

# Friday 10 November 17–21h: Lectures Part I

– Tatjana Schneider + Jeremy Till, Sheffield:  
*Alternative Currents*

– Alexander Levi + Amanda Schachter/  
SLO Architecture, Madrid:  
*Envisioning Hacker Space*

– Maria Theodorou, Athens:  
*Architecture and Activism*

– Miguel Robles-Duran, Rotterdam:  
*Anti-Avantgarde*

– Craig Buckley, New York:  
*The Impracticable Practice of Architecture*

21h:  
Opening  
An Architektur  
Exhibition

SCO

Saturday

11 November

11-15h:

Lectures Part II

- Ole W. Fischer, Zurich:

Aesthetic Radicalism

- BAVO, Rotterdam:

No Criticism Please, We're Projective Now!

- Elisabeth Blum, Zurich:

Detect & Paste City

- Markus Miessen, London:

The Violence of Participation

16-19h

Workshops

20h:

Final

Presentation

# Camp for Oppositional Architecture 2006 Theorizing Architectural Resistance

10–11 November 2006

Utrecht, the Netherlands  
An Architektur at Casco. Office for Art,  
Design and Theory

The small part of the built environment that is subject to planning at all is almost completely controlled by the claims of capitalist utilization: globalized markets and cultures ask for commodified spaces, nation states and corporations require spectacular architectures for representative purposes, the multitude of consumer subjects demands room for individualized privacy. What's left to do?

## Theorizing Architectural Resistance

Continuing the "Camp for Oppositional Architecture" this second congress again looks for possible ways of resistance within the field of architecture and planning. Having brought together practitioners and researchers in Berlin 2004 who exchanged approaches and developed a common basis of discourse on the open idea of oppositional architecture, we now want to further explore the theoretical grounds on which such projects could spread. As part of a series of future Camps each dealing with a specific issue, we this time would like to elaborate the concept of opposition within the field of architecture and planning. The Camp will focus on analytical approaches that invent, explore and reflect on possibilities of architectural resistance that withstand the demands of a capitalist production of space and try to develop a non-affirmative attitude within this powerful contiguity.

## Call for papers

An Architektur invites planners, researchers and initiatives active within these fields to present analyses and concepts of oppositional architecture. We seek to discuss researches and statements dealing with the histories, conditions or strategies of architectural resistance with the objective to further develop the project of oppositional architecture: How can we conceptualize the idea of opposition within the field of architecture and planning? In which context or social field, under which prepositions and with which objectives can it be imagined? What are possible stances, strategies or coalitions that have to be taken? What kind of planning methods or design approaches can we think of that are appropriate to contemporary social reality? Which projects can we refer to as a common basis in order to empower our practice? How to resist and oppose the social order from within the profession?

## Organization

The Camp for Oppositional Architecture 2006 will take place on November 10-11, 2006 at Casco, Utrecht, the Netherlands. We are able to invite up to eight authors of significant statements to present their theses in a 30 minutes lecture. Their travel and accommodation costs will be funded. However, other interesting statements are welcome to be discussed in workshops and have the possibility to be published in a special issue of An Architektur. All events of the Camp are public and free of charge for participants.

Please send a 1-page abstract to [cfoa@anarchitektur](mailto:cfoa@anarchitektur). The Camp language is English.

Closing date: October 10, 2006

We are looking forward to your proposals. Join the camp for oppositional architecture!  
[www.oppositionalarchitecture.com](http://www.oppositionalarchitecture.com)  
[www.cascoprojects.org](http://www.cascoprojects.org)

## Casco

Office for Art, Design and Theory

Oudegracht 366, 3511 PP Utrecht  
the Netherlands  
T/F +31(0)30 2319995  
[info@cascoprojects.org](mailto:info@cascoprojects.org)

**AN ARCHITEKTUR**



## Papers

- 5 BAVO  
5 Elisabeth Blum  
7 Ava Bromberg  
  
9 Craig Buckley  
11 Robert Burghardt + Johannes Räther/  
MeineAkademie  
13 Stefan Canham  
15 Aysen Ciravoglu + Zuhre Sozeri + Emre Torbaoglu  
17 Pilar Echavarria  
18 Eva Egermann + Christina Linortner  
20 Lisa Euler + Maria del Pilar Cañamero  
22 Lars Fischer/IAA + Scott Rigby/Basekamp  
24 Ole W. Fischer  
26 Cheryl Gallaway  
28 Marius Grønning  
29 Florian Haydn + Mirko Pogoreutz + Georg Böhm/  
000y0 Architekten  
30 Jorge Mario Jáuregui  
32 Dennis Kaspori  
34 Clive R. Knights  
35 Alexander Levi + Amanda Schachter/  
SLO Architecture  
39 Maria Cecilia Loschiavo dos Santos  
  
41 Eoghan McTigue  
42 Markus Miessen  
45 Timothy Moore  
47 public works  
48 Miguel Robles-Duran  
52 Michael Sander  
  
53 Antonio Scarponi  
56 Tatjana Schneider + Jeremy Till  
58 Tijana Stevanovic + Inga Zimprich  
60 Maria Theodorou  
64 Oscar Tuazon  
67 Alison Wolanski
- No Criticism Please, We're Projective Now!  
Detect & Paste City  
From the Spaces Between to the Spaces of  
Everybody's Dreams  
The Impracticable Practice of Architecture  
MeineAkademie and the Neoliberal Image  
Politics of the Volkswagen Corporation  
Bauwagen/Mobile Squatters  
Hypocrisy: Hypnosis and/or Illusion  
Daily Utopias  
Schuettehausprojekt  
Illegality, Legalization, and Other Maneuvres  
Plausible Forms of Sociality  
Aesthetic Radicalism  
Do It Yourself (Together!)  
The Object and the Interface  
ERSATZ  
  
No Title  
A Communism of Ideas  
Somnambulating Architecture  
Envisioning Hacker Space  
  
Cities of Plastic and Cardboard and the Space  
of Resistance  
Architecture and Defacement  
The Violence of Participation  
EXTRA ORDINARY  
Engagement as Form  
Anti-Avantgarde  
Oppositional Architecture? – Oh Come On,  
Get a Life!  
The Hypothetical Revolution  
Alternative Currents  
A Small School of Architecture  
Architecture and Activism  
Appear Normal or Don't Appear  
Critical Architecture, Spatial Polemics

## Reference Material

- 69 Paul Davidoff + Thomas A. Renner  
  
76 Michel Foucault  
  
81 Ernesto Laclau + Chantal Mouffe
- Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning  
Reprint from: *Journal of the American  
Institute of Planners*, Vol XXXI, No. 4,  
November 1965, page 331–337  
Space, Knowledge, and Power  
(interview with Paul Rabinow)  
Reprint from: *Skyline*, March 1982,  
page 16–20  
Hearts, Minds and Radical Democracy  
(interview with Dave Castle)  
Taken from: Redpepper Archive  
(www.redpepper.org.uk), 2006



## No Criticism Please, We're Projective Now!

— BAVO

Under the banner of 'the projective', design practice is suffering the same fate as journalism during the McCarthy show trials. The real victims of the present crusade against criticism are not its fictitious enemies, but design practice itself. With the call of Michael Speaks, prophet of the post-critical position, to his colleagues to no longer see the market state as an ideology, but as a reality, the design world is sinking into simulated naivety. The ideological character of this move is manifest. The fact that Speaks's summons to open our eyes to reality mostly produces the opposite effect: Every direct, concrete discussion of the many ups and downs currently affecting the city under the dictatorship of the market state is categorically rejected as unconstructive. With the projective movement, we are thus in fact encountering the capitulation of design practice to market realism, while retaining illusory space for critical awareness and artistic freedom. In our lecture we will further explore the opposition between critical and post-critical approaches to resistance, by using the theoretical perspective of Badiou and Žižek.

## Detect & Paste City

— Elisabeth Blum

The history of urbanism makes us understand that and how changing forms of power appear as

With the projective movement, we are thus in fact encountering the capitulation of design practice to market realism, while retaining illusory space for critical awareness and artistic freedom.

BAVO is a Rotterdam-based independent research office that investigates the political dimension of art, architecture and planning. BAVO is a collaboration of Gideon Boie and Matthias Pauwels who both studied architecture (Ghent) and philosophy (Rotterdam). BAVO produces books, essays and research reports which are based on a thorough 'cross-reading' of a diversity of research material varying from the built environment, architectural plans and city events to political and juridical texts that determine the spatial organization of society. Methodologically, concepts derived from political philosophy and psychoanalysis are used as diagnostic tools to read this material. BAVO also frequently gives courses and lectures and organizes and/or participates in debates.

info@bavo.biz

www.bavo.biz

Architecture and urban planning should work for the real city, not for the official one. There is a strong need for a decisive extension of existing zoning plans. We call it *Detect & Paste City*: changing areas to be defined and displayed according to particular opportunities at places suitable for what we would call – to use a psychoanalytic term – 'urbanes Probehandeln'.

sequences of urban infrastructural figures. So when we think of cities, these figures conjure up.

They constitute but also change the character of the given city and determine the nature of its public life. These elaborated figures are like mirrors of historical and contemporary ideas how the city was and is to be, what the city has to represent as a cultural creation.

Our contemplation will focus on the role which these figures of public institutions play in the life of the city. Focusing on the city in this way is highly interesting for the reason that the history of cities shows clearly that it was in visions and images which determined, abetted or hindered the quality and nature of life there.

Which figures are in fact extant? Which forms of living do they favor, suppress or ignore?

The answers mirror the socio-political dimension of these urbanistic figures.

Brushing city maps the wrong way we realise that a growing percentage of people lacks the right of representation. We postulate a representative sequence of infrastructural figures which allow the new urban precariat survive: people who are forced to live under increasingly precarious conditions.

What we are trying to do is to bring into appearance this repressed groups by representing them in additional urban figures of access to all important contemporary forms of real and medial infrastructures.

We set into motion the meaning of what city-life is or could be. We are going to extend the limits of the question 'To whom does the city belong?' We are going to change the concept of who has the right of being represented in the city.

This demand contrasts the enormous investments in social exclusion by a different idea: a first step to accept new realities – and above all an attempt to concede these realities spaces in the city.

To face up to the facts:

1. *Architecture & Urban Planning have to become realistic.* Thus they contribute to realise access to all important contemporary forms of real and medial infrastructures for everybody be it citizens or migrants whatever their social conditions might be.

2. *Architecture & Urban Planning have to become practical.* They develop strategies in order to realise the above mentioned demands by easy and unbureaucratic means.

3. *Architecture & Urban Planning work for*

*the real city, not for the official one.* There is a strong need for a decisive extension of existing zoning plans. We call it *Detect & Paste City*: changing areas to be defined and displayed according to particular opportunities at places suitable for what we would call – to use a psychoanalytic term – 'urbanes Probehandeln'.

You don't have to start at zero to discuss these demands. There are some intelligent references to tie up:

- Follow Georg Simmel's 'Dialectics of Reconciliation', the core of which says that in the necessarily periodically aggravating conflict between frozen forms and vital processes the latter always break the sclerotic forms.
- Understand Archigram's dialectics between urban hardware (the city's structure) and urban software (the city's program). There is a decisive judgement basically underlying this theoretical opposition: the idea that the city depends of sudden changes as much as of established rituals. It is not the city's built structure but its sociality mirrored by the ever changing influence exerted by both parameters: rituals of settledness and permanent activities appearing in every aspect of stability on the one hand, and all those temporary events and their consequences resulting from unpredictable or surprising political, economical and social changes on the other that require customised projects for changing situations.
- Follow Paul Virilio und Chilperic de Bois-cuillé in order to revolutionise the 'urban' chattels. Scan the city for economically uninteresting gaps and provide these 'life rafts' with supply facilities against social failure.
- Think of what Rem Koolhaas said: Conceive urbanism as a strategic reorientation. Redesign the psychological space. Provide facilities for eventualities instead of defining new limits and borders. Make up methods in order to impact the seemingly inescapable. Create alternative ideas of the city and accept risks.
- Follow Claude Lévi-Strauss and entitle the 'bricoleur' as a persona. As he is no engineer he needs enough space for experiments which until now you do find only in illegal spaces. The bricoleur's means are limited, and the rule of his game is: any time getting by with

tools and materials been found.

- Follow Loïc Wacquant's argument that it is risky and full of social consequences if the state – as demonstrated by the US – shifts from the social welfare to the social and ethnic exclusion and the penal management of the social rejects of the market society.

Elisabeth Blum, architect, author, lecturer University of Applied Sciences and Arts Zurich. Since 1985 member of the artists' group hasena. Since 1998 member of the Stadtbaukommission Lucerne.

Member of the Editorial Board of the book series 'Bauwelt Fundamente', member of the Advisory Board ifg (International Forum of Design Ulm).

Publications: 'Le Corbusiers Wege. Wie das Zauberwerk in Gang gesetzt wird', 1988. 'Wem gehört die Stadt?' (Ed.), 1996. 'Ein Haus, ein Aufruhr. Anmerkungen zu Zaha Hadids Feuerwehrhaus', 1997. 'Boulevard Ecke Dschungel' (Co-Ed.), 2002. 'Schöne neue Stadt', 2003. 'FavelaMetropolis' (Co-Ed.), 2004.

eb@elisabethblum.com

## From the Spaces in Between to the Spaces of Everybody's Dreams: Towards a Non-Oppositional Radical Practice for Architects and Planners

— Ava Bromberg

'A movement cannot be carried on by negating other acts; it must have a positive force, a driving and self-sustaining motive-power.'

— Jane Addams, *The Settlement as a Factor in the Labor Movement*

'Our vision of the possible and the feasible is so restricted by industrial expectations that any alternative to more mass production sounds like a return to past oppression or like a Utopian design for noble savages. In fact, however, the vision of new possibilities requires only the recognition that scientific discoveries can be used in at least two opposite ways. The first leads to specialization of functions, institutionalization of values, and centralization of power and turns people into the accessories of bureaucracies or machines. The second enlarges the range of each person's competence, control and initiative, limited only by the other individual's claims to an equal range of power and freedom.'

— Ivan Illich, *Tools of Conviviality*

As critical thinkers who care about people (as opposed to buildings), it is our job to see what is wrong with the dominant way of operating as architect or planner. And, seeing that, we are compelled to *do something* that doesn't merely oppose, but – more precisely – explodes and reconstitutes the field.

As someone wholly invested in reappropriating the knowledge of the spatial disciplines (planning in particular) to advance economic, political, and social transformation in our time, to move towards a society that takes better care of people while advancing more sustainable forms (in every sense), more equitably distributed conveniences, and a good time for all, I have only one problem with the concept of Oppositional Architecture. Said simply, it is the ways in which 'oppositonality' offers us a limited framework for action. Opposition does not leave adequate room for, or place adequate emphasis on, the role of vision in a reconstitutive spatial practice.

As critical thinkers who care about people (as opposed to buildings), it is our job to see what is wrong with the dominant way of operating as architect or planner. And, seeing that, we are compelled to *do something* that doesn't merely oppose, but – more precisely – explodes and reconstitutes the field. While I was not at the first Camp, and regrettably will not be

there for the second, I imagine (and hope) that the purpose of coming together is to develop practices that are more closely aligned with opening up new possibilities, than merely opposing the rigid systems we've inherited.

For, in planning at least, the problem of opposition is endemic. It is also illustrative of why our most challenging work (and, I would argue, the hardest work of all social movements) must begin earlier on, with a critical assessment of the problem, an informed sense of what is 'wrong', but before there is something specific to oppose. In the US, for example, innumerable groups and alliances form in opposition to a proposal they find problematic. If a developer wants to build in an ecologically sensitive area, groups will mobilize to prevent this. In too many cases it is only after a neighborhood begins to undergo rapid development leading to displacement that residents are prompted to think about how to resist. This is already far along in the process. And the power-momentum does not favor the opposition, because the struggle happens on someone else's terms. If the parameters of action are always defined 'in response to,' then our creativity is limited to resistance and struggle *against* something that isn't even ours. We could go on like this – developing tactics – until we die, without ever stepping back to cast a wider net to develop strategic action and long-term projects that generate new forms we *do* care about. Thus our challenge is not merely to oppose, but to make space for vision. To build up something we want to see and share.

The challenge is a double one, for we not only have to think about how and where it is possible to make space for vision, we have to do experiment; we have to build it. And then, after we carve out such a space, we have to extend the opportunity – for others to develop vision of the built forms they *do* want – beyond our professions and our conversations amongst ourselves. Here our role in producing physical spaces that others will inherit cannot be overstated.

Whether a reflex, a survival mechanism, or the product of careful consideration, we take seriously the need for a transformation of how our cities get built, whose needs they serve, and the values they perpetuate. We are not satisfied. If we were satisfied, I imagine we'd be getting together this weekend around something else. The plain and basic facts of the discursive

and physical terrain we have inherited gives us our starting point. As a system 'causing things to stand together' – such as buildings – we know that capitalism and its forms produce means of their own self-perpetuation. The built form is produced by and reproduces capitalist social relations, maximizing profits at the expense of other values. Our disciplines of planning and architecture are implicated. So our challenge is no smaller than considering in what kind of space – discursive yes, but also physical – we use our knowledges to make room for other social relations and other values.

I believe our critical approach is the basis for a radical synthesis – the creative act of taking the social, political and economic structures we have inherited (the one that has profit-maximization as its core value, squeezing out space for all other values) their dictates and the institutional inertia they make their business – the logic – as a system structuring our time, our spaces, and our fields – to make radical acts in the direction of something better. We (reading this) may know of (and participate in) projects that actively experiment with this edge in their practices. We do our research, listen, observe and decide where to take action. Some of these practices give people ways to intervene on their own behalf to make their environments better. Others offer opportunities for people to *share* their ideas and visions as a kind of exercise. But I would like to step back and ask, in what kinds of spaces do people generate the visions we are ultimately working to advance? I hope this question can spark a discussion about our role (as architects and planners who are unsatisfied and working towards some as-yet-undefined 'better' way) in opening up spaces for thinking about the mechanics of how (and by whom) visions for a 'better way' or 'better city' are developed and advanced.

As those with 'professional' knowledge of how cities get built and precisely what is wrong with that process, it is our task to open up spaces in which a wide range of individuals can see the liberatory possibilities waiting between the cracks of existing structures. For now, these are still perhaps insurgent acts operating in the spaces in between, but this is by no means a permanent condition. The dominant logic offers the means of its own radical reconstitution; David Harvey has shown us that much in *Spaces of Hope*. But before we can under-

stand where to direct our strategic actions, we must not only give space and time to figure out what we (everyone) actually want, we must necessarily discuss the quality of the space and time in which we develop that vision.

I have a favorite John Friedmann quote that captures this starting point nicely: 'Without vision, no radical practice; without radical practice, no theory; without theory, no strategy; without strategy, no action.'

This quote really resonates with me as an approach. Nothing replaces learning from practice. And nothing gives form to the starting point of our practices like vision. If we were only concerned with opposing the dominant order, vision would not be so important. But if we are – as I believe we are – concerned with transforming our disciplines and the horizon of possibilities contained by the spaces they create, then we must think about vision. Having thought about vision, with micropractices that give small scale utopian thinking concrete form to learn from, we also have a crucial role in helping stimulate alliances (around positive projects) across different geographic scales. This activity is becoming increasingly necessary and urgent, whether maintaining or opening sites for inscribing and transferring indigenous values or cultures that take care of people before profit margins – at the level of the body, the home, the street corner, the network, the region. To activate and extend such spaces is part of our task as critical spatial thinkers engaged in producing future built environments.

Having presented a case for the crucial role

of vision in advancing architectural and social forms outside of neo-liberal Capitalism and I hope to spark a discussion of the mechanics of opening up such a space – not for the production and distribution of a Vision – white, male, and professional – but for using the tools of our disciplines to make the *space for developing a vision* available more broadly. It would be amazing to see the same energy that goes into mobilizing people for opposition – even and especially in existing planning structures – put to developing spaces in which this 'better' world we all want can take form and give rise to new values. Then we might soon be operating in the radically reconstituted field we envision.

Ava Bromberg (1980), Los Angeles.

Co-founder of 'Mess Hall' (2003), an experimental cultural space in a Chicago storefront. Co-editor of 'Critical Planning', Journal of the Department of Urban Planning, UCLA, volume 14. Spatial Justice, 'Belltown Paradise/Making Their Own Plans', WhiteWalls, Chicago, 2005, with Brett Bloom and 'UNHOUSED: Creative Responses to Homelessness and Innovation at the Margins of Affordability', Book and exhibitions with Brett Bloom (in progress). Organizer of the exhibition 'The City Without a Ghetto: Housing Systems, with the Center for Urban Pedagogy, (CUP)', 2004, Mess Hall, Chicago.

ava@inthefield.info

<http://www.inthefield.info>

<http://www.messhall.org>

## The Impracticable Practice of Architecture: *Utopie* as Magazine and as Montage

— Craig Buckley

*Utopie's* theoretical ambitions were born out of a conviction that architecture had become, in their words, an 'impracticable practice.' Importantly, this 'impracticability' was not a wholesale withdrawal, but was a form of resistance that also created new formats and arenas for understanding architecture as a 'social practice'.

*Utopie*<sup>[1]</sup> named a group and also a magazine, but it is clear that it also named an unstable field and a contested term. The magazine's original editorial committee was composed of eight people coming from different disciplines. Included were recent graduates of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (Jean Aubert, Jean-Paul Jungmann, Antoine Stinco) (hereafter ENSBA); landscape architects (Isabelle Auricoste and Catharine Cot) as well as sociologists (Jean Baudrillard, René Lourau, and Hubert Tonka, all of whom had served as assistants to Henri Lefebvre). *Utopie* can be grasped not only as a magazine published by a temporary alliance of architects and sociologists but a case of publication as an architectural practice. The space of the magazine is arguably one of the most decisive spaces for the architecture of the twentieth-century, and this essay will study *Utopie* to better understand both the impasses and the opportunities latent in this 'space' in the midst of the radicalization that appeared at in the closing years of the nineteen-sixties. The function of publication was crucial in a moment when *Utopie*'s self-declared resistance to the organization of the profession defined architecture as 'an impracticable practice.' *Utopie* sought to address this condition both through the introduction of concepts from critical urban sociology and through a practice of montage that re-articulated the network of images circulating in the media landscape that surrounded them. A close analysis of the magazine's theoretical orientation and its practice of montage, this essay tries to make sense of the phrase 'architecture as an impracticable practice,' allowing one to consider how and in what way architecture might continue even when it is declared 'impracticable.' The graphic form of the magazine provides a first clue, reflecting an uneasy cohabitation traversed by a spirit of critical negation, a desire to search for different possibilities in design, as well as for formats that could sustain the editors' experiment in architectural publishing. This moment of uncertainty remains the magazine's most salient feature. This tension was something that struck the editors of AD as noteworthy in introducing *Utopie* to the English public:

'The first issue of their review... was published in May 1967, revealing an agonized, tortured, questioning of architectural values... The utopian credo is to be read as a

rallying call for a new idealism in architecture; it is not intended as an excuse for other-worldly fantasy in design. Indeed so stringent are their ideals for the new architecture that it is something of a surprise that they are willing and able to design anything at all.' [2]

The 'utopian credo' cited by the editors of AD may have been one of the elements that allowed for the antagonistic relations between the magazine's critical ideals and the member's design practice to keep from breaking apart. As the blank boxes that appeared in the first issue's introduction announced, the editors hesitated to give any positive content to their appropriation of the term utopia. For *Utopie* this credo had a distinctly arrière-garde emphasis. To call *Utopie*'s practice arrière-garde does not mean to situate it as lagging behind or retrograde relative to the production of other magazines or groups during these years. By arrière-garde I would like to suggest a framework through which to read the critical project taken on by *Utopie*, something that might help establish its potential affinities and differences from other groups and magazines active in the late nineteen sixties and early nineteen seventies. Such an arrière-garde practice sought to recover concepts and figures nearly lost to a contemporary perspective through an active consideration of the ways in which they might be put back into use. In each of the first issue's montages moments of history – from the Villa Savoye, to the iron constructions of the late nineteenth-century, to the film sets and stage designs of the 1920s – appear a key reference points against which contemporary products can be measured and reconsidered. Likewise theoretical texts in the magazine draw not only on the recent publications by theorists such as Henri Lefebvre or Louis Althusser, but upon relatively forgotten figures such as Charles Fourier and Marcel Poëte, both of whom were republished in excerpted form in a special section of the magazine. That these figures were being republished by *Utopie*'s publisher Anthropos editions – the publishing house that also published Henri Lefebvre – suggests that this arrière-garde orientation and its corresponding tension was part and parcel of the group's direct connection to philosopher. What appears as a graphic tension between the magazine's iconomaniac montages and the more austere layout of its theoretical texts was also

a tension between a desire to keep in play an attention to the latest contemporary developments in architecture, art, fashion, and design with the aspects of a radical critique of everyday life inspired by the philosopher's Marxist analysis. If it was a source of tension it can also be seen as a source of creative potential driving the montage strategies used in the magazine. In this sense the tension between the iconomaniac and the austere might be seen as a portrait of a collision between two different forms of cultural capital seeking a form in which they can cohabitate: the knowing, iconomaniac eye of a younger generation attuned to the ephemeral currents of several fields and the institutional and critical weight carried by the discourse articulated by a senior professor and intellectual like Lefebvre. The magazine's practice of montage was the form in which such a contradiction was able to work itself out for a brief period of time.

[1] The magazine's full title was *Utopie: Sociologie de l'urbain*. It was first published in 1967 and ended in 1978. Alongside the magazine, the editors organized exhibitions, participated in conferences, pro-

duced pamphlets and books.

[2] 'Pneuwold,' *AD* (September 1968) 273.

Craig Buckley (1974), Architecture Historian, PhD Candidate, Princeton University, lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Publications: 'Utopie (Reconsidered)' w/ Jean-Louis Violeau, Sylvere Lotringere, Hubert Tonka, *Semiotext(e)* 2007. 'Exhibiting Function: Terence Gower's Polytechnic', *Terence Gower*, Turner Editorial, Mexico City 2006. 'Spitball, Pennzoil, Model-T', *Pacemaker 11*, 2006. 'Floating Garden, or, Camouflage in the Service of Thinking', *Ibon Aranberri Bilbao* 2006. 'Thomas Demand', *The Architect's Newspaper*, May 2005. 'Sexualities.Struggle.Living.Speech: Interview with Knut Åsdam', *Untitled Magazine*, Spring 2004. 'Addressing Infrastructure: Portable Initiatives, Collapsible forms', *Fuse Magazine* Winter 2003.

Recent exhibitions: 'Clip/Stamp/Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines 196X-197X', Storefront for Art and Architecture, 2006; CCA, Montreal, 2007 (co-curator). 'Several Ways Out', UKS, Oslo, April 2006.

cbuckley@princeton.edu

## MeineAkademie and the Neo-liberal Image Politics of the Volkswagen Corporation

— Robert Burghardt + Johannes Rätther/MeineAkademie

MeineAkademie formed itself as a political and artistic collective (made up of artists, architects, theatre makers and theorists) on the occasion of the opening of the Volkswagen university library of the Technical University and the University of the Arts in Berlin in December 2004.

As a reaction, we gathered information on the 'sponsorship'-deal between Volkswagen and

Cultural producers (designers, architects, artists) play a central role in the 'image-construction industry'. [...] If resistance wants to be effective it has to be taken up by groups that can organise the many different skills involved in image production.

the universities. We publicised the knowledge we generated and intervened directly on the campus. Friendly scouts in Volkswagen-look occupied the foyer of the library and engaged students in debates on corporate engagement in the university. A decoration company was invented and hung large panels commenting on Volkswagens bargain at its shopping trip at the universities on the façade of the Volkswagen

university library.

Meanwhile MeineAkademie started to research the political and economical background that lead to the public-private partnership between the universities and Volkswagen, which revealed that Volkswagen had started to construct its own corporate university, the Volkswagen AutoUni. Departing from Volkswagens engagement in higher education we investigated the neoliberal reforms of the universities and tried to get a grip on the changing relationship between state and economy and the images that transport, execute and materialise the underlying ideology.

We organised a seminar with the title 'neoliberal image politics' to which we invited different guests to explore the political context of our subject. With the term image politics we tried to grasp what we considered an essential element in the perpetration of the prevailing ideology. We believe, that networks of images play an increasingly important role in the production of reality and that architectures are nodes in these networks. The Model-projects of the Volkswagen Corporation served as examples to study the changes in the shape and values of society.

## MobileLife Campus, AutoStadt and GläserneManufaktur

We interpreted Volkswagens model projects as architectural typologies that absorb classical public functions.

Institutions are rewritten and interpreted with a set of corporate values and ideas. The integration of the cultural landscape into the sphere of production is used to open up new resources for the production of surplus value.

We have looked at a city that promotes the diversity of the Volkswagen brands, a university that shares its campus with a technology park and a cultural centre with the backdrop of the historical scenery of Dresden that is actually a showroom. Volkswagen mobilized considerable resources to interpret three central societal institutions (the city, the factory and the university).

Gunther Henn, the corporate architect of Volkswagen, and designer of the three examined architectures, promotes himself as a specialist for the 'architecture of knowledge'. The form in the shape of a DNA of the MobileLife campus is explained with the statement: 'Life is always carried by knowledge and Knowledge always

carried by life'. This seemingly self evident assertion illustrates the diffuse ideological complex of knowledge society and its role in restructuring the economic order. The images implemented by his architectures claim to be innovative, inventive and intelligent, which already, in itself, is part of the cultural code of the ideology these buildings promote.

The Gläserne Manufaktur asserts the amalgamation of tradition and innovation, while it essentially only functions as a spectacle that aims to produce a close and emotional relationship between a potential customer, the public and the brand. The historical silhouette of Dresden is made productive for the Volkswagen and tied directly emotionally with the product, the Volkswagen Phaeton.

The AutoStadt celebrates the diversity of the Volkswagen world. Like a real city it stages different lifestyles and offers products for a variety of subjectivities. At the centre of the Volkswagen AutoStadt is a 'public square' which is located close to the Zeithaus, the museum of Volkswagen history. There, the essence of the Volkswagen World (that propagates ideas like 'Competition runs in our genes') is communicated.

Departing from the privatisation and colonisation of our own university we realised what an increasingly driving force our trades exercise in producing these images. Cultural producers (designers, architects, artists) play a central role in the 'image-construction industry'. The ideological productivity of these architectural models is created in interaction with language and all the different disciplines of design. If resistance wants to be effective it has to be taken up by groups that can organise the many different skills involved in image production.

Robert Burghardt + Johannes Räter/Meine-Akademie (2005), activist art group, focusing on privatisation and economisation of knowledge and education, Berlin.

2005: Workshop with Grupo d'Arte Callejero/Buenos Aires in Berlin. Factivism at the campus of TU and UdK, Berlin. Seminar Neoliberale Imagopolitiken in cooperation with Freie Klasse and Informelle Universität in Gründung, Berlin. Protest in and on the Volkswagen university library, Berlin. 2006: EXArgentina – La Normalidad, Palais

## Bauwagen/Mobile Squatters

— Stefan Canham

The 'Bauwagen'<sup>[1]</sup> scene might well be one of the most significant and controversial manifestations of an oppositional architecture in Germany – it is probably also the largest: From Flensburg down to Munich there are around one hundred 'Bauwagen'-sites in German towns and cities.<sup>[2]</sup> There may be as many as ten thousand people permanently living in disused wagons, trailers, buses and trucks, recycling and modifying them into highly individual, mobile, low cost living spaces.<sup>[3]</sup>

The occupation of inner city wasteland by people living in 'Bauwagen' is an invention of the late 1980s. Through the changing practice of the authorities, squatting empty houses became very difficult: at the same time as long-term squats were legalized by rent contracts, new squattings were prevented by immediately enforced evictions. Literally bringing one's own house – in form of a trailer – and taking possession of a fine, disused plot of inner city land was the alternative.

The squatting of the land is usually the result of a group's planned activities. It involves systematically roaming the city on the lookout for suitable pieces of wasteland, briefly occupying – and being evicted from – numerous plots in order to stress the fact that one needs a place to live, and the consulting of local politicians: if the city owns the land in question, toleration in the event of occupation might be hinted at. Legally, the status of the 'Bauwagen' inhabitants in Germany remains precarious at best. Legislation introduced in the 1950s still treats the self-constructed homes and settlements as if they were the undesirable excesses of poverty in the bombed out

Through the changing practice of the authorities, squatting empty houses became very difficult: at the same time as long-term squats were legalized by rent contracts, new squattings were prevented by immediately enforced evictions.

cities after the war, while in fact they are the physical manifestation of a conscious decision to live differently.<sup>[4]</sup> Today, people living in trailers may still have to carry their drinking water in canisters (most of them emphasise the fact that they actually save a lot of water because of this), but they are fully equipped with mobile phones, computers, and high-speed Internet access.

'Bauwagen'-sites set up their own infrastructure, and have over the years developed a nationwide network, with annual meetings and a newspaper<sup>[5]</sup> published for use within the scene only. Most of them hold a weekly plenum, where questions concerning the community are debated; space for trailers is limited, so new arrivals are decided on collectively. Often a 'Volksküche' or communal kitchen is set up, to which visitors are welcome. Concerts, workshops, demonstrations and other events are organised. Sites that have a contract with the city are supplied with water and electricity and are hooked up to the sewerage system. Sites that are merely tolerated build compost toilets and generate electricity through solar panels – or one decides to make do without electricity altogether and to recharge one's mobile phone at a friend's place.

The trailers themselves are constantly being reworked with the use of discarded materials like wood left over from building sites, old window frames from condemned houses, pallets, Styrofoam, metal sheeting, plastic foil, and tar. Second stories and winter gardens are added to the wagons, sheds and huts are built onto them, and some have gradually been transformed into houses in which the original trail-

ers have been all but completely obscured.<sup>[6]</sup>

Although districts and cities have tolerated sites for shorter or longer periods of time, at present no city government is likely to openly encourage or support the self-built 'Bauwagen'-settlements. Not living in a house made of bricks and mortar seems to invite the worst prejudices and scorn of the majority of the German population. The press also have for the most part taken an adverse stance to the inhabitants of the alternative trailer-sites, or at least have failed to capture their achievements: when the 'Bambule'-site was evicted in Hamburg in 2002, the local media carried extensive stories, but symptomatically managed not to show a single image of the trailers themselves.

