# AN ARCHITEKTUR

**Produktion und Gebrauch gebauter Umwelt**

## Communal Spaces / Community Places / Common Rooms

**De-totalized Forms of Encounter**
Interview with Joseph Vogl

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**For the tenth issue of An Architektur, we looked for historical and contemporary projects that deal with communal spaces. For us, these were all initially spaces that, as hippie-like, utopian, or countercultural projects, represented an intensely emancipatory concept of community and stood for various approaches to liberation. Architectural history, too, suggests that this view of communal space is a leftist project.**

**In your book "Gemeinschaften. Positionen zu einer Philosophie des Politischen"[1] (Communities. Positions Toward a Philosophy of the Political), you describe community quite generally as the reference point of passionate politics. You regard "the lost community and its return as a critical site and unsurpassable horizon of political-social action"[2]. Why do you attribute so much importance for politics to community?**

In my book, I pursue not only a theoretical approach, but also a historical perspective. This historical perspective consists of the fact that communities are not a political entity in themselves, but rather stand in opposition to what one calls society, and this is how they gain contours. Without the societal, the communal is unimaginable. If you will, it is a matter of differing kinds of transparence. In a long political tradition, "society" is conceived on the basis of contractual relations, structures of law, personality, and controlled interaction. In contrast, community is the site of hidden traditional, but also biological bonds. And the concept of community makes sense only in this opposition and tension.

What interests me is the idea of this tension between community, on the one hand, and society, on the other hand – that this opposition is a certain antinomy of the political. Concepts of the societal, of social transparence, of structures of law, must thus recurrently appeal to something communal. To some form or other of the original solidarity. Whereas, in contrast, communities must be understood in the context of an evolution of the societal: only by dissolving natural bonds can one create equality or justice. This means thinking in terms of this tension, this intertwining of the communal and the societal. This is the theoretical and historical starting point.

Different forms of politics are involved in both figures – society in the sense of social transparence, on the one hand, and community in the sense of social opacity, on the other. And different concepts of the political. For example, the site of the societal is closely bound up with matters of the public sphere, transmission of information through the media, parliamentarianism, representation, etc., whereas, in the communal sphere, completely different forms of moderation and other social relations and forms of intervention prevail, for example health policy or neighborly assistance, family policy or class affiliation. The two political posts – community and society – thus develop different teleologies of the political. There is no self-evident concept of the political that comprises both. The question of politics is decided by whether it is oriented toward models of community or of society.

**The politics of community, like the politics of a society, can be very diverse. Its spectrum ranges from permanent revolution or direct democracy to totalitarian exclusion. What consequences does this ambivalence of concepts of community, which contradicts our assumption that collectives are a specifically leftist project, have for the concept of a progressive, emancipatory community?**

Concepts of community are historically and theoretically extremely ambiguous. They can be charged with and have been colonized by various ideas of totality: the nation or class, mythical communities in general, blood ties or the "natural state". And again and again, one must liberate the communal from these symbolic reshapings (or clumping), one must liberate it from a logic of results that tells us that we must finally become a nation or a people, finally maintain the purity of our blood, finally create a pure race, i.e., must finally fabricate some immediate unity or other. And these emphatic fantasies that have evoked various, often catastrophic political constellations, demand that concepts of community be subjected to a cleaning-up process. Designs for community must constantly be cleansed of the ideas of totality that they themselves create.

**But don't communities always strive for ideas of totality? Are there possibilities of creating communities not based on class or nation? You write that the site of community must be defined anew again and again. Does this involve such cleaning-up processes because once something is realized and completed, it automatically becomes reactionary?**

I think one must be careful not to "realize" communities. That usually ends badly. Rather, one should open them up, make them permeable. Not so much complete and localize them than look for gaps and non-sites. There are various images and models for these processes of de-localization. One can think thereby of concrete practices and on literary ideas. To mention an example: I think that something like this has happened in the gay movement as a consequence of AIDS. That homosexuals no longer constitute themselves solely in terms of sexuality, exclusion, or medical procedures, but have entered into pragmatic alliances with every possible kind of people.

One can observe atopies in such movements – temporary, ephemeral, and also strategic alliances that are not oriented toward completing the communal substance. A literary example, almost already a theoretical concept, is Kafka's "The Great Wall of China". It shows that the wall that is to surround the "people" must not be built except rudimentarily, in fragments, i.e., with holes. This is an example of the construction of the communal. Communities must also fabricate their own dismantling, there where they are.

**Can the process of de-localization also be found in utopian spatial proposals, which are as a rule strongly related to community? They take an imaginary, distant site to formulate their critique of existing societal conditions.**

There is tradition of the utopian, especially in architecture. Namely, that of the utopian city, which is strongly characterized by a totalitarian completion, represented since Revelations at the latest by the New Heavenly Jerusalem. Perhaps you are familiar with this architecture from Revelations, which consists of stone, light, and encompassed standstill. Nothing moves there anymore. This is the community of the counted and numbered blessed, who have gathered there, a heavenly utopia, a utopia that has offered a model for many other utopias. This would be an architecture, an architectonic utopia as a clearly unfortunate perfection of community. When I speak of atopia, I actually mean something else, namely the question of when and in what constellations something like a political question can arise, something like the political. And I would say it arises everywhere where de-localization occurs within specific, determinable, observable localizations. I.e., where something is not in its place, where something has become removed and unavailable.

There is a famous example of this that has even become canonical in political theory: the fable of Menenius Agrippa and the exodus of the Plebians from the city of Rome. The people left Rome, Menenius Agrippa climbed up the Aventine Hill to bring them back; and there he told the fable of the political body, of the belly and the limbs: All the parts – people and rulers – have to come together or the whole cannot function. The interesting thing about this fable is that a lasting topos, so to speak, was found for the political, for politics as a whole, a topos in the double sense of site and manner of speaking: according to it, the political is the de-localization, but politics is the renewed assignment of place.

This moment of de-localization – the people has disappeared – raises an eminent political question of concern to the entire community. Here, something like the political has become visible, through a very elemental process of de-localization: The body politic and its quality are the stakes and have become problematical. I would like to connect communities with these processes of de-localization, with a movement that renders the political question visible. Here, a political question arises: the political always appears then, when something is not in the place it belongs.

Once more and putting a fine point on it: The community, in the sense I understand it, would be tied to the rendering visible of a political question, to a shift of site, or to a change of site or de-localization. And at this moment, the political matter as such manifests itself.

**So do communities always construct themselves around political questions?**

Precisely. But they are not resolved. That is very important. For example, if you take the German nation, then the surprising thing about its history – and one speaks of the "delayed" German nation – is that one always presupposes solutions – solutions that are mythically or biologically or culturally encoded: one always knows more or less what this nebulous German people is, that is supposed to become a nation. And the resulting problems lie more in giving the solutions a certain reality, for example a territory in common, a common empire, a common outfit. But this unity – with a specific descent and a family tree and a specific mythology – is no longer up for debate: There is no longer any political question, but only programs for realization; this was still the case in 1990.

