

SPOOL



Landscape metropolis #3

practicing design for
particular places

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SPOOL - Journal of Architecture and the Built Environment

SPOOL is a journal initiative in the field of 'architecture and the built environment'. It puts a strong emphasis on thematic threads that result into thematic issues, like in this case: Landscape metropolis. These threads address existing and upcoming research programmes/ interests in Europe and beyond, and ensure a steady stream of potential copy. Treating these topics as threads within one journal allows SPOOL to focus on the interrelationship between the fields, something that is often lost in specialised journals. SPOOL welcomes within this framework original papers and associated open data on research that deal with interventions in architecture and the built environment by means of design, engineering and/or planning.

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Cover images

Front: 'Open Gates' Program. This intervention was realized on the occasion of the Cultural Heritage Days. The gates of two buildings, formerly palaces owned by aristocratic families, were opened to the public. In both cases, inhabitants organized the event where presentations, exhibitions as well as discussions helped the visitors to learn about the building's history, the people living in it, and about their efforts to sustain the heritage site they live in. The projects showed how much locals appreciate their cultural heritage within the neighbourhood and highlighted how open they are to sharing their passion with others. // Concept & main organizers: Judit Györi, László Perényi, Dominika Tihanyi // Realization: locals, Judit Györi, László Perényi, Dominika Tihanyi, Tamás Tibor // No funding // (Image by László Perényi, 2009)

Back: Nordkapp, 1845 by Peter Balke. Sparebankstiftelsen DNB, dep. Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum, Tromsø. (Photograph by Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum).

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Practicing design for particular places

"It seems a commonplace that almost everyone is born with the need for identification with his surroundings and a relationship to them – with the need to be in a recognizable place. So sense of place is not a fine art extra, it is something we cannot afford to do without."--- Jan Nairn, 1965

Since its first issue, SPOOL has used the term 'landscape metropolis' to address urban formations beyond the traditional city that – despite their increasing ubiquity - still lack in-depth attention from the perspective of aesthetic appreciation, designerly concepts of development, guidelines for planning and governance, and design theoretical apprehension. The prefix 'landscape' is used to describe attention to these topics through the lens of landscape architecture, and offers, we feel, some novel potentials: in considering the metropolis as a cultural phenomenon that is constructed mentally as well as physically and socially; which relies on human as well as on natural driving forces; and which contains, somewhere in the cracks of the mosaic, in the 'in-between', places with distinguishable qualities – particular places.

In an era of globalization, landscape architects and urban designers have learnt to think big in the landscape metropolis – in the large scale and with far-reaching visions. Yet this bigness is still largely the domain of international players, and its effects do not necessarily foster the quality of urban spaces in the landscape metropolis. And this is also the moment we observe tendencies to think small again: design interventions on the neighbourhood level, transformations of unused spaces through low-cost, bottom-up initiatives, centred on awareness-raising and community building and which shape space temporarily. In this new playing field, designers work more and more with that which exists, taking everything into consideration, including those scattered pieces of the metropolitan tissue that defy definition. If we look at them through the lens of landscape architecture, can we apprehend their qualities beyond the static lens of the architectural object, by reading them as dynamic landscape architectural forms? What is the nature of such places and what is the vocabulary to describe them? The papers in this issue provide tools to sharpen our view for the particular, to identify the places of the landscape metropolis in their structural, material, dynamic, practical, atmospheric, mnemonic and discursive identities. They tentatively propose a new terminology for places eluding conceptual description, using works and words for something we still hardly have a name for.

In the two issues of SPOOL's volume 3, designerly and discursive work on particular places of the landscape metropolis is explored much like a gold digger might do – by taking a closer look, spotting those grains that merit attention amongst the vast ore body that is the metropolitan territory. Once found, these grains evoke all kinds of questions: How to grasp the particularities of places—their aesthetic, social, atmospheric, relational, and dynamic qualities, which are always materialized in a physical situation that has a particular form, and makes up part of a bigger picture? How to enhance identified particularities in a designerly way? How to theorize understandings of place for the landscape metropolis? How to replace tacitly accepted ideas of beauty when identifying a diversity of beauties in places so far overlooked?

The papers of these two issues on particular places do not provide a grand narrative. The authors published here accept the complexity of our take on the landscape metropolis, and put forward scattered narratives that emerge from the very interstices of the grand narratives, and of the many practices of research in and for the landscape metropolis. Authors have sent us proposals for theorizing and methodizing approaches to place and landscape metropolitan qualities, which we have grouped in the first issue under the title

'Capturing Particularities in the Landscape Metropolis'. Other submissions reflect on design work, sometimes imagined, sometimes realized, and sometimes also carried out by or in collaboration with the authors. This group of papers is collected in the second issue, entitled 'Practicing Design for Particular Places'.

Practicing in the landscape metropolis today means one hops from bike to train to car and creates links between fragments of the landscape metropolis, in ever changing moves. This is what we observe our authors doing through their research. To capture particularities, they move from on-site experience to off-site representation (Farsø and Henriksson), from physical fieldwork to digitally expanded mapping (Hemmersam and Morrison), from theorizing atmosphere to experimenting with cartography (Spanou), from walking to knowing (Schultz), from appreciating the urban to defining its quietness (Nielsen), from theories of frame to design as framing (Alexandrescu). To suggest and reflect practices of design for particular places, our authors examine narrative approaches (Havik and van Haeren), dynamic readings (Prezelj), durational art strategies (Tihanyi), participatory practices (Siarheyeva), DIY aesthetics (Dahl), and the staging of atmospheric encounters (Labadini).

Research about particular places can hardly be imagined without reference to such places, and unsurprisingly, all our authors start to develop their thoughts from a specific location, which offers us a picture of its own right of what the 'landscape metropolis' might include: the Öresund region across Denmark and Sweden (Farsø and Henriksson), a couple of Arctic cities in Norway, Russia and Canada (Hemmersam and Morrison), the Spanish region of Catalonia (Spanou), the German city of Freiburg (Schultz), newly developed districts in Amsterdam and Copenhagen (Nielsen), the transformed centre of Bukarest (Alexandrescu), urban fringes in the Netherlands (Havik and van Haeren), a contaminated site in the outskirts of Paris (Prezelj), a central district of Budapest (Tihanyi), harbour sites in Marseille (Siarheyeva) and Gothenburg (Dahl), a seafront in the Norwegian city of Brattøra (Labadini).

Practitioners of the landscape metropolis shift attention from people on the sidewalk to a smartphone message to a shower from a sudden cloud. This is how our authors unfold their thinking about particular places, and that is how we invite our readers to practice these two issues of SPOOL – with attention to the particular, while establishing links between one particularity and another, and to the overarching whole. Place is specific, 'somewhere'. Specific places can make connections between what is local and particular and what is regional and worldwide, as the Canadian geographer Edward Relph wrote in his study on the concept of place entitled *Place and Placelessness* (2009). He described place as the intimate and specific basis for how each of us connects with the world, with the potential to serve as a pragmatic foundation for addressing profound local and global challenges that are emerging in the present – be it megacity growth, climate change or economic disparity. Rethinking the particular, we argue, is urgently needed to bring affect back into our design and research endeavours. Or, as American scholar Elizabeth Meyer suggested on a recent conference in Malmö, 'what if landscape design techniques (...) were recalibrated so that openness included the uncertain affective capacities and propensities of human emotional interactions with designed landscapes that evoked awe? In doing so, might they challenge our sense of the public, and in doing so, suggest new modes of being in the world?'

Saskia de Wit and Lisa Diedrich

A story of three

a narrative approach to reading atmosphere and making place

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Abstract

This article explores a site-specific, narrative approach to placemaking in order to reveal ways of reading and reacting to spatial atmospheres. The contribution presents an MSc Architecture project that results in the design of three particular places on the fringes of the Dutch urban landscape by means of utilizing a narrative approach to reading and analysing the existing site-specific atmospheres. The three architectural follies designed within the landscape present opportunities for the insertion of narrative through experience, illuminating the contents within the existing context. The intention of the project was to explore how an architectural installation could serve as a locus for the generation of new trajectories of perception and understanding. Through a sequencing of events within each landscape folly, the existing site is revealed to the reader in a new way, establishing new circumstances to engage with the landscape. The implementation of narrative within the processes of placemaking allowed for the overlay of subjective interpretations through personal experience, creating spaces saturated with personal signification and interpretation. The three projects demonstrate the necessity of freedom of imagination and interpretation in placemaking and how a narrative approach to design can allow one to be fully involved in the creation of personal and particular place.

Keywords

placemaking; narrative; urban Fringes; atmosphere; literary methods

Alternative methods for reading and designing place

This contribution discusses a site-specific, narrative approach to placemaking, aiming to find ways to read and react to site-specific atmospheres. The ongoing processes of urbanization in the Dutch Randstad has caused the creation of fringe zones on the edges of many cities. These interstitial realms, aptly defined as a metropolitan landscape, include spaces that are fragmented, and lacking spatial identity and definition (Tisma, and Velde, 2014, p. 603). Being neither urban nor rural, these spatial configurations have an absence of significant places amid their discontinuous tissue of parts and pieces. These interstitial spaces have been referred to as *Zwischenstadt* (Sieverts, 2003) and as *Diffuse City* (Gianotti and Vigano, 2012). At first sight, they may appear as a placeless geography (de Wit, 2014, 14) that experientially goes unregistered: their meaning and significance being lost to the rush of daily life, experienced merely as grey, anonymous areas by the passer-by. Nevertheless, the atmosphere of such spaces is dynamic and multifaceted. An immense amount of activity occurs within the variable and interlocking typologies and geographic scales. These spaces are a reservoir of possible perceptions, filled with unique connections and characteristics that simply need to be presented in a new light. The detriment of such spaces is their lack of clear focus, disallowing them to attract awareness or engage understanding because they are too chaotic, dynamic and in a constant state of flux. Such boundary zones of indeterminacy, this article argues, should not be seen as a hindrance or limit, but rather as a place for new possibilities. What these spaces require is a means of gathering and grounding, a concretization of their contents in order to create a pause and a place for the experiencing body to engage physically and perceptively with the surroundings. The article presents a recent diploma project (MSc Architecture), which proposes a narrative approach to the reading and designing of atmospheres by means of analysis of and design for three particular places in the fringes of the Dutch urban landscape.

Site-specific atmospheres

A key notion within this project is atmosphere. As difficult as it is to fully grasp and define, atmosphere is one of the key qualitative aspects of urban places (Havik, Tielens and Teerds, 2013). Atmosphere, as the assemblage of both subject and space, is the coming together of objective, spatial and material arrangements, and the embodied, perceiving subject (Böhme, 2006). It is, therefore, a construction dependent on individual interpretation and ephemeral experiences. As the result of embodied experiences, atmospheric spaces allow one to relate to place beyond its physical forms, enabling generic sites or everyday surroundings to become relative and relatable, intimate and near. Being simultaneously the result of material properties of space and the immaterial realm of perceptions, atmosphere remains difficult to define, and new approaches are needed to deal with such atmospheric quality in (landscape-) architectural terms. The discourse on phenomenology, investigating the embodied experience of the world around us, provides a crucial point of departure for further research into the atmospheric qualities of places. A number of authors in the architectural field, who have a long pedigree of their investigations in architecture and phenomenology, such as Juhani Pallasmaa and Alberto Pérez-Gómez, have recently brought their focus to atmosphere. Pallasmaa speaks of atmospheric imagination, and calls into work the notion of empathy: in order to imagine how one would 'live' a certain situation, one has to be empathetic. Pallasmaa is convinced "*that atmospheric qualities arise from the designer's empathetic sensitivity and skill.*" (Pallasmaa in Havik, 2013, p. 43). In *Attunement*, the eminent architecture theorist Alberto Pérez-Gómez (2016) appeals for the

seeking of a balanced (attuned) relationship between man and his environment, and looks into the notions of 'stimmung' and atmosphere. He suggests that it is through the linguistic dimension of architecture that we could be able to make sense of attuned atmosphere. Pérez-Gómez has stressed the "*importance of poetic narrative*" for obtaining attuned environments.

In order to recognize and reveal the site-specific atmospheres of these seemingly 'placeless' urban fringes, we turn to a narrative method: not by literally working with literary stories, but through the practice of 'site-reading' and by turning to narrative processes of placemaking. Through a close reading of the embodied experience of physical and perceptual participation, the fleeting qualities of neutral space become an identifiable and relatable place. Place, this project argues, is made at the precise moment when the perception of the real and the projection of new possibilities converge to introduce a new articulation of space of which one feels a part. Through personal engagement and insertion into our spatial environments, atmospheres and elements of space no longer appear as a disjointed and fragmented expanse, but as a place: a situated locus of moments, experiences, and occurrences. A site-specific atmosphere is not rooted in the place objectively, nor in the mind subjectively. Its totality involves the coupling of physical manifestation and dynamic, tangible, yet ephemeral changing seasons, weather, time, and presence, along with the sensory apparatus of the perceiving subject (Rigby, 2003, p.11). As researchers of site-specific atmospheres, we could look at the integration of the material, human behavioural and psychological worlds that define and denote a sense of place. With the idea to work with the sense of place, we indeed position ourselves within the discourse of the genius loci. While Norberg Schulz' notion of an essential "*spirit of place*" (Norberg-Schulz, 1980) remains a source of inspiration, we acknowledge that such a 'spirit of place' involves a balancing and mediation between physical-spatial ensembles of the geography and the psychological perspectives that people prescribe to place (Casakin and Bernardo, 2012, p.13). Indeed, no single place is experienced in exactly the same way by two different people, and the experience of place is more complex than simply registering its specific characteristics. Doreen Massey maintains that each place consists of multiple identities, experienced differently by different people. She speaks of placemaking as the weaving together of ongoing stories, geometries and events to create a distinct and connected constellation within the wider topographies of space (Massey, 2005, 131). To establish such an understanding of site-specific atmosphere and to establish a sense of place, this research and design project explores the process of narrative within the application of small-scaled and curated installations.

Reading Layers of Atmosphere

The project entailed the reading of site-specific atmospheres of three particular places at the fringes of the Dutch urban landscape. Three particular sites were chosen, each with an area of one square kilometer, in the region of the Rotterdam metropolitan landscape. The three seemingly similar sites on the outskirts of Rotterdam all shared fragmented and hybrid spatial characteristics. The sites were each a mix of industrial, residential, infrastructural, recreational and other kinds of urban tissue that penetrated natural areas creating varying densities of space (Fig. 1). Areas were chosen in the regions of Barendrecht, Berkel en Rodenrijs, and Nieuwerkerk aan den IJssel. Each site, from an initial perspective, appeared to be very similar in nature: each an undefined area on the edges of the Dutch cityscape (Fig. 2-4). Though all were chosen due to their similar hybrid and seemingly 'placeless' character, it was the aim, through various forms of reading the site-specific atmospheres, to discover their differences and the hidden qualities located, but potentially lost, within each landscape. In order to create place within each, the determinants and actors within each dynamic space needed to be deciphered.

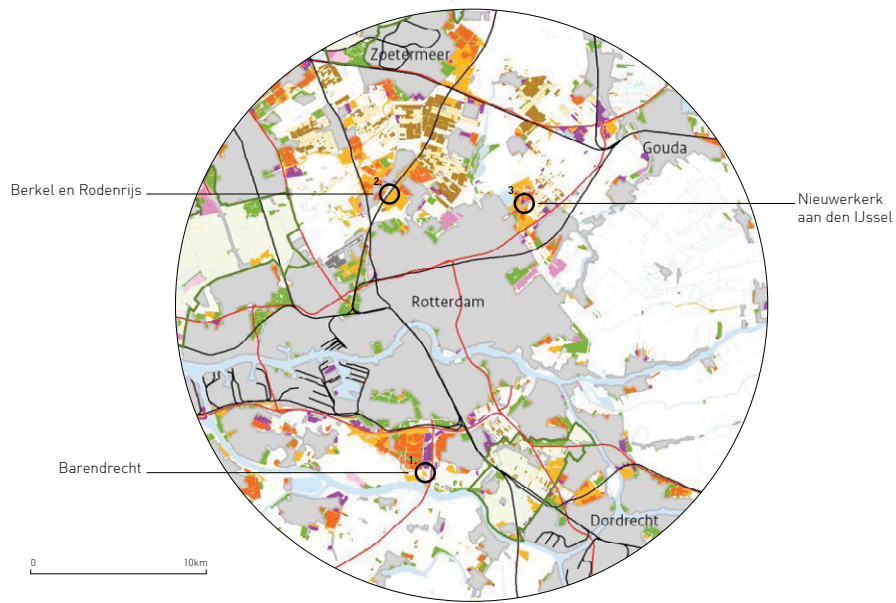
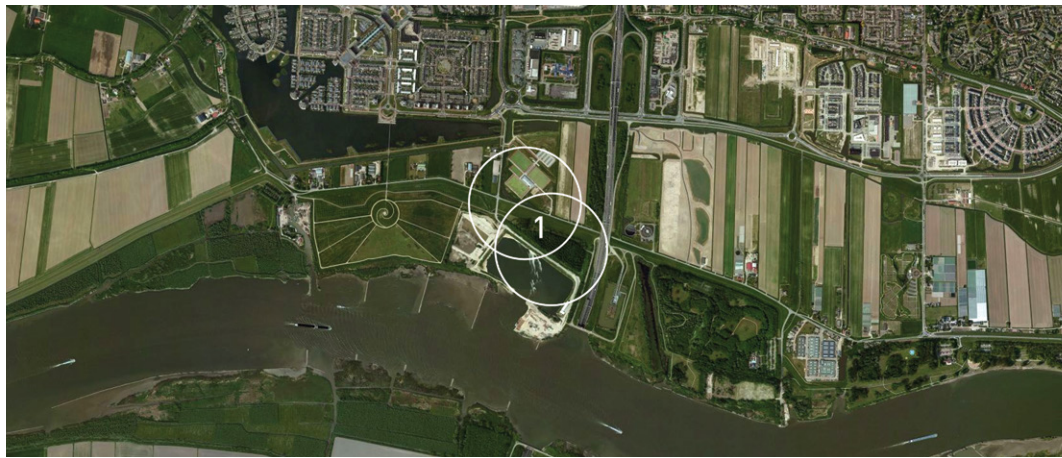


FIGURE 1 Urban Expansion Areas in the Rotterdam - The Hague Region. The three site locations were chosen based on the hybridization and lack of characterisation of landscapes in the surrounding areas of Rotterdam. These areas are neither urban nor rural, but are instead a mix of industry, residential, recreational and agricultural areas. They are transitional zones, placeless areas; they are spaces gone unrecognized. The three sites chosen were in (1) Barendrecht, (2) Berkel en Rodenrijs, and (3) Nieuwerkerk aan den IJssel. (Image by Tisma and Van der Velde, 2014).



a Aerial photograph: Depiction of the natural landscape and spatial systems of the city (Map data: Google)



b Site photographs revealing the interacting elements and spatial formations on site.

FIGURE 2 Barendrecht

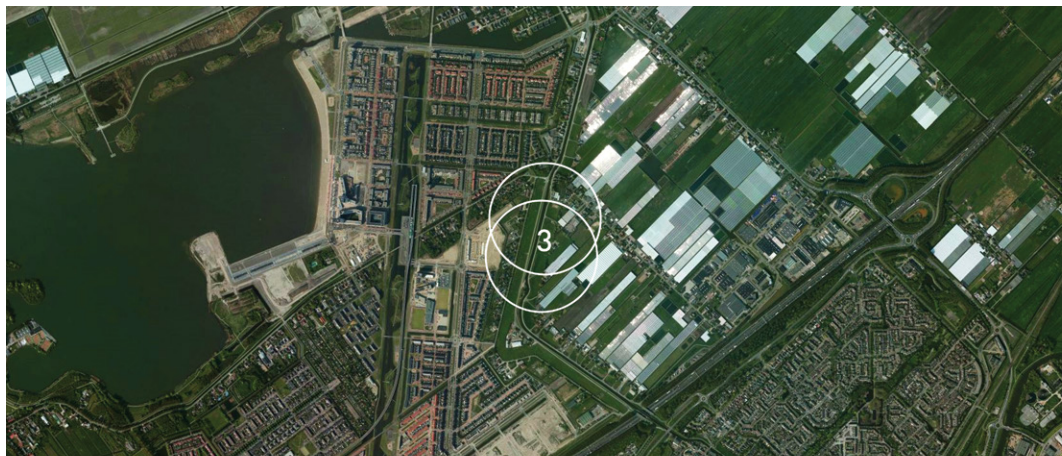


a Aerial photograph: Depiction of the natural landscape and spatial systems of the city (Map data: Google)



b Site photographs revealing the interacting elements and spatial formations on site.

FIGURE 3 Berkel en Rodenrijs



a Aerial photograph: Depiction of the natural landscape and spatial systems of the city (Map data: Google)



b Site photographs revealing the interacting elements and spatial formations on site.

FIGURE 4 Nieuwerkerk aan den IJssel

The investigation revolved largely around analyzing each site by means of the nine categories that Peter Zumthor defined as the essential elements of atmosphere in his text on architectural environments and surrounding objects. In this text, he distinguished key concerns that guide his architectural work towards a site-specific atmosphere (Zumthor, 2006). The project started by deconstructing and diagrammatically analyzing each of the three interstitial sites, based on each atmospheric contributing element that Zumthor outlined. The nine analyzed elements were the Body of Architecture, Material Compatibility, The Sound of a Space, The Temperature of a Space, Surrounding Objects, Between Composure and Seduction, Tension between Interior and Exterior, Levels of Intimacy, and The Light on Things (Figs. 5-7). This dissection of aspects of atmosphere was the first step in impartially determining what elements were currently acting on the site. Characteristics related to sounds of the space, material compatibility and surrounding objects seemed to characterize the atmosphere of each unique site to the greatest extent. Through photography, video and sound recording, these spatial qualities were analyzed further in order to better understand their presence and impact on the overall contextual character. The nine elements of atmosphere are analyzed at each of the three sites. The repetition of analysis allows each site to reveal its own individual atmospheric qualities, highlighting the existing qualities of each site and directing the focus of the architectural folly.

After such analysis of the placeless interstices chosen as sites, our first impression of the sites as lacking value or significance was indeed falsified. Differences and distinctions arose from each investigation, allowing each site to reveal its unique qualities and characteristics. The spaces began to resonate as places after such atmospheric reading and analysis, allowing the hidden potentials of the site to surface. Though this analysis, it became apparent that these potentials might be revealed through architectural intervention, which would allow the sharing of the site's stories. To summarize the experience and personal perceptions of each site, a post card was written to describe each spatial encounter. The practice of writing postcards, normally associated with a voyage abroad or a visit to a capital city, showing magnificent landscapes or important monuments, was now overlaid onto a landscape that would normally go unnoticed. It is uncommon to give such importance to these intermediate and commonly transitioning places, but, like poetry, the words reveal a new order and new way, both literally and conceptually, of reading the site (Figs. 8-10). Through the documentation of each experience, one can see how the journey through Site One in Barendrecht resulted in feelings of being overcome with sounds, whereas in Berkel en Rodenrijs (Site Two) one experienced feelings of exposure and vastness. In Nieuwerkerk aan den IJssel (Site Three) the journey's description revolves around water and its simultaneous presence and inaccessibility. Such descriptions of these 'placeless' sites already enables one to become more engaged in the site, realizing differences through personal experience.

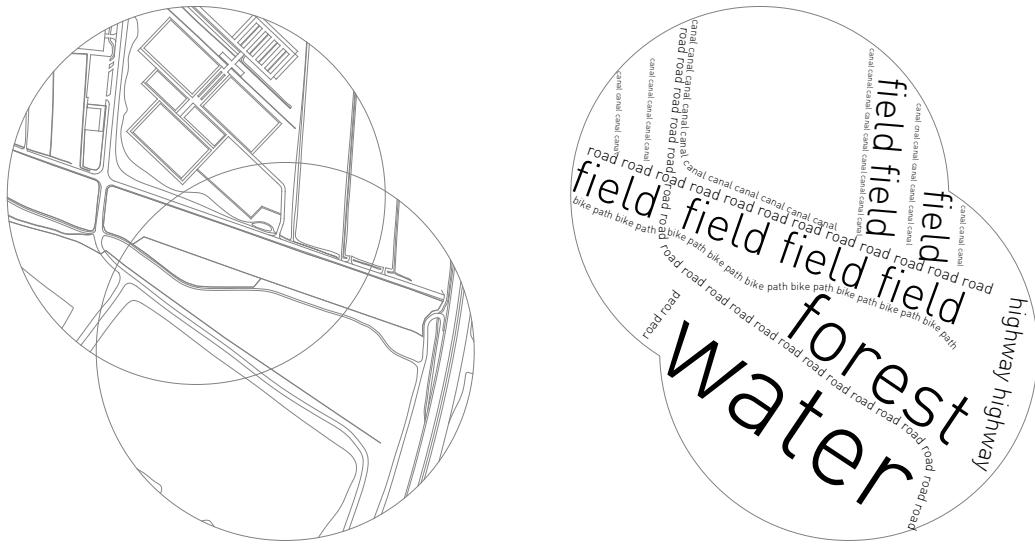


FIGURE 5 Zumthor Atmospheric Analysis of Barendrecht (Drawing by Kristen Van Haeren 2015).

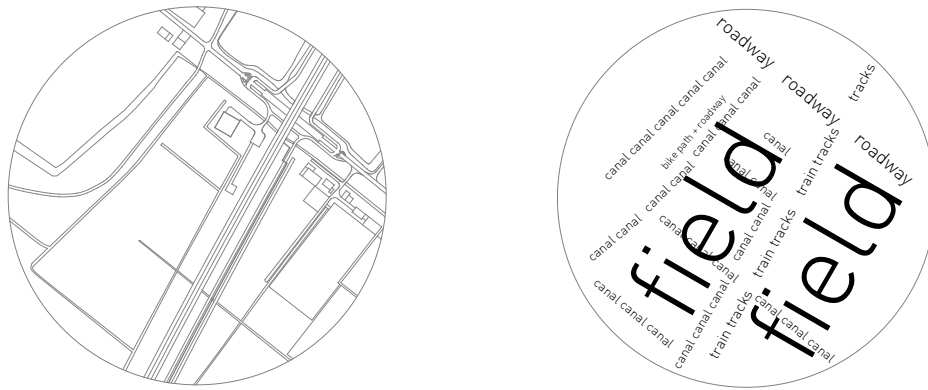


FIGURE 6 Zumthor Atmospheric Analysis of Berkel en Rodenrijs (Drawing by Kristen Van Haeren 2015).



FIGURE 7 Zumthor Atmospheric Analysis of Nieuwerkerk aan den IJssel (Drawing by Kristen Van Haeren 2015).



FIGURE 8 Barendrecht - sounds of the space. Postcard recollecting the journey across the landscape. As one would write about experiencing an iconic place or landmark, these postcards depict the encounter with each site. The short narrative allow the sites to gain differentiation of character, bringing a new life to the typical Dutch Landscape (2015).



POST CARD

It was all open. Every inch of it was open. It was hard to find a place where I could feel secure. Seclusion was given up to the vastness of the field; to the open plains of green that are inescapable by eye but inaccessible by foot. They surrounded me with every step taken. All I could do was circle them, all I could do was see them. They were physically bounded by canals of water that served as a mote does to a castle; keeping everything beyond it out. The eyes were left the task of travelling; moving and scanning the vast landscape, touching and exploring the grounds as the feet would have done themselves. The fields did not allow anything to be hidden. When a biker passed, I knew, when a train sped by, I knew, when a sheep decided to lower its head to take dinner, I knew. There was no sense of privacy here. The openness leads to the sense that everything was in motion. The tree's twigs blowing in the breeze. Each leaf flapping with every gust, waving in greeting as one passed by. The grasses all bent in one direction and then another, dancing along with the whistling wind. Bikes, planes, trains, buses, all passing the site, leaving nothing but me and their sound behind. I was exposed to a symphony of mechanics; each contraption of metal and gears creating its own rhythm, inserting its own verse into the song. Humming and buzzing along their individual paths that were placed to allow for their transition, but not for their pause. Always in motion. I am not even sure if those who transgress the site realize its bounded nature; if they realize that the path that they are taking is purely structuring their experience and dictating their perception. When one is in motion, they do not realize the movement of the rest of the world; they only see ahead, and do not know what they have left behind.