Starting out on a three-year photographic project in the aftermath of the 'Bambule'-eviction, it was my intention to document that, which the inhabitants of the 'Bauwagen' had actually physically constructed, the visually unique world of their self-built and self-organized settlements. The inhabitants – just as many women as men – are students, apprentices, pupils, musicians, actors, Tai Chi teachers, gardeners, punks, hippies etc, a very heterogeneous group who nevertheless define themselves as a community through their mode of living. Accordingly, the interior designs are extremely varied. In order to place the viewer in the midst of the self-built environment with nothing to distract his perception of the space, I chose not to portrait the owners of the wagons; it later turned out this was probably the only way to carry out the project: although the owners are generally proud of their trailers, a lot of them are reluctant of being photographed themselves – this being a direct result of the very adverse press coverage of the scene.

Photographing the exteriors was a lot harder: 'Bauwagen' are not positioned according to picturesque considerations, but according to necessity and practicality. Since they lack an attic or basement, the surrounding wasteland is turned into storage space. They look untidy. They always seem to face north, or to lie in the deep shadow of a building over-towering them. The clash of the improvised trailers with the surrounding city challenges the notion of the well-made, 'composed' picture. Viewers have criticized my way of representing the exteriors in graphic black and white, fearing that this would add to the negative image of the phenomenon – but it is not so much the

picture that challenges our notion of beauty, it is the 'Bauwagen' themselves that question our preconceptions of what is proper and desirable within our urban environment.

Architects, too, sometimes seem to find it hard to stomach the impact of a 'Bauwagen'-site: In 2003, the 'Deutsches Architektur Zentrum' in Berlin managed to have the neighbouring 'Bauwagen'-site 'Schwarzer Kanal' evicted<sup>[7]</sup> – this although numerous parallels may be drawn between the 'Bauwagen' and artists' and architects' schemes for a more participatory, dynamic, flexible, mobile, and even recycled and recyclable housing. 'Bauwagen' architecture might be considered reminiscent of some super-futuristic ideas from the 1960s, for instance Archigram's various designs of capsule homes (= 'Bauwagen') that were to be plugged into larger service structures located throughout the country (= 'Bauwagen'-sites).<sup>[8]</sup> Atelier van Lieshout's project of a free state in the harbour area of Rotterdam was remarkably similar to a 'Bauwagen'-site, featuring mobile housing, a communal kitchen, an academy, and a compost toilet; its hospital, distillery and mobile trees went beyond the conveniences of today's trailer sites. The idea was that within the autonomous space of a very small community the stifling bureaucracy of a nation might be bypassed: 'We're subject to Dutch laws, but we're not interested in respecting them. Right now, we're trying to get a blank building permit. We could wait for approval, but we decided to keep on building. If we already have ten buildings, then it'll be difficult for the city to stop us.'<sup>[9]</sup> Mobile squatting tactics.

In 1964, Bernard Rudofsky pointed out, that 'architectural history as we know it is [...] a who's who of architects who commemorated power and wealth, an anthology of buildings of, by and for the privileged – the houses of true and false gods, of merchant princes and princes of the blood – with never a word about the houses of lesser people.'<sup>[10]</sup> The architecture of the 'Bauwagen' is on the contrary functional and home-grown, produced by the spontaneous and continuing activity of a group of people, acting under a community of experience – qualities which Rudofsky identifies as being unique to vernacular architecture.

[1] Bauwagen = trailer originally produced to accommodate workers on building sites.

- [2] 'Vogelfrai', 2003
- [3] 'Wagenleben – das Leben wagen. Empirische Studie über das Leben und Wohnen in fahrbaren Behausungen'; Herbert Kropp und Holger Ulferts, Diplomarbeit an der Universität Oldenburg im Fachbereich Diplom-Sozialwissenschaften, 1997
- [4] Compare: 'Fischkistendorf Lurup. Siedlungsprojekte, Schrebergärten, Bauwagen und Lager von 1920 bis 1950', Anke Schulz, Hamburg, VSA-Verlag, 2002
- [5] 'Vogelfrai', two to four issues p.a., each number published by a different 'Bauwagen'-site in turn
- [6] The 'Bauwagen'-site at the Aubrook in Kiel has by now been transformed almost completely into a settlement of self-built houses. High quality clay is available at the site and only has to be dug up and mixed with sand to be used for building purposes.
- [7] 'Rote Karte für den Schwarzen Kanal' Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 31.10.2002  
'Abseits von eingefahrenen Wegen', taz, 13.5.2003
- [8] 'The house is an appliance for carrying with you, the city is a machine for plugging into.' David Green quoted in: 'Archigram', Peter Cook and others, Princeton Architectural Press, New York 1999
- [9] 'Jennifer Allen talks with AVL's Joep van Lieshout', ArtForum, April 2001

[10] 'Architecture Without Architects, a short introduction to non-pedigreed architecture', Bernard Rudofsky, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1965

Stefan Canham (1968), artist, lives in Hamburg. He is currently working on photographic documentation of low threshold, self-built homeless shelter in Hanover. Publications: 'Bauwagen: Mobile Squatting on Urban Wasteland', Scroope 17, Cambridge Architecture Journal, 2005. 'Bauwagen/Mobile Squatters', Peperoni Books, Berlin 2006.

Exhibitions: 1986–2005 Experimental film works screened at numerous festivals (EMAF Osnabrück, AVE Arnheim, Stuttgarter Filmwinter, and others). 2003 Artist-in residence at 'Schleswig-Holsteinisches Künstlerhaus', Eckernförde, Germany. 'Visite', Kalundborg Kunstforening, Denmark. 'Wägen', 3<sup>rd</sup> part of exhibition project Zeit-Bewegungen, Hamburg (solo). 2004 Nominated for 3<sup>rd</sup> International Bauhaus Award. 2005 'Bauwagen', Altonaer Museum/Fabrik Fotoforum, Hamburg (solo). 2006 'Spatial Shift', Museum für Skulptur und Denkmal, St. Petersburg, Russia.

canham@web.de

## Hypocrisy: Hypnosis and/or Illusion

— Aysen Ciravoglu + Zuhre Sozeri + Emre Torbaoglu

In order to discuss possible ways of resistance within the field of architecture and planning, first of all, to clarify the *hypocrisy* that we are currently experiencing in the professional practice medium is of great importance. We claim that *hypocrisy* that we are referring here can come out in two different ways in the professional media related to the practices of

What might be a possible proposal for discussion of this situation can be to raise self-awareness. However, this consciousness starting with the realization of the position that we are in, cannot come into being within homogeneous mediums.

the architects. One form of this is a *hypnotic process* which appears when we, architects 'act' unconsciously within current professional practice medium. In the other form, which is a more active and conscious one, architects are involved in an *illusory process* where the features of our environment make us believe the things that are taught to us. This kind of

constant *hypnosis* and/or *illusion* that we are subject to puts obstructions in our minds; and this eventually leads to *illusory* spaces and *hypnotic* societies.

We think that both approaches outlined above stem from the fact that the society and the profession is in a grand compromise and this problematic situation constitutes the main thing that generates *hypocrisy*. Compromise is a process which brings sectors, professionals and people from different backgrounds, environments and ideas together and forms an *illusory* agreement medium. This situation, the effort to reach an ideal solution for everyone/ everything is the essence that prevents oppositional approaches and besides, it damages the ethical side of the profession. For this reason, according to our understanding, as first step of resistance is to break this constant agreement platform, it is important to begin with the discussion of this concept.

If we need to open up the issue that is raised above, first of all we have to start with perceiving the circumstances that the architect is in. Undoubtedly, today, profession of architecture is enormously under the forces of global capitalism, economic activity and money networks. This reality results with a continuous building activity and impositions on the actors of the construction industry. Architectural education is also a part of this process; education given in many schools, program our minds to glorify the building activity towards the needs of the construction market. This situation, professional medium combining with the educational attitudes places us in an over loaded physical environment. In this framework, it is possible to discuss how to build; however what is impossible is to search if we have to build or not in certain circumstances. Here, erecting a building becomes an inevitable desire and conceived in this way; architect cannot reach the means to criticize the conditions that the profession and practice is in. For this reason, we are questioning 'the architect' within the *hypnosis and/or illusion* process who constantly wants to build – if a chance is given to him/her – without questioning ethical conditions and making internal interrogation. It should be remembered that what is built affects the future building activity in that place; the influence of the constructed is bigger than what is imagined to be today. For this reason, our claim is that what is needed more and more is to replace the design

process that does not question the issue above with an ethical approach.

However the way that we perceive ethical approaches that we stress on above is different than what is referred to in many environments in particular ways. Because we are aware of the fact that what seems ethical today may inhabit many *illusions*. For instance, when we evaluate the environmental approaches within the field of architecture, it is possible to determine that there is more *hypocrisy* than environmental devotion. It is not an exaggeration to argue that today the environmental approaches are used to purify the negative effects of the construction activity and can be seen as virtual efforts to find beneficial things in the building activity by individual professionals and professional institutes. It is obvious that architectural production in its essence is an act against the environment. For this reason, creating an *illusion* of a responsive architecture to its environment can be seen as an act trying to legitimize the profession of architecture. The problem with the *hypnotization* process that the mania of sustainability creates is similar to erecting a building. Both force us to think that every destruction, if it is labeled as an ethical approach, carries immunity.

What might be a possible proposal for discussion of this situation can be to raise self-awareness. However, this consciousness starting with the realization of the position that we are in, cannot come into being within homogeneous mediums. It is stated before that compromise can be connected not to a collective social understanding but instead to a constant transfer of money economic networks. For this reason, different experiences, positions, practices in different locales, distributed around the world, gains much more importance. Besides it is obvious that trying to reach a conclusion, a manifesto which will be a solution to all geographies is impossible anymore. Building on this argument as a last word, it should be stated that before defining the possible ways of resistance, we have to constantly oppose ourselves even in terms of discussing the above-mentioned topics only with using western epistemology in the sterile environments of the western geography excluding 'other voices'.

Aysen Ciravoglu (1977), architect, Istanbul. She is currently a research assistant

in Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul. She is the member of the editorial board of both 'mimar.ist', the journal of the Istanbul Branch of the Chamber of Architects of Turkey, and 'Mimarlık'. Her main publications are on architectural education, architectural theory, architectural design, environmental studies, and critics on architecture. Zuhre Sozeri (1972), freelance architect and researcher, Istanbul. She collaborates with several foundation for some non-profit organizations which are related to the south Anatolian part of Turkey and is working in recent project as a active member of ASK(Eurasia Art Collective). She was running LabPlace Istanbul from 2004–2006. Sozeri was invited as a guest advisor in

Architectural Design Studio in 2005–2006, Faculty of Architecture at Yıldız Technical University–Istanbul.

Emre Torbaoglu (1978), master student in Architectural Design Programme at Istanbul Technical University, lives in Bolu, Turkey. Selected works: Urban Pattern Analyse in Sanlıurfa, 2001. Archeological Survey in Trebenna, Antalya, 2003. Urban and Social Studies in Kemaliye, Erzincan, 2002–2004. Open Space, Architectural Festival in Istanbul, 2004.

aysenc@gmail.com  
zuhresozeri@gmail.com  
etorbaoglu@gmail.com

## Daily Utopias — Pilar Echavarria

Travel is fascinating, and for me, one of the most interesting things is urban life. Barcelona, Cologne, Bogota, Bombay, Beijing... It is incredible to see how each city 'works' in a very different way; and how urbanism often seemed immutable to all those changes. A 'western' model of spectacular squares, parks, passages, etc, that in many cases is uninhabited, cold, strangely... There is an imbalance in what architecture is generating and what societies requires: an over-production of design and on the other side extreme circumstances which need more empathetic understanding and reactions.

Today, the city cannot be planned solely on territories, but rather on behaviors and mechanisms that generate urban life. All inhabitants build their own constellation of material and immaterial places in order to define multiple personal territories. Intimate and mobile habitats submerged in an incomprehensible and uncertain territory, reflecting the contemporary complexity of different lifestyles. A new fragmented and personalized terrain in which

The aim of this investigation is to find, create and recreate new ways of use and appropriation of public space, through the observation of reality and its particularities.

the relationship between the local and the global is unpredictable.

Bodies in motion, comprising spaces and delocalized urban relations, accentuating changing dynamics, simultaneous experiences, spreading out across the terrain while at the same time being in a fixed location. Bodies in relation which are found and re-found, changing places, constantly altering the city, the landscape, its borders, its mazes, its character.

All these processes that make a complex map of relations and tensions more interesting than a physical map of the city or of the territory. Part of these extraordinary complexity are those informal, uncontrolled and unstable realities that are not accepted or that are often simply ignored, but that are always present in every urban scene.

'DAILY UTOPIAS': The aim of this investigation is to find, create and recreate new ways of use and appropriation of public space, through the observation of reality and its particularities.

ties. Reality is full of potentials of design, of inspiration, of answers, of movements... just observe and turn the city into a laboratory To take a 'problem' and turn it into a potential of inspiration and design. An attempt to value

informal processes and hybrid situations to impel the own urban culture.

portablearchitecture@yahoo.com

## Schuetthehausprojekt

— Eva Egermann + Christina Linortner

Schuetthehausprojekt – is an art-architecture collaboration – its material form is not fixed. At this moment Schuetthehausprojekt is a mobile museum that has until now travelled from Klagenfurt/Celovec to Graz, Vienna and Ljubljana and further.

It is the Narratives about social struggles in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic of Austria, the biography of a communist architect and anti fascist resistant fighter, the German-national consensus in Carinthia and the Slovenian ethnic minority, about spatial and cultural appropriation, about the memory of architecture and a potential future of an anti-fascist museum, that this project is dealing with.

In fact the Schütte house's real name is Volkshaus or Ljudski Dom – that's how it is written in big letters on its facade. One could call it just as well Balkan club, IKUC (Interculturalni Centar), theatre and soon maybe visitor's centre or museum of resistance. We simply call it Schütte house after its architect, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky. All the names that affiliate with this house indicate the many stories that are incorporated within this house.

We act on the assumption that history does not exist as such, but it is constructed and made. Thereby past and future conduce to the present. Historical images become a matter of political

Historical images become a matter of political struggles; they are generated and changed. People took action within certain preconditions and presumptions and not within a neutral container. Architecture as a part of a relational system preserves the memory of these actions and events.

struggles; they are generated and changed. People took action within certain preconditions and presumptions and not within a neutral container. Architecture as a part of a relational system preserves the memory of these actions and events. Correspondingly architecture is often used as means to an end in the intermediation of predominant historical discourse.

We understand architecture and space 'as a crystallization of time, as a material product that displays the foundation for coeval social and cultural practises and bears symbolic meaning. Forms and shapes of the built environment are used as one of the most significant codes in order to decipher the prevailing values of a society. Space is not an image of society. Space is society. In the same way as society changes, also space must be seen in the context of time and change.' The built environment is among other things defined through hierarchy, efficiency and control and permanently inter-related with social conditions.

The House 'Suedbahnguertel 24' in Klagenfurt uncovers various layers of meaning and history. These histories have widely vanished from our collective memory and our every-day life. The Volkshaus/Ljudski Dom was planned by the first Austrian Woman architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky in the years 1948–1950.

Originally built as a publishing house for the communist weekly newspaper 'Volkswille', today the house contains space for groups of Carinthian Slovenes, the intercultural centre IKUC (interkulturelne centar) and the so-called 'Balkan Klub'.

Apparently the planning of this house began shortly after the end of the war, just 4 years after Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (\*1897) herself had been freed from a Nazi prison. She joined the anti-fascist resistance movement in 1940. After she finished her architecture studies as the first Austrian woman she engaged in the settlers movement, through which she found out about the problems and living conditions of the Viennese working class. Schütte-Lihotzky perceived the misery of the masses as result of the unresolved living problems. Her work can be seen in close relationship with the ideas of modernism, the large social reforms and the desire for a new social order. By developing the 'Frankfurt kitchen', or the 'apartment for the single employed women' Schütte-Lihotzky made a substantial contribution to emancipatory labour-saving homemaking.

In 1930 she went to Moscow to build houses for children and industrial cities and finally took the decision to join the anti-fascist resistance. Just a few weeks after her return she got arrested by the Gestapo and was sentenced to 15 years penitentiary. As a political prisoner she spent 5 years in various Gestapo prisons under most adverse circumstances.

After the war Schütte-Lihotzky again took up her activity as an architect as well as her political commitment. In fact her affiliation to the communist party meant professional disqualification. She was excluded from public commissions for about 40 years. 'As a communist I was boycotted for many decades. I just didn't get any commissions' she summarized in an interview.

She died in January 2000 at the age of 102 years.

In the past 58 years since its erection Schütte house has resisted to hegemonic structures and broken with architectural as well as social conventions. The house was not only Lihotzky's first design after the war, but primarily it is Lihotzky's only building in Austria that was built outside of Vienna, despite the fact that Schütte-Lihotzky as a declared communist was

boycotted in the capital of a province that until today is formed by its German-national consensus.

In 1948 the house would constitute a distinct formal antipode unlike the common local culture of building at that time. When Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky planned the publishing house for the Carinthian 'Volkswille' newspaper together with Fritz Weber, they used a modernistic formal language that had not been known in Carinthia so far. Although in the 1970s a small extension had been added, in 1995 the house was – against reclamations of the local municipality of Klagenfurt – officially listed.

In the statement of the authorities we read: 'In a day when architecture in Carinthia was mainly dominated by a conservative repertoire of a folkish oriented building tradition, the architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky supplied a progressive and radical solution with a canny, simple and puristic draft focused on practical value.'

In the meantime parts of the house have been appropriated by various groups of users and new stories have been added.

The second stage of the construction of the building – a 3-storied house with a representative facade, a bookshop and facilities for the editorial team – has never been carried out. One reason for that might have been internal disputes within the KPÖ due to the Komminform conflict. As a consequence the half-realized construction had until in the 1970ies an extension for a staircase was added, only a very narrow spiral staircase, 2 side entries and a connecting staircase that led into nowhere.

Today the IKUC association (Interkulturelne center – Intercultural center) uses the former publishing house of the 'Kärntner Volkswille'. Adjacent to the street a snack stand is situated just next to the gateway. Where originally print materials were stored, an illuminated plate with the letterings 'Balkan Klub', and a gastronomy trade sign of the Juice Company 'Pago' indicates its today's use. The Balkan Klub, a discotheque equipped with bar, a dance floor, a small stage, neon lights, sunshades, bar tables, disco bowl and coloured walls. After the publishing of the 'Kärntner Volkswille' was displaced to Graz in the 1960s, the ground floor of the house had been used as a rehearsal stage by the local theatre group 'Klagenfurter Ensemble' for over 20 years.

Out of the enthusiasm for this peculiar house linked with an interest for the secluded and abandoned knowledge we added new and older stories to an exhibition about Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky that we had found in some storage of the Schüttehouse.

The boards and many more material traces of the various users indicate how function, form and use of the former publishing house have changed. They reveal the interrelationship between spatial organisation and social practice and also their change within time. To the original boards made in 1992 we added new boards and new histories.

Eva Egermann (1979), artist, lives in Vienna. She works in different media and in collec-

tives, eg. as an editor of the monthly magazine *MALMOE*.

Christina Linortner (1977), architect, currently lives in London. She works project-oriented in varying teams and is a collaborator of the Manoa Free University.

Both got to know each other in the Manoa Free University, where they have worked collaboratively several times. The Manoa Free University has been founded in 2003 in Vienna as a self-institution dedicated to collaborative practices in the field of political art.

christilin@gmx.li

eva@medien.akbild.ac.at

[www.manoafreeuniversity.org/schuettehausprojekt](http://www.manoafreeuniversity.org/schuettehausprojekt)

## Illegality, Legalization, and Other Maneuvres

— Lisa Euler + Maria del Pilar Cañamero

During the last 50 years about 200,000 wild or illegal buildings were built in Belgrade, an equivalent to one third of the present total housing stock. This research defines a new meaning of the term 'illegal' in a city where such construction is not only a synonym for buildings in slums, unhygienic settlements, and areas lacking zoning regulation. Wild buildings are easily found all over the city. In Belgrade a building can be partly illegal with only two of its six stories or simply become illegal after a period of time and the change of government. Building illegally often means to build without a building permit on land that was not designated as building land, legally transferred, or is simply owned by someone else. Sometimes this is the only way to build at all.

Research into the interactions of wild builders and Institutions in the specific environment of Serbia and Belgrade reveals Darwinian power structures. Today the will to build in coalition with money is obviously the strongest gravity point, transforming established city elements and planning tools.

It was estimated that during the nineties half of the population was involved in wild building either by letting, renting, or constructing themselves.

Research into the interactions of wild builders and Institutions in the specific environment of Serbia and Belgrade reveals Darwinian power structures. Today the will to build in coalition with money is obviously the strongest gravity point, transforming established city elements and planning tools. In the shadow of these bigger forces private interests bend legalization laws, which should stop illegal construction and create one legal real estate market, into well known illegal practice building up their own gaps through the jungle of a multiple-layered bureaucracy. The line between legal and

illegal actors and actions blurs. Oppositional architecture and a new type of Investors urbanism emerge.

In Belgrade legality is expensive, extensive, only partly possible or even impossible at all. Established and ordered illegality is the practice based and backed by constant investments in networks more stable than the ever changing governments.

A typology of wild buildings presents nine different types with specific stories, looks, builders, effects and strategies to oppose authorities' reactions. They are ranging from Kiosk-accumulations over media-enterprises' headquarters and villas representing new architectural identity to rural dwellings not stopping at colonizing the old city's roofs. The basic strategy is the number, the low price on the profitable black market and the necessity. In times of hyperinflation and insecurity, wild 'patchwork houses' for example are functioning as saving-accounts. They are improved whenever there is money to do so or another family member moving in. Kiosks in the Basement can be the starting point and bring additional money during the process. Built by the owners, friends, or black-labourers they are growing on weekends and during the night. The wild builders often pay fixed prices negotiated with the electric and water companies, creating the settlements infrastructure themselves. Authorities have to deal with and react to this 'do it yourself' mentality, these structures' flexibility or robustness and their wild builders' influence.

In Belgrade, wild building and the city's institutions can be seen as different typologies of urban entities, two actors acting and reacting. Both invest different interests, power, and strategies into a resulting dynamic balance changing with its environment. During the last 16 years Belgrade, as a post-socialist city plagued with war and hyperinflation, has been facing multiple transformations and complex structural changes. All of these influenced wild building as well as shaped institution's attitudes towards the growing number and variety of informally erected objects.

Since Milosevic's fall in 2000 Serbia is about to develop towards a market economy and tries to catch up with the global market. The legalization of the wild buildings is an important

step towards establishing a single and legal real estate market instead of having the black and legal markets, where prices are four times higher.

Although, in 2003, when new laws and deadlines for possible legalization were put in force meant to mark the cut towards a new legal building period the facts show otherwise. Due to problems like unclear landownership, lack of money, and poor communication, legalization soon resulted in a deadlock for many participants. Until today only about 4% of the applicants could legalize their structures, most of them owning large structures, where fees for legalization and its rising value made legalization profitable for the owners and the institutions involved.

As the dynamics of the environment and the necessity to improvise have created an enormous flexibility of all actors involved, the most dynamic actors left again the 'legal' path to act according to informal rules more reliable and profitable than the laws of the still young democracy. They developed a number of tactics to control, survive, make profit, legalize or gain recognition: Power is demonstrated and opponents are scared off by demolition of wild buildings or, the other way round, by builders ignoring all plans having the power on their side. Investors camouflage up to three stories as an attic and, at the city's fringes, wild built areas proliferate designed like generic suburban settlements waiting confidently for future legalization. Air-photos to record the state of facts are outsmarted by landowners putting roof sized foils on the ground pretending their yet unbuilt house had been finished years before. In Belgrade builders, Kiosks owners, and applicants for legalization are in constant negotiation with the city authorities. They build up networks, change their structures and bend legalization laws into well known illegal practice:

Today it is not the wild buildings dated before 2003 that are benefiting from legalization with its reduced taxes and *laissez-faire* in terms of quality control. The deadline for application for legalization was again and again postponed. Builders that are building right now use the possibility to enter illegal in the process of legalization, avoiding the still complicated bureaucratic procedure of issuance of building

permits. This way the deadline to stop all further illegal building activities is changing from a cut, marking the end of wild construction activities, towards a field of possibilities for new and cheaper 'tactical-wild' building. Building tactically wild can mean starting to build immediately 'camouflaging' an illegal construction by sticking exactly to the most up to date regulations. Afterwards they are bribing somebody to enter into the process of legalization. In the process itself 'overtaking' or queue jumping is a tactic to shorten the otherwise time consuming procedure. While the project is evaluated, 'negotiating' is helpful to lower the fees for legalization and facilitate possible restrictions. As a result the 'tactically wild builder' can move in his house up to two years earlier and pays more than 50% less than his legal colleague.

In Belgrade a turbulent multilayered past seems to dictate its own mode of action. The line between legal and illegal blurs. The specific local environment has its own logic, the 'Bel-

grade logic', opening up new possibilities to oppose widely accepted modes of planning and building.

Lisa Euler (1980), student at the TU Darmstadt, department of Architecture, lives in Frankfurt. She studied abroad in Istanbul and Zurich, was student assistant at the department for theory and history of architecture, Prof. Werner Durth, TU-Darmstadt, and worked at HtWW Wiesbaden and recently at CHORA, London.

Maria del Pilar Cañamero (1979), finalizing her studies of architecture at the Swiss Institute of Technology Lausanne, 2006, lives in Zurich. Contributions to: IV Bienal Iberoamericana de Arquitectur in Lima, Peru, 2004, and 6<sup>th</sup> Bienal Internacional de Arquitetura de São Paulo, Brazil, 2005.

[l-i-s@web.de](mailto:l-i-s@web.de)

[pilar.canamero@gmail.com](mailto:pilar.canamero@gmail.com)

## Plausible Forms of Sociality

[part 2]:

### Building Sociality Through and Within Collective Practice

— Lars Fischer/Institute for Advanced Architecture + Scott Rigby/Basekamp

Forms of sociality are understood to differ from social formations in that they are an open process as opposed to a pre-defined, top down categorization. With forms of sociality different scenarios of collective planning are suggested, forums for discourse and dialogue stimulating the creation of and possibility for further spaces for sociality. Rather than social programming through architecture, 'forms of sociality' are mutually independent catalysts for, and expressions of their own collec-

Rather than social programming through architecture, 'forms of sociality' are mutually independent catalysts for, and expressions of their own collective desires. When this is taken into account in the work of architects and planners, it can be co-imagined what these forms of sociality may already be, and could become in the near future.

tive desires. When this is taken into account in the work of architects and planners, it can be co-imagined what these forms of sociality may already be, and could become in the near future. The latent capacity for these forms is realized through an active engagement in the process of reevaluation of existing assumptions. These forms of sociality become more plausible when the focus on the individual and the unique is overcome and collective production is encouraged.

Architects, like others working in the creative industries, can build into the way they work strategies for encouraging forms of sociality that can act as 'building blocks' for the kinds of societies we collectively desire. Our starting point for fulfilling these desires is to recognize what gets in the way. Part of the role of architects and planners is to co-design, to 'speculate' socially, through discourse with others, about the various structures and interstices that comprise our yet-to-be-built environment. Another part of this role is to serve as advocates, working 'inside' the system (through the many different bureaucratic and administrative steps our practices take us), to lend solidarity to other groups that participate in the formation of sociality. These open forums can, as a sort of feedback loop, stimulate the generation of collective creativity allowing for further speculation.

As an architect or planner working within the dominant capitalist mode of production forms of resistance become increasingly difficult. Connecting with other cultural producers working in similar resistive ways can point towards alternate means of approaching small and larger strategies and outcomes. Collective practice allows mutually supportive structures. In order to contribute significantly to any field, existing resistive elements and structures need to be recognized, worked with to help put them together for better results, and developed further. Capitalism sets certain parameters for more specific forms of sociality that may already exist within it, but the dominant mode of production nonetheless has capital as the driving force. A growing social economy within capitalism can alternatively guide decisions within the practice. Tendencies of sociality are already evident as architects collaborate with engineers, designers and builders. These collaborative efforts can be exploited and expanded into areas not typically associated with the practice of architecture and planning.

Competition through uniqueness should be questioned as the only means for progress within cultural production. 'Redundancy' in form or content can be seen as progressive if organized effectively, allowing for similar conversations to overlap or merge constructively, without having to absorb one another in a hierarchy of negation or one-upmanship. With this understanding architecture could accom-

modate and reward as 'advancements' or 'developments' in the field very similar actions by multiple practitioners. For different contexts the repeats of similar work produce differing results, expanding the meaning of the work. In this sense implementation of already existing ideas on a wider cultural scale can generate effects much greater than the initial iterations which express themselves as continual innovation in the form of yet another prototypical signature building. Accepting and building upon the strength of 'redundancy' in architecture, rather than either repressing its existence or critiquing its practitioners as unoriginal is necessary for a self-reflexive practice. It looks for the critical reevaluation of means and methods of production towards this common objective. Building directly with and upon each other's work non-competitively can enable productive and critical dialogue to develop hybrids of what each practitioner has to offer. It also activates the possibilities of public ownership using collective resources as a means to conjointly transform production in the field of architecture.

Interdisciplinary cooperation allows for transformation and redevelopment of the existing structures that support cultural production. Large-scale resistance within interdisciplinary cultural production can be implemented through organizing smaller-scale, discipline-specific, and local practices to work together. When architects and planners are included, the ability to incubate this cooperation within the architecture around us can allow what emerges to in turn shape the future of our yet-to-be-built environment.

Lars Fischer (1971), architect, Institute for Advanced Architecture, lives in New York. The Institute for Advanced Architecture is an independent, private institution dedicated to advancing Architecture through research, exchange, and exhibition. Scott Rigby (1975), artist and curator, Basekamp, lives in Philadelphia. Basekamp's participation in critical curating is approached as an interdisciplinary team of artists and not necessarily as curators. A majority of the Basekamp's cultural involvement has taken the form of exhibition-making, reinventing who-does-what, and reexamining artist roles and relation-

ships. This, in addition to an exclusive emphasis on collaboration, has led Basekamp to hybridize the roles of curator, archivist, artist, and audience in their work – illuminating the possibilities of agency and autonomy in cultural co-production.

[lars@advancedarchitecture.org](mailto:lars@advancedarchitecture.org)  
<http://www.advancedarchitecture.org>  
[scott@basekamp.com](mailto:scott@basekamp.com)  
<http://www.basekamp.com>

## Aesthetic Radicalism (Theory after Theory?)

### Preliminary Notes on the Reformulation of a Critical Agenda in Architecture

— Ole W. Fischer

Within the contemporary discourse on architectural theory there is a phase of reorientation: the definition of architecture (and especially theory of architecture) as a 'critical practice' – the similarity to the notion of 'critical theory' of Frankfurt School philosophy is not by accident – is challenged by a 'post-critical' or 'projective' understanding of the discipline, characterized by the development of scenarios, design of user interfaces and production of multiple lifestyles. The main issue of this debate is the relationship between architecture and society, or, to be more precise, between architecture and power, capital, media: On one hand there is a concept of architecture being a 'critical' device, reflecting on power and gender discourse, economy and globalization, participation and resistance, law, politics and representation. On the other hand there is an engagement with the driving forces of society (the architect as smooth 'surfer' on the wave of capitalism) and a focused concern about

Critical thinking has to accept the limits and foundations of its own existence, it has to allow critique in its own territory, or better, dismiss the territorial notion of power, hierarchy or position altogether: it has to internalize, that there is no escape from mediation, construction or ideology, but a change of perspectives making them visible. Maybe critical thinking has to learn to take risks (again), has to find out, that 'criticality' is not academic knowledge, but a state of mind, an experimental existence.

pragmatic questions of acquisition, concept, design, realization and cultivation of architectural urban environments.

The attack of a younger generation of theoreticians against the institution of 'Criticality' yields at the 'critical theory' of K. Michael Hays and the 'critical practice' of Peter Eisenman and both their academic 'schools', who tried to reformulate the disciplinarity of architecture on an explicit theoretic foundation: 'Criticality' as default mode of reflection, interpretation and evaluation of architecture was established in the US after 1968 under the impression of European philosophic, psychoanalytic, linguistic and Neo-Marxist writings. Soon these theories became into 'canonical' readings, rhetoric strategies and an established academic discipline, although they were originally meant to question the very idea of historization, disciplinarity and elite culture. 'Post-Criticality' stems from the same Anglo-American academic background

and exploits the transatlantic cultural transfer, but this time operating with the *work* of European architects as evidence: especially the projects and buildings of the Swiss Herzog & de Meuron, the Spanish Zaera-Polo/FOA as well as the Dutch Rem Koolhaas/OMA are used to proliferate the idea of a 'projective practice' beyond resistance and negation of critical inquiry. Post-critical theorists question the 'regime of Criticality' as a set of established concepts, strategies, texts and key-words, which they suspect to limit and pre-determine the discourse on architecture on a linguistic basis. Instead, they try to stage an open, multiple and liberal understanding of the discipline by introducing alternative interpretative strategies, which are focused on the sensual perception, corporal presence and mediated atmosphere of architectural intervention on the observer – taking urban distraction and blasé attitude into account – in opposition to 'critical' autonomous formal manipulation and 'critical' display of socio-political bias. The notion of 'projective' in post-critical thinking exploits the schism of theory and practice in favor of the latter and argues for a new concern about architectures 'making', its production, performance and effect: it pursues pragmatic issues of architectural objects, such as programming, infrastructure, construction, materiality, texture, time, light, ambiance, etc., but at the same time it engages with strategies of popular culture, mass media, and contemporary art. Critical protagonists, on the other hand, regard post-critical theory and pragmatism as the *end of theory*, as a form of intellectual neo-liberalism, which neglects the socio-political agenda of architecture, and therefore questions the notion of architecture as *cultural practice*.