**What significance do constructions of identity have for communities? Are identity and its reflection – as a possible starting point for the capability to take political action – still progressive, or do they have a reactionary tendency, in that they represent, solidify, and produce structural exclusions?**

Concepts like identity and non-identity are very formal concepts, and taken by themselves they do not yet carry values in a political constellation. To mention some examples: For a long time, it made a lot of sense to receive a collective identity as proletarians, in order to win the struggle for jobs, work times, accident insurance, health insurance, etc. In this case, identity politics was necessary and convincing.

Then, in various areas – for example in feminism – people noticed that insisting on solidarity-obliging identities can be a two-edged sword: after all, such attributions – like THE female, THE woman – are always also violent and from outside. Today, in turn, under the sign of increased flexibility, one has the feeling that one should invoke stable identities again and question an economy that demands that one be a mother in the morning, a computer specialist in the afternoon, and a tele-worker in the evening: that one becomes an occupational nomad. This flexible, dissolved identity has already been absorbed by economic processes. What still holds this trembling identity together? A mildly weak ego, an elegant patchwork identity is practically demanded.

That is merely one example showing that identity and non-identity are, in themselves, concepts to be taken seriously politically. But one must also ask what stakes are wagered with concepts of identity or with the destruction of concepts of identity.

**In research on movements, Alberto Melucci, among others, develops a theory of collective identities, in order to be able to grasp collective actions at all.[3] The point therein is, on the one hand, the cognitive definition of goals. On the other hand, the significance of social and technical networks is being worked out here. How important is the theory of collective identities for your concept of community?**

I might prefer to approach this question from the other side. And that is a very general political consideration: I think that, for a long time, we have observed the disappearance of what was once called "interest". In these post-industrial societies, we have apparently arrived at a situation in which people have ever greater difficulties defining their personal, own, or collective interests. And I think that something like collective identity has always, or at any rate has long, defined itself in terms of the concept of interest. That means that collective identities are those defined by the pursuit of common interests.

Now we are observing that it is becoming ever more difficult to clarify common interests. And this makes visible a politics clearly based on reducing solidarity. Risks that once affected everyone and that were organized in terms of solidarity, for example health and social insurance, are being privatized. From now on, everyone is his own biggest risk, and everyone is expected to insure himself individually, a person-proximate risk administration. It is getting more and more difficult to tie together with common interests even people in similar employment situations, because everyone sees himself integrated in his own network of company loyalties. And somehow everyone is also supposed to become his own entrepreneur.

For this reason, perhaps I'll give a cautious answer: Collective identity, in my opinion, is a completely neutral term for political communication, but one ought to begin a step earlier and ask once more: Where are reserves of interest that could found these collective identities? In what interest situations could the people in this or that place come together? At the moment, this is not very clear to me. The whole problem of the trade union movement shows this quite clearly – the erosion of definitions of interest.

**But isn't this erosion of clear and encompassing definitions of interests a new quality? Your description of a desirable community as a "heterogeneous community of singular beings"[4] already includes conflicts of interest. Precisely the constant "postponement of their realization"[5] indicates that the common interest can no longer hope for fulfillment at all. Here, the model of community you describe seems to us to display some parallels to the concept of the multitude developed by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt[6]. The "absolute immanence" and the "constant self-creation", but also "unrepresentability" that you attribute to communities is comparable with how, in "Empire", the multitude – or crowd – is described as a non-mass, a non-people.**

To start with, I think that what Negri and Hardt call multitude is strongly tied to certain a prioris of the media. The Internet is behind it, something like the international networking is behind it, something like Attac is behind it. So – and this is not an uninteresting view – this means that whatever presents itself as apparently natural in people coming together is actually reflected on a very high media-theoretical or media-technical level. Thus, one must not forget that all these forms of community that appear natural are to a great degree conveyed by the media. And this technology of conveyance must be taken into consideration.

What I meant by community is a little bit different. And it includes a relatively conservative idea. My interest is to address a few rudiments of democratic theory. And if the core of a democratic-theoretical reflection consists – putting a fine point on it – in leaving the king's place free, in evacuating the king – however this may appear: there are, of course, different kinds of kings, pseudo-kings, and parodies of kings – then that means taking this empty place into consideration. If you will, this is the spatial order of a surrounded empty spot, the maintenance of an unavailability.

Incidentally, there are some model cases of this in the history of the connection between social and architectonic spaces. One example is the courtroom. The point of court architecture is, of course, that the middle of the room always remains empty. That is where the case is heard. The matter under consideration is put in the middle, but all the other participants – witnesses, the accused, public prosecutors, judges, etc. – sit on the outside around it. And this site of the courtroom is a paradigmatic social space – as an architectonic idea, as well as an answer to the question of how a case is heard.

Perhaps this example is too far-fetched, but to say it once more: I would place the question of immanence and of unrepresentability between these two extremes: On the one hand, the concept of the multitude, but where the respectively given media-technical conditions must be directly taken into consideration. On the other hand, the rudiment of democratic theory, in which the point is to keep the site of the king empty and not symbolically occupy it.

**What interests us about Negri/Hardt is that they actually tie the concept of the multitude to certain ideas of work; that they claim that societal conditions are fundamentally characterized by work, especially by informal work; and that, under capitalistic conditions and their expansion throughout the world, the tendency is therefore that everyone is exploited. The continuation and the expansion of this classic contradiction, but also the designation of an emancipatory direction – i.e., the designation of the field of conflict – make the concept of the multitude productive for us. This may also go beyond the perspective, rather neutral in this regard, of the community. The multitude is defined as a kind of resistant community, i.e., as a community bearing an emancipatory character within itself.**

I would formulate that a bit more cautiously: I think the idea of emancipation – understood in the traditional sense – is not that virulent anymore. Maybe the point is rather two things: That the multitude is, initially, always tied to a research program. That means, one tries to conduct research on an unclear status quo. People come together to formulate a problematical political constellation as a question, to become experts on a matter, a problem case – that's the first.

The second is that the multitude – and this is what distinguishes it from traditional concepts of community – carries its own expiration date. The multitude is not something that extends itself into a past "once" and into a future "one day". Rather, it knows that the operative units, the short-lived coming-together, carries a specific horizon of time and of theme within it. One comes together for specific themes and for specific short-term and midterm times. That is what characterizes the multitude.

Perhaps – and despite all my reservations about what Negri and Hardt say, this is the interesting constellation – one could also say that the multitude itself is a research project. One explores a social and political field that, in the process of research, becomes simultaneously a kind of test procedure and an object of processing – this is what gives it its political character. One does not have a pre-existing political question, but develops it in coming together. And one does not have a pre-existing solution to this political question, but invents ways of solving it that are already political interventions.