FIGURE 9 Berkel en Rodenrijs - exposed to the vastness. Postcard recollecting the journey across the landscape. As one would write about experiencing an iconic place or landmark, these postcards depict the encounter with each site. The short narrative allow the sites to gain differentiation of character, bringing a new life to the typical Dutch Landscape (2015).



POST CARD

There is little choice other than to continue down the path that one has started. Forwards was my only option, unless I turned around and started again. I was forced to head straight, with no sign of when I would be able to access the other side. There were people over there, on the opposite side, walking in parallel to me. Our strides matched, but there was no way in telling when, if ever, our paths would cross. There were homes over there, across the way, lining the banks, with backyards of fields and farms. But their presence, like the people, resembled those dreams where you are lost and cannot find your way out. I remained separated from the other side, divided by the canal's bends and straights that continued to shadow me along my walk. The ducks didn't seem to mind this situation. Why would they? What a pleasant and unbothered place they have to reside. The canal bed all to themselves, undisturbed by boats and pedestrians alike. There was no way for a person like me interact with the water, feel the water, and truly understand its presence. It simply just stood there, sparkling in the sporadic sunlight, taunting the eye and remaining ignorant to touch.

A few passing cars and bikes; only a distant and background sound to their ears. I envied these ducks. It was not until after many minutes, after my many steps going forward, each contemplating turning around, that I saw the bridge. Small, yet stable, it provided room for one person at a time to cross the canal, to finally reach the other side that has been subject to the gaze ever since the journey started. I took to the bridge and paused when I reached its peak. Staring down the long straight of water that had lead me to this destination. I could now see in symmetry how the river's rough edges of reeds and water weeds slowly dispersed and penetrated the site past the roads and into fields of green. The river that I had categorized as a division, could now be realized as a connection; adjoining two different sides in one space. It was an inescapable presence. It was definitely a physical boundary, but it was also, seen from atop of the bridge, a uniting entity and a force that without your knowing or conscious control, took a hold of your notice, never letting it go.

FIGURE 10 Nieuwerkerk aan den IJssel - always at the water's edge. Postcard recollecting the journey across the landscape. As one would write about experiencing an iconic place or landmark, these postcards depict the encounter with each site. The short narrative allow the sites to gain differentiation of character, bringing a new life to the typical Dutch Landscape (2015).

Narrative as a placemaking approach

Following this reading of the three sites, the project aimed to investigate how the site-specific atmospheres could be revealed or enhanced through architectural design. For placemaking projects, the stories of place become crucial. Indeed, it is through stories that the genius loci of a place is assembled and shared. The practice of narration allows for the binding of characters, events and places into a personal construct. By engaging in narration, the designer becomes a participant in the process and no longer a spectator. Following Doreen Massey, places become collections of stories, embedded with memories and personal meaning, where one is able to situate oneself within the dynamic whole.

The practice of narrative within the processes of placemaking allows for the overlay of subjective interpretations of contextual circumstances and events through personal experience. Narratives allow place to be saturated with subjective signification, forming a very personal geography through an individualized interpretation of experience, and a making sense of a sequence of events. The uniqueness of a narrative approach is that it maintains its point of departure and conceptual roots in the world one inhabits, and builds upon the cognitive mechanisms that arise from existing places (Coates, 2012, 14). It is in this way that the readings of the three sites and the resulting stories (the layered atmospheric analyses and the postcards) were used as point of departure for the design of three small buildings, which could be seen as follies or landscape installations.

The intention to create architectural follies within the landscape was to present an opportunity for the creation of a narrative through experience, allowing one to see, from an unfamiliar angle, what might otherwise be considered unremarkable. The founding of an architectural place was meant to serve as a locus for the generation of new trajectories of perception and understanding. It is through the act of building that spatial experience could be choreographed, creating possibilities for previously unrelated elements to engage and emerge. However, no construct can stand there alone. It is only through the pairing of spatial construct and individual interpretation and narrative, that place can be established. Places are always personal projections and collections of stories of spaces that are lived in and experienced.

Within the three sites on the outskirts of Rotterdam, the architecture interventions served as a means of creating a plot that assembled and structured a new narrative of place. Each significant part, each relative piece of the landscape's atmospheric composition, was given meaning through the architectural whole. The ensemble of constructed moments and sequences of events, created and depicted through a sectional study, revealed the site and elements through the progression of experience, providing moments of focus within the dynamic area, and exposing a composition of site-specific qualities that had previously gone unnoticed (Figs. 8-10).

These sectional diagrams are made of an interplay of transitions and events or pauses. The sectional studies reveal the way in which the architectural folly creates an environment for personal narratives. By means of creating an experiential path that reveals the site to the user through fragments, each person is free to interpret, read and understand the site through their own eyes and in relation to their own personal assemblage of memories and experiences. The segmenting of place as a whole allows for individual and atmospheric qualities of the site to be revealed when, typically, they may be overlooked. The section depicts the experience of the site by situating subjective interpretations beside objective happenings, allowing the reader of the sectional narrative to grasp the place experience. The interplay of transitions and events is illuminated through adjectives, feelings and visual relational images that encourage imagination and interpretation to guide each place experience, strengthening one's connection to place.

The designs are simultaneously a reflection of and a response to the atmospheric elements that were uncovered during the initial site readings. They each function as a progression that leads one from their current perspectives of the landscape to the newly situated and architecturally enabled ones. Whether below, above or integrated within the landscape itself, the designed responses allowed one to be newly oriented within and connected to space. The architecturally revealed places serve as a source of new identity and belonging, forged through the formation of emotional and psychological ties with the environment (Relph, 2008, p.141).

The resultant tunnel (Fig. 11-12), tower (Fig. 13-14), and bridge (Fig. 15-16), through their typological differences alone, reveal how the apparently similar sites within the Dutch landscape encompass drastically differing spatial atmospheres and compositional elements. Each project, created as a response to site-specific qualities, finds itself anchored to drastically different topographic situations. The atmospheres of each site, impregnated with a range of cultural and geographical qualities, cause the architectural derivative of each place to differ both physically and experientially. In different ways, the three projects illuminate their site's sounds, views and textures by means of creating a sequential experience that transitions between obscuring and revealing conditions. The landscape makes its way in through moments and materials that make up the interior experience, creating a place that resonates the rhythm of the spatial context through a focused vision. The segregation from some aspects, and selective choice of others, enables a place to be centered and specific, established on clear foundations that allow each depicted aspect of the environment to take on a new, noticeable presence. In the tunnel, one is subjected to a loss of vision, and an alternating amplification and loss of site sounds. This uncommon experience brings emphasis to another sense that is usually taken over by the prioritization of vision. The structure of the tower, made up of small rhythmic windows with set views to individual aspects of the site, means that neither they nor the viewer are permanently lost in the sea of the vast landscape. Lastly, the bridge allows one to no longer be limited by the presence of water, but instead allows for interaction with it through a variety of perspectives and experiences.

Overall, the architectural installments bring new life to a space, revitalizing and revealing essences of our spatial environments by offering a framework for a different way of seeing and being in a place. It is in the small details and nuances of design, the minor movements and short glances, that one's sensual and spatial experiences become interwoven with space. By providing new instances of connection and movement within an existing and unchanged environment, a new dialogue begins to take hold of both spectator and space.

The design objective for each of the three volumes was to reveal what is hidden within each interstitial landscape. The installations ignite an intrigue in users, standing bluntly within the context, and invite a wondering and wandering within its walls. Through a sequencing of events in each architectural intervention, the existing site is intermittently restricted and revealed to the reader, the experienter. The architectural form establishes new circumstances to engage with the landscape, awakening one's distant gaze to one of focus and precision, exposing a composition of site-specific qualities that had not been realized previously.

Making a Difference

The projects are a reaction to the typical Dutch topography but also its unique differentiations in each location. Upon close investigation, each site is located and anchored in a different topographic situation, ranging from more rural to more residential, to one that is predominantly transitional. The infrastructure

and surrounding urban compositions play a large role in the derivative of each place, causing the architecture of each site and situation to respond to a range of cultural and geographical qualities. As each design is both a response and reaction to the landscape, they offer unique experiences and moments of pause within their respective chaotic contexts. Each architectural installation offers the opportunity to identify, orient and dwell in the here-and-now, in a personal and momentary place.

For this project, the process of reading and creating site-specific narratives has been explored through small-scale architectural interventions in order to establish a sense of place by means of making the elements of site more accessible and recognizable to the user. The project uses architecture not as a function of insertion but as a means of serving a site, illuminating the contents within the context. From this approach, personal narrative through the experience of architecture can become the method of organizing dynamic atmospheres and undefined space, connecting the disparate parts of site with exact intention. Architectural narratives can be a means of modification and ordering of space that establish an absolute meaning and identity relative to place. By way of almost choreographing spatial encounters, architecture can serve as a portal to a contextualized composition, allowing a readable dialogue to emerge from the overlapping and fragmented elements of space. Building can be seen as a manifestation and freeing of the hidden meanings and stories of a space. Placemaking architectural projects grow from a process of gathering and transposing nature's dynamic characteristics in order to reinstate environmental significance and establish a sense of place.

The project argues that architecture can introduce new articulations and instigate a renewed way of seeing and being within space. It can create opportunities for previously unrelated elements to engage and emerge. In this way, architectural design has the potential to enlarge the range of human spatial consciousness (Tuan, 1977, p.116), and to produce possibilities for an alternative perspective of place.

The more one is able to read site-specific atmospheres, and to respond to them, the more likely a given site will begin to resonate as a place. Eugene Walter, author and poet, describes place as a location of dynamic human experience in his book *Placeways*. He writes about place stating,

"It evokes and organizes ones memories, images, feelings, sentiments, meanings and the work of imaginations. The feelings of a place are indeed the mental projections of individuals, but they come from collective experience and they do not happen anywhere else. They belong to place." (Walter, 1988, p.21)

Walter clearly depicts the epitome of place as a space that takes on personal projections, and holds that it is only through physical and psychological participatory practices that place may be distinguished from the surrounding complex world. Places are not an understandable or transferable things derived only from a material sense; they are events, occasions, and experiences that come into existence upon engagement and with the acquisition of personal meaning. Place provides a unique circumstance for each individual to process space through his or her filters of attitudes, experiences, and intentions.

The three site-specific projects demonstrate the necessity of freedom of imagination and interpretation required in the processes of placemaking, in order to allow people to engage with and identify themselves within a space, both in the moment and in memory. Therefore, the use of narrative can greatly benefit placemaking practices through the highly subjective processes of reading and understanding stories. Though each storyline may consist of the same basic parts, narratives allow interpretation and imagination to have an important role in the overall understanding of place. By enabling one to insert his or her own narrative into a space, it becomes a personal, explicit and particular place.

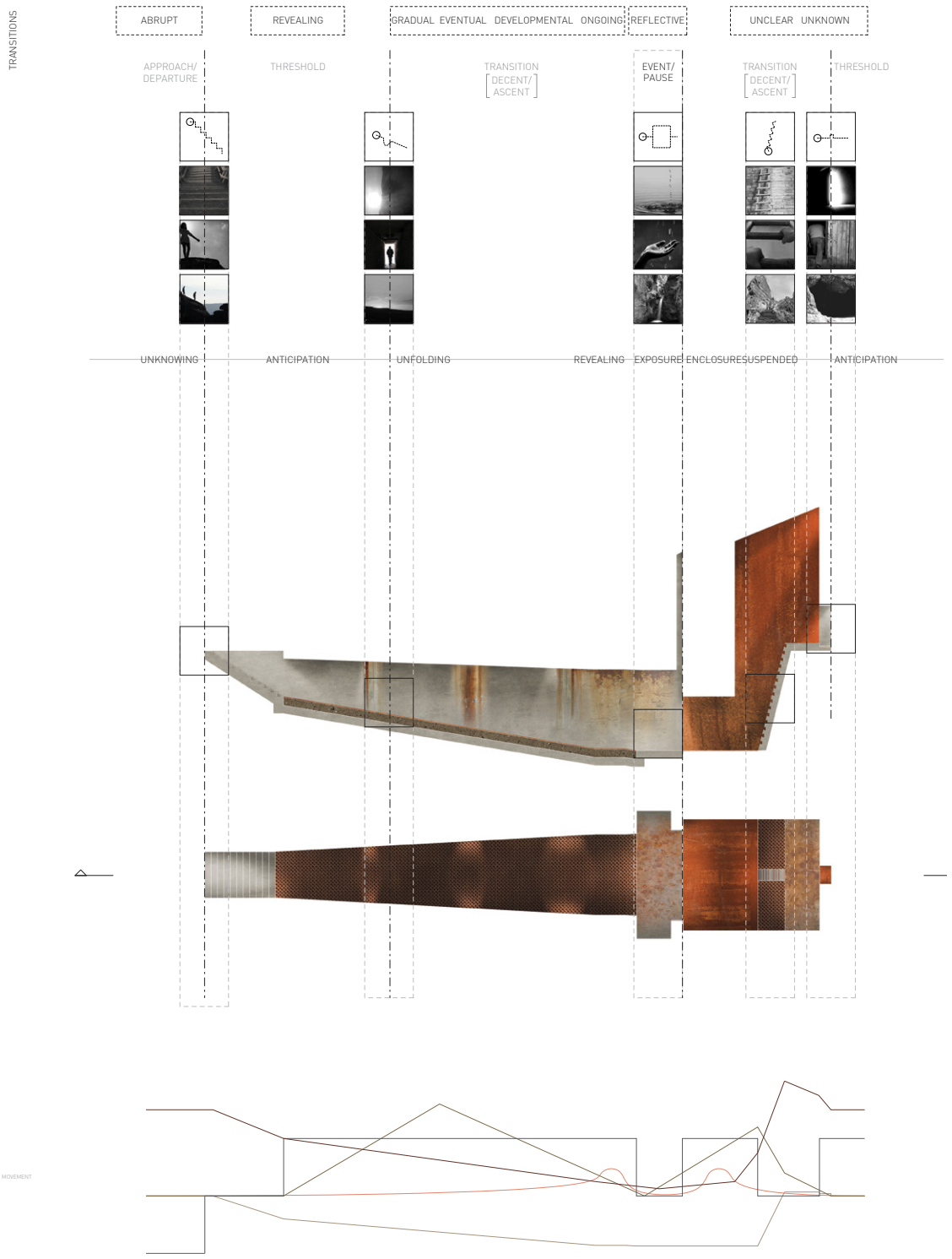


FIGURE 11 Sectional Narrative. Mapping of movements: Tunnel / Barendrecht. In this site scenario, the visual aspect of the site is almost non-existent. Instead, the sounds of the site are revealed to the user, enabling a focus on non-material aspects that contribute to the atmosphere of the site. Through transitions of muting and amplification, the sounds of the site are revealed independently, allowing them to be recognized and realized. The tunnel also allows for what happens beneath the surface of the site to be revealed: a system of drainage and water relocation that greatly contributes to the experience of the site. (Drawing by Kristen Van Haeren 2015).

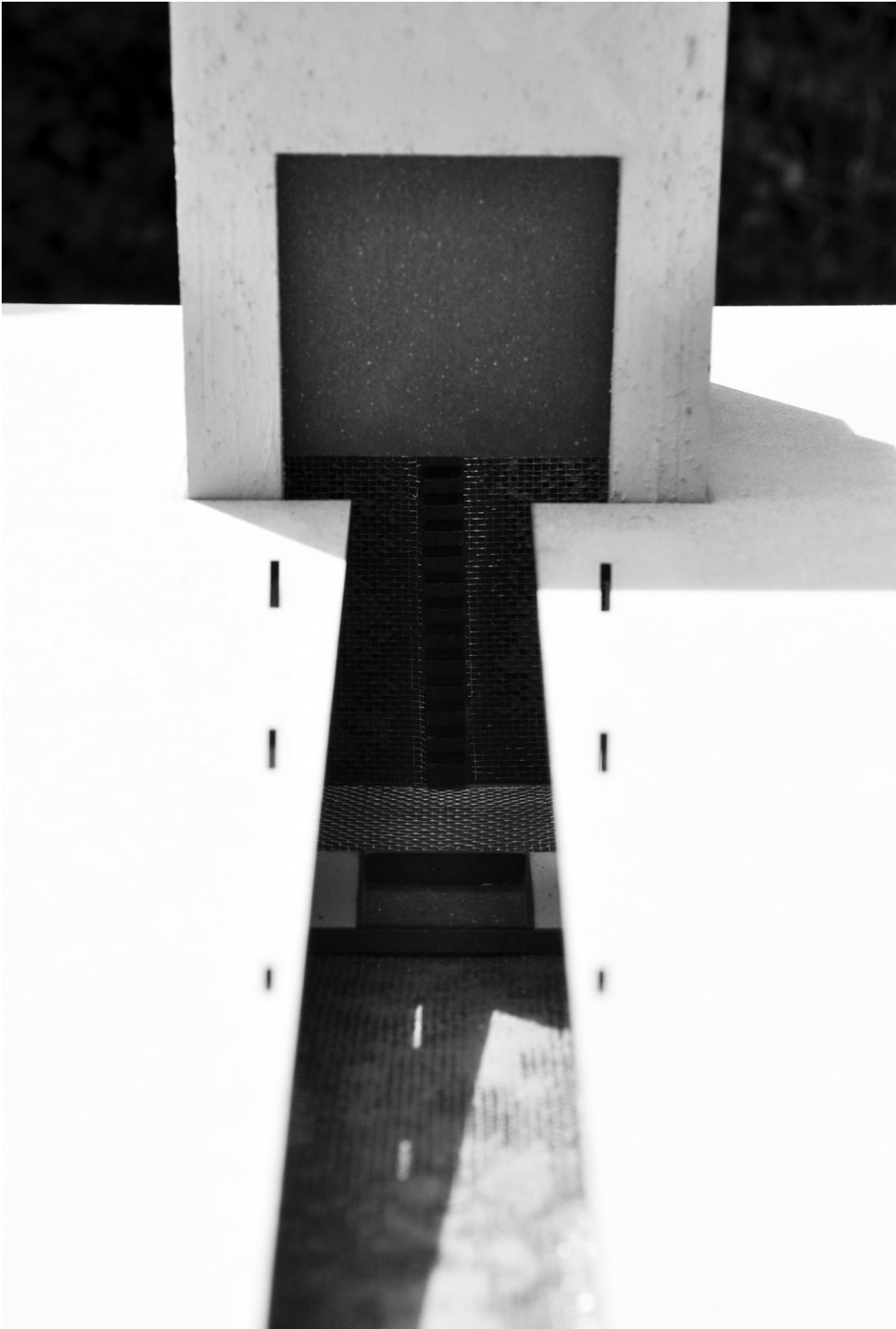


FIGURE 12 Model of the Tunnel. The image shows a fragment of the architectural folly, specifically highlighting the interior path that maps out the ways in which one comes into contact with the site (Model by Kristen Van Haeren 2015).

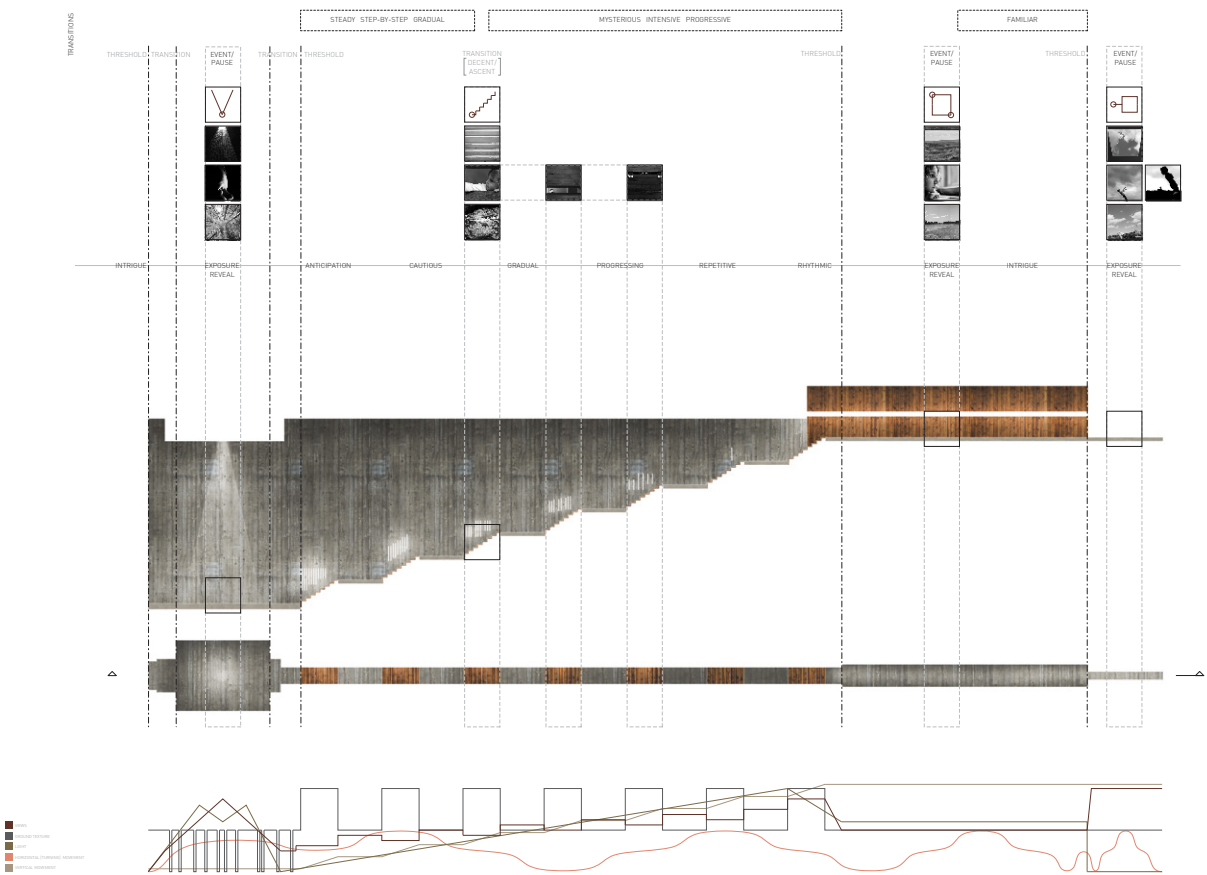


FIGURE 13 Sectional Narrative. Mapping of movements: Tower / Berkel en Rodenrijs. Here, the vastness of the site is broken up into fragments, giving attention to the pieces that come together to make the atmospheric whole. The tower allows one to see without being seen, while ascending the spiralling stairs that provide views out to the various aspects of the site. The tower allows for each element of the site to be given attention, including the sky above, which is always there, but overpowered by what is below the horizon. The tower provides a place for pause within a typically transitional landscape (Drawing by Kristen Van Haeren 2015).



FIGURE 14 Model of the Tower. The image shows a fragment of the architectural folly, specifically highlighting the interior path that maps out the ways in which one comes into contact with the site (Model by Kristen Van Haeren 2015).

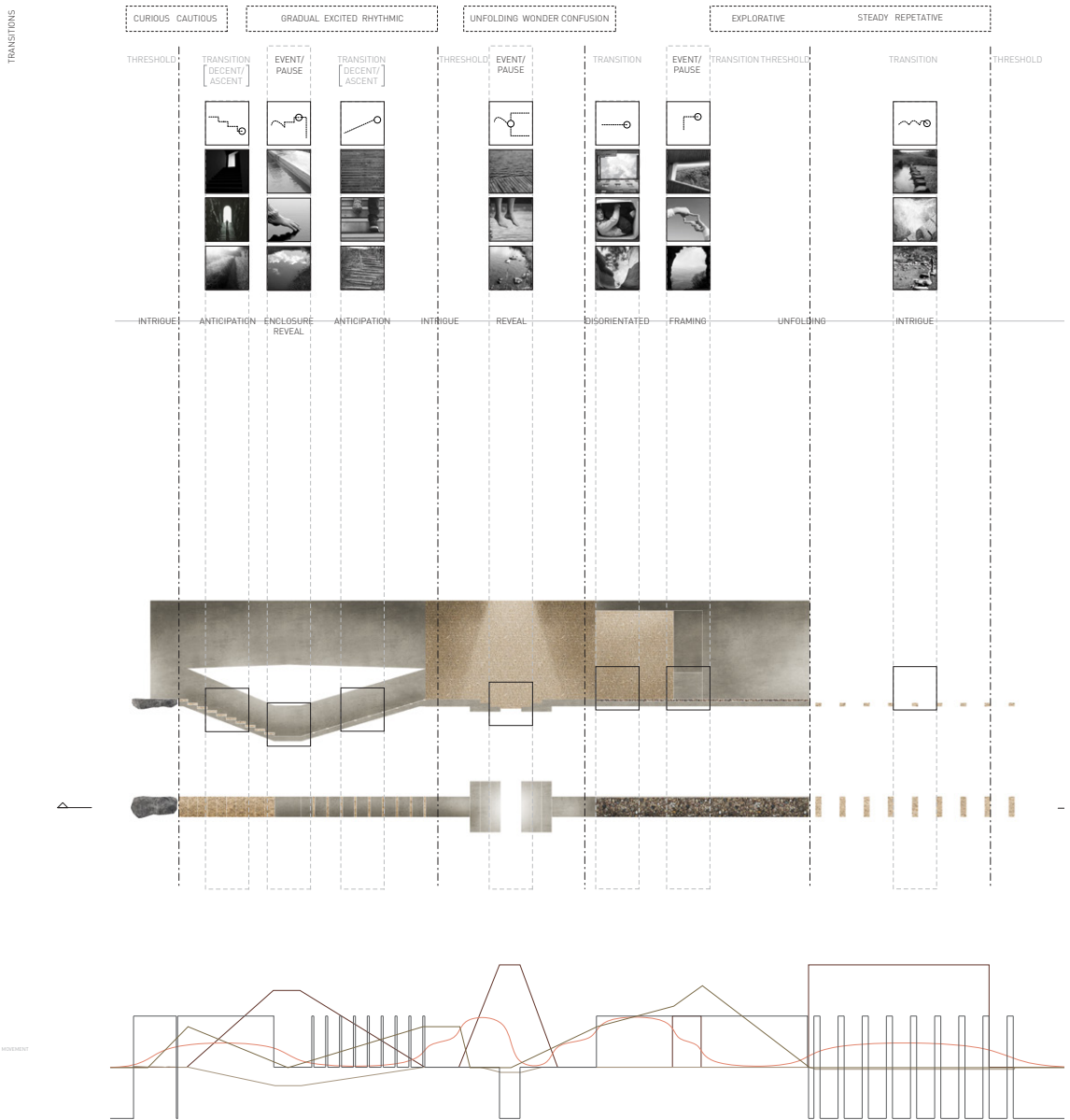


FIGURE 15 Sectional Narrative. Mapping of movements: Bridge / Nieuwerkerk aan den IJssel. The bridge finally allows one to encounter the water. As a boundary that becomes an interactive element, the water-filled canal is no longer seen as a hindrance but an opportunity. The bridge creates various occasions and perspectives for one to engage with the water: from above, below, or at the same level. The curving path creates chance encounters around each corner, allowing the simple act of crossing the river to be one of continual engagement (Drawing by Kristen Van Haeren 2015).

