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Editorial Note

Since our first issue on Property appeared in the Winter, 2010, we have witnessed the exacerbation of the latest global economic crisis, increasing demands for a programme of global austerity to ‘save capitalism’, and the confrontations that arise from these intolerable conditions. Within the autohysteria of the crisis, architecture and landscape have been called on to manifest a new iconography for a collapsing civil society. Scapegoat responds: in the service of *what future* will our designs take form?

In the middle of the sixteenth century, Étienne de La Boétie wrote “The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude” to question that peculiar human trait of desiring one’s own repression.¹ In his recent commentary on servility and its new life through consensus, theorist Sylvère Lotringer has remarked that we have departed from the submission to sovereign power that so irritated La Boétie to arrive at a condition of hegemonic ‘involuntary consensus.’² Everywhere, the same refrain: there is no other option; the same refrain everywhere: the global economy must be saved *at any cost*. But, as the influence of the carbon democracies of the twentieth century wanes and the massive revolts in North Africa and the Middle East intensify, the shackles of the ‘involuntary consensus’ machine are breaking apart.³ From architecture and landscape, perhaps it is time for a complementary reprisal.

The professions of architecture

and landscape architecture are founded on notions of *service*. While service contracts formalize and mediate designer-client-builder relations, designers are expected to serve a largely undefined public good. Recently, design culture has proliferated in the transition from industrial production to service industries by providing a single point of service predicated on less visible forms of production, materials, and labour. Architecture and landscape architecture are among the celebrated creative industries that often inhabit obsolete spaces of industry while renovating them to suit a city ‘re-valued’ by their very presence. At the same time, the neoliberal agenda has meant the wholesale disinvestment of public services, including the universal assault on organized labour, the privatization of utilities, the attacks on healthcare around the world and reproductive health services in the U.S. in particular.

The contemporary turn towards the concept of service in the design fields is, at least in part, an attempt to address economic inequality expedited by neoliberal policies. This turn underscores the disproportionate degree to which design has served a global elite and attempts to invert these relations by providing design services to populations typically excluded from design attention, often called the *underserved*. These practices are supported through *pro-bono* contributions by design firms, service-education programs in architecture schools, and government

or not-for-profit agencies. Scapegoat is drawn to these practices, but we are also provoked to examine their effects when they simply manage the symptoms of global capitalism. By fulfilling tasks formerly done by the state, architecture enacts a form of volunteerism that plays into neoliberal values and strategies. By reproducing conventional contractual relationships, the cult of the expert is defended, and the knowledge of users is patronized. By reducing design to a technical tool for public good—creative autonomy and critical content disappear. By problem solving without confronting the origins or terms of the problem itself—design becomes the apologist. By adopting a paternalistic position of charity or personal heroics—design is compromised by “the indignity of speaking for others.”⁴

In response, Scapegoat looks to current practices to intensify our concept of service *as a problem*: How can we develop new models for self-management and mutual aid that move beyond unidirectional forms of service as clientelism and dependency? How can we think through service provision beyond the state? How can we privilege voluntary association and ethical reciprocity rather than volunteerism? How can new approaches to training and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge be radically re-organized? How has the rise of the populist Right coincided with mechanisms of gentrification and the ideologies of the so-called

‘creative city?’ How can we counter the predominance of economic metaphors in our attempts to articulate values and commitments? How could design services work in solidarity with the labour of extraction, construction, and maintenance?

These questions resonate inside and against the new political economy of global austerity and Canada’s own Harper Doctrine. Scapegoat strives to contest the production and reproduction of this current social order in terms of both the political power and economic accumulation that create its inexorable crises.⁵ Building this confrontation through practice requires that we depart from both apolitical opportunism and self-obsessed criticality and turn instead to a reappraisal of the very terms of social reproduction and the place of design within the social. This is not only a question of social support structures, but also how architecture and landscape can facilitate social organization.

With our second issue, Scapegoat argues that design can no longer hide behind an anodyne image of service. Architecture and landscape might find a renewed voice, purpose, and practice among the defectors and rebels who refuse both voluntary submission and involuntary consensus. This would mean challenging contemporary demands for our austere and compliant service, and continuing our practices of struggle in a productive and resolute *denial of service* to both state and capital. 🏠

Notes

1. Étienne de La Boétie. *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*. trans. by Harry Kurz. intro. by Murray Rothbard (New York: Black Rose Books, 1997).

2. Sylvère Lotringer, Introduction to Jean Baudrillard, *The Agony of Power*, trans. Ames Hodges, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), Intervention Series, 2010).

3. For a prescient analysis of political economy in the carboniferous century, see Timothy Mitchell, “Carbon democracy.” *Economy and Society* Vol. 38, No. 3 (August 2009), 399-432.

4. Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, “Intellectuals and Power,” in Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts* (1953-1974), trans. Mike Taormina (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2003), 207-213.

5. Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler, “Capital accumulation: Breaking the dualism of ‘economics’ and ‘politics’,” in *Global Political Economy: Contemporary Theories*, edited by Ronen Palan (London: Routledge, 2000), 67-88.

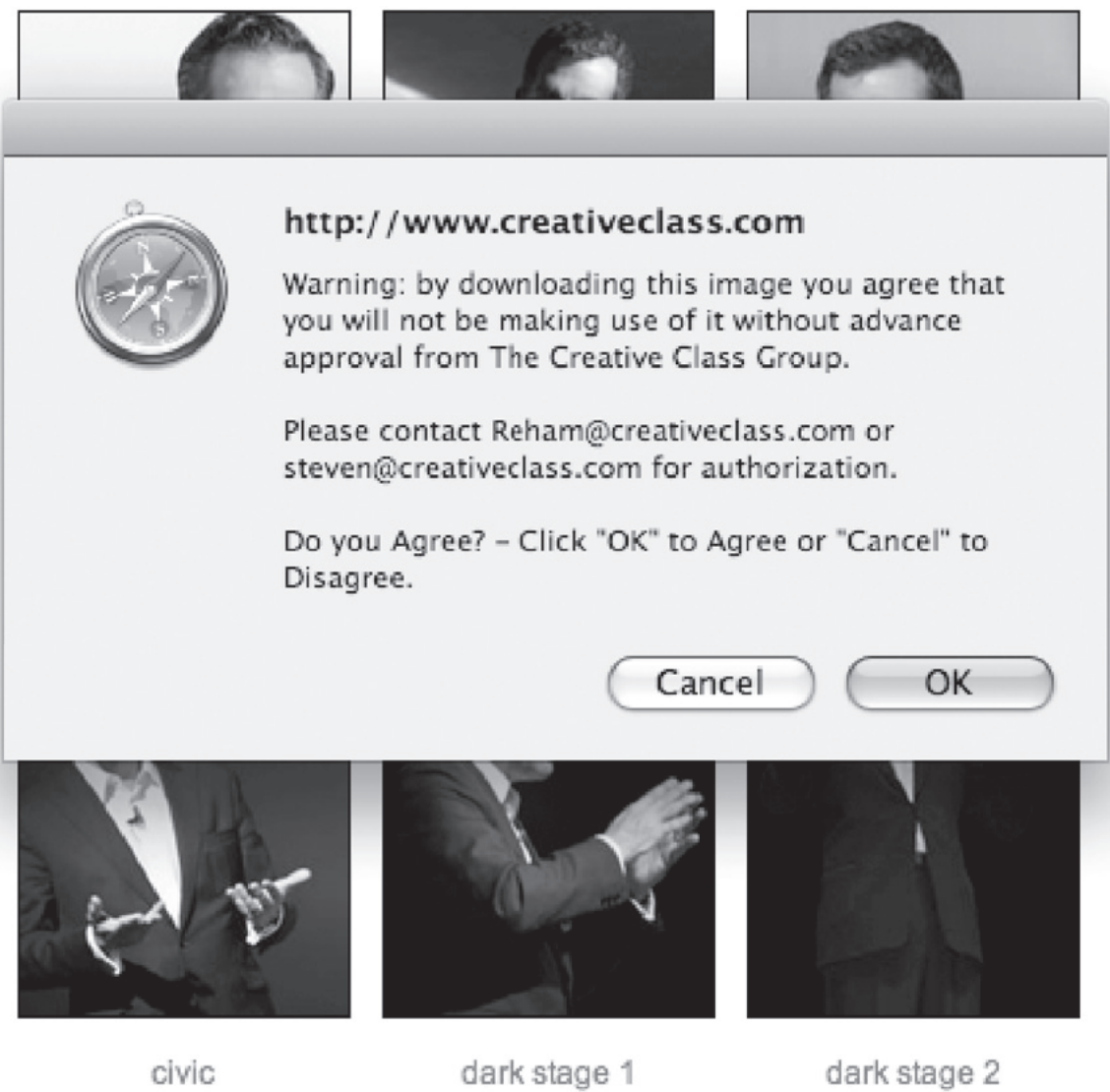
Service



p.6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 28
by Ollia Mishchenko

Urban Politics: Short Course

by Kanishka Goonewardena



civic

dark stage 1

dark stage 2

Some options for legally representing the guru of creative capital, Richard Florida

Toronto today is not a happy place for those thinking radically about the politics of the city. However, the least of their worries should have to do with the election of a right-wing, populist mayor last fall, a rude awakening for liberal spirits, who got another wake-up call the day after May Day this year when the Conservatives won the federal election with a much-feared absolute majority in a flawed electoral system. As Stefan Kipfer argued insightfully in *The Bullet* days before the mayoral election, Rob Ford's victory in October 2010 should not be seen as such a radical departure from the business as usual of the previous regime of David Miller.¹ For Ford barged in through a door already left ajar in the City Hall of Miller, who presided for two terms over a contradictory "social-democratic" compromise between neoliberal economics and cultural liberalism. What was left for Ford to do was tap into the evident discontent with the injustices of this uneven Third Way urbanism, opportunistically exploiting its cultural elitism and strategically appropriating its neoliberal pragmatism in order to roll out his own brand of authoritarian populism.²

Much ink has been spilt by some disoriented liberals in attributing Fordism in Toronto to a suburban-urban vote split, running the risk of blaming its enviable electoral success on those out-of-downtowners who just could not vote like the more enlightened "creative class." But their neat statistics and beautiful maps alone say nothing about the production of the conditions that enabled the possibility of Ford. Just under a month before Ford's election victory, Rick Salutin was right to insist: "What matters isn't *what* one thinks of him; it's understanding why he has bloomed so sturdily at this point."³ The enabling forces of Ford had been in the making for a while during Miller time, to be sure, and they will likely outlast Ford as well. These include, above all, the hardcore practices of Toronto's neoliberal urbanism: the cynical subjection of urban planning to real estate capital; the progressive erosion of public spending on housing, transit and social services; and the aggressive policing of racialized suburban poverty in concert with the aestheticized embourgeoisment of the inner city. None of this would have flown so stealthily under the radars of those now viscerally outraged by Ford, however, without the regnant ideology of Toronto.

Diverse City, Competitive City, Creative City—these are the three sources and component parts of the hegemonic, if not merely dominant, ideology of Toronto, which serve to both mask and glorify the realities of the Exploitative City, the Neoliberal City and the Elitist City that is also Toronto. The liberal discourse of diversity understood as multicultural "tolerance" has long been a staple of this mindset, by way of state policy rather than subaltern identity.⁴ Had the latter

been a real force in the politics of Toronto, it is unlikely that Ford would have gotten away so easily with his neo-Malthusian, anti-immigrant rants, along with his crude contempt for cyclists and homosexuals.⁵ However, it was the classic Third Way discursive *rapprochement* between liberal cultural diversity and neoliberal economic austerity that paved the way for Fordism in Toronto and similar debacles elsewhere. This was of course the alloyed ideological form underwritten by the global political-economic dispensation of the "Competitive City," which entails the injunction for global cities to compete relentlessly with other global cities for capital investments amidst dwindling public funds. Henceforth, as radical geographer Neil Smith noted in the *Harvard Design Magazine*, "urban policy" has become "little more than a euphemism for the process by which city governments huckster for private market investments."⁶

If the essence of urbanism was so reformatted for the new millennium with reference to capital, then what about labour? Enter Richard Florida and *The Rise of the Creative Class*—the man and the idea welcomed with great fan-fare in 2007 by the University of Toronto, with the influential blessing of the Economic Development people at the City of Toronto and large expanses of weekly space in the *Globe and Mail* to disseminate his precious wisdom. The boosters of Toronto had already paid Florida a hefty lecture fee the year previous, apparently without getting enough of his seductive solution to the structural problems of Toronto in just one ecstatic evening. But why were so many people in the media and academia suddenly falling heads over heels for such an age-old revelation that is now an utterly commonsensical idea—namely, that human beings are inherently creative, and are especially compelled to be so merely in order to survive under the conditions of capitalism? As Marx and Engels said in the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, we

Toronto Mayor Rob Ford discussing civic engagement



"cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society." That is to say, "constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones"—by any conceivable index of "creativity," "innovation," or "growth."

However, Florida's originality lies not in substance, but rather with a talent for enhancing his own subsistence—by making a small fortune from the well-worn idea of creativity, which has been famously elaborated for various purposes by a range of writers since Marx, including Joseph Schumpeter ("creative destruction"), Marshall Berman (*All That is Solid Melts Into Air*), and his own alleged guru Jane Jacobs (*The Economy of Cities* and *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*). So we are supposed to think that the revolution to liberate creativity is neither as old as capital, nor just around the corner. In Florida's considered opinion, it is happening right now. In case we haven't noticed it, he urges us to hurry up and join it: "It is up to us—all of us—to complete the transformation" begun by the world-historical agency of the "creative class." "The transformation now in progress," Florida writes in the preface to the paperback edition of *Rise* (his preferred abbreviation), "is potentially bigger and more powerful [than the] great transition from the agricultural to the industrial age."⁷ Such a hubristic hypothesis would be reckless on the part of a yuppie on drugs; coming from a Columbia University-educated professor of moneymaking, it is positively irresponsible. Clearly, *Rise* intends to address not serious students of history or cities, and definitely not revolutionaries. As his doctoral supervisor Peter Marcuse laments, it reads rather like a series of "after-dinner speeches," tailored for our business elites and civic leaders suffering from late-capitalist anxieties.⁸

What does Florida offer them? Basically, some *numbers* in the form of "indexes" on "talent," "technology," and "tolerance," correlated to "innovation," "creativity," and "growth," and *anecdotes* explaining how cool cool people are—and why our wonderful cities would be doomed without them. Florida's homespun stories not only motivate his audiences; they also flatter them. The gracious after-dinner crowds seem to have flattered him in return, as can be seen from the icon labeled "The Praise" on the website displaying *Rise* alongside his more recent wares (www.creativeclass.org). The economic development set however is by no means alone in praising *Rise*, the narrative style of which recalls Dale Carnegie's depression-era bestseller *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936). Some professors of urban studies who lost their social-democratic paddles in the rapid currents of neoliberal globalization have jumped swiftly onto Florida's cheerful lifeboat. But others see the cracks in it. Notwithstanding the mass of statistics mobilized by Florida on behalf of the "creative class," his numbers don't tell you anything about how to live with *citizens*, even within the terms of his own self-referential "indexes"—which have mesmerized impressionable politicians and depressed capitalists around the world, in spite of being notoriously auto-correlated and pregnant with tautologies. "Places that score high on this Tolerance Index," Florida assures us, "are *very* likely to have a culture of Tolerance" (original emphasis).¹⁰ In defense of the Index, we sure hope so.

Rise is riddled with errors, from the conceptual to the typographical. "The real challenge of our time is to compete [*sic*] the system we have given rise to," repeats Florida. We know here he means "complete," but this is not a mere typo. For we find a lot more than one such symptomatic slip in *Rise*, especially in Florida's botched attempt to flaunt his familiarity with some left literature. The author of *History and Class Consciousness* appears in its scholarly endnotes as "Georg Lukas [*sic*]," signaling Florida's confusion between the origins of Western Marxism and *Star Wars*. Likewise, the note including the subtitle of *One Market Under God* by Thomas Frank—one of the best critics of "creative class"—reads "*Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism, and the End of Economic Development* [*sic*]," whereas the last word in the real work is *Democracy*. No sophisticated psychobabble need be summoned to understand what kind of person sees "development" when reading "democracy," or says "complete" instead of the harmless English word "complete." Of "competition" and "development," Florida is not just a respected scholar but also a spectacular symptom. Much the same can be said about his *Rise* and the rest, which deserve scrutiny not for any intellectual interest, but as an "index" for the vacuity of our civic leaders and professional urbanists unable to envision alternatives to Third Way neoliberalism and its consequences in cities. If creativity

were needed in this situation, it would not be for objecting to the obscene vanity of *Rise*, but to transcend an urban condition that turns charlatans into celebrities, while bohemians overrun our cities primed for “competition” and “development,” and banish the damned of the earth to somewhere else.

If TAVIS, the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy, is the city’s iron fist, then the “creative class” is its velvet glove.¹¹ The former typically operates in the pathologized “Priority Neighbourhoods” of low-income Toronto, targeting primarily young black men suspected, convicted or acquitted of violent crimes; the latter routinely appears in multiculturally choreographed “Live with Culture” advertisements for the City of Toronto, *Nuit Blanche* and *Luminato*.¹² These are quite separate subjective life-worlds, no doubt, but they were objectively united in the pre-Ford world now fondly reminisced by some readers of alternative magazines and websites like *Now* and *Spacing*. The alienating relation between the two may not be readily apparent to liberal multiculturalists, but it has been obvious to some who live around Jane and Finch, and former inhabitants of Regent Park—to those who are *discounted* by the ruling political-economic system, through its coercive policing as well as consensual-cultural dimensions.¹³ To note that some poor “people of colour,” including disproportionately high numbers of single mothers and criminalized youth, voted for a man who was arrested for domestic violence and plans to replace streetcars with cars is not to say that Ford is no worse than Miller or suggest that those who banked on Ford will be necessarily better off with him than they were with Miller. True, more than the previous regime, the present one represents a reactionary regression and a greater challenge for the work that needs to be done for Toronto’s citizens to feel good about their city. Yet it is also the case that such a state of affairs will not serendipitously arise if we plead hard enough next time with our short-sighted New Democrat friends to “strategically” vote Liberal—or the other way around—in the desperate hope of keeping the Conservatives out. No one votes un-strategically, and it would be better now rather than never to work outside the box of capitalist parliamentarianism in order to fashion the kind of autonomous politics capable of distinguishing itself as much from Third Way social-democracy as from authoritarian-populist manifestations of state and capital.

A politics of *The Right to the City* understood in the radical sense proposed by Henri Lefebvre is very much needed today in Toronto, as it is in other cities. Yet questions arise as they should concerning what strategies and actors such a politics might involve. Could any of the usual urban practices—architecture, planning, engineering—help out here, given their claims to public service? The well-advertised Planning for the Future (PFF) campaign of the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) offers us a lesson.¹⁴ PFF’s proponents describe it as a “project begun in earnest” five years ago to address

the greater demands placed on planners by an increasingly complex world. So far, so good. But the nauseating overuse of the word “excellence” in a plethora of “task force reports” labouring to “uphold the highest standards” rings an alarm. Sure enough, with a bit of further reading the PFF reveals its real purpose: to turn planning into a licensed profession, like law, by narrowly demarcating its own exclusive domain of standardized technocratic expertise on the urban terrain, to be policed by rigorous rituals of membership and accreditation. So we should not be surprised to be told that the intent of CIP’s new Code of Ethics is to “distinguish professionals from non-professionals,” without a hint of even the most perfunctory gesture towards social justice that one is accustomed to encountering in such high-minded discourse. Yes, it is harsh to judge the prospects of professional service based on such an alarmingly inept and doomed expression of what Antonio Gramsci called “economic-corporate” interest. But CIP’s appalling rent-seeking behaviour also shows us how much our futuristic professions have to catch up with the aesthetics and politics of medieval guilds, which inspired not only John Ruskin and William Morris, but also Walter Gropius. Moreover, it highlights the distance radical urban praxis is now obliged to keep from bullheaded “professional practice.”

What Toronto teaches us accords well with the fundamental lesson offered by the history of architecture and urban planning in the twentieth century: it is unwise for citizens to abandon the fate of their city to the rule of either the expert (state) or the market (capital). History also suggests that attempts to transcend the logics of state and capital in radically democratic ways are essentially and necessarily *urban*—a point underlined by Guy Debord and the Situationists when they proposed to call the Paris Commune “an urban revolution,” and elaborated theoretically by Lefebvre in *The Urban Revolution* (1970).¹⁵ Advancing the novel thesis that *urbanization* has superseded *industrialization* as the motor of contemporary capitalism following the “implosion-explosion” of the city, Lefebvre identifies the supreme formal feature of the urban: *centrality*. “What does the city create?” he asks: “Nothing. It centralizes creation. And yet it creates everything. Nothing exists without exchange, without union, without proximity, that is, without relationships. The city creates a situation, the urban situation.”¹⁶ Urban-*ization* destroys the city; but by virtue of the forms of centrality that are still fundamentally characteristic of the urban, for Lefebvre the *possibility* always remains open for a re-realization of the socio-spatial architecture of the city on a plane beyond state and capital. Beyond political and economic reification lies *another* city, and an architecture, of radical *intercourse*.¹⁷ In two recent, coruscating studies of architecture and urbanism—*The Project of Autonomy* (2008) and *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (2011)—the architect and theorist

Pier Vittorio Aureli pries open a similar urban-political possibility by positing a radical antinomy between the city and urbanization, which he explores with specific reference to the potentialities of architectural form, considered against the political-historical backdrop of Italian Operaism and Autonomia. The iconoclastic French and Italian Marxisms of Lefebvre and Aureli are worlds apart, intellectually and politically, from the Fords and Floridas of the moment. Yet, in the unsavoury company of the latter, the former provide just the kind of provocation we need to aim for nothing less than a praxis of politics and urbanism within and against capitalism.