Does that make sense? It goes in the direction in which I would like to think. The political matter must always be newly clarified and won, it is not self-evident. There are no political questions that follow us from the cradle to the grave. For that, there are too many agencies that clarify or "solve" such political question – parliamentarianism, elections, collective bargaining, health policy, etc. These are all pseudo-political questions; only in the rarest cases do they allow their political aspect to appear, and usually they are resolved in accordance with a programmed procedure, one way or another. Rather, the point is to develop research teams that obtain the political question at the same time as they operate politically. Maybe that is the shortest definition.

**For this issue, we researched the Soviet communal houses that arose everywhere spontaneously in Moscow and Petersburg after the October Revolution. It was pretty clear that these communal houses were actually precisely this kind of test phase, an attempt at practical research and at making this uncertain situation scientific. This is comparable to how Negri/Hardt understand Marx: that he tries to grasp a political field by describing a contradiction and thereby makes community – as the working class – constructible in the first place.**

That is a very important point – and Marxism, and especially Marx himself, provided some key points – that the point therein is to gain knowledge. And that is something that actually never enters into things in many other forms of community. All the national and racial, but also communitarian concepts of community, which are so much discussed for example in the United States, all proceed from a position of having known. We always already know what family is, we always already know what neighborhood is. But with the Soviet communal houses, it was really about gaining new knowledge. You can call it subversive knowledge, which of course includes the acquisition of knowledge for domination.

**We are, of course, especially interested in how such an appropriation in space occurs. Because there community takes place directly and itself produces knowledge about this. This form of immanence, in our opinion, has a lot to do with the spaces of life**

reality, of everyday life and of special experience. Thus, for example, Seattle has significance for the globalization-critical movement and Woodstock for the hippies, and in the 1980s, the anti-nuclear power movement or the huts built against the new runway at Frankfurt Airport were intentional sites of resistance. What role does the site play in your concept of community?

There is an old and still influential Rousseauian tradition that always brings the site of community together with the site of gathering. For Rousseau, it was the spring, the fountain, where one met. It was, for example, the erected maypole. It was the festival that the French Revolutionaries celebrated. For Rousseau, the practice of common festivals at a site embodies the substance of the community, the direct and elemental exchange. And this image of festive community still makes the rounds today – in whatever dilutions.

But if one reads Rousseau more precisely, one notes the degree to which he was aware that there is no direct exchange or direct gathering, but rather that dramaturgies and staging elements are always in play. One acts out theater, for oneself and for others, and actually one gathers together to be someone other than who one is. Part of this is a certain strategy. Today, especially, and especially in the anti-globalization campaign, one knows that every site where one gathers is at the same time a site that is distributed, that de-localizes itself, that corresponds with other sites, that presents itself on monitors, and that is a theater scene. There are no idylls of the political site, but merely the politics of a site. The search for a site of gathering, for a site of community, is always already political strategy and inseparable from a symbolic and media processing of these sites. One constructs political topographies.

**Henri Lefèbvre thinks space on three levels: lived, perceived and conceived space.[7] Conceived space, in his scheme, also includes media representations of spaces, the symbolics of spaces. But on the other hand space also produces subjectivities, it makes possible one's experience of the everyday and of the exceptional. It is the field where we reside. Did collectively used space in Genoa – such as the NGO and Media Center during Genoa's Social Forum and the sleeping quarters in a school across the street – , did specific situations in that city define a space of a genuinely constitutive nature? Or is it only the representation of such a space that matters? As a whole – and this too is of course hypothetical – we are searching for how something can take place, in and through such spaces, that carries meaning for the orientation and inner make-up of particular communities. In the present issue, it is those communities motivated not necessarily politically but primarily by communal living and working that can be seen to concern themselves with a concrete, community-building experience of space.**

I would like to turn this question around – if indeed it is a question – and ask what it is that really takes place there. In situations of that kind, I feel that there is a lot lacking in terms of what was earlier named social experience or communal experience; and that this is something of a free-floating need that continually precipitates into gradients of different densities, different constellations, different aggregate states. To some extent, this is no longer self-evident. When one examines biographical trajectories these days (including one's own), what is noticeable is a constant hesitation, arguably lasting until the very end: where should one invest this need for social experience, what should one focus on? Family? Or professional relationships? Friendships, or romantic passion? One thing is quite certain: none of us really knows (hence the glorification of the '68 generation), and each of us knows that this need will not find its ultimate expression in any single one of those forms. And this is what makes events such as Genoa, and to some extent also the anti-nuclear movement, so significant: they provided this diffuse need for social experience with a place and a date. I believe this search for place and date is absolutely crucial in this regard – beyond the political stakes that certainly play their own role.

**This relationship between community and space becomes especially tight in such constructed and architectural forms as the monument, the cemetery, the marketplace and the sports stadium. It is a question of forms of representation. But we also see a further possible theoretical construction of the relationship between space and community. Since Henri Lefèbvre, space can be thought in exclusively political terms, and conversely every policy is implemented in space. Seizing and expanding on Marx's analysis of relations of production, he designates space as the site of contestation, the stage of conflict and the political. By contrast, you designate community as the site of contestation, the reference point of the political. It would seem possible to conceive of this tight relationship between space and community also along these lines – the political.**

Concepts of community are in my mind eminently tied to the question of topos and atopos, that is to say to the question of localization and de-localization. Which leads quite naturally to that of space and structures of space. And the fact that the relationship of community to space always implies a fundamental political gesture permeates political theory.

To name two analogous examples: the first comes from Carl Schmitt, who saw land and sea as two entirely different organizations of space, and tied that to the

question of the fate of the political. To put it crudely: Carl Schmitt says that political structures can only be built on firm ground. Whether a port city could ever become the center of a polity is a question that appears already in Plato. He says that it cannot, because the sea imperils political order. There is exchange and amalgamation. People busy around. Hypercommunication. Nothing is stable there.

Earlier I used another example, the "Heavenly Jerusalem", representing a fixed territorial ordering. And the counterexample is also formulated in John's Apocalypse: the great whore of Babylon, described as a city where everyone copulates with everyone, where there is prostitution. Where ships come and go. Where goods get transshipped. Where the many arts flourish. It is a place of disloyal and pagan commingling, another place, if you will, that was built too close to the sea and therefore not suitable for an ordering of that sort, a "Community of the Blessed". Similar concepts, similar contrasts (though assessed very differently) are found for example in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, when they speak of striated and smooth space.