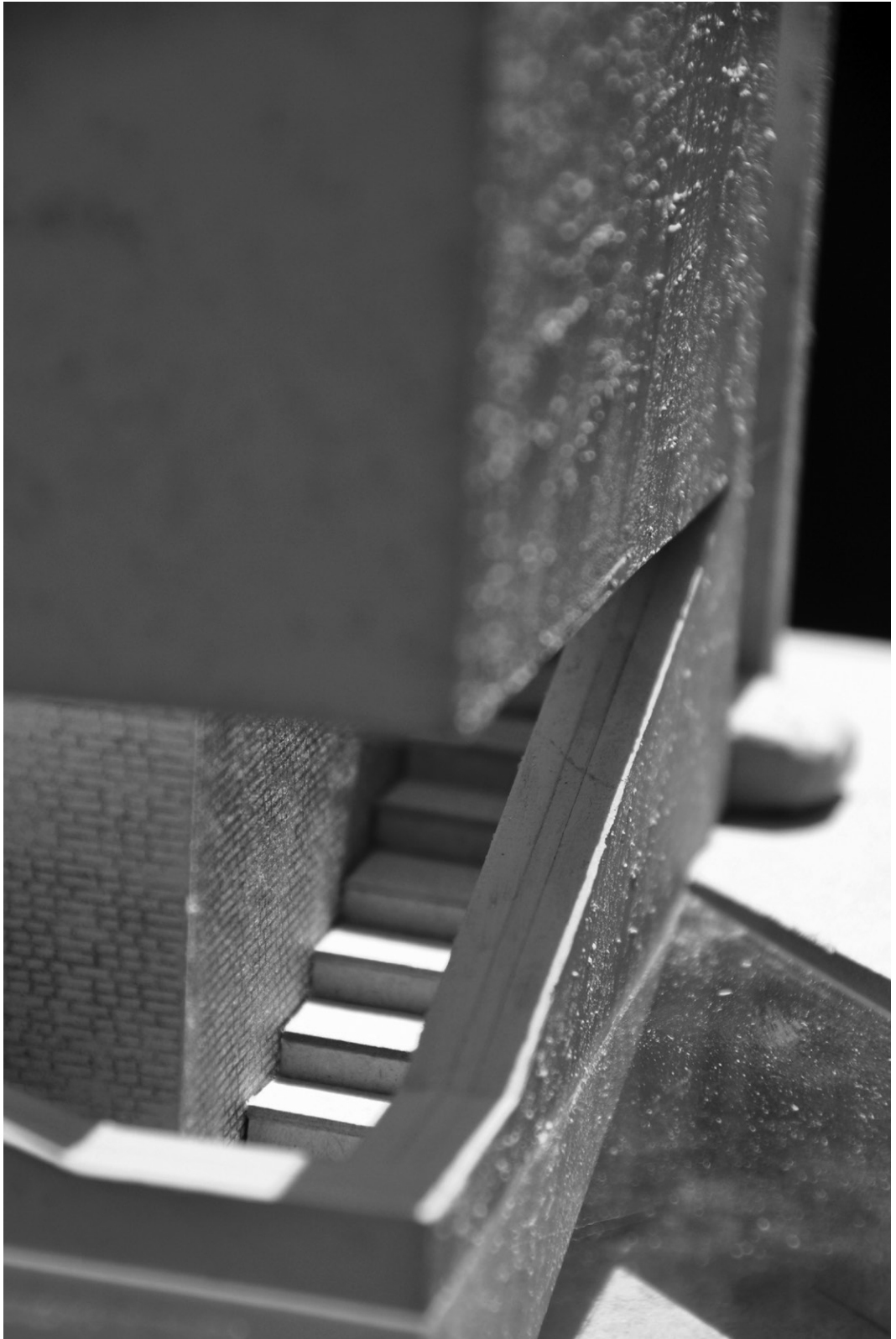


FIGURE 16 Model of the Bridge. The image shows a fragment of the architectural folly, specifically highlighting the interior path that maps out the ways in which one comes into contact with the site (Model by Kristen Van Haeren 2015).

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Unfamiliar territory

alternative landscape reading of disturbed sites' particularities

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Abstract

In an age when it is becoming increasingly apparent that disturbed sites (or any other sites for that matter) can never be fully managed, nor can their future development be entirely predetermined, this paper looks at disturbed sites' landscape as a complex and metastable system. While it deals with disturbed sites in particular, more broadly it aims to encourage a general re-examination of landscape design that relies on the world in harmonious balance and the experience of visual pleasure, which, according to long-established structures, may please or offer timeless experiences but in most cases hold little power and no potential to change, enhance or diminish (our own) bodily capacities to act – to stimulate thought, influence ideas, judgements and desires.

In order to explore ways of moving away from the desire for a stable portrayal of 'the natural' that often motivates disturbed sites' immediate ecological remediation and later programmatic transformation, the paper firstly, in order to clarify the understanding of the proposed alternative, imagines landscapes where such an approach is driven to extreme. Next, it places focus on the concept of territory and through the processes behind territory-making argues for a rethinking of the common ways of reading, intervening in and representing complex (in this case disturbed) sites. Alongside this, it proposes a reinterpretation of the notion of place, presents an alternative search for 'the specific' and questions what could specificity, once cleared of any 'essence', actually stand for.

Ideas and concepts developed throughout this paper begin with writings on territory by Deleuze and Guattari on one side, with further elaborations by Bogue, Brighenti, Grosz, and others. On the other side, ideas of post-humanism and new materialism provide a new view on disturbed sites to broaden the conception of territory as a relational, process-driven and open-ended mode of organization. They are accompanied by diagrammatic mappings that describe and analyse a very particular place – Fort de Vaujours, an abandoned uranium-contaminated site near Paris.

Keywords

territory; specificity, dynamism; disturbed sites; landscape architecture

Landscape and the Familiar

Identifying particular places goes beyond the spatial understanding that forms the basis of appreciating landscape's particularity in itself. In cultural terms, landscape is everything around us that we see at a particular moment in time (Cassels and Badrock, 2016). Therefore, to understand a piece of territory as landscape at its most basic requires two things: vision and distance. Furthermore, it means to convey the territory through the medium of a static picture frame and charge it with values conditioned by a particular larger cultural framework. It means to familiarize and normalize it in order to understand it and make it operative.

Such distancing, along with familiarization and appropriation, transforms territory into landscape, objectified by human gaze, and allows for the reinforcement of distance between polar terms such as culture and nature, human and non-human. Operating from such a privileged position, territory becomes viewed as a commodity to be exploited for economic development, political interests, technological growth, and more generally, for whatever human needs reside in contemporary culture at any given time. In this way the interpretation of nature is always a political act, heavily charged with cultural projections and the idealized image of the 'natural'.

Following on from this understanding, one way of contextualising landscape architecture would be to view it as a boundary-drawing practice, familiarizing selected pieces of land by means of framing, allowing certain processes to unfold and certain practices to take place. Landscape architecture is traditionally regarded as the curator of the land for 'the good of the people' and when the fixation with the stable and the familiar is driven to extreme, its boundaries become fixed, marking out a territory presented as familiar landscape, characterised by words such as good, predictable, balanced and safe. Myths of nature's equilibrium, manageability and human control remain in place, making the issues regarding comfort, pleasure, the pristine and the authentic, and the search for permanent solutions, etc. prime topics informing landscape design.

For the purposes of comparison, and in order to clarify the understanding of the proposed alternative approach, let us imagine such an extreme characterisation of one specific area of interest – transformations of disturbed sites. While this is not to suggest that there are no exceptions to the approach to such landscapes as described below, the characterisation serves as a point of departure to form an argument for the rethinking that is required.

Disturbed sites result as the by-product of economic, political and social decisions that view nature as commodity and accept environmental degradation as an inevitable result of technological progress and economic growth. After ceasing to provide us with necessary space or resources, they themselves go through the same mechanisms of projection and familiarization through the masking of the violence done to the land. With the use of the image of the 'natural' and the carefully drawn boundaries marking out what is allowed to be seen, practised, experienced or even thought of, they become what is by now an all too familiar image of predictable and scripted nature subservient to human needs. What stays (or becomes) obscured and hidden are the relations between different actors in space (and their outcomes) that transformed the territory into what we now perceive as an 'unhomely' landscape. Disturbed sites are extensively complex and uncertain, composed of human and non-human, material and chemical flows, natural, social and industrial processes that cannot be isolated or described solely by relying on the 'measurable' nature of ecology.

Instead of remaking them into fixed and generalized images of the familiar, they call for an approach that would focus on relations between different actors that together compose such landscapes and would,

through landscape reading and potential design intervention, acknowledge the past, present and future processes on site. The complexity of such sites cannot be read simply by observing what lies on the surface, nor can it be immediately recognized by the naked eye. Rather, the task is to go beyond the purely visual domain, move beyond mere representation and see beyond things, to change the register and become consciously involved in the continuous processes of landscape production (O'Sullivan, 2001). In these great times, changing the order of things (or in fact any order of things) might seem pretty far-fetched, but it is possibly only when this occurs that new viewpoints can be found and new practices established.

Fort de Vaujours

In order to develop and describe a methodological transgression of landscape reading that goes beyond the visual domain and focuses on what things do, how they are formed and how they could be otherwise, this paper applies theoretical concepts and research findings to a specific site of interest – Fort de Vaujours.

Fort de Vaujours and its surrounding area are a specific case among the many unfamiliar territories around us. They are leftover products of a particular territorial production where different human actors use overcoding (a series of “*phenomena of centering, unification, totalization, integration, hierarchization, and finalization*” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987)) to categorise, divide and appropriate the earth in order to achieve their political or economic aims. Such places are commonly characterised by unfamiliarity, uselessness and disorder, regarded as having little or no value as they contradict our idealised image of ‘the natural’ (or the ‘cultural’). Keeping such places outside the discourse reinforces thinking in opposing dualities and continues to view their development as something outside of the domain of human society, albeit subservient to it and therefore possible to control.

Fort de Vaujours, an abandoned uranium-contaminated area near Paris, has been the subject of power struggles, territorial claims and conflicting interests from the day it was envisioned, created and named. It was built at the end of the 19th century, primarily for the purposes of defending the city, but during the Second World War was transformed firstly into a German military base and later into a research centre for France’s Atomic Energy Commission or CEA. For four decades the site was used as a nuclear weapons testing site, where scientists detonated hundreds of miniature bombs containing combinations of natural or depleted uranium and explosives. Before moving to one of the nuclear testing bunkers, these explosions took place outdoors, with radioactive debris found within a one-kilometre radius of the fort. At present, the site is exposed to radiation, closed-off, and demolition of buildings is underway, as the grounds are planned to be excavated as part of a new gypsum mine. It has been stated that the excavation pit will later be covered with a fresh layer of clean soil, creating a ‘natural’ place, a forest rich in biodiversity.

Approaching Disturbed Sites through Territorology

In order to rethink the common ways of reading, intervening in and representing disturbed sites this research focuses on territorology, a general science of territory as developed by Andrea Mubi Brighenti, which views territory as a relational, process-driven and open-ended mode of organization. Therefore, research focused on territory does not focus on territory as a given but rather on how territories are established, by way of which processes, and on their material and affective outcomes.

Territory is, at least in political geography, mostly known as an organized and bounded area of sovereign states. However, as Brighenti argues, the simple interchangeability between territory and state is highly questionable. Territory as *“the passive spatial recipient of the state”* can never be ultimately established, nor can it fully delimit and control the variety of spatial functions and processes intertwining within its borders (Brighenti, 2010). Building on Foucault and Deleuze, Brighenti proposes looking at territory from a relational perspective, where *“territory appears precisely as what keeps sovereignty and government together”* (Brighenti, 2010). Power relations that are usually primarily discussed in relation to territoriality are not excluded in this approach, and are important, if not sufficient, in describing the workings of a territory. Thus, territories are never static entities but active processes of de- and re-territorialisation (decontextualization and repurposing); they are effects of relations rather than objects in themselves. As soon as new actors appear or old ones disappear and new territorial markers are set up or old ones change, territories reconfigure. Brighenti’s dynamic approach expands the understanding of territory from a delimited and controlled geographic area to the production and reproduction of territories through interactions. Borders and subsequent control over the area are seen as results of territorialisation; they are the material outcomes of social relationships. What is important is that they could be otherwise - in territory-making borders do not precede the socio-material processes that set them up (Brighenti, 2010). Turning to Fort de Vaujours, it would make little sense to speak of it only in terms of a certain arrangement of political or economic power, without taking into account the technologies, practices, various human and non-human agents and their social relations that have transformed and continue to transform it.

There are multiple forms of territorializing and multiple actors territorialize. Territorial animals, for instance, mark their territories using scent markers or visual and auditory signals, with the main aim of controlling resources. This enables them to have control over a certain area, to increase individual fitness and freely reproduce (Bogue, 2003). While markers used by animals are of various kinds and are often intangible, building fences and walls as the most common practice of securing territory is exclusively human. However, it should be noted that while territory exists as a bounded entity, its boundaries can materialize in multiple, or infinite, ways, and may be implicit or even invisible (Brighenti, 2010). Territory’s edges can be marked by phenomenon, forest edge, the trunk of a tree, a ditch, hedges, stones, variation in material, etc. In this way, territory is freed from connotations that link it to large-scale tracts of land, or organized and bounded areas of sovereign states, to become conceptualized as a mode of organization, as an act or a practice, rather than a physical space that precedes the relations and inscriptions that define it. Territory becomes an ordering device that exists across different scales, creates space for interaction, and in turn needs interaction to exist. It is defined through and along the emergence of matters of expression - markers that tie territory to expressivity, which precedes territorial domination or aggression. (Bogue, 2003) Markers put forward territory’s initial construction, describing how new forms of expression (new territorial markers) emerge, mark spaces and consequently give rise to territory. Particular markers transform space into a specific place that consequently becomes something more than mere location but does not yet obtain an ‘identity’.

In comparing territory to landscape, it could be said that while an understanding of landscape always involves the setting up of borders, striving for stability and a final perceived image, territory, as a relational construct, is inherently unstable. This is not to suggest that territories and landscapes cannot coexist, overlap or move from one to the other. However, this initial emphasis puts forward from the outset the idea of territorial production rather than a landscape image. In this way, approaching disturbed sites through territory-making initially involves looking into processes and relevant relations as well as into territories' functional and expressive components. Secondly, it proceeds from the understanding of territory to a renewed understanding of landscape, landscape design and landscape project. To bring territorology into discussion about landscape is an attempt to move away from the environmental and landscape discourse that praises change on the surface, yet below the neatly maintained green carpet hides an enduring conservatism that fears unrestrained emergence and continues to embrace landscape manageability, stability and homogeneity of landscape experience. To think of territory is to think primarily about how things might be done differently, how we could forget about landscape as totality and rather think of it as being always incomplete, actively contributing to the search for alternative futures while showing that the world is not set in stone.

The proposed methodology that focuses on reading the site through territorology involves three parts (three analytico-synthetic tools) – two mappings / diagrammatic representations and an experiment that tries to communicate the affective side of 'unhomely' landscapes. Each of the parts draws out the specificities of the site as found and works towards designing-from-within. While all three components are applied to the site in order to approach it as a complex system, produce alternative descriptions and later inform the design, the first and second components are the ones that serve as a basis to move towards design stage. Their outcomes and use in the design process are described below.

Describing Complexity

Landscape architecture uses landscape reading to try to provide answers to questions such as: What is a landscape? What defines a particular landscape? Where lies 'the particular'? What is most significant and characteristic of the site? What were the natural and cultural processes that produced it? What is the most appropriate form of intervention? and so on. Landscape reading conventionally focuses on landscape analytical methodologies that gather information about the site through collection and interpretation of the site's largely measurable qualities. Such reading examines the 'nature' of the site by looking into natural factors (geology, soil, topography, vegetation, animal life and climate), historical factors (development, cultural significance and heritage) and human factors (social aspects, landscape experience, spatial and visual quality). To a large extent, the measurable, 'ecological' values prevail, being understood as 'objective' information about the reality of the site. Since values that are more or less immeasurable, such as cultural significance, social aspect or landscape experience cannot be simply traced and mapped out, they are transformed into categories that, at best, only partially cover what they initially demanded - recording of age, patterns of use, smell, light, colour, etc. (Raxworthy, 1997) Gathered data is most commonly communicated through mappings or diagrammatic representations of different layers that come together to form a piece of landscape. Once mapped out, these layers serve as a powerful tool to find connections and relationships between different landscape components, though the relations that initially produced the chosen layers remain unquestioned.

Timeline / Virtual diagram

In order to go beyond the strictly physical location or visual expression of landscape components and to describe the conditions that led to materialization of both – their location and expression, the first part of the proposed reading approaches the site as a complex entanglement of various processes and agents, impossible to isolate and divide between distinct layers. It does not put emphasis on preformed layers but on the relations that produced those layers – it traces patterns of activity and agency (what happened, how it happened, which agents were present) and looks at the processes of the site's production (Fig. 1-6). It focuses on groupings of diverse agents that occupied and intervened in the site during the selected interval, and serves as a tool to describe its objective material conditions. Human and non-human processes/actors are considered on an equal basis, differentiated only in terms of the visibility of their effects and the agency they possess during a certain period. Once described, the understanding that underlies the connection between the site's materialization, and the processes of its production at any given time, serves as a useful tool to move towards design stage as it makes it possible to speculate on future distribution of various actors and its spatial outcome. It is important to emphasize that this type of reading is by no means sufficient to obtain the whole picture of the site. Rather, it is a promising start to begin to describe it.

The diagram should be read from left to right (horizontal axis deals with site's past, presents and future – fig. 2, 3, 6) and from top to bottom (vertical axis focuses on selected interval of 150 years to describe the processes of site's production in more detail – fig. 3, 4, 5).

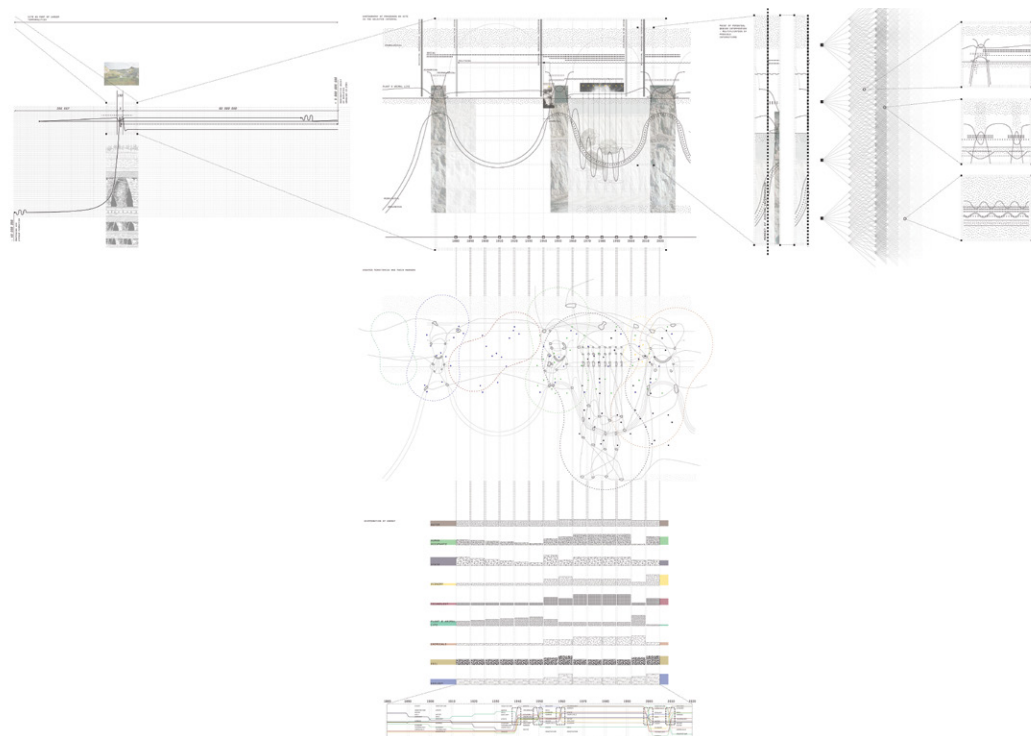


FIGURE 1 Processes of site's production.

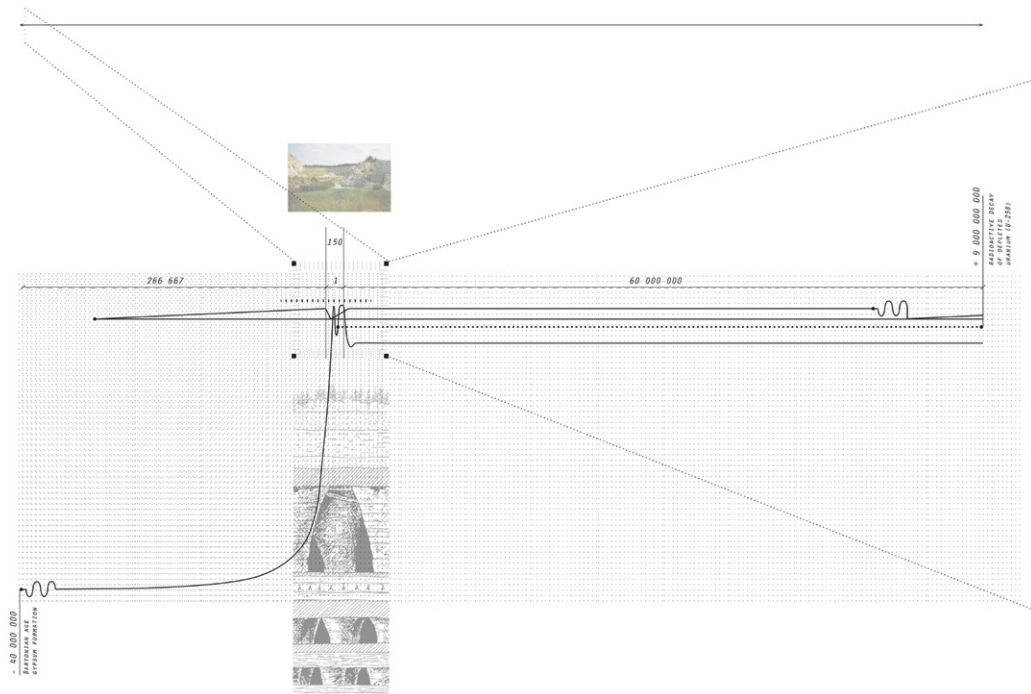


FIGURE 2 Timeline part 1. The timeline begins by positioning the site in the context of larger temporalities. In the case of Fort de Vaujours this means, on one side, the geologic past that formed the area and on the other side the long nuclear future. The last 150 years (the period of constant human presence on site) are marked, and presented as definitive in the future development of the site. (Diagram by author with image sources from: Carrières de gypse Vaujours. Retrieved from <http://fr.topic-topos.com/carrieres-de-gypse-vaujours>; Munier, D. Schéma montrant l'exploitation des trois masses de gypses reliées par des puits d'extraction. Retrieved from <http://ruedeslumieres.morkitu.org/apprendre/gypse/>) doi:10.7480/spool.2016.2.1111.g1501

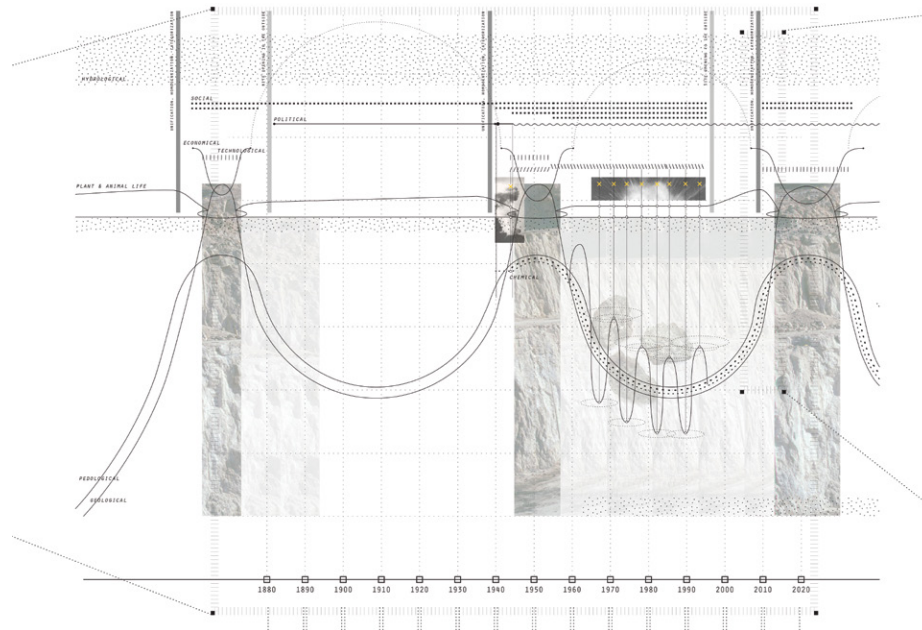


FIGURE 3 Timeline part 2. This section of the diagram describes the processes that shaped the site during the selected interval, looks at their interactions and traces moments when transformation occurred - points when relations were liberated or reaffirmed. (Diagram by author with image sources from: Raudin, M. Explosion de munitions au fort de Vaujours. Retrieved from <http://sauvons.dhuis.fr/page/2/>; Archive CEA., Tir froid à l'air libre. Retrieved from <http://sauvons.dhuis.fr/page/2, 2014>). doi:10.7480/spool.2016.2.1111.g1502

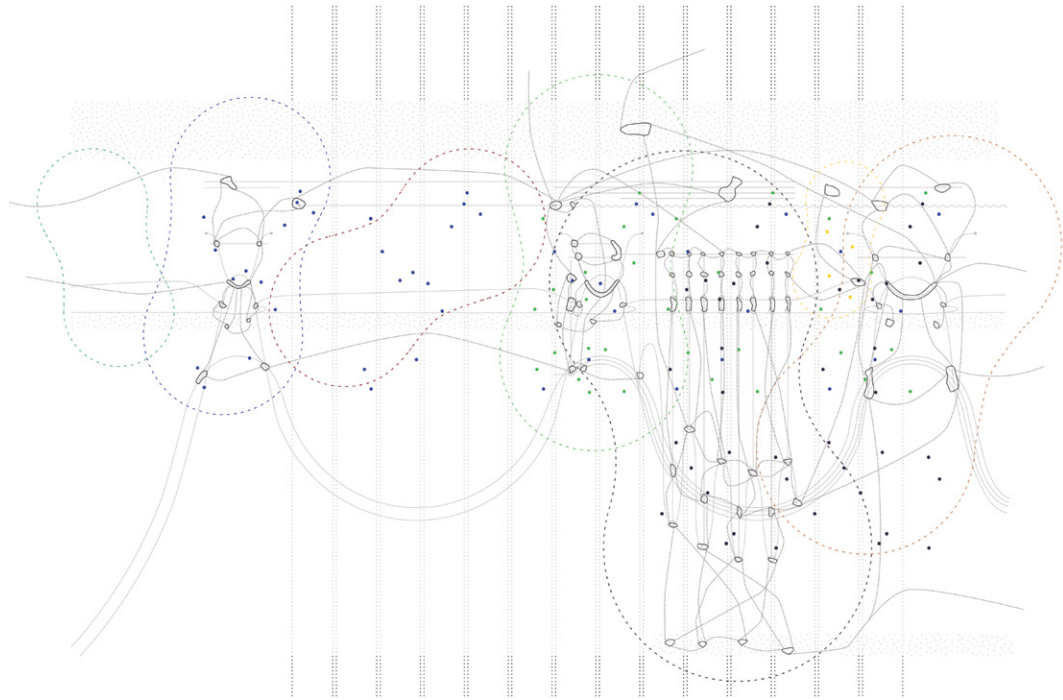


FIGURE 4 Timeline part 3. This part traces moments when particular interactions between processes in the same interval left a mark in space and created a territory. The mapping tries to show how territories shift, overlap and move from one to another, and how certain markers may be destroyed, while others are changed or retained. It should be mentioned that this mapping only maps a small selection of territories on site and only those that are perceivable from a large 'site scale'. More than being a completely accurate description of all the territories that took place in the selected interval, this mapping serves as a tool to begin to visualize and work with the theoretical findings. doi:10.7480/spool.2016.2.1111.g1503