Kanishka Goonewardena was trained as an architect in Sri Lanka and now teaches urban design and critical theory in Toronto. He recently co-edited (with Stefan Kipfer, Richard Milgrom, and Christian Schmid) *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (New York: Routledge, 2008) and is currently Associate Professor and Director, Program in Planning, Department of Geography, University of Toronto.

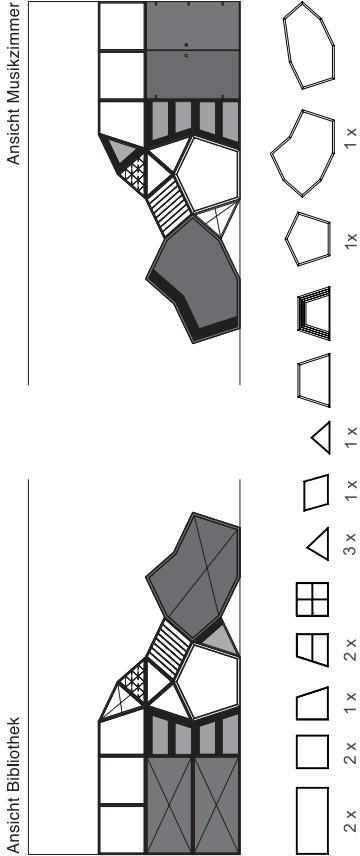
Notes

1. Stefan Kipfer, “The Hordes at the Gate,” *The Bulletin* 419 (13 October 2010) (www.socialistproject.ca/bullet/419.php).
2. For a prescient analysis of the continuum between Ford and Miller, see the editorial, “The Right Desires: Their Base and Ours,” *Upping the Antri* 12 (April 2011), 25–38.
3. Rick Salutin, “Rob Ford and the Loss of Hope,” *Globe and Mail* (2 October 2010) (www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/article1722148.ece).
4. Kanishka Goonewardena and Stefan Kipfer, “Spaces of Difference: Reflections from Toronto on Multiculturalism, Bourgeois Urbanism and the Possibility of Radical Urban Politics,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29.3 (2005), 670–678.
5. Kipfer, “Hordes.”
6. Neil Smith, “The Revanchist City,” *Harvard Design Magazine* 1 (Winter/Spring 1997), 20–21.
7. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848 (www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto).
8. Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), xiii.
9. Peter Marcuse, “Review of *The Rise of the Creative Class* by Richard Florida,” *Urban Land* 62 (2003), 40–1.
10. Florida, *Rise*, xx.
11. TAVIS is the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy of the Toronto Police Service.
12. On “Priority Neighbourhoods” and their discontents, including the politics of naming, mapping and policing, see Amy Siciliano, *Policing Poverty: Race, Space and the Fear of Crime after the Year of the Gun in Suburban Toronto* (University of Toronto: PhD Dissertation, 2010).
13. I use *discount* with reference to Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière, for whom *politics* consists in reconstituting the relation between who is *counted* (included) and *not counted* (excluded) in the inherent privileges of a given situation—i.e., in including the excluded, so as to alter the existing situation and produce a new and more inclusive-universal one. Rancière reserves the term “policing” for what liberal-democratic discourse *says* when it *means* politics: the management of the *status-quo*. See Badiou, *Metapolitics*, trans. Jason Barker (London: Verso, 2005 [1998]), 107–123.
14. See www.planningincanada.ca for details.
15. Guy Debord, Attila Kotányi and Raoul Vaneigem, “Theses on the Paris Commune,” 1962 (www.bopsecrets.org/SI/Pariscommune.htm).
16. Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Robert Bononno, foreword Neil Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003 [1970]), 117–118.
17. Intercourse = *Verkehr* à la Marx. For a spirited account of the centrality of this concept for Marx and emancipatory politics, see Japanese Marxist critic Kojin Karatani, “Beyond Capital-Nation-State,” *Rethinking Marxism* 20.4 (2008), 569–595.

Scapegoat

Project Manager: Dipl.-Arch. Marlen Weiser
Employees: Dipl.-Ing. James Wurps, Dipl.-Ing. Daniel Hulseweg
Model-building: Laure Severac
Start of planning: February 2009
Completion: August 2009

Client: Global Education pme
Familienservice GmbH
Anja Umbreit, Anke Sauerteig, Alexandra Stieper
Sponsors: MagPaint (magnetic and fluorescent color), Growing Table/pure position (benches and tables), Lummel (seating elements), der Holländer (plants)



Familienservice School, Berlin, 2009
by Susanne Hofmann Architects/
die Baupiloten

The Baupiloten converted the fifth floor of a Berlin office building into a school for the company Familienservice.¹ Anonymous waiting rooms and offices were transformed into learning and activity spaces for pupils.

During a model-building workshop for the Familienservice’s new school, the children imagined worlds that were full of plush and comfortable sleeping areas containing various jewels of delight, but the children also imagined worlds full of ice crystals and ice bombs—a place so cold and icy that nobody would dare set foot inside. As a result, the core hallways were converted into a Crystal Laboratory, with a Heat Lab for the planned kitchen area and a Coldness Research Lab next door. From the labs, crystals grow as single modules into the classrooms. (Fig. 1)

The Familienservice’s new school is planned to grow with its pupils. All of the school’s installations have a modular design and can be expanded, divided, or rearranged. As the classrooms see more use, separation walls made of single polygonal units can be utilized to subdivide the space. These units can also be decorated, inhabited, climbed through or used as play objects—and are always adaptable to the use of the individual room. Parts can be taken from the walls and used as chairs, tunnels, or anything else the children can imagine.

From the elevator, one enters an indoor garden full of plants and pictures. Together with the neighbouring activity area, the garden is an indoor substitute for the classical schoolyard. The ceiling of the activity room opens up into the sky with large glass windows. The expansiveness is reinforced by mirrors located on the ceiling, as well as adjustable mirror-walls in which the children can observe, discover, and experiment. The room offers plenty of space to play and has a stage for the children to climb around on.

Die Baupiloten

The Baupiloten are led by architect and professor Susanne Hofmann in a joint venture with the Technical University Berlin. Her firm, Susanne Hofmann Architects, is hired by external contractors for all projects, and as chief architect she assumes full responsibility and is personally liable for all work completed. The firm is comprised of a team of eight highly skilled architects and engineers who also support the student project at the TU Berlin. This allows for projects to be selectively worked on by either the architects or the pupils—ideally, in direct collaboration.

Payment for planning services provided by the Baupiloten is made according to professional standards and issued directly to the university in the form of third party funds. By participating in the Baupiloten, students can test and apply their academic knowledge to the demands of actual building measures throughout all phases of design and construction. This also includes coordinating details with clients and contractors, as well as working under the constraints of a tight budget. The academic context ensures not only the incorporation of research-oriented components into the individual projects, but also builds a multifaceted and interdisciplinary network. The academic context ensures not only the incorporation of research-oriented components into the individual projects, but also builds a multifaceted and interdisciplinary network.²

In the Presence of Another Being: A Conversation with Wendy Jacob

by Gina Badger



An exploration of Wendy Jacob’s recent work reveals key distinctions between different modes of group work. Under the aegis of Explorers Club, and then Autism Studio, Jacob has developed a working method informed not by service or collaboration, but by the communal structure of the *club*. A club is an affiliation among people with different skills, interests and backgrounds who, as a result, seek different outcomes of their membership. Both Explorers Club and Autism Studio consist of small, special interest groups devoted to the leisurely but rigorous indulgence of shared interests—including making YouTube videos, scavenging and collecting, and public space—and their memberships are constituted by artists and youth on the autism spectrum. The clubs’ activities consist of outings and meetings, and almost always have some form of public manifestation. While the clubs are attentive to the various ‘autisms’ of their members, this attention is not developed in order to pathologize them, but to develop *communities of interest* based on responses to the material world. The friendships and projects pursued in this context exist not despite, but across distinctions in ability and experience.

Jacob’s early career is characterized by her participation in the art collective Haha, which garnered recent art historical attention for *Flood*, its contribution to Mary Jane Jacob’s *Culture in Action* (1993).¹ In its last project together, a book entitled *With Love from Haha* (2008), the group affirmed its emphasis on “a specific place and a specific audience,”² against the increasing globalization of contemporary art. Projects like *Flood*—a hydroponic storefront garden that produced clean greens for seropositive people in the middle of the AIDS crisis, and *Hotel Shorts* (1996), which used public-access television to broadcast short, interview-based videos with residents of the Carillo Retirement Home in Santa Barbara—intervened critically in particular social situations in order to directly affect them, often involving their target audience in the production of the works. The care paid by Haha to the way in which the collective’s artworks became public is key to its politics, and is consistent with Jacob’s work post-Haha.

In “Alluvial Deposits,” Brett Bloom’s contribution to *With Love From Haha*, “service” is defined as a mode of artistic production by which artists implicate themselves in the social and political fabric of the places they inhabit, creating projects that “can have multiple functions for people with different concerns, backgrounds, and levels of education and engagement.”³ Further, Bloom posits that service represents a way of working that is not subsumed by the reductive logic of experience-hawking capitalist political economies. Despite the similarities between Bloom’s conception of service and the operation of the club within Jacob’s work, there is a lot at stake in the distinction between the modes of group work suggested by these two terms. Service, with its implication of need, contradicts one of the priorities of both the Explorers Club and Autism Studio: to form communities of interest in excess of the clinical categories and lifestyles that normally enforce separation among their members.

As a former student of Jacob’s and member of Autism Studio, I solicited her for insight into the mode of group work that links Haha to Explorers Club and Autism Studio. What follows is the result of our exchanges, which took place in April 2011.

Above
Theodossios
Issaias with
Clovis Theilha-
ber, *My Knees
are Fine*, 2009.
Video stills.
Image courtesy
of the artist
and Autism
Studio.

GB: The first iteration of Autism Studio was the Explorers Club, composed of yourself, Stefano Micali, and Addy Fuller. When did you start this work?

WJ: The Explorers Club started in the fall of 2008. But before there was an Explorers Club, Stefano and I made a number of installations with masking tape and gym mats in my studio at MIT. Stefano has a talent for naming things. He called our first installation “MIT Emporium.” He was twelve years old at the time.

In the fall we left the studio to continue our work outdoors. Addy Fuller, a student research assistant, joined us and we became the “Explorers Club.”

GB: What were the founding motivations of Explorers Club?

WJ: I had been talking with Stefano’s mother about my project rigging tightropes through buildings. She told me that Stefano was also interested in tightropes and had run string across his room, connecting the furniture.

Stefano is autistic and is concerned about how spaces are ordered. Although his sight is perfectly fine, he has challenges integrating visual spatial information, particularly large, open spaces. He has devised tactics for framing or subdividing space such as wearing eyeglass frames, even though he doesn’t need corrective lenses, and running string around his room. Because Stefano and I were both altering spaces with lines, I invited him and his mother to my studio to do something with lines. It was an open-ended invitation, with no particular ideas about what might happen, or even of future work together.

We ended up forming the Explorers Club and spent the next two years travelling all over Boston, laying down vinyl marking tape and temporarily restructuring the city with fluorescent orange lines. On one of our first outings, it became clear that we needed an identity. Stefano’s days are tightly scheduled with structured activities. So how to describe this activity? Stefano solved the problem by naming us the Explorers Club. In naming the activity, he also named us. We were not teachers and students or therapists and patients, but club members. And, as club members, we were all in it together.

GB: What were the club’s principal activities?

WJ: To explore. To lay down lines. To go to new locations. To visit every station in the subway system.

GB: Why did you decide to expand the Explorers Club into Autism Studio, formalizing its methods and involving more people?

WJ: With the Explorers Club, I was not interested in the pathology or condition of autism *per se*, but with the experience of being with a particular person (Stefano) and his particular way of organizing and experiencing the world. In thinking about the class, I wanted to see what could happen if a group of neurotypical students could re-imagine the physical world from the perspective of someone with autism. (Neurotypical is a term coined in the autistic community for someone not on the autism spectrum.) I was convinced that the exchange could be mutually beneficial and that new ways of thinking about space and communication might evolve from it.

GB: How was the experience of teaching the Autism Studio “method?” For two consecutive years, you led Autism Studio as a semester-long course in MIT’s Visual Arts Program. How did it differ from one year to the next?

WJ: In its first year, the class used autism as a point of departure for a broader investigation into the nature of experience. One student, Jackie Lee, worked with Clovis Bockstaele, a young, non-verbal autistic man. Their work culminated in a birthday party, where Jackie and Clovis tore paper together as an act of communication and fraternity. It was a beautiful project. In its second year, I built collaboration into the structure of the class and all the students worked with autistic partners.

GB: The Explorers Club provides a model for collaboration between artists and non-artists—people with different interests, skill sets, and desired outcomes. Do you view this collaboration as a form of service? And does service imply a kind of longevity? How did this translate in Autism Studio, where students who participated in projects and semesters ultimately framed the duration of the interactions?

WJ: I hesitate to call what we do “service.” Maybe “group works” is a better fit. Service implies a *doing for*, and doesn’t acknowledge the two-way aspect of the relationship. But to address your second question, I don’t think Autism Studio’s group works necessarily require longevity. A short-term collaboration can be as fruitful as a long-term one. For most of the students, their involvement was determined by the length of the semester. For others, the work has continued. Jackie, Gershon Dublon and Theo Issaias, for example, have all continued to be involved with Clovis and his family, two, three years after the studio formally ended.

GB: How did you approach the families of Stefano, James Crawley, and Clovis?

WJ: I had known Stefano and Clovis’s families for a while, and recently met James’s mother. By way of introduction, I invited the boys’ parents to meet with the class. During that initial visit, students and families paired themselves up. The families were an important part of the collaborations. We depended on them for guidance and interpretation.

GB: In the iteration of Autism Studio that I participated in, we talked about not wanting to be another form of therapy or to offer some kind of cure. We didn’t imagine that we were experts on anything, and we weren’t necessarily interested in approaching autism as a pathology. Can you talk about how you conceptualized the activities of Autism Studio participants in contrast to the therapeutic routines of the families we worked with?

WJ: Many autistic children have highly structured lives shaped in part by a cohort of therapists, teachers, and other specialists. The participants in Autism Studio met on a regular basis, becoming part of each family’s routine, at least for the duration of the semester. I never had ambitions, however, for the activities of the studio to be part of a larger therapeutic regime. I know that you, Gina, were interested in a particular therapy in which James was involved and incorporated aspects of it into your project. So that was an interesting crossover, though your *use* of that information had more to do with your own thinking and process than with supplementing James’s therapy.

GB: When you presented on Explorers Club in the early days, I recall you saying something along the lines of sometimes you and Addy would plan activities that would play off of or exaggerate Stefano’s “autisms.” Can you expand on that (or correct me if I didn’t remember it right)?

WJ: I think what’s important is that we weren’t approaching the Explorers Club as an experiment in behaviour modification. We weren’t trying make Stefano appear “less autistic,” but were interested in engaging with him as he was, with all his particular abilities and interests.

GB: I guess what I meant was that you didn’t see any of Stefano’s behaviour as “symptoms” of his autism, as in something to be expunged. Instead you wanted to run with him, just trust and honour his ways of seeing and doing—even, or especially, when they diverged from the norm.

Haha’s project *Flood* has garnered renewed attention in recent years. Perhaps this is because of an interest in service as a model for politically engaged art practices and the desire for models of locally based artworks that stand in stark contrast to the itinerant “art star” production encouraged by biennial culture. Can you talk about the relationship between Haha’s work and Autism Studio?

WJ: With both *Flood* and the projects of Autism Studio there is a messiness of identity. Is it therapy? Education? Social work? In both cases, the answer is none of the above, and a very little bit of all of the above. Mostly, however, it is art. With *Flood*, we weren’t trying to change public policy or discover a cure. We were creating an indoor garden that provided clean greens to a limited number of people with HIV/AIDS. The project was different things to different people. For some it was a source of greens, for others it was a place to garden, socialize, or hang out. For others it was a curiosity: a patch of green in the middle of a grey Chicago winter.

The focus on collaboration as a means of research is also central to both Autism Studio and Haha’s working process. It isn’t that two (or four) heads are better than one; it is more about what happens when people with different backgrounds



Wendy Jacob with
Stefano Micali.
Explorers Club.
2009. Image
courtesy of the
artist.



and experiences get together for a common purpose. It’s an inefficient process that involves lots of talk, following meanders, and getting lost.

In describing Haha’s work, we always end up telling stories. Each project comes out of a particular place and set of circumstances, so we tell stories to establish the context. Maybe the projects of Autism Studio are the same, and would be better communicated as a collection of short stories—each story being about a relationship and what it produced.

GB: I keep coming back to your use of the word *club*. When I decided to become involved in Autism Studio, this word was the thing that gave me an entry point to the whole project—and made me feel like it was something I could get involved in. The word club makes it really clear that the project can’t be reduced to providing a service. And it’s not about collaboration because collaboration implies that everybody involved has a shared goal, or they are invested in a similar way, which just isn’t true with Autism Studio projects or for Explorers Club. I wonder if what you’re saying about stories is something particular to the relational structure of the club. In the context of artists working at MIT, describing our work as forms of collaboration with people who aren’t artists is a kind of default—that is problematic in its own ways, and has a real currency in the art world.

WJ: It’s now accepted practice for artists to collaborate, both with other artists and with experts from other fields. It’s easy for me to describe my work with an acoustical engineer, or a tightrope walker. It’s much harder to describe my work with an autistic boy.

GB: Part of why it’s easier is that the professional identity of an engineer is *not* contested in the same way as identifying—or being identified—as disabled. That’s at the heart of Explorers Club and Autism Studio’s politics—not pathologizing people who are part of the club as being disabled.

WJ: At the same time—and this is why there has to be a story—I just can’t describe the person I am working with as a fourth-grader who has expertise in subways, maps, and directions, and leave it at that. Stefano’s expertise is only part of the story and doesn’t account for why we spent two years carving up the city with orange lines.

GB: That also really points to the way that Autism Studio is embedded in the world of ability-disability activism, because it participates in redefining how people are on a spectrum of abilities. And because as a culture we don’t have the right terminology to be attentive to the range of abilities that people live with, there is no easy shorthand, and so Autism Studio constantly has to do that work.

WJ: And therefore the stories!

GB: How did the Explorers Club come up with its shared goals? For instance, you decided that you wanted to conquer open space, which was something that Stefano didn’t like.

WJ: When we first started, we were in my studio, and it was just Stefano, Stefano’s mother, and me working with masking tape. We were using tape to create spaces—running it across the room, sticking it to walls and itself—and really quickly it got interesting. Stefano carved up the space into rooms and then into smaller and smaller rooms, and then he took off his shoes and went to the smallest room of all. His mother said that taking off his shoes was significant because that’s what he does when he gets home. “Wow!” I thought, “What are we going to do next week?” That was when dividing up spaces, especially big spaces, became a club goal. We spent the next two weeks subdividing MIT gyms with masking tape. After that, we went outdoors. At first Stefano was tentative, and would slowly venture out into open spaces, unrolling the

tape as he went. Later, he became much bolder and confident. Addy had a huge impact on what we did. She had spent a summer at Camphill in Scotland, (a community for people with special needs), and when she came to MIT she worked with an autistic boy as his babysitter. So when she joined Stefano and me, she was comfortable with Stefano’s autism and wasn’t at all afraid to push his limits. When club activities started to feel a little ho-hum, Addy would say, “Well, Stefano doesn’t like plazas, so let’s go there.” And that’s how it went. As soon as things started to feel predictable or easy, we would go for the thing that made it uncomfortable, and explore that. But identifying what was uncomfortable was coupled with exploring things that Stefano really liked and had an expertise in, like the subway system.

GB: Even when the club *did* have a common goal, each member still had a different stake in accomplishing it. In the Explorers Club, you were the resident artist. You were the one who was in charge of caring about the art part. So, for example, you thought of the exercise with tape as drawing, whereas the other members of the club might not have.

WJ: I’m not sure if Stefano thought of what he was doing as drawing, but I did. There were lots of things going on. Stefano was laying down tape and trying to get to the next train station, I was trying to document the drawing, and Addy was engaging with Stefano and reeling in the yards and yards of tape. We were each on our own track.

It’s like preschool kids on a playground. It sometimes looks like they’re playing together, but in fact they’re playing side by side. That’s how I felt a lot of the time, like we were playing side by side.

