

# VDC INTERNATIONAL WEEK '26

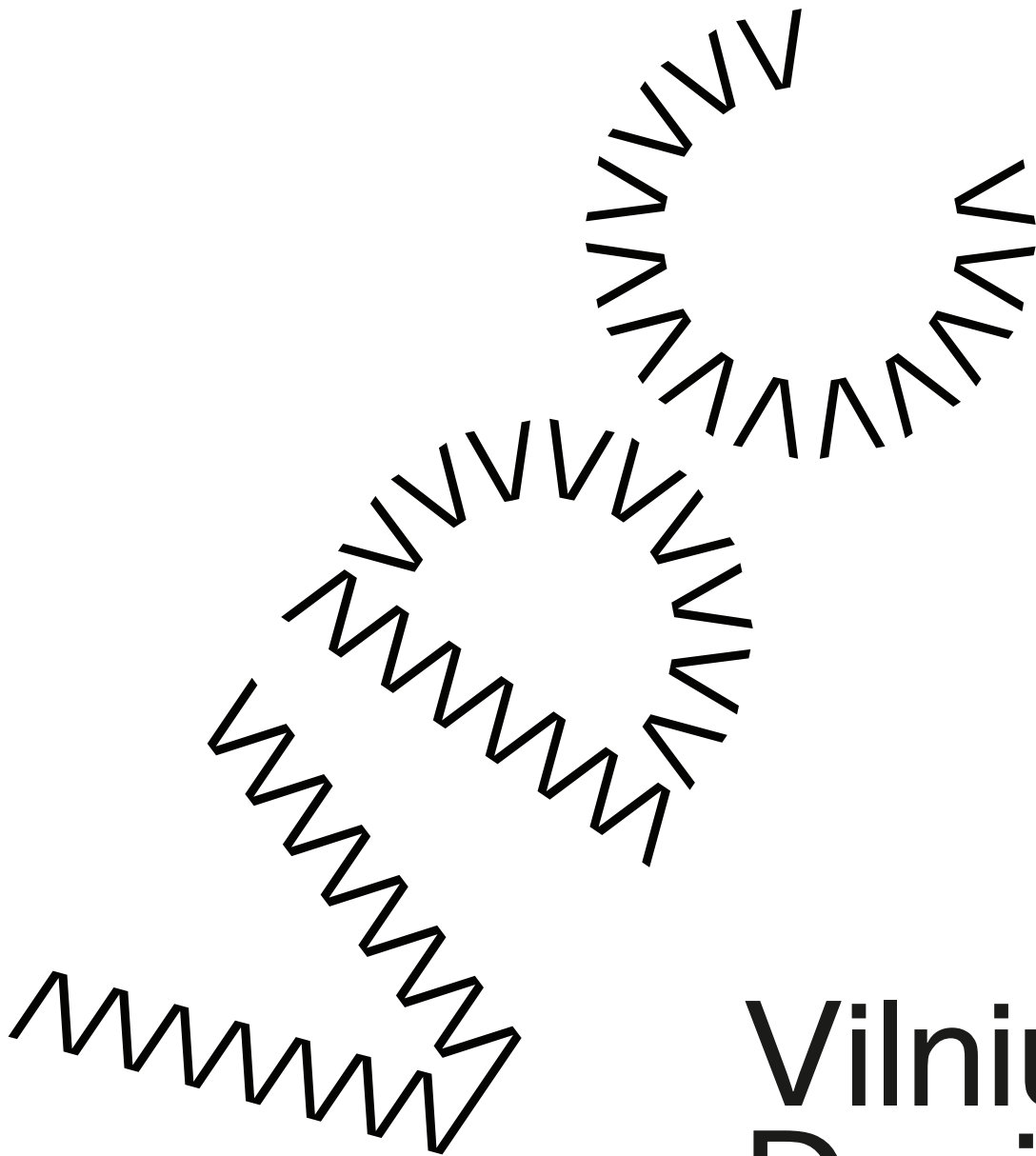
April 20 - 27

BIP (Blended Intensive Programme)

together with

International Design Day 2026:

"The Spaces In Between".



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## **City Speaks: The Spaces In Between — Naujamiestis Lab (Vilnius)**

Inspired by ICoD International Design Day 2026: “The Spaces In Between”, this BIP focuses on the thresholds where connection happens—or breaks: arrival, waiting, navigating, first encounters, cross-cultural interaction, and informal meeting places. Students treat the city as a living system of signs, stories, communities, and social practices, then design interventions that help the city “speak” more clearly and inclusively.