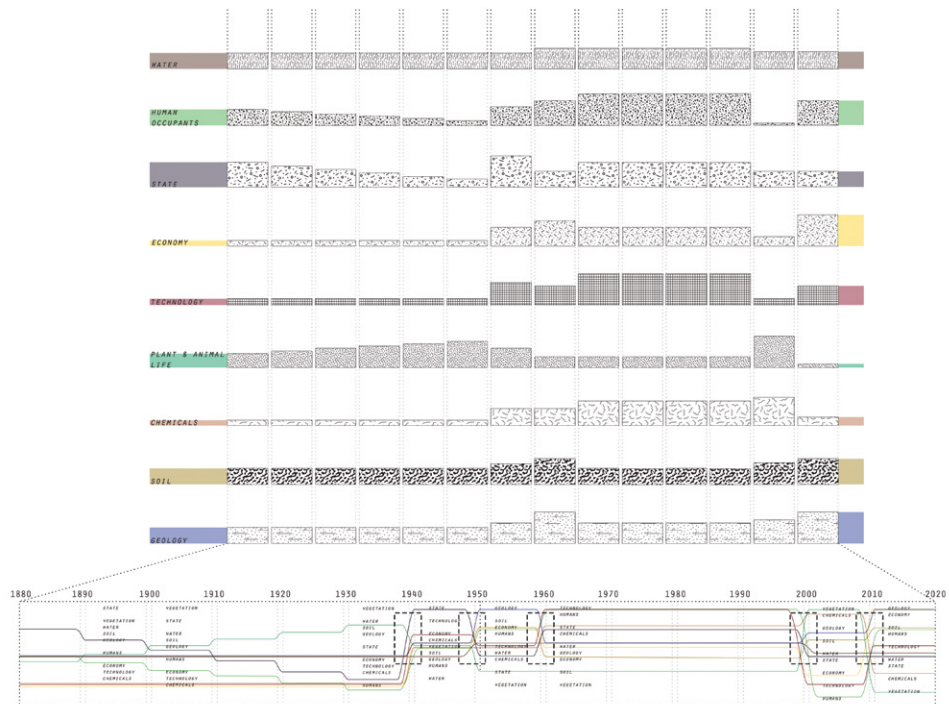


FIGURE 5 Timeline part 4. This part looks at the distribution of the agents that shaped the site in the same selected interval. It focuses on points when the agency possessed by different agents changed, resulting in site transformation and its effects. doi:10.7480/spool.2016.2.1111.g1504

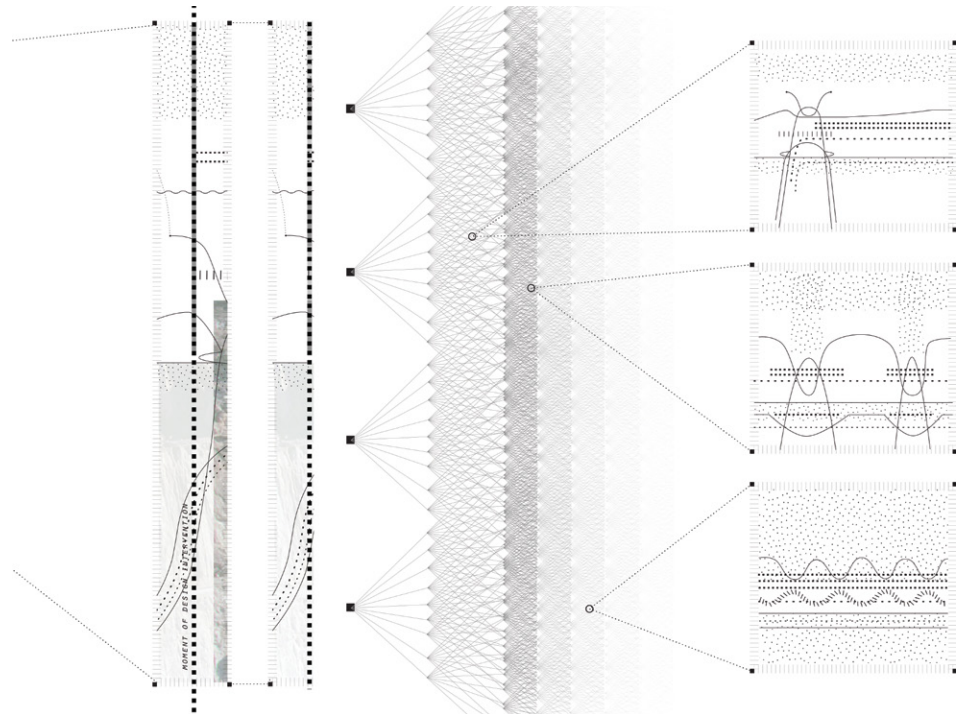


FIGURE 6 Timeline part 5. Last section of the diagram speculates on site's future and marks a point of potential design intervention, which is understood here as a guided choreography of processes directed towards multiple possible interactions and creative connections. It aims to show how an intervention could strive for diversity, and open up possibilities instead of close them. Three moments in the course of site development are isolated to show the possible distribution of different processes and practices at those chosen times.
doi:10.7480/spool.2016.2.1111.g1505

Locating 'The Particular'

Every territory works through a certain rhythm or repetition that sets up the theme for the marking of space. (Wise, 2000:302) In landscape, these rhythms are not so much landscape processes (when purely functional) but rather practices and actions that acquire a dimensional, spatial component through markers. However, landscape processes should not be completely neglected - there are many that shape landscape in such a way that certain qualities or matters of expression are produced (erosion, freezing, corrosion, sedimentation, drought, industrialization, deforestation, etc.).

Rhythms form a set of relations produced by landscape components, and the way they come together into a territory is part of its specificity, of 'the particular'. For instance, foxes, as territorial animals, leave scent markers on prominent landmarks or otherwise visually conspicuous elements such as hedges, fences, tree stumps, rocks, etc. While it is they who leave the markers and defend their territory, a whole set of relations between the fox, fox's urine, the potentially marked elements, included and excluded space, area's species distribution, fox's predators, etc. is an experimental, space and time specific, territorial assemblage that sets up the theme for the marking of space. Importantly, this kind of understanding removes any 'essence' from specificity and we could say that when searching for 'the specific' one might be searching in vain if not acknowledging that 'the particular' lies in landscape's dynamism, changes through scales and is always, when pinned down, given a certain duration. It is heavily determined by the chosen way of looking at it, and never pre-exists.

Territorial Markers

In order to find 'the specific' from where to form the basis of a design intervention, the second part of the proposed landscape reading involves looking deeper into a set of markers that together bring about a territory (in this case the territory of Fort de Vaujours). Similar to the previously explained part of site's analysis, the selection of markers is described through diagrammatic mappings that go beyond the visual domain and trace ongoing processes and practices on site as well as the distribution of agency that led to the materialization of chosen markers in this particular moment in time (Fig. 7-10). However, in contrast to the previous mapping, the markers' diagrams do not focus on development in time but rather on the specific arrangement of conditions. They are to be seen as spaces of marker's capacities, meaning that they allow us to think of the unactualized capacities and tendencies of a marker - of what has yet to come. They make clear that markers are greatly intertwined with processes and are, when not fixed but temporary stabilized, always subject to change. They help us understand that an object is not only defined by its actual properties but also by its unactualized potentialities, by what may not yet be visible but is nevertheless imminently present, waiting for the right moment or the right trigger to actualize (Grosz, 2013). In this way, the mapping is not a matter of tracing or of description and representation only, but becomes an analytico-synthetic tool that can move on to 'territory-making', to invention.

Approaching the site through territorial markers means going beyond the strictly visual appearance to question what is it that brings about the production, not only of the site's territory but of a specific territorial marker (of a smaller territory inside the larger territory of the site) - it means looking into its inner territoriality, into its conditions of production. The arrangement of processes and relationships that forms a marker and shows us how it could develop further is part of landscape's specificity, of 'the particular'. Site specificity, therefore, is seen as relational specificity, as a particular arrangement of intensive differences that for a certain duration drive specific processes on site, as an arrangement that results in specific material configurations and spatial experiences. This kind of approach moves the search for specificity from the visual realm towards the processes of individuation - towards that which comes before the separation of the world into singular and discrete entities, in this case that which comes before the materialization of a marker.

Diagrams should be read separately, as each one focuses on a particular marker. In the centre of each diagram lies a satellite image of the marker's location along with a description. The top right corner of the diagram shows an image of an object taken from the marker's location along with a process or an actor that had the most influence along its development. Moving clockwise, one can find the most relevant processes/actors that shaped marker's location prior to direct human involvement. Further, moving to the left side of the diagram, are the processes/actors that are the result of human intervention on site, with the last one being possible design intervention (processes/actors that share relations with which a design intervention could possibly experiment are circled). Arrows mark points of interaction between different processes, showing how, through time, the relations that form a marker become more complex. Line widths that stand for a particular process/actor vary and change, based on their effect or the agency possessed by them during the marker's development. All the dots around and between the processes represent possible points when a marker had a particular spatial expression based on the overall arrangement of relations, with the top illustration showing its present materialization.

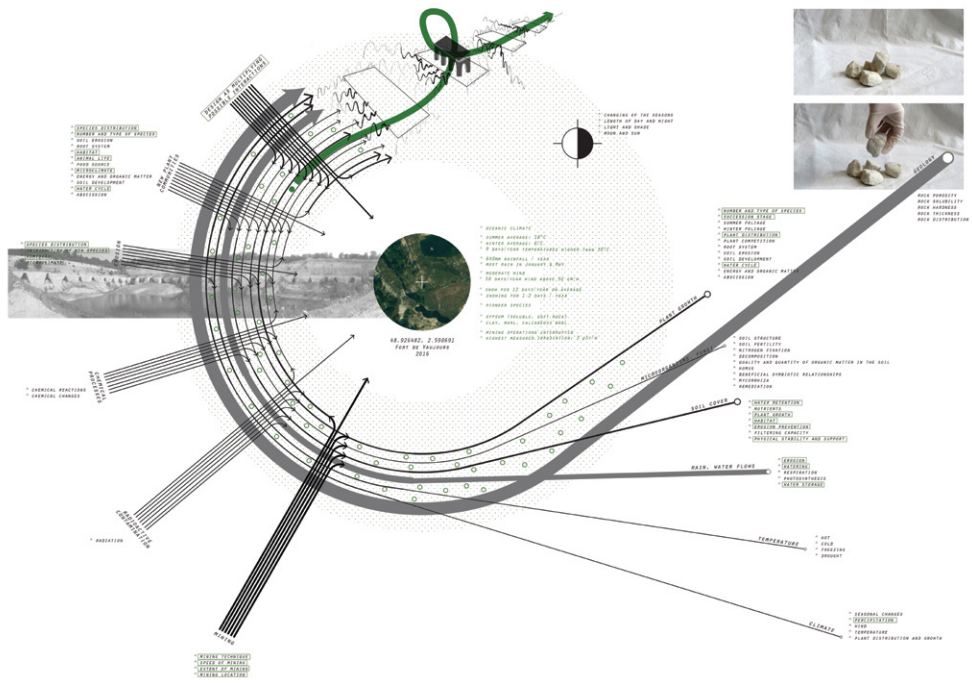


FIGURE 7 Post-mining gypsum quarry. (Diagram by author with image sources from: Carrière de gypse abandonnée de Vaujours. Retrieved from http://ruedeslumieres.morkitu.org/apprendre/gypse/histoire/index_histoire.html Zoom Earth. ©2016 GeoEye ©2016 InterAtlas ©2016 IGN ©2016 Blom Earthstar Geographics SIO ©2016 Microsoft Corporation. Retrieved from <https://zoom.earth/#48.927103,2.593213,17z,sat,2016>) doi:10.7480/spool.2016.2.1111.g1506

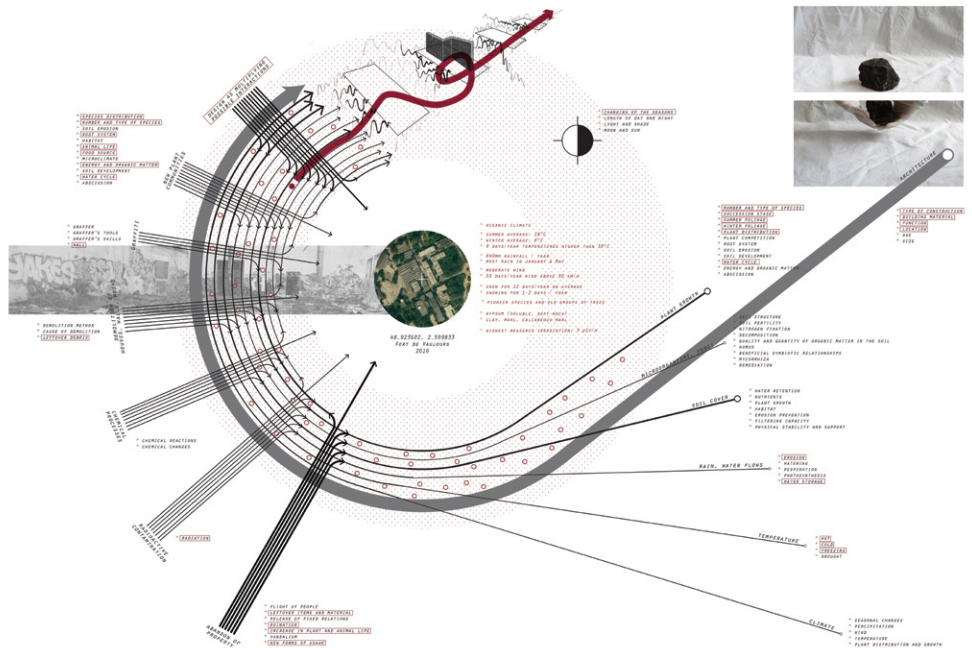


FIGURE 8 Building ruins and debris. (Diagram by author with image sources from: Zoom Earth. ©2016 GeoEye ©2016 InterAtlas ©2016 IGN ©2016 Blom Earthstar Geographics SIO ©2016 Microsoft Corporation. Retrieved from <https://zoom.earth/#48.923923,2.600069,17z,sat,2016>) doi:10.7480/spool.2016.2.1111.g1507

Defining Place

Just as markers appear stable but are actually very much fleeting, so is 'place'. Despite the fact that we usually think of place as something fixed, a stable point in space that awaits our arrival and keeps on waiting, places are not static and are in fact constantly shifting. We change them just by living or they change according to the contingency of their surroundings. Places cannot be created once and for all; they require continual attempts at placemaking, continual interaction, and the setting up of a set of markers that invests space with quality that sets it apart. They are products of repetition and, produced by various assemblages of agents, result from a process of constant becoming (Massey, 1994). Rather than being there in a finalised or permanent state, they are time and space defined configurations of relations, a pause, a temporal interruption, specific but brief in their present formation. Like an assemblage of diverse components that expresses a distinct character and particular qualities only as long as its pattern of relations retains its composition. Therefore, when asked to intervene in a place, important questions one should consider are which relations are worth holding on to, for how long and at what cost, as well as what the proposed constellation of relations is capable of doing and what its possible patterns of changing may be.

Following the research on territorology, design intervention could be conceptualized in two ways. Firstly, one could start by changing the aim from the creation of a timeless landscape to proposing an intervention of a becoming-landscape / becoming-image instead. Becoming characterises events, encounters. An event is seen not as a definite outcome but as a synthesis generated in a given moment when different forces interact to produce something new and open up new relations (O'Sullivan, 2006). An ongoing separation and fusion where relations that become fixed are unleashed to enter into new entanglements. Becoming-landscape moves away from one final point to a space that strives for variety. It works with interactions of different processes and practices, where the role of the designer is to carefully study relations on and beyond the chosen site, propose a direction and guide the choreography of individual processes in order to temporally actualize a selection of potentialities present on site (Hiller & Abrahams, 2014). Secondly, in order to further elaborate the territory and, with precision, trigger what otherwise would not happen, design intervention could be approached as 'marking', as leaving more or less permanent traces that mark territories and are created and re-created under specific conditions. Such an approach does not pre-assign a final form to a landscape entity but designs for an open-ended future, leaving space for the unpredictable to evolve out of the site (Barnett, 2013). The outcomes of such an emergence are impossible to predefine but possible to guide and give direction - open-ended futures are in this way envisioned through precise definition. Designing in markers allows the marker to acquire a certain constancy, but recognizes that as such it is always already on its way to becoming-different as it alters and is altered by the processes that designing can never fully envision, let alone determine.

Conclusion

Disturbed sites are places where we are confronted with too much contingency to imagine a linear cause and effect relationship of how the site came to be or a simple action - solution plan of how to proceed. They are highly 'particular'. While this particularity expresses itself through their unknowability and unfamiliar appearance, even more particular are the underlying processes and relations on site that we now perceive as

'disturbed'. Particularity as presented in this paper moves beyond the purely visual domain to question what is it that brings about specific landscapes and particular places in the first place. It looks into the processes of a site's production to suggest that site's present particularity cannot really be captured once and for all – at best, it can be described and held on to until the moment when it transforms to become 'another kind of particular'. Such an understanding opens up possibilities to imagine how particularity could be redefined, how it could lead to seeing design intervention not as a complete or final thing but as a constant action.

An approach that looks into relations that produced either the entire site in question or a selected landscape component should not be understood as applicable to disturbed sites alone. In today's globalized world with its many complex landscapes, any given site should demand more than being simply read through the spectacles of subjectivity. Only once we are looking beyond mere appearance, can we begin to see that there is room for change and discover what it would take to move forward. Perhaps today true novelty (or novel particularity) will not come with constant progress but with things unmade, constraints released and relations set free.

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The role of durational art strategies in urban regeneration in Budapest

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Abstract

The presented strategy reflects on the theme of sustainable urban regeneration, focusing on the importance of the role of public spaces in creating liveable cities. The theoretical background of the strategy deals with the changes taking place in the fields of public art and urban rehabilitation methodologies. The parallel drawn between the evolvement of the two fields leads to the introduction of a method which integrates public art interventions into the process of urban rehabilitation. Public art interventions become platforms that enable people to take an active role in creating and forming their future, and enable future landscape/public space design elements to become more site-specific and unique.

Keywords

durational strategy; temporality; participatory citizenship; local identity; embedded design; urban regeneration; temporary art intervention

Introduction

If we understand social relations and the affective bond of people and location as an essential component of place, a specific task for designing the particular would be to activate those relations over time. This paper is the outcome of theoretical and on-site research to examine how public art and creative strategies help urban rehabilitation initiatives in developing more creative public spaces that enhance social activities in order to help reconstruct social and environmental relations and to set a foundation for participatory design. It is argued that durational art strategies, implemented as part of urban rehabilitation, are able to create platforms for communication that will help increase the social aspects of rehabilitation, while constant feedback allows the rehabilitation process itself to be more flexible.

The aim of the case study is to present how durational art strategies can be implemented as an organic part of urban rehabilitation. The case study entitled 'The chain of public art interventions developed on the site of the Palotanegyed', devised from the method introduced in the theoretical research, was developed previously by Dominika Tihanyi, as part of a doctoral study at the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design. The realized project aims to underpin the hypothesis that, by creating a series of art projects (that act as acupuncture points) in a specific city part both the site and the people living there can be activated during the process of urban rehabilitation in order to have a richer understanding of the place itself and help changes become more deeply rooted. The 12 interconnected interventions, developed over the duration of 4 years, were strongly connected in their set-up, with the shared aim of an ongoing rehabilitation of the run down, but slowly up-and-coming, neighbourhood. The actions initiated by Dominika Tihanyi were mostly realized with the support and partial funding of Rév8 Zrt., the rehabilitation office of the 8th district of Budapest. Some of the interventions were realized under the aegis of Placcc Festival, a yearly public art festival in Budapest, while others were developed in cooperation with the Technical University with the involvement of architecture students, along with landscape architects from the office Újirány Landscape Architects. Through playfulness, the realized interventions aimed to create the possibility for development of new social connections in a social setting where networking is hard to develop. The actions worked as communicational surfaces through which to devise local knowledge that could be incorporated into future plans and designs of the rehabilitation, in order to help public space design become more anthropocentric and site responsive.

The first part of the paper gives the theoretical background of the case study. It draws on the fact that public space design plays an ever-important role in urban rehabilitation. Public spaces have become the fulcrum of urban processes that aim to create liveable cities. Yet, in the 21st century, homogeneity has characterized our cities and public spaces, as globalized design attitudes manifest in standardized and prefabricated design elements that overwrite site-specific reflections in landscape and public space design. In parallel to this phenomenon, the uniqueness of a place is becoming more highly valued, evoking more responsive design attitudes that take into consideration local demands and values and draw on the particularities of a certain space defined at a neighbourhood level. It proposes that a parallel can be drawn between the changing roles of urban development or rehabilitation, urban design and public art in the social context of creating liveable cities. Though most regeneration projects incorporate various forms of public art projects in their process, it is argued that they are only supplementary elements of the regeneration project. Thus, there is debate over the reasons and means of implementation of public art interventions in the process of urban rehabilitation. Durational approaches are introduced as creative art strategies that help in reconstructing social relations and help the process of place-making, where 'the durational is conceived of as an accumulation of interconnected artistic commissions which respond to a site with an identity under construction' (O'Neill and Doherty, 2011, p.141). As the design of public spaces is usually developed in the last phase of the rehabilitation process which results in a shortage of time for deep engagement, a durational strategy, called cultural action planning, is introduced to allow the actual design process to be lengthened

in order to emphasise experimental research work (through a set of ephemeral, temporal interventions) at the beginning of the process (pre-rehabilitation phase). This promotes the development of 'time and space' within the early stage of the rehabilitation, ensuring an abundance of creative process where the developed arena of cognition and dialogue between architects/artists, residents and space makes it possible to truly understand and become part of a place, resulting in well-founded and well-defined uses and meanings of space for future design phases.

Theoretical background: connections between public art and regeneration strategies concerning social sustainability and cultural transformation

Durational approach as working method – art, architecture and landscape architecture as a social-public/civic art form

Changes in the role of public artworks have been clearly identified since the 1960s, as written about in detail by Kwon (2004, pp. 56-137), when a new form of socially engaged public art began to arise. Prevalent by the 1980s, this new genre of public art sees social-cultural aspects come to the forefront, as opposed to the traditional roles of representation and self-expression. As Kester (2004, p.8) writes, the social context of these works can be summed up in their aim to enhance social communication, open discussion and 'provoke dialogue'. As opposed to creating objects, these projects are more performative and process-based in approach and engage people in the process of creation, 'where conversation becomes an integral part of the artwork itself' (Kester 2004, p.8). As Bourriaud (1998, pp.12-16) describes it, contemporary art creates experimental, perceptive, critical and participatory models. It takes an active part in social process and community building, hence playing an active role in the reintegration of the self in society (Miles, 1997, p.162-172.).

By the turn of the 21st century, socially engaged public art as an act of the 'reconstruction of everyday life' that helps the 'rediscovery of joy in city living' (Miles, 1997, p.18) becomes apparent in the urban context, and the importance of this phenomenon is also recognized by architects, landscape architects, and artists. In the past decade, it has become common to see mixed groups of artists and architects develop interventions that aim to substantiate design through enabling the development of local knowledge, and understanding local values and needs to help formulate and model ideas for possible future activities by engaging local residents in the actions. If we look at works of artists such as Jeanne van Heeswijk's project entitled 'The Blue House' we will see that very similar durational methods are put into practice simultaneously, albeit in different surroundings, but based on a curated sequence of art projects in order to help locals inhabit their public spaces. Other works of architecture practices established since the new millennium like Raumlabor Berlin or Karo Architekten (among many others) also show that the revival of urban spaces is largely seen through the involvement of local citizens and the construction of communities. Theoretical works of Nicolas Bourriaud, Paul O'Neill and Claire Doherty, or architects such as Stan Allen, note that opposed to creating something 'new'—in the modernist sense—these practices teach us the importance of 'learning to inhabit the world again' (Bourriaud, 1998, pp.12-16).

The above thoughts can be traced back to Martin Heidegger's discussion on inhabitation, as he points out that 'dwelling is the basic character of Being', and 'the fundamental character of dwelling is sparing and preserving'. Following this idea, to 'inhabit a space' is a continuous and time consuming act and as such, the greatest value of durational art strategies can be seen in their overall durational approach—the time spent in one space—where architects, artists, and locals take part in the process as civilians, through which they become active participants in the process. Through a durational process, inhabitation, or actual place-making, can be achieved by 'paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution, which is much more than just promoting a better urban design' ('What is Placemaking?', para. 1), in reference to place as a series of socially formed spaces, 'which is performed and practised in everyday life as an evolving identity that emerges and re-emerges over time' as put by Cresswell (2004. p.39).

Continuous artistic/architectural presence provides time and space to explore locality and to learn about a place and its dwellers, thus creating the opportunity for people to become part of a long-term process. From the urban aspect, it can be said that projects that advocate social process by creating cultural activities can be effective tools in place-making, creating 'meanings, uses and forms for the city' as defined by Deutsch (1996, p.56). As Hopkins (2005, p.29) puts it, in this case the artist's role shifts from self-expression to the expression of the collective identity, whereby the artist actually becomes the 'interpreter of a community'. O'Neill and Doherty (2011, p.47) propose that this new approach be conceived as 'civic art', one that helps the growth of participatory citizenship to allow people to take action in their lives. This greatly contributes to changing and developing future perspectives of a community and gives rise to participatory design whereby local networks develop, helping the conception of socially inclusive spaces. As O'Neill and Doherty (2011, p.7) note, ownership of such projects as a whole becomes shared, as opposed to clearly attributed ownerships of commissioned artistic or architectural interventions.

Paradigm shift in urban rehabilitation – the role of public art in urban regeneration

Since the 19th century, the question of how the modern city is altering relations amongst people has remained timely. This question led to the rise of new alternative theories in the past decade that have laid the foundation for new urban strategies, emphasizing that sustainable development cannot be managed without the participation and knowledge of local citizens, as articulated in the Rio Charter: 'Think global, act local'. New solutions try to integrate cultural, economic and social development in the course of rehabilitation by dealing with everything as one system, evoking regeneration and guaranteeing long-term changes and sustainability (Hopkins, 2005, p.30). Consequently, by the beginning of the 21st century, a paradigm shift could be seen in the re-conception of urbanism, when cities started to be conceived of as a set of complex systems that add up to an organic whole (Waldheim, 2006, pp. 37-43). In urban development and rehabilitation a long-term strategic approach and interconnected economical-ecological-social thinking is advocated, where social and cultural aspects are taken into consideration, and which is deeply connected with the creation of 'good' public spaces that are responsive, meaningful and democratic, as defined by Carr et al. (1992, pp.19-20). It is recognized that the renewal of public spaces affects cities in both the social and economic sense; thus, like a century ago, public space is again perceived as a constellation of social relations. Hence public spaces act as arenas of 'local community revitalization and participatory local democracy', thereby becoming catalysts of urban renewal to be seen as the fulcrum of 'social well-being of inhabitants' (Carmona, Magalhaes, and Hammond, 2008, p.65).

As rehabilitation processes aim to take into account not only the physical but the non-physical dimensions of social exclusion, it is quite evident that public art and culture have become vehicles to integrate the social

and the physical dimensions of rehabilitation, and in this sense can be referred to as urban regeneration. As Tornaghi discusses (2007, pp.1-6), examples of cultural regeneration show that using public art and culture as a catalyst for change can produce stunning achievements in terms of neighbourhood branding and economic development. At the same time, this does not necessarily mean that actual place making has been achieved, and the development of sustainable communities can only be achieved through the process of place making. In this process, the role of art projects is vital in connecting the rehabilitation process and the regeneration site itself to the given community. As both Tornaghi (2007, pp.1-32) and Finkelpearl (2001, pp. 3-45) argue, though most regeneration projects incorporate various forms of public art projects within their process, they are only supplementary elements of the regeneration project, just like the design of public spaces, and in many cases don't produce meaningful cultural regeneration, nor appropriate landscape design.

This problem is remedied by means of the method introduced below, which aims to prove that public art projects can be understood as essential place-making tools that create platforms to enhance communication and social activity, while also reflecting on locality in a sensitive way. It is argued that the idea of integrating an 'interconnected chain of public artworks' within the process of regeneration, as also argued for by Tornaghi (2007, pp.1-32), creates an opportunity for art and culture to truly contribute to place-making, reflexive design, environmental quality, education, job creation, cultural participation and civic engagement. The case study attempts to justify this argument further.

Pre-rehabilitation as a durational art strategy

Pre-rehabilitation as a long-term art strategy aims to illustrate that, opposed to developing unattached public art interventions in different parts of the city, it is more beneficial to create a chain of interconnected public art actions in a specific site that, on the whole, act as acupuncture points that activate that specific part of the city over an extended time period. The flexibility of the process or method allows new thoughts and design ideas to arise through the testing of artworks (generating temporary uses and design elements) on site, which could then be incorporated into the long-term regeneration program and future design (Fig. 1).