GB: Now that you’ve had some time to reflect on Explorers Club, what do you think of the outcomes of it? Is it important to present this work as art, and if so, how do you do that?

WJ: The work could have just stayed as this weekly activity, but I wanted it to have an audience. I decided to make a book where a line would run through all the pages, through different locations and years. Once I made this decision, I started taking pictures differently than I had before, because now the line had to run across the frame horizontally in order to connect with the line on the next page. So then I really shifted gears and focused on framing the line. And Stefano was such an expert at the line by then, he didn’t need any encouragement—he would just grab the roll of tape and go. And I would run along side, and take pictures as fast as I could. We both just did our thing. At that point I almost began to think of him as my expert studio assistant. One day, Stefano couldn’t come. I remember it was a sunny day, which was rare that spring, so I asked one of the students I was working with if she could put down the line for me instead. But it didn’t work. Without Stefano doing his job, we felt self-conscious. Also I was taking much too long to frame each shot, so the pictures looked posed and flat.

GB: Yeah, which is what makes me skeptical about this whole ‘parallel play’ thing. I don’t buy it. Although it might seem like you’re each doing your own thing, you’re totally affecting each other. Even if you’re just in the same room with somebody, and you’re not talking to each other, and you’re just doing your own thing, you still *totally* affect each other. Just the fact of being in the presence of another being—even if it’s not another person, even if it’s a cat, or a plant—there’s a really important kind of solidarity at the most basic level.

WJ: Synergy?

GB: Yeah, I think there’s more than that. I think there’s a kind of synergy. And I think that’s exactly what you just described.

WJ: I agree. I also think Stefano liked an audience; the more guest explorers we’d have along, the more “on” he’d be. Some-

Wendy Jacob with Stefano Micali. Explorer’s Club. 2009. Image courtesy of the artist.



times I’d invite other people to come photograph, or at one point we had two filmmakers who were doing a documentary about the club. Stefano just ate it up and, literally, ran with the line, something he wouldn’t have done before.

Wendy Jacob with Stefano Micali. Explorer’s Club. 2009. Image courtesy of the artist.

GB: The line is a great image, not just for Explorers Club, but to conceptualize on a larger scale your work as an artist, over the last three years or more. You keep picking up this thread, or tape line, and pulling it into the next project. Explorers Club runs into Autism Studio. And then it’s been picked up again by Gershon and Jackie, who are still working with Clovis, and now you’ve ran with it to Edinburgh. So let’s keep following the line and talk about a couple of other projects. In your response to my question about the relationship between Haha’s work and Autism Studio, you began by elaborating on the focus on collaboration, which provides a structure for research. Something emerging through this conversation are the really crucial distinctions between collaboration, the club, and service. The *Squeeze Chair*, which you created with Temple Grandin, was a collaborative project. Can you describe the structure of your collaboration with Grandin?

WJ: I was interested in this squeeze machine that Temple had made for herself, and wanted to find out more about it. I had a hunch that Temple had the key to something that I wanted to know. It wasn’t any clearer than that. I wrote to her asking if I could visit and see the squeeze machine, and she invited me out to Fort Collins [Colorado] where she lives. Experiencing the machine was a little intimidating because it’s this huge contraption that you enter on hands and knees. I talked to Temple about making a squeeze device that was less intimidating and embodied comfort. We went out for dinner—I think we had beef tacos, which was funny to me because her profession is designing systems for the meat packing industry—and I talked about wanting to place the squeeze in a chair. Temple’s an engineer, so we just started drawing ideas right there in the restaurant. And that was the extent of our collaboration. It was really just an intensive, two-day visit. After that, I fabricated several squeeze chairs and showed two chairs and six drawings Temple had made of cattle-handling facilities in an exhibition that traveled around the country. At each location, Temple and I would come to the opening for a public talk. So, for a period of about two years, we saw each other every four to six months at these openings. We had a gig going. But the real work together happened in those two days in Colorado.

GB: More recently, you’ve been working with Alison Sterling from Artlink. Can you describe that?

WJ: Alison runs this great program in Edinburgh where people with profound cognitive disabilities work with artists. Steve Hollingsworth, for example, organized the Feral Choir v. Feral Orchestra, a kind of electronica band. He’s working with people who don’t necessarily have a lot of manual dexterity, but who do have rhythm that they express through flapping or rocking. With these instruments that Steve and his partner invent, the Feral Orchestra can create all of these amazing percussive sounds. They bring in lights and costumes, and it’s this big production. At the end of the session, they put it all away, and the room turns back into an institutional space.

GB: It strikes me that the public aspect of Autism Studio links right back up to the first thing you brought up about stories. At the heart of all the projects is the interaction between the members of the club. But it’s not *just* about that. There’s a larger aesthetic project, but there’s also a larger political project, and both of those are served by the function of them being public. Because that’s about making sure that people outside of the club hear those stories and can be witness to its aesthetic outcomes. I think that’s part of how the clubs manage to avoid having their activities being reduced to a service, which is something that is offered in a capitalist economy in lieu of a product—there’s labour involved, and so it has to produce either a product or a service—and calling it a “service” reduces it to that logic.

continued on pg. 27

H: Shhh...We're in a museum. *(Whispering)*

SS: Why do you think people are quiet in a museum?

J: To admire.

SS: What makes artwork interesting for you?

H: I like it 'cause it's weird. If it's weird and you could do some-thing on it.

SS: If you could play on it?

H: That would be awesome.

Comfortable Art

J: What's up with these things? This doesn't look so com-fortable *(sits in chair)*. Arrgh! Not very comfortable, this thing is kind of sharp.

SS: It was designed by Frank Gehry...

J: Does he work for art or comfort?

SS: What's more important?

J: Comfort.

H: What if it was comfortable art that you could sit on? And then what if it's art and a chair, and there's a big chair and I'm like: "Oh, this one's comfy!" But someone says, "You're not allowed to sit on it because it's art." "It's a chair..." It's like: "It's art." "It's a Chair!"

J: Did you know that one time I was on a couch and then I fell asleep, and I fell off and went headfirst!

Jonah Bachtiar, 10, is a grade 4 student and enjoys playing baseball and hanging out with friends in his parents' base-ment.
Hannah Allinicy, 11, likes to draw. Her favourite space in her house is her room.
A special thanks to Kristina Liubanovic for her help with this article.

Moore Gallery

J: This is creepy.

SS: Ha ha. What's creepy about it?

J: I feel like it's monsters trying to kill me—and then use me in some science experiment.

SS: What do you think art is? How would you define it?

H: Anything.

J: Undescribable.

SS: What do you think of abstract art?

J: You mean that stuff that kind of looks like what you did in kindergarten?

H: They think they do whatever they want, and then when they're done they try to fig-ure out what it is. At the end.

SS: After they finish.

H: They're like, "Okay, now I have to figure it out. Umm...maybe that could be—wait! No, I don't think so...I don't know."

J: Are those drums? Boom-Boom, ba-doom. Boom Boom, ba-doom.

Weird Art

SS: What would make this space more fun?

H: Colour.

J: I wish you could yell.



£ fig. 2

SS: No way, really?

J: Don't you love bubble wrap dances?

SS: Yes! How about dancing with other materials like straws, all over the ground?

J: You're trying to use it and then you slip extra. So if you want to do a slipping move, don't even try...it will do it for you!

AGO Promenade (Galleria Italia)

SS: What do you think about this space?

H: I think they copied the ROM [Royal Ontario Museum]. The ROM looks kind of similar, but it's smaller. They used the screen-thing. I don't like the ROM thing.

J: I feel queasy...how is this possible? It's creat-ing weight on one side but not on the other and it's still not falling. You just want a drama-tic effect *(pretends he knows someone outside on the street and waves)*, you want to be recognized but you don't realize that this is a window. And you jump off: "I forgot my parachute!"

H: There's a thing in front of it so it doesn't work. *(Points to the structure)* They shouldn't have put that there, it doesn't make the illusion.

Henry

SS: What's the most fun material to use?

H: I want it to be Bubbles.

J: Foam, Styrofoam... Did you know bubble wrap was originally created as wallpaper?



J: Imagine if that whole thing turned into a button *(points to concrete pool in park)*, like, a pressing-button.

SS: ...And would you need a lot of people to press it?

J: No, it'd be light.

H: You have to have a big red button, okay, a big tall button: Jump on it and some ran-dom thing pops up!

SS: Because you want something surpris-ing?

J: Yeah.

H: And something to jump on.

J: I like jumping.

SS: What else would you change in your schools?

J: Hallways...

H: They're so bor-ing. Hallways are so boring; they are so straight. Lines are boring.

J: In schools you would get your own tubing-raft-thing, and it has a floor so that water didn't get through and then you walk out of the classroom and you're in the water and you get to ride until your next class.

Dogs

SS: How do you imagine a space de-signed for dogs?

J: Dogs, they get their own private room, not just a small, dumb doghouse. *(Pets a dog in the park)*

H: They should get their own bed...

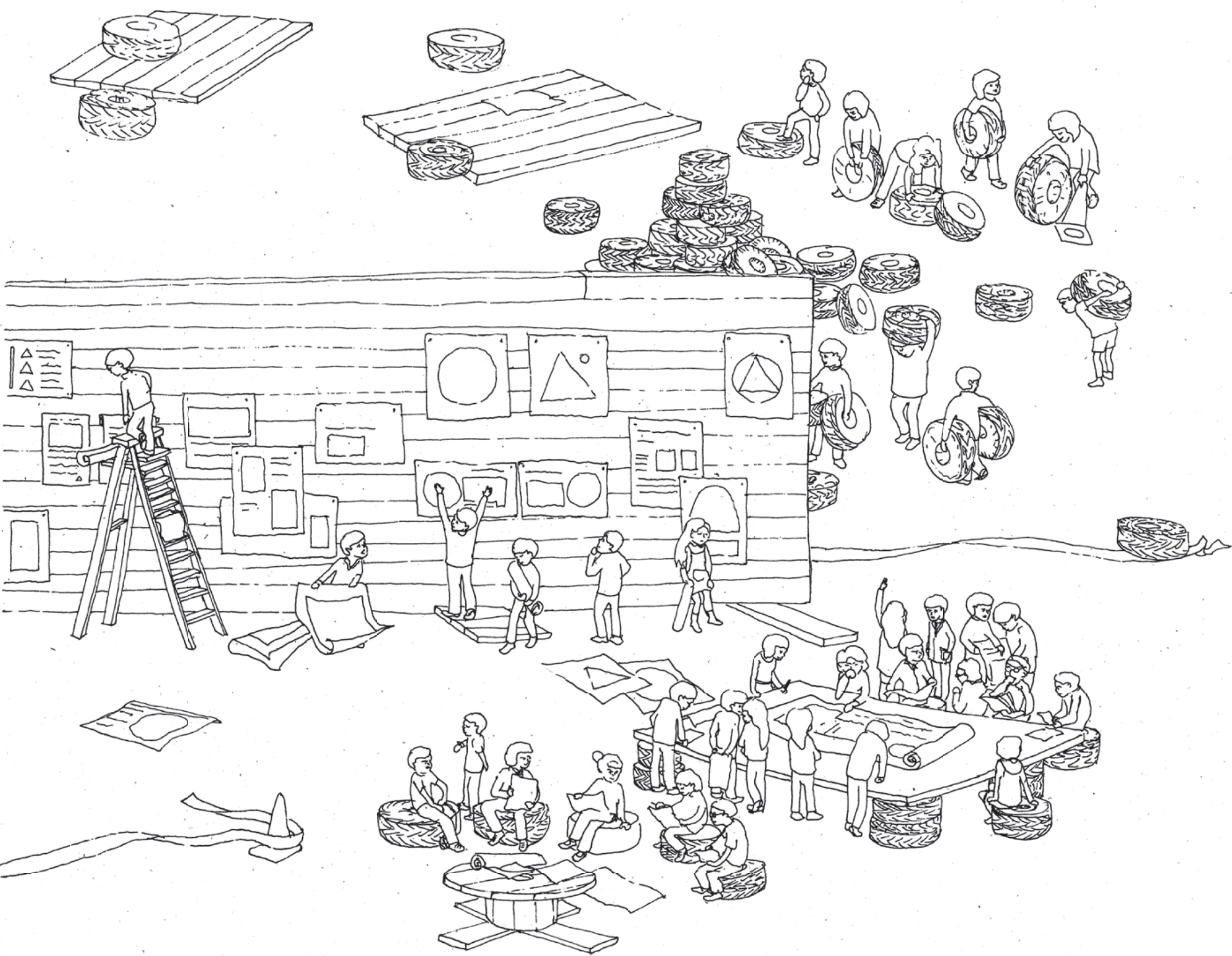
J: ...They should get their own room.

SS: Where, in a house?

H: ...And there's a dog marathon where they have to run and then they jump and at the end they have a

Review

Kids on Buildings



Mona Fawaz is an associate professor in the Masters in Urban Planning and Policy/Masters in Urban Design at the American University of Beirut. I had the pleasure of interviewing her about her research on Hezbollah's post-war reconstruction plan, which was quickly put into place after the Israeli bombing of Lebanon in 2006. This interview focuses on the site of Haret Hreik, a suburb in the south of Beirut that was completely destroyed during the bombardment. I was interested in knowing more about her intervention as a practicing urban planner, and how it coincided with the emergence of Hezbollah's new role as urban planner during the reconstruction period specific to Haret Hreik.

Nasrin Himada: Why did you choose Haret Hreik as a case study? Describe exactly where Haret Hreik is in Lebanon and how it was affected by the Israeli attack in July 2006?

Mona Fawaz: Haret Hreik is located south of the municipal borders of Beirut, within what is generally described as the “Greater Beirut Area” (fig. 1). Until the 1960s, Haret Hreik was an old Christian village, an independent municipal district on the southwestern coast of Beirut that included orange groves and a handful of individual houses. Several factors contributed to the densification of the neighbourhood and its transformation into a dense residential and commercial hub of the Lebanese capital city: rural migration fueled by unequal national rural/urban development as of the 1950s; the repeated Israeli incursions into/invasions of South Lebanon as of the 1960s, which precipitated outmigration towards the city; and the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). By the 1970s, Beirut had grown beyond its municipal borders to include many villages and areas within a continuous metropolitan zone. Haret Hreik is one of those.

Within Greater Beirut, Haret Hreik is part of Dahiyah, the southern suburb of Beirut widely identified as the Shiite (Muslim) territory of the city, an area largely controlled by the two Shiite political groups, Amal and, especially, Hezbollah. In many ways, Haret Hreik was the core of this Shiite suburb until its demolition in 2006. It was the richest and most established neighbourhood in Dahiyah, the seat of many branches for local and international banks, several widely attended private schools, and vibrant commercial activities (fig. 2). Haret Hreik was also central to Dahiyah until 2006 because the neighbourhood acted as the central seat of Hezbollah in Lebanon: it housed the Party's political headquarters (*majlis al shoura*) in its security zone (*al murabba' al amni*), as well as the headquarters of most of the NGOs through which the Party organizes the provision of social and infrastructure services for its constituencies.

On the last days of the 33-Day War on Lebanon, which Israel waged in July and August 2006, the Israeli army implemented several air raids on Haret Hreik. It was a blitz that wreaked havoc in the neighbourhood. It destroyed an estimated 260 multi-story apartment buildings and severely damaged hundreds of others. Ten- to twelve-story apartment buildings were turned into craters, infrastructure networks were annihilated, and street boundaries became unidentifiable (figs. 3 and 4).

The Israeli blitz on Haret Hreik carried a strong symbolic dimension. Israel flattened this neighbourhood as an act of revenge against the Party it was unable to defeat militarily; the Israeli government was ordering the erasure of what it had identified as the spatial body-politic of Hezbollah. In practice, however, the Israeli army turned a lifetime of investments into rubble, destroying thousands of family homes and businesses. In that sense, Israel collectively punished thousands of urban dwellers and reduced their position to the uni-dimensional role of supporters of the Party. The dwellers were being chastised for an assumed political belief—their support for Hezbollah, a militant Islamic movement. One can dwell on the fact that this is a violation of the Geneva convention and many other international treaties on war and peace, but I think that for many people in the Arab Middle-East, especially in Lebanon and Palestine, talking about international rights has become a dull exercise in which we denounce one Israeli violation after another, and we decry the double standards of the international community to no avail.

I chose Haret Hreik as a site for this research because of the urgent reaction I had back in 2006 in response to the destruction of one of the neighbourhoods that was hit worst in my city. While I recognized Haret Hreik as the site that housed the headquarters of Hezbollah, I also understood it as a social and economic centre of Beirut. As a practicing urban planner in this city, it seemed instinctive that I would get involved in post-war reconstruction and contribute to the city in this manner. This was not only my position, but also that of several of my colleagues at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Eventually, the conditions of our involvement were more complicated than we had anticipated. To be honest, I wrote and commented on the post-war reconstruction of this neighbourhood more than I was able to influence its rebuilding.

NH: At the time of reconstruction, what was Hezbollah's position in the Lebanese government, and how did this affect the way it manoeuvred the reconstruction effort? How was this time significant for Hezbollah in terms of gaining momentum and power in Lebanese politics? Were other government parties involved in similar relief efforts for other communities in and around Beirut, like Hezbollah? Were some involved in reconstruction plans and providing relief post-destruction? If so, in what way is Hezbollah different from the rest of the parties, and how did it distance itself from the Lebanese state? How was Hezbollah, at the time, a 'non-state' actor?

MF: If you go back to the summer of 2006, it is clear that Hezbollah was waging two survival wars in Lebanon, one locally with the national government and the other with Israel. At the time, a pro-western liberal coalition was in power. The prime minister at the time, Fouad al-Saniara, a former minister of

ezbollah's Urban Plan: An Interview with Mona Fawaz by Nasrin Himada

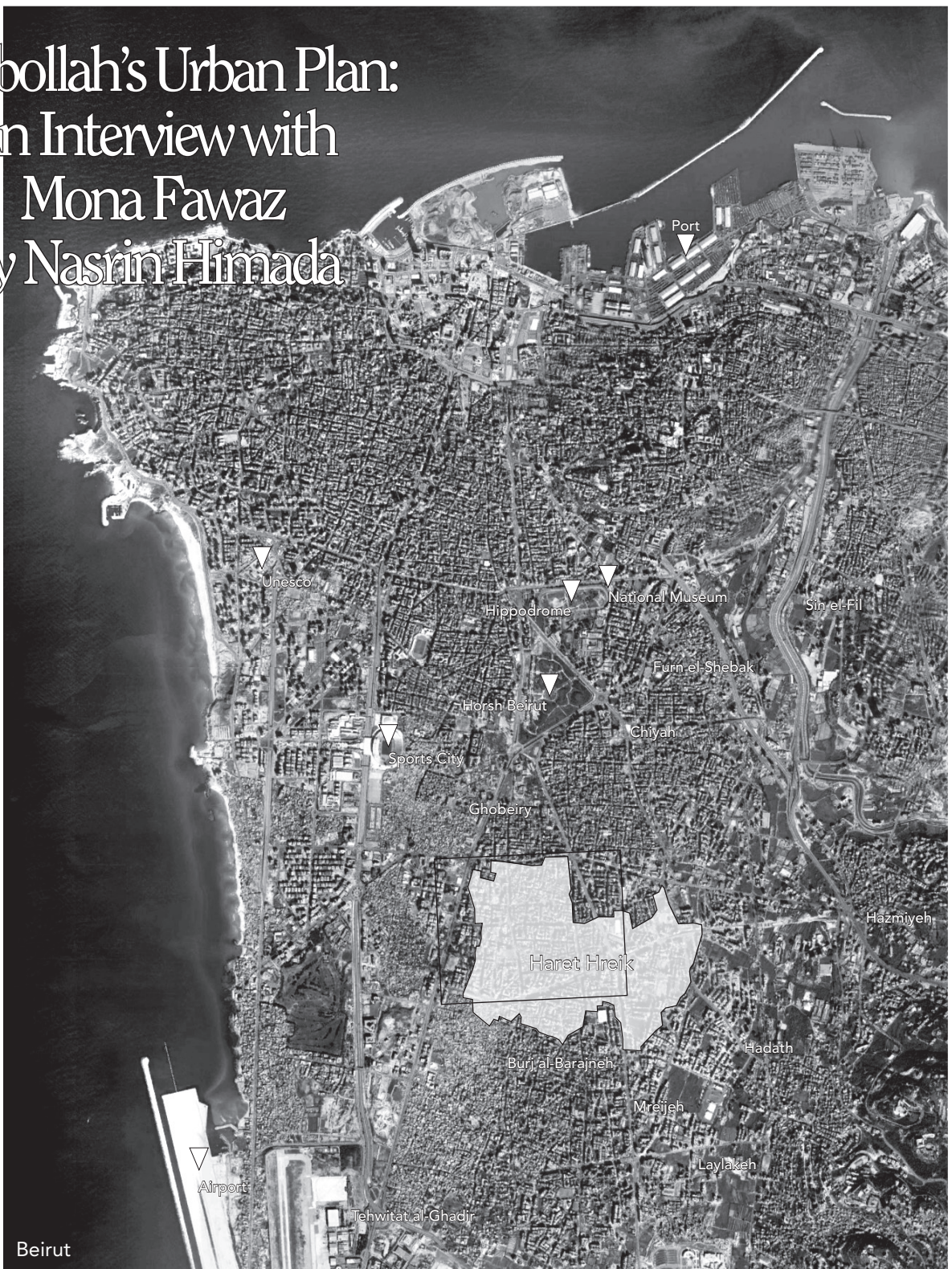


fig.1, CONTEXT
Haret Hreik in
Beirut. Base
map: Aerial view
of the larger
Beirut agglom-
eration, 2005.

fig.2, ANALYSIS

- | | |
|---|--|
|  | Public building |
|  | Popular landmark |
|  | Mosque |
|  | Husseinieh |
|  | Church |
|  | Hospital |
|  | Medical lab |
|  | Educational institution |
|  | Parking |
|  | Gas station |
|  | Bank |
|  | Playfields |
|  | Green areas in private properties |
|  | Empty lots, waqf, private and public properties |
|  | Lots currently used as surface level parking areas |
|  | Main commercial arteries |
|  | Municipal Boundary |
|  | Old residential fabric |
|  | Buildings demolished or to be demolished |



finance, was the head of the coalition. He is widely recognized for his role in implementing neoliberal economic policies in the country. If you look at the press during this period, Hezbollah repeatedly accused the national government of plotting its demilitarization, an option that it denounced as motivated by the interests of the Israeli and United States governments rather than national security. I should say that the accusations towards cabinet members negotiating with the U.S. for the demilitarization of Hezbollah have been widely verified through documents that were revealed by Wikileaks over the last two months in the local media. There are clear reports indicating that Lebanese government officials saw the Israeli war on Lebanon as an opportunity to get rid of Hezbollah. Hezbollah saw the reconstruction effort as a way to retaliate—as a force in resistance to both the Israeli state and the national government.