Whilst the debate between 'critical' and 'post-critical' theorists has arrived in continental European discourse (symposia, articles and pro-seminars in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria etc.) this essay will differentiate the exclusive oppositional model between 'critical' gesture, reflex or 'reading' versus the affirmative mode of 'post-critical' – or, if we look at the European contemporary architects being involved, it is more adequate to speak of 'non-critical' – practice. At the same time, the discontent with 'Criticality' in architecture can be contextualized as part of a larger cultural re-evaluation of 'critical theory' in

philosophy and Humanities, as an excursus to Bruno Latour's self-critique will show. If we take the 'critique of critique' as symptom of the inefficiency, restriction and internalization of 'Criticality' into the production process of contemporary global capitalism, into the repertoire of advertising and consulting, and into the rhetoric of the so-called 'war against terrorism', there is a possibility to reformulate critical thinking from within: 'post-critical' or 'projective' theory can be applied as *dialectical* instruments to detect the blind spots, limitations and mechanics of 'Criticality'. If ideology critique, linguistic deconstruction and vanguard anti-culture have turned from liberating strategies into established analytic instruments, from intellectual ambush into well-known methods with predictable results, from critical inquiry to stabilizing effects, habits or style, they might have still the form, but not the content of a continuous liberating discourse of the critiques of Kant, Marx or Freud. Critical thinking has to accept the limits and foundations of its own existence, it has to allow critique in its own territory, or better, dismiss the territorial notion of power, hierarchy or position altogether: it has to internalize, that there is no escape from mediation, construction or ideology, but a change of perspectives making them visible. Maybe critical thinking has to learn to take risks (again), has to find out, that 'criticality' is not academic knowledge, but a state of mind, an experimental existence. As in contemporary sciences, the theorist has to imagine himself as part of experiment, as a practitioner or instrument, and not as autonomous, distanced and safe observer. Theory has to turn from a discipline – with fixed methods, canonic texts, approved principles and basic axioms – into a discourse again in the sense of Foucault, into a 'critical' state of mind – with multitudes of speakers, methods and strategies – to evade a petrified system of references and phrases that are easily turned into a consumer product. Critical theory has to analyze history and the current state of affairs, not in order to 'read', debunk, resist or criticize, but to experience, to play, to engage with reality of the specific object, city or text, to enable liberating experiences and situations, in order to empower change, to design alternative futures, in short: to become 'projective' in the true sense of the word again.

This essay will be based on my previous articles on this topic and take them as reference: first the transfer and historization of the current debate on Post-Criticality to the European discourse ('Critical, Post-Critical, Projective? – Szenen einer Debatte', in: *Archplus* 174, December 2005, p. 92–97.), and second, a subversive dialectic operation to use 'critical' and 'projective' theory as means to open up a new interpretations of atmospheric spaces in architecture and art („Alle reden über das Wetter. – Atmosphärische Räume und immersive Envrionments zwischen kritischer Lektüre und projektiver Praxis', shortened German version of a lecture at the Stylos Conference 'Projective Landscapes', at TU Delft, March 17<sup>th</sup> 2006, in: *Archplus* 178, June 2006, p. 76–81). In difference to these first approaches on the issue of 'Post-Criticality', in form of 'report' and dialectic (ab)use, this third step will try to reformulate a critical agenda of architecture as a cultural practice.

Ole W. Fischer (1974), architect, researcher/teacher ETH Zurich, Institut Geschichte und

Theorie der Architektur (gta), Architekturtheorie, Zurich. Research on the transfer of philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche to theory and work of Henry van de Velde in turn of the Century Culture (19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>), doctoral thesis 2002–2007.

Publications and lectures on contemporary question of architectural theory and its social agenda.

Publications: 'Precisions – Architecture between art and science', Akos Moravanszky & Ole W. Fischer (ed.), Berlin: 2007. 'The Nietzsche Archive in Weimar – A retroactive Studiolo by Henry van de Velde', in: *Thresholds* 32, Fall 2006, Cambridge: MIT press. 'Alle reden vom Wetter... – Atmosphärische Räume zwischen kritischer Lektüre und projektiver Praxis', in: *Archplus* 178, Juni 2006. 'Robert Somol, Sarah Whiting: Bemerkungen zum Doppler-Effekt und anderen Stimmungen der Moderne', in: *Archplus* 178, Juni 2006. 'Critical, Post-Critical, Projective? – Szenen einer Debatte', in: *Archplus* 174, Dezember 2005.

fischer@gta.arch.ethz.ch

## Do It Yourself (Together!)

— Cheryl Gallaway

### Project Concept

The project Do It Yourself (Together!) is in response to and addresses the goals and ideals of 'Wilde Wonen'. [1]

Do It Yourself (Together!) is a tool in development that will enable local communities to create their own knowledge base surrounding an interactive version of the building permit application form, which is issued by the Dutch Ministry VROM.

The tool is designed in a way so that com-

Communities that can advise each other on the varying rules, regulations for building permits will participate in giving way to the democratization of Dutch housing. Residents will become designers, contractors and builders of their own homes.

munities can advise and assist each other with the often complex and un-navigable regulations that can be encountered when residents wish to build onto or modify their home.

### Online Tool Description

The tool is an Internet based social web-application designed for and to be used by residents living in the Netherlands. One example of how the tool may be used is in the following scenario:

A resident is keen to modify or extend their home. The resident may ask their neighbours to recommend a builder or an architect, possibly search online for the local government regulations that need to be considered. Whilst searching online the resident discovers the Do It Yourself (Together!) website. Here the resident will find local as well as national advice and recommendations from other residents. Not only will the resident be able to make a collective and informed decision on how to proceed, but also neighbours in navigating the complex regulations will assist him or her to fill out the form. Finally they can add his/hers experience to the knowledge base plus recommendations or concerns surrounding his or her specific issues encountered.

The knowledge base will not only create connections within the community but also in turn enable the residents to assist and advise each other with their own experience know-how/tips and tricks during the process of building extensions onto their homes.

Communities that can advise each other on the varying rules, regulations for building permits will participate in giving way to the democratization of Dutch housing. Residents will become designers, contractors and builders of their own homes.

## Project Context

The conceptual framework of the project stems from the 'Wilde Wonen Initiative' which is in favour of the democratisation of housing in the Netherlands. Within this framework we present the web tool Do It Your Self (Together!), which will further develop and highlight the issues and concerns of the Wilde Wonen.

'Heel gebouwd Nederland een zee van identieke rijtjes huizen? Architect en stedenbouwer Carel Weeber vreest die ramp als de woningbouw niet wordt geliberaliseerd. Het vrijstaande huis moet weer de normale woonvorm worden, vindt hij. Daarvoor is in Nederland ruimte genoeg. 'In mijn ideaal gaan de mensen naar een bouwwaren-huis, een soort Gamma, dat huisonderdelen in verschillende variëteiten verkoopt.'

— *NRC Handelsblad*, Cultureel Supplement, 4 april 1997, Bernhard Hulsman, 'Het Wilde Wonen'

## Project Background

Do It Yourself (Together!) is a 'proof of concept' which was presented as part of and in response to a thematic project at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam (October 2005). After being introduced to the initiative 'Wilde Wonen' Cheryl Gallaway visited and interviewed Dutch 'rijtes woning' residents, researching how the community currently go about applying for an extension permit. What their experiences have been and whether or not such an online tool would be useful to them in the future?

Research proved that residents currently rely heavily on the advice of one individual the 'aannemer'. Recommendation is limited to that given by one, limiting the options and possibilities for residents.

Dennis Kaspori presented the Do It Yourself (Together!) concept at the NAI Rotterdam as part of the Wilde Wonen presentation and discussion in December 2006.

The Do It Yourself (Together!) team  
Concept and design: Cheryl Gallaway.  
Advisor and initiator: Dennis Kaspori, The Maze Corporation, Rotterdam.  
Software development: Todd Matsumoto.  
Graphic design: Solar Initiative, Amsterdam.

[1] Carel Weeber, had published an article in a Dutch newspaper, with reflections on mass housing. As an alternative, he advocated a high degree of user participation, called 'gewild wonen' (desired living). [www.obom.org/DOWNLOADS2/MCinHousing.pdf](http://www.obom.org/DOWNLOADS2/MCinHousing.pdf)

Cheryl Gallaway (1979), interactive designer, lives in Amsterdam.  
Projects: [www.openwardrobe.org](http://www.openwardrobe.org)

[cheryl.gallaway@gmail.com](mailto:cheryl.gallaway@gmail.com)  
[www.cdefgallaway.com](http://www.cdefgallaway.com)

## The Object and the Interface

---

— Marius Grønning

I introduce this reflection by redirecting the question away from what is potentially an erroneous conception of the problem: Although architecture and planning have political ends, the practitioners of these fields are not politicians. Acting as if they were, means to politicize architecture, which again is to let political agents take over the matters of conceptual disciplines. This is precisely the problem – *the fading limits between the fields*.

Due to the common interests of the fields of architecture and planning, as well as their intimate interrelation, I will refer to both through the general subject of *the practitioner*.

What we see through today's building processes and territorial development is that real estate operators – public and private – are using the whole profession as a tool: matters of architecture and planning are reduced to marketing and propaganda, and practitioners become mere instruments for the promotion of economic interests and state policies. More dramatically, alternative attitudes seem to be more and more difficult to sustain. This is presently giving the history of architecture a critical turn. For through this process, real estate operators become the very producers of today's architectural and civic art culture. Hence, to oppose this process is a question of finding ways to defend the autonomy of the field through professional practice.

The production of space and architecture is technically taking place within two main categories of operations: On the one hand, on the traditional design level of a project (in competitions or direct commissions), the operations generally activate a discussion over architectural canons, that are selected and mounted up in the different nevralgic points of the design: a facade or the lobby of an office building, the

If real estate operators have taken the place as the real producers of form, using architects and planners as tools for the promotion of their interests, it is their mental representations one has to analyze and question. Architectural resistance then is a question of deconstructing the visual systems that support them.

roof structure of a cultural building etc. These discussions have a futile character, because, as I will argue, this is not the level where discussions of social value really take place, and contemporary architectural discourse is therefore often a pseudo-discourse. On the other hand there is usually discussion going on a different level, which has to do with the expectations and demands to a process of physical and socioeconomic transformation. The outcome of this discussion is a product of a different kind, where physical environment is described, analyzed and reassembled through wide panoramas presented in terms of visions or scenarios. Since this is where the battle over interests and values really take place, it is where we have to turn to if we want to understand the social relevance of architecture and planning.

It is a paradox that while it is usually the practitioners themselves that are set to produce the material support of these panoramas, in the form of texts, drawings, computer generated images etc, their actual influence over the process still seems limited. As the very technicians of both the built objects and the interface that allows for the representation and mediation of the whole transformation process, the practitioner actually occupies a crucial position. And it is through the awareness of possible manouvres in this position that he can regain professional and intellectual autonomy.

In professional practice it is therefore necessary to take into account both the logic of built form and the structural historicity of images and visibility, putting the main focus on the space that separates them in order to hypothesize possible coherence. Architecture and planning are both a question of built form, whether it is a territory, a landscape, a town, a district, a housing facility or a single building,

but one cannot talk about form without taking into account mental representations. And this is where I propose to start: If real estate operators have taken the place as the real producers of form, using architects and planners as tools for the promotion of their interests, it is their mental representations one has to analyze and question. Architectural resistance then is a question of deconstructing the visual systems that support them, but also to show subversive and progressist conducts in confrontation with common taste and market dominated trends.

Marius Grønning (1972), architect, since 2005 PhD candidate in urbanism at the IUAV University in Venice (Professor Bernardo

Secchi), while working as an independent architect in Oslo. Guest critic at ETH Zurich and AHO Oslo and guest lectures in urbanism at AHO Oslo.

Spring 2005, 'Innovative Determination', a presentation of UNDEND GmbH for the exhibition *Junge Schweizer Architektur*, AM Architekturmuseum, Basel. Papers published in *Byggekunst: the Norwegian Review of Architecture*: 'Samtidsarkitektur: kommentar til triennalen (1/2004); 'Estetik og demokratisk makt' (8/2004); 'Barcode: normer og former i fjordlandskapet' (3/2006).

grønning@dplg.no  
www.dplg.no

## ERSATZ

— Florian Haydn + Mirko Pogoreutz + Georg Böhm/000y0 Architekten

At first its necessary to mark out the spatial field of architecture. Architecture represents the present space of society. To build in the sense of representation cannot be oppositional. Why not? – Representation tries to make something present which literally is not present. The building, a ersatz-building remains in between. Oppositional architecture on the other hand is present. There is nothing that takes over the duty to represent something which itself is not there.

Ersatz-form, ersatz-idea comes to the fore. Architectural production is based on ersatz-thinking with the production of ersatz-buildings. Oppositional architecture is simply form, idea, thinking and in consequence the building. Every program on which representative architecture builds on triggers speculation about how something could be, where there is need, or how something could work, or indeed has to work. Generally the architect positions himself/herself outside the necessity; he/she represents a need and fulfils a service. The

Oppositional architecture transcends this market mechanism and expands the notion of architecture from built form to unbuilt, to unbuildable and to the utopia of possibilities.

building represents the need. The satisfaction of needs is delegated to the architect.

From basic necessities a need is created underlayed with purchasing power and demand is created if they take effect in the market. Today it seems there is a second movement prior to the first and running in the opposite direction: At first there is the need for demand. It is taken into consideration how appropriate needs can be created, which subsequently lead to demand. A need is created where there is no necessity. This mechanism appears in building production, in architecture. Building fulfils the constructed ersatz-needs and satisfies the real estate market.

Oppositional architecture transcends this market mechanism and expands the notion of architecture from built form to unbuilt, to unbuildable and to the utopia of possibilities. Oppositional architecture creates possibilities and becomes an analysing expert. The alternative of architecture lies in the opposition to the satisfaction of constructed demand

through the articulation and development of needs. Oppositional architecture has no program and realizes a present situation, a situation of possibilities. Oppositional architecture constantly shows new possibilities.

Opposition in the field of architecture is giving space to alternatives of possibilities.

Florian Haydn, Mirko Pogoreutz and Georg Böhm/000y0 Architekten (2005), architects, Vienna.

Winner European 08 – Schwechat/Austria. Publication: 'Temporary Urban Spaces, Concepts for the Use of City Spaces', Florian Haydn and Robert Temel (Eds.), 2006.

post@000y0.at

www.000y0.at

## No Title

— Jorge Mario Jáuregui

It is true that individual and collective demands related with the subject's wishes, which are not attended by the proposals and products of the globalized markets and cultures that transform the demands of an equilibrated relationship between public and private realms in a disarticulated summity of commodified spaces.

The constitution of a net of interconnected 'camp for architecture and urban solutions' could be an important contribution to connect what is now disconnected, and to allow new ways of actions and think.(thought)

However, a resistant attitude today can only be conceived maintaining a physical presence in each place of intervention, by letting us be affected by the relationship between intelligible and the sensible, starting from the scheme of reading of the structure of the place, the hearing of the demands (through free association and fluctuant attention between all the variables) and the detection of opportunities. All this not in order to respond to these demands (psychoanalysis teaches us that this is not the point), but furthermore, to interpret

A resistant attitude today can only be conceived maintaining a physical presence in each place of intervention, by letting us be affected by the relationship between intelligible and the sensible, starting from the scheme of reading of the structure of the place, the hearing of the demands and the detection of opportunities.

them conceptually, formally and spatially, in 'sensible aggregates'.

It is true that individual and collective demands related with the subject's wishes, which are not attended by the proposals and products of the globalized markets and cultures that transform the demands of an equilibrated relationship between public and private realms in a disarticulated summity of commodified spaces.

The constitution of a net of interconnected 'camp for architecture and urban solutions' could be an important contribution to connect what is now disconnected, and to allow new ways of actions and think.(thought)

However, a resistant attitude today can only be conceived maintaining a physical presence in each place of intervention, by letting us be affected by the relationship between intelligible and the sensible, starting from the scheme of reading of the structure of the place, the hearing of the demands (through free association and fluctuant attention between all the variables) and the detection of opportunities.

All this not in order to respond to these demands (psychoanalysis teaches us that this is not the point), but furthermore, to interpret them conceptually, formally and spatially, in 'sensible aggregates'.

In the text 'Strategies for Urban Articulation – Project and Management of Peripheral Settlements in Latin America' published by FADU/UBA, 2002, Buenos Aires, the concepts which fundament a connective strategy for the articulation of the broken city (both between formal and informal legal and illegal sectors) are presented. These strategies see the project as a tool (a gun), which allow the communities to negotiate their demands with the representatives of the public power, in better conditions. Allowing them to visualize what they had right to desire, but didn't know. This is related to the ethic question of 'what has necessary to be done'.

Trying to tackle the question of 'what is left to do', we can say that the informal areas are a summatory of spaces and intersection of fluxes, in a context of fragmentary and contradictory interventions. Different spheres of public power superimpose without coordination, being unable to produce resubjectivator effects. The elaboration of the map of reading of the structure of the place is converted in a task that combines the interpretation of signs, with the signification of risks and conflicts, putting in question the own institutional meaning of the city and the role of architecture.

What can then the architect do, involved and introduced in a territory of high intensities in a process of explosion? Today there exist risks and threats while trying to develop a communicative connection with the inhabitants. Therefore, instead of an urbanism of master plan and normatives, what should tried to be thought to do and materialized in the informal city, with sense of opportunity, are alternatives guided by a careful lecture of the local conditions, by the hearing of the demands and the detection of potentials thinking from the notion of productive territories, social capital, organized community and the articulation of the professional culture with the popular culture.

From the architect's point of view, it is necessary to identify the bending points, or pieces we should connect to allow to become city the parts today excluded from the benefits of the

urbanity.

A possible way for an oppositional architecture and urbanism, capable of establishing coalitions in the contemporary social and urban broken field, can be to conceive and formalize new types of spaces and objects based in the creation of new concepts, able to establish an amalgam between the city, the urban and the public space. In this context, the architect has to allow connecting his individual subjectivity with the collective one, in order to help the new becoming of the world.

A critical architecture, and, consequently, urbanism that opposes the dominant patterns and values, has undoubtedly to do with an anti-communist position which opposes the dilapidation of resources for reasons which do not have man and nature as the center of considerations and which opposes the lack of social compromise to the investments made in the name of 'development'.

Today, in a general neo-nomadic scenario, characterized by mobility of people through the territory and the fluxes of capital and merchandises, which produce a dilution of frontiers, it is at the same time crucial a fight for the right 'to have rights'. Therefore, nowadays the city is, as a unit of conviviality, involved with the claiming for the right to the 'territorialized rights' (the same rights for people who live in a place, independent of being or not born there). Therefore, from the architectural and urbanistic field, appears the demand for a hybrid professional, as well as a new kind of hybrid urbanism as a field of crossing and articulation of different disciplines, whose prospective character is capable of formulating/imagining different possible futures.

This is, on the other hand, related with the concept of serendipity, where, starting from continuous and persistent actions and reflections, unexpected discoveries can happen, fruit of the observation and sagacity.

Social differences have been dramatically accentuated in new kinds of spatial segregation that threat conviviality, accessibility and heterogeneity, which have once characterized the public space.

This situation requires today a totally different attitude from the architects, taking them out of their 'parasitic security', submerging in socio-political context, concerning both architectonic and urbanistic challenges.

Theoretical and practical methods are necessary, intriguing, sophisticated, as well as coherent in their interdisciplinary coactions, demonstrating his productive social engagement in the fields of urbanism and architecture.

This obliges to establish distinctions between manifest and latent demands of the 'clients'.

To humanize in life conditions, not only in the 'informal' areas, implies to search for urbanistic and architectural interventions combining social compromise with creative methods including forms of cooperation between planners and clients, and spatial architectural solutions, capable of revitalize the urban fabric with new communicating glasses.

From the architect's point of view, it is necessary to fight against the broken city and society, identifying what are the points of inflexions, or pieces, that need to be connected to permit to become city to the parts excluded of the benefits of urbanity and architecture. Helping to 'desire more'.

An Art lacking of human feelings and social relationships is shortly dead. Since the modernity, the 'truth' and the 'beauty' are built from noises and dissonances. To recuperate the conflict and the thought in its contradictions is the challenge of an oppositional architecture and urbanism against the established.

In the complex context of our big contemporary metropolis, the urgent always primes over the important.

The competitiveness of our economy, the quality of our environment, the cohesion of our society and the capacity of the democratic con-

viviality, will surely depend on the fact that we are able to precisely formulate our urban policies and to viabilize a social and environmentally responsible architecture. For these reasons we should today fight in a planetary level.

'Happy or unhappy cities. It doesn't make sense to divide the cities in these two categories, but in two other: the ones which still give form to the wishes, throughout the years, and the ones in which the wishes can cancel the city, or are thereby canceled.'

Italo Calvino used to describe his 'invisible cities' like this, what stimulates the reflection on the dichotomy between trying to give form to the inhabitants' wishes by interfering in the complexity of the human existences, and to simply succumb to the way of the happenings without trying to offer consistent alternatives.

Jorge Mario Jáuregui, architect, urbanist, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.

Among his main works executed are the Reurbanization of the street of Catete (Rio-Cidade program) in the historic area of Rio de Janeiro, the Urbanization of 20 favelas (shanty towns) in different locations in the city of Rio de Janeiro (Favela-Bairro program), Urbanistic Development Plan (Master Plan) to the 'Complexo do Alemão' and to 'Complexo de Manguinhos' and the Urban Furniture for Rio de Janeiro.

[jorge@jauregui.arq.br](mailto:jorge@jauregui.arq.br)

[www.jauregui.arq.br](http://www.jauregui.arq.br)

## A Communism of Ideas Towards an Open-Source Archi- tectural Practice

— Dennis Kaspori

Open source presupposes that these ideas are disclosed and made available to others, who in turn can improve on them. In this way, design changes from a one-off action into a kind of evolutionary process. It is important to depict architecture not only as an aesthetic object or showpiece, but also as a learning process and a subject for discussion.

The role of the architect in the building process would seem to have been reduced to that of a visagiste. The architect's authority has completely disappeared. He or she is at the mercy of the market and that means only one thing: everything is affected by risk management. And so everything that is new is automatically problematical.

The situation for architects has seldom been so hopeless and yet so favourable. On the one hand, architecture is praised for its pragmatic inventiveness, its ability to give a twist to everyday banality. On the other hand, humdrum problems do not diminish as a result. While there are big, important social problems, crying out as it were for intervention from architects and mediation from architecture, the architectural practice continues to bask in the glory of international success. But this cannot go on much longer.

It is high time architects applied their famous pragmatic inventiveness not only to their designs but also to the organization of their practice, and regained a significant role in spatial planning. In recent years, a great deal of effort has been expended on 'being different'. The result is a practice in which architects try to rediscover the wheel with every new project. It is time to abandon this method and to look for alternative models for spatial design. This calls not for solo operations but a collective (preferably interdisciplinary) approach.

Accordingly, architectural practice needs to be turned inside-out. Architects should no longer look inwards in search of the essence of architecture. They should also cease harking back nostalgically to past times, when the architect was still a master builder. Architecture must look outwards and forwards, in search of the countless opportunities offered by these turbulent times of political and economic instability. The search for the essence of architecture will have to make way for the question of what architecture can mean for the contemporary network society. It is time for a collectively organized renewal of architectural practice.

Open source architecture requires a shake-up of established ways of thinking and a different interpretation, both socially and economically, of the concept of innovation. The existing model with the autonomous genius of the chief designer at the top of a strict hierarchy is 'closed' and based on competition. That com-

petition has proved to be an important generator of innovation, but also leads to enormous fragmentation. The other model is based on cooperation. It conforms to the network logic of an effective distribution of ideas, as a result of which these ideas can be tested in different situations and improved. It makes use of the 'swarm intelligence' of a large group of users and/or developers.

This swarm intelligence presupposes a large user base which is actively involved in development. Open source is not a closed community. The sole requirement for this type of cooperation is the same as for all other types of community, namely a shared interest. That interest leads to knowledge being shared between different disciplines and also between professionals and hobbyists. The identification of this user base is accordingly an important step in the development of an open-source architectural practice. The user group transcends the profession and also encompasses other disciplines. In view of the leading role played by government in the country's spatial planning, it should certainly take an active role in stimulating this approach. And then there are the 'end users' (the occupants) of architecture. They too could have a role in the process. The fact is that the open-source process can also be an important stimulus for greater participation by residents in the spatial planning process. The only condition that needs to be met in order to produce an actively involved community is a reasonable promise.

Thus, open source provides an organization model for the collective development of solutions for spatial issues involving housing, mobility, greenspace, urban renewal and so on. These are all complex issues that presuppose an interdisciplinary approach; in fact they can only be solved with cooperation. Open source presupposes that these ideas are disclosed and made available to others, who in turn can improve on them. In this way, design changes from a one-off action into a kind of evolutionary process. It is important to depict architecture not only as an aesthetic object or showpiece, but also as a learning process and a subject for discussion.

Dennis Kaspori, architect, Rotterdam.  
He is the founder of The Maze Corporation and also belongs to the Office for

Tele(Communication), Historicity & Mobility. The Maze Corporation is currently working with Suite 75 on the project 'do-it-yourself city, open source urbanism'.

kaspori@themaze.org  
<http://www.themaze.org>

## Somnambulating Architecture Wake Up and Smell the Bacon — Clive R. Knights

It is no generalization to suggest that current architectural practice is, for the most part, preoccupied with the management of complex networks of systemized realities, where application of technique, admittedly ever complex and conceptually demanding, has become the reason for being, the subject of sustained energy, the justification for certain organizational patterns of work, the driving concern. Utilizing technique has become, it seems, an obsession in itself, its current complexities saturating human capacities for action with agendas of operation so demanding in and of themselves that they generate an illusion of a world bound by their scope, and organized according to their rules. A kind of short hand has been developed over the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and into the 21<sup>st</sup>, which has instituted the physicality, shape, and organization of a simplified vocabulary of architecture, a vocabulary of form rather than content, syntax rather than semantics, production rather than interpretation; a limiting vocabulary in service of the dogmatic, twinned tyrannies of prediction and control.

Coupled with this technocratic hallucination what must also be acknowledged is the influence formalist thinking has had as a reductive tendency on the possibilities of translating the manifold fullness of human experience into meaningful architectural work. Human experience is patently not, in the first instance, a collection of quantitative, mathematical and geometric data waiting to be lashed together into pragmatic bundles of 'adjacency',

An architect's fundamental obligation is to infuse the product of her or his endeavors with the dramatic potency of human experience, which for most of us simply happens, in order that we might see our place in that happening under new light.

tweaked by the tease of 'juxtaposition', the uncritical 'form-making' predilection of too many architects. Human experience is an existential intertwining of ourselves with others, and with the world. Human beings are not discrete formulaic entities, and the world does not exist in equally objective completeness before us (the classic Cartesian dualism); we are rooted to the world in a much more fundamental way than this rational generalization can account for; as Merleau-Ponty suggests 'we situate ourselves in ourselves and in... things, in ourselves and in the other, at the point where, by a sort of chiasm (crossover, intersection), we become the others and we become world'.

An architect's fundamental obligation is to infuse the product of her or his endeavors with the dramatic potency of human experience, which for most of us simply happens, in order that we might see our place in that happening under new light. It is through the sincere fulfillment of such an obligation that architecture can have meaning for its participants, architects and non-architects alike, and that this meaning is not preconceived, immutable and closed, but fertile, ambiguous and open. In other words, open to, and requiring, further creative interpretations from every involved imagination as equally responsible participants in the created settings, that is, as ethically engaged beings.

Architecture must situate itself once again firmly in the embrace of an animate human body, wide awake and at work in the world, the force and character of which extends beyond

the limitations of human language and gesture to the manipulation of matter. Architects must acknowledge their temporal coexistence in the depth of a vivifying context, a culture, sustained and enfolded by an insurmountable background of relentless and dynamic orderliness, the shared gift of human life.

If architects forget to be inspired by the ineffable dimensions of the context of life, they may just as well relinquish their part in its unfolding, lay down, draw one final breath of vitality, ignore it, and submit to perpetual sleep.

Clive R. Knights (1960), Professor of Architecture at Portland State University, lives in Portland.

Selected project: *Northeast Community Center*, Hollywood neighborhood, Portland: lob-

by remodel including new reception area and community living room, completed April 2005. Selected publications: 'The fragility of structure, the weight of interpretation: some anomalies in the life and opinions of Eisenman and Derrida' in *InterSections: Architectural Histories and Critical Theories*, eds. Borden & Rendell, Routledge, London, 2000. 'Waiting Watching Wondering: Responding to the Urban Realities of Migrant Workers' in *Building Dwelling Drifting: Migrancy and the Limits of Architecture*, eds. Cairns and Goad, Melbourne, Australia, 1997. 'The Spatiality of the Roman Domestic Setting: An Interpretation of Symbolic Content' in *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space*, eds. Parker-Pearson and Richards, Routledge, London, 1994.

knightsc@pdx.edu

www.pdx.edu/architecture

## Envisioning Hacker Space — Alexander Levi + Amanda Schachter/SLO Architecture

On the occasion of the publication of *Rebel Rooms: Envisioning Hacker Space*, we present the hacker ethic as an alternative ethos to current design practice.

What can Architecture learn from the hacker? Once referring to avid computer programmers with eccentric hobbies, the hacker now describes any rebel of corporate time – those who put passionate personal rhythm and open-ended discovery before society's deeply encoded imperative of mass-efficiency.

Architecture has long accommodated and enforced a co-opted Modernism's desire to turn everyday life into a form of optimized produc-

How much longer can Architecture stand to draw the slick lines of a consumerist contraption when it has the unprecedented chance to house a new ethos? The hacker's collaborative, freewheeling spirit can make of Architecture an analog bridge between the real and the virtual, the integrated and the isolated, the poetic and the banal.

tion. But today, with the Net's double-edged potential to inspire both an open-source Hacker Ethic (as coined by Pekka Himanen), and a global machine, architecture is poised to tip the balance. How much longer can Architecture stand to draw the slick lines of a consumerist contraption when it has the unprecedented chance to house a new ethos? The hacker's collaborative, freewheeling spirit can make of Architecture an analog bridge between the real and the virtual, the integrated and the isolated, the poetic and the banal.

We probe contemporary architecture to find manifest signs of a latent Hacker Design Ethic.

We identify the potential for today's design processes and their resultant space to realize new paradigms of time and cooperation, through analysis of contemporary hacker practice – from Free Radio, to public space activists such as New York's Surveillance Camera Players, California's Billboard Liberation Front and Holland's Hippies from Hell.

Hacker space has its roots in architecture's rebel movements, from Futurism to Situationism, and in individuals, from Paul Rudolph to John Hejduk. Their fleeting, open-ended experimentation enters the canon and then is almost as quickly misinterpreted, even discarded, amidst mainstream architecture's alternate desire to control and ultimately restrict space. The hacker's openness and ingenuity revindicate such experimentation, with implications for architectural design, for dwelling, and for space itself that are direct, profound, and – when wholly embraced by the creative professions – revolutionary.

## Introduction – From Garage to Highway

*Rebel Rooms: Envisioning Hacker Space* grows out of a close reading of Pekka Himanen's *The Hacker Ethic: A Radical Approach to the Philosophy of Business* (2001), which espouses a fundamentally new work ethic, vital to the beneficial application of explosive new information technologies. This is the story of how architecture has long-embraced and can recover its own hacker philosophy to create a meaningful, seminal design ethic amid the IT revolution. In *The Hacker Ethic*, Himanen argues that new ideas and fruitful relationships are created most effectively through play, free-thinking and work according to personal rhythms. He maintains that, while the Net and digitalization promise real-time information flow and split-second time management for all, IT has so far been utilized largely to intensify the established and predominant values of work and money – the machine-like, binary optimization of time and action, and the avaricious extremes of copyrighted intellectual property, patents, and nondisclosure agreements that make all forms of industrial and post-industrial production apt for the amassing of capital. Himanen introduces us to the real *hacker*, for whom timing and speed, though essential, are secondary to creative goals, and for whom information sharing coupled with mutual respect are always

a powerful, positive good. A term coined in the 1960s to define the passionate programmer who in fact created much of today's information technology working from out-buildings in free-form exploration, the hacker offers a welcome alternative to the current automatic pursuits of our time-enslaved, profit-driven society, which can and do reach the absurd now that data move seamlessly and lightning-fast over a multiplicity of connections.

Himanen shows how, in its current and imminent state, IT flow is locked within a tighter and tighter loop that is doomed to short-circuit. More production attracts more passive consumption which in turn urges more production; this short circuit is evident in the compliant, submissive attitude most people have with regard to the long hours of neatly packaged, flickering television that constitute leisure while devouring potentially creative time. In a system encouraging, and expecting passive consumption as the norm, any kind of active engagement with technology is considered eccentric if not an all-out threat.

It is no wonder then that, since the mid-eighties, the *hacker*, a programmer engaging rather than consuming information technology, would be thrown in with the *cracker*, the media and public opinion coming to blame hacker and cracker alike for systems-incursions that inflicted serious damage to information integrity and flow. (This lumping together would happen at around the same time that *rebel gamers* – who through role-play in often violent cybergames raise fun to the level of inventive and serious conspiracy – come to be confused with sociopaths responsible for mortal violence perpetrated in the street.) Crackers are anarchists who misuse their hacker-ingenuity to attack and destroy systems to which they aspire not to belong, as they suffer from an incurable paranoia about the corruption and evil of systems at large.

Hackers, on the other hand, are rooted in the system, having come subtly to redefine the status quo by relying on their own playful process amid loose, non-hierarchical interrelationships, rethinking the system's deep structure through real-time diversion. Linus Torvalds, founder of the open-source Linux operating system, postulates in *Linus's Law* that human beings are motivated by three things in ascending phases of evolution – survival, social life, and entertainment.<sup>[1]</sup> Survival is the basest

need, and can be practically fulfilled in physical terms, for example by making money. Social ties – such as family, friends and country – normally motivate a person after his or her basic needs are met, sometimes becoming even more important than personal survival, for example when one is willing to die for one's country. Entertainment ('more than just playing games on your Nintendo') is the highest form of motivation, the pursuit of challenges that are intrinsically worthwhile, though not necessarily immediately useful. All three phases are integral to life, but hackers see *fun*, or active self-propelled entertainment, as the highest form of evolution and what gives each individual life its meaning. Hard-core productivity, perpetuated by inducing consumers to feel as though something vital were lacking, forces the obsessive and single-minded gratification of *survival* as a motor for the false attainment of *social life* and *entertainment*.