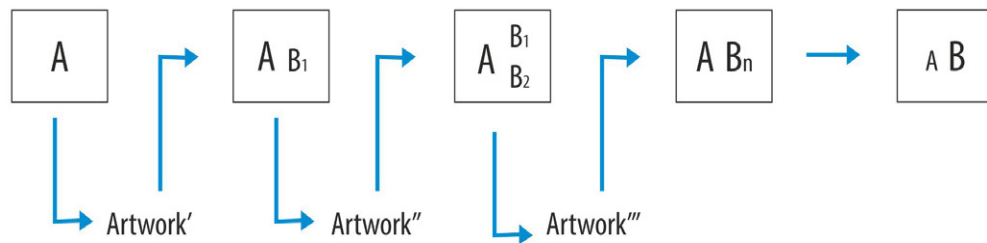


FIGURE 1 The diagram of constant feedback. The method of cultural action planning gives the possibility for live testing of ideas on site from the beginning - through the testing of artworks (generating temporary uses and design elements), enabling a dynamic process that can change, adapt and improve as it goes along. Through constant feedback, the strategy creates time and space for inner renewal that rehabilitation processes alone cannot possess. (Image by Dominika Tihanyi, 2005)

Therefore, it allows for a more dynamic regeneration process that is, over time, able to change and adapt to local needs and demands, thereby helping the development of new common goals and allowing local identity to arise. Through constant feedback, the strategy creates time and space for inner renewal that rehabilitation processes alone cannot possess. The essence of the strategy lies in its durational approach: to be present in one well defined place over a long period of time.

The innovation of the idea can be seen in the development of interconnected temporal interventions that constantly activate a specific site for a long duration. The playful, low cost, temporal interventions and public art projects help create time and space for discussion and learning through interaction. Through the rise of dialogue, people will also become an active, integral part of the regeneration process, which will initiate meaningful engagement between people and space, and improve the social aspects of the rehabilitation process. The interventions enable experimental research work to be done in order to have a better understanding of the place itself, and allow the incorporation of local knowledge and values into future designs, which are important factors in creating socially inclusive, deep rooted and responsive plans and design.

Cultural action planning

Cultural action planning is the method that provides a framework for the strategic concept of pre-rehabilitation. The method of 'cultural action planning' helps in rendering cultural interventions systematically in the process of urban rehabilitation, and provides a framework for the systematic build-up and detailed phasing of public artworks and cultural events during the regeneration process to help the democratization of urban landscape/public space design. Cultural action planning is a learning process through which future possibilities and cultural values can be mapped, discussed and integrated into everyday life. As an organic part of the rehabilitation process, it has a great impact on the futures of communities in helping new common goals to develop and in creating a culturally richer and socially embedded environment.

The cultural action plan should be introduced into the process of regeneration in order to achieve sustainable cultural transformation as an integral part of the redevelopment. The action plan should be constructed by the action planning team, who should form a separate office and be commissioned by the authorities or the rehabilitation office, ideally consisting of architects, landscape architects, artists, sociologists and community developers. The action planning team's principal task is to deliver a framework document for implementing a series of works in relation to the regeneration, as well as generating temporary uses and possible design elements for the future that will initiate a meaningful engagement between people and space. In order for such an 'art brief' to be created, the artist should engage with the aims of the regeneration project, as well as the history, local people and personal stories and myths of the place in order for the project to be specific to its context at all levels. The action plan itself should be developed prior to and alongside the regeneration project. It is a continuously developing entity, through which one project can inspire the next. This gives the possibility for live testing of ideas on site from the beginning, enabling a dynamic process that can change, adapt and improve as it goes along. The cultural action planning team shall work together with the physical regeneration team to construct civic spaces that mediate in relationships between different people, and between people and place.

Case study – Palotanegyed, Budapest

As an experiment to put the above stated theoretical ideas into practice - during the period of 2008-2012 - a chain of public art interventions were developed on the site of the Palotanegyed (Palace Quarter) in

Budapest. Since the rehabilitation programme of the Palace Quarter (run by Rév8 Zrt. the office in charge of the rehabilitation operation) had already started in 2007, the 12 realized public art projects scattered throughout the area were developed in parallel to the rehabilitation program and with a strong connection to the social, economic and environmental aims of the rehabilitation (Figs. 2-3). The case study attempts to exemplify that 'durational art strategies', implemented as part of urban regeneration processes, are able to create platforms to enhance communication and enable the undertaking of research work to improve local and social aspects of rehabilitation.

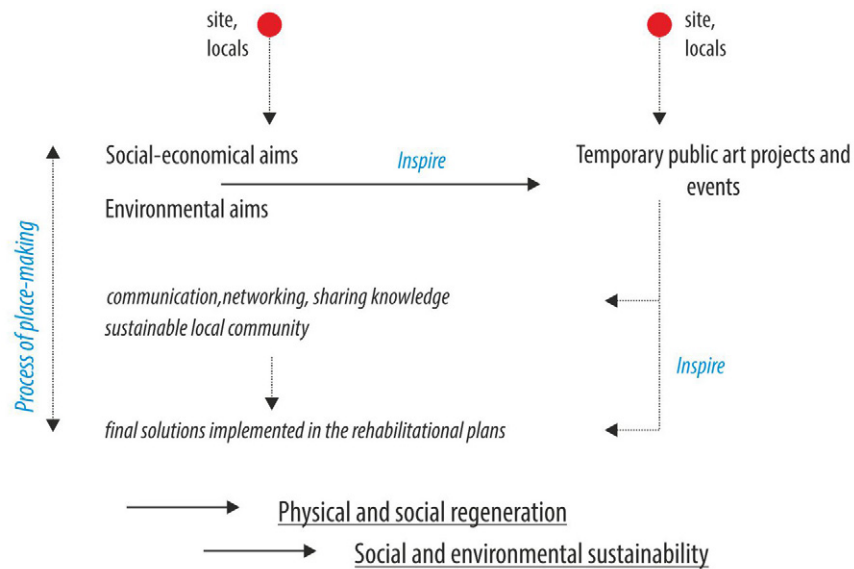


FIGURE 2 The theory of the durational approach. The action plan itself should be developed prior to and alongside the regeneration project. It is a continuously developing entity, through which one project can inspire the next to help the process of place making. Since the rehabilitation programme of the Palace Quarter (run by Rév8 Zrt. the office in charge of the rehabilitation operation) had already started in 2007, the 12 realized interventions were developed in parallel to the rehabilitation program and with a strong connection to the social, economic and environmental aims of the rehabilitation, to set ground for social and environmental sustainability. (Image by Dominika Tihanyi, 2008)



FIGURE 3 Interventions developed on the site of Palotanegyed (Palace Quarter). The essence of the strategy lies in its durational approach: to be present in one well defined place over a long period of time. In the case of Palotanegyed (which is one of the 13 quarters of Józsefváros) the 12 realized public art projects scattered throughout the area were to constantly activate the site and the people living there for the duration of 4 years to help the social aspects of the rehabilitation to arise. (Image by Dominika Tihanyi, 2010)



FIGURE 4 The central position of Palotanegyed (Palace Quarter). Palotanegyed (Palace Quarter) is situated in the inner city of Budapest, within the densely built 8th district, Józsefváros. (Image by Dominika Tihanyi, 2012)

Rehabilitation program of Palotanegyed

Palotanegyed (Palace Quarter) is situated in the inner city of Budapest, within the densely built 8th district, Józsefváros (Fig. 4), a district that faces the biggest socio-economic problems in Budapest. Among the 13 quarters of Józsefváros, Palotanegyed is historically the most prestigious area of the district. The main infiltration of the area goes back to the late 1900s when the historical inner city of Budapest was developed. The name Palotanegyed refers to the palaces built by the aristocracy of later times. Although slow changes have occurred since the 2000s (hip bars and lunchrooms putting out tables on the streets, as can be seen in Fig. 5), it was due to the lack of development in the previous decades that the state of the buildings and the built environment still did not meet the expectations of the inner city of Budapest, and hence the overall regeneration of the area was inevitable.

Duality can be seen in the social aspect of the area, as young newcomers move to run-down inner city areas, mixing with elderly locals. Public research shows that although income position and employment ratio doesn't meet inner city standards, the ratio of intellectuals has risen to higher standards. Economic activity is also below standard, due to factors of demography and social polarization. Inner Józsefváros is traditionally an area of handicraft and retail. In general, structural changes of the past 20 years in the service industries have demolished the economic position of these enterprises. Thanks to strong tradition and the closeness of the inner city, Palotanegyed is a quarter that is quite rich in such enterprises. The aim of the rehabilitation program is to generate inner city functions in the area, in strong connection to local cultural heritage, to help local inhabitants restore their buildings and to reimagine and reinvent their public spaces (Fig. 6). By creating a strong civic and cultural life, it aims to expose itself as a cultural heritage site generating quality environment, education, job creation, cultural participation and civic engagement for locals, as opposed to causing gentrification (Alföldi, Tibor, 2007, pp.7-88).



a



b



c

FIGURE 5 The slowly up-and-coming neighbourhood of Palotanegyed (Palace Quarter). Although slow changes have occurred since the 2000s (hip bars and lunchrooms putting out tables on the streets), it was due to the lack of development in the previous decades that the state of the buildings and the built environment still did not meet the expectations of the inner city of Budapest, and hence the overall regeneration of the area was inevitable. (Photographs by Zsolt Zsuffa, 2012)



a



b



c

FIGURE 6 Renewal of streets in Palotanegyed (Palace Quarter). The aim of the rehabilitation program was to generate inner city functions in the area, in strong connection to local cultural heritage, to help local inhabitants restore their buildings and to reimagine and reinvent their public spaces. As the first step of this process the worn asphalt of streets has been replaced with new paving elements, giving a new structure to the streets, reducing parking space to provide place for trees and amenities. (Photographs by Zsolt Zsuffa, 2012)

The chain of interventions developed on the site of the Palace Quarter within the Cultural Action Plan of the quarter

In the case of the rehabilitation of Palotanegyed (Palace Quarter), the method of cultural action planning was put into practice with the cooperation of Rév8 Zrt. and Újirány Group (Fig. 7). It aimed to set ground for social and environmental sustainability, enhancing social activity by integrating cultural activities and public art projects into the rehabilitation program. The realized temporary interventions were to reflect the aims of the rehabilitation, the cultural heritage and the potential of the area, and inspired the renewal of inner courtyards as community spaces (Fig. 8). They were also tools for modelling alternative space usage to draw attention to the communal role of public spaces. The projects tried to activate both public spaces (streets and squares) and semi-public spaces (inner courtyards) in order to reach out to as many people as possible, to enhance inhabitants' feeling of ownership of not only their flats but also their semi-public and public spaces (Fig. 9).

ACTION PLAN: FRAMEWORK OF ACTIONS FOR PALOTANEGYED (PALACE-QUARTER) 2008-2012					
Aim: social-economical, cultural and environmental sustainability through creating communicational platforms					
Micro projects	Macro projects				
public art projects and events set in privately owned spaces	chain of temporary public art interventions developed on the streets and squares of Palotanegyed				
	Hard elements		Soft elements		
	temporary public art projects, modeling future physical elements characteristic to Palotanegyed		temporary events that model future events that create tradition		
	Temporary public art projects	Social-economical aims	Environmental aims	Local events	Aims
<p>Inner Courtyard Program The aim of the program is to transform the inner courts of houses into community places. The people living in the buildings are involved in the act from the planning phase up to the executional part of the renovation creating the sense of belonging.</p> <p><i>Social and environmental aims: to generate communication between dwellers, and to create a place where the micro community can interact</i></p> <p>Palaces Project - Flag project The aim of the project is to create a unique, unified flag element for the palaces on site so they become visual. Dwellers take part in the program to look up information of the palace</p> <p>- Open Gates Festival in their open courtyards, dwellers present the gathered history of their palaces</p> <p><i>Social and environmental aims: to generate communication between dwellers, and to create a place where the micro community can interact to share local knowledge</i></p>	<p>Asphalt paintings (marking the site of rehabilitation)</p> <p>A. pattern: 1. reflecting on damages on asphalt 2. marking out entrances of Palaces 3. marking out entrances of shops</p> <p>B. quotations on future pedestrian streets</p> <p>C. who was...? reflecting the names of streets</p> <p>Personal Stories Project (story boards of history local shops and cafes)</p> <p>Mirror Project (mirror installations, reflecting local values)</p> <p>Interactive Mapping Project (orthofoto placed in open space, playful form of public research)</p> <p>Design workshop Workshop for thinking of local image creating site-specific urban design elements, that make the place more homely</p> <p>Info box Project</p> <p>Cultural Center Project</p> <p>Wifi spots Project</p>	<p><i>to generate communication between locals, local shopkeepers, authorities; to draw attention to the environment</i></p> <p><i>to generate and sustain communication between locals, between locals and outsiders, and draw attention to the environment</i></p>	<p><i>to experiment in finding possible ways to visualize how local values and needs can be implemented through design eg. paving elements, seatings, information system... or even finding new elements... like the mirror poles</i></p> <p><i>to create spaces where information can be obtained, and places where community members can interact with each other</i></p>	<p>Open Mall Project (market like sales of shops, on Saturdays)</p> <p>Thematic markets (cheese market, antique market, wine market, bio market on Sundays)</p> <p>Flow market program (recycling goods of local people to collect money for environmental issues)</p> <p>Leisure and cultural programs (open space yoga, Jazz concerts, theater programs - in collaboration with nearby institutions, like: Italian Cultural Center, Chamber for Architecture, Jazz Center, University of Health-care, University of Theater, and Schools)</p> <p>Milk program (revives traditional milk carrying-out service)</p> <p>Story Telling Program - (Stories of Palotanegyed, told by elderly to the young at Cafes, in collaboration with Café owners)</p> <p>Civil actions (tree planting, flower planting actions, organization of local street festivals, etc.)</p> <p>Art Festivals (Pedestrian Festival, public art-street art festivals)</p> <p>Tour guides in Palotanegyed (guided tours, that light on local heritage)</p>	<p><i>to enhance communication between locals, to enhance social-cultural awareness, environmental awareness, to promote locality/local culture, to promote open space usage</i></p>

FIGURE 7 The cultural action plan of Palotanegyed (Palace Quarter). Cultural action planning helps in rendering cultural interventions systematically in the process of urban rehabilitation, and provides a framework for the systematic build-up and detailed phasing of public artworks and cultural events during the regeneration process. The cultural action plan itself is a framework document for implementing a series of works in relation to the regeneration, as well as generating temporary uses and possible design elements for the future that will initiate a meaningful engagement between people and space. (Image by Dominika Tihanyi, 2008)

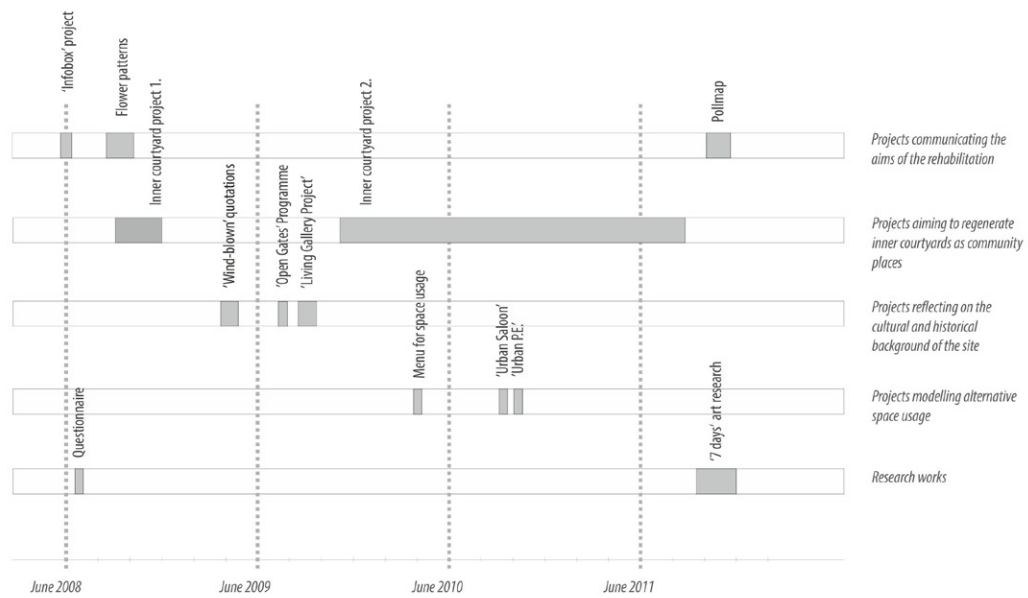


FIGURE 8 Correlation of realized projects. The 12 interconnected interventions, developed over the duration of 4 years, were strongly connected in their set-up. The temporary projects were to reflect the aims of the rehabilitation, the cultural heritage and the potential of the area, and inspired the renewal of inner courtyards as community spaces. They were also tools for modelling alternative space usage to draw attention to the communal role of public spaces. (Image by Dominika Tihanyi, 2012)

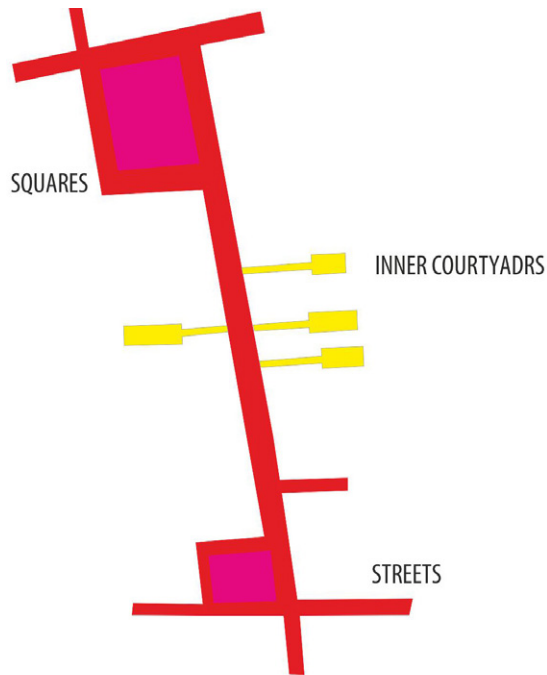


FIGURE 9 Actions were developed in both public and semi-public spaces. The projects tried to activate both public spaces (streets and squares) and semi-public spaces (inner courtyards) in order to reach out to as many people as possible, to enhance inhabitants' feeling of ownership of not only their flats but also their semi-public and public spaces (Image by Dominika Tihanyi, 2008)

The first projects realized tried to help communicate the aims of the rehabilitation and tried to poll people's opinion about the rehabilitation. The two-day temporary 'rehabilitation office' created at Lumen Coffee House and the patterns that marked out the rehabilitation site acted as informational surfaces so people could learn in the actual space where the changes would take place. 'Pollmap', an interactive orthophoto game, was later developed and installed in a busy square of Palace Quarter and was a playful mode in gauging the opinions of the people regarding which parts of the neighbourhood they most/least liked and which parts they would prefer to be rehabilitated (Figs. 10-12).

Actions such as the 'Wind-blown' quotations and the 'Living Gallery Project' tried to reflect the cultural and historical background of the site. Quotations of the well-known Hungarian writer, Gyula Krúdy that were contextually connected to Pest, were painted randomly on the surface of the asphalt. This aimed to draw attention to the streets bearing names of famous writers and poets. The project tried to imply that coffee houses as reading rooms and antique bookstores could be important elements in giving a unique identity to the area. The 'Living Gallery Project' involved local shopkeepers in exploring and exposing their shops' individual stories and myths, to be presented on small tablets next to each shop's entrance. Reading the 21 brief narratives, the story of the street comes alive: how it evolved from an old 'carpenters street' into an important cultural scene of the 1990s (Figs. 13-14).

Within the projects aiming to regenerate inner courtyards as community places, two programmes were realized. In the 'Open Gates' programme two inner courtyards were temporarily opened to the public for a day when inhabitants organized an event in which presentations, exhibitions and discussions helped the visitors to learn about the building's history, the people living in it, and their efforts to sustain the heritage site in which they live. The 'Inner Courtyard Project' aimed to permanently transform inner courtyards of houses into community places with the active participation of the residents. During the programme, two inner courtyards were renewed. In both cases, a central communal element was created where inhabitants can now meet each other and organize events (Figs. 15-16).

In order to activate streets and squares, 'Urban Saloon' and 'Urban P.E.', realized as part of the Placc Festival, modelled alternative space usages for the duration of one week. 'Urban Saloon' created a place for contemplation as sun chairs were placed on an empty square in the Palace Quarter to create a space in the city where one can spend time freely, without the compulsory need to spend money. As a counterpart, 'Urban P.E.' allowed people to exercise for free in the streets of Palotanegyed with the help of exercise bars fixed to the facades of houses (Figs. 17-18).

Project summary

For a few years these interventions, along with the actions and events organized by the Civils of Palotanegyed, transformed the site of the Palotanegyed into a unique, ever-evolving interactive gallery in order to create a lively neighbourhood. The playful interventions, partly realized within the framework of the rehabilitation, and partly as guerrilla acts, tried to build bridges between the locals and the authorities while also enhancing communication between fellow inhabitants in order to develop a stable network of citizens who could take an active role in creating and sustaining their community and their environment. Overall, the work attempts to set a positive example in showing that socially engaged public art interventions are able to create arenas of meeting and discussion in public space that have an impact on reviving local communities through the reconstruction of communal/public spirit. It tries to underpin the belief that re/constructed urban situations that encourage people to meet in public space can be of help in creating a more open, inclusive and cooperative society that takes an active part in forming its environment and future.



d



d



b



b



c



c

FIGURE 10 Infobox project. As the kick-off project, a two-day temporary 'rehabilitation office' was created at Lumen Coffee House during the first Krúdy Festival organized by the Civils of Palotanegyed. In the 'office' visitors could learn about the aims of the rehabilitation, leave notes with their opinions, learn about and fill out a questionnaire which aimed to poll the interest in the Inner Courtyard Program. // Concept: Dominika Tihanyi // Realization: Dominika Tihanyi (Újirány Group) and Tamás Tibor (Rév 8 Zrt.) // Funding: Rév 8 Zrt. (Cost: 30 Euro) // (Images by Dominika Tihanyi, 2008)

FIGURE 11 Asphalt painting project to mark out the rehabilitation site. A well-known pattern –which used to cover many walls of Budapest –was painted on the asphalt surfaces of the streets that were going to be renewed. The project also promoted the new name of the quarter, 'Palotanegyed', as it was integrated into the paintings. The pattern tried to draw attention to the use of unique paving design in the future that could be typical of the quarter. // Concept: Dominika Tihanyi // Realization: Dominika Tihanyi, Tamás Tibor, Béla Gál and Áron Vass-Eysen // Funding: Rév 8 Zrt. (Cost: 90 Euro) // (Images by: Gergely László, 2008)



FIGURE 12 Pollmap – The Interactive Mapping Project. Pollmap is an interactive artwork installed in public spaces. On the surface of the orthophoto citizens can mark with coloured stickers their favourite spots, homes and the places they wish to develop. The project also tried to show that a digital version, shown as an interactive information column, could act as a future landscape design element in the small squares of the quarter providing constant feedback from city dwellers concerning their local environment. // Concept: Dominika Tihanyi // Realization: Dominika Tihanyi, Árpád Kovács, Dorottya Thurnay // Funding: Rév 8 Zrt. (Cost: 1800 Euro) // (Figure 12.a Image by Árpád Kovács, 2011; Figure 12.b, c by DominikaTihanyi, 2011)



FIGURE 13 'Wind-blown' Quotations. The aim of the second asphalt painting project, realized together with architect students during a workshop, was to draw attention to the streets bearing names of famous writers and poets. Hence quotations of the well-known Hungarian writer, Gyula Krúdy, were randomly painted on the surface of the asphalt. The project tried to imply that coffee houses as reading rooms and antique bookstores could be important elements in giving a unique identity to the area. It also showed that quotations could be interesting elements in creating site-specific paving surfaces. // Concept + realization: Dominika Tihanyi, Juci Soltész, Sarolta Hüttl and other students // Funding: TU Budapest (Cost: 30 Euro) // (Fig. 13.a,b Image by Sarolta Hüttl, 2009, Fig. 13.c by Dominika Tihanyi, 2009)



b



b



c

FIGURE 14 'Living Gallery' Project. Local shopkeepers of Krúdy Gyula Street were involved in a project that focused on finding out and exposing their shops' individual stories and myths. The collected stories were presented in Hungarian and English on little tablets that can still be found next to each shop's entrance. Reading the 21 brief narratives the story of the street comes alive and we are taken back in time to the era when the street was an old 'carpenters street' and later an important cultural scene of the 1990's. // Concept: Dominika Tihanyi // Realization: Dominika Tihanyi, Levente G. Molnár, locals // Funding: Újirány Group (Cost: 300Euro) // (Image by Árpád Kovács, 2009)



b



b



c

FIGURE 15 'Open Gates' Program. This intervention was realized on the occasion of the Cultural Heritage Days. The gates of two buildings, formerly palaces owned by aristocratic families, were opened to the public. In both cases, inhabitants organized the event where presentations, exhibitions as well as discussions helped the visitors to learn about the building's history, the people living in it, and about their efforts to sustain the heritage site they live in. The projects showed how much locals appreciate their cultural heritage within the neighbourhood and highlighted how open they are to sharing their passion with others. // Concept & main organizers: Judit Györi, László Perényi, Dominika Tihanyi, Tamás Tibor // Realization: locals, Judit Györi, László Perényi, Dominika Tihanyi // No funding // (Images by László Perényi, 2009)



a



a



b



b



c



c

FIGURE 16 Inner Courtyard Program. This project aimed to transform inner courtyards of houses into community places with the active participation of the residents. During the programme – set within the Budapest Downtown of Europe Programme – two inner courtyards were renewed. In both cases, a central communal element was created where inhabitants can now meet each other and organize events. For example, a seating element that can be a sofa or a stage or individual seats and in the other case a dining area under a pergola for barbequing with a sandbox for kids. The project was to be continued with one new courtyard being renewed each year. The new courtyards were to be opened up each year on the cultural heritage days so others could get an insight to the planned changes and to be able to meet fellow neighbours. As more and more buildings were to be opened up at this event, it could possibly become a local festival that would play an especially important role in the rise of local identity. // Concept: locals, DominikaTihanyi, GyörgyAlföldi, TamásTibor // Realization: locals, DominikaTihanyi, TamásTibor // Funding: Rév 8 Zrt. (Cost: 3000 Euro) // (Figure 16.a,b Image by K.Z., 2008; Figure 16.c by Judit Figuli, 2010)

FIGURE 17 'Urban Saloon'. Realized within Placc Festival, sun chairs were placed on an empty square in the Palace Quarter. The aim of the project was to create a space in the city where one can spend time freely without the compulsory need to spend money. The temporary project also drew attention to the fundamental problem of Pollack Mihály Square, where no seating can be found and therefore the square is only used for crossing through. The project exemplified that big changes can be brought about in public space usage through a very simple idea. By creating sitting places we were able to develop small saloons during the afternoons where locals felt welcome. // Concept: Dominika Tihanyi // Curator: Katalin Erdődi // Realization: Dominika Tihanyi, Katalin Erdődi // Funding: Placc Festival (Costs: 90 Euro) // (Figure 17a Image by Tamás Zakota, 2010; Figure 17b, c by Dominika Tihanyi, 2010)



d



b



c

FIGURE 18 'Urban P.E.' This project also realized within Placc Festival, allowed people to exercise for free in the streets of Palotanegyed with the help of exercise bars fixed to the facades of houses. The aim of the project was to draw attention to the fact that such exercise can prevent spinal problems from developing. It is known that among Palotanegyed's inhabitants there is a high percentage of intellectuals who spend most of their time sitting, which is a leading cause of spinal problems today. It is also an element which (if realized for good) could give a very unique and specific identity to the place. // Concept: Dominika Tihanyi // Curator: Katalin Erdődi // Realization: Dominika Tihanyi, Katalin Erdődi, Zsolt Zsuffa // Sponsored by: Királyhegyi Sport (Cost: 250 Euro) // (Images by Dominika Tihanyi, 2010)



d



b



c

FIGURE 19 'Palace Quarter NOW'. a) Finally, as a sign of trust, we were commissioned by the 8th district to edit the magazine called 'Palace Quarter NOW' that deals with the past, present, and future of the area. All articles were written by members of the local civil group that emerged parallel to the actions and rehabilitation process. This cooperation proved that the realized projects were able to create platforms for informal meetings where a good set of people actually did get to know each other better and formed an active community that was eager to help changes arise in their neighbourhood. // Concept & realization: Civils of Palotanegyed, D. Tihanyi, L.G. Molnár // Funding: mRév 8 Zrt. // a) (Image by D. Tihanyi, 2012) // b) and c) The Community-based reinvention of Teleki Square // (Images by T. Vermes, 2013)

Results and conclusions

The presented work is an experimental one that initially had no support and that had to prove its value as it went along. It was an idea that was supported by the lead architect of the rehabilitation office, as he understood that the intention of activating locals and the site was to help the rehabilitation itself. The idea of actualizing the chain of actions came just in time, as the rehabilitation of the area (that also aimed to activate the site culturally) had just started. It was also around this time that the civil group, Civils of Palotanegyed, was starting to form. This junction enabled very positive cooperation between the actors, as everyone who was engaged in some way was eager to make the best out of the given opportunity. This is one of the reasons it is difficult to measure the success of the project. Furthermore, as no analysis was done, only empirical learning can help identify what impact it had on the authorities, on the outcome of the rehabilitation and on the inhabitants.