The post-2006 war reconstruction effort was at the heart of this standoff between Hezbollah (and its allies) and the national government. Hezbollah strongly believed that members of the government were delaying reconstruction in order to agitate the dwellers, hoping they would later blame Hezbollah's military resistance for their homelessness. At the same time, al-Saniora, the prime minister, also placed the reconstruction effort at the heart of the standoff with Hezbollah. In several of his speeches, al-Saniora condemned the neighbourhood dwellers, identified as Hezbollah's constituency, for having built their houses “illegally,” and threatened them with delays in public compensation based on contested property and/or building status. These accusations were in reality exaggerations, but they illustrate the symbolic dimension of legality and how it can be manipulated to accept or contest the right of a certain class or religious group to be in a part of the city.

The main options offered through the Hezbollah reconstruction project in 2006 need to be analyzed in this context. Interviews we conducted with Hezbollah officials at the time revealed that most Party members were convinced that the less they involved the national government in the reconstruction, the more efficient it would be. They were concerned about the neighbourhood dwellers resettling elsewhere if reconstruction dragged on. Some evoked the experience of Elyssar, the public agency that was set up for the rehabilitation of the southern coast of Beirut. The project has been halted since 1996, trapped in political tensions, and they were wary that any negotiation with the national government would induce the same. As a result, Hezbollah limited its demands from the national government to two points: 1) mandatory payment of indemnities to those damaged by the war, and 2) a legal exemption that would allow dwellers to rebuild whatever apartments they had before the war, even if they are not in line with current zoning regulations and building laws. The legal exemption was not issued and a delegate of the Party is still in the process of working with parliamentary commissions to get it underway.

In 2007, Hezbollah decided to move ahead with reconstruction without building permits. As a powerful actor in the city with its own military power and popular support, Hezbollah is capable of defying the local police force and putting in place its own agency to organize the reconstruction process. It is important to note that no other individual or group can do the same without facing repercussions from the local authorities. In that sense, the absence of a legal

framework in which the post-war reconstruction can occur worked in favour of Hezbollah—in the post-war balance of power that provided the ground for reconstruction, the only way a neighbourhood dweller can rebuild his or her home is by delegating authority over the process to Hezbollah. By involving them in a legal battle over their property rights, the dwellers were put into a very difficult position by the national government. Hezbollah, on the other hand, was prepared to take full control of the reconstruction effort, and with its power was able to bypass this legal hurdle, which made delegation of the reconstruction to the Party the only option for dwellers to rebuild their homes.

I like your question about what type of actor Hezbollah is. Of course, Hezbollah is not a government actor in the sense that its cadres do not report to the national hierarchies, but rather to those of the Party. Yet, this divide is not as clear as it seems. In the summer of 2006, Hezbollah had three ministers in the national government and several deputies in parliament. In Haret Hreik, the vice president of the municipality was a member of the Party and the mayor was affiliated with another political party allied to

Hezbollah. A Hezbollah member was part of the national commission set-up by the prime minister to determine what compensation should be disbursed. Many of Hezbollah's allies at the time were also highly placed in the national government. In that sense, Hezbollah had the ability to influence the process of public decision-making, as well as to halt it.

NH: As you mention above, the highest authorities in the Hezbollah Party wanted to quickly return the displaced population back to Haret Hreik, in order to restore its previously consolidated territorial base. In order to do this without any state intervention, they made a request that the suburb be returned to its exact state prior to the Israeli attack on Lebanon. How did they go about doing this? And how did it then bypass legislation and other involvement from the state? How did this ensure their autonomy?

MF: Two critical decisions were made in November 2006 that would determine the outcome of the project. First, there was the decision that the Party would take charge of the reconstruction itself, that it would set up an independent agency (loosely affiliated with Jihad al-Bina', its state-recognized reconstruction arm) that would oversee the reconstruction process, defining the general framework and strategy, but also commissioning the design of individual buildings and overseeing their actual contracting and building. Second, the option to rebuild the neighbourhood largely as it had been before the war, meaning that every building and block will be rebuilt in the same volume and form that it had occupied in the pre-war era, sitting on the same lots, in the same places—even if it is widely recognized that the pre-war buildings suffered from severe deficiencies of natural lighting and cross-ventilation.

These decisions were geared toward reducing negotiations with public agencies and other actors, like the neighbourhood dwellers, who could delay the reconstruction project. Centralizing the reconstruction process in its hand allowed the Party to coordinate the entire reconstruction effort, and they became the ultimate decision-maker in all stages of the process. Rebuilding the site as it was before the war had the merit of eliminating a potentially lengthy phase of exploring design options, which would have to be discussed and agreed on with dwellers, and with public actors in planning and municipal agencies. It also reduced the demands placed on state planning agencies to a single, one-time exemption: the rebuilding of homes as they had been in the pre-war era.

The architectural plan was justified by emphasizing ‘the memory of place’ and ‘the people's attachment to particular elements of the built-environment.’ The preservation of ‘memory’ would justify rebuilding blocks otherwise in violation of building and zoning regulations, but also and more importantly, standards of architectural practice that secure natural lighting and cross-ventilation in buildings—meaning the quality of life.

The main actor sidelined in these decisions was the municipality of Haret Hreik, including its vice-president, despite the fact that he was, and is, an active member of the Party. At the time, the municipality had agreed with a group of us (professors from the AUB) that an international urban design competition would invite architects from all over the world to design for the post-war reconstruction of the neighbourhood.

Our role was to support the municipality by developing the competition brief in accordance with its strict guidelines (most notably the fact that despite the high population density in the area, no population displacements would be imposed) and overseeing the competition process. We also secured funding, essentially from the Order of Engineers and Architects, and the Syndicate of Architects and Engineers in Beirut, which monitor the practice of architecture and engineering in most of the country.

In October 2006, the municipal council voted to support the competition. Knowing that such an option would only be feasible if the Party approved it, we had also presented our proposal with several influential members of its cadres—to mixed responses but generally positive feedback. However, things did not turn out as we had planned. In December 2006, we were ordered, along with the municipality, to halt our efforts to organize the competition because the Party was in the process of establishing a private agency to conduct the reconstruction process. At this time, the Party announced its decision to rebuild the neighbourhood as it had been. A community meeting was organized and dwellers were encouraged to sign the official delegation forms to Hezbollah.

NH: Can you elaborate on the Party's restrictions on the possible reconstruction schemes, the confines, and the priorities imposed on the eight handpicked architects that were hired to re-build the neighbourhood? Or, is this what was discussed in “closed-door meetings?” When you were doing this research, did members of the community know or were they aware of these plans? Was there any effort to challenge it on behalf of the people of Haret Hreik?

MF: Wa'd [Hezbollah's private development agency] claims that the project is participative, stemming from the will of the people. This is one of the main refrains that you hear about Wa'd among Party officials and project participants. Party members refer to the community meeting I described above as a participatory event during which they were asked by dwellers to take charge of the reconstruction process. This is factually incorrect. When the community meeting was held, the decision to rebuild the neighbourhood as it had been was already made at the highest political level and behind closed doors. At the community meeting, the dwellers were given forms to sign, through which they would legally delegate the responsibility for reconstruction to the Party. I truly think that many of these Hezbollah agents thought they were acting in the interest of the neighbourhood dwellers when they prioritized efficiency and speed. I am not convinced that the dwellers were in line with



fig. 3



fig. 4

this idea. In my interviews with dwellers, as with those conducted by one of my graduate students in September and October 2006, dwellers described green areas, open spaces, playgrounds, and a functioning public realm. They only began proposing neighbourhood improvements aligned with the Party's vision of modern building amenities once they were organized in building committees headed by Party representatives.

The architects delegated by the Party faced a few restrictions. Each lot in the neighbourhood was rebuilt separately, as a stand-alone unit. It was not possible to move blocks and/or individual buildings in ways that could improve the quality of streets and/or public services. Some of the basic rules of thumb that one can think of as an urban designer to improve the built fabric, such as moving high-rises to street corners that are naturally more lit, were not adopted. Again, you can see how the obsession with efficiency and rapid reconstruction trumps all other priorities. To introduce changes would require, on the one hand, a more elaborate legal framework for reconstruction that would be beyond the one-time exemption “to rebuild things as they had been.” On the other hand, changes in the design and layout of buildings would bring about more negotiations with the future dwellers/beneficiaries of the project, a prospect again likely to delay work.

The commission of architects delegated to develop a master plan for the area—if one can call this intervention a master plan—restricted its urban intervention options to street alignments and the design of a canopy on one of the main

Demolitions in Haret Hreik immediately after the Israeli raids in 2006

fig. 3
Credit: Abir Saksouk Sasso

fig. 4
Credit: Mona Harb

Haret Hreik in reconstruction 2010
credit: Abir Saksouk Sasso



Mona Fawaz and Nasrin Himada

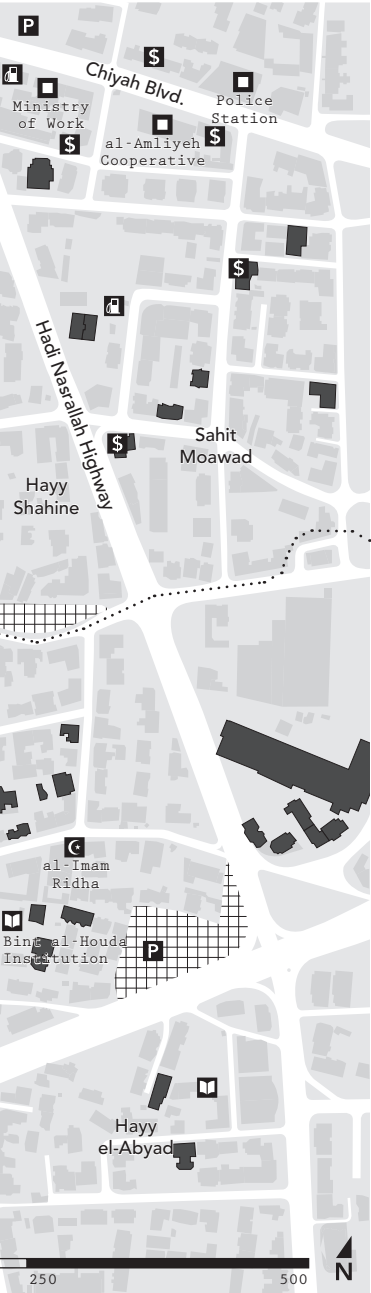
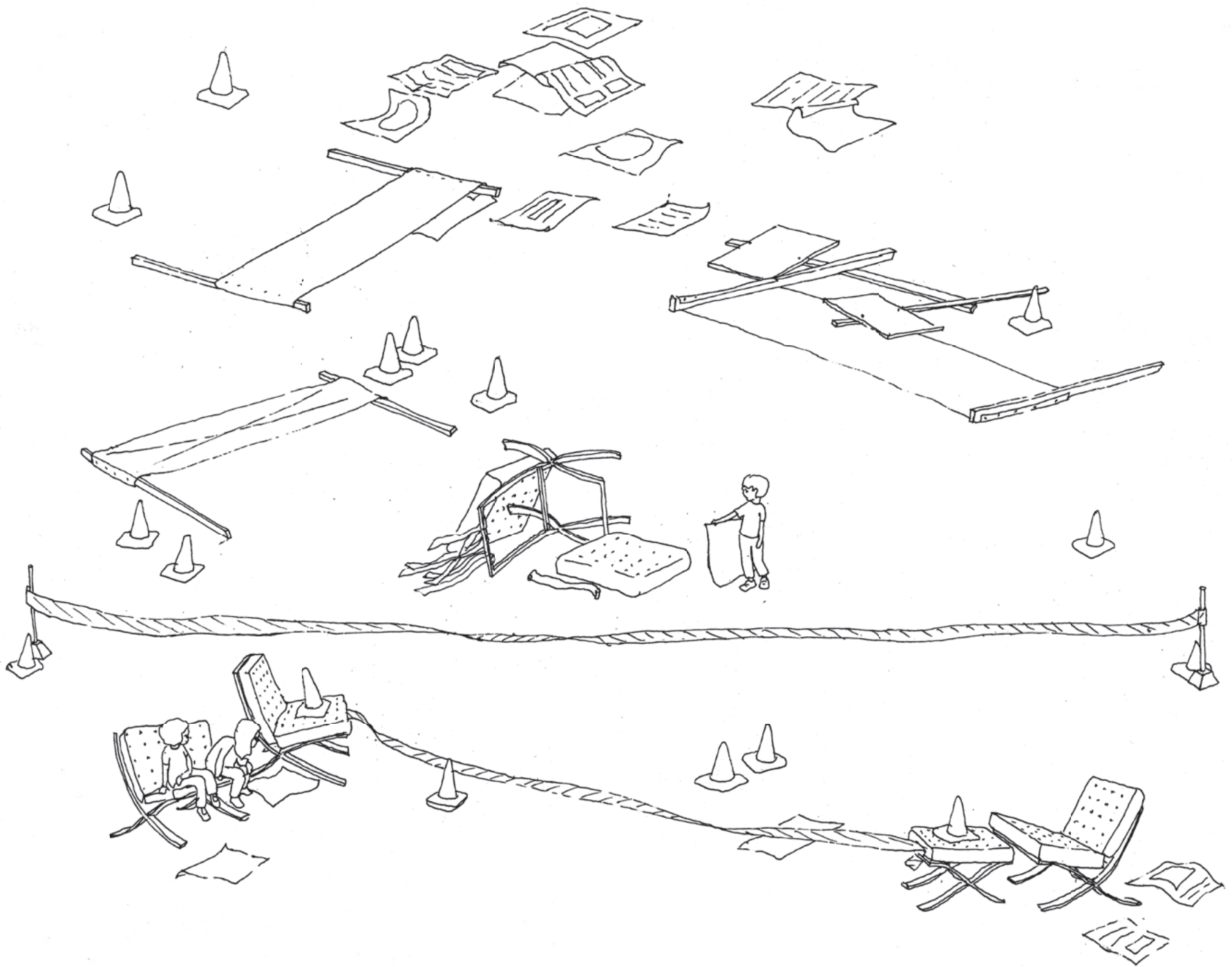


fig. 2



streets. These measures feel superficial in a dense residential fabric where dwellers suffered—according to interviews we conducted—from mould, lack of natural sunlight, and other severe challenges to their living conditions.

NH: In your article “Hezbollah as Urban Planner?,” you mention how the Hezbollah reconstruction plan comes close to radical planning in the sense that Wa’d “was designed in defiance of public regulations that would make on-site resettlement of all pre-war neighbourhood dwellers impossible.”¹ Out of this impetus for radical urban planning in a neighbourhood that was completely devastated, the dwellers gave permission for Hezbollah to take complete control of the planning process. But this became strategic on the part of Hezbollah and was used to gain ground and re-gain territory as well as a populace base in this neighbourhood. How do you see this change today? If they have maintained a hold on this territory then have they re-assessed their planning initiatives?

MF: In one of the most cited classifications of planning approaches, John Friedmann places planning along a spectrum that ranges from the conservative to radical.² One of the main ways in which the classification is conducted is to look at who hires the planner or whom the planner considers to be the “client” to whom s/he is accountable. Conservative planners are commissioned by state agents and conceive of their projects (e.g. master plans, etc.) as tools to help public administrators manage and plan the territories over which they have jurisdiction. Radical planners are commissioned by neighbourhood dwellers and respond to the latter, often in opposition to the state agency. If one takes this classification seriously, it is possible to describe the Wa’d project to be an attempt at radical planning, as some of my colleagues have, as it stands in the face of state regulations that prevent neighbourhood dwellers from rebuilding their homes. Instead, Wa’d empowers them to do it. In this context, however, to claim that the neighbourhood dwellers had an impetus for radical planning is a huge leap. If you want to assess the intentions of the dwellers or property claimants in 2006, I think you have to go back to the points raised above about both the legal framework and the political standoff between Hezbollah and the national government. I will do this exercise briefly because I think that it is already clear from the above discussion.

In the absence of a legal framework that recognizes the actual entitlement of property, claimants in the neighbourhood, property owners and/

or building committees cannot apply for a building permit and secure authorization from public authorities to contract out construction. So suppose that all the residents of a demolished building agree together on the conditions of reconstruction (commissioning an architect, a contractor, etc.), they cannot apply for a permit and would hence be stopped from rebuilding their houses by the local municipal police. The only actor capable of actually defying all local authorities is Hezbollah, who can commission reconstructions even if they are not sanctioned by national law. This was the scenario that took place. All discussion of whether dwellers were *inclined* or *not inclined* to delegate the reconstruction to the Party is speculation. Certain factors—such as the hike in the price of steel in 2007—may have precipitated this option and was likely the case. But it should be clear that dwellers didn’t have the choice. If they wanted to rebuild, they had to delegate the building to the Party.

But this is not the only reason why Hezbollah planning falls short of radical. Friedman, Leonie Sandercock, and others have also attempted to combine their efforts to stand against the state by way of a methodology of planning that is participative, and that challenges the traditional structures of power by enabling neighbourhood dwellers to take part in the decision-making process that determines the orientation of the project. In that sense, I argue that there is nothing radical about Hezbollah’s planning intervention.

To make matters worse, the dwellers were also not involved in the selection of the committee of architects who defined the scope of the intervention—they never met them. They also didn’t choose the architect who was appointed to build their houses. When they were finally invited to “participate” by expressing their opinions on its final layout and the selection of kitchen and bathroom tiles, they did so in the Wa’d offices—the Wa’d architects worked with them. Again, you can see that the dwellers had little control over the decision-making processes.

NH: As you mention, in practice there was no actual effort to re-build through community-oriented participation. Rather, there were a lot of restrictions and confines put on the architects hired, which left no space for any formal consultation initiated with local dwellers, any of their representatives, or the local municipality of Haret Hreik. In this planning process, the dwellers of Haret Hreik were not involved in any decision-making concerning, as you mention, the scale of the neighbourhood rehabilitation, the potential choices of rebuilding in the original form or in new ones, changes in layout, or any other design decisions. What

was introduced as a participatory-based building plan became strategic and opportunistic, and information was held back from the people whom they were building for.

In the end, a lot of what was being planned and the procedural aspects of reconstruction planning were kept in secret or away from the public eye and debate, and in this way became characteristic of comprehensive planning. Would you be able to elaborate further on what “comprehensive planning” means in this context? How did Hezbollah manage to be radical in its planning strategy, and comprehensive? Was the planning initiative directly used to uphold and further implement the political agenda of Hezbollah, especially during that time? And thus the secretive and private negotiations that were held between Hezbollah, the Wa’d, and the architects? Were there any cases where the dwellers actually did benefit from the plans? Did Hezbollah’s popularity grow from the re-construction effort, or were they solely focusing on the populace in Haret Hreik in order to re-claim their territorial base? And what exactly was their agenda at the time?