Himanen argues that the hacker spirit was historically a prevalent life value. In Plato's Academy, philosophy was as necessary as physical sustenance, 'like light flashing forth when a fire is kindled, it is born in the soul and straightway nourishes itself.' Truth was reached through critical dialogue. The Medieval model also encouraged the symbiosis of task and respite. Himanen laments that while the medieval worker moved at a natural pace, able to enjoy a spontaneous pause within the rhythm, the industrial and post-industrial worker seek to (and are driven to) subdivide the day into clearly defined time-blocks based on optimized modes of mass-production, orienting the economy of every thought and action.

Fun has always been an integral part of architecture, too. Vitruvius, architect during the reign of Julius Caesar, defines the art of building as *commodity*, *firmness* and *delight*<sup>[2]</sup>, a classification that bears surprising resemblance to the survival, social life, and entertainment of *Linus's Law*. According to Vitruvius, architecture should first address its functional concerns to be habitable and structurally sound, meeting its users' survival instinct first for shelter, and then, lasting solidity. Ultimately, however, architecture must rise above practicality, bringing pleasure to its users though a well-considered play of forms. Vitruvius was looking back to Classical Greece as a paradigm and his conclusions follow the Platonic model, arguing that the architect should

be well-rounded in many disciplines from mathematics, writing, drawing, history and music to moral philosophy. In the Renaissance, Leone Battista Alberti reiterates Vitruvius's humanist approach, in *De re aedificatoria* (1452), with an innovative architectural technique based upon mathematical principles and musical harmonies.

Such delight has all but been forgotten. Architecture is currently locked in single-minded survival. What was once its most basic requirement, *commodity*, has now become its selling point: architecture is a commodity. Nowhere is this misunderstanding more prevalent than in professional practice, where much of the creative process has been usurped by expectations the discipline borrows from other fields, like corporate management – which defines 'creativity' only as that ingenuity which will increase productivity, induce more consumption, or increase profit. Today we dwell more in architecture via mediation than through direct experience, where participation, if there is any, is parsed, packaged, and passive. While mediation can introduce us to spaces we may otherwise never visit, thereby extending our reach and ostensibly widening our horizons, its packaging can displace communication by raising a physical barrier to active thought and substantive debate. Architecture journals turned monolithic-tomes and monographic-monologues, among architectural design's most authoritative media-formats, silence discourse as taboo, replacing it with fetish objects sought by every dying place as a signature-path to reinvention.

In a practice like architecture it might seem logical to have reached this synergy with the priorities of big business, as new construction is a global, client-driven, large-scale undertaking, an investment able to be made almost exclusively by entities with sufficient financial weight. With production metaphors since that of Le Corbusier proclaiming architecture as a 'machine for living', architecture has, in this turn of the century, come to be little more than a 'digital system for image management'. Computer technology bloats the market with new ways of assuring that the architectural commodity is considered down to its last detail while neglecting *firmness* and *delight*. Projects are discussed in terms of the economic benefits they promise and the financial risks they pose, to be assuaged only by hyper-real renderings

and animations of crowded 'real-life' scenarios that promise hazard-free viability and no unpleasant surprises. Much as Jean Baudrillard has noted that canned television laughter takes away even the chore of laughing from the audience, leaving the watcher completely inert, *delight* in architecture has been substituted by the image of blissfully vapid 3D mannequins marveling within their doctored surroundings. Even most cutting-edge discourse and practice incorporating information technology in design lacks fundamental basis in its origins and goals, advocating a go-with-the-flow complacency that exploits only the capacity of new technologies to realize more intricate consumerist and isolationist visions. Hackers, adopting pre-industrialist ideals in post-industrial society, have become society's rebels. If the term's etymology might imply insurgency or belligerence, today the real 'rebels' within society are the ones having fun. As conjured up by George Lucas's 1977 *Star Wars*, in which the Rebel Alliance is a collective of volunteers promoting positive values as a blockade against the onslaught of a menacing and far greater Evil Empire, 'rebel' has evolved to mean 'an aficionado of cooperative cybergaming; a gamer'. Cybergamers play in a group with real people in real time to realize a fantasy espousing unity, however extravagant or meta-violent the process. Rebels, together, create and inhabit a virtual wide open room within real space where they engage in serious fun for its own sake, in keeping with Torvalds's third and highest phase of existence, *entertainment*.

In the physical, built environment, rebel rooms constitute an architecture of and beyond the game. The game is the launching pad, that burlesque plane from where one arises to fashion new collectively believed-in space amid what feels like must be the doldrums. Hacker space – the overlaying of rebel rooms onto everyday life –, anchored in the physical world, is now equipped to expand and multiply as the hacker ethic informs the return of *delight* to the making of technological space.

*Rebel Rooms: Envisioning Hacker Space* seeks to tell, flesh out, and interweave a number of hacker stories. The scenarios trace the lineage of a latent rebel code that has guided and driven architectural transformation over the last century with more or less success since the advent of the Modern movement, as design has sought to carve out a place for itself within the

workethic of the industrial complex.

*Rebel Rooms* encourages confrontation with the current pollution of information flow in the form of loose cooperation, openness, passionate exchange and investigation, made possible by imbuing architecture with the fun-fantasy-mission-within-the-everyday spirit of the hacker ethic. It entreats the rebel to uncover architecture's essential hacker disposition for what is now more than ever vital to the harnessing of information technology and the creation of new space.

[1] Himanen, *ibid*, prologue by Linus Torvalds, p. xiv.

[2] (Or [according to Forrest Wilson as quoted by Bill Thayer] more closely translated as strength, utility, and aesthetic effect.) Vitruvius Pollio, Marcus, *The Ten Books on Architecture*. (M.H. Morgan, translator.) New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960. Book I.

Amanda Schachter (1971), is Director of the *Department of Cooperation in Architecture* at the *ESARQ-UIC*, Barcelona, a department with the intention to bring socially inclusive, alternative practice back into architecture and design education, as well as to the profession at large. She teaches Design and runs the Master program in *International Cooperation in Architecture*. She received a Master of Architecture from Princeton University in 1996.

Alexander Levi (1968), teaches Design, and Master seminars in the *International Cooperation in Architecture*, at the *ESARQ*. He received a Master of Architecture from Yale University in 1996.

Schachter and Levi began collaborating together in 1996, founding *aandacht loop* in Madrid in 2001, a design cooperative dedicated to incursions in the public realm, and *SLO Architecture* in 2005, a design office, to bring the Hacker spirit to built work.

The book '*Rebel Rooms: Envisioning Hacker Space*' (Stanze Ribelli: *Immaginando lo Spazio Hacker*), will be published this fall, 2006, by EdilStampa (Rome, Italy), as part of the *IT Revolution in Architecture* series edited by Antonino Saggio.

aandacht@gmx.net

## Cities of Plastic and Cardboard and the Space of Resistance

— Maria Cecilia Loschiavo dos Santos

At the beginning of the Third Millennium the spatial and urban concentration of poverty, deprivation and human suffering has taken on astonishing proportions.

The current development model contributes to social exclusion; it produces unemployment, indebtedness, and does not ensure living conditions. Gentrification, neglect and helplessness displace thousands of excluded, bringing them to the large cities. Furthermore, this parcel of the population undergoes a stigmatization and discrimination process, leading to increasing marginalization.

*This paper discusses* the impact of unemployment and socio-spatial exclusion in the central areas of São Paulo, Brazil, where the cultures of unemployment, practices and alternative strategies performed by the unemployed, homeless, collectors of recyclable materials and street vendors are expressed, with a view to resisting the crisis, generating income and protecting life.

They have built *cities of plastic and cardboard* across the formal city, in order to keep alive. What are the attitudes of society towards these new practices? Frequently these homeless populations are seen as parasites, and the society's responses include a variety of adverse, virulent, stigmatizing reactions. One of the most prominent reactions is what the Americans usually call the NIMBY syndrome (NIMBY – Not In My Back Yard), which applies not only to the arrangements spontaneously constructed by the homeless, but also to all types of institu-

Looking at the survivalist strategy of homeless recyclers it is possible to recognize a culture of resistance that impacts the large metropolis. [...] Resistance in this context is the political struggle in defense of dignity, of humanity, of survival. The practices of such resistance by the homeless involve some form of collective or individual action, a tremendous sense of creativity and design that transforms nothing into human survival.

tions providing services to these populations. The mentioned reaction applies too to the great mass of informal workers and recyclable collectors [catadores], that act in public space, occupying it according to a very specific logic.

This syndrome describes one dimension of resistance that is the organized resistance of communities to the use of public spaces, which consists in one of the most sinister effects of neo-liberalism: the end of public space and the transformation of the citizen into the customer.

*In Brazil* this process is even more perverse, because it has the marks of an authoritarian, colonial, slave-holding society. As says Marilena Chauí 'Brazilian society is marked by the predominance of private space over the public space, and having as its center the family hierarchy, it is strongly hierarchical in all its aspects. In this society, social and intersubjective relations are always performed as a relationship between a superior who give the orders and an inferior who obeys. The differences and asymmetries are always transformed into inequalities that reinforce the order-obedience relationship. The other is never acknowledged as a subject, nor as a subject of rights, he is never acknowledged as subjectivity nor as alterity. The relations between those whom they consider their equals are as of a 'family relationship', i.e., complicity; and among those that are seen as unequal, relationship takes on the form of a favor, of clientele, of guardianship or cooptation, and, when there is a very marked inequality, it takes on the form of oppression'.

The unceasing search for material strategies of survival brings to the homeless a possibility of exhuming dead products attributing to them other definitions and constructing a new materiality on their part. The typical recycler was a homeless person that, through the rescue of discarded material, has been able to overcome his/her condition of severe poverty. Recyclers have been doing their work in an informal and marginalized manner for decades, but some of them have created recyclers cooperatives in order to generate a dynamic of collection, selection and commercial activities, thus generating some income.

Looking at the survivalist strategy of homeless recyclers it is possible to recognize a culture of resistance that impacts the large metropolis. I use the term resistance to refer to homeless recycler everyday practices.

*Resistance* in this context is the political struggle in defense of dignity, of humanity, of survival. The practices of such resistance by the homeless involve some form of collective or individual action, a tremendous sense of creativity and design that transforms nothing into human survival.

Bell Hooks has been writing on the resistance space in her book *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics* wrote about resistance in the essays 'Homeplace: a Site of Resistance' and 'Choosing the Margins as a Space of Radical Openness', Hooks recomposes our lived spaces as potentially places of resistance against all kinds of oppression. She refers to the marginal space as a place of resistance: 'Understanding marginality as position and place of resistance is crucial for oppressed, exploited, colonized people. If we only view the margin as sign marking the despair, a deep nihilism penetrates in a destructive way the very ground of our being. It is there in that space of collective despair that one's creativity, one's imagination is at risk, there that one's mind is fully colonized, there that the freedom one longs for as lost. [...] So I want to note that I am not trying to romantically re-inscribe the notion of space of marginality where the oppressed live apart from their oppressors as 'pure'. I want to say that these margins have been both sites of repression and sites of resistance. And since we are well able to name the nature of that repression we know better the margin as site of deprivation.'

*Resistance* had become a significant theme in

Michel Foucault's work. Writing on the nature of power in society and its pervasive mechanisms, Foucault stressed the productiveness of power, because it is not only a negative force, where there is power there is resistance. According to him: '...resistance is a part of this strategic relationship of which power consists. [...] If there was no resistance, there would be no power relations. Because it would simply be a matter of obedience. You have to use power relations to refer to the situation when you are not doing what you want. So resistance comes first, and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged to change with the resistance. [...] To say no is the minimum form of resistance. But of course, at times that is very important. You have to say no as a decisive form of resistance.'

São Paulo still has blood spots in its sidewalks due to the brutal series of attacks on sleeping street people, that left seven dead and eight more seriously wounded. Despite police and governmental promises to seek justice in this case, the crime is still unsolved. Activists and homeless community and leadership are resisting against all kinds of city cleansing practices.

The critical interpretation of architectural resistance is an uplifting initiative to re-think the space and the place of the homeless and excluded populations within the contemporary city. Critical intelligence is an inseparable partner of hope. It is important to publicize the result of this camp to a wide audience in schools of architecture, design and urbanism, because it is important to re-think the approach to social issues in architecture. and take once again Michel Foucault to illuminate our understanding of this matter. He says: '...[Architecture] can and does positive effects when the liberating intentions of the architect coincide with the real practice of people in the exercise of their freedom'.

#### References

- Takahashi, Lois M. 'The socio-spatial stigmatization of Homelessness and HIV/AIDS: toward an explanation of the nimby syndrome.' *Soc.Sci.Med.* vol.45, n.6, Great Britain, Elsevier Science Ltda, 1997, p. 903–914.
- Chauí, Marilena. *Espaço Público e Democracia*. São Paulo, cópia mimeo conferência

realizada 'Espaços públicos e exclusão sócio-espacial: práticas urbanas e inclusão', 6 out.1999.

- Hooks, Bell. *Yearning*. Boston, South End Press, 1990.
- Lotringer, Sylvère (Ed.) *Foucault Live*. New York. Semiotexte, 1996.
- Rabinow, Paul (Ed.) *The Foucault Reader*. New York, Pantheon Books, 1984.

Maria Cecilia Loschiavo dos Santos, philosopher and associate professor of Design at the School of Architecture and Urbanism, University of São Paulo. Currently she is the coordinator of the Workshop of Social Design at the Institute of Advanced Studies, at the University of São Paulo. Her current research is about Discarded Products,

Design and Homelessness in Global Cities and she is deeply committed to design and social responsibility issues. She was awarded the First Prize by the Museu da Casa Brasileira, for her book *Móvel Moderno no Brasil*. She is the screenwriter of the documentary movie *A Margem da Imagem (On the Fringes of São Paulo: Homeless)* which concentrates on themes such as social exclusion, unemployment, alcoholism, insanity, religiousness, contemporary public spaces, urban degradation, identity and citizenship. The film was officially selected for the São Paulo Short Film Festival 2002 and was awarded the 'Best documentary' film at the Gramado Film Festival, 2003.

closchia@usp.br

## Architecture and Defacement — Eoghan McTigue

I would like to look at defacement as a strategy for revealing the politics embedded in architectural form. Can defacement, in this context, create what Jacques Lacan might call a rupture in the symbolic narrative continuum. Can it be used to encourage architectures suppressed narratives, those that lie just beneath the surface of its' façade, to come to the fore.

The social anthropologist Michael Taussig when speaking about 'defacement' (Michael Taussig, 'Defacement; Public Secrecy and the Labour of the Negative', Stanford University Press, 1999) contends that political artifacts, portraits, flags, statues, buildings etc. are inert when they appear on public display. It is only when they are defaced that they begin to become charged politically. That is when these artifacts begin to reveal traces of what Taussig contends is the 'public secret'. For Taussig the

Is there a place for 'absence' in the planning and development of city space? Can we take the 'Empty Sign' work as an example where material has been removed from a specific place to create new interpretative possibilities. Can we apply this to city space and streets?

'public secret' is that which is generally known but for one reason or another, cannot easily be articulated. Taussig ties the issue of secrecy to defacement suggesting that when the surface is damaged depth is revealed, 'the depth that seems to surface with the tearing of the surface'. This surfacing is made all the more subtle and ingenious, not to mention everyday, when the tear is partial or incomplete.

In the 50s the French artist Raymond Haines pulled down advertising and political posters and remounted them in galleries both as a response to a media saturated public space and as a criticism of the artwork of his contemporaries. These fractured images, composites of layers of postings, fragment language and graphic form to create a complex and unconscious patterning of 'the public voice' as it appears in print form. In my projects

collectively titled 'Empty Sign' (1998–2002), I have taken photographs of institutional notice boards after having completely stripped the information from the boards. These photographs are then installed in a manner that extends their meaning into the architecture of the gallery space. In the project 'All Over Again' (2004) I photographed political murals that had been painted over in white. These white gable structures are not entirely blank, as traces of the obscured mural are still evident on the surface of the photograph. I used the free standing structure 'Free Derry Corner' located in the nationalist Bogside in Derry as the template for the installation of the work. The gable end from the 'All Over Again' series has had material from its surface obscured while the Free Derry corner gable is the only remaining structure from the 1960s in an area that has been bulldozed and redeveloped over the course of the past forty years. These are pictorial and architectural palimpsests, surfaces and areas that have been erased and re-inscribed over time. The fact that these actions have never been fully completed, that there are traces of the previous composition or street structure in place makes them all the more compelling

I want to connect these theories and strategies of defacement to my current research based around architecture and popular protest movements in Berlin. I am interested in connecting the development of architectural spaces in the east of the city to the history of protest movements in the city. I'd like to concentrate on certain aspects of this research that relates to defacement and attempt to develop some of the questions that that research poses.

How can this 'labour of the negative', that we associate with defacement, be applied to the productive mentality of planning and build-

ing? According to Taussig the negativity in the act of defacement is far from negative in its effects, for it brings an absence, that we otherwise wouldn't know anything about, into presence. Is there a place for 'absence' in the planning and development of city space? Can we take the 'Empty Sign' work as an example where material has been removed from a specific place to create new interpretative possibilities. Can we apply this to city space and streets? Can we engineer strategic gaps in the city to extend its interpretative potential? Leading from these ideas, how does the continual redevelopment of Alexanderplatz relate to theories of reinscription and overwriting that we associate with the palimpsest? Is there such a thing as an architectural palimpsest? And more specifically relating to defacement, what did the destruction of the façade of the British Embassy by a group of protesters demonstrating solidarity with Palestine in 2002 reveal about the politics of the architecture of that Embassy?

Eoghan McTigue (1969), artist, Berlin. He works on the relationship between architecture and display. Selected exhibitions: 'Here After', Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2006) solo. 'Enthusiasm', Frieze Art Fair, London (2006). 'Parade Ground', COLAB, Bangalore (2006) solo. European Month of Photography, Berlin, (2006). MOP Projects, Sydney (2006). 'Every Picture Tells a Story', Sparwasser HQ, Berlin (2006). 'Fragments of Another Language', Galerie Kuttner Siebert, Berlin (2005) solo. Independent publication: 'Free Association'.

eoghanmctigue@yahoo.com

## The Violence of Participation Spatial Practices Beyond Models of Consensus

— Markus Miessen

When we look at conflict as opposed to innocent forms of participation, conflict is not to be understood as a form of protest or contrary provocation, but rather as a micro-political practice through which the participant become an active

agent insisting on being an actor in the forcefield they are facing. Thus, participation becomes a form of critical engagement. When participation becomes conflict, conflict becomes space.

'The disappearance of class identities and the end of the bipolar system of confrontation have rendered conventional politics obsolete. Consensus finally reigns with respect to the basic institutions of society, and the lack of any legitimate alternative means that this consensus will not be challenged.' [1]

— Chantal Mouffe

'In contrast to cooperation, collaboration is driven by complex realities rather than romantic notions of a common ground or commonality. It is an ambivalent process constituted by a set of paradoxical relationships between co-producers who affect each other.' [2]

— Florian Schneider

When humans assemble, spatial conflicts arise. Spatial planning is often considered as the management of spatial conflicts. To deal with conflicts, critical decision-making must evolve. The city – and, indeed, the progressive institution – exist as social and spatial conflict zones, re-negotiating their limits through constant transformation.

Today, there is an ever-increasing need to consider the breaking of the consensus machine. Taking this notion as a possible starting point, my research attempts to understand and illustrate the importance of critical engagement in alien fields of knowledge – based on spatial conditions as a means of a cultural investigation. It aims to enquire both the role of the architect and the role of the contemporary institution.

The paper will present and discuss today's need for actors operating from outside existing networks while leaving behind circles of conventional expertise and overlap with other post-disciplinary fields of knowledge. An alternative model of participation within spatial practice will be rendered, one that takes as a starting point an understanding of participation beyond models of consensus. Instead of aiming for synchronization, such model could

be based on participation through critical distance and the conscious implementation of zones of conflict. Through cyclical specialisation, the future spatial practitioner could arguably be understood as an outsider who – instead of trying to set up or sustain common denominators of consensus – enters existing situations or projects by deliberately instigating conflicts as a micro-political form of critical engagement with the environment that one is operating in. Using the architect's expertise of mapping out fields of conflict, the research raises a set of questions trying to uncover the relevance of spatial and architectural expertise and how, in the remit of institutions, they can facilitate an alternative knowledge production. It seems that today we are in urgent need of a re-evaluation of spatial production beyond traditional definitions, acknowledging the possibility of an 'architecture of knowledge' that is being built up by actively participating in space. The understanding, production and altering of spatial conditions presents us with a pre-requisite of identifying the broader reaches of political reality.

## Participation and Conflict

Participation is war. Any form of participation is already a form of conflict. In war, enemy and adversary usually hold territory, which they can gain or lose, while each has a spokesman or authority that can govern, submit or collapse. In order to participate in any environment or given situation, one needs to understand the forces of conflict that act upon that environment. In physics, a spatial vector is a concept described by scale and direction: in a field of forces, it is the individual vectors that participate in its becoming. However, if one wants to participate in any given forcefield, it is crucial to identify the conflicting forces at play.

Participation is often understood as a means of becoming part in something through pro-active contribution and the occupation of a particular role. However, it seems that this

role is rarely understood as a critical platform of engagement, but rather based on romantic conceptions of harmony and solidarity. In this context, I would like to promote an understanding of conflictual participation, one that acts as an uninvited irritant, a forced entry into fields of knowledge that could arguably benefit from spatial thinking.

## Undoing the innocence of Participation

From the beginning of *Sex and the City*, Charlotte York is portrayed as the most innocent of the four protagonists. Throughout the series, she is the only one who follows 'dating rules' and expresses a serious desire to marry and have children. In episode 55, Charlotte decides to quit her job as a curator in a Manhattan art gallery. When she reveals her intentions to her disapproving friends, she explains why she wants to stay home. In order to not feel 'bad' about her real motives (wanting to be pregnant and redecorating the house), she justifies her decision by stating that she wants to 'volunteer at Trey's hospital and raise money for the pediatric wing'. In Charlotte's case, doing volunteering work for an important social cause is portrayed as her voluntary participation in a good cause that prevents her from being judged for quitting her job.

Isn't this kind of practice precisely the *modus operandi* that we can find so many 'socially relevant' practices today? There is an interesting similarity between the way of arguing and the way in which particular practices have hijacked the notion of participation as a positive, unquestionable means of engagement (which forms their economy). Architects are often used as a means of power structures, but from the perspective of the power structure itself, the architect is not welcome as a participating vector or enabler in this forcefield, but understood as a service-provider who delivers a product. As Rem Koolhaas argued in a conversation recently: 'I would say that particularly in America the political obliviousness is considered part of the role of the architect.'<sup>[3]</sup> It is this chasm that I am attempting to tackle.

## Collaboration as Post-consensus Practice

Conflict refers to a condition of antagonism or state of opposition between two or more groups of people. It can also be described as a clash of

interests, aims, or targets. When we look at conflict as opposed to innocent forms of participation, conflict is not to be understood as a form of protest or contrary provocation, but rather as a micro-political practice through which the participant become an active agent insisting on being an actor in the forcefield they are facing. Thus, participation becomes a form of critical engagement. When participation becomes conflict, conflict becomes space. Re-inserting friction and differences into both the scale of the institution and the city bears the potential of micro-political forces that render conflict as practice. In this context, participation becomes a form of non-physical, productive violence. Micro-political action can be as effective as traditional state political action.

Now, I would like to argue that – in order to include the complexity of the city – one also needs to include the conflicting forces of that city. Consensus is only achieved through relationality of powers. One could argue that if such relationality would have been broken, another kind of knowledge would have been produced; one that helps us to understand the composite realities of the contemporary city and the forces at play. In this context, it could be useful to re-think the concept of conflict as an enabler, a producer of a productive environment rather than an understanding of conflict as direct, physical violence. A more diverse set of conflicting voices could potentially inhabit risks. However, it allows for multiple agencies and discourse that, through the re-calibration of vectorial forces by means of critical conversations, could produce alternative and unexpected knowledge.

In order for any kind of participation to reach a political dimension, the engagement needs to be based on a distant critical voice. Through this kind of 'conflictual participation', the exchange of knowledge in a post-disciplinary field of forces starts to produce new forms of knowledge. As a starting point for such model of 'conflictual participation', one could make use of the concept of collaboration as opposed to cooperation that Florian Schneider distinguishes in 'The Dark Site of the Multitude'<sup>[4]</sup>: 'as a pejorative term, collaboration stands for willingly assisting an enemy of one's country and especially an occupying force or a malevolent power. It means to work together with an agency or instrumentality with which one is not immediately connected [...].'<sup>[5]</sup>

Since such notion of collaboration is also based on an idea of the inside and the outside (if you are inside you are part of an existing discourse which is to be agreed with and fostered), it will increasingly be 'the outsider' that will manage to add critically to pre-established power-relations of expertise. Although the outsider will be understood as someone who does not threaten the internal system due to lack of knowledge of its structure, it is precisely this condition that allows one to fully immerse in its depth in a dilettante manner. What we need today are more dilettantes that neither worry about making the wrong shift nor prevent friction between certain agents in the existing forcefield if necessary, a means to – as Claire Doherty calls it – 'circumnavigate predictability'.<sup>[6]</sup>

Given the increasing fragmentation of identities and the complexities of the contemporary city, we are now facing a situation in which it is crucial to think about a form of commonality, which allows for conflict as a form of productive engagement: a model of bohemian participation in the sense of an outsider's point of entry, accessing existing debates and discourses untroubled by their disapproval.

[1] Chantal Mouffe, 'Introduction', in: Chantal Mouffe (ed.), *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt*, London: Verso, 1999, p.3

[2] Florian Schneider, 'The Dark Site of the

Multitude', in: theory kit (<http://kit.kein.org/node/1>)

[3] Rem Koolhaas in conversation with Markus Miessen, interview published in *Bidoun* magazine (8, Fall 2006)

[4] Florian Schneider, 'The Dark Site of the Multitude', in: theory kit (<http://kit.kein.org/node/1>)

[5] *ibid.*

[6] Claire Doherty, 'The New Situationists', in: Claire Doherty, *Contemporary Art – From Studio to Situation*, London: Black Dog, 2004, p.11

Markus Miessen (1978), architect, researcher and writer, London. He is the editor of *Did Someone Say Participate?* (MIT Press, 2006, w. Basar), author of *Spaces of Uncertainty* (Müller+Busmann, 2002, w. Cupers), acts as a spatial consultant to the European Kunsthalle and Demos, and is currently a PhD candidate at the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths, investigating conflict- and non-consensus-based forms of participation as a form of alternative spatial practice. Together with Matthew Murphy, he is Unit Master of Intermediate Unit 7 at the Architectural Association, London.

studiomiessen@gmx.net

[www.studiomiessen.com](http://www.studiomiessen.com)

[www.didsomeonesayparticipate.com](http://www.didsomeonesayparticipate.com)

## EXTRA ORDINARY

Or the Time Duran Duran's 'The Reflex' Was On the Radio and I Was Sick of Spending the Last Decade Reliving the Previous Three

— Timothy Moore

'Oh the reflex what a game he's hiding all the cards / The reflex is in charge of finding treasure in the dark / And watching over lucky clover

Therefore, a new call for resistance is not like old resistance of the late 60s, which was more about an act, with a faith in autonomy. Today's resistance is about working within an existing system to create alternative systems. It means one works with the prevailing condition and finds potentialities to change it.

isn't that bizarre / Every little thing the reflex does / Leaves you answered with a question mark' — Duran Duran, 'The Reflex'

There is no familiar stomping ground between architectural theory and praxis. Either, architecture withdraws behind the autonomy of form, theory and beauty, or it madly embraces the heterogeneity of everyday practices. My proposition is that architecture can find a middle ground without being middle-of-the-road and thus oppose the mediocrity of capitalism. It can become extra ordinary. It can achieve this via a basic set of rules – which turns two simple things (the ordinary and the extra) into a complex.

However, before one can tackle the rules for opposition, it is essential to unpack the term. To discuss the notion of opposition under traditional (Marxist) definitions – such as the act of demonstrating in 1968 – we would be having the same conversation today again in 30 plus years. Therefore, a new call for resistance is not like old resistance of the late 60s, which was more about an act, with a faith in autonomy. Today's resistance is about working within an existing system to create alternative systems. It means one works with the prevailing condition and finds potentialities to change it. It's about acting on the reflex with a few ideas in mind.

## ORDINARY

By working with and exploring prevailing conditions – reality – everyday differences are exposed. This is the ordinary. The process of identifying the ordinary highlights issues at a grass roots level. For example, did you know there is a subculture branded grindie: kids that listen to grime and indie? Or that the woman next-door believes in voodoo – and herself, and Balenciaga? This is a dangerous game where information or fresh facts can be reduced to entertainment, where radical can become totally rad. Bottoms up!

Henceforth, in order to oppose capitalism and change the way we are, one must step outside the ordinary and also take an external position.

## EXTRA

Designers need to take a stance outside of the ordinary. Architects and planners must have a strong idea of how they want the world to be. This vision must be dependant upon new correlations of meaning and cooperation that are neither collective or singular but instead based on creating new forms of representation. It is a vision that puts forward people who are not

socially submissive. It is a vision of collecting people to release their desires, yet, without binding them. It is a vision of estranging people from reality in order to provide a moment of critical reflection.

The Extra and the Ordinary can be defined as a distance from reality while maintaining a passion for everyday processes. This is a contradiction of sorts. This is extraordinary: a moment of dislocation that takes from the real world to the next world.

## EXTRA ORDINARY

The rules of opposition focus on a particular problem combining ordinary processes with extra input. It is the terms for architectural engagement with capitalism because architecture can create a new, visible reality.

These rules are:

- To observe and record the everyday in order to identify bottoms-up processes and problems
- To identify one or two issues from the analysis
- To set up rules (an algorithm) to facilitate a response to the problem
- To simulate the algorithm and derive a multitude of outcomes
- Choose an outcome based on a qualitative measure. This information then feeds back into the algorithm until an outcome is achieved. It may not be the optimal solution but it is one that works
- The desired outcome should not make everyone happy but instead provoke a feeling of estrangement

The rules can be illustrated by two examples, one analogue and one digital, which are outside the constraints of this abstract.

### *Don't Concentrate | Too Hard. YTH*

'Don't Concentrate | Too Hard' is a conceptual project by YTH for a traffic interchange in Madrid developed with the aid of computer scripting and observational studies of Madrid. It endeavours to break up concentrations of power by facilitating connections and movement across the scale of the city. Computer scripting, guided by a set of politically motivated rules towards self-organisation, sets up an algorithm which generated a complexity of solutions to the problem. In particular, the project focuses on nonprogrammed

noncommercial spaces between units – built on existing transport infrastructure – to compete with the awe of capitalism.

### *Micro Dwellings | N55*

MicroDwellings is a small pragmatic unit made from truncated octahedrons. It is lowcost in order that it 'would reduce the need for high incomes in order to afford living. This in turn could free time for other activities than money-generating work, something that could have a positive social impact'. The design allows for diversity of configurations and materials. Furthermore, it takes opportunity of existing rooftops. Also, it has the ability to reflect change (separate dwellings, ie, divorce). 'The MICRO DWELLINGS in themselves do not define

a social constellation, but only provide the basic equipment so that persons can configure their own social setting.' [www.n55.dk](http://www.n55.dk)

Timothy Moore (1978) lives in Melbourne. He is an editor of the magazine *They Shoot Homos Don't They?*. Selected Exhibitions: 'Dead Darlings', De Witten plaats, Amsterdam, 2005. 'Hate The Game, Not the Player', Bus Gallery, Melbourne, 2005. 'Perfect City' for bunkerhotel.net, Rotterdam Architectural Biennale, 2003.

[timothymoore@graffiti.net](mailto:timothymoore@graffiti.net)  
[www.theyshoothomosdontthey.com](http://www.theyshoothomosdontthey.com)

## Engagement as Form — public works

Projects based on direct engagement and closeness with the end user increasingly rely on a sustained on site engagement. This activity often generates new networks and establishes or opens up social situations, which in itself can be understood as a spatial construct. The acknowledgment of this idea is the base for our current research and the proposal for our contribution.

Within the current practice of architecture and public art it is important to think of social networks not only as means of communication but also as spatial relations, which construct an inclusive design. As a practice engaged in the public realm we understand the potential of everyday social structures and informal networks presented to us within different scales of public spaces. These networks and structures contribute to the diversity, richness and ephemeral conditions, which make public spaces key spaces within our cities. In order to work with the informal and everyday to reveal the hidden richness and complexity, our practice is continuously confronted with the need to docu-

Architecture heavily relies on images to convey and sell visions of a better future. However it has no accurate tool, which helps to understand the spatial impact of informal networks.

ment, visualise and represent them.

In architectural practice and urban planning these structures and networks are often neglected mainly because they are not immediately visible and don't have a definite physicality. In our work we identified a real need to acknowledge these structures as intangible spaces and make their importance, part of the broader discussion on how we conceive designing of public spaces.

Architecture heavily relies on images to convey and sell visions of a better future. However it has no accurate tool, which helps to understand the spatial impact of informal networks. The emergence of the Internet has increased the efforts to visualise informal networks and relationships. However they purely focus on personal relations away from any geographical or spatial context. Nor do they describe key qualities that help understand the impact of those spaces and networks.

Our talk will examine projects that operate from the ground upwards by establishing new informal networks and will trace attempts of

representing them as a spatial construct. The representation however is only means to an end that should enable us to speculate and propose a new architectural project, which understands engagement as form.

public works (1998), art/architecture collective, London, founded by architects Sandra Denicke-Polcher, Torange Khonsari, Andreas Lang and artists Kathrin Böhm and Stefan Saffer.

All public works projects address the question how users of public space are engaging with their environment and how design and programmatic strategies can support and facilitate physical, economical and social infrastructures in the public realm. public works' art and architecture collaboration is

using the methodology of art led processes to explore how existing social dynamics can inform spatial, architectural and urban proposals.

Sandra Denicke-Polcher and Torange Khonsari are teaching Architecture and Urbanism at London Metropolitan University. Andreas Lang and Kathrin Böhm are teaching Intermediate School Unit 10 at the Architectural Association London. Kathrin Böhm is currently holding an AHRC Fellowship at the School of Art and Design, University of Wolverhampton.