- 1 It is difficult for the mayor and authorities to deal with open-ended approaches. If the positive outcome of a project is not justified in the form of plans, it is very hard to get support for it, and in this case, we never knew what project would come next. It was also very hard to make officials understand why we were actually doing the actions, as the reasoning of creating benefit for the future was quite a vague one. It is also quite evident that no official would approve of a project that sought to paint the asphalt of streets, an act that, at the very least, would be considered vandalism. In this vein, most actions were realized without the permission of the local government, but with the silent approval of the rehabilitation office. A promising outcome came after the projects were realized, when positive feedback came from the authorities and the mayor himself. As a sign of trust and recognition, Újirány Landscape Architects together with the Civils of Palota Quarter were commissioned by the 8th district to create the magazine called 'Palacenegyed NOW' that deals with the past, present, and future of the area Palotanegyed (Fig. 19). Furthermore, the practice itself has been commissioned for the community-based reinvention of Teleki Square in an adjacent quarter.
- 2 Concerning the impact the project had on the design process of the rehabilitation, it reached little success as the temporal interventions were developed in parallel to the rehabilitation programme, lagging behind the construction plans. Hence the design ideas evoked by the actions could only be partially realized, including those (e.g. tablets telling stories of certain houses) that could be applied in addition to the rehabilitation, which unfortunately consisted mostly of road construction works (Fig. 6). From this point of view, it is important to state that the 'cultural action plan' should be developed at a very early stage of a regeneration process.
- 3 The biggest impact of the actions can be seen in the activation of the local inhabitants and activists/artists, who were largely inspired by the project. To this day, all participants try to continue to create more and more site-specific actions and events/cultural programs similar to the ones developed by this project. This proves that the realized projects were successful in creating platforms for informal meetings where a wide range of people actually did get to know each other better and formed an active community that is still eager to help changes happen in their neighbourhood. Having been present for almost a decade on this specific site, it can be said that, through continuous long-term presence, the people who took part in the actions have truly become an organic part of the life of the place, and inspire change authentically. Landscape architects of Újirány, artists from Lumen, and local inhabitants of Palotanegyed all took part in the process as civilians and, as such, have become active participants of the process of creating a socially and culturally enriched and embedded place (Fig. 20).



FIGURE 20 Citizens of Palotanegyed in action organizing a flow market and a flower planting weekend // (Images by Citizens of Palotanegyed, 2011).

Overall, the project gives positive feedback on the value of incorporating creative art strategies in the process of rehabilitation, to help formulate and test ideas for possible future activities through engaging local residents in the actions that create informal spaces of thinking and learning through fun, which enables the spending of quality social time in public space. It underpins the idea that it is beneficial to take the time to get to know a place better, while also showing it as a very slow process that needs continuous involvement. By understanding good urban design and art as 'the manifestation of the collective cultural, historical and philosophical identity of a community', as John Hopkins (2005, p.30) puts it, this multidisciplinary practice helps in (re)constructing the identity of a place, building upon the existing knowledge of the community and enabling inhabitants to engage meaningfully with the given space and its inhabitants to have a better understanding of their environment. Consequently, as opposed to merely creating a new urban design, paying attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place ('What is Placemaking?', para 1) will result in a thorough understanding of a particular place, and urban changes (including urban design) will 'become part of, form and reflect identity' as discussed by Carr et al. (1992, pp.19-20) and will truly support the ongoing evolution of a place.

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‘Yes We Camp!’

Marseille’s artistic and participatory urban camp examined through a socio-materiality lens

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Abstract

The presented paper builds on theoretical language borrowed from post-modern philosophy and humanist geography to investigate particular features of the artistic and participatory “Yes We Camp!” The article emphasizes a mutually reinforcing relationship between static properties of the site – its spatial organization, built environment and selection of materials – and its dynamic characteristics – social interactions, organizational form and the emotional resonance evoked in people. The paper shows that place particularity is symbolically conveyed by the spatial organization and built environment and is collectively lived and felt as a unique atmosphere. Thus, our understanding of particular places cannot be complete without accounting for the complex interactions between their spatial, material, social and human dimensions.

Keywords

particular place, atmosphere, socio-materiality, heterotopia, Yes We Camp!

Introduction

In urban design and landscape architecture practice, designers often overlook the dynamic dimensions of place, tending instead to focus mainly on its static, physical and material characteristics. To contribute to the discussion about how to capture and conceptualize the dynamic particularities of the landscape metropolis, the presented paper will investigate the artistic and participatory 'Yes We Camp!' (YWC). It does so not to deny the importance of the static properties of places, but rather to argue that combining multiple dimensions may bring the conceptualization of particulars to a new level of understanding and favour site transformation practice over more open-ended work design approaches.

YWC was an experimental project, combining ecology and performative architecture, conceived on the occasion of Marseille Provence European Capital of Culture 2013. The project was initiated by Olivier Bedu, architect and creator of the project Cabanon Vertical, and Eric Pringels, designer at Natural Solutions and co-founder of the alternative festival Off Marseille 2013. The main mini-housing modular hexa-structures of the campsite were designed by BC Architect & Studies and Michael Lefeber. During the implementation phase, it was directed by Nicolas Détrie, urban economist. The campsite was built on the banks of Estaque, Marseille Area, between January and April 2013, open to public from May to September 2013 and dismantled in October 2013. It hosted more than 50 cultural events, 11 artists in residence, on average 130 campers per day at high tourist season and up to 800 visitors during cultural events and festivities.

Overall, the project had a strong social dimension. It hosted youths in the process of professional and social (re)integration, and worked closely with local communities to sensitize poor, often migrant, populations to culture. It promoted such values as sharing, convivial atmosphere and mixing of the public. Designed as an ephemeral space, its purpose was to recycle and promote a deserted site, and then ultimately give it back to its inhabitants. The initial ambition of the project founders was to create a 'multifunctional space attractive for various reasons, by their mutual proximity and by their organization on the site enabling a mix of uses and of public' [1]. A particular affective atmosphere consolidated collective action, nurtured the action potential of the volunteers, and gave material expression to the site's symbolic and emotional meaning.

The ambition of this article is to capture and emphasize the socio-material and spatial characteristics of the campsite that have made a particular place out of this spatial product. More specifically, I will analyse the symbolic meaning conveyed by the place, consider emotional affect and other forms of representations cultivated by the volunteers working at the campsite, and observe social practices that emerged at the site, which may be viewed as an enactment of the potential in place. I will attempt to provide a fine-grained analysis of the mutually reinforcing relationship between static and material properties of the site on one hand and the campsite's social dynamics on the other hand. To reach this objective, I will heuristically derive a conceptual framework that will help me to grasp the peculiarities of the site and then apply it to the empirical analysis of the campsite. The relevance to design and architecture practice is in bringing to the forefront new forms of professional practice, mixing traditional designer work with experimental and participatory practices on the site.

The rest of the article is organized as follows: the first section presents a heuristically derived conceptual framework for understanding particular places; the second section describes YWC as a particular place around seven hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework presented in the first section. The attention of the reader will be brought to the specificities of the place, such as being 'another place', social and artistic production occurring there, with a focus on designer practice intertwined with social practice, the campsite's affective atmosphere and its capacity to inspire action. The last section briefly elaborates on the value of the results for urban design, landscape practitioners and scholarly research, and concludes.

Conceptual framework for understanding particulars

In 1974, Lefebvre's 'The production of space' addressed a critique to the one-sided, static conception of space by professionals: "...[the] architect has before him a slice or a piece of space cut from larger wholes, that he takes this portion of space as a 'given' and works on it according to his tastes, technical skills, ideas and preferences." (Ibid.: p. 143). "When compared with the abstract space of the experts, the space of the everyday activities of users is a concrete, which is to say, subjective. ... [i]t has an origin, and that origin is childhood, with its hardships, its achievements and lacks." (Ibid.: p. 145). In assigning importance to situational and social properties of space and to symbolic meanings and codes it conveys, Lefebvre undertakes a careful description of the gap that may exist between the representation of space by professional landscape designers and users' practices in that space. His key argument is that space is produced by social practices; therefore, any structural understanding of space cannot be complete without surrounding societal context (epoch, mode of production, distribution of power). That is, in the design practice, space must not be seen a geometric container; rather, it must be considered as inseparable from lived experience, continuously shaped, 'produced' through social interaction.

While Lefebvre describes the relationship between space and society in general, Foucault focusses on the role of singular, specific places - particular places, called heterotopias (Foucault, 1984). Within a single location, heterotopias may concentrate several incompatible spaces and sites; mirror, designate or invert established relations of a culture or civilization; transgress time by linking several slices in time, accumulating time or being ephemeral, transitory. Heterotopias are at once isolated from the outside world and have open access or access subject to rites, rules or permissions. The role of heterotopias can be in creating "a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned" (ibid.: p. 9) or "a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled" (ibid.: p. 9). Heterotopias are a great reserve of imagination, adventure and dreams, a sort of source of renewal and regeneration for civilizations.

In describing the relationship between spatial, material and social dimensions of space, post-modern philosophy has a strong focus on power relations and established social order. Alternatively, contributions in humanist geography on affective atmospheres bring to the forefront the emotional component of the space-society relationship. Atmospheres emanate from the material and structural elements of space; belong to physical and/or aesthetic object; and at the same time to the perceiving subject (Anderson, 2009; Böhme, 2006, 1993). Places, buildings, sites are atmospheric, that is, animated by specific affective qualities, resonances or moods (Anderson, 2009). They possess intensive affective power (Böhme, 1993), an aura (Böhme, 2006) that is perceived and lived as something singular and unique (Böhme, 2006), creating a sense of place (Rodaway, 1994). Atmospheres are impersonal, they belong to collective situations and nurture collective consciousness; at the same time, they are felt as intensely personal, governing individual consciousness in place (Anderson, 2006). Atmospheres are an "assemblage of social, material and affective components linked together into practice, in the materiality of place, traversing peoples, things and spaces" (Anderson, 2009: p.78). The humanist geography emphasizes that atmosphere gives a motivating impulse to action, and that the potential of a place, conveyed by atmosphere, may be materialized through individual and collective action. More specifically, emotional affect may drive collective active engagement with the structural or material dimensions of a place in the process of the creation of a sense of belonging in a place, or in place-making (Thrift, 2007; Massumi, 2002) and may inspire future events or activities (Duff, 2010).

Grasping particularities of YWC

From the conceptual framework outlined above, I am able to formulate seven hypotheses about social, political, atmospheric and emotional dimensions of particular places to guide the observation of the site and to grasp its peculiarities. The empirical knowledge gained from the YWC case study can in turn validate or question the heuristically derived conceptual framework. From the professional practice viewpoint, the empirical description of the place dynamics around the hypotheses may directly inform and inspire urban space and landscape design.

Production of ‘another place’

Hypothesis 1: Material space of particular places is produced within an established order of social relations of reproduction (family) and relations of production (hierarchical social functions), or in an attempt to mirror, transgress, contest or invert them. Aiming to ‘recycle’ and revitalize an abandoned industrial site and to propose a “*real alternative to luxury hotels of Noailles*” [2], YWC contested the cultural and urban policy of the city of Marseille on the eve of Marseille European Capital of Culture 2013. The initiative highlighted the reality of poor and deserted urban areas in Marseille and its neighbouring suburbs, towns and villages contrasting with the official discourse and policy-making. To change the negative image of the site, show neighbouring inhabitants the value of the place, involve them in the collective dynamics and bring culture (in a broad sense) to deprived citizens, YWC hosted cultural events and projects in a location ‘snubbed’ by the official cultural program of the European Capital of Culture. The campsite was designed and built on a deserted industrial site of 6500 m² on the banks of Estaque, a suburb of Marseille. Before the campsite’s construction, the site was completely unoccupied and empty, with no constructions and few facilities. The adjacent areas were characterized by poverty and lack of security. Located between the city, the sea and the mountain, the campsite was a sort of condensed Marseille (Fig. 1 and Fig. 3), aimed at symbolizing the city as it is represented by its inhabitants.



FIGURE 1 The campsite location.



FIGURE 2 The campsite’s overall spatial organization scheme (Drawing by Audebert, A., 2013).

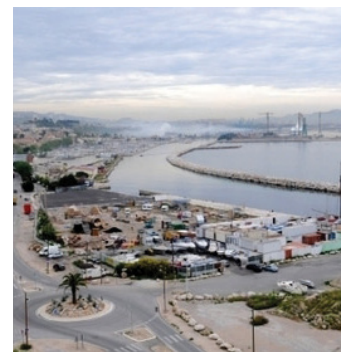


FIGURE 3 View of the camp (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).

The project had a target of having a limited environmental impact, mirroring public debates about the environmental impact of the Marseille European Capital of Culture 2013. A 3-level shower system on scaffolding had a solar energy water heating system on the top, showers in the middle and a water

recycling system on the ground. Dry toilets, also on scaffolding, had recovery tanks on the ground and toilet cabins on the top.

Hypothesis 2: Particular places have spatial delimitations that both isolate them from the outside world and make them penetrable. Entry can be open, or submitted to rites, rules or permissions.

The location of the campsite was quite isolated, relatively far from urban life, with little public transportation from the centre of Marseille. By the time the campsite opened to tourists, a ferryboat linking Estaque to Marseille city centre had started circulating. Fences delineated the campsite from the outside world. Upon arrival at the site, one became completely immersed in the life of the campsite.

Hypothesis 3: Particular places transgress time by linking several slices in time, are oriented towards the eternal aspect of time, accumulate time or are ephemeral, transitory. The site was conceived as an ephemeral 'event-place'. Construction works started in April 2013 and the site was open to visitors from May to September 2013. At the end of the summer period, YWC was dismantled and its construction components, objects and equipment were sold at a big garage sale. Now, there is not even a single sign left as a reminder of YWC.

Space of new forms of social and artistic production

Hypothesis 4: The material space of particular places displays, contests, or inverts codes of social organization, subsuming established power relations and creates a space of illusion, sort of 'another real space'. In many aspects, the spatial and material structure of YWC conveyed an alternative form of spatial and socio-material structure, architectural design and artistic production. The campsite was designed as a mini-village with many places where one could isolate oneself, as well as private spaces, artistic work and making spaces, spaces for social life and a totem place above all constructions, wearing the symbol of the campsite (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). These were organized around a central place, an 'agora' recalling and reproducing the roots of the Western society: the Greek city-state with its democratic form of social organization. At the same time, the concentration of leisure, rest and work, artistic production and consumption, public and private spaces in one central location blurred the traditional delineation of such spaces in Western society. Eleven mini-housing constructions, constituting the core of the campsite, were designed and built using a performativity approach. The flagship constructions included 'les Cabanons perchés' - 'Perched huts' and 'Moisseuneuses' - 'Combines' (Fig. 4), 'Semeuses' - 'Sowers' (Fig. 5) as well as la 'Gyagone', version 3.0 of 'Moissonneuses'. In line with the philosophy of place recycling, and due to scarcity of resources, many objects and construction elements were collected from Emmaus, an international charitable movement aimed at combatting poverty and homelessness. Some mini-housing facilities were built using recycled caravans, like 'Hameau de caravanes' - 'Hamlet of caravans'. The reception desk of the campsite was built out of a recycled container (Fig. 6). Some mini-housing facilities were built using recycled caravans, like 'Hameau de caravanes' - 'Hamlet of caravans' (Fig. 7).



FIGURE 4 'Moissonneuses' - 'Combines' on the front and Perched Huts in the background. Dorms and small rooms built on scaffolds made out of wooden materials and recycled pallets and 'Les Cabanons perchés' (Perched huts) two-storey perched and shady platforms for tents built on scaffolds are among the flagship constructions of the camping. Designed by BC Architect & Studios and Michael Lefeber. (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).



FIGURE 5 'Semeuses' - 'Sowers'. Dorms and small rooms built on scaffolds made out of wooden materials and recycled pallets. Designed by BC Architect & Studios and Michael Lefeber (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).



FIGURE 6 The campsite's reception desk. The reception desk of the campsite was built out of a recycled container (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).



FIGURE 7 'Hameau de caravanes' - 'Hamlet of caravans'. The very first mini-housing facilities built on the campsite were 'Hameau de caravanes' (hamlet of caravans) - recycled caravans perched on scaffolds over two levels (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).



FIGURE 8 Bubble house. Designed in the sixties by architect Jean Benjamin Maneval, the habitat is composed of six plastic shells. It was first used in the campsite Elf Aquitaine and then recovered by a group of artists and performers. An example of architectural utopias of pop art, Bubble house was one of the emblematic habitats of the campsite (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).



FIGURE 9 Hive Bee Pass. The hive Bee-Pass equipped with a smokestack 2.5 meters high allows bees to live in proximity to humans (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).

To further question the dominant model of cultural policy and that of cultural production in Marseille [1], the campsite adopted the 'open creativity' approach in campsite construction, through analogy with open source digital platforms, like Wikipedia or GitHub. Participation of various actors, such as artists, enterprises, neighbours and volunteers, was solicited for the implementation of the project. Some creative solutions and constructions that existed as independent constructions and artworks were borrowed to complement the architectural constructions conceived specifically for the camping project: la 'Maison bulle' - 'Bubble house' (Fig. 8), a hive Bee-Pass (Fig. 9), 'Valcoucou SDF-hotel' - 'Valcoucou, a hotel for homelessness' (Fig. 10). The campsite also hosted artists in residence who built original constructions -customized caravans (Fig. 15) and grew a garden (Fig. 11).



FIGURE 10 Valcoucou SDF Hotel. 'Valcoucou SDF-hotel' (Valcoucou, a hotel for homelessness), an artistic activist project built as a reaction to the policy of N. Sarkozy (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).



FIGURE 11 The garden. The garden is an experiment with above ground permaculture adapted for urban life that made the campsite green (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).

Professional design and social practices at YWC

Hypothesis 5: The design practice of particular places is inseparable from lived experience and is continuously enriched through social interaction. The YWC project experimented with new forms of social organization and power relations. Because it was mainly volunteers that implemented the campsite, the project's organizational structure was characterized by the absence of hierarchical employee-employer relations. Paid professionals were only solicited for specialized construction tasks when volunteers' skills were insufficient and where security requirements were strong (e.g. constructions on scaffolding, electricity and plumbing). A volunteer joining the campsite was given the liberty of choosing what he/she wanted to do, choosing from the list of tasks that were communicated by the project leader at regular volunteer team meetings: *"There is no chief, no timetable, no one obliges you to do that if you do not want to."* (volunteer A, member of the core team). On the negative side *"[t]oo much freedom also brings screwing around. People choose to do nothing, they do nothing. It happens"* (volunteer A, member of the core team). Recognition of individual efforts by peers served as a motivating factor: *"There is an important group dynamic... We make fun of those who do not do anything, on purpose: hey, you don't do anything... we motivate ourselves"* (short-term volunteer E). Those who were not willing to fully invest in the project had a feeling of not being part of the collective: *"There is a closed bubble mentality in here... people always do something..."* (short-term volunteer C). The rollover within the volunteer team was relatively high. Its size also varied depending on the season: large at high tourist season in July and August, and reduced during the construction and deconstruction periods. Although functional roles were more or less explicitly defined for everyone, the operational process implicitly agreed by the collective was open to input from all. The team was also open to newcomers: any person joining the project could make propositions about implementation or improvement of specific areas of the campsite's life-processes: *"Sometimes there are volunteers who have been here for two days and could give an idea ... it's funny"* (volunteer F, member of the core team).

However, it was not enough to bring an idea; it needed to be implicitly approved by the others. Only when other volunteers recognized the value added by a new initiative were they progressively joining to help and the initiator implicitly appointed by the community as a new task leader. *"Everyone has a small plot and everyone has his own ideas, there is no one person who holds things. Everyone has ideas ... and then there is an idea and when the idea becomes interesting, everyone joins and then it goes in one direction... That's how it works"* (short-term volunteer D).

This self-selection and self-appointment process shaped a highly dedicated core team. The members of the core group took the lead on organization and implementation of various functional tasks of the project: management of volunteers, camping reservations, manning the campsite desk, making and realization of small constructions, safety maintenance, stage management, bar holding, communication, and other tasks. The core team completely appropriated the campsite project and collectively shared the responsibility of the project outcome: *"There is responsibility, we are all responsible [...] This is crazy, this is a project that belongs to no one, but we are all concerned."* (volunteer F, member of the core team).

A number of young professional landscape designers and architects were part of the core team. Their professional design and making practice was intertwined with the campsite maintenance and management tasks. They perceived the democratic organizational form and the established freedom of initiative as an opportunity to try, to commit errors and to retry in their professional practice: *"... if it does not work we undo and redo it differently, and if it works then we make it even better... and it's true that it works well"* (volunteer H, member of a core team).

The team's diversity in terms of professional occupations, and its size, flexibility and openness to newcomers, combined with large needs for construction, maintenance and animation of the campsite

provided it with unlimited opportunities for the exchange of ideas and collective experimentations with the material space. “Everyone feeds with the vision of another. This happens when sharing around a table, or at a construction site. “Look, I see it more like this” – “Yes, you’re right”. And we try” (volunteer H, member of a core team).

Affective atmosphere of the campsite

Hypothesis 6: Material space of particular places possesses a singular and unique surrounding atmosphere, arousing emotional affect in individuals, nurturing a collective sense of place and collective imagination. The initial ambition of the project founders was to create a “multifunctional space, with different equipment and activities that make it attractive for various reasons, by their mutual proximity and by their organization on the site enabling a mix of uses and of public” [1]; “a place of realization of dreams of artists makers and performers” (ibid.) but also “a place where one feels good and where one stays, for a drink or for a long weekend” (ibid.) , a “sort of summer 1936, where perfume of possible is floating in the air” (ibid.).



FIGURE 12 Ranch Pony/turtle. Ranch Pony is an example of humour radiating from the constructions, reflecting social practices in place – a two level construction of scaffolds made out of recycled wood for a bar at ground level and a terrace on the floor above, which became the Ranch Turtle by simply putting a mask on the green pony toy hooked above the bar (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013)



FIGURE 13 Gastonette. “Gastonette” is a recycled caravan that served as an exchange point at the camp illustrates socio-material practices inverting the real world: to purchase food and drinks in the camp the visitors had to convert money into the local currency, Gaston (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013)

The atmosphere of YWC was indeed permeated with the sense of ‘another place’ where realization of dreams was possible, and where one could escape the everyday rush and routine and find rest. The campsite radiated a special mood evocative of an island of freedom, humour, joy, and the transgression of established codes that was collectively experienced in bodily presence by the people there. As examples of transgression and humour, one can refer to Ranch Pony/Ranch Turtle (Fig. 12) and ‘Gastonette’ (Fig. 13).

Interviewed volunteers attested to a deep feeling of attachment to the atmosphere traversing the people, the constructions and the place:

"At the beginning, I came as a camper, I stayed for one week and after that I never wanted to leave. I became a volunteer, I've being here for two and a half weeks. [...] I fell in love with the project" (short-term volunteer D)

"I just came to see my buddy [...] He talked me about volunteering quickly. I said hey, I was on vacations, I planned to go on holiday and in fact I found myself doing everything. [...] Yes, there is a good atmosphere" (short-term volunteer E)

Many tourists and visitors were attracted by the alternative and artistic side of the campsite:

"We came to stay a couple of days and to support the project because it is alternative" (tourist A)

"I have read about the camping on a web site and decided to come to the South of France to see it in real" (Tourist B).

Among the typical profiles for whom the campsite created an emotional resonance were young 'cultural rebels', those new hippies aged between 18 and 25, lower-and mid-income families with children, curious amateurs of culture, and groups of 'soixante-huitards' -older generation of participants of the 1968 movement.

Materializing potential in place

Hypothesis 7: The atmospheric expression of particular places radiates a motivating impulse to actively engage their structural or material components to materialize the potential of the place. The idea of building an alternative place and realizing its potential for people nurtured the collective sense of place and collective action of the YWC core team. The material characteristic of the campsite – its ephemeral constructions – combined with the democratic and socially organized design, incited risk-taking in design practice, experimentation and search for innovation: *"...the ephemeral [nature] ... opens a venue for testing, experimentations. It is less risk-taking compared to long-term projects, you learn things without leaving traces too long"* (volunteer G, a member of the core team).

The early visitors and the campers gave positive emotional feedback about the particular atmosphere emanating from the camping place. The positive collective mood and lived collective experience of joy, humour and shared sentiment of freedom reinforced the campsite's atmosphere. A virtual emotional circle was created: an enthusiastic echo from the public deepened the emotional attachment of the volunteers to the project and reinforced incentives to further realize campsite's constructions, furniture and creative prototypes. In addition to main mini-housing and functional constructions, the team created numerous experimental landscape constructions and 'bounty spaces': 'Passage au frais' – 'Passage into fresh' (Fig. 14); an open kitchen with barbecues (Fig. 15) and adjacent to it 'Chéri, j'ai agrandi la cuisine' – 'Darling, I extended the kitchen' - an extension of the caravan for serving breakfast and snacks, built with recycled wood and concrete and equipped with a phytoremediation system.

Recycling as a ground philosophy, but also as a solution to scarcity of available means, further nurtured the collective creativity and experimentation. The volunteers themselves qualified this situation as 'system D', where D means 'la débrouille', which in French means ingenuity in a context of scarce resources, making do with the limited resources available. Recycled materials and objects served as raw material for realization of

some of the campsite's constructions and furniture, realization of small objects - the campsite's 'goodies', or equipment for specific events, for example, deck chairs made out of recycled pallets (Fig. 16); refurbished old radios for the Yes We Radio space (Fig. 17) and a giant grill.



FIGURE 14 Passage au frais. In addition to the main mini-housing and functional constructions, numerous landscape constructions and 'bounty spaces' were created. One is 'Passage au frais' (Passage into the fresh) – a system of water spray constructed out of plastic boxes (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).



FIGURE 15 The camping's 'permanent' BBQ and some customized caravans. An open kitchen with barbecues was realized with recycled wood. The camp hosted artists in residence who customized recycled caravans (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).



FIGURE 16 Deck chairs. Recycled materials and objects served as raw materials for the realization of some of the camp's constructions and furniture, such as the construction of deck chairs out of recycled pallets (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).



FIGURE 17 A customized radio. In line with the recycling philosophy of the camp, old radio sets were restored and placed in the Yes We Radio space for the camp's radio broadcasts (Photograph by Yes We Camp! 2013).

The realizations reinforced the material expression of the site, in both symbolic and emotional ways, meaning it conveyed and strengthened the emotional resonance of visitors with the camping atmosphere. The mutually reinforcing, dynamic relationship between spatial, material, social and atmospheric dimensions of the campsite fed the understanding of the young volunteering professionals about the way public spaces can be shaped: *"I think projects as YWC bring a lot of different elements, that it is people who come by*

curiosity, people who do not have a lot of means and want to live at low cost rate during the summer season, people traveling through or any other ... but also volunteers who are here, who know the site [...] there are so many things I think it feeds the project and the way to design spaces created either for housing and for other activities” (volunteer H, member of a core team).

Conclusion

The presented article proposed to use the socio-materiality stream of literature to describe particular places beyond their static - material and spatial - characteristics. A set of hypotheses were derived from theoretical contributions of post-modern philosophy and humanist geography and tested in the case study of the artistic and participatory campsite ‘Yes We Camp!’. The article demonstrates that particular places are designed within established models of social relations or in an attempt to transgress, contest or invert them. That is, space design can at once mirror, contest and invert the established order of social power relations. For instance, the motivation to “recycle” abandoned places, observed in the YWC project, influenced the site choice and adopted design solutions and selection of materials. The reliance of the campsite on external contributions, borrowing from the open source movement, challenged the dominant model of cultural and creative production focused on individual creations and the personality of artists and designers. At the same time, it reflected the growing societal trend of experimenting with open-ended design approaches of co-creation and open innovation.