MF: There is no doubt that there are certain advantages to the reconstruction options that Hezbollah offered, and the Party needs to be credited for those. At the end of the day, in a country where population displacements are an easy currency, and where the landmark reconstruction initiative of the city’s historic core amounted to the dispossession and permanent eviction of thousands of claimants, to uphold on-site resettlement of pre-war dwellers is quite an achievement. By the fifth anniversary of the 2006 war this coming August, Hezbollah will also be able to show the national government—and the world—that it has rebuilt its “headquarters” entirely and resettled a large population, which is unprecedented in Lebanon. It is also true that the building standards it has adopted are well above those of the aging buildings that it replaced. In that sense, property owners in the neighbourhood have benefited from the reconstruction plan. This positive evaluation is strengthened when one places the reconstruction tasks in relation to the challenges faced by the Party throughout the past five years, especially in terms of local and international politics. (For example, the United States’ sanctions and bans on donating funds to Islamic charities have complicated the fundraising process for the Party and limited some of its revenue.)

But, to conclude, Hezbollah’s intervention in Haret Hreik was not a progressive form of planning.

There are many reasons why, to my mind, Hezbollah’s planning intervention falls largely into the liberal, market-driven, comprehensive, and traditional approach to planning. There is not sufficient space here to detail every element of the project, so I will stick to only a few points:

1. Who are the claimants to whom the Party’s reconstruction is responding?
From the beginning, the project claimants/beneficiaries are identified to be property owners in the area, those who can produce a substantiated claim for property ownership and whose entitlement is for a housing unit with the same qualifications (size and location) as before the war. These claimants were invited to the first—and only—community meeting that the Party organized in November 2006. They were reassured by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the Party’s secretary general, in one of his rare public appearances, that the neighbourhood will be rebuilt “*more beautiful than it had been.*”

To view Haret Hreik as only the sum of 200 private individual apartments is nonetheless quite problematic. After all, the neighbourhood was also, for example, the centre of economic and educational activities in the area. In that sense, many other dwellers and visitors should be entitled to bring claims and participate in articulating a communal vision for what the neighbourhood was and the potential it has.

2. What kind of input is solicited from the recognized claimants?

This is again a key issue in planning that is immediately derived from the first point. One of my graduate students, Nancy Hilal, conducted interviews with neighbourhood dwellers immediately after the end of the 2006 war, after Nasrallah’s speech. We asked dwellers about what kind of improvements they envisioned. Most answers revolved around the public realm, which was particularly dysfunctional at the time: better sidewalks, more open spaces, playgrounds, less [traffic] congestion. There was no mention of these elements in the reconstruction plans. In the end, they were invited to choose between types of bathroom and kitchen finishes, such as tiles and colour preferences. For Hezbollah planners, this was called the first participatory initiative in planning. But it hardly qualifies as such.

3. What volumes/forms does this reconstruction rebuild?

Those of us familiar with the history of spatial production in Haret Hreik recognize that it was largely developed by a handful of profit-driven developers. During the 1980s, large tracts of agricultural land were subdivided and sold to individual developers, each of whom built a multi-

story apartment building. This process largely disregarded (legal and non-legal) considerations for public space: no empty lots were allocated to the provision of open spaces or public facilities such as playgrounds, schools, or hospitals. In addition, developers built intensively, in disregard of the possible negative repercussions on the livability of the neighbourhood. (By livability, here, I mean the standards that architects normally consider when designing spaces that would provide natural light and ventilation, a level of privacy, etc.). In one extreme case, for example, two 12-story apartment buildings were built at a distance of 2.5 meters from each other, leaving no possibility for natural lighting and/or ventilation. More generally, the sun-pattern projections we developed of the neighbourhood showed that even within the main arteries, sunlight rarely penetrated at noon, even in the middle of the summer. These are not just criteria that architects use to define how the space should be, these are considerations that impact people's lives. For example, our interviews with dwellers indicated that they complained from food rotting quickly due to high levels of humidity. Dwellers also consistently talked of the importance of public spaces in the area and how much they longed for them. These considerations had no place in the profit-driven housing market of the neighbourhood in the 1980s and 1990s. They also have no place in this post-war reconstruction.

NH: As you point out, while Hezbollah's plan and strategy did not seek the accumulation of financial capital, it did, however, focus in on gaining a different source of accumulative power—"political capital." They provided a service as non-state actors and informed the planning process on a mass scale, which also, in effect, helped strengthen their position in Haret Hreik. Hezbollah, as a "non-market private planning" agency, did not prioritize capital profit, but rather re-built in order to sustain its political hold on areas that they have historically been popular in. It seems that in your article both capital profit and political profit are similarly analyzed, where what is at stake in both cases is the further alienation from the urban planning process. But can you further explain how political accumulation can also be different? How is a political or religious

agenda different from a capital one when it comes to urban planning practice? Where do you see Hezbollah falling on the spectrum of political economy today? Are their plans not driven by capital profit?

MF: When I think about how the production of space is influenced by the strategy of its producers, I am thinking again with Henri Lefebvre.³ My main concern is that in both cases, the production of space is obeying a particularly powerful interest, and that it is therefore bending to that interest at the expense of other forces which are also trying to produce the space. Spaces produced by powerful capitalist forces were denounced by Lefebvre as abstract spaces, where it is particularly difficult for users to inscribe aspirations, dreams, emotions, memories, etc. A look at the post-war reconstruction of the historic core of the city in the hands of the private development company Solidere provides a good example of this process of abstraction. The historic heritage of the city was turned into a commodity, easy to navigate for a community of high-class Lebanese and regional users accommodated to the luxuries of western-style malls and restaurants. The city's historic *souks*, or markets, were transformed into a western-style high-end mall—designed by a signature architect—where global franchises like H&M are operating. There is, of course, a huge difference between this form of abstract space and the one produced by Wa'd, where the ultimate users of the space are those dwellers who were evicted in 2006. Yet, when one looks at the process by which Wa'd designed, there are very few possibilities for dwellers to reclaim, imagine, or represent the spaces where they had lived. A critical analysis of the discourses of the project's planners shows that when they describe reconstruction, they are repeatedly referring to sheer physical volumes, specific property rights that translate into the tabulation of exact areas that need to be reproduced. Space, in that sense, is again reduced to abstract volumes. The importance of those volumes, however, stems from a different rationale, one that is rebuilding for a family of five or six who plan to "go back" to the neighbourhood. In this process, these dwellers are themselves conceived of as "supporters of the Party" who are coming back to reaffirm the territorial base of Hezbollah. In Haret Hreik, Hezbollah wants to maintain and consolidate its

space as much as it can. It has prevented people from leaving and has invested the compensation money elsewhere. However, today you see many property owners selling back their apartments and choosing to move elsewhere. I think, in this way, the popular base will change.

NH: Hezbollah strengthened its credibility as service-provider, which further gave strength to what you refer to in your article as a "supra-national Islamic political project."⁴ If Hezbollah's planning initiative is deeply embedded in the "local way of doing things," in the context of a dysfunctional and corrupt political system, how then do you see members of communities actually participating or strategizing with planners over how they want to live, and how as a planner do you ensure that livable standards are put into place?

Also, if Hezbollah is driven by political profit, which informs its urban planning strategy, then is there a way to intercept their agenda from within their own community? Are there non-state actors working on the ground that actually do take into consideration the opinions and needs of the dwellers? How do you see yourself, as an urban planner, taking a position in this regard?

MF: I don't think it's possible to paint things in black and white. There are clear political motivations in the decisions taken by Hezbollah in this reconstruction, but these decisions don't entirely contradict those of the dwellers. I am confident that many dwellers would have prioritized the prompt reconstruction as much as the Party did. There were also speculations at the time that the neighbourhood, which is very close to the international airport, would be very attractive to investors. Some compared this time to the post-war reconstruction of downtown Beirut (by Solidere) in which property titles were turned into shares in a large investment company, and [owners] lost their right and ability to determine what will happen to their property and/or assets in the city's historical core. Instead, it was turned into a high-end exclusive commercial and residential district restricted in its uses to the richest social classes of the region. One merit that Hezbollah's plan certainly has is to

have prevented such a scenario and to have helped the on-site resettlement of many middle- and low-income dwellers who wanted to come back to their neighbourhood.

As I explained above, the decisions of the Party nonetheless do not entirely coincide with the interests of the dwellers. Our field interviews showed dwellers and local public (municipal) actors interested in improving the public spaces of the neighbourhood, for example, in investing in its public infrastructure to respond to the demand for greener, more pedestrian-friendly routes. In January 2007, we organized an urban design workshop at AUB, and we published the proceedings and distributed them widely in order to create some mobilization around the importance of public participation. We also took our ideas to Wa'd and to the municipality on numerous occasions, always reiterating our main criticism of the Wa'd project: that it has prioritized the private realm over the public one by reducing the reconstruction to the restitution of private property. Also, I want to create public debate around this post-war reconstruction.

In some sense, Hezbollah is rebuilding a neighbourhood of Beirut and its reconstruction should be discussed in Beirut at large. In November 2008, we finally convinced Mr. Hassan Jechi, the director of Wa'd, to come and present the reconstruction project to a wide audience of planners and architects at AUB. It was the first time the project was presented to the public. Since then, we have organized several debates at AUB with the Order of Engineers and Architects, and other practitioners in and around Beirut. Just last week, at our yearly City Debates conference, we included a panel in which we had the Solidere and Wa'd projects presented side by side. These debates are meant to help generate a public concern and interest in the reconstruction, to make the Party accountable in some way.

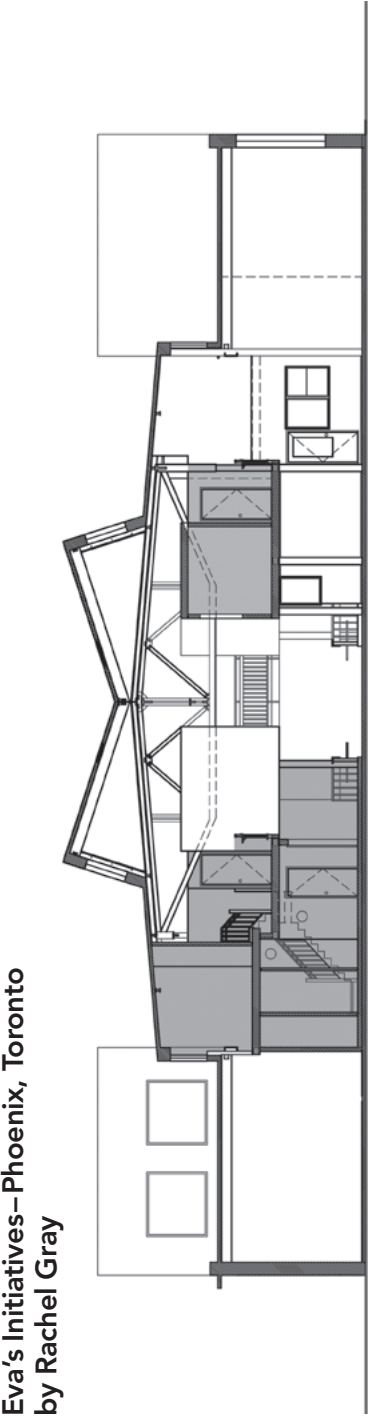
I personally feel that debates about public involvement are very important. There are a number of private planning interventions in the city, and each of these interventions forges its own enclave in Beirut. We are witnessing a form of splintering urbanism—to paraphrase Marvin and Graham—in which every private actor is carving an enclave that spatially embodies its autonomous power in the city.³

continued on pg. 27

Scapegoat

Hezbollah's Urban Plan

Mona Fawaz and Nasrin Himada



Eva's Initiatives—Phoenix, Toronto
by Rachel Gray

to lead the Ordinance St. project with Somerville Construction and Levitt-Goodman Architects—and with \$500,000, the work began. The design was informed by focus groups of Eva's youth. The feedback was simple: they wanted their own bedrooms and doors that locked. As one young man said: "I want the same things you want." Within the huge interior space of a fire truck repair garage, 10 townhouses were constructed with a "main street" down the middle of the building. Each house has five bedrooms, a bathroom, and an open concept kitchen and living room.

The training initiative was integrated into the construction process and programming of the shelter. While the contractor and architects worked to make the townhouses viable and the agency struggled to raise the additional \$2 million needed for the project, 50 youth apprentices in a partnership with local trade unions in carpentry, dry walling, and painting at union halls, and then worked on site at Ordinance St. for 12 weeks.

When Eva's opened Phoenix in June 2000, a significant shift had taken place for the youth and service sector. The involvement of the trades and the enthusiasm of the construction and architecture firms encouraged small and large businesses to donate hundreds of thousands of dollars in gifts in kind. Community agencies, government bureaucrats, and politicians were keenly interested in the model. The Provincial Government provided funding to a housing initiative at a time when housing dollars had disappeared. The training program would eventually include an award-winning print shop, a multitude of creative mentorship programs, and partnerships with over 200 employers.³

The apprenticeship model became a critical precedent for other communities. In response to demand, Eva's secured funding to support

other groups, government representatives, and foreign delegations interested in developing similar programs. Transitional housing projects modelled on Phoenix have been developed in St. John's, Hamilton, and Mississauga, and housing options have been developed with support from Eva's in a host of other cities. In St. John's, the training program incorporated a focus on retrofitting of public housing units throughout the city. That model was then adapted in Vancouver, where participants salvage materials from buildings slated for demolition, leading to a 93% reduction in waste going to landfills from these projects.

Eva's does not operate alone, and much of the organization's success is due to partnerships with other institutions and community groups who offer specialized services. While Eva's is a multi-service organization, the youth rely on a variety of services concentrated in the downtown, including rehabilitation and addiction treatment centres, mental illness care, immigration services, education and employment training services, recreation, arts, food and clothing banks, health clinics, sex education and GLBT support services, and harm reduction services. Similarly, connecting youth to employment and housing requires a larger pool of prospective employers and housing.

When Eva's Phoenix appeared on the surplus list, hundreds of young people came forward in support of the program, setting up Facebook groups and calling city councillors and the mayor's office. These were people who had lived at Phoenix, and who were clear about the impact of the program. As one person wrote: "Phoenix saved my life. For god's sake don't close it." When Phoenix was removed from the surplus list, a critical programmatic and architectural precedent for youth housing was saved—all because of creative partnerships, unlikely allies, and formidable young people who believed they could claim the future as their own.

Image credits
Levitt-Goodman Architects

Rachel Gray has worked in the community service sector for 20 years. In 1999, she was part of the development team that overrode the construction of Eva's Phoenix, an award-winning partnership-based transitional housing and employment training facility for homeless and at-risk youth. She served as the Manager of Housing at Eva's Phoenix and since 2008 as the Director of National Initiatives for Eva's National Initiatives Program, which supports capacity building in the youth services sector.

Editor's Notes

1. Eva's Phoenix was included in the February 24, 2011 City of Toronto document titled "City-Owned Properties Being Considered for Transfer/Turnover to Build Toronto" which slated 22 city-owned properties for sale to Toronto's real estate corporation. Transference of city properties to Build Toronto has increased since Mayor Rob Ford's recent election. See Patrick White and Kelly Grant, "Youth Homeless Shelter Could Face Eviction," *The Globe and Mail*, March 9, 2011.

2. See www.evasinitiatives.com/e-phoenix.php

3. See www.phoenixprintshop.ca/



The Care of the Possible: Isabelle Stengers interviewed by Erik Bordeleau

Translated from French by Kelly Ladd
The original version of this interview—“Le soin des possibles”—will be published in *Les nouveaux cahiers de socialisme* 6 (Fall, 2011).

Isabelle Stengers is, without a doubt, one of the most interesting figures in the panorama of contemporary philosophy. A mobilized scientist who chose desertion, a free electron of thought, she has finally found refuge in the philosophy department at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, where she initiates students into the abstract charms of Alfred North Whitehead’s speculative philosophy on the one hand, and the political practices of neo-pagan witches borne from the anti-globalization movement on the other. Her prolific theoretical output is both open and original. One dimension of her thought has initiated a renewal of the relationship between the sciences and philosophy, particularly in *The New Alliance* (1979), written with Nobel Prize winning chemist Ilya Prigogine, and in *The Invention of Modern Science* (1993), winner of the Prix Quinquennal de L’essai (1996). A second key aspect of Stengers’ philosophy has developed into a constructivist-inspired cosmopolitical reflection around the concept of an ecology of practices, as in *Cosmopolitics I and II* (1997/2003), *Capitalist Sorcery* (2005), and *Au temps des catastrophes* (2009). Between these two poles, there is one question that cuts across all of her work: “What has rendered us so vulnerable, so ready to justify the destruction committed in the name of progress?” This decisive problematic is animated by a vital exigency long ago articulated by William James and relayed by Gilles Deleuze: *To believe in the world*. It is with remarkable generosity that she agreed to this interview, which took place in July 2010, at her ULB office.

—Erik Bordeleau

The editors of *Scapegoat* would like to thank Erik Bordeleau for his own remarkable generosity in sharing this interview, and for allowing its English publication to precede the original French. We would also like to thank Kelly Ladd for her translation.

Practices & Academia

Erik Bordeleau: I am interested in the way you think about political intervention, which gives a unique inflection to your writing. I am thinking about, for example, *Capitalist Sorcery* or *Au temps des catastrophes*, books that are at once complex and nevertheless really accessible, which illustrate the concern you have about questions of heritage and transmission, a concern that is considerably out of place with academic modes of publishing. How do you situate yourself with respect to the academic world?

Isabelle Stengers: One way of articulating what I do is that my work is not addressed to my colleagues [laughs]. This is not about contempt, but about learning to situate oneself in relation to a future—a future in which I am uncertain as to what will have become of universities. They have already died once, in the Middle Ages, with the printing press. It seems to me that this is in the process of being reproduced—in the sense that they can only exist as diplomatic institutions, not as sites for the production of knowledge. Defending them against external attacks (rankings, objective evaluation in all domains, the economy of knowledge) is not particularly compelling because of the passivity with which academics give in. This shows that it’s over. Obviously, the interesting question is: who is going to take over [prendre le relais]? At the end of the era of the mediaeval university, it was not clear who would take over. I find this notion compelling.

However, it’s not about holding on to the institution. I made the choice to hold on to practices because with practices, while they may be present at the university, the university is certainly not suitable to them [laughs]. A bit better are those of scientists, because the universities as we know them are not based on Wilhelm von Humboldt’s model of the university, as we are often being told. They were invented in the concluding decades of the 19th century. What seems normal to us today—finishing one’s dissertation in four years—was a major innovation that stemmed from Giessen’s organic chemistry laboratory in Liebig. The idea that we learn to become a researcher, and not a “scholar,” comes from the laboratory sciences, but today this has redefined everything else. However, even for the experimental sciences, the cost has been steep and has created a vulnerability that is only now being brought to light. Therefore, I look to practices instead of to the university, and I am trying to write using that model.

EB: The way you hold yourself at a distance in relation to the academic world and, consequently, how you envisage the future, reminds me of Peter Sloterdijk, who has harsh words for the university.¹

IS: Let’s say that Sloterdijk is more “prophetic” than I am! My idea is to try to discern in the present what perhaps will make the future. I do not feel that I think before my time. Maybe a quarter of a millimeter [laughs], but I owe that quarter millimeter to what my time is capable of. We always say that there is a rapport between philosophy and medicine, but I don’t really come from medicine, at least in the way that we can say that medicine always receives its force from its own time—it all depends on the figure of the physician. In any case, I don’t come from a medical tradition that benefits from a knowledge that allows it to intervene in and transcend its own time.

EB: What is striking in your work is the concern that you demonstrate for the singularity of practices. It matters to you to think of practices in terms of their divergence, which allows you to preserve their political potential. I see in this a pragmatic tenor that strongly contrasts with the obsession over an anesthetizing consensus that marks our time.

IS: Effectively, the encounter with pragmatism has been very important in the sense of, “So this is what I do!” [laughs] Here is what animates me! This pragmatism, which I take from William James, from his more speculative dimensions (meaning the concern for consequences, in terms of invention, of speculation on consequences), this is what pragmatism, in its common usage (which is an insult), passes over in silence. We don’t know how these things can matter. But we can learn to examine situations from the point of view of their possibilities, from that which they communicate with and that which they poison. *Pragmatism is the care of the possible*.

Spiritual pragmatism? No thanks!

EB: Your reading of pragmatism seems to be the exact opposite of the sort that has lead to the present domination of the liberal ethos and of “keeping the conversation going,” in the vein of Richard Rorty. But I would like to return to the care of the possible: while speaking of the “speculative,” you have made a very singular gesture; it seems to me a spiritual one, as if to open up the future.