[mail@publicworksgroup.net](mailto:mail@publicworksgroup.net)

[www.publicworksgroup.net](http://www.publicworksgroup.net)

## Anti-Avantgarde — Miguel Robles-Duran

Its apparent that we inhabit within a dissolved community, a space of conflict and alienation, of extreme individualism and increasing class polarization, we can either forever accept this and be part of the Avantgarde, or begin strategizing negative reasoning, conflict and the dialectics it implies to the rooted traditions of architecture which make it impossible to act outside of the establishment.

1.

In the permanent state of image consumption of the everyday and special day of postmodern societies, the imagination of an Avantgarde only reinstates the cycle of consumption; it becomes the oil, the fuel, that thrusts the continuation of cultural immediacy, the statics of the 'new' fashion.

2.

The ideological meaning and sacrificial task of the historical Avantgarde has vanished from the historical consciousness of the postmodern architect. As with all other epochs, all that remains can be reduced to the nostalgic

graphic layout of its images; what represented a conscious congregation of political souls in action is now a catalogue of diachronic souvenirs for the visual market. The appropriation and re-appropriation of history's pictorial form not only banalizes the source but re-signifies its substance into another graphic commodity, these new versions neutralize authentic signification and ideological connotation while continuously deleting the past resulting in the construction of our meaningless future. Today's 'Avantgarde' is nothing but the ridicule of memory. Its ignorance and apathy commercializing imagery to its exhaustion in its constant search for the 'new,' the supreme value of

capitalism in architecture. *The value of the new is a completely fluid one, it does not have to be actually new; it only has to be new to somebody – to the last lady who found out about the driftwood – and to win neophytes is the chief interest of the caste.*<sup>[1]</sup>

3.

The question whether the production of the 'new' can be attributed to the cultural enlighteners of the masses is not a question of designation, but of demystification. One has to first realize that the true significance of the 'new' can only be operative as a collective exercise – sensuous human activity – *the coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice*<sup>[2]</sup>: that which campaigns by the speculative assembling of social relations and not by the reclusive relation to 'never seen' commodities. The dread of our epoch is exposed by its incapacity to generate social and intellectual-identification, -gatherings, -alliances or -community that is not related to fetishes and consumption. Our belief in the 'new' rests completely in industry and no longer in *human society, or social humanity*<sup>[3]</sup> as Marx once believed, this context is where the 'Avantgarde,' devoid of all its signification, rises in favor of the ceaseless production of phantom rarities and nothing else, forever.

4.

The word 'Avantgarde' becomes the envelope of all the postmodern vicissitudes of architectural production; that out of the market necessities swears to media and technological manifolds, the inactive image of the dynamic empiricist dominance as the reflection of its cultural emanation. Subservient to technology and its media market, architects indoctrinate themselves and their expanding list of followers to a *false consciousness that has become immune against its falsehood*.<sup>[4]</sup> Moving toward absolute alienation into a condensed simulation of life in shared space, a psychological condition resulted, tracing and defining the limits of our pond, forever inscribing us in the stasis of the governing body; the operational field of the contemporary Avantgarde is not only confined to this regime, but by being so, promotes the market culture more than the unpretentious architectural masses who follow it, the media

wants them and with it become supporters of the institution of industrial cultural numbness.

5.

The extent of the nostalgic word has overtaken all marketing discourses and for almost three decades the 'Avantgarde' has incrementally affixed to its inclusion in every form of mass media, from tabloids and fashion magazines, to pseudo-science television, and the architect is present as a powerful instrument of diffusion, a superstar, a poster-child for the rising 'creative' class, subsumed by the faith in the upcoming trend, siding to the mediated landscape of consequent-less solitary production. Never has architecture been so lonely, never has architecture been so in vogue.

6.

To use the word 'Avantgarde' today is to obligate the term to the market rule of progression through imagery, where the production of cultural fashions, the 'different' and the novelty proliferate and attempt to make the convincing argument – that cultural progress is still possible and can happen within the solitude of the masses – empowered by its own consumption for its users are frozen in their perpetual monadic spaces of oblivion; and the future they look for is, in reality, their present wrapped in mirrors.

7.

Where the bareness of collective life is blackened by the shadow of the consuming masses, the tumult recedes into fragmented singularities giving way to the frivolous power of the fashion world – the ultimate cultural reducer – poetry subjugates to slogans, art simplifies to billboards and architecture demans into a spectacle of icons, reproducibly overwriting variations in the name of the Avantgarde. Fashion becomes its only possible consequence, hence its imminent expansion and survival is solely reliant on its mystical guide, the completer of the postmodern cycle, the Avantgarde.

8.

Today's pretentious Avantgarde and its mainstream synonyms: the forefront commanders: generators of the new: predictors of the trend: of the 'in': of the 'next': gurus of the discipline: foreseers of the hip and the chic; only providing to our discipline a splurge of unnecessary

excesses; consumption material for the lagging who, mimicking passively, aspire ascension to this regiment of cultural control.

9.

The cultural collectivity once addressed in Poglioli and Bürger's *Theories of the Avantgarde* becomes a fantasy inside society's much defended liberal democratic states, an acceptance or negation of a critical autonomy in cultural production is not only absurd, but illusory in a moment where the vain cult of individuality supersedes social structure and any alleged relation to autonomy has equalized to the breakless consumption cycle of the masses. The separation of architecture to the true praxis of life has brought it closer to its self-absorbing regime, and within this gravitational center, any attempt of unification only generates additive sub-genres of postmodern independences. Therefore, to pretend collective manifestations that position themselves outside the praxis of life, while contained within the hegemonic and engrossing atmosphere of individual democracies is to expect the multiplication of its genesis, the recycle of the 'free' will that furthers on Nietzsche's paradox of individuality: *essentially the feeling of superiority that is experienced towards our subordinates.*<sup>[5]</sup>

10.

The negations and attacks of the historical Avantgarde to the coercive character of the bourgeois institutionalization of architecture – art – and more importantly its outcome, which clearly alienates the essential social values and functions from the praxis of life into an uncontrolled explosion of autonomous individualities, formed a concise oppositional stance that potentially reenforced their cultural progressiveness towards the formation of a new society, allied to a communal political consciousness and a common belief in a better future, nevertheless, for the intentions to turn operative, it became imperative that they practiced a critical distance from total subordination to the ordinary, for they were aware that a practice in total union with the everyday would mislay its capacity to criticize it. Only through the culture industry hijack, can the total amalgamation of life and the architecture kitsch be made possible; the virtually indistinct relation from what its called architecture

to the mundane abysm of image demand, draws a parallel to the quantitative production of flamboyant wannabes – personifications of the industry – and its individual mediatory operations. If there is anything that must be learned from the historical Avantgardes is precisely the *radical negation of the category of individual creation*<sup>[6]</sup>, a political attitude that we must acquire if we will ever pretend to transcend this unchanging moment; for by now, we must know that in a neoliberal political system, architecture can only be about the architect's mystique and his singular object in abstraction with the market. A rooted collective political consciousness would be needed to supersede this spectacle, which by postmodern standards cannot be conceived, let alone enacted.

11.

The Avantgarde now reasons closer to its military origins, the short life of its creations becomes its sacrificial task, the only position where its use retains the purpose of collectively, replacing and destroying, overlaying anew. If only it could uproot itself.

12.

It seems that the 'new' goal for architecture is the blind representation of commercial enterprise, since the enterprise has pulverized in uncountable competitive entities, the Avantgarde desires their volatility to excuse the kitsch and the florid from its designs, complying with the need of the instantaneous publicity of its corporate clients – wether in marketing their private territory or inside of one of the hundreds of publications that are in search of a flashy image – for such deliberate media-exposure to market would only replace social relations for capital struggle. Hegel had anticipated this lysis and Marx was certain that *everything that was solid would melt into air*<sup>[7]</sup> but if there is anything peculiar to our time without future is the intellectualization of its nothingness, because the Avantgarde cannot exist by itself, its permanently dependent on its thinking corpse – the media – the ones that see the invisible and find the connections to everyday life necessary for the continuous buildup of architecture's mass culture. 'Critics' and 'theorists' that singlehandedly choose the aluminum cans amongst the garbage, the ones that announce the dying and upcoming trends and denounce serious critique and

intellect as useless; light 'theorists,' since they float in the air they manufacture where the architect is a drifting particle in expectation of what direction the daily wind will blow.

13.

There cannot be a legitimate opposition where all positions are equally regarded by the architecture masses and where its individual totalities compete in the same space; any formal stance I take or any valorization of space

I work with will immediately become another addition to our contemporary landscape. Therefore I will automatically collaborate to architecture's immanent decomposition to autonomous singularities. Architecture as a representation of non-commodified social collectivity and as a historical formal language; reached its bounds in postmodernity. No longer can we imagine a future that comes out of this tradition that is not already present, nor can we foresee a change within the structure of a profession that *follows established rules at a time when all rules are put into question*<sup>[8]</sup> by each architect; to do away with this laissez faire state, all – at least a few thousand – must delete the over-interpreted logical historical consequences of architecture. Architecture can no longer be about its visuals and form, for all accumulated visuals are contemporary and all forms are immediately identified – even the fanciest. If architecture wishes to transform, it should do so by disregarding its tradition and nostalgic aesthetics as a means, in an instance where everything is contemporary and this everything exists in cohabitation with the urban space, our profession's task can only be the strategical weaving of this 'between' space, the spatial reassembling of social relations in the city, the place where everything crashed. How all of humanity and everything will coexist in space? This is the question to answer.

14.

With this self-critique that records my thoughts about a concerning characteristic of our post-modern condition, I hasten a call for the struggle against the 'Avantgarde' and the old that still believes and hopes for its everyday reincarnation; for a true Avantgarde would not be busy labeling itself as one but would only act toward their reciprocal political beliefs and identifications; reciprocity with any of today's political structures is more of an illusion, with

whom do you side with? In who do you believe? To what do you identify with, if not the packaged products of the cultural supermarket?

The sound of singular Avantgardes is mortifying and a contradiction in itself, the more individualism makes each one of us feel special to the other, the more the distance for transgression extends. Its apparent that we inhabit within a dissolved community, a space of conflict and alienation, of extreme individualism and increasing class polarization, we can either forever accept this and be part of the Avantgarde, or begin strategizing negative reasoning, conflict and the dialectics it implies to the rooted traditions of architecture which make it impossible to act outside of the establishment.

[1] Harold Rosenberg, *The Tradition of the New*

[2] Karl Marx, *Thesis on Feurbach*

[3] Ibid

[4] Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*

[5] F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*

[6] Peter Burger, *Theory of the Avant-garde*

[7] Karl Marx, *Communist Manifesto*

[8] Harold Rosenberg, *The Tradition of the New*

Miguel Robles-Duran, architect, Rotterdam. Born in Mexico City, studied architecture at the ITESM in Monterrey, Sci-Arc in Los Angeles and The Berlage Institute, Rotterdam. In 1999 he opened his office in the border region Tijuana-San Diego. He has taught theory and design at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Tijuana, Mexico, at 'The new school of architecture' in San Diego, California, Woodbury University Los Angeles/San Diego, postgraduate urban design at K.U. Leuven, Belgium and architecture/urban design at The Berlage Institute. Presently he teaches a graduate thesis design studio and a theory seminar on contentious representation at TU Delft, the Netherlands, and is also conducting research as PhD candidate on contentious collective urban manifestations at The Berlage Institute in Rotterdam, where he practices as partner of 'Cohabitation Strategies'.

m@cohabitationstrategies.org

www.cohabitationstrategies.org

## Oppositional Architecture? – Oh Come On, Get a Life! — Michael Sander

It is not surprising, that the subtitle of the 'camp for oppositional architecture' is 'theorizing architectural resistance'. One could say that the misery of a profession with (almost) no known history of oppositional practice and an insatiable urge to produce avant-gardes, is very well summarized in these headlines.

Architecture has a strictly affirmative core to it: the process of building and its material results. They are what everyone inside and outside of the profession has to deal with and therefore the central object of all imaginable subversion, opposition and criticism. But, as the core is material and therefore affirmative, all criticism will remain powerless and vain as long as it is not able to become affirmative and material itself. The oppositional gestures at the rims of architectural practice, exhibitions, lectures, art-type projects, imagery, writings, extravagant projects for the few among the wealthy few and all symbolic actions of any kind are important inside the profession, but like with most architectural avant-garde efforts in the last say 50 years, you cannot help but constantly hear the begging for recuperation.

Architecture is one of the principal modes of materialization of society's power structures, and the work of architects consists of designing, planning and organizing that materialization. In the last 20 or so years, writing, theorizing, exhibiting and lecturing about these actual or possible materializations has become an ever more important part of the work of architects. It is to the latter field, that any notion of opposition is confined, and even more if it be anything near an actual materializing practice. The only opposition-like history in the history of architecture is that of the countless actual or self-proclaimed avant-gardes. But the opposition and the revolution that they spur are either aesthetical or technical, never social. And they never never come to a critical

Architecture has a strictly affirmative core to it: the process of building and its material results. They are what everyone inside and outside of the profession has to deal with and therefore the central object of all imaginable subversion, opposition and criticism.

analysis of the self-conception of architects.

Why is it that we as architects have no history of oppositional practice to refer to? Why are there no built examples of oppositional architecture to refer to? Why is a profession that so eagerly takes up theories and expressions from more or less adjacent professions, not able to at least develop a concept of the profession that is up to the self-reflecting practice of artist (who normally take up the same theories and expressions)? Why is there no political corporation and representation of architects beyond the reverend corporate institutions, dominated by the mandarins of the profession? Why is a profession, whose working conditions have come to produce an ever growing precariat of underpaid and overworked enthusiasts, not able to at least come to a public discussion of just these conditions? Why is it never assumed awkward, that architects constantly talk about themselves, their latest project and its importance for humanity?

We are corrupt and garrulously avoid any real deconstruction of the ideology of architectural practice. We have so very much internalized society's insinuation, that if we just try long enough, we will be offered that first, second or whatever chance to prove our originality, our wit and our talent. And if we do our best, the puppet masters controlling the resources needed, will turn their attention on us and finally make us belong to that elite, we have all learned to feel a part of. Social reality has made architecture a service among others – finally, I am inclined to say – and it is this reality we should start to accept and turn into something to work with.

The first and most credible act of opposition against the 'social order' is the refusal of unacceptable working conditions for oneself. The second is the identification of those in similar conditions and the declaration of solidar-

ity with them. The third is the understanding, that for an oppositional practice (and a practical solidarity), it will be among those people, that we will find our future clients. For like everybody else, they too have use for the service we can provide. We will have to cope with the risk though, that we might not be invited to the captain's table for dinner.

If this gathering shall be more than just another notch on the attendants lecturing list, an additional small coin of symbolic capital or an unnecessary discussion about an outdated version of radical chic (there is actually an office in Germany that calls itself 'office for

subversive architecture'), then the first step to be taken should be that of organizing our representation, not as an office, an institute, a network or any other rampant mock-situationist euphemism, but as a union. And go and challenge the chamber for a starter.

Michael Sander (1961), architect, lives in Frankfurt. Currently he is doing post-graduate studies at the UAS-Frankfurt on 'barrier-free systems'.

sander@n3-21.org

## The Hypothetical Revolution Imagining New Forms of Symbolic Order

— Antonio Scarponi

*'All warfare is based on deception.'*<sup>[1]</sup>

Oppositional architecture is considered here as a tactic that aims to explore *hypothetical revolutions*, practices that produce devices that represent a society organized around different forms of symbolic order. The tactic consists in disabling power's legitimacy through the representation of different kind of values among which we can look upon everyday reality in a more socially and civically engaged way reflecting different kind of social order. Oppositional architecture produces oppositional behaviours, opening up different possibilities for everyday living. These practices go far much beyond the field of built environment, it operates in the field of symbolic values, in the field of culture, where culture is conceived as indirect tool of social transformation.

Our society is an entity shaped within a fight between two sides of a dichotomy: the fight between the individual's and the collective's interests. This dichotomy contains a contradiction or *nonsense*: the personal and the collective interests should overlap; they should stand by the same side of the fight. But the borders within them are not sharp; they are

The hypothetical revolution's devices work at an everyday scale; the scale of any objects or devices that changes the everydayness of living.

blurred one on each other. They have mutant limits that changes according to condition, situations, individuals, perspective and time. This fight is consumed, first of all, on the field of 'symbolic values', a fight for priorities, common urgencies and common needs. It is the cruellest of the fight, a fight of *symbolic violence*<sup>[2]</sup>: the fight for which power is legitimate and history written.

This fight will never be over as long as our society exists, because this fight is our society. Architecture takes an active part in it. Anything we do, consciously or not – either if we do it for money or for fun – it refers to a hierarchy of values shared within an ideal community that one's believe has to come. But there is no urgent need of architects or architectures in our society; architecture is not, in itself, a biological priority, therefore, on the contrary of other disciplines, it needs to be self-legitimated by raising priorities and shifting symbolic values. We can indeed re-read the history of architecture from the point of view of its self-legitimizing issues, from the imitation of nature, history, political ideologies or religious liturgy. So we can argue that in the spectacle's society architecture is a sparkling

entertainment or, in general, that architectural form follows power.<sup>[3]</sup>

*'Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near.'*<sup>[4]</sup>

'Opposition' is a failure tactic for oppositional architecture. Rather opposition is to be considered as a strategy<sup>[5]</sup>, an agenda or a long-term goal. A good tactic for a deceiving architectural opposition would be to be able to open new possibilities rather than offer new solutions. It is important here that we make a distinction between possibilities and solutions because the first provide the freedom to choose, self-organization, empowerment, indeterminacy and creativity; the second provide conclusions, entertainment, rigidity, laziness. A possibility contains few solutions, a solution contains one possibility; the first is alive the second is dead.

Instead to declare an open opposition that criticize the existing society that perhaps makes it even 'aesthetically appealing' like a negative utopia<sup>[6]</sup>, successful opposition tactics has to open up new possibilities for proposing action that awakes consciousnesses. Luc Boltanski, in his essay on the spectacle of sufferance '*La Souffrance à distance*'<sup>[7]</sup>, characterizes three main topics on which medias 'sales' sufferance creating different kind of provocations among society:

- The topic of denounce.
- The topic of sentiment.
- The topic of aesthetic.

Instead of this campaign's tactics, I am proposing here a different level of operation that breaks the circle of spectacle. I would like to call this kind oppositional practice a *subversive imagination*<sup>[8]</sup>: the efforts to imagine and represent our realities under a different order of values on which society organize and reproduce itself. It is an epistemological shift that transforms the spectator into an actor. It is a demonstrative and provocative imprint because it doesn't change the reality itself, but opens up new possibilities for its interpretation. Therefore an oppositional architecture produces devices for the *hypothetical revolution*, proposing the re-arrangement and the redefini-

tion of common values, imagining new forms of symbolic orders.<sup>[9]</sup>

*'Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.'*<sup>[10]</sup>

The hypothetical revolution's devices work at an everyday scale; the scale of any objects or devises that changes the everydayness of living. It is a scale-free practice that produces design issues that could spread and interact like viruses, from the repetition and iteration of the individual's behavior toward a critical mass crowd.<sup>[11]</sup> The hypothetical revolution's devises does not change the physical world, rather they operate in the cultural environment producing indirect devices of social transformation.

In this conception of oppositional architecture we have to abandon the narrow vision to consider architecture nothing else that bricks and cement. This is the most awful hypocrisy among us because we all know the most influencing projects that changed the history of architecture were never built but they where just operating as devices of subversive imagination, projects that opened a broader vision in people's mind.

The issue is to take in to account the attitude to consider any creative practice able to produce devises of *hypothetical revolution*, a social aware practice that synthesize a critique of the existing environment and a practical vision of a different reality, a different order of values on which our society organize itself.

[1] Sun Tzu's *The Art of War. Military Strategy*: <http://www.chinapage.com/sunzi-e.html>

[2] The concept of symbolic value and symbolic violence is referred, of course, to the work of Pierre Bourdieu: 'Symbolic violence is fundamentally the imposition of categories of thought and perception upon dominated social agents who then take the social order to be desirable. It is the incorporation of unthought-of structures that tend to perpetuate the structures of action of the dominant. The dominated then take their position to be 'right'. Symbolic violence is in some senses much more powerful than

physical violence in that it is embedded in the very modes of action and structures of cognition of individuals, and imposes the vision of the legitimacy of the social order': [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre\\_Bourdieu#Symbolic\\_capital\\_and\\_symbolic\\_violence.html](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Bourdieu#Symbolic_capital_and_symbolic_violence.html)

[3] I apologize to speculate one's again on the Sullivan's motto but the relation between architectural forms and power is obviously ageless. In this context thought I would like to remember that even the Italian rationalism was used to legitimate the political civic image of fascism especially in the first decade of the regime. Mussolini supported architectural modernism because was providing a 'modern' and efficient image. Italian rationalism was, in other words, a symbolic form that suited the fascist policies by being a metaphor of efficiency, modernity, and transparency. This relation changed only after the colonial foreign policy of the regime, when architecture had to mirror its neo-roman imperialistic ambitions supporting a rhetorical and populist conception of classical architectural language. See: Giorgio Ciucci, *Gli Architetti e il Fascismo. Architettura e Città 1922-1944*, Einaudi, Torino, 1989.

[4] Sun Tzu's *The Art of War. Military Strategy*. Op.Cit.

[5] A 'tactic' is a 'move' played in the 'enemy's territory'; in a territory that is not known and that is not controlled. A tactic operates as an inductive reaction, as a short time feedback process. On the contrary a strategy is a set of moves that operate in one's own territory and has a long time feedback process. A strategy contains the practice of tactics. In this issue related to the difference between tactic and strategy I am referring to Sun Tzu's *Military Strategy*, a Chinese military treatise written during 6<sup>th</sup> century BC by Sun Tzu; a treatise that relates the ethical codes of 'the art of war'. See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Art\\_of\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Art_of_War)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Art\\_of\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Art_of_War)

[6] A negative utopia is the beautification of the world ugliness or unfairness, like someone who has to learn how to share her coexistence with a mortal disease. I have taken this concept from Yona Friedman: *Utopies réalisables. Nouvelle éditions (1974-2000)*, Editions de l'éclat, Paris, 2000.

[7] L. Boltanski, *La Souffrance à distance*, Editions Métailié, Paris, 1993.

[8] C. Becker, *The Subversive Imagination. Artists, society and social responsibility*, Routledge, New York, 1994.

[9] See also the concept of soft power that relates to the power of culture. Coined by Joseph Nye, soft power is opposed to hard or coercitive power it is defined instead as soft or seductive power: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soft\\_power](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soft_power)

[10] Sun Tzu's *The Art of War. Military Strategy*. Op.Cit.

[11] See the concept of tipping point: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tipping\\_point](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tipping_point), or Malcom Gladwell *The Tipping Point. How Little things can make a big difference*. Back Bay Books, New York – Boston, 2000. See also Philip Ball, *Critical Mass. How one thing leads to another*, Arrow Books, London 2005.

Antonio Scarponi (1974), architect/artist, Venice. Currently he is a PhD candidate in Urban Design at the University of Venice (IUAV). He develops interdisciplinary research projects using cognitive tools and practices from architecture, visual culture and design to develop innovative devices with the aim to investigate and relate to social practices and behaviours in everyday life. His works operate through a shift of symbolic values due to the social utility and social responsibility of arts and design in contemporary visual culture.

antonio@conceptualdevices.com  
[www.conceptualdevices.com](http://www.conceptualdevices.com)

## Alternative Currents<sup>[1]</sup>

— Tatjana Schneider + Jeremy Till

Recent research has identified a pressing need for the development of alternative forms of architectural praxis. A joint report by CABA (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) and the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) points to the potential marginalisation of architectural practice if normative tenets and working methods are clung to. A further report by the Royal Institute of British Architects from 2005 calls for the urgent requirement to 'address outdated professional norms and behaviour' and to acknowledge 'the diversity of the architectural market'.

However, neither report, nor others like them, propose how such an alternative model of architectural practice may be structured. What, indeed, is this 'other' model of architecture that might address this gap and how might alternative architectural praxis contribute to the development of contemporary and future architectural practice?

These questions are formulated in response to a defined need to develop new models of architectural praxis in order to address the changing social, economic and environmental contexts that face contemporary architectural practice. The proposal for a research project, on which this paper is based, aims to address these issues through both a historiographical survey of alternative praxis and an evaluation of contemporary examples.

In the historical context, there are a number of histories of the architectural profession. However, in all of these the concentration is on the mainstream development of the profession, with the consequent glorification of the individual genius architect. Alternative architectural praxis stands outside the tradition which celebrates the great 'master architect', where the reputation of a 'name' alone seems to be the guarantor of the cultural and social value of a building. It is rare to find research that addresses the history of alternative praxis per se.

Initially, alternative architectural praxis (AAP) is defined through a set of overlapping concepts.

- AAP is a praxis that demands an engagement with the conditions of its production in a critical way.
- It is a praxis that reflects on its organisational principles.
- Alternative architectural praxis a praxis that acknowledges that architectural practice has to deal with architecture's economic, political and social significance.
- Finally, it is a praxis in which the processes are more important than the product.

Despite the need for new models of architectural practice, there is little sustained research in the field and so the term as such remains undertheorised and ambiguous. Alternative practices have of course developed in the past and continue to evolve; the aim of this research is to collect these various histories and contemporary examples together, so that the whole builds to more than the sum of its parts.

In the historical context, there are a number of histories of the architectural profession. However, in all of these the concentration is on the mainstream development of the profession, with the consequent glorification of the individual genius architect. Alternative architectural praxis stands outside the tradition which

celebrates the great 'master architect', where the reputation of a 'name' alone seems to be the guarantor of the cultural and social value of a building. It is rare to find research that addresses the history of alternative praxis *per se*; this is generally limited to specific examples. Perhaps more relevant is the literature on the sociology of the architectural profession and the story of practice. Gutman, for example, outlines the changing context for architectural practice, and Dana Cuff argues that a practice's characteristics neatly correspond to dominant cultural constructs. However, neither investigation develops a case for an alternative praxis but instead dwells on the re-organisation of the already existing forms. They unravel the social foundations of practice and thus point to, but do not propose, alternatives. Larson identifies the way that mainstream architectural practice perpetuates a perceived need to continually establish a figure based on notions of genius. Both she and Cuff show how the normative model becomes one of aspiration in both education and practice, and thus to a large extent controls architectural production.

It is therefore necessary to look elsewhere to find the history of alternative architectural praxis, how it has evolved and the various motivations for it. Generally AAP is motivated by a desire to re-think the processes of architectural production rather than their explicit interest in the architectural product *per se*. In this it differs from approaches that concentrate on alternative or 'radical' form (as outlined, for example in Samantha Hardingham's book 'Experiments in Architecture'). In contrast, AAP is often initiated through a reconsideration of organisational principles (i.e. collaboration of architects and artists, co-operatives, relationship to user/client) and/or an explicitly stated ideological or political point of view (i.e. Marxist, feminist, etc).

Our research will also draw on and develop theories of alternative practice. On the one hand there is a move to look critically at architecture as a discipline, on the other there is a move to see how other critical discourses may influence the architectural realm. The former is exemplified in the approach taken by the Critical Architecture conference (University College London 2004, published in *Journal of Architecture* 3, 2005), which explored architectural criticism as a form of practice and considered the different modes of critical practice

(buildings, drawings and texts) in architectural design. Our proposed project moves outwards from this to see how such theories of criticality may be applied to contemporary architectural production. Our central concern is not on the theories of criticality *per se*, but in the way they might be informed to practice, hence our use of the word 'praxis'.

In terms of other discourses and their relationship to architecture, recent research has concentrated on aspects of gender, race and class. Thus key feminist research has begun to propose new forms of organisation for practice, has taken feminist theory as a means of unsettling the normative male values of the profession, or examined contemporary female and feminist practices. Certain texts begin to develop the history of female and feminist praxis others that of race. These and others are important in informing approaches to AAP, but our intent is to place them into a wider and more comparative structure, drawing on the organisational and ideological aspects of the praxis, rather than concentrating on the historiographical elements.

As important are the analyses that form a political critique of the profession, notably Tafuri's Marxist analysis in 'Architecture and Utopia: design and capitalist development' which whilst essential in understanding the straightjacket that capitalism imposes on architecture, is famously scathing about the chances for reformulation. What Tafuri and others point to is that AAP can be informed by a critique of the demands of a capitalist production of the built environment, noting that capitalist society has frequently procured buildings and urban regeneration projects that are at odds with the social, and psychological needs of users, and thus restrictive of their freedom. It is our hypothesis that AAP often addresses this context of social empowerment, sometimes through an explicit political stance and sometimes through the organisational principles of their working practices. We will also draw on research into alternative processes in architectural practice such as participation or collaboration.

We are suggesting that alternative architectural praxis in the future can be developed from a comparative understanding of all these discourses, not necessarily by taking on board their critical, political or ideological stances, but by learning from the organisatio-

nal principles, architectural processes and engagement with others that have arisen out of these stances.

[1] The project is funded by the AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council). It will investigate the history and future of Alternative Architectural Praxis. The project starts in December 2006 and runs for two years.

Tatjana Schneider (1974), researcher (architecture), Sheffield. From 2001 to 2005, she was member of the workers co-operative G.L.A.S. (Glasgow Letters on Architecture and Space), a group that undertook community based design consultancy, agit-prop works, educational workshops and also produced glaspaper – a quarterly journal on

architecture and space.

Jeremy Till (1957), architect, professor of architecture at the University of Sheffield and director of Sarah Wigglesworth Architects. Publications include 'Architecture and Participation', Routledge 2005, joint editor. 'Architecture and the Everyday', Academy 1999, joint editor. 'Flexible Housing', Architectural Press 2007, joint author and 'Architecture Depends', MIT 2007. He curated the British Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale and won the RIBA Sustainability Award 2005 and the EAAE Prize for Writings in Architectural Education.

t.schneider@sheffield.ac.uk

j.till@sheffield.ac.uk

www.swarch.co.uk

www.sheffield.ac.uk/architecture

## A Small School of Architecture Planned for Belgrade 2007 — Tijana Stevanovic + Inga Zimprich

The concept of the Small School of Architecture is to bring different questions and discourses into overlap. Architects are invited to make the refraction noticeable by confronting this emerging space with their practice as architects and planners.

Considering that many social and political questions are difficult to be addressed publicly and directly in Belgrade, we will use the modernist architecture of Belgrade – the city's built interface as access point to surface the social visions, which motivated its building process.

The themes lined out here are not more but starting points, which accumulated associatively during several visits to Belgrade and conversations with artists, theorists and

Subversive practices still assume a dialectical perspective from which an antagonist can be singled out. The concept of left and right, resistance and power has been diffused not only in Serbia. Is this mind-model actually apt to form a bases for operation today?

architects. We mean to provide a sketch at this point, which invites for further investigation and preparation of the Small School of Architecture.

### Building

We hope it will be possible that the Small School of Architecture will take place in the Sports centre 25<sup>th</sup> of May built by Ivan Antic. The building overlooking Danube and Sava and forming the entrance to a huge recreation area of Belgrade stands proof for the vision of a self-managed society and its relation to its urban space and time. Aside of hosting small businesses on its ground level and spread-out surrounding kiosks the triangular former restaurant with panoramic view is abandoned and

out of use today. Instead of design engineering we propose to develop suggestions of usage for the building the Small School will take place in resulting from the experience of our common activity during the school's activity. The developed proposals will specify the questions discussed in the Small School towards a physical or methodological appliance, as: How can a space for the community be thought or designed under contemporary conditions?

## Modernist Architecture

After the losses of WWII the population in an at that time still agrarian country relied on the Yugoslavian academic structures which would concentrate in the new 'la ville radieuse'-like city on grounds not before used as urban space. On a strategical geopolitical position – in history separating the Ottoman from the Austro-Hungarian empire – the new governmental headquarters would be detached from the old town's historical centre and reflect the new block-less state and a new social class in its architecture and urban planning. Buildings in Belgrade and New Belgrade as Nikola Dobrovic's Block of Buildings of the Ministry of National Defense (1956–63), buildings by Ivan Antic ('25<sup>th</sup> May' Sports-Recreation Center, 1961–73), Uros Martinovic (Local community Center, New Belgrade 1963) and others will serve as study-cases to consider the environments which were meant to facilitate and express this new community. In which manner are schools, hospitals, high-rises and town halls shaped and which social relations and usages do they suggest? Which concrete structures do still correspond to today's social life; which have been adjusted to contemporary conditions? Which threats of thought and form can contemporary architectural practice pick up to correspond with the existing cityscape? Which conclusions can be drawn from the modernist school facing contemporary architectural assignments?

## De-stabilized bodies

In *The Intruder* Jean Luc Nancy introduces the notion of the foreigner as a figure that can't be integrated anymore but that exposes itself as alien from within an organism leading towards a process of 'polymorphic' erosion or dissolution. Nancy from observing his own sickening and psychological as well as physical reaction provides us with terminology to consider both the human as much as the urban body in a process

of disintegration originating from the inside. From *The Intruder* parallels can be drawn towards the very concrete spreading of destructive cell-growth in a cancerous body, as much as a spreading of decay in an urban body as a symptom of denial. In de-stabilized bodies we would like to raise the question whether a fundamental social disorientation and uncertainty works on the body – the human, the collectively social as much as on the urban one, and to look for the dynamics of these processes: Which experience causes spreading decomposition? Does one cell influence the other cell's behaviour? Hesitation, growth, destruction and productivity, which energies are apparent where in Belgrade's cityscape?

## Resisting the opposition

Former oppositional powers, which challenged the Milosevic regime, hold relevant public and political positions in Serbia today, embodying democratic, anti-communist and pro-western values. Democratic initiatives have been supported and subsidized by western institutions since the nineties. But has the resistance in Serbia taken chance enough to critically evaluate itself? And how does one resist an opposition? Is it useful to operate with this political terminology and does it make sense to incorporate critical terminology from 'the West'?

Subversive practices still assume a dialectical perspective from which an antagonist can be singled out. The concept of left and right, resistance and power has been diffused not only in Serbia. Is this mind-model actually apt to form a bases for operation today?

Can a new critical language emerge on the bases of dialectical argumentation or within grammatical constraints? Which forms of articulation fuse styles, work with a consciousness of contradiction and thereby challenge concepts of criticality?