This paper highlights the fact that, through the built environment and spatial organization, the produced space can be a vehicle to establish societal order or messages of rebellion and activism, radiating searches for a new societal organization and forms of production. A place located at some distance from other human activities, or having other forms of delineation from the outside world (fences or natural isolation like sea or mountain), and its temporal, ephemeral nature amplifies the sense of the particular. Such a place, emitting strong symbolic meaning, may create a deep emotional resonance in the public and professionals in that place, felt as a particular atmosphere or a unique aura. Both the experience of the place and the experience lived in the place nurture a collective sense of belonging, a profound feeling of interconnected humans who share the same values and aspirations.

The immersion into the atmosphere of particular places may invite people to action, to materializing the potential embedded in a place, through the emotional channel of affect and attachment. At YWC, this process was primarily fed by the emotional resonance of the volunteers with the meaning conveyed by the built environment. It was additionally supported by open forms of organization. This spatial, material and social mix produced a space for design experimentation, including interdisciplinary collaboration, making and re-making. Individual and collective creative potential of young professionals working on the site found expression in the production of diverse prototypes and artefacts.

To sum up, the YWC project is a rich illustrative example of a particular place that combines several co-existing and mutually shaped spatial, material and social ingredients. Their particularity is symbolically conveyed by the spatial organization and built environment. Above all, this particularity is collectively lived and felt as a unique atmosphere. The emanating symbolic message is able to drive individual and collective action that materializes the potential embedded in the place. Thus, our understanding of particular places cannot be complete without accounting for this complex interaction between space, material elements and humans.

The results of the research call for further empirical investigation of the solidity of the selected theoretical language for academic codification of knowledge about particulars. Additionally, they open numerous practical questions. How can we ensure in the design of places that the symbolic meaning instilled into a place by the designer will be interpreted by the public in the same sense? If it is possible to do so through open, creative practice and through professional practice in place, what specific design methods and tools can be offered to ease their practical implementation? What professional skills should urban space and landscape designers acquire to implement such open-ended approaches? With what criteria can such design works be assessed?

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Notes

- [1] http://www.apeas.fr/IMG/pdf/Projet_YesWeCamp_8janv.pdf p.4 (Accessed 5 February 2014)
- [2] Favouring support of already known artists and organizations whose productions depend on public funding and are protected by copyright

Gothenborg's Jubileumsparken 0.5 and Frihamnen

explorations into the aesthetic of DIY

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Abstract

This design critique explores how a top-down approach of conventional planning coincides with a do-it-(y)ourself project that evolved from the site and is facilitated by a designated mediator instigated in city administration with the purpose of bridging the city's disconnected departments. Hence, the project called Jubileumsparken 0.5 was instigated in 2013 as a placemaking project in concurrence with urban planning undertakings in order to facilitate a redevelopment of the harbour area of Frihamnen in Gothenburg, Sweden. The purpose of this ongoing project is to make use of "meantime" to explore the site and its specific qualities and relationships, and to test these through prototypes and events before plans and protocols are set in stone. Only three years later, at a point when this specific meantime is starting to run out and the first development plans are being drafted, this article demonstrates – through a transformation analysis – that the abandoned site has been turned into a particular place through people's engagement and the processes of building together. Furthermore, it shows that the embedded narratives of these actions are starting to challenge the planners' otherwise distant and abstract understanding of this place.

Keywords

urban transformation; placemaking; site-specificity; do-it-yourself; relational aesthetics

Introduction

The city is bustling itself with preparations for the Volvo Ocean Race. Banners and pavilions, signposts and VIP booths sprawl across an otherwise emptied out harbour area of Frihamnen in Gothenburg, Sweden, on this summer day in June 2015. I cannot help but feel a bit surprised to see the area taken over by an affluent sailing race sponsored by car manufacturer Volvo, the former pride of the city and one of the main employers in the region during its heyday. Feeling a bit derailed by all the hustle and bustle of the race, I can't initially see the interventions that I have come to study, even though the view from the top of the bridge connecting the northern and southern banks of the Göta River is almost infinite. Then the rainbow flag catches my eye, fluttering alongside the crest of the city. Below, I can distinguish the prototypes that I have come to experience, nestled together in a sea of cracked asphalt. Not only has their construction turned an abandoned location into a place that now has significance for the inhabitants of Gothenburg and beyond, but it has also flipped a top-down masterplan to recognise the outcome of an unconventional practice of placemaking that was initially considered as comprising merely temporal events and spectacular happenings.

The prototypes are part of the project called Jubileumsparken 0.5. The name translates from Swedish into "*Jubilee Park*" referencing the city of Gothenburg's upcoming 400th anniversary in 2021. The suffix 0.5 suggests that this is a place in the making, that the prototypes are test beds for something else that will come in the future. So how do we evaluate a project that is not yet completed or never even intended to be? Is it even relevant for an issue that addresses particular places as its theme? I believe it is, but to assess this project at a time when it is still underway and the larger transformation process is picking up speed, a conventional architectural work analysis does not seem to be sufficient, as it "*only allows the researcher to investigate states of space - the form of the old harbour area before transformation and the form of the new city after transformation*" (Diedrich & Dahl 2016, p. 74; Hauxner 2010). Instead, an adopted analytical tool recognizes urban form as something dynamic, consisting of materials as much as of relations, thus making it possible to evaluate the change of space as opposed to the state of space (ibid.). The interpretive tool of transformation analysis (Braae, 2015; Diedrich, 2013; Braae & Diedrich, 2012; Diedrich & Dahl, 2016) allows the researcher to step into, and consider the project as it is, in motion, without being caught up in a discussion of a future end result. In the case of Jubileumsparken 0.5, there are a number of guiding questions for the transformation analysis: How does one inhabit the meantime? What values can be harvested from a meantime in terms of landscape qualities and relations? How does the place on site relate to the place in plans and the place in the future, and what kind of stakeholders inhabit the various 'places'? Is a process of building together, or DIY, enough to turn an abandoned site into a particular place and how is this then recognized by authorities? To explore these questions, the transformation analysis aims for a time-oriented understanding of the project by extrapolating how two redevelopment plans intersect with the project of Jubileumsparken 0.5 in Frihamnen in Gothenburg.

Jubileumsparken 0.5: place and time

Situated on the northern banks of the Göta River, the Frihamnen area is one of nine areas located on the banks of this water body at the centre of the city and the region. (fig. 1). The Frihamnen area is a former harbour area established in the 1920s with three harbour basins and adjacent piers. The area, owned by the public developer Älvstranden Utvecklings AB, covers almost 30 hectares. As a former harbour area, the

site is flat and exposed, overlooking the city centre to the south and housing areas to the north. Extensive infrastructure constructions dominate the area, yet it is quite difficult to access. A handful of large warehouses are located on the site.



FIGURE 1 The area of Frihamnen situated in the Göta River in Gothenburg, Sweden. (City of Gothenburg).

The areas are undergoing transformation within a common framework referred to as the RiverCity Gothenburg project. Initiated in 2009 the aim was to formulate a vision and a strategy for the redevelopment, in close dialogue with the local and regional community. In 2012, the city adopted a vision labelled “*The River City Vision*”. The vision builds upon an eco-city model and comprises three main strategies: Connect the city, Embrace the water, and Reinforce the centre (City of Gothenburg, 2012). Since then the vision has guided numerous plans, programs, studies, projects, activities etc., many of them carried out by the public developer, Älvstranden Utvecklings AB in collaboration with the City Planning Authorities in Gothenburg.

To start we need to unfold the urban planning tools commonly used in Sweden. Swedish planning legislation requires municipalities to adopt one comprehensive plan for the entire municipal territory. This comprehensive plan, *översiktsplanen*, is a long-term strategic land use plan. In addition to the *översiktsplan*, detailed development plans are instated for urban areas, which need to be revised for new developments or areas undergoing redevelopment. Depending on the project’s complexity or extent, a preparatory plan is sometimes required. This preparatory plan, called *planprogram* or simply *program*, is used to survey various conditions of the site. (Boverket, <http://www.boverket.se/sv/samhallsplanering/kommunal-planering/>) The Frihamnen area is currently being regulated through various plans. A preparatory land use plan, *Program för Frihamnen och del av Ringön*, was drafted in 2014. The plan acknowledges the RiverCity vision and its overall strategies, and thus the proposed urban form corresponds to the eco-city model; high density, mix-use generic blocks in a strict grid and with the future Jubilee Park located in a remote southwest corner of the site (fig. 2). The plan pays only minor attention to the spatial qualities and atmosphere of the current site. Hence, the preparatory plan is a top-down implementation of a generic urban model with little or no consideration given to site-specific qualities.

The subsequent detailed development plan is underway and a public hearing took place during the winter of 2015/16, with an additional hearing in the summer of 2016. The urban model of an eco-city remains the overall concept for the redevelopment, but a few significant changes that indicate an emerging appreciation of site-specific qualities, conditions and atmospheres of the site can be traced between the preparatory plan and the proposed detailed development plan, (Göteborgs Stad, 2015) (fig. 3).

In parallel with the drafting of the regulatory plans, the Jubileumsparken 0.5 was implemented as a joint project between Älvstaden Utvecklings AB and the City Planning Authorities. The aim of the project is to “investigate, develop and formulate new and alternative methods and ways of working where community planning and dialogue with the people of the city [is] the core” (City of Gothenburg & Raumlabor, 2015). The project strategy makes use of the meantime, between the present day abandonment of the harbour area and the completion of the new eco-city district. Various architectural firms were invited as consultants throughout the project. For example, the London based architectural practice MUF was involved at an early stage in mapping existing qualities of the site that relate to actual monetary values; for example, leftover concrete constructions could be used as benches, thus ‘saving’ a certain amount of money etc.. The Berlin based architectural practice Raumlabor was invited several times to construct prototypes, while they also instated the processes of building together. These prototypes: urban basics – infrastructure and connectivity; urban farming; bathing culture – a beach, a sauna, a pool; playgrounds; an empowerment project to facilitate initiative from the inhabitants etc. have made explorations into what constitutes a park of the 21st century (Platsbyggnad Älvstaden) (fig. 4). The ‘0.5’ park explores what might be called half- or part-way measures that can inform the design of the future (1.0) park.



FIGURE 4 Prototypes at Jubileumsparken 0.5: the sauna, the beach, a water playground, and a roller-derby arena.

Tracing the transformation strategy

According to Ellen Braae (2015) “*a transformation project tells the story of an industrial area whose function has changed*” (p. 292). RiverCity, and the Frihamnen area, are harbour transformation projects. Studying the transformation of Frihamnen and of Jubileumsparken 0.5 one can detect a wide difference in the attention paid to reading the existing site. Assessing site-specificity demands a method or a technique in order to identify site qualities. Lisa Diedrich (2013) offers an interpretation tool for revealing and evaluating site specificity in harbour transformation projects (p. 95). The interpretation tool describes three categories of ‘reading filters’ in order to identify the specific conditions of site: physical, dynamic, and immaterial. The physical filter encompasses structures and materiality, the dynamic filter deals with processes and practices of a site and the immaterial filter acknowledges memories, atmospheres, and discourses (ibid).

As we study the preparatory plan, it shows no evidence of site readings, as the document mainly focuses on explaining the future vision and the benefits of the selected urban model without describing the conditions of the site in which it will happen (Göteborgs stad 2014a, 2014b). The detailed development plan, however, starts to show evidence of site readings through its acknowledgement of existing structures; the harbour basin Lundbyhamnen, which previous plans proposed to be land filled, is now illustrated as being under consideration for preservation. The site for the Jubileumsparken 0.5 is zoned as ‘PARK’ in the detailed development plan, thus the dynamic and immaterial value of the project has been recognized in contrast to the preparatory plan’s proposition to use the same area for mixed-use high-density development. Two of the prototypes, the pool and the sauna, are identified as ‘existing’ on the illustrated masterplan that supplements the detailed development plan, suggesting that they might be preserved, a contradiction to their having been erected as temporal constructions (ibid) (fig. 3).

Despite these late recognitions of existing site qualities in the detailed development plan, it is apparent that the operational mode while drafting the plan is close to what Braae (2015) describes with reference to a blank paper and the transferring of representations of elements from the site into the development scheme (p. 293). Braae states that two contradictory mind-sets, namely project development and design process, are in play during a transformation process where the first starts with “*a blank sheet of paper to which representations of the elements from the site are transferred one after another*” (ibid) to become objects that are then included in the development scheme. This is what happened when the two prototypes were transferred and recognized in the detailed development plan with no attention paid to the relational conditions these two buildings have with the site, nor with the place appropriated through the various activities of the Jubileumsparken 0.5 project. As such, the operational mode of the planning process is rather a prolongation of *tabula rasa* – still a common approach in the culture of masterplanning, than of site-specificity. It is also apparent that the masterplan will do perfectly well even if, later on in the process, it becomes clear that the prototypes cannot be preserved for one reason or another.

Visiting the actual Jubileumsparken 0.5 prototypes on site, one recognises a larger consideration to site-specific qualities. In 2015, the site’s potentials were mapped during an open workshop conducted by the mediating organization, in collaboration with Raumlabor. The outcome was called potential maps. Scrutinizing these, they convey ideas for programming rather than existing physical conditions. Vast tarmac fields that can be adapted into roller derby arenas, cantilevered roofs that can be continuously used as rain protection when the former loading platform is transformed into a stage, a gathering of a few birch trees that can offer protection from wind and view when one moves from changing room to sauna etc. (fig. 5).



a



b

FIGURE 5 Site-specific qualities that have been cultivated in the transformation process: cantilevering roof transformed into a stage; birch trees used as a protected anchor point for the gangway to the sauna etc.

This aligns with Braae's second approach to transformation; that of selecting elements from a diverse whole that are then adapted to a new programme and re-installed in the whole (ibid.). What seems to have supported this translation process of selecting elements and transforming them into something else is an extensive mapping of the site, not only as a physical construction but also as a relational place. As expressed by Platsbyggnad Älvstaden (2016): "To recognise what makes a place unique is not only made at site but also in relation and in interaction with other sites" (p. 17). Studying the Frihamnen transformation project using the theoretical framework provided by Ellen Braae, one could detect two simultaneous processes at play: a top-down 'concept driven' planning process and a bottom up, 'site-inspired' placemaking design process. Understanding that these operations happen on different levels, one can understand why the outcome of one process is difficult to feed into the other, without it being a designated task.

Catalysing radical increments and mini-laboratories: tilting the balance

The mode of working through smaller elements in order to transform a greater whole has been elaborated upon by the scholars Dana Cuff and Roger Sherman (2011). They launched the concept of radical increment as one of eight "principles of practice" to be offered in an urban paradigm that oscillates in-between laissez-faire urbanization and prescriptive traditionalists. Cuff and Sherman state that the concept of radical increments can be understood as a "design strategy that utilizes accumulation as a means of catalysing change, while producing urban character and identity in the process" (p. 24-25).

The prototypes of Jubileumsparken 0.5 in Frihamnen can be analysed as radical increments. Growing in numbers, ambition, and recognition – the sauna was shortlisted for the annual architectural award in Sweden 2015 – over the few years that they have been inserted in the barren land of the former harbour, they have created a buzz and are continuously generating expectations, thus fulfilling the initial aim of placemaking by raising interest in the area. As the prototypes are, in fact, built as temporary constructions, they can also be considered to be what Indira van 't Klooster (2013) calls "mini-laboratories to test ideas" (p. 9). In the case of Jubileumsparken the ideas being tested are programmatic explorations to inform the future park. These, however, are not only about basic functionality, materiality and/or use-value. In addition, they challenge social norms and perceptions, and open up the development process for critical participation. Platsbyggnad Älvstaden states that "In order to facilitate conversations and meetings

activities were initiated that were related to the planning process and the construction process, thus the oral communication was supplemented by sketches to inform [the participants]" (2016, p.8) . As such, the prototypes came to offer a much-needed creative resistance towards the real estate speculation that often emerges in concurrence with conventional land subdivision and distribution through long-term strategic visions and plans. This crucial shift between placemaking interventions and regulatory planning in the overall RiverCity project has been recognised by Dana Cuff and Per-Johan Dahl (2015) in a recent evaluation: "*The critical transition between the preparatory land use plan and more specific plans will shape the first phase of housing development at Frihamnen. At the time of writing this, it appeared that conventional approaches might beat out creative approaches*" (p. 9). Picking up where Cuff and Dahl left off, we can now conclude that the feared throwing overboard of the creativity and innovation to which Jubileumsparken 0.5 contributed did not happen, though it might have been a close call...

In accordance with Swedish planning legislation the preparatory plan, *Program för Frihamnen och del av Ringön*, was adopted in 2015. As described, the plan did not take the physical outcome of the Jubileumsparken 0.5 or the expectations that arose from the site into much consideration. The park is recognized only as something that will take place in the future and the proposed location differs from that where the prototypes were being built while the preparatory plan was drafted. Studying the preparatory plan, the future park comes across as something more real than that already constructed on site. It was no wonder that the project managers of Jubileumsparken 0.5 found that it was challenging to distinguish between the actual place, the location of the park given in the plans, and the place that was communicated through social media (Platsbyggnad Älvstaden, 2016, p. 21). The report from the public hearing process of the preparatory plan only briefly stated: "*Some have questioned the size and location of the Jubilee Park*" (Göteborgs stad, 2014b, p.6). However, in the subsequent detailed development plan being drafted now the situation is different. All of a sudden, the area where the prototypes are constructed is proposed as a park. A few of the prototypes are also included in the drawing as 'existing', thus indicating that they will be preserved. How can this be? What happened? To answer these questions we have to scrutinize the masterplanning culture, and to understand the tilting power balance currently underway.

According to Cuff and Sherman (2011) the master has gone missing in the neoliberal contemporary American context, thus no one remains to draft the masterplan. Hence, Cuff and Sherman are looking for other ways of conducting urban redevelopment. It is not this article's aim to validate the claim of the missing master, in a Swedish, European or even American context. However, amongst both researchers and practitioners there is a growing criticism towards a masterplan culture of grand visions and top-down protocols, fixed outcomes and generic aesthetics. (Cuff & Sherman, 2011; Jarzombek, 2008; van 't Klooster, 2013; Verebes, 2013). As a response, alternative practices such as open-source urbanism, urban commoning, hack the city etc. have emerged (Bradley, 2015; Deslandes, 2013; Fabian & Samson, 2015; Ferguson, 2014; Finn, 2014; Kodalak, 2015; Krivy & Kaminer, 2013; Pagano, 2013; Smith, 2014; Smith, 2012). In the wake of a missing or reluctant master, the practice of bottom-up participation is gaining ground.

These participatory practices can happen without any formal connection to city administration, or they can be integrated with city administration. The architectural scholar Lebbeus Woods claimed that conventional administration could only be challenged by instigating 'new structures' within city governance (Woods 1997). Indira van 't Klooster (2013) makes a similar claim by stating, "the contemporary creative prefers to pursue gradual change from the inside out" (p. 22). One way to do that according to van 't Klooster is to instate mini-laboratories "*with the aim of [forcing] jammed planning machines*" (p. 9). The prototypes of Jubileumsparken 0.5 and the mediators' role and position within city administration could offer innovative protocols to urban planning, if recognized.

Do-it-(y)ourself as an unlocking instrument

When studying the Frihamnen area and the Jubileumparken 0.5 project, treating top-down versus bottom-up approaches as a simple dichotomy is not sufficient to describe what is playing out. For example, the seemingly participation-oriented mediating organization and the Jubileumparken 0.5 project sit within city governance, making it a top-down initiative. At the same time, the operational mode is showing openness to participation and willingness to empower inhabitants to appropriate the place as they see fit (Platsbyggnad Älvstaden 2016, p. 8). Throughout the project, various outreach activities guided the process - workshops, guided site visits, communication through social media, and more. Through so-called 'open calls' executed in collaboration with Raumlabor, people were invited to sign up to participate in the actual construction of the prototypes (City of Gothenburg & Raumlaborberlin, 2015) (fig. 6).



FIGURE 6 'Building together' activities unlocking the fixed outcome of the masterplan into conversations about possible futures.

The actual building of the prototypes goes beyond mere participation in abstract planning processes. To actually spend time and work with the place, and to interact with the people visiting the place for leisure, work, or to participate in the open calls, changes the perception of the place. The workshops did not result only in realized prototypes, they also, according to the architects, resulted in conversations “*about the possible future*” of the park that drove “*imagination and speculation*” (City of Gothenburg & Raumlaborberlin, 2015). This unlocked capacity of using one’s imagination also turned some aspects of the sites more challenging specificities into assets, such as the vast derelict field of asphalt instead representing an atmosphere of openness and potentials (Platsbyggnad Älvstaden, 2016, p. 18). It is interesting to recognize

that the people who worked and participated on the site gained a 'site blindness', only considering the place, thus neglecting – one assumes – the ongoing planning process, while the people that did not work on site also gained a 'site blindness' of not recognizing the place at all (Platsbyggnad Älvstaden, 2016, p. 19). This tension between the actual site, the emerging place, and the future plan has propelled a dialogue within city administration, with the power to revise the initial intentions for the area (fig. 7).

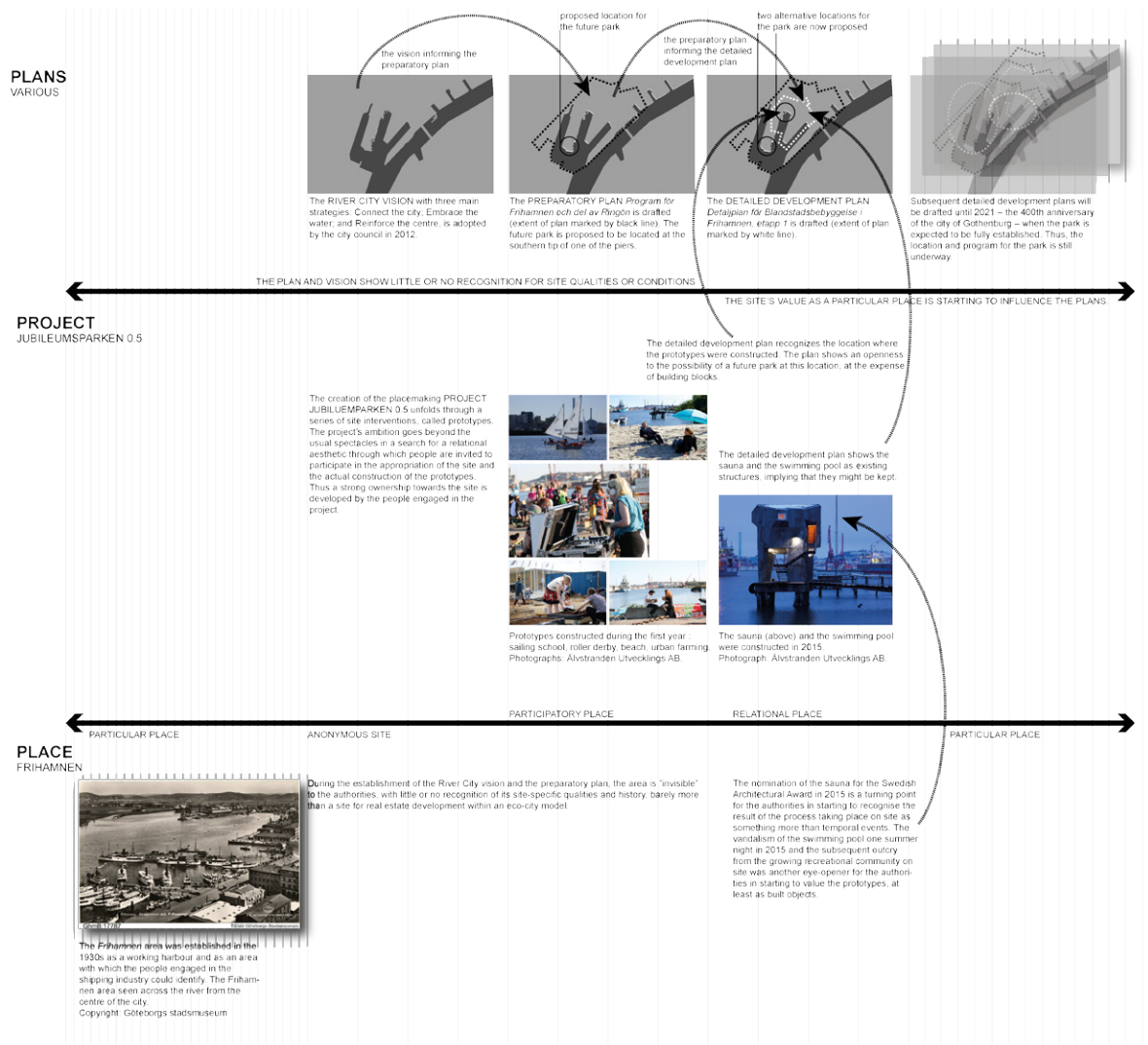


FIGURE 7 Frihamnen process diagram. doi:10.7480/spool.2016.2.1115.g1500

Silvia Lavin (2013) claims, in her introductory essay for the exhibition catalogue *Everything Loose Will Land*, that "DIY (do-it-yourself) projects [lose] the expectation that architecture's primary effect [is] to direct building toward a predictable future" (p. 41). The experience from the open calls at Jubileumsparken 0.5 testifies to Lavin's claim. The building-together workshops did not result only in realized prototypes but they also, according to the architects, resulted in conversations "about the possible future" of the park that drove "imagination and speculation" (City of Gothenburg & Raumlaborberlin, 2015). Quoting Lavin, one can further

understand that when a component of DIY is introduced, “*the architectural object [transforms] from predictable form – knowable and describable in advance through drawings – to unpredictable process*” (p. 40). The DIY initiatives may not have radically altered the transformation of Frihamnen from a prescriptive into an open process, but the resulting changes between the preparatory and the detailed development plans testify to the impact of the mediating function. Through the drafting process of the preparatory plan, the planning authority underestimated the impact the ongoing building-together process had on people and place. The preparatory plan anticipated the future, represented it in drawings and renderings, and attached a clear road map to implement it. As seen through the analysis of the planning documents, the planning authority was not initially able to assimilate the catalysing power that the prototypes were generating.

A new aesthetic understanding

The awareness that engaging with the physical aspects of a site generates a sense belonging to a place is not new, but still valid. With the help of Kenneth Olwig (2006) we can understand that people’s appropriation and engagement is needed in order to turn an anonymous location into a particular place. Based on the studied preparatory and detailed development plans for the area one can conclude that up until now the planning authorities in Gothenburg have regarded the Frihamnen area as an empty site with only a little bit of history to take into consideration when instating the new city. However, in parallel, the location has begun a transformation into a meaningful place for people, through the prototypes and the building-together processes. Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) claims that every aesthetic production produces a model of sociability entitling us to ask whether “*the work allows us to enter into dialogue or not, and if we are able to exist, and how, in the space it defines*” (p. 109). Jubileumsparken 0.5 is hosting a Facebook page where people can express their thoughts (<https://www.facebook.com/Jubileumsparken-Frihamnen-1011368268889931/reviews/>). So far, 58 people have shared their reviews, and more than 5600 people have liked the page. Among the reviewers, there are people that are enthusiastic about the design and specifically appreciate the view and the contemplative atmosphere. Other reviewers find the area rather poorly appropriated, with too much asphalt, and a lingering atmosphere of junkyard. It is interesting that several reviewers support the idea of the place being inclusive and several express gratitude that all activities are free. Quite a few express the view that the place belongs to ‘everybody’ and some even recognize a need to share more with the inhabitants of Gothenburg.

Conclusions

The Frihamnen transformation project read through the Jubileumsparken 0.5 project testifies to the fact that masterplanning culture is failing to recognise site-specific qualities and relational aesthetics. The first batch of prototypes went unrecognised by the urban planners. With the building-together processes, a larger sense of ownership emerged, first by the people participating in the DIY actions, and later by visitors enjoying the activities the prototypes offered. This later phase demonstrates a critical momentum during the meantime when the site is starting to emerge as a particular place through the appropriation of people. This is also when the planners start to recognise that the site is not only an abandoned harbour area

being rendered into prime real estate, but also a place of particular interest for an emerging community. The response from the planners to this emerging sense of place and community is to revisit the decision about where to localize the future park, thus opening up the plans for alternative futures, a response that describes an unusual and promising attempt by the local authorities to recognise the power of DIY processes. The other response by the planners is to include a few of the prototypes in the plans as 'existing'. By this measure, they recognise the temporal construction as something more lasting, though they neglect to understand that the value of the prototypes is not the actual construction but the relational qualities embedded in them through the narratives of the process. The significance of this relational aesthetic, and how it can be harvested in transformation processes, calls for further explorations that have not been possible in the writing of this article.