Another connected figure emerges with the question: what happens when political orderings are always and necessarily constructed upon exclusion? It cannot work otherwise. Borders must be drawn. One must discriminate, create differences. A basic political gesture is that of discrimination, whether it leads to a declaration of enmity, as in Carl Schmitt, or simply to drawing lines of exclusion.

Every political gesture – however one chooses to understand it – is tied to processes of discrimination. And these are in turn linked to orderings of space. Giorgio Agamben asks the question more or less like this: what exactly are these peculiar political spaces that have been for so long bound up with a politics of the camp? Exclusion and inclusion take place simultaneously: in the deportation camps, in refugee camps, in centers for asylum seekers. And that is why I would say: in every spatial ordering, in every architectural ordering there is an explicit political strategy as well as an implicit political theory. And these can in fact be mapped out onto a field structured by the sea – smooth space – on the one hand, the land – striated space – on the other. Every typology of political spaces, every scale of political values plays itself out in one way or another between these two extremes.

**Is the problem not that built space per se has solidity and therefore a particular material durability? If so, how could one think architecture as emancipatory? Many of the community forms we have considered, such as for instance various voluntaristic communes that erect borders toward the outside while homogenizing on the inside, function by excluding and rigidifying. There are few examples, it**

**would seem, of actual built communal spaces of a more open nature. Is such a concept of community even buildable, if conceived only as temporary and originating in hypercommunication and commingling?**

There are some bizarre examples of built communal spaces, from our perspective at least: the gated communities in the USA. People come together to build themselves a small separate community. With its own rules, with near-masochistic covenants. Where one agrees in writing to being punished for dropping a piece of paper or forgetting to throwing away a can. Where there are extremely clear conditions for entering and leaving. With its own security guards and private police. People pay a lot for this. That is, if you will, a new form of disciplinary community, communal living under masochistic conditions.

One should therefore perhaps look in a different direction. I would say that one of the greatest achievements of what we call liberal society is that encounters no longer have to be total encounters. That means I am no longer bound to a real-life, lock, stock and barrel encounter; we no longer need to rub up against each other body and soul, we can be left alone.

With this in mind, I would tend to consider any form of spatial and architectural ordering that disrupts the total and compulsory encounter as community-founding. And especially through processes of uncoupling that, depending on the case, make me prudish or lascivious, focused or absent-minded. The ideal form of encounter is an encounter that is unforced, that allows for a free game of social positioning. Hence one of the most important architectural inventions: the door and its multifaceted dramaturgy. An entire universe of social relationships can be generated from the types and uses of doors.

**With three architectural concepts emerging around the same time at the beginning of the last century, we could return once again to the discussion of the role that space can play for communities. All three ask the question of how a working class that develops self-consciousness searches for spatial forms, and how spatial forms are proffered to them.**

**The first example is relatively well-known: the Karl-Marx-Hof in Vienna. Here, as in other workers' housing developments, social democracy attempted to produce fortified landmarks, symbolic representations modeled after typologies of the bourgeois city. The second example is the so-called "Einküchenhaus", which was so fiercely contested in Sweden, Denmark, Austria and especially Berlin. Housework had to be relocated from the home and organized in a professional and centralized manner. The idea was to manufacture an infrastructure, a type of**

technical tool. The emancipation from housework would make class culture but also family experienceable within a new communal form. Architecture is here invested with bolstering particular social processes. And the third example, which we already mentioned, are the Soviet communal houses, which in our view were principally an experiment in spatial and community experience. The objective was to build a space open to experience in the context of a social movement.

**Those now would be three models for the relationship between space and community. Until now we have focused heavily on the model closest to us, the symbolic coding of a place, that is to say a particular representation of a nation or class or some other self-contained community. Are these other models – i.e.: a vision of the technical, a vision of the open – plausible in your view?**

Yes, absolutely. When I speak of the bringing about of communities, it is always of course a matter of particular technologies. That is crucial. Architecture, as well as social technologies, as well as media technologies, belong among these technologies. Without question.

But we cannot forget that such technologies do not protect us from accidents, abuses and misuses, in short: from the unpredictable. Initially, the "Karl-Marx-Hof", for example, was not only an architectural experiment, but a social one as well: a kind of prestige project, with quotations from the manorly styles of palace- and castle-architecture and even the architecture of the Viennese Ringstrasse. And moreover, it did function as a fortress once before, during the workers' uprising, when it was shelled by the army.

The "Einküchenhaus" (One-Kitchen-House) model too was a social experiment, though it did not function at all. Built as quasi-manorly architecture, planned for proletarian living, it ended up being settled with a downright petty bourgeois, resolutely non-collectivist proclivity for the self-contained private living parcel, rededicated so to speak, and diverted from its intended use by its residents. What eventually emerged there was not a new social type, the proletarian, in a position to determine his future in architectural terms too; what these apartments and interiors really housed were the petty, very obvious ambitions for social mobility, outfitted with a cozy parlor and a nuclear family. One finds something similar in the Bauhaus estates of Dessau today, with the old sobriety and frugality overgrown by the embellishments and stylistic window-dressings of the former GDR.

However it is one looks to build "communities": such architectural projects must always deal with small corruptions and flaws of this kind. And I would always entertain some anxiety in relation to "built" communi-

ties: one expects a wonderful community, only to notice later it is something of a panopticon.

Here again, the permanence of built space emerges as a fundamental problem. When one considers the Karl-Marx-Hof, the scurrility of such an effort at material representation is striking. The "Einküchenhaus" too fast became obsolete, while the communal houses proved not adaptable to the economic developments of the Soviet Union. Soon enough social reality finds itself no longer limping along playing catch-up, but already somewhere else entirely. Is there not a fundamental contradiction here? Can spaces really be produced, of whichever form, corresponding to a community that does not aim for completion?

I probably have no answer to that question, perhaps only a casual and insufficient one. Every architecture certainly carries within itself a basic social decision in regards to what should be done and how life should be lived therein. Every building is a decision: will it be commercial property, a shopping paradise, will it be a prison, will it be something with a lot of green? But an architecture would be very presumptuous if it truly hoped to produce social forms, social identities.

You should perhaps ask the question the other way around: how can one avoid precisely that, a machine producing social form? How to provide people with room for their own dramas? How to build in such a way that people are able to redraw or transgress their own boundaries and barriers? Here again it has to do with a de-totalization of forms of encounter.