## Stateless Spaces

In Georgio Agambens *We refugees* he introduces the 'person without a country' as a pioneering figure of a society to come. Through the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Serbia is not only a state noticeably without close federation with other states but also caused and witnessed many scenarios of migration. When Agamben suggests towards the end of his essay a concept of 'reciprocal extraterritoriality', an 'exodus (of) one into the other' as a political, non-auton-

omous space, in how far does this correspond with or contradict experiences made in Serbia: 'In other words, we become illegal habitants of the Europe, people without papers, we entered obscure Other of Europe, outside the Law and its protection. And we learnt from this experience. We learnt that it is not possible anymore to be emigrant, which is to be someone who freely circulates Europe ever-ready to jump in to the Abyss of not having an identity. [...] since then we are emigrants in our own country and that is only position we find to be correct. That's why we never again wanted to [...] leave Belgrade forever, because only in Belgrade we do not have to be Serbs...'[1]

Which forms of governance do permanent states of being stateless call for? Which questions do concepts of stateless spaces pose towards architecture and planning?

## Development

During the upcoming 6 month we would like to refine the thematic fields and develop the schools program as much as the organizational framework together with the following participants. Invited to develop the Small School together on this side are/will be:

- Tijana Stefanovic, architecture student, Belgrade
- Nebojsa Milikic, artist and cultural organizer, Media Center REX, Belgrade (Initiated several projects in Kaludjerice)
- Maria Milinkic, assistant professor at the Architecture Faculty, Belgrade
- Sönke Hallmann, theorist, Maastricht, NL ('Department of Reading')
- M7red, Mauricio Corberlan, Pio Torroja, architects, Buenos Aires
- Johannes Räther, Freie Klasse, Berlin, DE
- Robert Burghardt, architecture student and co-founder of Informal University in Foundation, Berlin, DE

- Wim Cuyvers, architect, BE ('The impossibility of Planning')
- Marjolein Dijkman, artist, NL
- Stealth, architects, Rotterdam, NL

And is in the future open to participation.

[1] Milica Tomic, Branimir Stojanovic:  
[http://www.project-go-home.com/gohome/dinners/Bios/Milica\\_Branimir.html](http://www.project-go-home.com/gohome/dinners/Bios/Milica_Branimir.html)

Tijana Stevanovic (1982), student of architecture, Belgrade. She focuses on the phenomena of transition between post-communism and post-capitalism, the shift from common to privatized property and the way it affects built structure in micro and macro scale, in social and urbanistic studies. From 2003 to 2005 she worked on Radio Belgrade 1 as author of the weekly show on urban culture and city life *Tajni prolaz*.

Inga Zimprich (1979), artist, Berlin/Maastricht. Currently she is at the Jan van Eyck Academie with a Research Grant. Projects include: 'the Speech', Faculty of Invisibility #1', Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht. 'Resonance. Or how one reality can be understood through another', STUK, Leuven and ARTIS Den Bos. 'Center for Communication and Context', in: *Private With Public*, with Ingela Johansson, Volodymyr Kuznetsov, Contemporary Art Centre Kiev. 'Thinktank 0.1', Public Space With A Roof, Amsterdam.

Currently Stevanovic and Zimprich work together on the project 'Small School of Architecture' in Belgrade.

tijana.stevanovic@gmail.com  
 inga@con-gress.net

## Architecture and Activism

— Maria Theodorou

Given that history 'hardly repeats itself', to what degree the reference to the 'radical gesture' of the 1960s operates still today as a query of techniques? Can activism be a form

of resistance within architecture and a way – to quote Zizek – ‘to revolutionize an order whose very principle is constant self-revolutionizing’?

## Problems and dead-end states

Events that occur in various parts of the globe require a fresh look at a rather obvious relation. In such events, architecture appears either as the effect of specific policies or it is adopted as an appropriate solution by politicians. Both versions can be described as the two sides of architecture’s relation to politics, where politics accounts for forms of institutionalised practices.

However, as one enters the details of these events, a number of issues are raised that complicate the relation. States of exemption, human waste ‘management’, international organisations operations, global finance, memory and rehabilitation are not problems that surface at the intersection of architecture and politics but rather dead-end states produced at the current moment in which architecture encounters the political. The political indicates the state in which reality as we know it either has been shaken or collapsed and emerging formations of various types challenge our system of references and force us to re-examine given ways of thinking and operating.

Current agitation in the form of activism which encompasses a spectrum of fields from the social to the cultural from the anti-globalisation movement and environmental and cyber activism to the Yes Men and Reverent Billy indicate a restlessness that might be interpreted as the sign of the contemporary encounter with the political. Being ‘a moment of openness and undecidability’, the political calls into question institutionalised practices.

What are the indications that architecture and architects responds to this encounter? Apart from a renewed interest manifested in the form of recent publications, exhibitions and awards of work produced in the aftermath of the 60s and 70s upheaval, does the change of socio-political context in the 1990s – which triggered a renewed interest for activism – opened up the potential for action within architecture? Given that history ‘hardly repeats itself’, to what degree the reference to the ‘radical gesture’ of the 60s – subjected to a continu-

ous recuperation of any subversive action from the mid 70s onwards – operates still today as a query of techniques? Can activism be a form of resistance within architecture and a way – to quote Zizek – ‘to revolutionize an order whose very principle is constant self-revolutionizing?’ Should the 60s history of concepts such as ‘space’, ‘participation’ and ‘everyday life’ be taken into account when employed in current ‘critical’ agendas?

Activism is related to the desire and demand for change and seizes every opportunity available to achieve its aim. It is associated with dissatisfaction in existing conditions but it does not prescribe solutions. The activist stance and task is to identify areas and ways of action that disturb established or unchallenged state of affairs. To examine its current potential within architecture, the paper discusses two instances of architecture’s encounter with the political. The first concerns the Iveria Hotel IDPs camp in the centre of the Georgian capital Tbilisi symbolically demolished by the prime minister in November 2005, while the second looks at the escape-scape of the Greek islands. In the context of this short text to be used as the conference reader only the first case will be presented for it brings in an array of issues with which architecture is entangled in current conditions.

The moment architecture encounters the political ‘dead-end states’ appear as ‘problems’ asking for appropriate solutions. The activist stance, however, turns ‘problems’ into ‘dead-end states’. An understanding of the two terms is required to proceed further. A ‘problem’, in the Greek sense of the word, has a double meaning; it is something to be put in front of one’s eyes, like a project to be clearly understood and resolved. Nevertheless, a problem is also something which operates as a shield, under which something takes refuge to remain hidden and protected. A ‘dead-end state’ on the other hand, is a condition in which a problem reaches a deadlock and cannot be resolved unless the context in which this problem is posed or arises is questioned and reconsidered.

In the dead-end state that which is hidden and covered up by a problem is called into question. Thus the encounter with what was previously unknown occurs and a whole new set of conditions takes shape.

Problem solving is the art of experts' administration. In July 2003, a group of Council of Europe (COE) experts (the author included) visited Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia in Northern Caucasus in the context of the COE's STAGE programme. The experts were expected to analyse existing conditions within the city in order to draft a report and prescribe appropriate cultural policies for the city's cultural regeneration as a means to trigger economic development. The team held a series of meetings with cultural actors, artists, university professors, city officials, members of the government, politicians, architects, NGO members, entrepreneurs etc. The COE initiative was inscribed in the context of European efforts to attenuate the effects of the Soviet Union collapse but the interest in the area cannot be dissociated from the oil pipeline crossing the Caucasian area.

In 2003, the city bear witness to the effects of economic dilapidation, and corruption. Deserted areas, decaying buildings, high rise of the nouveaux rich illegally build within central city parks, the half-finished regeneration plan of a neighbourhood financed by the world bank, rapidly increasing investment in land by speculators were the visible signs of the city's decadent state. Local architects and urbanists pointed out that the municipality's chief architect post was always assigned to the most corrupted person in town. However, there was something which was never discussed in the meetings; a kind of wound secluded by the silence of the locals and the puzzlement of the visitors but whose sign was exposed in open view in the heart of the city.

The geometrical center of Tbilisi – a privileged holiday destination under soviet rule – was marked by the overwhelming presence of the Iveria Hotel. The conspicuous site was deliberately chosen – in a gesture of soviet urban rhetoric – to construct in 1967, the best ever hotel not only in Tbilisi but in the whole of Georgia. In July 2003, at the time of the experts' visit, Iveria was nothing but the war's side effect on the city; a 15-storey vertical refugee camp for 800 uprooted Abkhazians. After the SU break up and the 1992–93 war in Georgia, app. 200,000 IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) flooded

Tbilisi. They were officially received and resettled. Iveria emerged as the highest-profile IDP refuge.

The hotel's temporary dwellers had remained in a transition state for eleven years already in 2003. Caught in a limbo state, they were still unable to return home and yet not integrated into the host city; Residents but not citizens. In their prolonged sojourn, IDPs have acted upon the architecture of the building and adapted it to their needs. Balconies turned into rooms. Walls made of wooden planks or blue plastic mark the attempt of the dwellers not only to make home out of a hotel room, but to make this home distinct and personal. Over the years the Iveria has grown into an organic community. As the VIP's of the Soviet era were substituted by the Abkhazian IDP's, the building's original program was compromised. Life took over and spilled out in what appears as a deformed modernist building. The rationality and controlled programme of modern architecture turned into an intolerable image when anything unwanted which was excluded in the first place comes back with a vengeance. In Iveria, it is as if human matter and building matter were recombined to produce a sensational and monstrous structure. A monster is a living entity created by the combination of already existing entities that lacks a name. In that sense, a future is always experienced as monstrous. Iveria an animated architecture monster at the center of a city may announce a future that we haven't thought of. And I do not refer here to the future that recombinant architectures envisage: 'the debut of the structural architectural career of flesh, in which bodily matter interacts with structural systems to create highly intricate – and perhaps deeply functional – material forms' (Benzamin Bratton's article, 'The premise of Recombinant Architecture'). We should, however, pay attention and understand the context in which 'bare life' surfaces both at the core of social issues and in current architectural experiments.

What makes Iveria case so unique is the fact that it occupied the center and the most prominent location of a city; usually refugee or IDPs camps are in the periphery. What makes it a city symptom is the fact, that one could almost sense the locals' creeping delight for a former SU glory turned into contemporary glum. They seemed to enjoy their symptom although they were unaware of its function; it helped them

to keep on with their lives despite the harsh conditions they experienced. To an outsider it seemed quite obvious that in Iveria, the people and the built alike were awaiting their rehabilitation. Rehabilitation is mainly a medical term. Due to the heritage conservation aspiration to the medical notion of cure, rehabilitation became a key operative concept in the context of cultural heritage practice. Experts prescribe cures. Cultural experts in particular, following the analysis of a specific context, deploy strategies and formulate policies for regeneration, including rehabilitation, especially in case of a city's context. What they actually do, is in the absence of the political, to generate politics (i.e., set of practices and institutions) as the art of experts administration.

Iveria hotel however, stand as a reminder that the political cannot be ignored for it has violently evaded contemporary cities, not only in Georgia but worldwide, since the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By political we mean the moment in which a problem becomes a dead-end state and creates a crisis that dislocates our social constructions. The political is associated with this moment of contingency and undecidability marking the gap between the dislocation of one socio-political identification and the creation of the desire of a new one. (Y. Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political*). Iveria is our encounter with the political. As such, it provokes anxiety and triggers defensive constructs that help to pretend that it does not exist. This was the approach of the Georgians but also of the group of experts. After having drafted our report with no mention to Iveria I was asked to contribute an article on Tbilisi for the COE magazine issue 100 dedicated on city's sustainable development. Instead of referring to the report I picked up Iveria which cannot be contained within a settling approach of rehabilitation or – to put it bluntly – of recycling either of people or of the building. No reaction or initiative came through COE but political events were accelerated back in Georgia.

Within three months after the visit, in November of 2003, mass protests took place following falsified parliamentary elections which forced more than 100,000 people into the streets and concluded with the Rose Revolution. Since 2004, the city government has taken new initiatives to curb uncontrolled construction projects; it had a good reason to do so, given

the speculation allure which the new government was quick to exploit. 'The Iveria Hotel must be evacuated and restored to its original condition,' said Mikheil Saakashvili in June 2004 and set the process in motion. Two months later, on August 20, a deadline expired for the hotel-dwellers to move out. 'Private interests are not involved here,' Tbilisi mayor told the reacting community of refugees. 'It's the city and the country which needs the Iveria restored.' But he said foreign investors had shown interest in buying into the Iveria, and it was they who were offering the refugees 7,000 dollars per room if they move out. 'The investors will soon transform the Iveria into a five-star hotel,' A Georgian company called Silk Road has taken the initiative. 'The company's business was oil and petrochemicals transportation, Silk Road got lucky because its vision of the Iveria's future coincided with the government's own', said the company's spokesman.

It is when the last public remain of a hated soviet rule disappeared as Shevardnadze was forced out by the Rose revolution, that Iveria became visible as a city symptom. 'In social analysis the symptom would be that which is ideologically thought to introduce disharmony in a society that would otherwise be harmoniously unified under a certain utopian ideal'. Only at that point it became urgent to be torn down to make way for a new hotel and shopping complex. What was in fact urgent was the city symptom to be substituted by a city fetish. According to Žižek fetish is a kind of inverse of the symptom. That is to say, the symptom is the exception which disturbs the surface of false appearance, while fetish is the embodiment of the Lie which enables us to sustain the unbearable. Both keep a system in deadlock to keep on. The regeneration of Tbilisi will start from Iveria the president said and his presence and rhetoric at the building's demolition earlier this November, was an overdue counter-act to the soviet inauguration in '67.

Iveria's case forces back to contemporary reality where architecture reinforces its relation with politics, that is, with the conditions of the given. Margaret Thatcher whispers us again her infamous catchphrase TINA, There Is No Alternative. And indeed there seems to be no viable alternative for Iveria. But it is this paralysing deadlock which started in the 1990s that produced a wave of agitation in the form of contemporary activism less than ten

years later. The deadlock paves the way for action. For a connection between architecture and activism to occur, architects might need to invent not revolutionary design statements but to include in their design process, acts that insist on bringing out that which is abided, covered up under the problem they are asked to resolve with their projects.

Dr. Maria Theodorou (1958), architect, Athens. She is currently director of the not-for-profit SARCHA (School of ARCHitecture 4 All). It was founded in April 2006 to incite activism in architecture. It aims to educate and activate the public regarding architecture's impact on the formation of the ever-changing, life-shaping environment. It pro-

notes research, actions and projects that examine architecture's relation and connection with the diverse and political aspects of individual and collective activities. She has been the head of Architecture Network in Athens since 2001, adviser to the Minister of Culture in Greece 1996–2004, adviser on architecture events for the Cultural Olympiad 2001–2004, and Council of Europe expert on Cities' Cultural Policy (2003). She lectures and publishes on architecture theory in Greece and abroad, has been a member of the *Archis* magazine International Board, (2000–2004), a visiting critic to the Architectural Association, and invited juror to international architecture competitions.

maria.theodorou@sarcha.gr

## Appear Normal or Don't Appear — Oscar Tuazon

The Poor People's March was initiated by Rev. Martin Luther King in 1968 and took place shortly after his assassination. The march, which aimed to shift the political coalition that King had mobilized against segregation towards an engagement with poverty, ended with the erection of a shantytown on the great mall in Washington DC. The marchers moved in, drilling into the water pipes that ran under the Mall. What the 'march' – finally more like an occupation – emphasized was the disruptive force of stationary bodies. The Washington

Conflicts over how space is used have given rise to successful strategies of building and living with minimal resources, in remote locations – strategies that necessarily minimize their relationships with mainstream social and economic organizations. Such strategies, rather than assuming an oppositional or even cohesively political stance, value invisibility over confrontation as a means of sustaining their initiatives over the long term.

Mall, designed to accommodate a kind of disembodied or at least mobile democratic subject, had been converted into a living space, and the effect was overwhelming. The occupation, marked by discontinuous scenes – park-as-kitchen, street-as-toilet, sit-in; live-in; shit-in – short-circuited the intended use of the park as a place for democratic expression by turning it into a functional tent city for thousands of protesters. Space filled with bodies. The image of a slum at the foot of the Washington Monument, appropriate or not, was simply

too extreme to elicit broad sympathy. If it is remembered at all, the Poor People's March is considered a failure, the last march of the civil rights era.

The tactics, and indeed the political necessity motivating the large protests of the civil rights era are no longer relevant. My philosophy for survival: appear normal, or don't appear. Two years ago, taking a rifle, a handful of beaver traps, and about \$200 in bulk food, I headed into the woods. Except for brief intervals, I've been in the woods ever since. For the most part, I've gotten my living from the woods: cutting cedar shake bolts, firewood, thinning trees, and running a small winter trapline for winter meat and needed cash. In regard to conventional society, I would not go often or stay long.

Though the accelerating suburbanization of rural areas in the Western US continues to constrict the free movement of nomadic and homeless people, it is still possible to maintain a very low profile in the woods. The collapse of the logging industry in the rural Northwest over the past decade has turned large tracts of recently harvested forests into virtual terra incognita. Sporadically replanted (after which the next harvest is typically in 50 years), and subject to cursory helicopter fly-overs only during the marijuana growing season from April to October, the clear-cut slopes of the Cascade and Coast ranges, while sparsely populated, support a range of activities and environments that would be impossible in more densely developed areas. There is a stable black market in illegally harvested forest products fed by small 'wildcat' logging operations and salal, moss, and mushroom poaching. In the Pacific Northwest, the influx of Methamphetamine has begun to produce effects on the built environment. Because a meth 'cook' leaves a toxic chemical residue that will contaminate the manufacturing site, and because of the urgent need to stay out of sight of the authorities, labs have emigrated from urban apartments and moved 'back to the land'. A car can be parked on an unimproved road on public land and left there when the manufacturing process is complete. Because methamphetamine can be made quickly with a minimum of equipment, a lab can be set up in a series of buckets en plaine aire. And so increasingly you see labs on the move, leaving behind any kind of structure altogether, and operating just as a set of tools, a set of chemi-

cals that can be cooked, the byproducts left behind. This kind of mobility becomes very hard to trace and is effective at evading detection.

Conflicts over how space is used have given rise to successful strategies of building and living with minimal resources, in remote locations – strategies that necessarily minimize their relationships with mainstream social and economic organizations. Such strategies, rather than assuming an oppositional or even cohesively political stance, value invisibility over confrontation as a means of sustaining their initiatives over the long term. Bert and Holly Davis have spent over 30 years living in a series of temporary homes in the mountains of central Oregon. Building this way enables the Davises to move quickly and easily, which they do several times a year, and to avoid unwanted contact with others. By digging their shelters into sparsely wooded slopes in recently logged areas, the Davises enjoy sweeping views and take advantage of the passive solar gain provided by continuous sunshine, and yet avoid detection even by the occasional nearby mushroom picker with careful camouflage and by minimizing their use of fire. Though winters in the Coast range, where the Davises live, are icy cold, the plastic tarps provide a moisture barrier allowing the shelters to remain adequately heated with the warmth of their bodies. The buildings themselves have low ceilings, lined and covered with black poly tarp. A typical shelter might take a day or two to construct, and will cost less than \$50.

Using false identities and a courier system to handle their correspondence, the Davises have published a kind of manual, called *Dwelling Portably*, several times a year for the past two decades. Compiled from their wide ranging correspondents, the debates within *Dwelling Portably* address a range of practical issues encountered by those living a sub-marginal existence. Typical topics in *Dwelling Portably* include the identification of edible plants, how to make shoes out of used tires, and discussions of DIY dentistry. Severely edited, the newsletter is available in two sizes: an 8-page pamphlet, or a version of the same issue reduced to fit onto a single sheet of paper. Though barely legible, the small-type edition is the more popular of the two: it is lighter, more portable. The formal language of their built projects is motivated by the same ruthless economy: built of scavenged or found material, the

structures are constructed by hand, with very few tools, and can be recycled in subsequent shelters. This is a way that we can start to talk in a concrete and meaningful way about architecture on the edges of intangibility, an invisible architecture.

Though the phrase 'invisible architecture' might suggest the utopian spirit that motivated such iconic unrealizable 60s speculations as Yves Klein's Air Pavilion, or the inflatable projects of Ant Farm, it should be understood in this context to be resolutely, basely, buildable. Invisible architecture is simply: a house that can't be seen by other people. However, the implications of such a straightforward program are extreme. There is a point when pursuing a project like this to its logical end will have profound, and sometimes disastrous, consequences for your life. I'm interested in that dynamic: a pursuit so demanding, so inhuman, that to follow it requires accepting a kind of permanent alienation. In *Dwelling Portably*, this clarity of intent, the 1:1 relationship between writing and experience, creates a fundamental ambiguity. By writing a manual that describes their particular way of living, the Davises have committed themselves to living the life they describe. One gets a sense when reading the material that it is in fact a peculiar form of fiction – not that any of it is untrue, but that they've written themselves as characters into a very rigorous and hardcore mode of existence. Finally, what makes the best projects of the design/build tradition in architecture so compelling is exactly this determination to subject oneself to design, to alter one's life through design.

We might as well admit that cities are dead. Though maybe that isn't the appropriate metaphor, evoking as it does the now romantic 'death' of cities in the 1970s, punctuated by sexy riots, gangs, and drugs. A better description of a city like New York today might be to call it 'inert'. As an arena for truly committed experimental design, the urban built environment is too thoroughly compromised by competing political agendas, financial calculations, and the sheer physical inertia of its infrastructure to support practices of radical planning and design. The economic realities in large urban centers have tended to generate stable and predictable forms that are

increasingly hard to differentiate from city to city. While a few high-profile architects have in recent years produced increasingly sophisticated mega-buildings, their accomplishments are inseparable from the necessarily compromised relationships to the economic and political agendas they are enlisted to support. The suburbs are hardly better. The hysterical vision of Manhattan as an unplannable city set forth in Rem Koolhaas' *Delirious New York* has re-emerged lately as an earnest optimism for the heterogeneity of suburban sprawl, but this vision of the suburbs as a horizontal zone of intensities is largely in the imagination of a few theorists. In fact, the suburbanization of the Western US has brought with it an encyclopedia of building codes that make experimental design/build projects an expensive and risky proposition.

Today the place for planning is in the woods. The innovations developed in hardcore rural scenes suggest practical models of using space that are cheap, and flexible, and above all largely autonomous. Designing this way means working without a plan, working quickly, adapting to local conditions, and being ready to move when the scene gets heavy. It goes without saying that the ambitions of such a practice are narrow: the goal is survival, alone. The challenge of this kind of work to practice architecture without buildings, to think of architecture not as a product of design but of *occupation* – and to devise ways of living that can, in themselves, alter space.

Oscar Tuazon (1975), artist, Tacoma, USA. Exhibitions: 'The Elementary Particles', STANDARD, Oslo. 'Minotaur Blood', Fortescue Avenue/Johnathan Viner. 'Down By Law', The Wrong Gallery, Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art. 'An Open Operation', Edinburgh College of Art. 'Underground Room', Halle 14, Leipzig. 'The Culture of Fear', ACC Galerie, Weimar. 'Metronome no. 10', Portland Institute for Contemporary Art. 'Living Underground', Siuslaw National Forest, Oregon. He published 'Metronome no. 10', a special project for Documenta 12 Magazines.

oscartuazonx@hotmail.com

# Critical Architecture, Spatial Polemics: Architecture and Resistance in Accra, Ghana

— Alison Wolanski

Critical Architecture, Spatial Polemics: Architecture and Resistance in Accra, Ghana is concerned with architecture as a political agent; a critical, if rarely acknowledged factor in shaping the nature of public discourse in cities. Using the specific example of Ghana's capital city, the relationship between urban places and their political, cultural and historical context is explored. The major landmark buildings and urban infrastructures of Accra are treated as forms of ideological intervention, intimately linked to a broad set of cultural interventions past and present, including indirect empire, colonialism, the independence movement, the Cold War, and trade liberalization. The ultimate effect of these interventions has been the production of an authoritatively and externally imposed formal structure that does not coincide with the cultural reality of the city, and consequently is often actively resisted by the city's residents.

This interpretation raises the difficult question of how to approach the design of permanent architecture in a place where permanent architecture is so closely linked to the historical experience of cultural subjugation. Contemporary trends in Ghanaian urban culture are then explored in an attempt to identify principles that could inform a more relevant approach to design for post-colonial Accra. A complex picture emerges of a place where, for both cultural and historical reasons, urban cohesion is poor, the institutional base is superficial and often irrelevant, and informed public debate on the common good is nearly non-existent. Ghana is a new and fragile democracy without the institutional basis for critical debate.

Yet critical debate is inseparable from the process of democratization, and democratization, in a broad sense of the word, is one of the primary stated objectives of contemporary development policy and theory. The integrated

Architecture and Resistance in Accra, Ghana is concerned with architecture as a political agent; a critical, if rarely acknowledged factor in shaping the nature of public discourse in cities.

formal, cultural and political analysis of Accra is followed, therefore, by a speculation on the idea of democratic place, and how architecture can, using Ghanaian cultural patterns and principles, help to encourage an environment of engaged urban citizenship and common purpose without simply imposing a unitary vision.

Ultimately this research is aimed at identifying a method for relevant design practice in a particular context. This book proposes that rather than focusing on formal or iconographic interpretations of culture, in Accra, relevance can be achieved through open acknowledgment of the political nature of structural intervention. Critical architecture that works through a form of contrapuntal urbanism is proposed as a way to use architecture to generate symbolic spaces of dialogue and resistance to powerful local and global forces. Making use of a deeply rooted appreciation of irony, improvisation, relational identity and paradoxical reality in Ghanaian culture, the proposed approach to design generates dynamic meaning out of active engagement with politicized context.

Alison Wolanski (1977), architect, Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Her research is concerned with architecture as a political agent – its role as an institutional symbol in urban environments, and its potential to be a form of socio-economic and cultural resistance, particularly in post-colonial contexts. She participated in the UN Habitat III World Urban Forum, Vancouver, Canada 2006 and was a guest critic at: University of British Columbia, University of Waterloo, KNUST, Ghana as well as a guest lecturer at York University, Toronto, Canada.

[alison@wolanski.ca](mailto:alison@wolanski.ca)



# ADVOCACY AND PLURALISM IN PLANNING

Paul Davidoff

*City planning is a means for determining policy. Appropriate policy in a democracy is determined through political debate. The right course of action is always a matter of choice, never of fact. Planners should engage in the political process as advocates of the interests of government and other groups. Intelligent choice about public policy would be aided if different political, social, and economic interests produced city plans. Plural plans rather than a single agency plan should be presented to the public. Politicizing the planning process requires that the planning function be located in either or both the executive and legislative branches and the scope of planning be broadened to include all areas of interest to the public.*

The present can become an epoch in which the dreams of the past for an enlightened and just democracy are turned into a reality. The massing of voices protesting racial discrimination have roused this nation to the need to rectify racial and other social injustices. The adoption by Congress of a host of welfare measures and the Supreme Court's specification of the meaning of equal protection by law both reveal the response to protest and open the way for the vast changes still required.

The just demand for political and social equality on the part of the Negro and the impoverished requires the public to establish the bases for a society affording equal opportunity to all citizens. The compelling need for intelligent planning, for specification of new social goals and the means for achieving them, is manifest. The society of the future will be an urban one, and city planners will help to give it shape and content.

The prospect for future planning is that of a practice which openly invites political and social values to be examined and debated. Acceptance of this position means rejection of prescriptions for planning which would have the planner act solely as a technician. It has been argued that technical studies to enlarge the information available to decision makers must take precedence over statements of goals and ideals:

We have suggested that, at least in part, the city planner is better advised to start from research into the functional aspects of cities than from his own estimation of the values which he is attempting to maximize. This suggestion springs from a conviction that at this juncture the implications of many planning decisions are poorly understood, and that no certain means are at hand by which values can be measured, ranked, and translated into the design of a metropolitan system.<sup>1</sup>

While acknowledging the need for humility and openness in the adoption of social goals, this statement amounts to an attempt to eliminate, or sharply reduce, the unique contribution planning can make: understanding the functional aspects of the city and recommending appropriate future action to improve the urban condition.

*Paul Davidoff is Professor of City Planning at Hunter College of the City University of New York City, where he is developing a graduate program in city planning to begin in 1966. He is also a member of the faculty of City Planning at the University of Pennsylvania. He holds a law degree and a master's degree in planning from the University of Pennsylvania.*

Another argument that attempts to reduce the importance of attitudes and values in planning and other policy sciences is that the major public questions are themselves matters of choice between technical methods of solution. Dahl and Lindblom put forth this position at the beginning of their important textbook, *Politics, Economics, and Welfare*.<sup>2</sup>

In economic organization and reform, the "great issues" are no longer the great issues, if they ever were. It has become increasingly difficult for thoughtful men to find meaningful alternatives posed in the traditional choices between socialism and capitalism, planning and the free market, regulation and laissez faire, for they find their actual choices neither so simple nor so grand. Not so simple, because economic organization poses knotty problems that can only be solved by painstaking attention to technical details—how else, for example, can inflation be controlled? Nor so grand, because, at least in the Western world, most people neither can nor wish to experiment with the whole pattern of socio-economic organization to attain goals more easily won. If for example, taxation will serve the purpose, why "abolish the wages system" to ameliorate income inequality?

These words were written in the early 1950's and express the spirit of that decade more than that of the 1960's. They suggest that the major battles have been fought. But the "great issues" in economic organization, those revolving around the central issue of the nature of distributive justice, have yet to be settled. The world is still in turmoil over the way in which the resources of nations are to be distributed. The justice of the present social allocation of wealth, knowledge, skill, and other social goods is clearly in debate. Solutions to questions about the share of wealth and other social commodities that should go to different classes cannot be technically derived; they must arise from social attitudes.

*Appropriate planning action cannot be prescribed from a position of value neutrality, for prescriptions are based on desired objectives.* One conclusion drawn from this assertion is that "values are inescapable elements of any rational decision-making process"<sup>3</sup> and that values held by the planner should be made clear. The implications of that conclusion for planning have been described elsewhere and will not be considered in this article.<sup>4</sup> Here I will say that the planner should do more than explicate the values underlying his prescriptions for courses of action; he should affirm them; he should be an advocate

for what he deems proper.

Determinations of what serves the public interest, in a society containing many diverse interest groups, are almost always of a highly contentious nature. In performing its role of prescribing courses of action leading to future desired states, the planning profession must engage itself thoroughly and openly in the contention surrounding political determination. Moreover, planners should be able to engage in the political process as advocates of the interests both of government and of such other groups, organizations, or individuals who are concerned with proposing policies for the future development of the community.

The recommendation that city planners represent and plead the plans of many interest groups is founded upon the need to establish an effective urban democracy, one in which citizens may be able to play an active role in the process of deciding public policy. Appropriate policy in a democracy is determined through a process of political debate. The right course of action is always a matter of choice, never of fact. In a bureaucratic age great care must be taken that choices remain in the area of public view and participation.

Urban politics, in an era of increasing government activity in planning and welfare, must balance the demands for ever-increasing central bureaucratic control against the demands for increased concern for the unique requirements of local, specialized interests. The welfare of all and the welfare of minorities are both deserving of support; planning must be so structured and so practiced as to account for this unavoidable bifurcation of the public interest.

The idealized political process in a democracy serves the search for truth in much the same manner as due process in law. Fair notice and hearings, production of supporting evidence, cross examination, reasoned decision are all means employed to arrive at relative truth: a just decision. Due process and two- (or more) party political contention both rely heavily upon strong advocacy by a professional. The advocate represents an individual, group, or organization. He affirms their position in language understandable to his client and to the decision makers he seeks to convince.

If the planning process is to encourage democratic urban government then it must operate so as to include rather than exclude citizens from participating in the process. "Inclusion" means not only permitting the citizen to be heard. It also means that he be able to become well informed about the underlying reasons for planning proposals, and be able to respond to them in the technical language of professional planners.

A practice that has discouraged full participation by citizens in plan making in the past has been based on what might be called the "unitary plan." This is the idea that only one agency in a community should prepare a comprehensive plan; that agency is the city planning commission or department. Why is it that no other organization within a community prepares a plan? Why is only one agency concerned with establishing both general and specific goals for community development, and with proposing the strategies and costs required to effect the goals? Why are there not plural plans?

If the social, economic, and political ramifications of a plan are politically contentious, then why is it that

those in opposition to the agency plan do not prepare one of their own? It is interesting to observe that "rational" theories of planning have called for consideration of alternative courses of action by planning agencies. As a matter of rationality it has been argued that all of the alternative choices open as means to the ends sought be examined.<sup>5</sup> But those, including myself, who have recommended agency consideration of alternatives have placed upon the agency planner the burden of inventing "a few representative alternatives."<sup>6</sup> The agency planner has been given the duty of constructing a model of the political spectrum, and charged with sorting out what he conceives to be worthy alternatives. This duty has placed too great a burden on the agency planner, and has failed to provide for the formulation of alternatives by the interest groups who will eventually be affected by the completed plans.

Whereas in a large part of our national and local political practice contention is viewed as healthy, in city planning where a large proportion of the professionals are public employees, contentious criticism has not always been viewed as legitimate. Further, where only government prepares plans, and no minority plans are developed, pressure is often applied to bring all professionals to work for the ends espoused by a public agency. For example, last year a Federal official complained to a meeting of planning professors that the academic planners were not giving enough support to Federal programs. He assumed that every planner should be on the side of the Federal renewal program. Of course government administrators will seek to gain the support of professionals outside of government, but such support should not be expected as a matter of loyalty. In a democratic system opposition to a public agency should be just as normal and appropriate as support. The agency, despite the fact that it is concerned with planning, may be serving undesired ends.

In presenting a plea for plural planning I do not mean to minimize the importance of the obligation of the public planning agency. It must decide upon appropriate future courses of action for the community. But being isolated as the only plan maker in the community, public agencies as well as the public itself may have suffered from incomplete and shallow analysis of potential directions. Lively political dispute aided by plural plans could do much to improve the level of rationality in the process of preparing the public plan.

