



La Cambre

CALLED MESSAGES, WRITING WITH MATTER

Erasmus + Blended Intensive Programme

March 30 – April 3, 2026

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Topic / Problematic

For as long as humans have existed, we have written on walls.

From prehistoric cave markings to political slogans on the Berlin Wall, from devotional inscriptions to spontaneous declarations of love, the public surface has always been a stage for expression, dissent, memory, and imagination.

This workshop invites students to explore writing as an embodied, spatial, and sculptural act – not as painted typography, nor graphic design on paper, but as something carved, engraved, and inscribed into matter.

Topic / Problematic

- ▶ What does it mean to engrave a message into matter today, and how does the choice of material – brick, fragment, surface – shape what can be said ?
- ▶ From where do we speak when words are carved rather than written, and what kind of permanence, resistance, or vulnerability does engraving imply ?

Beyond the message itself, students are invited to consider how these inscribed elements inhabit space : how construction, fragmentation, collapse, horizontality, or elevation influence the reading of the work, and how the global installation – its scale, orientation, and spatial relationships – produces meaning through its presence in space.

Workshop Description

Over one week, 20 students from partner universities across Europe – coming from **graphic design, typography** and **visual communication** programmes – will work in small groups to conceive and carve a message they want to transmit into space.

Each participant will receive a set of aerated concrete blocks, roughly equivalent to the height of a human body (≈ 1.70 m total). In total, the studio will fill with 20 x 10 blocks : a temporary landscape of potential elements to be activated, inviting collective decisions on how space is occupied, structured, or negotiated. The students are free to decide : how their message is engraved, how their blocks are arranged, how their construction relates to those of other groups. The only shared constraint is the act of engraving letters or messages into matter, and the necessity of negotiating space collectively.

Called Messages – A Question of Context

The title **Called Messages** refers both to engraved messages and to messages that call out from a specific moment and position.

Students are invited to situate their message explicitly :

from Europe, from 2026, from a generation of young designers and typographers...

The workshop encourages them to consider what it means to take a position, to inscribe something that could remain, and to assume responsibility for the words they carve.

Structure of the week

DAY 1 – Group Formation & Urban walk

- Formation of small, mixed groups, bringing together students from the different partner schools.
- Introduction to the workshop through a collective urban walk. The walk is approached with a specific reading bias: observing messages, signs, and writings engraved into matter : carved, cut, incised, or embedded in architectural surfaces.
- Visit of emblematic places of the city and selected institutional cultural venues, depending on current opportunities.
- Short collective discussion at the end of the day to share observations and first intuitions.

Structure of the week

DAY 2 – Concept development & Carving

- Collective discussion reflecting on the previous day's urban walk: shared observations, sketches, and first intuitions.
- Initiation to engraving through carving sessions supported by tutors, allowing students to experience the material and its resistance.
- Clarifying the message and beginning the engraving process.

Structure of the week

DAY 3 – Carving

- Full-day engraving and construction sessions in small groups, allowing time for labour, repetition, and refinement.
- Informal intervention by the tutors, meeting each group to discuss their ongoing work and to open questions about spatial positioning.
- A collective discussion opens reflections on spatial composition and the final collective installation, without fixing decisions at this stage.

Structure of the week

DAY 4 – Installation Workshop

- Completion of engraving for groups who need additional time.
- A session dedicated to collective spatial composition, focusing on how the carved blocks can be brought together into a coherent collective installation.
- How do individual messages relate to each other ? What does the structure communicate as a whole ? How do material, scale, and placement influence the reading of the text ? Where, in the building, the installation takes place ?
- Optional communication initiatives : students who wish may create posters, invitations, or social media content to announce the opening.

Structure of the week

DAY 5 – Final Assembly & Opening Drink

- Collective set-up of the installation
- Cleaning and tidying the space
- Public viewing with an informal drink
- Learning Outcomes

Structure of the week

Participants will :

- Explore engraving as a material and typographic gesture,
- Reflect on writing as a situated act rather than a neutral form,
- Experiment with construction, instability, and spatial dialogue,
- Engage in collective decision-making and exhibition design,
- Produce a shared installation reflecting a multiplicity of voices.

Adress, Links, and useful contacts

- lacambre.be
- BIP coordinators : Noémie Couronné & David Maurissen – david.maurissen@lacambre.be
- La Cambre – 21 Abbaye de La Cambre, 1000 Brussels, BELGIUM
- Erasmus & International Relations : Lucas Limongelli – international@lacambre.be



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