**Naturally this concept of de-totalization and dissolution of boundaries seems a lot more attractive to us than the rigidification of housing estates and prisons. But what kinds of spaces are these, where non-identification and non-totalized oneness can take place? How to provide a potential non-place? Superstudio's 1972 collages and film scripts for "Five Fundamental Acts" illustrate a totally open, but infrastructurally highly networked space, in which individuals or better singularities circulate in full freedom. In such a post-capitalistic structure, communities emerge of their own accord and radically overcome all spatial constraints.**

**But when on the other hand one thinks of Plato's port as a free trade zone, when one conceives of the flexible work relation of the in-house lounge, or the desktop-sharing in the open-plan workplace, as open spaces of that nature, the reference is to a notion of workplace and social relationships that is extremely pervasive these days. Such spaces therefore denote at the very same time a type of totality: neoliberal open space, and its construction of community.**

I believe that the promises that spaces of that nature always carry with them are always unintentional promises, that is to say promises that are not truly thought through. And what is a promise that is not truly thought through? It is the possibility of abuse. All of these spatial concepts carry in them possibilities of abuse, of misuse. So as I look at spaces, I ask myself: where can that happen? Which spaces are most efficiently abused, led astray, misemployed?

This is a question, I think, that is tied to the new technologies of government. One tries to reduce the possibility of abuse by expanding the margins of flexibility. Which means: when spaces are usable both privately and professionally, when spaces are both intimate and public, when spaces are defined in every respect by a high diffusion coefficient, then the possibility of abuse, of corrupted mutation recedes.

As to the extent to which neoliberal economic concepts are also tied to particular spatial concepts: first of all, we can see – this is certainly widely accepted – that along with the modernization of concepts of government, configurations of space also underwent thorough reform. What Foucault called the disciplinary society was characterized in a significant way by the creation of address spaces, the localization of people. We see that in the example of the Panopticon. But also in the history of cities, in the introduction of streets of houses and house numbers, in the drainage of basements and the thinning of attics. The rehabilitation of all disorder. It was about the production of transparent spatial orders and parcels of space. And above all, the assignment of places and individuals.

In such a constellation it was abundantly clear that the transgression of boundaries – one could think for instance of the hordes of girls in Kafka's Trial, oozing through every doorcrack – are evidence of the collapse of the disciplinary regime, or at the very least that they prefigure it. The new situation that has emerged – this is also well-known – is characterized by the fact that there are today fewer prohibitions on mobility than there are imperatives of mobility, which once again deeply transforms the configuration of space.

That is one issue. The status quo. The other question, which one cannot get around, is that every one of these historical transformations of the relationship between the political, the social and the architectural asks for a phenomenology of space. What actually takes place in what spaces? Today there is a definite tendency, at least in our cultures, towards multi-purpose spaces. Spaces are fundamentally multi-purpose spaces. And the best example, perhaps even the utopia of these multi-purpose spaces, is the so-called loft. In a space once used for work, we can now sleep, eat, work. Lofts, in a certain sense, are total-body and total-mind spaces. So the question must be posed again: in these nomadic spaces, in these spaces for the nomads of career and love, which technology of differentiation should we use to re-insert discrimination?

## Why discrimination? Do you mean a kind of active drawing of boundaries?

Yes. Boundaries, for instance, to keep work out of certain spaces. For me that isn't so easy. The same probably goes for you. We even work in bed. How are spaces generated that produce places of concentration, however improvised? Amidst a generalized deconcentration of spaces, we sometimes find ourselves longing for what we know from childhood: the space that consisted of covering a table with a tablecloth and squatting underneath and not being seen.

1 Joseph Vogl (Hg.): Gemeinschaften. Positionen zu einer Philosophie des Politischen, Frankfurt am Main 1994
2 Vogl, S. 8
3 Alberto Melucci: Challenging Codes, Cambridge / New York 1996
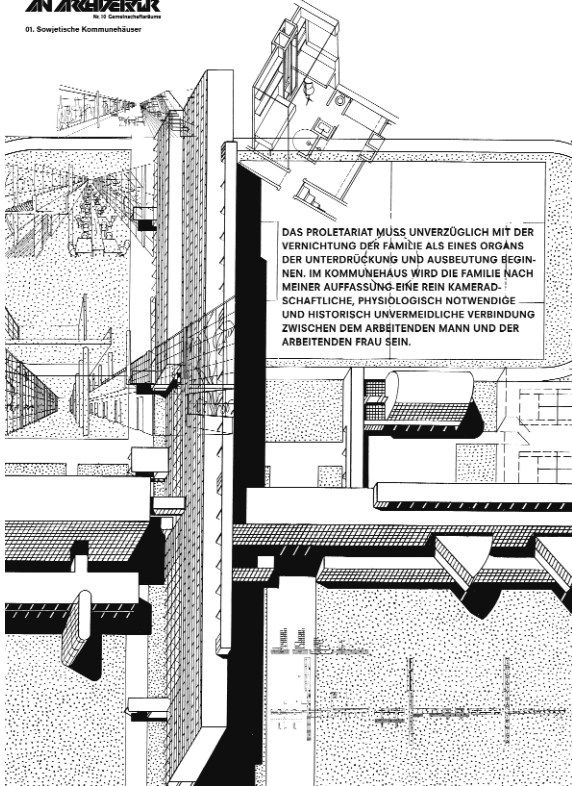4 Vogl, S. 23
5 Vogl, S. 20
6 Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri: Empire. Die neue Weltordnung, Frankfurt am Main 2003
7 Henri Lefèbvre: The Production of Space, Oxford 1991

DAS PROLETARIAT MUSS UNVERZÜGLICH MIT DER VERNICHTUNG DER FAMILIE ALS EINES ORGANS DER UNTERDRÜCKUNG UND AUSBEUTUNG BEGINNEN. IM KOMMUNEHAUS WIRD DIE FAMILIE NACH MEINER AUFFASSUNG EINE REIN KAMERADSCHAFTLICHE, PHYSIOLOGISCH NOTWENDIGE UND HISTORISCH UNVERMEIDLICHE VERBINDUNG ZWISCHEN DEM ARBEITENDEN MANN UND DER ARBEITENDEN FRAU SEIN.

## 01 Soviet Communal Houses

After the October Revolution in Russia the pressing question was how could the everyday life of people living under Socialism be imagined, how should their work, their buying habits, their relationships, their leisure time and their living quarters be organized. Inspired by the communal living, which emerged spontaneously in the expropriated apartments of the bourgeoisie in the cities, the architects sought new communist forms of habitation to radically overcome the individualized forms of family life of the bourgeoisie.



## 02 Globalization-critical groups

In the field of social movement research Della Porta et al. developed an approach to broach the issue of community according to which the construction of collective identity is characteristic for the globalization-critical

movement. In Genoa and elsewhere very diverse individuals and groups protested together despite differing politico-moral convictions and thereby advanced a globalization from the bottom up. The social and age-based heterogeneity of the base is explained by the cognitive definition of goals and means. Apparently a new proletariat of students, intellectuals and unemployed has developed. A politicization of the youth has taken place.



## 03 En Ronda

The "Ciudad Abierta", the "Open City" is a teaching facility and living quarters of the Valparaiso School (Chile) where communal design and construction is being practiced since 1971. An important working method of this communal approach is the "Trabajo en Ronda", a working in a circle that is never completed but rather is a cyclically ongoing process and is developed as a collective group.  Designs and buildings are continually revised and modified in a succession of operations.