A cross-institution, interdisciplinary BIP where mixed teams identify “in-between” spaces in a host city of Vilnius and diagnose where connection breaks down, then prototype design interventions that improve belonging, clarity, accessibility, trust, and shared experience.

This is explicitly aligned with the theme’s focus on transitions, thresholds, arrival/waiting/navigation, interfaces, first encounters, and social cues—and on design as a practice of relationship, not just outputs.

## **Design challenge**

**How can a city speak to us — and how can we speak to the city?**

Teams select one location in Naujamiestis and propose a new design perspective: add what's missing, amplify local character, and improve how people understand, access, and belong in that place.

## **Our Aim**

To develop students' capacity to design relational, place-based experiences that shape how people arrive, meet, navigate, participate, and feel included—across physical environments, digital touchpoints, and emotional thresholds—using human-centered and co-design methods in international, interdisciplinary teams.

## **Learning outcomes (3 ECTS)**

**By the end of the BIP, students will be able to:**

**Investigate a place as a system** by conducting field research (observation, interviews/intercepts, visual mapping) and identifying key “in-between” moments that influence inclusion, accessibility, and social interaction.

**Synthesize cultural and community insights** into a coherent problem framing and design direction (journey/touchpoint mapping, stakeholder needs, inclusion/exclusion dynamics, power relations).

**Generate and justify a concept narrative** that articulates how the city “speaks” (signals, identities, histories, communities) and how the proposed design intervention responds.

**Prototype and iterate** interventions across relevant media (spatial/visual/digital/experiential/service) and refine them based on testing and feedback (readability/usability walkthroughs, in-context trials, peer/stakeholder critique).

**Collaborate effectively** in international, multidisciplinary teams by applying design thinking workflows, managing roles, documenting decisions, and working to shared quality standards.

**Communicate outcomes** professionally through clear storytelling and documentation (concept rationale, context analysis, prototypes, testing evidence, impact and inclusion lens), suitable for public presentation and publication.

## **Target groups**

**Primary:** BA students in graphic design, fashion design, interior design, photography (and closely related communication/visual disciplines).

**Recommended add-on** (for stronger “relational” depth): students from social work, education, urban studies (or civic/heritage studies), especially for community-focused locations and inclusion-oriented briefs.

## **International week**

### **Phase A — Virtual Component:**

April 10, 2026 (Online)

Purpose: Align methods, build shared language, form international teams, and arrive in Vilnius ready for fieldwork.

## **International week**

### **Phase B — Physical Component:**

April 20-25, 2026 (On-site Intensive in Vilnius)

### **Day 1 — Orientation & Framing (Arrival Day)**

Goal: establish shared understanding of theme, context, method, and expectations; teams ready to research.

#### Activities

- Welcome + programme brief + safety/ethics, permissions, respectful fieldwork
- Kick-off lecture: city, creativity, public expression, relational design
- Guided excursion introducing Naujamiestis context and candidate sites
- Studio set-up: team charters, roles, workflow, documentation system

#### Outputs

- Team charter (roles, decision rules, daily cadence)
- Initial site preferences + logistics plan

## International week

### Day 2 — Fieldwork & Synthesis (Insight Day)

Goal: gather real evidence and form an inclusion-aware problem framing.

#### Activities

- Site walks with local team leaders / micro-guides (30–45 min per location if possible)
- Observation + intercept interviews + photo/visual mapping
- Synthesis studio: patterns, tensions, “who is missing?”, breakdown points

#### Outputs

- Evidence board (photos, quotes, diagrams)
- “What the city is saying” assumptions (tested/validated)
- Draft problem statement + opportunity areas
- Inclusion/exclusion map (access, language, mobility, safety, belonging)

## International week

### Day 3 — Concept Generation & Prototype Sprint (Concept Day)

Goal: convert insight into a strong narrative and first prototype.

#### Activities

- Journey/touchpoint map + stakeholder lens
- “City voice” exercise: what the place says now vs what it could say
- Define 3–5 connection principles (rules your concept follows)
- Concept selection using criteria: inclusion, feasibility, cultural fit, impact
- Rapid prototyping (paper/print mockups, tape-ups, Figma, audio, projection tests, etc.)