IS: I will never take up the label of “spiritualism” because that would oppose the spirit, the spiritual, to other things. Conversely, absolute silence (we can’t even say contempt) on what might represent a concern for the spiritual seems to me to come from a badly directed Marxism and scientism. In any case, I situate myself primarily as a postcolonial European. I consider this to be present in my analysis of modern scientific practices, that we must first learn to civilize these practices—to separate them from words that are guaranteed to insult those that seek to cultivate, each in their own way, something that is a matter of concern. The philosopher can learn from the responsibility carried by the words she has forged, which are almost systematically insulting, and try some new ones. And so, I try to use words in a manner that takes into account and incorporates this fact as an active constraint: *We think of ourselves*, and almost no one can escape this—not even Marx—as *the thinking heads of humanity*, in relation to whom others are, in one way or another, still children. It is something that is in all of our words (Kant expressed this

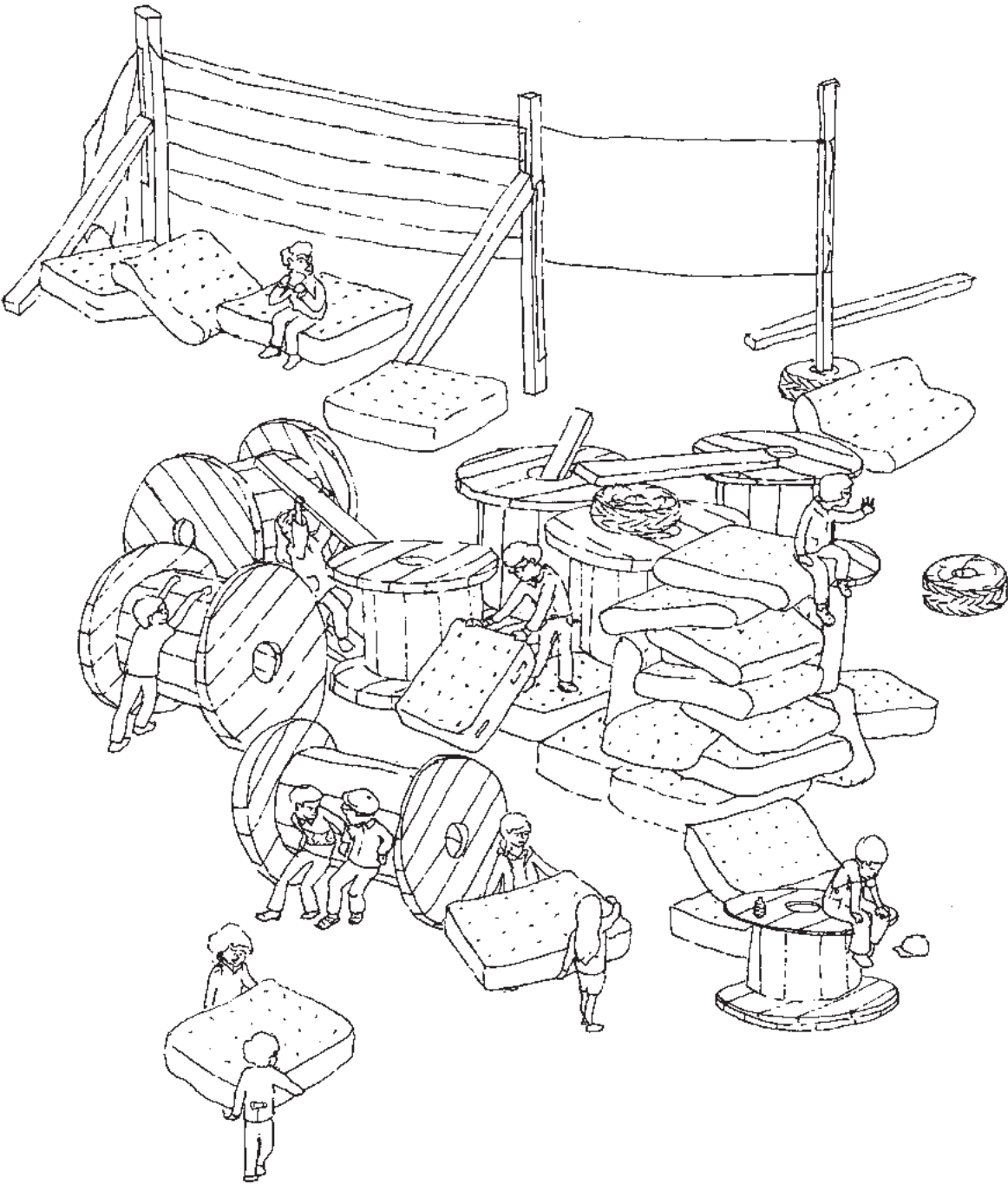
very well in *What is Enlightenment?*), and it is a lot of work to rework words, to acquire words that break with this state of affairs. What I like about the concept of practice, in the way that I am trying to think it, is that it creates an angle from which to approach our most “serious” holdings, including the sciences as “bizarre,” as bizarre practices that we have the tendency to classify as superstitious, etc.

EB: All of your work on hypnosis, therapy, ethnopsychiatry...

IS: Yes, ethnopsychiatry has been extremely important for me, notably because it has taught me up to which point, precisely, in the eyes of others, we can be “bizarre.” Bizarre is important because I am refusing another one of our specialties—denouncing ourselves. We are masters at having goodwill as much as we are at feeling guilty [laughs]—from the moment that, as Westerners, we consider that we are exceptional. To think practices is an attempt to situate ourselves, starting from the way in which practices were destroyed, poisoned, enslaved in our own history. As a result, I refuse all positions that would have others act as the conveyers of our “greeting,” or as “our” victims, somewhat like Third Worldism did, with “us” always at the centre. This is again and always thinking in the place of others. I try not to think in the place of others because I look to a future where they will take *their* place.

EB: This is where I like *Capitalist Sorcery* a lot, in the great efficiency with which things are formulated in terms of capture and vulnerability, and conversely the question: How to get a reliable new hold so that divergent practices emerge within the smooth and neutralized spaces of capitalism?

IS: How to get a hold [comment faire prise]? This question proclaims that I resist what I call, pejoratively, the theatre of concepts. Whether it’s [Alain] Badiou, [Slavoj] Žižek, and so on, we have the impression that the one who discovers the right concept of capitalism or communism will have discovered something extremely important. So, I “reclaim,” as the neo-pagan witches say, a pragmatist Marx. That is, a Marx about whom we can say when reading him, “Yes, at the time, effectively, his analysis was an excellent hold.” But also a Marx whose nightmare would have been thinking that more than a century later, we would continue to rely on this hold and to make of it concepts that are more and more disconnected from his question. His was a pragmatic question: understanding in a “consequent” mode, that is, in contact with the possibility of transformation. So, “reclaim” Marx, recuperate him, but also (and this is a move that I learned from the witches)



rehabilitate him, *reproduce* him.² And not for any concern for justice on his part, but from the perspective of asking his question once again. If we want to understand him in the sense of transformation, we have to re-ask ourselves to what capitalism could give hold today [*il faut se re-demander à quoi le capitalisme pourrait donner prise aujourd'hui*].

EB: In *Out of this World*, Peter Hallward, a philosopher close to Badiou, develops an acrimonious critique of Deleuze, which seems to me to correspond to what you reject in Badiou or Žižek. In his little theatre of political concepts (to take up your expression), Deleuze is defined as a “spiritual thinker” and, as a result, largely ineffectual in the political scheme of things. He goes as far to treat him as a “radical creationist.”

IS: And, Guattari spoke about axiological creationism... There is bread on the cutting board of the censors! [*mocking laughter*] But if there is anyone who is a quasi-spiritualist, it's Badiou! The event as a matter of fidelity, the four truths, etc. It is spiritualism in the sense that there is a genuine transcendence in relation to the state of things.

EB: Exactly. He does not ask the question about the modes of existence, and this transcendence justifies his “pure” politics...

IS: And, as soon as we in “the pure,” in “the pure and the true”...The convergence between the true and the pure, that is the sin of spiritualism!

On Messianic Politics

EB: You have situated yourself in relation to Badiou. At the extreme of the philo-political spectrum that interests us, we find a certain kind of messianism. In particular, I am thinking of Giorgio Agamben, Tiqqun, the Invisible Committee, etc. I can't help myself from seeing several points of contact with your work, in particular at the level of a reflection on the hold and the capture, an attempt to position our vulnerability to being captured by apparatuses [*dispositifs*], with the difference that this thinking is dramatized in a messianic or apocalyptic manner.

IS: Yes, but this difference is crucial, it is everywhere...For me, Agamben is the inheritor of a tradition from which I want to escape, from which one must escape. This tradition says: We are in a disaster that conjures up a truth. And, those that possess this truth find themselves in a neo-colonialist situation. They have nothing to learn from others. Their knowledge has value for Man (or *Dasein*, or the Subject, or Bare Life...). And so, once again, this means we don't think from where we are, but instead for everyone in a delocalized manner.

This is the movement to *reclaim*, taking into account what has happened to us, that we are further away from being in a position to touch the Real. We are very sick. It is not an illness of truth and it is not an illness of Deleuzian philosophy or of Nietzsche, who must pass through the grand illness. No, we are impurely sick [*salement malades*]. And so, simply recuperating a few points of joy, of resistance, of thought, etc. and understanding where this occurs from—the vulnerability to stupidity [*bêtise*], the feeling of being responsible for humanity, the communication between our histories and the vocation of Humanity—it would not be bad if our concepts could contribute to that. Deleuze said that if philosophy has a function, it is to resist stupidity. Not stupidity as an anthropological trait, like I have read in the work of certain Deleuzians, but as *our* stupidity. I am not far from this position, except that one must always be suspicious. Deleuze himself dates the question of stupidity.

As such, this problem emerges in the 19th century, at the moment when science, the State, and capitalism forge an alliance. Africans do not suffer from stupidity—maybe that is what waits for them; they are not unharmed by this definition. But in any case, stupidity is nothing inherently anthropological.

So, confusing what happens to us with something that not only would necessarily happen to the rest of humanity but, additionally, would somehow contain a truth that would allow the philosopher to be the one who truly sees—no way! That's what a hold is for me: it involves a body-to-body relation to the world, which has a relative truth. And, it's also linked to a thinking of the relay [*relais*]. The consequences of this hold do not belong to the one who produces the hold, but to the way in which this hold can be taken up, to work as a relay [*la manière dont cette prise peut être reprise, et faire relais*].

And so, when considering Tiqqun, I have often conversed with inheritors or those close to Tiqqun in France and it seems to me that, for the moment, a discussion topic among them is the role of Agamben. There are tensions, there are those who have discovered that it is really not the kind of thinking that they need. Because I enjoy stirring the pot, I told them that, when reading certain Agamben texts, I felt what Deleuze calls “shame”—at the reformulation of what happened at Auschwitz, the “musulmann” taken as an anthropological truth of our time: this is instrumentalization. A philosopher does not have the right to do that; he has to create his own concepts. He cannot take possession of Auschwitz to formulate a philosophical anthropology.³

EB: I have to say, I find myself in a very particular position, hopefully that of an intercessor, between a certain ‘Tiqqunian’ milieu and those that adhere to what I call, echoing your work, an idea of ‘speculative presence.’ In fact, the people that I am going to see in Brussels after our interview belong to this Tiqqunian constellation.

IS: Ah! Here we call them “les Chavannais” because, two years ago, they

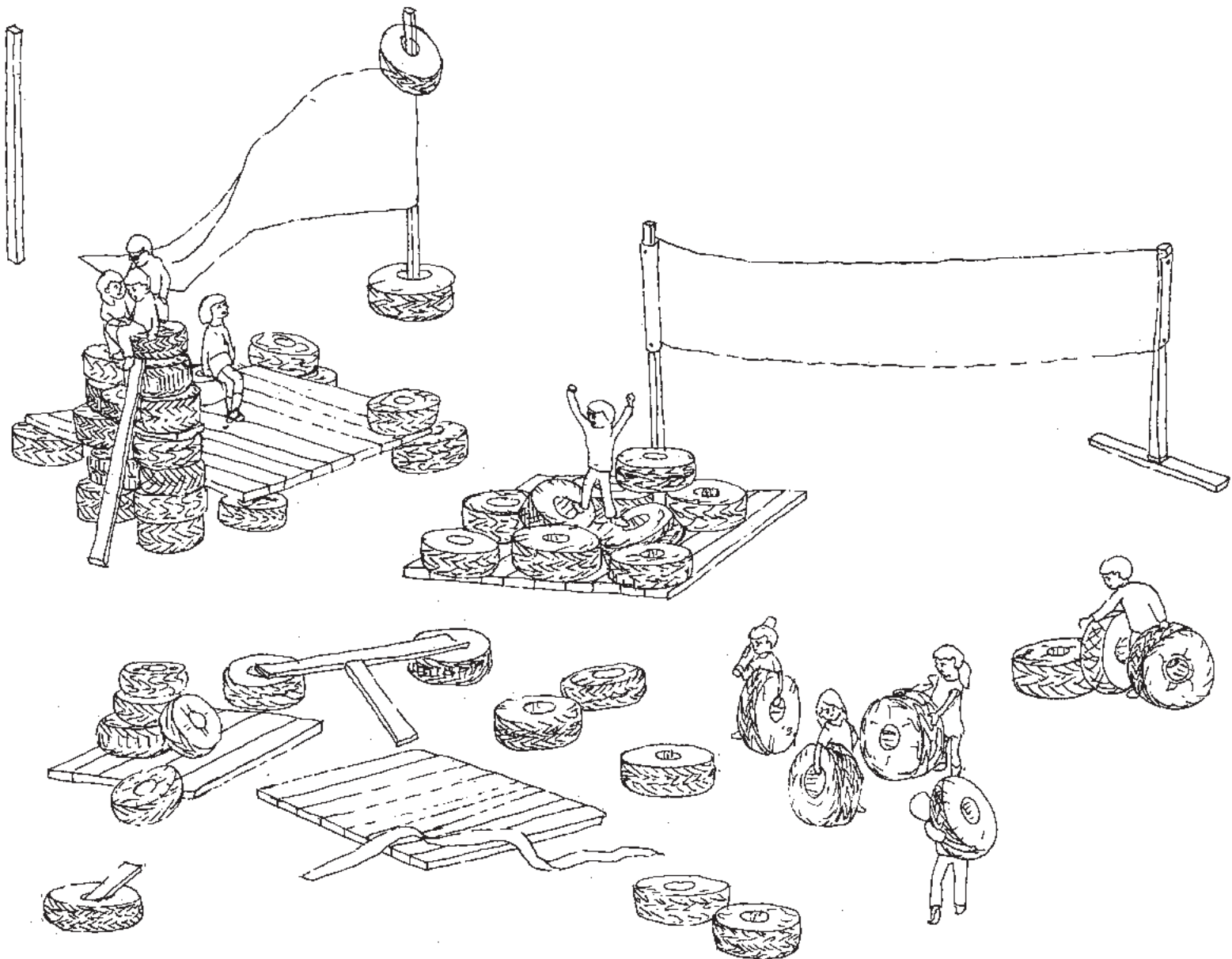
famously participated in the occupation of the Chavanne auditorium at ULB. Four years ago, they took me to be their number one enemy.

EB: Yes, they were repeating a logic that is reminiscent of the Situationist purifications...

IS: For two days we had a “frank” conversation, and since then it has not been love, but it seems to me that they have accepted that I can exist without being their enemy. In the same way, I recognize that faced with the world as it is, the urgency that they are taken with cannot be more justified.

EB: I feel like I am taking up the posture that you did when you wrote *Beyond Conversation*, half-way between the theology of Process and the French Deleuzians.⁴ I feel that I occupy the same relation to the people in the Tiqqunian constellation, or to the Barcelona collective *Espai en blanc*, by way of my own trajectory. Canada appears to me as a place of very low political intensity, where the energies of belief in the world are made manifest mostly through a therapeutic bias. Moreover, this culture of the therapeutic is the site of a disastrous privatization of existence. It is in Europe that I found the collective presences necessary for understanding that the problem of affective misery and of general anesthesia under the regime of the Spectacle is not a psychological or even psychosocial problem, but a political one. From there, I started to conceive of a strong idea of the political, guided by a certain intuition about anonymity. In effect, everything seems to me so excessively personalized in our time...

continued on pg. 16



ASHES, FRUIT-
ANALYSIS OF

BANANA.
(IN JAMAICA)

BANANAS.
'DRIED

BANANAS.
EAST INDIAN
DYSENTERY.

EARTH
WORMS

ENGLISH
CHARACTERISTICS

FATIGUE

FEEDING OF INFANTS.
(BY THE NOSE)

Endeavour Birds

HUMAN-NATURE

*Imprisonment
Repair of*

INSANE,
LETTERS OF THE

KAPOK FIBRE

LEMON
CULTURE

LIME CULTIVATION
YIELD OF

LIME JUICE
CONCENTRATED
& RAW.

LIMES,
ESSENTIAL OIL OF

LIMES.
USES OF

*Nutrients.
Culture of-*

Orange,

ORANGE TREES,

ORANGES

PARTHENOGENESIS

on of.

MANURE FOR

PHOTOTHERAPY.

PHYSICIANS &
WOMEN

POTATOES.
(SWEET)

PRURITUS
VULVÆ.

QUININE, ACTION OF
UPON THE EAR

RAT-POISONING
IN THE CANE-
FIELD

Roots

RUBBER.

SEX, (IN PLANTS.)

SKIN.
NON-REMOVAL OF

SUGAR QUESTION.
THE.
from p. 22.

TEA.

TOBACCO ASH,
VALUE OF

UNKNOWN. THE

URINE,
HOT

Vanilla,
Culture of.

Miscellaneous details, Memory Books (1881–1928) of Henry Alfred Alford Nicholls, M.D., C.M.S.S., Principal Medical Officer of Dominica; corresponding member of the New York Academy of Sciences and of the Chamber of Agriculture of Basseterre, Guadeloupe; honorary member, the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society of British Guiana and the Central Agricultural Board of Trinidad; Fellow of the Linnaean Society, London; Special Commissioner on Yaws in the West Indies (1891); Commissioner for Dominica of the Tropical Products Exhibition, London (1914); aspirant (unsuccessful) to the posts of Director of the Dominica Botanic Station and Administrator of Dominica; correspondent to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. (Collection Dr. Lennox Honychurch, Turtle Point, Dominica)

THE EFFECT OF TROPICAL LIGHT ON WHITE MEN

IS: How capitalism is making us into little entrepreneurs of Self ...

EB: Yes, and it is in Europe that I met people that have reacted politically toward this civilizing phenomenon. And, it seems to me that thinking of getting reliable holds is right on, and permits a problematization of the conditions for effective action. And, to articulate it one way, it is also there that I see a site of possible encounter between “messianic” and “speculative” milieus.

IS: Ah well, let’s say that messianism is what I would call a strong “pharmakon” that is able to incite force but which can also very easily become a poison. Poison as it allows for heroic vocation and a conception of truth all the more true that it is inaudible. All are traits that seem to me to be very masculinist [*viriloides*]. Where messianism incites the desire for separation, I try and think practices of the interstice. This is an idea developed in *Capitalist Sorcery*, which goes back to Whitehead. The interstice is not defined against the block; it produces its own presence, its own mode of production. It knows that the block is certainly not a friend, but it does not define itself through antagonism, or else it would become the mere reflection of the block. This does not mean non-conflict. It means conflict when necessary, in the way that is necessary. This is thinking in the interstices! So, what I like about these milieus is that they are looking to make their own lives.

EB: Which changes from the sort of resistance by proxy, which unfolds in the wake of Žižek’s thought, for instance...

IS: Exactly. It is like Tiqqun’s concept of ‘forms-of-life.’¹⁵ But no form of life

is exemplary. The interstice is not associated with any exemplarity, and has nothing messianic about it. Rather, its mode of existence is problematic. Each interstice is an interstice in relation to a block, without any legitimacy other than the hold that it accomplishes. This requires humour, lucidity and pragmatism. It also consists of pharmacological thinking, because the milieu, the block, is never, ever a friend. Therefore, we must never trust it. Recuperation is always a danger, but it is necessary that we are not taken aback by this danger or else suspicion poisons everything, and then it is no longer a form of life. Dangers are what one must be pragmatic in relation to—foreshadowing them and constructing the means of doing that might allow us, at a given moment, to not have to tear ourselves between the good-pure-radicals and the bad-interested-traitors, knowing that this kind of situation is nothing more than a foreseeable failure in relation to which we must think. With messianism there is a difference of temperament because messianism is always close to the selection of the chosen, of those who know how to maintain loyalty. This kind of selection signifies that situations where we can recognize traitors are more on the side of truth than of failure.

What I call this difference in temperament can easily be described otherwise—my pragmatism is what is most comfortable for me. Except that I know that to do otherwise would injure me. I have always fled situations that hold one hostage—and there, where it is important to be loyal, the suspicion of treachery is present and holding hostage never far away.

So, I don’t have any desire to convince or to convert. Instead, I think that there is a force in not letting oneself be divided. All the “or this...or this...” is deadly. For groups that are looking for forms of radical or messianic life, one of the ways of resisting

being held hostage could very well be to cultivate a bit of Jewish humour—especially apt because we are talking about messianism—of the kind like, “Shit, we are the chosen people, we would be better off without it!” In any case, what I find interesting in the interstices is the knowledge that there is some messianic component, which is precious in the sense that it stops an interstice from closing in on itself. This maintains a sense of the urgency that must remain present and which should not become the basis for a mobilizing command.

EB: Demonstrating this urgency in the North American academy already puts us in a slightly contentious position, in the sense that after one’s master’s degree or doctorate, everything happens as if we needed to have succeeded in finding a way to be satisfied with the world as it is. We must soften our indignation. And, this tacit requirement certainly does not spare Deleuzian milieus.