## 4 Paris Commune 1871

The Paris Commune declared in March of 1871 only existed for 72 days, after which it was brutally defeated by the troops of the reactionary French government. Based on the model of communal self-government a new model of society was developed which envisioned

a fundamental reorganization of state and society. The separation of church and state, a free secular education system for everyone, the creation of unions and the initiation of workers' councils, laws for occupational health and safety and labor contracts were all included in the innovations of the provisional government



05 Universal Embassy

## 05 Universal Embassy

In December of 2001 a group of Sans Papiers (people without legal documents) occupied the building of the former Somalian embassy in Brussels and established the Universal Embassy there. This served on the one hand as a temporary shelter for the de-legalized, but at the same time it was also symbolically declared the official representation of the Sans Papiers community. It is an embassy, which stands for the rights of migrants and the radical renegotiation of the status of citizenship.



06. Ende des Sozialen Wohnungsbaus

## 06 The End of Social housing

In February of 2003 the local senate of Berlin decided the immediate discontinuation of public subsidization of social housing. With this act it ended a practice of funding, which saw the creation of living space with socially compatible rents for "the broad levels" of the population as a function of the state government and consequently tried to regulate the housing market. In response the Berlin Sistra Management Company successfully sued the regional government of Berlin, which now must continue payments until a final ruling has been reached.
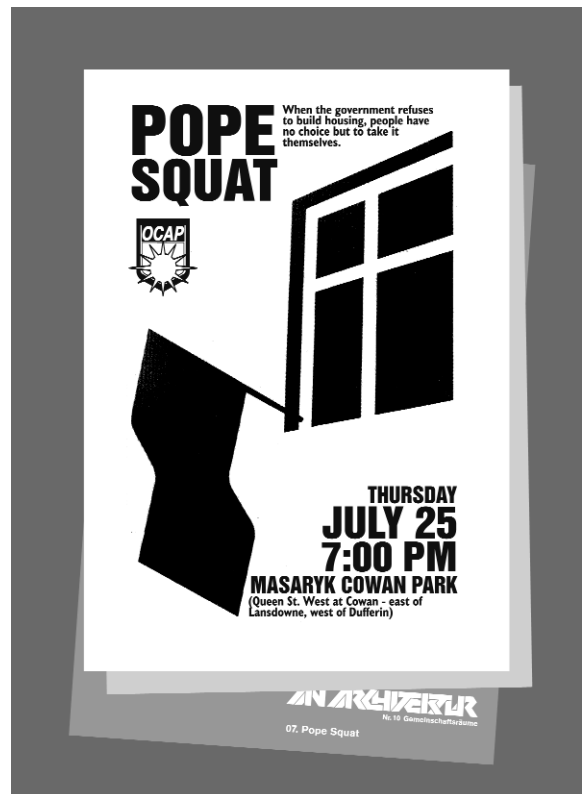


07. Pope Squat

## 07 The Pope Squat

Taking the visit of the pope to the "World Catholic Youth Days" as occasion, the "Ontario Coalition Against Poverty" occupied on July 25th, 2002 a house on King Street West in Toronto as a call against the Canadian housing crisis. Once "The Pope Squat" they renovated the building themselves it served as a self-governed living space for three months and became a cultural venue. The squat was protest made manifest and was marked by a wide community of supporters.



## 08 Zusammen Wohnen (Living Together)

Micha Fedrowitz and Ludger Gailing observed a new tendency towards communal forms of living and described them as a reaction to current shifts in society and as attempts to realize ecologically and socially alternative outlooks on life. Communal Housing Projects can

thereby go beyond their function as a means to shaping one's life and can be understood as strategies for a social and ecological urban development.



## 09 Family and Youth Living Floors

In a complex of buildings established in 1974 by the protestant church of Berlin-Lichtenrade 32 "Familien- und Jugendwohnetagen" (family and youth living floors) were offered in different areas. These are open spaces with kitchenettes whose configuration and use the surrounding tenants could determine themselves. They were furnished and painted collectively, arranged as play areas, communal living rooms or libraries.  The spaces are used for playing ping-pong, cooking and watching TV together or they are used as hobby rooms or storage areas.



## 10 Co-Housing Project

The "Wohnhöfe" (residential courtyards) built in Graz (Austria) in 1975 were planned to enrich the co-habitation of multiple families: "There already exists – spontaneously occurring – a good deal of practical collaboration: transportation to kindergarten and school, carpooling, collective gardening, anything not fixed is lent out, mosaics are laid, the connecting passage is painted, people cook together, the sick are cared for, children sleep over at and occasionally live with neighbors, adults and children sing together and much more."
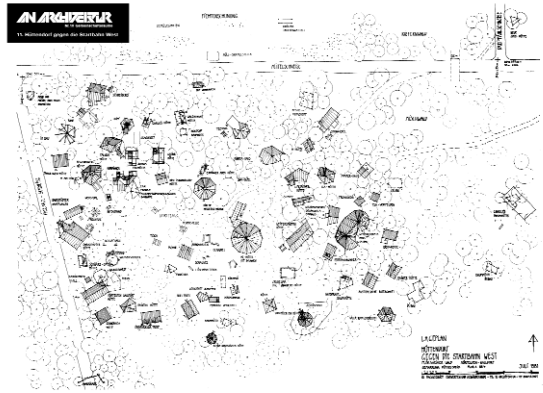


## 11 Squatter Camp against the New West Runway

From October 1980 until November 1981 citizens' initiatives, freaks and student groups erected a squatter camp in the Flörsheimer Wald near Frankfurt am Main (Germany) in the area of the planned extension to the Frankfurt Airport. Together they built and inhabited over 60 huts for community use and housing, to prevent the extension of the airport through the occupation of the construction site and the protest actions generated from the site.
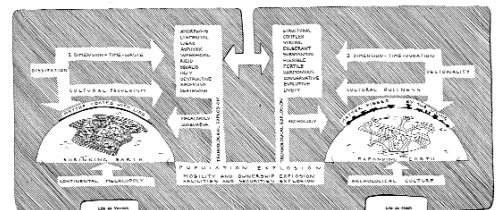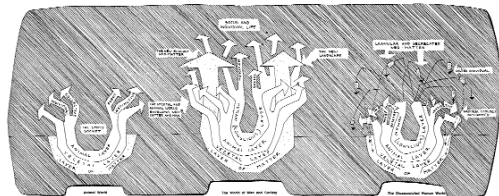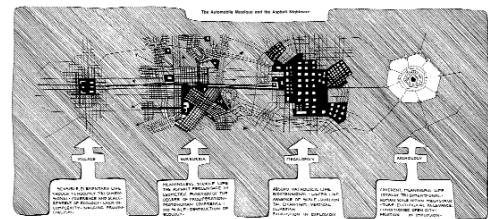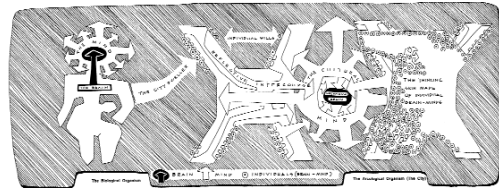
## 12 Archology Arcosanti

Arcosanti in Arizona is based on a master plan by the architect Paolo Soleri and is so far the only attempt to realize his concept of "Archology", the synthesis of architecture and ecology. Alongside the planning guidelines however an unplanned camp developed on the outskirts, which is primarily occupied by youths. Soleri's rejection of this camp reveals the normative nature of his projected spatial counter proposal.