The advocacy of alternative plans by interest groups outside of government would stimulate city planning in a number of ways. First, it would serve as a means of better informing the public of the alternative choices open, *alternatives strongly supported by their proponents*. In current practice those few agencies which have portrayed alternatives have not been equally enthusiastic about each.<sup>7</sup> A standard reaction to rationalists' prescription for consideration of alternative courses of action has been "it can't be done; how can you expect planners to present alternatives which they don't approve?" The appropriate answer to that question has been that planners like lawyers may have a professional obligation to defend positions they oppose. However, in a system of plural planning, the public agency would be relieved of at least some of the burden of presenting alternatives. In plural planning the alternatives would be presented by interest groups differing with the public agency's plan. Such al-

ternatives would represent the deep-seated convictions of their proponents and not just the mental exercises of rational planners seeking to portray the range of choice.

A second way in which advocacy and plural planning would improve planning practice would be in forcing the public agency to compete with other planning groups to win political support. In the absence of opposition or alternative plans presented by interest groups the public agencies have had little incentive to improve the quality of their work or the rate of production of plans. The political consumer has been offered a yes-no ballot in regard to the comprehensive plan; either the public agency's plan was to be adopted or no plan would be adopted.

A third improvement in planning practice which might follow from plural planning would be to force those who have been critical of "establishment" plans to produce superior plans, rather than only to carry out the very essential obligation of criticizing plans deemed improper.

#### *The Planner as Advocate*

Where plural planning is practiced, advocacy becomes the means of professional support for competing claims about how the community should develop. Pluralism in support of political contention describes the process; advocacy describes the role performed by the professional in the process. Where unitary planning prevails, advocacy is not of paramount importance, for there is little or no competition for the plan prepared by the public agency. The concept of advocacy as taken from legal practice implies the opposition of at least two contending viewpoints in an adversary proceeding.

The legal advocate must plead for his own and his client's sense of legal propriety or justice. The planner as advocate would plead for his own and his client's view of the good society. The advocate planner would be more than a provider of information, an analyst of current trends, a simulator of future conditions, and a detailer of means. In addition to carrying out these necessary parts of planning, he would be a *proponent* of specific substantive solutions.

The advocate planner would be responsible to his client and would seek to express his client's views. This does not mean that the planner could not seek to persuade his client. In some situations persuasion might not be necessary, for the planner would have sought out an employer with whom he shared common views about desired social conditions and the means toward them. In fact one of the benefits of advocate planning is the possibility it creates for a planner to find employment with agencies holding values close to his own. Today the agency planner may be dismayed by the positions affirmed by his agency, but there may be no alternative employer.

The advocate planner would be above all a planner. He would be responsible to his client for preparing plans and for all of the other elements comprising the planning process. Whether working for the public agency or for some private organization, the planner would have to prepare plans that take account of the arguments made in other plans. Thus the advocate's plan might have some of the characteristics of a legal brief. It would be a document presenting the facts and reasons for supporting one set of proposals, and facts and reasons

indicating the inferiority of counter-proposals. The adversary nature of plural planning might, then, have the beneficial effect of upsetting the tradition of writing plan proposals in terminology which makes them appear self-evident.

A troublesome issue in contemporary planning is that of finding techniques for evaluating alternative plans. Technical devices such as cost-benefit analysis by themselves are of little assistance without the use of means for appraising the values underlying plans. Advocate planning, by making more apparent the values underlying plans, and by making definitions of social costs and benefits more explicit, should greatly assist the process of plan evaluation. Further, it would become clear (as it is not at present) that there are no neutral grounds for evaluating a plan; there are as many evaluative systems as there are value systems.

The adversary nature of plural planning might also have a good effect on the uses of information and research in planning. One of the tasks of the advocate planner in discussing the plans prepared in opposition to his would be to point out the nature of the bias underlying information presented in other plans. In this way, as critic of opposition plans, he would be performing a task similar to the legal technique of cross-examination. While painful to the planner whose bias is exposed (and no planner can be entirely free of bias) the net effect of confrontation between advocates of alternative plans would be more careful and precise research.

Not all the work of an advocate planner would be of an adversary nature. Much of it would be educational. The advocate would have the job of informing other groups, including public agencies, of the conditions, problems, and outlook of the group he represented. Another major educational job would be that of informing his clients of their rights under planning and renewal laws, about the general operations of city government, and of particular programs likely to affect them.

The advocate planner would devote much attention to assisting the client organization to clarify its ideas and to give expression to them. In order to make his client more powerful politically the advocate might also become engaged in expanding the size and scope of his client organization. But the advocate's most important function would be to carry out the planning process for the organization and to argue persuasively in favor of its planning proposals.

Advocacy in planning has already begun to emerge as planning and renewal affect the lives of more and more people. The critics of urban renewal<sup>8</sup> have forced response from the renewal agencies, and the ongoing debate<sup>9</sup> has stimulated needed self-evaluation by public agencies. Much work along the lines of advocate planning has already taken place, but little of it by professional planners. More often the work has been conducted by trained community organizers or by student groups. In at least one instance, however, a planner's professional aid led to the development of an alternative renewal approach, one which will result in the relocation of far fewer families than originally contem-

plated.<sup>10</sup>

Pluralism and advocacy are means for stimulating consideration of future conditions by all groups in society. But there is one social group which at present is particularly in need of the assistance of planners. This group includes organizations representing low-income families. At a time when concern for the condition of the poor finds institutionalization in community action programs, it would be appropriate for planners concerned with such groups to find means to plan with them. The plans prepared for these groups would seek to combat poverty and would propose programs affording new and better opportunities to the members of the organization and to families similarly situated.<sup>11</sup>

The difficulty in providing adequate planning assistance to organizations representing low-income families may in part be overcome by funds allocated to local anti-poverty councils. But these councils are not the only representatives of the poor; other organizations exist and seek help. How can this type of assistance be financed? This question will be examined below, when attention is turned to the means for institutionalizing plural planning.

### *The Structure of Planning*

#### PLANNING BY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

The local planning process typically includes one or more "citizens" organizations concerned with the nature of planning in the community. The Workable Program requirement for "citizen participation"<sup>12</sup> has enforced this tradition and brought it to most large communities. The difficulty with current citizen participation programs is that citizens are more often *reacting* to agency programs than *proposing* their concepts of appropriate goals and future action.

The fact that citizens' organizations have not played a positive role in formulating plans is to some extent a result of both the enlarged role in society played by government bureaucracies and the historic weakness of municipal party politics. There is something very shameful to our society in the necessity to have organized "citizen participation." Such participation should be the norm in an enlightened democracy. The formalization of citizen participation as a required practice in localities is similar in many respects to totalitarian shows of loyalty to the state by citizen parades.

Will a private group interested in preparing a recommendation for community development be required to carry out its own survey and analysis of the community? The answer would depend upon the quality of the work prepared by the public agency, work which should be public information. In some instances the public agency may not have surveyed or analyzed aspects the private group thinks important; or the public agency's work may reveal strong biases unacceptable to the private group. In any event, the production of a useful plan proposal will require much information concerning the present and predicted conditions in the community. There will be some costs associated with gathering that information, even if it is taken from the public agency. The major cost involved in the preparation of a plan by a private agency would probably be the employment of one or more professional planners.

What organizations might be expected to engage in the

plural planning process? The first type that comes to mind are the political parties; but this is clearly an aspirational thought. There is very little evidence that local political organizations have the interest, ability, or concern to establish well developed programs for their communities. Not all the fault, though, should be placed upon the professional politicians, for the registered members of political parties have not demanded very much, if anything, from them as agents.

Despite the unreality of the wish, the desirability for active participation in the process of planning by the political parties is strong. In an ideal situation local parties would establish political platforms which would contain master plans for community growth and both the majority and minority parties in the legislative branch of government would use such plans as one basis for appraising individual legislative proposals. Further, the local administration would use its planning agency to carry out the plans it proposed to the electorate. This dream will not turn to reality for a long time. In the interim other interest groups must be sought to fill the gap caused by the present inability of political organizations.

The second set of organizations which might be interested in preparing plans for community development are those that represent special interest groups having established views in regard to proper public policy. Such organizations as chambers of commerce, real estate boards, labor organizations, pro- and anti-civil rights groups, and anti-poverty councils come to mind. Groups of this nature have often played parts in the development of community plans, but only in a very few instances have they proposed their own plans.

It must be recognized that there is strong reason operating against commitment to a plan by these organizations. In fact it is the same reason that in part limits the interests of politicians and which limits the potential for planning in our society. The expressed commitment to a particular plan may make it difficult for groups to find means for accommodating their various interests. In other terms, it may be simpler for professionals, politicians, or lobbyists to make deals if they have not laid their cards on the table.

There is a third set of organizations that might be looked to as proponents of plans and to whom the foregoing comments might not apply. These are the ad hoc protest associations which may form in opposition to some proposed policy. An example of such a group is a neighborhood association formed to combat a renewal plan, a zoning change, or the proposed location of a public facility. Such organizations may seek to develop alternative plans, plans which would, if effected, better serve their interests.

From the point of view of effective and rational planning it might be desirable to commence plural planning at the level of city-wide organizations, but a more realistic view is that it will start at the neighborhood level. Certain advantages of this outcome should be noted. Mention was made earlier of tension in government between centralizing and decentralizing forces. The contention aroused by conflict between the central planning agency and the neighborhood organization may indeed be healthy, leading to clearer definition of welfare policies and their relation to the rights of individuals or minority groups.

Who will pay for plural planning? Some organizations have the resources to sponsor the development of a plan. Many groups lack the means. The plight of the relatively indigent association seeking to propose a plan might be analogous to that of the indigent client in search of legal aid. If the idea of plural planning makes sense, then support may be found from foundations or from government. In the beginning it is more likely that some foundation might be willing to experiment with plural planning as a means of making city planning more effective and more democratic. Or the Federal Government might see plural planning, if carried out by local anti-poverty councils, as a strong means of generating local interest in community affairs.

Federal sponsorship of plural planning might be seen as a more effective tool for stimulating involvement of the citizen in the future of his community than are the present types of citizen participation programs. Federal support could only be expected if plural planning were seen, not as a means of combating renewal plans, but as an incentive to local renewal agencies to prepare better plans.

#### THE PUBLIC PLANNING AGENCY

A major drawback to effective democratic planning practice is the continuation of that non-responsible vestigial institution, the planning commission. If it is agreed that the establishment of both general policies and implementation policies are questions affecting the public interest and that public interest questions should be decided in accord with established democratic practices for decision making, then it is indeed difficult to find convincing reasons for continuing to permit independent commissions to make planning decisions. At an earlier stage in planning the strong arguments of John T. Howard<sup>13</sup> and others in support of commissions may have been persuasive. But it is now more than a decade since Howard made his defense against Robert Walker's position favoring planning as a staff function under the mayor. With the increasing effect planning decisions have upon the lives of citizens the Walker proposal assumes great urgency.<sup>14</sup>

Aside from important questions regarding the propriety of independent agencies which are far removed from public control determining public policy, the failure to place planning decision choices in the hands of elected officials has weakened the ability of professional planners to have their proposals effected. Separating planning from local politics has made it difficult for independent commissions to garner influential political support. The commissions are not responsible directly to the electorate and in turn the electorate is, at best, often indifferent to the planning commission.

During the last decade in many cities power to alter community development has slipped out of the hands of city planning commissions, assuming they ever held it, and has been transferred to development coordinators. This has weakened the professional planner. Perhaps planners unknowingly contributed to this by their refusal to take concerted action in opposition to the perpetuation of commissions.

Planning commissions are products of the conservative reform movement of the early part of this century. The movement was essentially anti-populist and pro-aristocracy. Politics was viewed as dirty business. The commissions are

relics of a not-too-distant past when it was believed that if men of good will discussed a problem thoroughly, certainly the right solution would be forthcoming. We know today, and perhaps it was always known, that there are no right solutions. Proper policy is that which the decision-making unit declares to be proper.

Planning commissions are responsible to no constituency. The members of the commissions, except for their chairman, are seldom known to the public. In general the individual members fail to expose their personal views about policy and prefer to immerse them in group decision. If the members wrote concurring and dissenting opinions, then at least the commissions might stimulate thought about planning issues. It is difficult to comprehend why this aristocratic and undemocratic form of decision making should be continued. The public planning function should be carried out in the executive or legislative office and perhaps in both. There has been some question about which of these branches of government would provide the best home, but there is much reason to believe that both branches would be made more cognizant of planning issues if they were each informed by their own planning staffs. To carry this division further, it would probably be advisable to establish minority and majority planning staffs in the legislative branch.

At the root of my last suggestion is the belief that there is or should be a Republican and Democratic way of viewing city development; that there should be conservative and liberal plans, plans to support the private market and plans to support greater government control. There are many possible roads for a community to travel and many plans should show them. Explication is required of many alternative futures presented by those sympathetic to the construction of each such future. As indicated earlier, such alternatives are not presented to the public now. Those few reports which do include alternative futures do not speak in terms of interest to the average citizen. They are filled with professional jargon and present sham alternatives. These plans have expressed technical land use alternatives rather than social, economic, or political value alternatives. Both the traditional unitary plans and the new ones that present technical alternatives have limited the public's exposure to the future states that might be achieved. Instead of arousing healthy political contention as diverse comprehensive plans might, these plans have deflated interest.

The independent planning commission and unitary plan practice certainly should not co-exist. Separately they dull the possibility for enlightened political debate; in combination they have made it yet more difficult. But when still another hoary concept of city planning is added to them, such debate becomes practically impossible. This third of a trinity of worn-out notions is that city planning should focus only upon the physical aspects of city development.

#### *An Inclusive Definition of The Scope of Planning*

The view that equates physical planning with city planning is myopic. It may have had some historic justification, but it is clearly out of place at a time when it is necessary to integrate knowledge and techniques in order to wrestle effectively with the myriad of problems afflict-

ing urban populations.

The city planning profession's historic concern with the physical environment has warped its ability to see physical structures and land as servants to those who use them.<sup>15</sup> Physical relations and conditions have no meaning or quality apart from the way they serve their users. But this is forgotten every time a physical condition is described as good or bad without relation to a specified group of users. High density, low density, green belts, mixed uses, cluster developments, centralized or decentralized business centers are per se neither good nor bad. They describe physical relations or conditions, but take on value only when seen in terms of their social, economic, psychological, physiological, or aesthetic effects upon different users.

The profession's experience with renewal over the past decade has shown the high costs of exclusive concern with physical conditions. It has been found that the allocation of funds for removal of physical blight may not necessarily improve the over-all physical condition of a community and may engender such harsh social repercussions as to severely damage both social and economic institutions. Another example of the deficiencies of the physical bias is the assumption of city planners that they could deal with the capital budget as if the physical attributes of a facility could be understood apart from the philosophy and practice of the service conducted within the physical structure. This assumption is open to question. The size, shape, and location of a facility greatly interact with the purpose of the activity the facility houses. Clear examples of this can be seen in public education and in the provision of low cost housing. The racial and other socio-economic consequences of "physical decisions" such as location of schools and housing projects have been immense, but city planners, while acknowledging the existence of such consequences, have not sought or trained themselves to understand socio-economic problems, their causes or solutions.

The city planning profession's limited scope has tended to bias strongly many of its recommendations toward perpetuation of existing social and economic practices. Here I am not opposing the outcomes, but the way in which they are developed. Relative ignorance of social and economic methods of analysis have caused planners to propose solutions in the absence of sufficient knowledge of the costs and benefits of proposals upon different sections of the population.

Large expenditures have been made on planning studies of regional transportation needs, for example, but these studies have been conducted in a manner suggesting that different social and economic classes of the population did not have different needs and different abilities to meet them. In the field of housing, to take another example, planners have been hesitant to question the consequences of locating public housing in slum areas. In the field of industrial development, planners have seldom examined the types of jobs the community needed; it has been assumed that one job was about as useful as another. But this may not be the case where a significant sector of the population finds it difficult to get employment.

"Who gets what, when, where, why, and how" are the basic political questions which need to be raised about every allocation of public resources. The questions cannot be answered adequately if land use criteria are

the sole or major standards for judgment.

The need to see an element of city development, land use, in broad perspective applies equally well to every other element, such as health, welfare, and recreation. The governing of a city requires an adequate plan for its future. Such a plan loses guiding force and rational basis to the degree that it deals with less than the whole that is of concern to the public.

The implications of the foregoing comments for the practice of city planning are these. First, state planning enabling legislation should be amended to permit planning departments to study and to prepare plans related to any area of public concern. Second, planning education must be redirected so as to provide channels of specialization in different parts of public planning and a core focussed upon the planning process. Third, the professional planning association should enlarge its scope so as to not exclude city planners not specializing in physical planning.

A year ago at the AIP convention it was suggested that the AIP Constitution be amended to permit city planning to enlarge its scope to all matters of public concern.<sup>16</sup> Members of the Institute in agreement with this proposal should seek to develop support for it at both the chapter and national level. The Constitution at present states that the Institute's "particular sphere of activity shall be the planning of the unified development of urban communities and their environs and of states, regions and the nation as *expressed through determination of the comprehensive arrangement of land and land occupancy and regulation thereof.*"<sup>17</sup>

It is time that the AIP delete the words in my italics from its Constitution. The planner limited to such concerns is not a city planner, he is a land planner or a physical planner. A city is its people, their practices, and their political, social, cultural and economic institutions as well as other things. The city planner must comprehend and deal with all these factors.

The new city planner will be concerned with physical planning, economic planning, and social planning. The scope of his work will be no wider than that presently demanded of a mayor or a city councilman. Thus, we cannot argue against an enlarged planning function on grounds that it is too large to handle. The mayor needs assistance; in particular he needs the assistance of a planner, one trained to examine needs and aspirations in terms of both short and long term perspectives. In observing the early stages of development of Community Action Programs, it is apparent that our cities are in desperate need of the type of assistance trained planners could offer. Our cities require for their social and economic programs the type of long range thought and information that have been brought forward in the realm of physical planning. Potential resources must be examined and priorities set.

What I have just proposed does not imply the termination of physical planning, but it does mean that physical planning be seen as part of city planning. Uninhibited by limitations on his work, the city planner will be able to add his expertise to the task of coordinating the operating and capital budgets and to the job of relating effects of each city program upon the others and upon the social, political, and economic resources of the community.

An expanded scope reaching all matters of public concern will make planning not only a more effective admin-

istrative tool of local government but it will also bring planning practice closer to the issues of real concern to the citizens. A system of plural city planning probably has a much greater chance for operational success where the focus is on live social and economic questions instead of rather esoteric issues relating to physical norms.

### *The Education of Planners*

Widening the scope of planning to include all areas of concern to government would suggest that city planners must possess a broader knowledge of the structure and forces affecting urban development. In general this would be true. But at present many city planners are specialists in only one or more of the functions of city government. Broadening the scope of planning would require some additional planners who specialize in one or more of the services entailed by the new focus.

A prime purpose of city planning is the coordination of many separate functions. This coordination calls for men holding general knowledge of the many elements comprising the urban community. Educating a man for performing the coordinative role is a difficult job, one not well satisfied by the present tradition of two years of graduate study. Training of urban planners with the skills called for in this article may require both longer graduate study and development of a liberal arts undergraduate program affording an opportunity for holistic understanding of both urban conditions and techniques for analyzing and solving urban problems.

The practice of plural planning requires educating planners who would be able to engage as professional advocates in the contentious work of forming social policy. The person able to do this would be one deeply committed to both the process of planning and to particular substantive ideas. Recognizing that ideological commitments will separate planners, there is tremendous need to train professionals who are competent to express their social objectives.

The great advances in analytic skills, demonstrated in the recent May issue of this *Journal* dedicated to techniques of simulating urban growth processes, portend a time when planners and the public will be better able to predict the consequences of proposed courses of action. But these advances will be of little social advantage if the proposals themselves do not have substance. The contemporary thoughts of planners about the nature of man in society are often mundane, unexciting or gimmicky. When asked to point out to students the planners who have a developed sense of history and philosophy concerning man's situation in the urban world one is hard put to come up with a name. Sometimes Goodman or Mumford might be mentioned. But planners seldom go deeper than acknowledging the goodness of green space and the soundness of proximity of linked activities. We cope with the problems of the alienated man with a recommendation for reducing the time of the journey to work.

### *Conclusion*

The urban community is a system comprised of inter-related elements, but little is known about how the elements do, will, or should interrelate. The type of knowledge required by the new comprehensive city planner demands that the planning profession be comprised of

groups of men well versed in contemporary philosophy, social work, law, the social sciences, and civic design. Not every planner must be knowledgeable in all these areas, but each planner must have a deep understanding of one or more of these areas and he must be able to give persuasive expression to his understanding.

As a profession charged with making urban life more beautiful, exciting, and creative, and more just, we have had little to say. Our task is to train a future generation of planners to go well beyond us in its ability to prescribe the future urban life.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Britton Harris, "Plan or Projection," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, XXVI (November 1960) 265-272.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Dahl and Charles Lindblom, *Politics, Economics, and Welfare* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953) p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Davidoff and Thomas Reiner, "A Choice Theory of Planning," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, XXVIII (May 1962) 103-115.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Martin Meyerson and Edward Banfield, *Politics, Planning and the Public Interest* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1955) p. 314 ff. The authors state "By a rational decision, we mean one made in the following manner: 1. the decision-maker considers all of the alternatives (courses of action) open to him; . . . 2. he identifies and evaluates all of the consequences which would follow from the adoption of each alternative; . . . 3. he selects that alternative the probable consequences of which would be preferable in terms of his most valued ends."

<sup>6</sup> Davidoff and Reiner, *Op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> National Capital Planning Commission, *The Nation's Capital; a Policies Plan for the Year 2000* (Washington, D.C.: The Commission, 1961).

<sup>8</sup> The most important critical studies are: Jane Jacobs, *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961); Martin Anderson, *The Federal Bulldozer* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1964); Herbert J. Gans, "The Human Implications of Current Redevelopment and Relocation Planning," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, XXV (February 1959) 15-26.

<sup>9</sup> A recent example of heated debate appears in the following set of articles: Herbert J. Gans, "The Failure of Urban Renewal," *Commentary* 39 (April 1965) p. 29; George Raymond "Controversy," *Commentary* 40 (July 1965) p. 72; and Herbert J. Gans, "Controversy," *Commentary* 40 (July 1965) p. 77.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Thabit, *An Alternate Plan for Cooper Square*, (New York: Walter Thabit, July 1961).

<sup>11</sup> The first conscious effort to employ the advocacy method was carried out by a graduate student of city planning as an independent research project. The author acted as both a participant and an observer of a local housing organization. See Linda Davidoff, "The Bluffs: Advocate Planning," *Comment*, Dept. of City Planning, University of Pennsylvania, (Spring 1965) p. 59.

<sup>12</sup> See Section 101(c) of the United States Housing Act of 1949, as amended.

<sup>13</sup> John T. Howard, "In Defense of Planning Commissions," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, XVII (Spring 1951).

<sup>14</sup> Robert Walker, *The Planning Function in Urban Government*; Second Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950). Walker drew the following conclusions from his examination of planning and planning commissions. "Another conclusion to be drawn from the existing composition of city planning boards is that they are not representative of the population as a whole." p. 153. "In summary the writer is of the opinion that the claim that planning commissions are more objective than elected officials must be rejected." p. 155. "From his observations the writer feels justified in saying that very seldom does a majority of any commission have any well-rounded understanding of the purposes and ramifications of planning." p. 157. "In summary, then, it was found that the average commission member does not comprehend planning nor is he particularly interested even in the range of customary physical planning." p. 158. "Looking at the planning commission at the present time, however, one is forced to conclude that, despite some examples of successful operations, the unpaid board is not proving satisfactory as a planning agency," p. 165. ". . . (it) is believed that the most fruitful line of development for the future would be replacement of these commissions by a department or bureau attached to the office of mayor or city manager. This department might be headed by a board or by a single director, but

# Interview : Michel Foucault

# PRO

Noted French philosopher Michel Foucault talks with anthropologist Paul Rabinow about architecture and its role in political organization and social relationships.

**P.R.:** In your interview with geographers at *Herodote*, you said that architecture becomes political at the end of the eighteenth century [see article on Foucault, p. 14]. Obviously, it was political in earlier periods, too, such as during the Roman Empire. What is particular about the eighteenth century?

**M.F.:** My statement was awkward in that form. Of course I did not mean to say that architecture was not political before, becoming so only at that time. I only meant to say that in the eighteenth century one sees the development of reflection upon architecture as a function of the aims and techniques of the government of societies. One begins to see a form of political literature that addresses what the order of a society should be, what a city should be, given the requirements of the maintenance of order; given that one should avoid epidemics, avoid revolts, permit a decent and moral family life, and so on. In terms of these objectives, how is one to conceive of both the organization of a city and the construction of a collective infrastructure? And how should houses be built? I am not saying that this sort of reflection appears only in the eighteenth century, but only that in the eighteenth century a very broad and general reflection on these questions takes place. If one opens a police report of the times—the treatises that are devoted to the techniques of government—one finds that architecture and urbanism occupy a place of considerable importance. That is what I meant to say.

**P.R.:** Among the Ancients, in Rome or Greece, what was the difference?

**M.F.:** In discussing Rome one sees that the problem revolves around Vitruvius. Vitruvius was reinterpreted from the sixteenth century on, but one can find in the sixteenth century—and no doubt in the Middle Ages as well—many considerations of the same order as Vitruvius; if you consider them as *reflections upon*. The treatises on politics, on the art of government, on the manner of good government, did not generally include chapters or analyses devoted to the organization of cities or to architecture.

The *Republic* of Jean Bodin (Paris, 1577) does not contain extended discussions of the role of architecture, whereas the police treatises of the eighteenth century are full of them.

**P.R.:** Do you mean there were techniques and practices, but the discourse did not exist?

**M.F.:** I did not say that discourses upon architecture did not exist before the eighteenth century. Nor do I mean to say that the discussions of architecture before the eighteenth century lacked any political dimension or significance. What I wish to point out is that from the eighteenth century on, every discussion of politics as the art of the government of men necessarily includes a chapter or a series of chapters on urbanism, on collective facilities, on hygiene, and on private architecture. Such chapters are not found in the discussions of the art of government of the sixteenth century. This change is perhaps not in the reflections of architects upon architecture, but it is quite clearly seen in the reflections of political men.

**P.R.:** So it was not necessarily a change within the theory of architecture itself?

**M.F.:** That's right. It was not necessarily a change in the minds of architects, or in their techniques—although that remains to be seen—but in the minds of political men in the choice and the form of attention that they bring to bear upon the objects that are of concern to them. Architecture became one of these during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

**P.R.:** Could you tell us why?

**M.F.:** Well, I think that it was linked to a number of phenomena, such as the question of the city and the idea that was clearly formulated at the beginning of the seventeenth century that the government of a large state like France should ultimately think of its territory on the model of the city. The city was no longer perceived as a place of privilege, as an exception in a territory of fields, forests, and roads. The cities were no longer islands beyond the common law. Instead, the cities, with the

problems that they raised, and the particular forms that they took, served as the models for the governmental rationality that was to apply to the whole of the territory.

There is an entire series of utopias or projects for governing territory that developed on the premise that a state is like a large city; the capital is like its main square; the roads are like its streets. A state will be well organized when a system of policing as tight and efficient as that of the cities extends over the entire territory. At the outset, the notion of police applied only to the set of regulations that were to assure the tranquility of a city, but at that moment the police become the very *type* of rationality for the government of the whole territory. The model of the city became the matrix for the regulations that apply to a whole state.

The notion of police, even in France today, is frequently misunderstood. When one speaks to a Frenchman about police, he can only think of people in uniform or in the secret service. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "police" signified a program of government rationality. This can be characterized as a project to create a system of regulation of the general conduct of individuals whereby everything would be controlled to the point of self-sustenance, without the need for intervention. This is the rather typically French effort of policing. The English, for a number of reasons, did not develop a comparable system, mainly because of the parliamentary tradition on one hand, and the tradition of local, communal autonomy on the other, not to mention the religious system.

One can place Napoleon almost exactly at the break between the old organization of the eighteenth-century police state (understood, of course, in the sense we have been discussing, not in the sense of the "police state" as we have come to know it) and the forms of the modern state, which he invented. At any rate, it seems that, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there appeared—rather quickly in the case of commerce and more slowly in all the other domains—this idea of a police that would manage to penetrate, to stimulate, to regulate, and to render almost automatic all the mechanisms of society.

Translation by Christian Hubert

"... *Le Corbusier, who is described today—with a cruelty that I find perfectly useless—as a sort of crypto-Stalinist. He was, I am sure, someone full of good intentions...*"

# Space, Knowledge, and

# WAR

This idea has since been abandoned. The question has been turned around. No longer do we ask, What is the form of governmental rationality that will be able to penetrate the body politic to its most fundamental elements? but rather, How is government possible? That is, what is the principle of limitation that applies to governmental actions such that things will occur for the best, in conformity with the rationality of government, and without intervention?

It is here that the question of liberalism comes up. It seems to me that at that very moment it became apparent that if one governed too much, one did not govern at all—that one provoked results contrary to those one desired. What was discovered at that time—and this was one of the great discoveries of political thought at the end of the eighteenth century—was the idea of *society*. That is to say, that government not only has to deal with a territory, with a domain, and with its subjects, but that it also has to deal with a complex and independent reality that has its own laws and mechanisms of reaction; its regulations as well as its possibilities of disturbance. This new reality is society. From the moment that one is to manipulate a society, one cannot consider it completely penetrable by police. One must take into account what it is. It becomes necessary to reflect upon it, upon its specific characteristics, its constants and its variables. . . .

**P.R.:** So there is a change in the importance of space. In the eighteenth century there was a territory and the problem of governing people in this territory: one can choose as an example *La Métropole* (1682) of Alexandre LeMaitre—a utopian treatise on how to build a capital city—or one can understand a city as a metaphor or symbol for the territory and how to govern it. All of this is quite spatial, whereas after Napoleon, society is not necessarily so spatialized. . . .

**M.F.:** That's right. On one hand, it is not so spatialized, yet at the same time a certain number of problems that are properly seen as spatial emerged. Urban space has its own dangers: disease, such as the epidemics of cholera in

Europe from 1830 to about 1890; and revolution, such as the series of urban revolts that shook all of Europe during the same period. These spatial problems, which were perhaps not new, took on a new importance.

Secondly, a new aspect of the relations of space and power were the railroads. These were to establish a network of communication no longer corresponding necessarily to the traditional network of roads, but they nonetheless had to take into account the nature of society and its history. In addition, there are all the social phenomena that railroads gave rise to, be they the resistances they provoked, the transformations of population, or changes in the behavior of people. Europe was immediately sensitive to the changes in behavior that the railroads entailed. What was going to happen, for example, if it was possible to get married between Bordeaux and Nantes? Something that was not possible before. What was going to happen when people in Germany and France might get to know one another? Would war still be possible once there were railroads? In France a theory developed that the railroads would increase familiarity among people and that the new forms of human universality made possible would render war impossible. But what the people did not foresee—although the German military command was fully aware of it, since they were much cleverer than their French counterpart—was that, on the contrary, the railroads rendered war far easier to wage. The third development, which came later, was electricity.

So, there were problems in the links between the exercise of political power and the space of a territory, or the space of cities—links that were completely new.

**P.R.:** So it was less a matter of architecture than before. These are sorts of technics of space. . . .

**M.F.:** The major problems of space, from the nineteenth century on, were indeed of a different type. Which is not to say that problems of an architectural nature were forgotten. In terms of the first ones I referred to—disease and the political problems—architecture has a very important role to play. The reflections on urbanism and on the design of workers' housing—all of these questions—are an area of reflection upon architecture.

**P.R.:** But architecture itself, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, belongs to a completely different set of spatial issues.

**M.F.:** That's right. With the birth of these new technologies and these new economic processes one sees the birth of a sort of thinking about space that is no longer modeled upon the police state of the urbanization of the territory, but that extends far beyond the limits of urbanism and architecture.

**P.R.:** Consequently, the Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées. . . .

**M.F.:** That's right. The Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées and its capital importance in political rationality in France are part of this. It was not architects, but engineers and builders of bridges, roads, viaducts, railways, as well as the Polytechnicians (who practically controlled the French railroads)—those are the people who thought out space.

**P.R.:** Has this situation continued up to the present, or are we witnessing a change in relations between the technicians of space?

**M.F.:** We may well witness some changes, but I think that we have until now remained with the developers of the territory, the people of the Ponts et Chaussées, etc.

**P.R.:** So architects are not necessarily the masters of space that they once were, or believe themselves to be.

**M.F.:** That's right. They are not the technicians or engineers of the three great variables—territory, communication, and speed. These escape the domain of architects.

**P.R.:** Do you see any particular architectural projects, either in the past or the present, as forces of liberation or resistance?

**M.F.:** I do not think that it is possible to say that one thing is of the order of "liberation" and another is of the order of "oppression." There are a certain number of

## Interview: Michel Foucault

*"After all, the architect has no power over me. If I want to tear down or change a house, . . . the architect has no control. The architect should be placed in another category—which is not to say that he is not*



Conference on alcoholism in the auditorium of the prison at Fresnes.

Michel Foucault on a visit to the University of Southern California. (photo: Michael Yada/Time Magazine)

things that one can say with some certainty about a concentration camp to the effect that it is not an instrument of liberation, but one should still take into account—and this is not generally acknowledged—that, aside from torture and execution, which preclude any resistance, no matter how terrifying a given system may be, there always remain the possibilities of resistance, disobedience, and oppositional groupings.

On the other hand, I do not think that there is anything that is functionally—by its very nature—absolutely liberating. Liberty is a *practice*. So there may, in fact, always be, a certain number of projects whose aim is to modify some constraints, to loosen, or even to break them, but none of these projects can, simply by its nature, assure that people will have liberty automatically; that it will be established by the project itself. The liberty of men is never assured by the institutions and laws that are intended to guarantee them. This is why almost all of these laws and institutions are quite capable of being turned around. Not because they are ambiguous, but simply because "liberty" is what must be exercised.

**P.R.:** Are there urban examples of this? Or examples where architects succeeded?

**M.F.:** Well, up to a point there is Le Corbusier, who is described today—with a sort of cruelty that I find perfectly useless—as a sort of crypto-Stalinist. He was, I am sure, someone full of good intentions and what he did was in fact dedicated to liberating effects. Perhaps the means that he proposed were in the end less liberating than he thought, but, once again, I think that it can never be inherent in the structure of things to guarantee the exercise of freedom. The guarantee of freedom is freedom.