In addition, this article points to the finding that a facilitated and inclusive dialog between various stakeholders has the power of demystify the transformation process from abstract plans to concrete action. The empowerment of a relational aesthetic through do-it-yourself actions can contribute to unlocking planning processes, allowing the plans to include the particularities of a place. If and how these processes can stay open, to harvest even more site-grown insights, remains a question for further exploration. The importance of the mediators as agents with the ability to grant credibility to grass-root projects while simultaneously challenging conventional masterplanning culture from inside the city's administration is part of such further studies.

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Providing a stage for atmospheric encounters

Brattøra's seafront by SLA

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Abstract

The article addresses the theme of 'particular places' in the contemporary landscape metropolis by focusing on the temporal, climatic and geographic specificity that determines each place as unique. In particular, it explores how design can support the appreciation of a 'particular place' by enhancing the readability of its temporal, climatic and geographic constituents through an engagement with local weather phenomena.

The article considers the capacity of design to foreground the particularity of a place by connecting to its weather through a critical reading of SLA's redesign of the seafront of Brattøra in the city of Trondheim in Norway. My critical approach to the project juxtaposes a personal investigation of the design work based on primary experience and the insights of a conversation with SLA's principal Stig Lennart Andersson, performed and transcribed in 2012 as part of my doctoral thesis. Elaborating on this conversation, the article is articulated in three successive thematic sections, dealing respectively with the concepts of ground, exposure and wonder. Albeit specific to the project, these notions afford the possibility to expand upon more universal considerations of the capacity of design to foreground diffuse, changing and immaterial components of space in human experience. In the conclusive part of the article, I attempt to verbalise why SLA's work can be considered a valuable reference for the design of 'particular places' in the contemporary landscape metropolis.

Keywords

landscape architecture; perception; experience; agency; affect; immaterial; weather; ground; exposure; wonder; seafront; environment

Introduction

Landscapes are inherently temporal. They are shaped over time by flows, processes, and relationships (Corner, 2006; Waldheim 2016), by uses and practices (Ingold, 1993), and by movement. But landscapes are also temporal – of time – because they are always defined by the singularity of a season and a time of the day. Of time, again, because they are also defined by a weather condition. The French philosopher Jean Luc Nancy posits the temporality of landscapes with an exquisite definition: “A *landscape is always a landscape of time, and doubly so: it is a time of year (a season) and a time of day (morning, noon, or evening), as well as a kind of weather [un temps], rain or snow, sun or mist.*” (Nancy, 2005: 61 [1]) This article unfolds the theme of SPOOL’s present issue by exploring how certain temporal constituents of landscapes – their weather conditions across the seasons and the local effects of global cycles – can support the appreciation of a place as ‘particular’. The weather is dynamic, always unfolding, ever changing in its states, currents, qualities of light and colours; it is alternately damp or dry, warm or cold, luminous or dark. Yet, it can be highly site specific, and a forceful agent able to define a place’s character and foreground its uniqueness. (Høyer, 1999; Meyer, 2005) In the current age in particular, which is characterised by radical changes in climate, and consequently, in weather patterns, weather phenomena and their perceived characteristics are rapidly becoming forceful determinants on our apperception of ‘places’ – and of our own position within them.

The article addresses the theme of ‘particular places’ from the perspective of design practice. It embraces the idea, first advanced by American artist, Carl Andre (1968), that place and design are indissolubly linked, since to define place is to talk about the result of a design. For Andre, “*a place is an area within an environment which has been altered in such a way as to make the general environment more conspicuous*” one that “is related particularly to both the general qualities of the environment and the particular qualities of the work that has been done.” (as cited in Lippard, 1997: 47). With these words, Andre not only implies that the creation of a place is the necessary result of a design, but he also implies that the modalities by which designers devise places inevitably pass from an alteration in the perception, and therefore in the experience, of certain given conditions within an environment.

Following Andre’s insight, I propose to discuss the role of design practice in the shaping of place by adopting the perspective of a concept of environment. Environment is a concept that speaks of an individual’s phenomenal world in its singularity. [2] In its twofold connection with both being and perception, the concept of environment proves especially useful when discussing design in relation to temporal phenomena because it allows us to address a living being’s existence in and experience of space in a unitary notion. (Sloterdijk, 2006; Ponte, 2014: 215) Approaching the design of place from the perspective of a concept of environment instead of, for example, space or landscape, elicits a deeper inquiry into existential conditions, atmospheric states, sensual encounters and affective relations. All these categories provide a constructive vocabulary for discussing design practice, place and temporality alongside each other.

The article explores the capacity of design to foreground the particularity of a place by connecting to its temporality through a critical reading of SLA’s redesign of the seafront of Brattøra in the city of Trondheim in Norway. It concentrates on the characteristics of the landscape of Brattøra that are most relevant for a person’s experience of the site and unravels them in three successive thematic sections, dealing respectively with the notions of ground, exposure and wonder. Following the example of SLA’s work, in its closing lines, the article advances a consideration of design’s capacity to define ‘place’ and to isolate its particularity by framing distinct environmental conditions for encountering and engaging with a site’s phenomenal and temporal constituents.

The Conversation as a Method for Research

This article builds on a research work that explores the possibility of formulating concepts in conversation as a method for conducting research in the field of design. The reflections contained in this article juxtapose a personal investigation of the design work based on primary experience, namely repeated site visits and the study of design documents, and the insights of a conversation with SLA's principal Stig Lennart Andersson performed and transcribed in 2012 as part of my doctoral thesis. (Labadini, 2016) [3] In the article, first-hand readings intertwine with selected contents of the conversation, thus trying to reflect the full scope and process of the work's investigation.

The format of the conversation has been chosen with an intention to experiment with a mode of collaborative reflection on theoretical issues crucial to design. The format of the conversation constitutes an attempt to explore a series of design research questions in a format that allows a continuous exchange between matters of theory and design actions. The dialogue mobilises an active agency in the design work, both by actualizing it as site of discussion, and by allowing it to speak out through the voice of its designers. Conversely, theory enters the dialogue in the thinking of each of the interlocutors, and through their verbal exchange is both transformed and produced. The dialogue itself becomes an operative medium that allows for a series of continuous “relays” (Foucault, 1977; Rendell, 2003) from theory to practice, since they are not under the total control of one exclusive subject. In this respect, the conversation may be regarded as a productive place for theoretical projection, holding a certain similarity with a design process: in it, the critic's viewpoint and his or her first-hand readings can be confronted with design actions, both questioning design intentions, and retrospectively reviewing their physical outcome.

The notions presented in the article originate from the conversation, and the reflections presented here constitute an attempt to consolidate the intuitions that emerged in a broader theoretical scope, aiming to extract applicable theory from the singularity of the discussion and of the design work under scrutiny.



FIGURE 1 The harbour promenade, March 2016. SLA lays out the seafront of Brattøra as a continuous concrete walking surface. (Photograph by SLA, 2016).

Brattøra Open Space

SLA's project for the seafront of Brattøra can be regarded as an inspiring example of a design that is capable of transforming a derelict space into a compelling environment by engaging with the distinct temporal characteristics that are unique to the site (Fig. 1).

In Trondheim, local weather conditions vary significantly, even across relatively small distances and within very short periods of time. At times turbulent, the weather in Trondheim is defined by a hemiboreal oceanic climate with prevalent north-westerly fronts. As a consequence of this, Trondheim's weather phenomena and their rapid changes manifest their utmost potency at the seashore of Brattøra, which is orientated toward the main direction of the fronts. Furthermore, sea levels in Trondheim change notably as a result of significant tidal ranges. An intention to embrace the site's distinctive temporal conditions and especially its weather as chief drivers for the design of Brattøra's seafront was presented previously in SLA and Pirl's 2009 winning competition entry. [4] There, the project is presented as a celebration of "*nature's raw forces, the changing light of the sky, the poetic and the aggressive.*" (Fig. 2). These programmatic words are the expression of a design intention that seeks to reconfigure the landscape of Brattøra in close relation to the site's most phenomenal and temporal components. How could this ambitious statement grow out of the competition boards and materialise into a physical space without losing its power? Could a public space project, with all its material and programmatic requirements, maintain and accomplish its original ambition to celebrate immateriality?



FIGURE 2 Collage from the competition entry. The collage evinces SLA's ambition to embrace Trondheim's distinctive weather phenomena as chief drivers for the design. (Drawing by SLA, 2009)

In SLA's design, the drive to embody the impetus of local weather phenomena in the physical landscape of the site finds expression in an approach that seeks to foreground temporality by acting on the spatial fundamentals of a person's experience of the site. In the following lines, I seek to unravel SLA's approach with regard to three distinct notions: respectively ground, exposure, and wonder. Could these notions contribute to the development of a design lexicon for the contemporary landscape metropolis, which is inclusive not only of atmospheric and weather phenomena but also of their radical and ineluctable change?



FIGURE 4 The harbour promenade, September 2014. The promenade's flat topography and its openness to the water draw a space where the ground component clearly prevails. (Photograph by SLA, 2014)



FIGURE 5 The harbour promenade, September 2014. The homogeneous and unchanging character of the promenade's ground powerfully counters Trondheim's ever-changing sky. (Photograph by SLA, 2014)

As a result, when walking along the shore of Brattøra one finds oneself immersed in an environment that is shaped by an unmediated relationship between the matters of the ground and the meteors of the sky. This unmediated relationship between ground and sky intensely informs the experience of the landscape of Brattøra, which is closely dependent on the atmospheric events taking place above and around it. By means of the distinct material and geometric characteristics of its ground, one could say that the shore of Brattøra transcends its pure function as vertical foundation for the human body and becomes a stage for an ultimate confrontation between the human body and the elements of the weather.



FIGURE 6 Nordkapp, 1845 by Peter Balke. Sparebankstiftelsen DNB, dep. Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum, Tromsø. (Photograph by Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum).

SLA's work embodies a topos of being at shore that is evocative of a romantic aesthetic of the sublime. (Corbin, 1994). In our 2012 conversation, SLA's principal Stig Lennart Andersson aligns the notion of ground underpinning the design of Brattøra with the painterly work of the nineteenth-century Norwegian artist Peder Balke (Fig. 6). Balke's oeuvre is characterised by repeated depictions of a few iconic pieces of the Norwegian landscape, each one engulfed in a different, but equally haunting, weather condition. The constancy of the subject, and especially its geological solidity – take the rocky cliffs of North Cape as an example – reinforce the visual predominance of stormy seas and threatening skies in Balke's paintings. Similarly, the landscape of Brattøra's seafront may be said to actively bring the presence of atmospheric phenomena to the fore, in the way its flat, unchanging and open ground powerfully counters the diffuse, changing and weightless character of the phenomena of the atmosphere.

One could, of course, question whether and to what extent an aesthetic of the sublime can be resumed in today's landscapes and in concurrence with the disquietude regarding global changes in climate and weather conditions that characterises our times. It may, however, be precisely in this context that a sublime aesthetic may reassert itself, as proposed by, among others, the Swedish landscape architectural theorist Maria Hellström Reimer, with its capacity to convey "*a sense of tension, entanglement and interdependence.*" (Hellström Reimer, 2010: 29) [6] The experience of certain weather events at Brattøra might then be described as sublime in that the seafront's ground, by offering little more than a support to the body's posture, not only frames compelling encounters with the phenomena of the atmosphere, but also reasserts a fundamental connection between our individual existential sphere and the atmosphere that surrounds us.



FIGURE 7 A position of exposure, September 2014. Because of the openness of the promenade to the sea, a person standing on the shore of Brattøra is literally exposed to the impetus of the weather fronts. (Photograph by SLA, 2014)

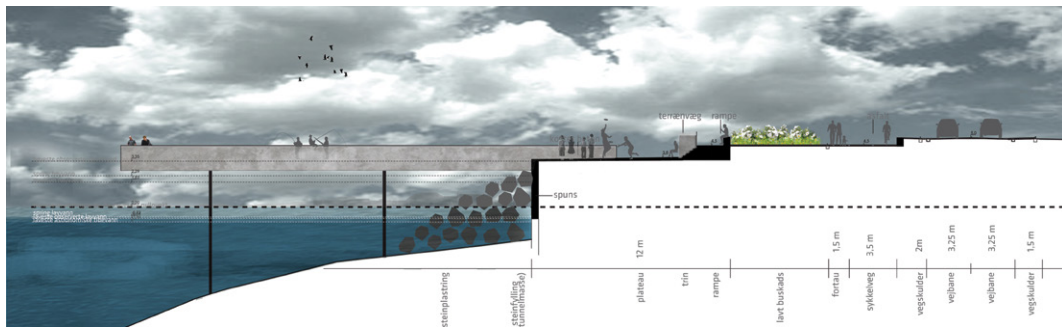


FIGURE 8 Section with view on the pier. Open and narrow, the pier stretches perpendicularly from the shore into the ocean. (Drawing by SLA, 2009)

The Norwegian architectural theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz has repeatedly pointed out the common etymology in Norwegian between the term 'vær' – weather – and the verb 'å være' – to be (Norberg-Schulz 1996: 6). By creating a space of existence for the human being that is intimately connected with atmospheric conditions, the landscape of Brattøra hypostatizes, so to speak, this connection. [7]

Exposure

When walking along the shore of Brattøra, one is also left alone in a position at the limit of comfort against the presence of the elements (Fig. 7). This position is hypostatized in what is maybe the most iconic segment of SLA's design: at a certain point along the walk, the promenade branches off into an open and narrow pier stretching perpendicularly from the shore into the sea. (Fig. 8)



FIGURE 9 The pier, September 2014. On the pier, a sudden contrasting verticality encompasses one's body, where the concrete pavement hangs over the waters with an unmediated fall. (Photograph by SLA, 2014)



FIGURE 10 The pier, March 2016. The pier, even more so than the promenade, draws a person standing on it into a compelling confrontation with the depth of Trondheim's sky, with the infinity of the sea and with the force of the elements that come from them (Photograph by SLA, 2016).

There, a sudden contrasting verticality encompasses one's body, where the concrete pavement hangs over the waters with an unmediated fall. The pier, even more so than the promenade, urges a figure standing on it into a compelling confrontation with the depth of Trondheim's sky, with the infinity of the sea and with the force of the elements that come from them (Figs. 9-10). It is a confrontation that requires a certain surrender.

One could tentatively define the environmental setting of this confrontation as one of exposure. Holding a subversive effect on subjecthood, a condition of exposure is capable of destabilising the conventions of a rational approach to the landscape. Because of the openness of the promenade and pier to the sea and to the sky, and in the absence of other geometric references than the ground on which one stands, one could say that a person walking along the shore of Brattøra is literally exposed to the impetus of the weather fronts. This mobilises a relationship between the human subject and the landscape that escapes the totalising impulse of a coherent aesthetic experience. Rather, the vitality of Trondheim's weathers strikes the one who stands on the shore of Brattøra, or urges one onto the pier with a modality that is both unmediated by reason and indifferent to a subjective will. The indifferent nature of Brattøra's landscape recalls the Scottish poet James Thomson's description of the shores of the North, where nature holds no compassion to mankind, and "*terrifying meteors sweep through the landscape*", where "*winds, flashing lightning, and waves join forces*." (as cited in Corbin, 1994: 125) Forcefully unsettling, a condition of exposure discloses the intimate and fundamental connection between our own individual existential sphere and the phenomenal dimension of the climate and its changes in that it relocates the modality of our engagement with weather phenomena "*from contemplation to agency*" (Hellström Reimer, 2010: 31). In a condition of exposure, a person is compelled to embrace a position in relation to her or his environment that is similar to what the English scholar Timothy Morton calls "*a zero-person perspective*." (Morton, 2011: 80) A zero-person perspective adopts a point of view opposite to the one of a frontal approach to the landscape. From a zero-person perspective, one finds oneself looking at the landscapes while the landscape, so to speak, looks back. This generates a situation in which a human being is not only inclined to appreciate the aesthetic potency of weather phenomena, but is literally taken by them. [8]

Wonder

Air movements, weather phenomena, and sunlight effects are all entities whose individuality is engendered in the act of happening, rather than being the result of an inherent identity. [9] The American landscape architectural theorist Elisabeth Meyer has talked about the individual events that intersect with a place as haecceities, an expression that interestingly connects with Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's philosophical writings. (Meyer, 2005: 111; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 261-263) Especially in the work of the latter authors, the term haecceity assumes a particular value in that it individuates entities by their mere taking place – here it is – describing an emergence that is revealed in a variation of state rather than in a confinable identity. [10] Unexpected moments of encounter with singular events evoke an aesthetic force that could be aligned with a notion of wonder. Wonder is an often-recurring heading in the work of SLA (SLA, 2010). But what can an aesthetic of wonder bring about in a design that addresses local weather and global cycles, their phenomena intersecting with a place, and their irreversible change? Wonder is a category of aesthetics that describes the effect of a sudden confrontation with something out of the ordinary (Fisher, 1998). Wonder is also what drives humans to question the world: as Socrates remarked to Theaetetus, "*wonder is the only beginning of philosophy*." The twofold meaning of the term 'wonder' is well exemplified by its use in the English language, as the American literature scholar Philip Fisher also points out (1998: 11). The first sense in which the word is used is that of interrogation, where wonder is a verb (I wonder ...?). The second use is in exclamation, where wonder is a noun (what a wonder!). Wonder is that which bridges the gap between the delight we feel in confronting an extraordinary event (or thing) and the intellectual curiosity that compels us to make sense of it. At Brattøra, SLA lays out a topology of spatial situations and potential phenomena that aim to reformulate the visitor's distracted approach into an engagement with place that is infused with wonder.

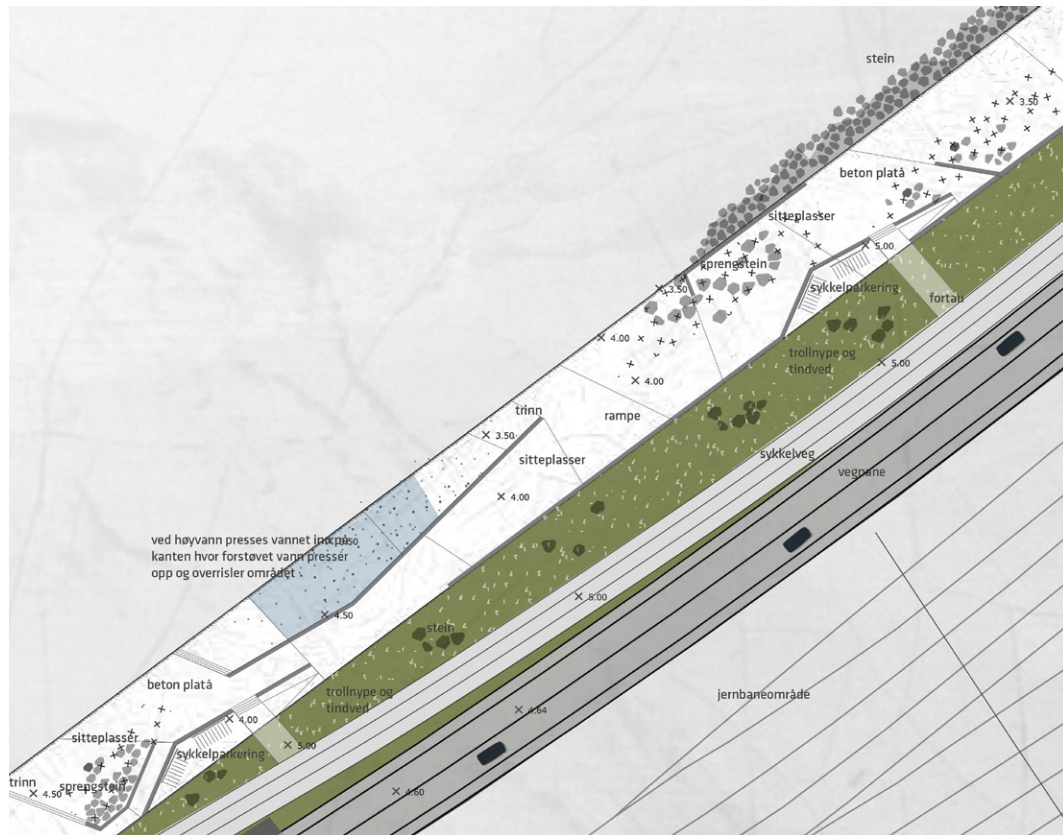


FIGURE 11 The tide-measuring stepped topography. Plan detail from the competition entry (Drawing by SLA, 2009)

Through wonder, the visitor is moved into a confrontation with the site's specificity that is both aesthetically and intellectually rich. In SLA's design, a sense of wonder is latent in the potential encounter with striking atmospheric phenomena and in the spatial setting that the project provides to these encounters. A more focused intention of provoking wonder is expressed in the design of a stepped topography along the outer edge of the harbour promenade, the levels of which are informed by the average intertidal height that the sea maintains between ebb and flow (Fig. 11). Designed so that the different steps retain water after the tide has lowered, revealing the changes in height when the tide is at its minimum, they provide the visitors with tangible evidence of the processes of change in water levels. This topographical artefact illustrates tidal variations by compressing the tide's temporal dynamics into a spatial composition of juxtaposed wet surfaces. The project decomposes the transition between sea levels into progressive time sequences, and reconstructs them in space. In a way, the project's approach to change may recall early experiments of visualizing movement in modern art, from cubism to futurism. The layering of different states in the same spatial sequence, past and present, unfolds the visitor's experience of the space into an interplay between sensuous perception of the present phenomenon and intellectual reflection on the recent history and causality of the same phenomenon, inscribed in the traces left by the receding tide.

The stepped topography of SLA's project makes productive use of the agency of measures in people's relationship with landscapes in order to manifest and foreground temporality. Measures are, for people, both intelligible and intellectually appealing in that they speak to our rational mind. The capacity of a design to present people with a measure provokes them to wonder about the dynamics that sustain a certain phenomenon. It engages their curiosity and interest in understanding processes of change that would otherwise not be so clearly readable. While infusing their senses with pleasure, Brattøra's wondrous phenomena provoke the visitor to question the physical and material cause of their emergence, and, by extension, they shed light on the site's particular temporality as a result of its unique geographic and

climatic location. Ultimately, Brattøra's stepped topography might also be interpreted as a device for tangibly measuring sea level rise as a consequence of global warming, in this sense exposing – again – humans and their awareness of the inescapable impact of our actions on the planet.

Conclusion

Weather phenomena are one-of-a-kind and often exist in the singularity of a fraction of time: one moment they are there, the next they are gone. In this sense, they are also 'particular'. Therefore, SLA's redesign of Brattøra's seafront supports an understanding of the particular as something that is bound to the singularity of a temporal moment and the way it intersects with the more permanent features of a place. The work poetically interprets Carl Andre's definition of 'place' in that it frames a firm spatial setting by which the presence and perception of local weather phenomena is rendered more conspicuous. The type of place that the work creates can be said to be particular because the actuality of an experience of it is bound to a distinct temporal moment – a distinct season, or a moment of the day – and the singularity of the phenomena there occurring – like the occurrence of a violent westerly storm, or simply a moment of high tide.

With its take on the notions of ground, exposure and wonder, SLA's project harnesses the accidental character of these phenomena and renders them an almost choreographed component of the place's experience. By framing distinct spatial and existential conditions that foreground temporality and intensify a person's perceptual awareness, the project manages to incorporate the site's temporal and phenomenal constituents as an integral component of the place despite their unpredictability. Thus, the project embraces the generative potential of a few precise spatial operations set at the service of responding and interacting with specific phenomenal conditions found on site, without fully determining the aesthetic content of the experiences they may create.

Steered by a focus on individual experience and perception, SLA's project encourages us to think of the design of 'particular places' as the design of sensually engaging and forcefully unsettling environments that are not only singular and constantly changing, but whose changes have also the capacity to connect us with a dimension of entities and forces that transcends the time and scale of the here and now. By creating potent conditions for experience without fully determining their programmatic or semantic content, Brattøra's landscape actively engages the human body not as a passive receiver of sensory stimulation, but as an active participant.

SLA's project for Brattøra suggests that designing a 'particular place' may also and especially mean cultivating and enhancing the perceptual richness of a landscape by framing a physical stage for encountering its more intangible components – its weather, its light and atmospheric qualities, and the temporal phenomena that happen to take place in it or that it is capable of generating.

Might particular places of this kind also become possible sites of environmental reflection in the contemporary landscape metropolis? Unsettling places of forceful agency, places in which we do not necessarily feel at ease, but which may support the recovering of our intimate connection with the physical world by means of the powerful aesthetic experiences they are capable of providing (cf. Hellström Reimer 2010, Meyer 2008).

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Notes

- [1] Nancy's definition makes productive use of the fact that, in the Latin languages, the word for 'weather' is the same as the word 'time' (tempo/temp/tiempo). This linguistic analogy supports the idea that the weather must be regarded as an essential component of the landscape.
- [2] Albeit the term environment holds in contemporary English a wide range of meanings, I have chosen here to call attention to a specific understanding of the term, which departs from a definition given by the Estonian biologist Jakob von Uexküll. According to Uexküll, the term environment, or Umwelt, designates the phenomenal world of an organism as distinguished from its physical surroundings – its Umgebung (Uexküll, 1934). Uexküll's concept of Umwelt, described and made public in the biologist's writings since the first decade of the 1900s, has become extremely influential in 20th century European philosophy, influencing thinkers such as Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleu-Ponty, and Gilles Deleuze, among others.
- [3] The conversation between the author and Stig Lennart Andersson was recorded at SLA's office in Copenhagen on 13.02.2012.
- [4] The project Brattøra Open Space was developed jointly by SLA and the Norwegian architecture firm Pir II, which was responsible for group leadership and planning.
- [5] James J. Gibson, in his theory of sensual perception, affirms that the basic orienting system of terrestrial animals, and, therefore, human beings, is based on the relationship between the horizontal ground plane and our vertical posture. Gibson calls these two axes "the direction up-down" and "the plane of the ground" (Gibson, 1966: 59).

- [6] I would like to thank my reviewers for drawing my attention to Maria Hellström Reimer's important contribution to a discussion on aesthetics in a time of environmental crisis.
- [7] It is also interesting to notice that, when looked upon in existential terms, the weather represents one of the few real public and democratic domains that are left in our cities and landscapes. Olafur Eliasson beautifully points this out in a conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist along the Goose Lake trail in Iceland, transcribed in the book *The Goose Lake Trail (southern Route)*. Eliasson observes that the weather, especially in northern countries, actively functions as a social organiser. Weather also defines what he calls "*a kind of shared environment*" and "*a kind of shared physicality*" that bring people together both metaphorically and physically (Eliasson & Obrist, 2006: 44).
- [8] In this article, I often use the term situation in close analogy to the definition given of it by the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk. 'Situations' are, for Sloterdijk, heterogeneous groupings of different materials, the configuration of which is primarily shaped by the relationship between them and the interacting agencies of their components. These 'situations' are also spatial configurations that determine the environment of humans, and therefore their perception, in a fundamental way, since being immersed in them is a condition intrinsic to human existence. Thus, the term situation simultaneously describes a space in which humans are immersed and that gives shape to their existence in a fundamental way, and a spatial assemblage that is primarily shaped by relations of agency between humans and things (Sloterdijk, 2011).
- [9] In the essay "The eye of the storm: visual perception and the weather," the British anthropologist Tim Ingold proposes a definition of the weather that is inclusive of all phenomena in the atmosphere (Ingold, 2005). He also argues that weather conditions are mostly revealed in visual perception as changes in the qualities of sunlight. In including air movements and sunlight effects in my argument I embrace Ingold's definition.
- [10] In the chapter "1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming- Imperceptible..." of *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze & Guattari refer to haecceities as bodies whose individuality is not determined by form, substance or function, but by the totality of the relations that they are capable of establishing. Deleuze & Guattari write, "*A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected. [...] A haecceity has neither beginning nor end, origin nor destination; it is always in the middle.*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 261-263).

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