## 13 1km Corviale

Towards the end of the 1970's an Italian group of architects developed in the northwestern periphery of Rom the housing project "Corviale", a 1km long slab, which offers space to 8500 tenants. The Corviale was realized with the inclusion of all architectural ideals of the 1970's: teamwork, theories of neighborhoods, mega-structural thinking, standardization and mass production. Ample shopping and service infrastructures on the 4th floor however were never built. The promenade level was nevertheless used by the residents and others. Soon after the completion of the building around 700 families squatted parts of the building and occupied unfinished empty areas of the structure.



## 14 Asia Pacific Center

5000 to 10000 immigrants of Vietnamese origin live in the Eastern part of Berlin most of who had arrived in the GDR in the late 1970's as immigrant workers. With the collapse of the GDR however they lost their jobs in the factories. For most the regular job market remained closed. The Asia Pacific Center, a Vietnamese business and service center in Berlin-Hohenschönhausen, which was operated from 1997 to 2002 in a former warehouse, was a possibility of autonomously making money for the Vietnamese community.
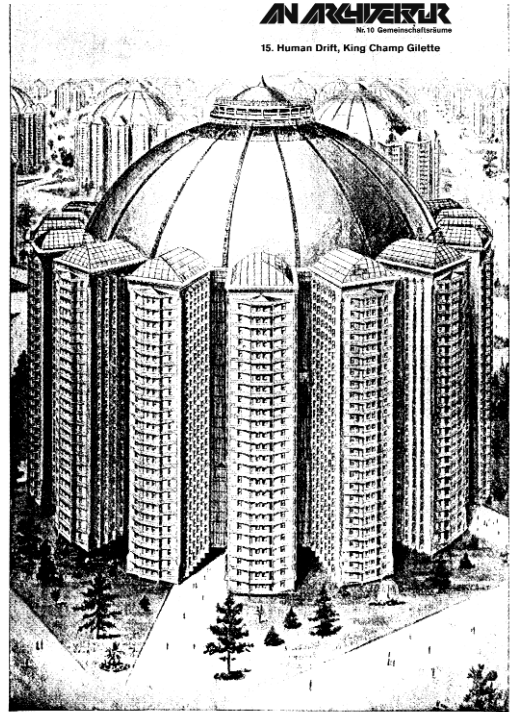


PLATE V.
APARTMENT BUILDING.

## 15 The Human Drift

In 1894 the inventor of the disposable razor, King Champ Gillette, describes and works out the social utopia of an immense metropolis, which was to be home to all people. The electrical power gained from the difference in elevation of the Niagara Falls would transform the large central city into a wonderland. 60 million people would live in huge, hotel-like apartment towers and were thus freed of the nuisances of housekeeping chores.



## 16 Gallaratese occupata!

In the Gallaratese quarter on the periphery of Milan the architects Carlo Aymonino and Aldo Rossi built a new housing complex, which refers typologically and spatially to the Italian worker's housing and to social utopian concepts of community. This architectural order, which alludes to a proletarian self-consciousness, was occu-

pied in 1974 by people seeking housing whereby the recovery of the buildings social function was reclaimed.



## 17 Zanon es de los Obreros
The ceramic tile factory "Zanon" in the Argentinea is one of about 160 factories, which in the course of the national economic crisis was occupied within the last two years by the workers. Zanon together with textile factory "Brukman" in Buenos Aires, which in the meantime has been vacated, and the supermarket "Ex-Tigre" in Rosario is one of the currently best-known and largest worker run companies in Argentina. Since early 2002 the workers co-operative self-runs the production of ceramic tiles after heavy disputes with the company management over unpaid wages and violated security regulations.
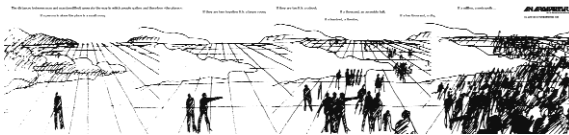


## 18 Life as Fundamental Act
The Florentine architecture group "Superstudio" developed with their "Five Fundamental Acts" a utopia of a technologically overstocked non-hierarchical landscape. In this non-architecture, community was to spontaneously evolve of its own accord in continuous modification without being constrained by the repressions of capitalist space.



## 19 Christiania Selvforvaltning
Concurrent to the attempt of the new ultra right wing populist Danish government to end Christiania as a social experiment there is a large counter movement of solidarity – not with the currently existing, inhabited Christiania but with the historical image of the place as a countercultural Freetown. This lead to an increase in public protests, petitions, and cultural events, which made Christiania once again, contested space.



## 20 Einküchenhaus (One-Kitchen-House)
At the turn of the century the German feminist Lily Braun already calls for the "Einküchenhaus". By relieving women of housekeeping duties through the establishment of professionally run canteen kitchens in housing developments and other technical facilities and services the emancipation of the woman was to be enabled. This project was vehemently criticized within socialist circles as a dangerous attempt "to realize the ideals of socialism in the midst of capitalist society". Soon thereafter the project was built in Berlin, Copenhagen and Vienna by bourgeois reformers.



## 21 Steilshoop
In the 1970's radically participative decision-making structures were initiated in the construction, the use and the administration of the most prominent German experiment for subsidized housing. In the apartments, apartment shares and the entire building the tenants

established a number of community rooms including a day-care center, a bar, a woodshop, a photo-lab and a sauna.



## 22 Auroville

Since its establishment in 1968 Auroville (India) is being realized in a continual process of anarcho-spiritual cohabitation. From the teachings of "integral yoga" by Sri Aurobindo the founder Mira Alfassa known as the "Mother" developed a concept of city and community. Auroville is a continuation of this teaching and suspends the distinction between life and spirituality. Up to now only parts of the utopian city model have been realized. Following the teachings of Sri Aurobindo this model however cannot be an ultimate conclusion of Auroville, but rather only one, which can be interpreted and further, developed. The "Matrimandir" is the center of Auroville which functions as a place of congregation and in whose center stands the symbol of Sri Aurobindo.