**P.R.:** So you do not think of Le Corbusier as an example of success. You are simply saying that his intention was liberating. Can you give us a successful example?

**M.F.:** No. It *cannot* succeed. If one were to find a place, and perhaps there are some, where liberty is effectively exercised, one would find that this is not owing to the order of objects, but, once again, owing to the practice of liberty. Which is not to say that, after all, one may as well leave people in slums thinking that they can simply exercise their rights there.

**P.R.:** Meaning that architecture in itself cannot resolve social problems?

**M.F.:** I think that it can and does produce positive effects when the liberating intentions of the architect coincide with the real practice of people in the exercise of their freedom.

**P.R.:** But the same architecture can serve other ends.

**M.F.:** Absolutely. Let me bring up another example: The *Familistere* of Jean-Baptiste Godin (1859). The architecture of Godin was clearly intended for the freedom of people. Here was something that manifested the power of ordinary workers to participate in the exercise of their trade. It was a rather important sign and instrument of autonomy for a group of workers. Yet no one could enter or leave the place without being seen by everyone—an aspect of the architecture that could be totally oppressive. But it could only be oppressive if people were prepared to use their own presence in order to watch over others. Let's imagine a community of unlimited sexual practices that might be established there. It would once again become a place of freedom. I think it is somewhat arbitrary to try to dissociate the effective practice of freedom by people, the practice of social relations, and the spatial distributions in which they find themselves. If they are separated, they become impossible to understand. Each can only be understood through the other.

**P.R.:** Yet people have often attempted to find utopian schemes to liberate people, or to oppress them.

**M.F.:** Men have dreamed of liberating machines. But there are no machines of freedom, by definition. This is not to say that the exercise of freedom is completely indifferent to spatial distribution, but it can only function when there is a certain convergence; in the case of divergence or distortion it immediately becomes the opposite of that which had been intended. The panoptic qualities of Guise could perfectly well have allowed it to be used as a prison. Nothing could be simpler. It is clear that, in fact, the *Familistere* may well have served as an instrument for discipline and a rather unbearable group pressure.

**P.R.:** So once again the intention of the architect is not the fundamental determining factor.

**M.F.:** Nothing is fundamental. That is what is interesting in the analysis of society. That is why nothing irritates me as much as these inquiries—which are by definition metaphysical—on the foundations of power in a society or the self-institution of a society, etc. These are not fundamental phenomena. There are only reciprocal relations, and the perpetual gaps between intentions in relation to one another.

**P.R.:** You have singled out doctors, prison wardens, priests, judges, and psychiatrists as key figures in the political configurations that involve domination. Would you put architects on this list?

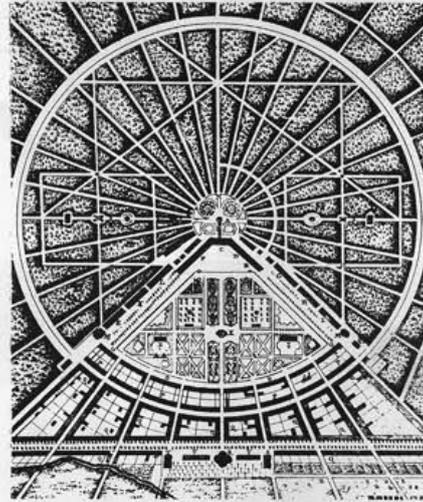
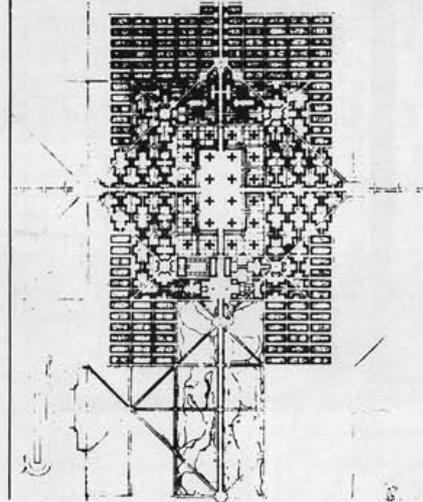
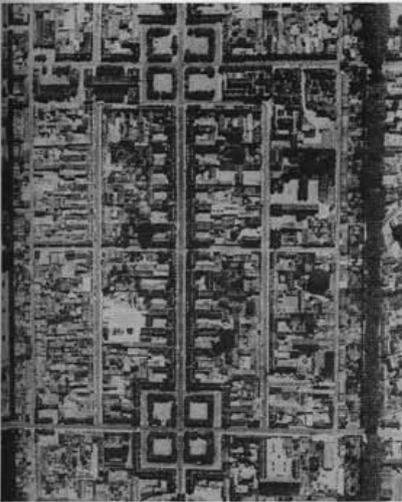
**M.F.:** You know, I was not really attempting to describe figures of domination when I referred to doctors and people like that, but rather to describe people through whom power passed or who are important in the fields of power relations. A patient in a mental institution is placed within a field of fairly complicated power relations, which Erving Goffman analyzed very well. The pastor in a Christian or Catholic church (in Protestant churches it is somewhat different) is an important link in a set of power relations. The architect is not an individual of that sort.

After all, the architect has no power over me. If I want to tear down or change a house he built for me, put up new partitions, add a chimney, the architect has no control. So the architect should be placed in another category—which is not to say that he is not totally foreign to the organization, the implementation, and all the techniques of power that are exercised in a society. I would say that one must take *him*—his mentality, his attitude—into account as well as his projects, in order to understand a certain number of the techniques of power that are invested in architecture, but he is not comparable to a doctor, a priest, a psychiatrist, or a prison warden.

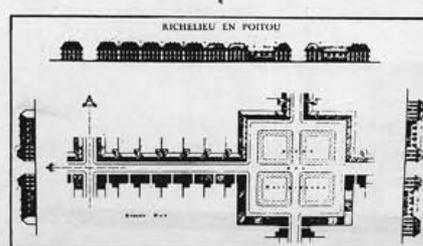
**P.R.:** "Post-modernism" has received a great deal of attention recently in architectural circles. It is also being talked about in philosophy, notably by Jean-François Lyotard and Jurgen Habermas. Clearly, historical reference and language play an important role in the modern episteme. How do you see post-modernism, both as architecture and in terms of the historical and philosophical questions that are posed by it?

**M.F.:** I think that there is a widespread and facile tendency, which one should combat, to designate that which has just occurred as the primary enemy as if this were always the principal form of oppression from which one had to liberate oneself. Now, this simple attitude entails a number of dangerous consequences: first, an inclination to seek out some cheap form of archaism or some imaginary past forms of happiness that people did not, in fact, have at all. For instance, in the areas that interest me, it is very amusing to see how contemporary sexuality is described as something absolutely terrible. To think that it is only possible now to make love after turning off the television! and in mass-produced beds! "Not like that wonderful time when . . ." Well, what about those wonderful times when people worked eighteen hours a day and there were six people in a bed, if one was lucky enough to have a bed! There is in this hatred of the present or the immediate past a dangerous tendency to invoke a completely mythical past. Secondly, there is the problem raised by Habermas: if one abandons the work of Kant or Weber, for example, one runs the risk of lapsing into irrationality.

*totally foreign to the organization, the implementation, and all the techniques of power that are exercised in a society."*



Above: 17th century town of Richelieu, France, showing control through spatial ordering. (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris) Right, above: Le Corbusier, plan of a contemporary city for 3 million people; 1922. Below: Facades and site plan showing the principal axis of Richelieu. Far Right, above: Plan of Karlsruhe, built in 1715 as a hunting retreat for Karl Wilhelm, margrave of Baden. Below: Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, perspective view of the second project for the town of Chaux; c. 1773.



I am completely in agreement with this, but at the same time, our question is quite different: I think that the central issue of philosophy and critical thought since the eighteenth century has always been, still is, and will, I hope, remain the question, *What is this Reason that we use? What are its historical effects? What are its limits, and what are its dangers? How can we exist as rational beings, fortunately committed to practicing a rationality that is unfortunately crisscrossed by intrinsic dangers? One should remain as close to this question as possible, keeping in mind that it is both central and extremely difficult to resolve. In addition, if it is extremely dangerous to say that Reason is the enemy that should be eliminated, it is just as dangerous to say that any critical questioning of this rationality risks sending us into irrationality. One should not forget—and I'm not saying this in order to criticize rationality, but in order to show how ambiguous things are—it was on the basis of the flamboyant rationality of Social Darwinism that racism was formulated, becoming one of the most enduring and powerful ingredients of Nazism. This was, of course, an irrationality, but an irrationality that was at the same time, after all, a certain form of rationality. . . .*

This is the situation that we are in and that we must combat. If intellectuals in general are to have a function, if critical thought itself has a function, and, even more specifically, if philosophy has a function within critical thought, it is precisely to accept this sort of spiral, this sort of revolving door of rationality that refers us to its necessity, to its indispensability, and at the same time, to its intrinsic dangers.

**P.R.:** All that being said, it would be fair to say that you are much less afraid of historicism and the play of historical references than someone like Habermas is; also that this issue has been posed in architecture as almost a crisis of civilization by the defenders of modernism, who contend that if we abandon modern architecture for a frivolous return to decoration and motifs, we are somehow abandoning civilization. On the other hand, some post-modernists have claimed that historical references per se are somehow meaningful and are going to protect us from the dangers of an overly rationalized world.

**M.F.:** Although it may not answer your question, I would say this: One should totally and absolutely suspect anything that claims to be a return. One reason is a logical one: there is in fact no such thing as a return. History, and the meticulous interest applied to history, is certainly one of the best defenses against this theme of the return. For me, the history of madness or the studies of the prison . . . were done in that precise manner because I knew full well—this is in fact what aggravated many

people—that I was carrying out an historical analysis in such a manner that people *could* criticize the present, but it was impossible for them to say, "Let's go back to the good old days when madmen in the eighteenth century . . ." or, "Let's go back to the days when the prison was not one of the principal instruments. . . ." No; I think that history preserves us from that sort of ideology of the return.

**P.R.:** Hence, the simple opposition between reason and history is rather silly. . . . choosing sides between the two. . . .

**M.F.:** Yes. Well, the problem for Habermas is, after all, to make a transcendental mode of thought spring forth against any historicism. I am, indeed, far more historicist and Nietzschean. I do not think that there is a proper usage of history or a proper usage of intrahistorical analysis—which is fairly lucid, by the way—that works precisely against this ideology of the return. A good study of peasant architecture in Europe, for example, would show the utter vanity of wanting to return to the little individual house with its thatched roof. History protects us from historicism—from a historicist that calls on the past to resolve the questions of the present.

**P.R.:** It also reminds us that there is always a history; that those modernists who wanted to suppress any reference to the past were making a mistake.

**M.F.:** Of course.

**P.R.:** Your next two books deal with sexuality among the Greeks and the Early Christians. Are there any particular architectural dimensions to the issues you discuss?

**M.F.:** I didn't find any; absolutely none. But what is interesting is that in Imperial Rome there were, in fact, brothels, pleasure quarters, criminal areas, etc., and there was also one sort of quasi-public place of pleasure: the baths, the *thermes*. The baths were a very important place of pleasure and encounter, which slowly disappeared in Europe. In the Middle Ages, the baths were still a place of encounter between men and women as well as of men with men and women with women, although that is rarely talked about. What was referred to and condemned, as well as practiced, were the encounters between men and women, which disappeared over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

**P.R.:** In the Arab world it continues.

**M.F.:** Yes; but in France it has largely ceased. It still existed in the nineteenth century. One sees it in *Les*

*Enfants du Paradis*, and it is historically exact. One of the characters, Lacenaire, was—no one mentions it—a swine and a pimp who used young boys to attract older men and then blackmailed them; there is a scene that refers to this. It required all the naive and antihomosexuality of the Surrealists to overlook that fact. So the baths continued to exist, as a place of sexual encounters. The bath was a sort of cathedral of pleasure at the heart of the city, where people could go as often as they want, where they walked about, picked each other up, met each other, took their pleasure, ate, drank, discussed. . . .

**P.R.:** So sex was not separated from the other pleasures. It was inscribed in the center of the cities. It was public; it served a purpose. . . .

**M.F.:** That's right. Sexuality was obviously considered a social pleasure for the Greeks and the Romans. What is interesting about male homosexuality today—this has apparently been the case of female homosexuals for some time—is that their sexual relations are immediately translated into social relations and the social relations are understood as sexual relations. For the Greeks and the Romans, in a different fashion, sexual relations were located within social relations in the widest sense of the term. The baths were a place of sociality that included sexual relations.

One can directly compare the bath and the brothel. The brothel is in fact a place, and an architecture, of pleasure. There is, in fact, a very interesting form of sociality that was studied by Alain Corbin in *Les Filles de Noce* (Aubier, 1978). The men of the city met at the brothel; they were tied to one another by the fact that the same women passed through their hands, that the same diseases and infections were communicated to them. There was a sociality of the brothel; but the sociality of the baths as it existed among the ancients—a new version of which could perhaps exist again—was completely different from the sociality of the brothel.

**P.R.:** We now know a great deal about disciplinary architecture. What about confessional architecture—the kind of architecture that would be associated with a confessional technology?

**M.F.:** You mean religious architecture? I think that it has been studied. There is the whole problem of a monastery as xenophobic. There one finds precise regulations concerning life in common; affecting sleeping, eating, prayer, the place of each individual in all of that, the cells. All of this was programmed from very early on.

**P.R.:** In a technology of power, of confession as opposed to discipline, space seems to play a central role as well.

## Interview: Michel Foucault

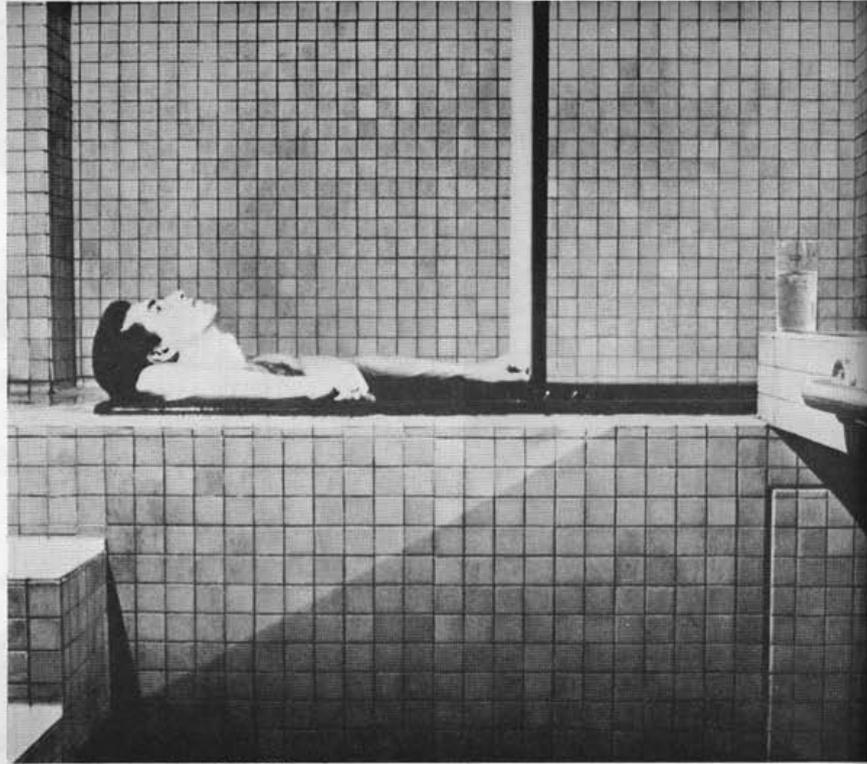
*"One can directly compare the bath and the brothel. The brothel is in fact a place and an architecture of pleasure. . . . but the sociality of the baths was completely different from the sociality of the brothel."*



Textile printing workshop at Jouy, from de la Platière's Encyclopédie Méthodique, 1785. (Bib. Nat., Paris)



Detail of a Philadelphia prison in the early 19th century.



Robert Mapplethorpe. James Ford, 1979.

**M.F.:** Yes. Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power. To make a parenthetical remark, I recall having been invited, in 1966, by a group of architects to do a study of space, of something that I called at that time "heterotopias," those singular spaces to be found in some given social spaces whose functions are different or even the opposite of others. The architects worked on this, and at the end of the study someone spoke up—a Sartrean psychologist—who firebombed me, saying that *space* is reactionary and capitalist, but *history* and *becoming* are revolutionary. This absurd discourse was not at all unusual at the time. Today everyone would be convulsed with laughter at such a pronouncement, but not then.

**P.R.:** Architects in particular, if they do choose to analyze an institutional building such as a hospital or a school in terms of its disciplinary function, would tend to focus primarily on the walls. After all, that is what they design. Your approach is perhaps more concerned with space, rather than architecture, in that the physical walls are only one aspect of the institution. How would you characterize the difference between these two approaches, between the building itself and space?

**M.F.:** I think there is a difference in method and approach. It is true that for me, architecture, in the very vague analyses of it that I have been able to conduct, is only taken as an element of support, to insure a certain allocation of people in space, a *canalization* of their circulation, as well as the coding of their reciprocal relations. So it is not only considered as an element in space, but is especially thought of as a plunge into a field of social relations in which it brings about some specific effects.

For example, I know that there is an historian who is carrying out some interesting studies of the archaeology of the Middle Ages, in which he takes up the problem of architecture, of houses in the Middle Ages, in terms of the problem of the chimney. I think that he is in the process of showing that beginning at a certain moment it was possible to build a chimney inside the house—a chimney with a hearth, not simply an open room or a chimney outside the house; that at that moment all sorts of things changed and relations between individuals became possible. All of this seems very interesting to me, but the conclusion that he presented in an article was that the history of ideas and thoughts is useless.

What is, in fact, interesting is that the two are rigorously indivisible. Why did people struggle to find the way to put a chimney inside a house? Or why did they put their techniques to this use? So often in the history of techniques it takes years or even centuries to implement

them. It is certain, and of capital importance, that this technique was a formative influence upon new human relations, but it is impossible to think that it would have been developed and adapted had there not been in the play and strategy of human relations something which tended in that direction. What is interesting is always interconnection, not the primacy of this over that, which never has any meaning.

**P.R.:** In your book *Les Mots et les Choses* you constructed certain vivid spatial metaphors to describe structures of thought. Why do you think spatial images are so evocative for these references? What is the relationship between these spatial metaphors describing disciplines and more concrete descriptions of institutional spaces?

**M.F.:** It is quite possible that since I was interested in the problems of space I used quite a number of spatial metaphors in *Les Mots et les Choses*, but usually these metaphors were not ones that I advanced, but ones that I was studying as objects. What is striking in the epistemological mutations and transformations of the seventeenth century is to see how the spatialization of knowledge was one of the factors in the constitution of this knowledge as a science. If the natural history and the classifications of Linnaeus were possible, it is for a certain number of reasons: on the one hand, there was literally a spatialization of the very object of their analyses, since they gave themselves the rule of studying and classifying a plant only on the basis of that which was visible. They didn't even want to use a microscope. All the traditional elements of knowledge, such as the medical functions of the plant, fell away. The object was spatialized. Subsequently, it was spatialized insofar as the principles of classification had to be found in the very structure of the plant: The number of elements, how they were arranged, their size, etc., and certain other elements, like the height of the plant. Then there was the spatialization into illustrations within books, which was only possible with certain printing techniques. Then the spatialization of the reproduction of the plants themselves, which was represented in books. All of these are spatial techniques, not metaphors.

**P.R.:** Is the actual plan for a building—the precise drawing that becomes walls and windows—the same form of discourse as, say, a hierarchical pyramid that describes rather precisely relations between people not only in space but also in social life?

**M.F.:** Well, I think there are a few simple and exceptional examples in which the architectural means reproduce, with more or less emphasis, the social hierarchies. There is the model of the military camp, where the military hierarchy is

to be read in the ground itself, by the place occupied by the tents and the buildings reserved for each rank. It reproduces precisely through architecture a pyramid of power; but this is an exceptional example, as is everything military—privileged in society and of an extreme simplicity.

**P.R.:** But the plan itself is not always an account of relations or power.

**M.F.:** No. Fortunately for human imagination, things are a little more complicated than that.

**P.R.:** Architecture is not, of course, a constant: it has a long tradition of changing preoccupations, changing systems, different rules. The *savoir* of architecture is partly the history of the profession, partly the evolution of a science of construction, and partly a rewriting of aesthetic theories. What do you think is particular about this form of *savoir*? Is it more like a natural science, or what you have called a "dubious science"?

**M.F.:** I can't exact, say that this distinction between sciences that are certain and those that are uncertain is of no interest—that would be avoiding the question—but I must say that what interests me more is to focus on what the Greeks called the *techné*, that is to say, a practical rationality governed by a conscious goal. I am not even sure if it is worth constantly asking the question of whether government can be the object of an exact science. On the other hand, if architecture, like the practice of government and the practice of other forms of social organization, is considered as a *techné*, possibly using elements of sciences like physics, for example, or statistics, etc. . . . that is what is interesting. But if one wanted to do a history of architecture, I think that it should be much more along the lines of that general history of the *techné*, rather than the histories of either the exact sciences or the inexact ones. The disadvantage of this word *techné*, I realize, is its relation to the word "technology," which has a very specific meaning. A very narrow meaning is given to "technology": one thinks of hard technology, the technology of wood, of fire, of electricity. Whereas government is also a function of technology: the government of individuals, the government of souls, the government of the self by the self, the government of families, the government of children, and so on. I believe that if one placed the history of architecture back in this general history of *techné*, in this wide sense of the word, one would have a more interesting guiding concept than by considering opposition between the exact sciences and the inexact ones.



## Hearts, Minds and Radical Democracy

**Dave Castle continues Red Pepper's interviews with theorists whose work contributes to a renewal of the left. This month he talks to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe whose work on social movements and class offers a controversial theorisation of insights familiar to grassroots activists.**

**Now the Cold War has ended, people have been able to think more clearly about the contribution Marxism can still make to radical politics, and we have seen a reconsideration of Marx in forums as diverse as the Financial Times and Socialist Register. What do you think are the most politically debilitating flaws of Marxism, and what is still of use?**

**EL:** A flaw of traditional Marxism has been to suppose that there is one dynamic which dominates social life, that of the class struggle. If you look at the history of socialism you can see that, in practice, radical political movements have only emerged through an alliance of many different struggles – nationalist, anti-imperialist, civil rights and religious alongside the workers' struggle. We have tried to present a theory (which still draws on Marxism) of how political movements mobilise and how they can transform society without making premature assumptions as to the exact constitution and nature of the political movements. As radicals, this should widen our horizons by letting us see the full extent of possible political change.

**CM:** A restricted conception of oppression and struggle has limited socialist politics in the past. We came to develop our theories because we felt that traditional socialist thought failed to understand what were then called the new social movements – feminism, the anti-racist struggle, the environmental movement. It tried to absorb them into the model of class struggle rather than respecting them as inherently different forms of resistance arising from different modes of oppression. We agreed with the Marxist notion that society is riven by conflict. However, we felt that the traditional Marxist doctrine did not allow enough room for understanding all the forms that conflict can take. There are forms of antagonism which cannot be understood purely as an effect of a capitalist system. For example, as socialist feminists argued, sexism cannot be reduced to being simply a product of capitalism. The origin of sexism is not in capitalism. You are not going to solve the question of sexism by transforming or even by ending the capitalist system. The same is true for racism.

**EL:** Furthermore, capitalism itself was producing antagonisms other than just the oppression of the workers. For instance, there might be a mobilisation of people against a factory which is polluting the environment. This is an anti-capitalist struggle in that it is the capitalist system which produced the

polluting factory. However, the workers at the factory may not be part of that struggle – they may side with the entrepreneurs against the mobilised people to protect their employment. What consequence does this have for political strategy?

**EL:** The plurality of modes of oppression is counterbalanced by processes which can bring people together. Any group's identity and struggle can be transformed by changing its relationship with other groups. Antonio Gramsci began to theorise this process. He argued that the success of the Italian Communist Party lay in building an allegiance between the labour movement and other democratic forces, such as the movement for the development of school co-operatives and the fight against the Mafia. These connections were much more than a tactical alliance. They had to involve a transformation of political consciousness so that participants in one movement saw that their demands could not be satisfied without also taking account of the demands of other groups. In the end, whoever wanted to say 'justice' would also say 'communism'. This formation of a common collective will is Gramsci's concept of hegemony.

**CM:** We describe the relation between different struggles in a hegemony as linked by a chain of equivalence. We use the term equivalence to recognise the specificity of each mode of oppression. An hegemony cannot be formed by one movement merely absorbing other struggles. This threat has repeatedly been posed in history. In Britain, the Labour Party has made attempts to absorb the women's movement, but women have rightly asserted that it is not enough to be just one more demand on the Labour Party's list. If feminism is to be linked to the Labour Party, Labour's structure has to change, including its institutions, its language and its culture.

### **How do you theorise those forces which resist the emergence of a radical hegemony?**

**EL:** We have distinguished between what we call logic of equivalence (which is used in the formation of a hegemony) and logic of difference. The discourse of Chartism in Britain was a discourse of equivalence because various demands were conceded as equivalent to each other – economic freedom, freedom of the press, republicanism – all these things were seen as part of a totality which became a kind of popular identity. The way of undermining such a hegemony is to do the opposite, to differentiate the issues. Disraeli did this through his ideology of 'One Nation'. This worked by simultaneously absorbing and separating demands. It recognised, for instance, the demand for housing, but dealt with this by disconnecting it from republicanism and connecting it to the government. A state institution was set up to deal with housing, and individuals are made to understand that they are granted housing through the charity of Queen Victoria rather than as a democratic right connected to a whole series of other rights. In the 20th century, the policies of the welfare state further developed this process by separating demands for health care, pensions, education etc, from more radical aspirations to transform the very structure of the state and the economy.

### **Considering that you do not privilege the class struggle, how do you define the goal of left-wing politics?**

**CM:** We define the left-wing project as the radicalisation of democracy. It can include any struggle against a relation of subordination Ü which includes those of the workplace but is not limited by them. It is also a break with Marxism in that its organising principles are the democratic ideals of equality and liberty for all, ideals that are actually within the rhetoric of the dominant groups of modern capitalist states. We had therefore abandoned the idea of a need for a radical break with the previous society Ü the idea of revolution. We began to understand our politics as a radicalisation of ideas and values which were already present, although unfulfilled in liberal capitalism. I think there is nothing more radical than asserting liberty and equality for all. The problem was that these ideas were not put into practice in the societies which claimed to follow them. What a left-wing project should do is to try to force those societies to really put those ideas into practice.

**This conception of left-wing politics seems so open that it could include any struggle against the dominant order, not necessarily just those struggles that we might term progressive or egalitarian. What is to stop a pro-monarchist or religious fundamentalist struggle entering the chain of equivalence?**

**CM:** There are movements which could never be placed in the radical democratic chain, because they would refuse to adjust to the demands of others Ü for instance the Ku Klux Klan could not be linked to black rights. However, most struggles can work for or against the radical democratic project, depending on how they have been articulated in specific circumstances. A struggle for hegemony is a struggle to transform the consciousness of individual groups in society so that they see that their interests are tied up with the interests of other groups. The demands of the middle classes, for example, could be linked to a radical democratic hegemony if you are able to present this in such a way that people will say 'we are going to accept we have to pay more taxes because we believe it is important to have better schools, a better social security system, a better NHS'. Groups which presently are not radical need to be linked to the socialist cause to create a broad anti-capitalist movement. The wider the chains of equivalence, the more radical is the democratic project. One can imagine there being an apparently progressive alliance in Britain where the solution to their problem might create some new form of oppression in other countries. Therefore it is always important to have an internationalist dimension Ü to link movements of one country with movements in others. However, there is a structural limit to a chain of equivalence. A chain of equivalence needs what we have termed a critical frontier. For a hegemony to have a radical focus it needs to establish an enemy, be it capitalism, ecological destruction, or violation of human rights. One of the things that I find more worrying about the kind of politics which is taking place today is the idea of consensus of the centre. It is impossible for a radical project to encompass all views. A consensus of the centre ensures everything will stay much the same.

**How do you define democracy if not as consensus?**

**CM:** I use the concept of agonistic pluralism to present a new way to think

about democracy which is different from the traditional liberal conception of democracy as a negotiation among interests and is also different to the model which is currently being developed by people like Jurgen Habermas and John Rawls. While they have many differences, Rawls and Habermas have in common the idea that the aim of the democratic society is the creation of a consensus, and that consensus is possible if people are only able to leave aside their particular interests and think as rational beings. However, while we desire an end to conflict, if we want people to be free we must always allow for the possibility that conflict may appear and to provide an arena where differences can be confronted. The democratic process should supply that arena.

**EL:** Interestingly, there is a similar rationalist flaw in the foundations of Marxism. Many forms of Marxism have supposed that society can be entirely rational and reconciled around a single popular will. As has happened in practice in Communism in the East and Social Democracy in the West, the state has had to intervene to compensate for the failure of this collective will to emerge. In that case this social control becomes bureaucratic control. In its most extreme form the Soviet bureaucrats told the people that as they lived in a rational society; any dissidents can only be mentally deranged people, so they had to be sent to a psychiatric clinic.

**CM:** In the West today, if there are no democratic channels through which a confrontation of values and interests can take place, it is going to lead either to apathy so people won't be involved in politics any more, or even worse, there are going to be mobilisations of those struggles which are not compatible with democracy such as apartheid, religious fundamentalism and fascism. Take France and the growth of the extreme right under Le Pen: it is precisely at the moment when the socialists have moved toward the centre and acquiesced to the arguments of the democratic right that the extreme right began to grow, because they were the only ones who were offering an alternative through which antagonism could be focused. Le Pen has been able to give a voice to the people who could not find a place within the democratic space to express their different positions. Britain could at first sight look like a counter example because there is not a strong extreme right in Britain. My interpretation is that because Labour had not been tried for 18 years, people have the illusion that something different is possible with this new government. In France and in Austria the extreme right began to grow as an alternative when everything else had been tried, and the people had become convinced that none of the mainstream parties were going to offer an alternative. If, in four years time, people feel nothing really has changed, and that Labour in power has not done anything very different from the Conservatives, then it will be interesting to see where those energies are mobilised. That will be the test for my analysis.

### **What do you see as the key areas of struggle to make radical democracy a hegemonic idea?**

**CM:** The main block for left-wing European parties today is that they have no conception of an alternative economic programme. There is the belief that the economy is untouchable because of the rule of the market, globalisation, the decline of nation states etc. It is principally this which has led them to this consensus politics. The most important task for the left today is to find

alternatives to neoliberalism.

**EL:** When the social democratic model of nationalisation and high taxation was exhausted, the right took the initiative to forge an alternative model in the form of neoliberalism which took into account the transformations which were taking place. The left has been very slow in developing an alternative discourse. That is why we have a model like that of Tony Blair which tries to incorporate the Thatcherite legacy.

**CM:** But you don't have to choose between the old Keynesianism or neo-liberalism. The question of unemployment is not going to be solved by the traditional idea of full employment as some socialist parties still believe. It also cannot be solved through the American model of flexible labour markets. We need a much more drastic redistribution of work. We should look at the reduction of the working week and job sharing. We should also look at the idea of basic income – the idea that people should, by the very fact of being a citizen, be able to receive an income that can then be added to through work. It is essential that we break the link between income and work simply because there is not enough work for everybody today. This also implies a cultural transformation – work can no longer be the centre of our identity. But the socialist parties are very, very reluctant about this, because it brings into question their own symbolic view of the centrality of work.

**EL:** Neoliberalism has inherited from 19th century bourgeois economic thought the idea that there is one basic economic mechanism which can ensure social reproduction. To confront neo-liberalism we should not argue for a different type of unique mechanism at the economic level, but should assert that the effects of society cannot be produced by an abstract economic logic. We must argue that the field of production relies on a plurality of social and political forces. The factory is a very complex place in its relations of power. Transnational corporations have to operate in national terrains where contradictory forces direct the fluxes of capital from one place to the other. Once the discourse starts to be oriented in this way, neoliberalism is brought into question.

**Some recent books: *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*** by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (*Verso*); ***The Return of the Political*** by Chantal Mouffe (*Verso*); ***Emancipation(s)*** by Ernesto Laclau (*Verso*). Forthcoming: ***A Politics without Adversaries*** by Chantal Mouffe.

[Top](#) ↑ [Back to national archive](#) ←

This reader is produced on the occasion of the Camp for Oppositional Architecture 2006, organized by An Architektur and Casco, Office for Art, Design and Theory.

Camp for Oppositional Architecture 2006  
Theorizing Architectural Resistance  
10–11 November  
Exhibition: 10 November–10 December 2006

All lectures take place at:  
Expodium  
Bovenvredenburg 27, 3511 DL Utrecht

Design reader: Sam de Groot

Casco

Office for Art, Design and Theory

Oudegracht 366, 3511 PP Utrecht  
the Netherlands  
T/F +31(0)30 231 9995  
info@cascoprojects.org  
www.cascoprojects.org  
Opening hours:  
Tuesday–Sunday, 12–18h

An Architektur  
Alexanderplatz 5  
10178 Berlin  
www.anarchitektur.com  
www.oppositionalarchitecture.com



Gemeente Utrecht



Monist van Sijckema  
(Mediaman Festival '06)

# Exhibition: 10 November – 10 December 2006

Casco

Office for Art, Design and Theory

Oudegracht 366, 3511 PP Utrecht

the Netherlands

T/F +31(0)30 231 9995

[info@cascoprojects.org](mailto:info@cascoprojects.org)

Opening hours:

Tuesday–Sunday, 12–18h

All lectures take place at:

Expodium

Bovenvedenburg 27, 3511 DL Utrecht

For reservations please e-mail:

[mereL@cascoprojects.org](mailto:mereL@cascoprojects.org)

For further information see:

[www.oppositionalarchitecture.com](http://www.oppositionalarchitecture.com)

[www.cascoprojects.org](http://www.cascoprojects.org)

Design: Julia Born & Laurenz Brunner

Printing: Wyber Zeefdruk

Logo: ITF Grafik Design



Gemeente Utrecht

# WVNV

Camp for  
Oppositional  
Architecture  
2006

Theorizing  
Architectural  
Resistance

Cad