IS: In France, we say that the Americans waited for Deleuze to die before taking possession of him! For me, there is a line that separates people with whom I can work and those with whom I can only be friends: is this world imperfect, certainly, but is it normal at first approach? Whenever I feel that a position implies something like “we can do better for sure, but still, we have democracy, tolerance, etc.”, there is not much for me there. Instead, I align myself with those who think viscerally about how this world is not working, that it is not at all acceptable, those who say “we are not happy at all.” We can argue, for sure, but for me it’s first and foremost because the situation has surpassed us all.

Here is a short reminiscence that left a mark. I was at a protest in front of an internment center for

illegal immigrants, what we call here the “sans-papiers.” On a butte, there was a group with really smashed faces carrying a socialist syndicate flag that read “homeless section.” And they were screaming, their voices hoarse, “We are not happy at all, we are not happy at all!” And it was...it was exactly what needed to be said! This is the cry, the cry of irreconciliation. This is the reason, obviously, why I am closer to the Chavannais than to the majority of my colleagues. This must be.

EB: But can’t we consider the messianic like an accelerating artifice, a creator of beneficial emergencies?

IS: I am not sure if an emergency as such is beneficial. Evidently, faced with the heavy temporalities associated with climate disorder and all kinds of other similar things, there is the feeling that there is an emergency. Sadly, it is not in the name of an emergency that we will become able to respond. In the name of urgency, those who govern us will rather require some “necessary sacrifices.” The emergency felt by radicals—I can’t do anything but understand it. Still, how does one not give more power to the police if they explode a bomb?

Thinking with Whitehead

EB: I like your book *Thinking with Whitehead* a lot, and, more specifically, the way you dramatize his thought. And one of the culminating movements of that dramatization is the discussion of the idea of peace as it is presented in *The Adventure of Ideas*. You cite an extraordinary passage on how peace can easily be reversed to become Anesthesia. Whitehead says that we cannot “want” peace too much, and how the experience of peace renders us more sensitive to tragedy. Your book brings us to understand how important these ideas are to Whitehead. All of this echoes the introduction of the book, where you present Whitehead’s philosophy in the context of a world where “it is normal to make war in the name of truth,” a world that you contrast to a more pacifist culture, Buddhist for example. In that world, you argue that

Scapegoat

The Care of the Possible

Isabelle Stengers and Erik Bordeleau



Self-Centered Ecological Services by Victoria Marshall

Eugene P. Odum’s (1971) unified theory of the ecosystem, with its emphasis on homeostasis, cooperation, social organization, and “environmentalism,” has been replaced in the last two decades with an image of nature characterized by individualistic associations, constant disturbance, and incessant change. Within this dynamic context of changing ecological ideas, lies a stable understanding of human self-interest. In a world where our relationships to food, animals, and things are all up for discussion, why does the idea of the “self” remain so stable while other ideas change? This trend can be seen in ecosystem services where narrow categories have been broadened to include multiple types of services that support human life. Two recent projects marking the bicentennial and future of the New York’s Commissioners Plan of 1811 offer examples of a self-interest that challenge these stable categories to allow radical ideas of self to inform policy and planning. This agenda aims to shift the spectacle of urban design from the passive consumption of green urban simulations constructed by specialists toward one in which a broad array of actors advocate and participate in the making of both the city and its images.¹

According to the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the concept of ecosystem services was first used in the 1960s, with its use dramatically increasing after 1995.² In 2005, the concept was broadened, popularized and formalized, referencing two definitions:

Ecosystem services are the conditions and processes through which natural ecosystems, and the species that make them up, sustain and fulfill human life. They maintain biodiversity and the production of ecosystem goods, such as seafood, forage timber, biomass fuels, natural fiber, and many pharmaceuticals, industrial products, and their precursors.³

Ecosystem goods (such as food) and services (such as waste assimilation) represent the benefits human populations derive, directly or indirectly, from ecosystem functions.⁴

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment assembled ecosystem services into four broad functional categories which sometimes overlap, acknowledging our entangled socio-natural processes: 1) provisioning services are the products obtained from ecosystems; 2) regulating services are benefits obtained from regulation of ecosystem processes; 3) cultural services, which are nonmaterial benefits obtained from ecosystems through spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, reflection, recreation, and aesthetic experiences; and 4) supporting services are those that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services—their impacts on people are either indirect or occur over a very long time.⁵ These categories are then operationalized in a process that includes assessment, assignment of value, and management, which is defined as maintaining stability in relation to dynamics such as variability, resilience, and thresholds.

Regardless of these broad functional categories laid out by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, there is a trend toward privileging economic value over other values such as the socio-ecological (resilience), psychological (well-being), cultural (inspiration), and philosophical or ethical.⁶ This valuing trend is discussed as an innovation in relation to current agricultural and forestry practices, business strategies, and global governance. For example, a farmer in Wisconsin proposes to use new tools such

More innovative approaches offer new landscape design principles for ecologically motivated construction and management with an emphasis on education about ecosystem services in urban areas; however, both of these approaches still reveal mid-20th century ties to economics, particularly faith in management, with design playing the role of expert and informed implementer for an uninformed public.¹⁴

On April 1, 2011, a street performance called *Grid Scenes* marked the bicentennial of New York’s Commissioners Plan of 1811. Forty performers, walking very slowly in two big groups, making simple sounds with simple instruments and carrying hand-made lanterns, aimed to slow down the grid, to run counter clockwise to the flow.¹⁵ Moving along 14th Street, from 5th toward 6th Avenue, and from 7th toward 6th Avenue, two collective forms moved at the pace of the sunset. From seven until eight in the evening, passers-by walked through the middle of the groups, stopping, pausing, and taking photos. Others waited, watching quietly and some joined in. The goal was to create an environment where possibilities could emerge in the hustle and bustle of a Friday evening rush hour at one of New York’s busiest intersections.

Later, the lanterns were placed in a ninth floor rooftop garden on 5th Avenue, between 12th and 13th Street. The Lantern Roof Garden directs visitors’ movement by asking them to align their bodies in relation to other roof gardens in the neighborhood.¹⁶ At night, the lanterns create a field of blue lights, reversing the outward orientation of the garden by offering it as an attraction for viewing from adjacent taller buildings. The garden is enclosed by landmarks such as the Washington Square Memorial, a canyon of 5th Avenue red-brick and stone apartment buildings, a wall of 14th Street white-brick apartment buildings, a big, deep, muddy-hole in the ground where a new building is under construction, and a ‘valley’ of private, eclectic, lower roof gardens bursting into summer life after the spring rain. Vegetation, planted to create natural dyes, will be harvested in the fall, contributing later to the fashions of the street. Strange plant life brought in by the wind and birds, unexpected insect visitors, stairwells and clouds all add

as geographic information systems (GIS), precision application of inputs made possible with geographic positioning systems (GPS), and biotech’s genetically stacked seeds to develop an eCommerce market that values his farm’s ecosystem benefits—such as soil conservation, cleaner water, cleaner air, wildlife habitat and protected green space.⁷ The Office of Environmental Markets (OEM) is a new office created within the U.S. Department of Agriculture to catalyze the development of markets for ecosystem services. By creating uniform standards and market infrastructure that will facilitate market-based approaches to agriculture, forest, and rangeland conservation, the OEM is exploring national opportunities to make stewardship profitable.⁸ The chemical company Dow is working with the environmental NGO The Nature Conservancy to develop tools to value the natural world in business. They aim to identify risks and opportunities at Dow’s facilities, and in its products and supply chain, and to value them correctly.⁹ The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity reports have prompted that payment for ecosystem services will likely find its way on the agenda for the next United Nations conference on sustainability, Rio+20, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in May 2012.¹⁰

How did ecosystems come to be understood in economic terms? In 1977, the environmental historian Donald Worster argued that “the metaphors used here are more than casual or incidental...ecologists have transformed nature into a reflection of the modern corporate, industrial system.”¹¹ Worster notes that economics took nothing from ecological biology that might have made it more aware of the environmental limits to industrial growth. Rather, it was ecology that applied economic thinking to the study of nature.¹² For Worster, every generation writes its own description of the natural order, which generally reveals as much about human society and its concerns as it does about nature. These descriptions linger on in bits and pieces, often creating incongruous or incomplete juxtapositions.

Today, urban ecology texts often begin with an introduction to the phenomenon of global urbanization and conclude with a statement of management recommendations which privilege spatial planning indifferent to context.¹³

concepts would take on an entirely different meaning.

IS: Today, Whitehead’s philosophy is having some success in China, Korea, and Japan. But I think that its meaning is changing, or, more accurately, it has something familiar to it—“now here is a thinking that we can connect to our own traditions,” like a reunion. But the Whitehead that interests me, being a European, is wholly from here. He has wholly taken into account the rapport that characterizes us, between truth and polemic, of what our concepts are made of that allows them to be delivered up to war. And he did not respond with a pacification that anaesthetizes, in the vein of Rorty for example, but rather through creation. It is not a question of renouncing, but of going even further with ideas and separating them from what is of the order of power. Ideas are vectors of assertion that do not have the power to deny. Maybe this is because I am a woman, but the concepts I am trying to make—and in every case the effectiveness that I hope for them—will function to dissolve these huge amalgamations that hold together liberty, rationality, universality...

EB: If we let these blocks fall, we have the impression of losing all consistency.

IS: Exactly. It is precisely these pseudo-consistencies, which are in fact amalgamations that we have to undo!

EB: It is against this background that the idea of speculative presence emerges, which I find so beautiful, and implies precisely the taking hold of a plane of consistency. Is there perhaps here a parallel with the work of François Jullien, with his way of thinking the implicit, or with other forms of coherence?

IS: Yes, of course. It is true that if you are Chinese in the manner of Jullien, the only question that you’ll ask yourself is “why was it so complicated to arrive at that...!” [*big laugh*]. But there is a limit to Jullien: his representation of “our” coherence leaves no room for marginal thinkers, Whitehead, maybe Leibniz, and many others. For me—the question that needs to be asked if we’re talking about the “West” would be why these thoughts have been systematically misconstrued, transformed into a vision of the world or simply despised. Since Voltaire, we have misunderstood Leibniz’s idea of the best of all possible worlds, which for me functions as a “thinking-hammer” in the Nietzschean sense. Therefore, what I find interesting about Whitehead and also the American neo-pagan activist witches is, notably, that which allows us to inherit our history otherwise, against all ideas of a kind of anthropological truth that would forgive us—the “West”—for “thinking man.” For me,

presenting ourselves, thinking ourselves, as if we belonged to a real history, not to a destiny, is a condition for holding language in a way that is alright with others who don’t have the same history, to get out of a position that is still and always the one that benefits colonialism. That Whitehead was ignored by academics for such a long time is not chance. I give myself the task and the pleasure of discussing witches with philosophy students. I don’t do this to play at being an exotic creature who does her all to shock, but rather because it is a vital test for thought. I have become aware that even those in touch with what is happening, like Donna Haraway, don’t do this, maybe because all this is happening right under her nose. Or, maybe because American universities form such a dense network amongst themselves that there is no room for what happens on the outside. My highest ambition on this front, now that *Capitalist Sorcery* is being translated into English, is that American academics will begin to realize that there are things happening in their backyards that they consistently ignore. They love French Theory, so I am serving them Whitehead from Harvard and Californian witches!

Thinking Together

EB: You evoke the challenges posed by talking about witches at the university, but when we look at it a little more closely, we can nevertheless see that it is very solidly supported, philosophically speaking. For example, I am thinking about your preface for the new edition of Étienne Souriau's *Les différents modes d'existence*. I was struck by his insistence on the question of the accomplishment of what he calls the “mystique of realization.” This reminded me of your usage of James’s formula: ‘Nothing but experience, but all of experience.’ In effect, in the “all” we understand the necessity of the accomplishment, something that seems to be essential in the thinking about becoming for Deleuze, for example, or something like a contraction on the order of the cosmological, or, invoking Michaux, “vital ideas.” This “dramatic” idea of the accomplishment is

very present in your work. But I wanted to ask you: how do you cohabit with a philosophy that is as comfortable with the establishment as Souriau’s?

IS: It was a friend, Marco Mateos Diaz, who one day introduced me to *L’Instauration philosophique*, and it was a surprise. My first reaction was: “But, but...Deleuze read all of this!” There is a whole dimension of Deleuze, notably that of imperative ideas and of the virtual as “work to do,” which is there...I will never think with Deleuze because I believe he never asks for it [*laughs*], and I can’t think with Souriau either, but for other reasons. I think with Whitehead or with Leibniz because there is “trust” with them, to use James’s sense of the word. I know that I can go all the way to the end of their concepts, even if, when doing this, I am recreating them—and I know that this would not bother them. Deleuze is difficult; his concepts are not made in the same way. One has to be very careful with them; if not, we expose ourselves to a kind of binarism, which was Bergson’s problem.

EB: This is exactly what Hallward criticizes in him, a kind of tendency toward redemption.

IS: If we read these texts technically, they are the two dimensions to the event: counter-effectuation makes no sense without effectuations, as multiple and proliferating as possible. To effectuate in one’s own body, that is not nothing! But there is something in Deleuze’s style that, if we watch for it, can easily lead us into a binary attitude, derisive towards those miserable people who simply effectuate. This is maybe why he has so much success in academia today. As soon as they can deride, academics are comfortable. But Deleuze created

the most beautiful eulogy for Anglo-American philosophy and for his own wild empiricism...

But our problem today, it seems to me, is not minor creations but collective ones, in relation to which we are not taken aback, who demand that we learn how to inherit (that is why witches interest me). Our bourgeois capitalist world has satisfied itself by honouring creators as “exceptional beings,” humanity’s patrimony, etc., but this is what has always been systematically destroyed, what we call today “collective intelligence.” This is a concept that I don’t connect to new technologies, however, but to what Felix Guattari called an ethico-political “paradigm.” My formula for asserting a creation of that genre, from that of scientists when their science is alive to that required for collective gardens, is “confering to a situation the power to make us think together.” In a way that is perhaps fabulatory, I would say that that’s what the commons were about, before they were destroyed by generalized privatization. The “commoners” needed to think the collective usage of the land together.

EB: The critical ethos that you describe so well in *Au temps des catastrophes* effectively prevents conceiving of how a situation could make us think together.

IS: Yes. Because when there is thinking together, it is always of the order of the event. But the care of the event, meaning that from which the situation can receive this power—which is not usual, which is not given—this requires a whole culture of artifice...

EB: To accompany it in collective processes...

continued on pg. 27

Scapegoat

The Care of the Possible



actions might be considered alongside what Keller Easterling calls an extended repertoire of troublemaking.²² The goal was to begin to encounter ourselves as an array of bodies that are not exclusively human and to develop a type of self-interest that is as porous and open as contemporary ecological theory and urban design practices. This can be done through the use of a busy and congested urban street and an under-utilized roof as sites to practice the radical ecological idea of not believing in an external environment.

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to the designed non-grid-like orientations of the garden.

The *Grid Scenes* performance and the *Lantern Roof Garden* are the first events of an urban design project that aims to serve both as a celebration of the historical moment when New York transformed from a compact port city into a metropolis, but also to start a discussion on cultivating new ecological subjectivities for Manhattan, and the Hudson Raritan Estuary beyond, over the next two centuries. Next, a network of wireless environmental quality sensors will be installed from river to river, street level to rooftop. The door-to-door process of finding partners and appropriate sites to house the sensors is also an outreach project designed to find participants for a series of workshops aiming to lower summer surface temperature, create urban micro-climates, store rain water and investigate new visions for mobility, energy and aesthetic perception.

Today a non-equilibrium paradigm in ecology acknowledges that natural systems do not have internal equilibrium-seeking or equilibrium-maintaining behaviors. Ecologists now acknowledge the following: ecological systems exchange materials with other systems; external factors can regulate system behavior; there may not be a single stable state equilibrium point of a system’s composition or behavior; disturbance is part of a system’s dynamics; succession or response to disturbance can be highly unpredictable; and finally, humans, their institutions, and behaviors are part of ecological systems.¹⁷ Some activists and scholars argue that this open model has meant the loss of authority for their critiques or an emasculation of critical environmentalism. However, within the context of this discussion, non-equilibrium ecology is seen as a more engaged and radical mode of inquiry, where the emphasis shifts from problematizing stability to working with instability.¹⁸

The idea of ecosystem services presumes a stable understanding of self-interest in the context of changing ideas of ecological frameworks. Inspired by Felix Guattari’s *Three Ecologies*, the *Grid Scenes* performance and the *Lantern Roof Garden* aim to create spaces for experiments into expanded notions of what Jane Bennett calls *self-interest*, or what Guattari calls *subjectivity*.¹⁹ For Guattari, emancipatory ecological praxes intervene in the means by which subjectivity itself is produced. His three ecologies—the environment at the macro scale, social relations at the intermediary scale, and mental ecology at the micro, or molecular, scale—are all ecological registers that need to be engaged fully and simultaneously. For Guattari, “earthly spheres, social tissues, and the world of ideas are not compartmentalized.”²⁰ This is an image of change through action, through new aesthetic ethical-political articulations that are not based solely on profit, property, scarcity, or restricted distribution.

The Guattarian subject is “an entangled assemblage of many components, a collective (heterogeneous, multiple) articulation of such components before and beyond the individual; the individual is like a transit station for changes, crossings, and switches.”²¹ The *Grid Scenes* performance created a type of clearing in the city, and it also offered the performers an experience of slowing down according to the pace of the setting sun. The *Lantern Roof Garden* offers a diagonal and relational experience of the grid as a space of exchange between insects, rain, clothes, flowers, and clouds. These are experiences of environmental activism that are not normally considered in symmetrical face-offs or in the culture of frugality that emerges whenever the word sustainability is mentioned. These

Pro-Testo Laboratorija, Lietuva by Gediminas and Nomedas Urbanas

“Citizens of the world, dear colleagues, friends, comrades!

Can you imagine the following scenario?

The largest cinema in your country that is the last art-house cinema left losing the battle against monopolization and being turned into a hypermarket such as LIDL or ALDI.

This is the plight of cinema LIETUVA in Vilnius” (fig. 1)

—Gediminas and Nomedas Urbanas, “Pro-Testo Laboratorija”¹



fig. 1

“Since independence in 1991, Lithuania has been caught in an insane period of privatization, property development and demolition. Like a Wild West land-grab or a gold rush, speculators and real estate tycoons have joined forces with corrupt municipal bureaucrats to redevelop the country at a mad pace. Profit has been their only motive. Public space, landmark buildings, cultural life, and public opinion have been the principal victims. Their method is simple: tell the population that economic development is good for everyone. Convince them that Capital is King. Remind the public that making Lithuania look like a pale shade of a Western European city is the best way to scrub the Soviet past.”

—Gediminas and Nomedas Urbanas, “Pro-Testo Laboratorija”



fig. 2

The Lietuva (“Lithuania” in Lithuanian) Cinema in the centre of Vilnius, Lithuania was built in 1965 and seats over 1000 guests. (fig. 2) In 2002, it was sold by municipal authorities to private investor UAB VP, a national supermarket chain. Gediminas Urbanas and Nomedas Urbanas have been working for over six years to save the Lietuva. It is one of many Soviet modern public buildings in Vilnius undergoing dramatic changes since the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. Gediminas and Nomedas, who are both from Vilnius and have worked since the 1990s as artistic collaborators, have used the precarious future of the theatre in the hands of developers to publicize fundamental questions about the architecture of civil society under both totalitarian communism and neoliberal capitalism. (figs. 3–6)



fig. 3a

3a. Cinema Vilnius, date unknown. Lithuanian Central State Archives

Figure

1. Cinema Lietuva. Vilnius, April 2006. Nomedas Urbanas

2. Cinema Lietuva, Vilnius, date unknown. Lithuanian Central State Archives

3b. United Colors of Benetton, Vilnius, July 2005. Nomedas Urbanas



fig. 3b

4a. Cinema Lazdynai, Vilnius, date unknown. Lithuanian Central State Archives

4b. Former Cinema Lazdynai, currently Iris hardware store, Vilnius, July 2005. Nomedas Urbanas



fig. 5b

5b. Emporio Armani, City Casino, Rimi, Steak House, et al., Vilnius, July 2005. Nomedas Urbanas



fig. 6b

6a. Cinema Pergalė, Vilnius, date unknown. Lithuanian Central State Archives

6b. Bank of Entertainment, Vilnius, July 2005. Nomedas Urbanas



fig. 3b

apparatus. Once this apparatus was dismantled so too were any examples of civil society that actually did exist. This project then could be understood as in the service of building a kind of commonality—or civic sense.

SS: Was the theatre an architecture of civil society when it was under Soviet control?

GU: Yes, though this contradicts the popular belief that cinemas were propaganda machines.

SS: Are you trying to preserve one of the few remaining spaces of civil society?