#### Outputs

- 1-page concept narrative + storyboard/scenario
- Prototype v1 + test plan
- 3 insight statements and a clear framing

# International week

## Day 4 — Testing in Context & Iteration (Validation Day)

Goal: test in the real environment; iterate based on evidence.

### Activities

- In-context testing: readability/usability walkthroughs, “first-time user” simulation
- Iteration sprint: refine tone, form, accessibility, robustness
- Design decisions log: what changed and why

### Outputs

- Prototype v2 + testing evidence
- Draft Impact & Inclusion Statement (benefits, risks, mitigations)
- Refined documentation for final presentation

## International week

### Day 5 — Final Communication & Public Showcase (International Design Day Alignment)

Goal: produce a professional narrative + publishable documentation and present publicly.

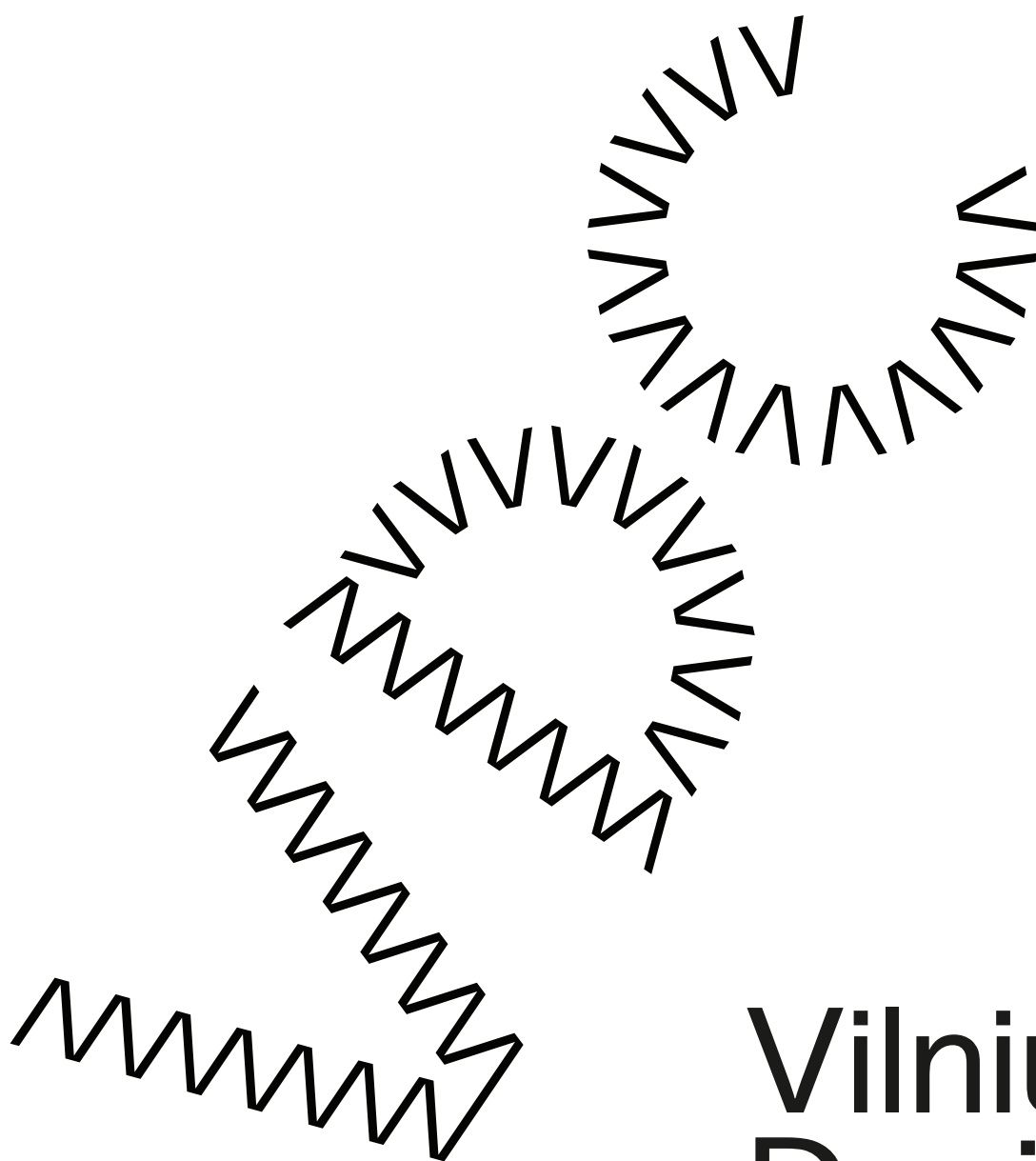
#### Activities

- Final studio: polish prototype + narrative
- Rehearsal + critique
- Final presentations (digital acceptable)
- Pop-up showcase / gallery wall / walkthrough demo
- Reflection circle: thresholds, belonging, co-design practice