## 23 Border camps Europe

Since 1998 every summer border camps were held Europe wide, which acted against the capitalist logic of exploitation and the racist marginalization of the EU-Migration Politics and advocated for a global freedom of movement. The camps are a type of leftist, political summer camp with actionist interventions, with collective protest, provocation and party or autonomous summer school. Organizationally the individual border

camps are increasingly connected through the European "No-Border-Network" and define themselves as such as a leftist counter community against the supranational entity of the European union.
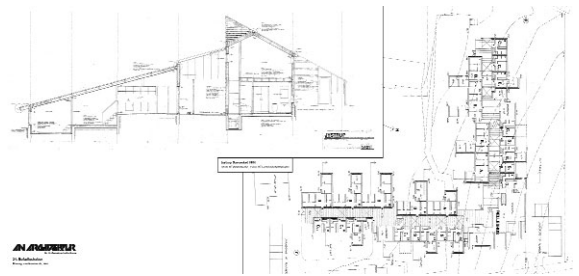


## 24 Bofælleskaber

Over 100 mostly privately initiated co-housing projects were built in Denmark in the 1970's. Translated the terms means "living community" and stands for a form of communal living where the floor areas of the private living spaces are proportionally reduced in favor of community spaces. The individual apartments are arranged around a community building which can include a large dining hall, a common kitchen, a lounge, conference rooms, recreational facilities, a library, woodshops and areas for children.



**dem erdkundigen ein neuer ort auf der siegfriedkarte, dem bourgeois rotes nest, dem sovjetstern nicht rot genug, dem aestheten kaserne, dem gläubigen stätte der religionslosigkeit, dem eigenbrödler zwangserziehungsanstalt, dem privathändler todschlagversuch an seiner wirtschaftsform, und dem genossenschafter die erste schweizerische vollgenossenschaft und eine cooperative rarität europas: das ist die siedelungsgenossenschaft freidorf.**



## 25 Coop Siedelung Freidorf

The "Freidorf" in Muttenz near Basel, Switzerland, was initiated in 1919 by the governing body of various consumers' cooperatives as a sample estate for future

cooperative housing estates and was conceived and built following designs by Hannes Meyer. Hannes Meyer himself lived in the Freidorf for several years until his appointment to the Bauhaus Dessau. However shortly thereafter he criticized the project as bourgeois and as a doomed attempt at reform.



**26 Wagenburgen 1988-2003**
Mobile squatters, which in the early 1990's began to settle the inner-city districts of Berlin are exposed to continuously changing pressures of land utilization. Most of the time they had to make way for representative investment projects. The conflicts over their location were however not only with real estate investors but also with the respective districts and neighbors which due to the presence of the "mobile squatters" worried about the decrease in value of their own properties.
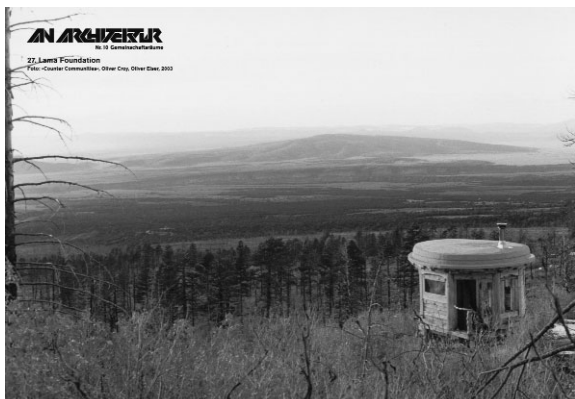


**27 Lama Foundation**
In 1967 New York artists established the "Lama Foundation" in the Sangre de Christo Mountains of New Mexico. The community life of this spiritual commune takes place according to the seasonal rhythms. Several times a day the members congregate in the community hut to eat and pray. For part of the year most members usually retreat to their solitary huts to spend their time in hermitage. As a source of income summer classes are offered. The members also self-publish books and print cloths, t-shirts and bags.



**28 Communes in the New World**
Liselotte and Oswald Mathias Ungers analyze different utopian communities in North America and see therein possibilities for a co-existence of man, which is not based on an ideology of profit and competition. "The practices of the utopians cannot simply be transferred into our industrialized mass society, but insight can be gained from their experiences for today's experiments."
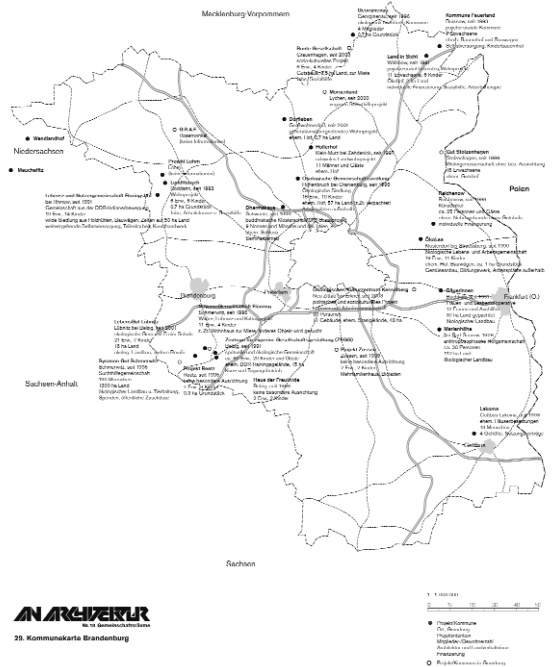
**29 Communes in Brandenburg**

Since the beginning of the 1990's several political, spiritual, ecological, psychosocial or cooperative projects or communes were established in Brandenburg (Germany) as a result of the low cost of local real estate and the proximity to Berlin. Many of the projects survived less because of agricultural self-sufficiency but rather due to offered products and seminars or because of visitors and guests, which participated, temporarily in the everyday life of the communes.

Translated by common room.



**30 NORC Co-op Village**

One of the largest and oldest Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities in the US, the NORC Co-op Villages was established out of the need to help the increasing senior population of the Lower East Side cooperative housing developments age in place.  In addition to medical services provided for the senior residents the NORC facilitates the continued integration and participation with society keeping up a long history of grassroots activity of the local community



**31 ABC No Rio**

The Lower East Side, NYC arts center ABC No Rio began when a group of visual artists staged a building occupation as exhibition called the Real Estate Show. In 1983 a group of performing artists took over. In the early '90s, control passed to a collective of punk rokkers. Today a group of collectives runs ABC, producing art shows, music and poetry events, and running workshops in screen printing and photography. The ABC community shares values and convictions, including commitment to social justice, equality, anti-authoritarianism, autonomous action, and collective processes. It is a community both local and international.

**Imprint**