocked my comprehensive urban experience in a saddening way. Additionally, I was aware of the presence of hot and cold water, especially as the presence of hot water at Elisenbrunnen is evident by its smell. However, during the presentation by Mr. Markus Ulrich and our subsequent excursion, learning about the hot water springs under some buildings, starkly highlighted that their value might not be adequately preserved.

Regarding vacancy and its reevaluation by urban transformation, it is essential to touch on the "search for and use of space according to the weather", a phenomenon which I noticed in Aachen. When the weather is cold and rainy, people prefer indoor spaces, whereas on pleasant days, spending time outdoors in public spaces is preferred. In this context, the transformation story of Horten-Haus perfectly suited this situation. Transforming a disused area into a collective space with various functions is crucial. Besides its locational advantages, assigning functions that can utilize its size and spatial potential is important. The flexibility of usage and circulation in this space, increasing its activity in all weather conditions, raises another question: Should such spaces always exist in one place, or should they appear in different locations like a travelling circus, continually offering new options? To answer this, I believe we need to experience the transformation proposals of a few more structures.

In summary, being aware of the characteristics of certain areas, but not being able to utilize their potential changes our perspective on the city. Creating "what if...?" scenarios and refraining from being a city that hinders itself from becoming a constantly vibrant place for its residents pushes us towards new solutions. Therefore, rather than searching for new spaces, looking at spaces from different perspectives and enabling their transformations are crucial for the city and its inhabitants.