#### Outputs

- Final presentation deck
- Final prototype (physical/digital/spec)
- Team documentation package (publication-ready)

# OUR INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS THIS WEEK



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**Timothy Goodman** is an artist, designer, and author based in NYC. In 2007, he graduated from the School of Visual Arts with a BFA in graphic design.

After working in branding for 4 years, and creating many personal projects on the side, he's had his own practice since 2012. In the last 13 years, his art has populated walls, galleries, clothes, products, packaging, and books for organizations such as Apple, Nike, MoMa, Netflix, YSL, Google, Samsung, Tiffany & Co., Coca-Cola, The New Yorker, and the New York Times. His partnerships include a global collection of clothing with Uniqlo, and a Nike shoe for Kevin Durant. He's created over 250 public murals, including a b-ball court for the students at P.S. 315 in Brooklyn, and a sanitation truck for New York.

Timothy is the author of three books, and the co-creator of several social experiments including the viral blog & book *40 Days of Dating*, whose TV rights were optioned to Netflix. He's had two solo gallery shows in NYC, he teaches at School of Visual Arts, and speaks around the world at creative conferences. His graphic memoir *I Always Think It's Forever* was published in 2023 by Simon & Schuster.



**Timothy Goodman**

A close-up portrait of Marcos Rodríguez, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a black beanie and a black hoodie. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**Marcos Rodríguez** is working at the intersection of brand and digital products, his work consists in designing memorable experiences that comes to life through merging utility and novelty. His practice spans from strategy & graphic design to UX, motion, and prototyping.

He has collaborated with leading digital-focused agencies such as Huge Inc and Work&Co, and now leads the interactive design department at PORTO ROCHA — a global design studio uniting strategy and design to create work that evolves with the world we live in — partnering with clients across a diverse range of industries. He also teaches at aprender design, a school for those who challenge the established—in design and beyond.

**Marcos Rodríguez**

**Peter Verheul** (1965, NL) is an independent first generation digital type designer, graphic designer, and teacher. He graduated from the Royal Academy of Art in 1989, where he studied with Gerrit Noordzij, and has been teaching there since 1991.  
He lives and works in The Hague.

He is a tutor at the Graphic Design department and also a tutor at the Master Type Media program. His studio, Farhill.nl, was established in 1991 in The Hague, where he works on type design, lettering, calligraphy, and book design. Notable projects include the type family Versa, developed alongside the acclaimed book *Dutch Type* (2004), and typefaces FF Sheriff (1996) and FF Berlin (1991) for FontShop International. Verheul designed the corporate fonts Rijksoverheid Serif & Sans for the Dutch Government (2008), in collaboration with Just van Rossum, with ongoing expansions, including a recent set of Variable Fonts with Erik van Blokland.

He also created Arita Sans (2012) for Amore-Pacific, complementing a multilingual type collection in Hangul and Chinese. His lettering projects include commissions for the University of Amsterdam, signage for the Royal Academy of Art, and co-authoring *Dutch Alphabets* (2015) with Mathieu Lommen.

He has also been active in the design community, co-organizing Zefir 7 events for nearly two decades.



**Peter Verheul**

Frederik Berlaen is a typesigner with a love for programming and scripting.

After studying graphic design at Sint-lucas in Ghent, where he got the passion for pure black & white type, he went to study typesign at the Royal Academy of Art (KABK) in The Hague.

He successfully got a Master Degree at the postgraduate course Type & Media in 2006. His final project was not a typefamily but an application which studies the broadnip and pointed pen, called Kallculator.

Frederik Berlaen works under the name of TypeMyType providing font services, programming and development of applications as RoboFont, DrawBot, UFOstretch and more. He teaches typesign and scripting at Luca School of Arts Ghent, at ECAL in Lausanne from 2009 to 2015 and at Typography & Language post-graduate course in Esad Amiens since 2016.



**Frederik Berlaen**

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