GU: This is very complex. Many people see the theatre as a legacy of totalitarianism. This is in fact false. Soviet modernism was a reaction to the challenge coming from the West during the first years of the Cold War. The style emerges out of the first tours of American exhibitions occurring all over Western Europe, and then Eastern Europe—for instance, the inclusion of American modernist designers in the World Expositions. All the propaganda of American architecture and design filtered into Eastern Europe through these exhibitions. The Soviet modernization project instigated by Khrushchev in 1959 came immediately after the first American National Exhibition in Moscow and the *Union internationale des architectes* in 1958. Following these, there was the export of Soviet architecture bearing the influence of American modernism. For example, the Soviet Union Pavilion at the 1967 International and Universal Exposition in Montréal. The reception of American modernism in the U.S.S.R. gave legitimacy to continue the constructivist project repressed by Stalin, while it was also a reflection upon what was happening in Western architecture and the result of a demand to create a competitive international product. (figs. 7–11)

So, the *Lietuva Cinema* and other cultural centers built at the time were projects informed by American influence as well as the post-Stalin liberal possibilities during Khrushchev. Suddenly, it was possible to do things between 1958 and 1968; the repression came around 1972 with Brezhnev, when bureaucratic socialism transformed into totalitarian capitalism. The *Lietuva Cinema* is precisely a result of these years of possibility, conflict, complicated legacies, and international exchanges.

For Lithuanian nationalists though, the *Cinema* is a monument to Soviet totalitarianism.² But from a political perspective, it's more complicated—we can't collapse things so trivially. We can see that the cinema is in fact the result of a liberal project; it was built in opposition to totalitarianism.

Public institutions were given great priority by the Soviets, no matter if it was Stalin or Khrushchev, primarily as vehicles of propaganda. Nevertheless, there was the possibility for free discussion in these places that you couldn't find in apartments or private spaces. Just look at the layout of Soviet apartments, with their kitchens built to hold only three people. It was impossible to meet in large groups. Public discussion could only happen at these gathering places, waiting in the queues before the cinema, or leaving the cinema and having a cigarette in the big square, or the big halls and ticket offices. There was inadvertently the possibility for things to loosen or to side-step control in these cultural centres, even under surveillance and repression.

SS: Has the project been to disseminate a different public image or reinterpretation of the cinema and its role in culture?

GU: Absolutely. But you see, from a neoliberal

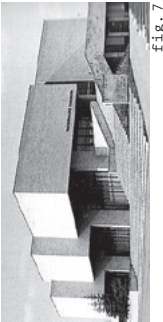


fig. 7

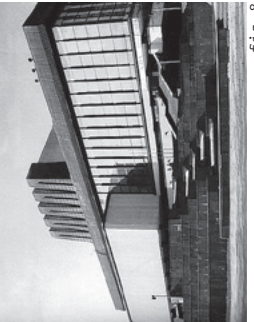


fig. 8

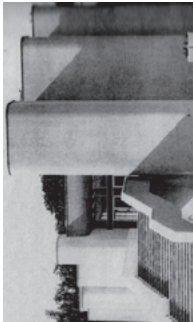


fig. 9



fig. 10



fig. 11

perspective any type of project that tries to renegotiate history is not profitable. It puts the dominant scenario into question. Our idea was to think more dialectically and critically about this history and to put into question the nationalist project, neoliberalism, and nostalgia. The past is not resolved, it must be re-negotiated.

SS: What is happening now with the project?

GU: Well, from the beginning, our work has tapped into this hybrid body of actors. There are all of these different negotiations centered around the cinema, coming from historians, nationalists, preservationists, urbanists, archaeologists, anarchists, students, film enthusiasts etc. We ended up squatting the theatre lobby and creating workshops. (fig. 12) Gradually we moved to the legal project, and that's where we are at the moment, involved in several lawsuits

that are attempting to create a precedent for public involvement in territorial planning and to challenge the very laws that define territorial planning.³

Our project was understood as threatening private property. Early on we declared that we wanted to question the privatization of the cinema—we made this very clear. The theatre is the biggest in Vilnius, it's in the centre of the city, it has a diverse audience, and it is known throughout the country. The questioning of the privatization of that particular site, because it is so charged, is seen as a threat to the very idea of privatization. Therefore we were accused of being nostalgic, Bolsheviks wanting to appropriate land.

SS: Is that what you want to do?

GU: That's a good question. First of all, 'we' is a multitude. Who is the 'we' in this project? There is a multiplicity of perspectives about the theatre and different desires for its future. For instance, there are architects who try to workshop new visions for the site. (Fig. 13) And then there is a very strong group of preservationists and heritage enthusiasts, and they are entirely against the architects because they think the site should not be touched. They say it is important because it is in front of the medieval defense wall, a site which was left unbuilt for centuries so the guards could maintain sight lines from the castle. So, the only other buildings around were valueless, small wooden buildings set up for trade. The Soviet cinema was the first prominent building to inhabit the space. Moreover the Soviets built the cinema atop the medieval water infrastructure. So, strangely, if they excavated it, either underneath, around or through the cinema, the city could have a fantastic water supply again. We were fantasizing about producing mineral water to subsidize our lawsuits! The project proposed by the private developers was planning to destroy the medieval infrastructure and build massive underground parking garages. There are a lot of contradictions between those who want to build and those who want to preserve.

SS: Are you more interested in bringing together as many of these contradictory perspectives as possible rather than resolving them or taking a position in relation to them?

GU: I think the former is right. If you look at our first calls and meetings we would say, "Lietuva is for all." It's not just for one group or one private interest. And we need to understand, or define, what a public interest is, though we do recognize that the public is agonistic—structurally so. The cinema can become this monument through which we re-negotiate these agonistic perspectives. We need to slow down the process of



fig. 12

development to accomplish this. We turned the site into a space of constant workshoping and constant negotiation of bodies. We have also introduced different vocabularies of public space into the legal framework, popular consciousness, and specialist jargons.



fig. 13

13. VIP Market, by ASK, Vilnius, April 2005. Nomedas Urbonas

14. Sold Out, banner action by Vilnius residents, April 2005. Nomedas Urbonas



fig. 14

15. America Will Help Us, action at Cinema Lietuva, Vilnius, June 2005. Nomedas Urbonas



fig. 15

SS: You are trying to return the theatre to what it was in Soviet times, a space of agonism and a space of freedom?

GU: Yes. And what's uncanny is that the nationalists today consider the former cinemas and housing as propaganda machines. But there were always unanticipated or double functions. When intellectuals were sitting around the table



fig. 16



fig. 17



fig. 18

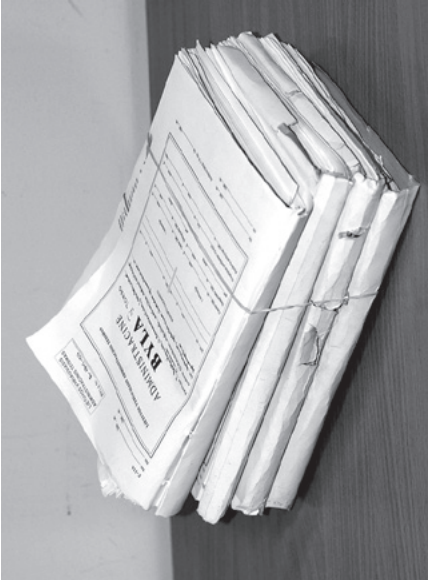


fig. 19

Lietuva case is an example of this very specific and uncanny communication that demands this subversive language.

I'll give you another example. Once we were understood as dismantling or even just questioning processes of privatization, there were no lawyers who would dare to join us. So as a consequence, one of the members of the movement, who was a musicologist, decided to go to law



fig. 20

16. Talk show as part of bus tour of cinemas in Vilnius, Lietuva TV, May 2005. Nomedas Urbonas

17. Developers' vision for the site. Date and author unknown.

18. Pro-Test Scarf, based on regional soccer scarves, August 2006. Nomedas Urbonas

19. Case files in Administrative Court, Vilnius, May 2007. Nomedas Urbonas

school. The court processes are so laborious and take so much time in Lithuania (we've been in the courts for almost five years now), you would not believe it. For example, they appointed a judge in October, and then in December they cancelled the hearing because the judge said that he is not objective because our lawyer was his student. Then they appointed another judge in January and announced the hearing would take place in March. Then it came out that this very judge announced a positive decision about our case in the lower courts a few years ago, so again they dismantled the court to announce another judge. Now we are waiting for the new judge to be announced, but it is summer and they won't do it during the summer because everyone is on vacation, so it won't be until the fall. This pace is in our favour because the musicologist has time to finish his law degree.

But to get back to the intellectuals and subversive language, one of the preservationists was sued by the developers for defamation of character. They had hired a media monitoring company to make records of all of our public speeches and gather all of our written statements. So we have to be very careful of how we speak. In one of the recordings the preservationist said, roughly, "companies like these are destroying places for kids to play, public parks, and cultural spaces, etc. The developers are taking over lots that used to be in the public good." So the developers brought her to court for defamation and provided these recordings as proof. In return, we commissioned the Lithuanian Institute of Semiotics to provide a counter analysis of the recordings. The president of the institute—who by the way is a good friend of Greimas's—successfully argued that the preservationist's comments were not defamatory by analyzing all of the pauses and the intonation of her speech. That's how we won the case!

You see, it's a war with many fronts.⁵

20. Current state of Cinema Lietuva, Vilnius, August 2009. Nomedas Urbonas

21. Gadimas Urbonas is an associate professor in the Art, Culture and Technology program at MIT. Nomedas Urbonas is PhD researcher at Norwegian University for Science and Technology. Gadimas and Nomedas represented Lithuania at the Biennale di Venezia, Italy, in 2007.

Notes

1. LIDL's full company name is Lidl Stiftung & Co. KG, a German supermarket chain with stores all over Eastern and Western Europe. The same is true of ALDI, whose full company name is ALDI Einkauf GmbH & Co. oHG.
2. Lithuanian nationalism has historical roots in the mid-19th century colonial Tsarist Russian project of russification, as a reaction to this threat of assimilation to the Russians or Poles. During the Stalinist era, nationalism was strengthened as a technique of separation and antagonism between the smaller "brother" and "sister" nations, and the "father of all nations" in the Soviet family.
3. During the summer of 2008, Citizens Group found that the Lithuanian translation of the Aarhus Convention (which guarantees public participation in spatial planning) was mistranslated in such a way that public participation was compromised. An appeal was made to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee, and the Lithuanian government reacted. In the next few months, a new translation was produced by the Lithuanian government and officially published. The incorrect translation, in effect for almost 10 years, had violated public rights and enabled the establishment of legal precedents that contradict the principles of the Convention. Such court practice is convenient for the developers and corrupt public administrators alike, causing major issues for the arguments of the Citizens Group.
4. Lithuanian Algirdas Julien Greimas is one of the most influential semioticians of the 20th century.
5. Eds. note: As of 6 June, 2011, the Cinema Lietuva court case has been once again delayed due to the resignation of the judge.



The Nightmare of Participation
(*Crossbench Praxis as a Mode of Criticality*)
Markus Miessen, Sternberg Press, 2010,
pp. 304
Reviewed by Seth Denizen

Clearly we are meant to ask: What is the nightmare of participation? Isn't participation great? What's the problem?

For Miessen, the problem of participation is the problem of consensus, or the way in which participatory frameworks produce consensus through the digestion or dilution of conflict. Presumably, Miessen's nightmare comes from the inextricability of this process from daily life. One might avoid playing board games with Miessen altogether—and the monstrous forms produced by such seemingly good intentions. As an architect, participation is also a problem for Miessen at a professional level. Architecture projects always start with a commission that is always conditional in one way or another, requiring the architect to participate in the intentions and desires of the brief. So, the question for Miessen is: what is the nature of this participation? Does it end in agreement? Obviously, Howard Roark was right to dynamite the Cortlandt Housing Project: those balconies were beyond compromise.¹ Or maybe not, but the issue for cultural production is the way in which participation exists in the grey area between producing nothing and wiring dynamite. It's this grey area that Miessen is trying to theorize through his critique of consensus, and providing alternatives to it through the introduction of a new species that he variously refers to as the "uninvited outsider" and the "cross-bench practitioner," meaning essentially an outside catalyst.

Those who might pick up this text for a critique of consensus, however, would

be better off reading Chantal Mouffe (on agonism) or Jacques Rancière (on dissensus), from whom Miessen borrows his analysis whole cloth. His reading of these texts is cursory and fails to devote a single page to a critical reflection on consensus as a term. It is, for instance, always presumed to be possible and to exist. Without this critique, consensus starts to take on some strange, positive existence in the book, becoming a kind of thing-in-itself; and if this is true for Miessen, I can see why it is such a nightmare.

Miessen's description of his new species is more interesting, however, as it starts to define a new relation for practice, in clear spatial terms that promise to become useful to those of us dealing with similar issues. But in trying to imagine this new species, this hypothetical outsider that he is trying to theorize always seems to take on the vague, apparitional appearance of Markus Miessen, in effect closing down the general applicability of the text. As Mouffe points out in an interview with Miessen printed in the book, "You are, in fact, clearly trying to theorize your own role?"² Miessen replies in the affirmative. The case studies Miessen provides also come mainly from his own work, and this is when the contradictions in his methods start to beckon some difficult questions. How do you write a book about the problematics of consensus and then fill it with assenting voices and positive examples? Contributing author Carson Chan points this out in the concluding text, along with the observation that by making his critique he was himself providing the missing dissensus. That, perhaps, is what friends are for.

But the problem is that for those who feel some kind of kinship with the 'uninvited outsider,' Miessen's text just isn't very useful. It reads more like William Gilpin's *Remarks on Forest Scenery, and other Woodland Views* than the *Army Field Manual*. Even in his most concrete examples, there seems to be an almost gentlemanly lack of concern for their applicability in practice. For example, Miessen walks us through the halls of two multinational consulting firms, McKinsey and Koenigswieser, showing us important principles of his theory, and then suggesting that "the concept and practice of the external consultant could be compared to and used as a useful—albeit partially problematic—example of the uninvited outsider or cross-bench practitioner."³ For someone attempting to use this text,

the difference between one who is invited—the consultant—and one who is not—the uninvited outsider—is important, yet not addressed. While the styles of intervention in organizational and institutional frameworks exemplified by each of the firms that Miessen describes are interesting, they remain sadly picturesque in their relationship to site. This is the problematic part.

Looking back at Miessen's introduction, it seems like much of it was written in anticipation of the kinds of critiques I am making here. It makes for a long list of apologies: "The material, research, and knowledge collated in this publication is not the result of endless weeks in libraries and archives;"⁴ "I am aware that the methodology at play is the ultimate nightmare for any academic;"⁵ and this may also be an apology: "Each one of the coming chapters can be understood as a galactic model, in which planets circulate around an empty void."⁶

Many of Miessen's apologies revolve around his assertion that he is in fact merely generating an archive, structured "not like a library, but an accumulation of different species of knowledge and matter congregated in a single (physical) container."⁷ For Miessen this is the start of an archive taking on a subject that does not yet have an archive. However, if this is an apology for the lack of coherence of his text, it cannot be an apology for its lack of concern for the relevance of the archive with regard to its potential users. While Miessen seems perfectly capable of filling a single (physical) container full of things and calling it an archive, it's not at all clear what these things amount to. A more pressing question seems to be: What does Markus Miessen have against the library?

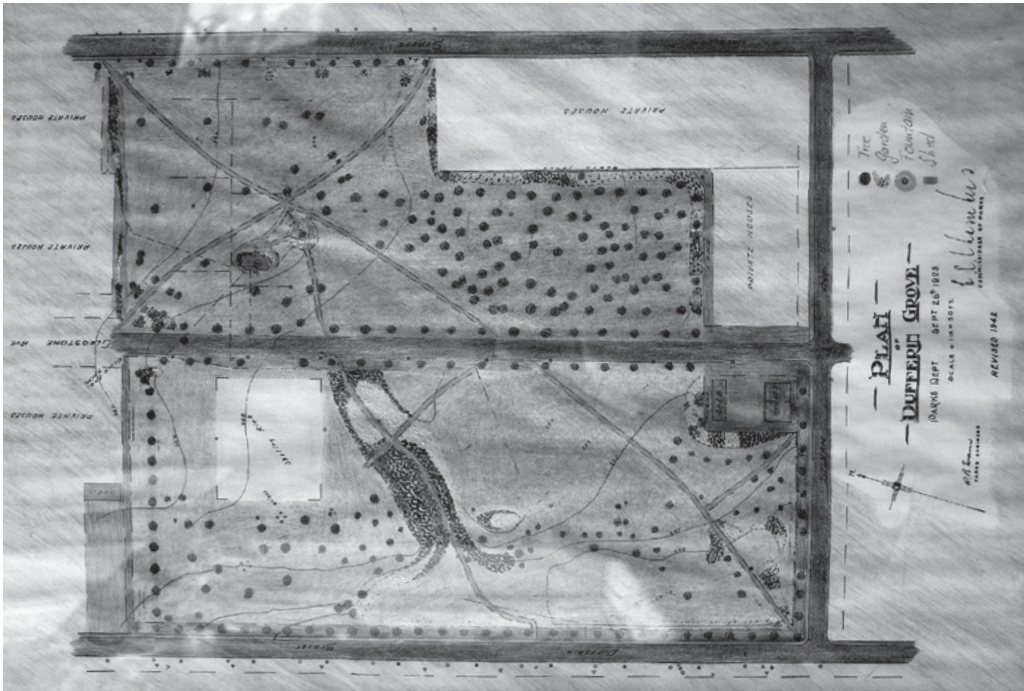
Seth Denizen is a landscape architecture masters candidate at the University of Virginia. He holds a degree in science from the University of McGill in Montréal, where he studied the Pliocene evolutionary biology of the Panamanian Isthmus. His work includes radio, sculpture, freelance reporting, and the cross breeding of mint.

Notes

1. Howard Roark is the protagonist of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*.
2. Markus Miessen, *Nightmare of Participation* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2010), 155.
3. Ibid., 170.
4. Ibid., 18.
5. Ibid., 25.
6. Ibid., 15.
7. Ibid., 24.

Review

Nightmare of Participation



Friends of Appropriation:
An Interview with Jutta Mason,
Dufferin Grove Park, Toronto

Parks, courts, rinks, pools, and playgrounds, created with public funds by city governments for citizens, are icons of design as service. When cities give us fantastic parks we are grateful; when they do not we are resentful. When we act as individuals and collectives to form and reform the public realm we become participants and creators. We loosen the degenerative face of government and external parental authority to claim our own authority and desires.

Dufferin Grove Park is a 14-acre park located in a mixed-income neighbourhood in downtown Toronto, Canada. Prior to 1992, it was a relatively uninhabited grassed space with trees, a soccer pitch, skating rink, and playground facing a mall parking lot. Like other city parks that became under-utilized after urban flight, Dufferin Grove was perceived as dangerous and monitored by a security company. The ad-hoc citizens' group *Friends of Dufferin Grove Park* emerged in 1992 led by resident Jutta Mason, whose outspoken and combative advocacy for the park is well-known to Parks employees. Through her example of democratic participation and activist provocation, the community has slowly transformed Dufferin Grove into a true commons, welcoming all ages at all hours, all year round. The Friends' website includes information on arts in the park, bake ovens, campfires, the cob-constructed courtyard where you can get snacks and drinks, the playground and wading pool, dogs, the weekly farmer's market, and weekly community outdoor dinners (year-round, even in winter).¹ SCAPEGOAT interviewed Jutta Mason to learn more about how Dufferin Grove has become a local and international model for creative civil disobedience and an example of activist architecture reforming a piece of public infrastructure.

"The Friends of Dufferin Grove Park are not an organization. There is no executive, no annual meetings, no formal status... There is no schedule to how these things are given, no five-year plan—it's (sorry) organic."¹

1992: Neighbourhood offered new playground equipment by mall developers. Community organizes to discuss.

1993: Adventure-playground style playground with sand pit opened; first garden and basketball court opened; rink reconstruction begins. *Friends of Dufferin Grove Park* named.

1994: Dufferin Grove Rink House built by the City of Toronto with zamboni garage, gender-segregated toilets, and skate change rooms.

1995: First bake oven built.

1996: More gardens built. The rink house reconfigured by local residents. One weekend, local residents began transforming the solid brick rink house piece by piece into a vibrant community gathering place. Today, Friday night park dinners are cooked in its communal kitchen; the farmer's market weaves through its doors; giant puppets repose in its rafters for seasonal parades; the smell of bread baking envelops the building, and, during blizzards, you enter greeted by freshly baked cookies and hot chocolate served by City staff.

Jutta Mason: Nineteen ninety-six was still before Toronto's amalgamation into a 'megacity'—people still talked to each other. We talked to the Director of Building Inspection at the City, and

he told us to get the local City building inspector in. He knew the place wasn't liked. He told us that the walls in the middle of the building weren't load-bearing. Then we got a quote from the City to tear down about 10 feet of wall. Six to eight thousand dollars. They told us to start fundraising! So we just started with a spike, chipping away at the mortar, and when you do that you can very gently take a block down. It's quite easy, actually – it took us 6 hours. We had the key, did it after hours. We basically knew we had City approval, knew the building wasn't going to fall down; we just didn't have the money. So why not just go and do it? At that time people still had a sense of humour. Everyone at the City was laughing. Everyone knows how long and complicated it is to do anything at the City.

1997: Wood stove installed in rink house. Lights replaced.

JM: Next was the stove. The following year, we petitioned for money and we had an electrician come in on the weekend and hook it up in the rink office when the staff wasn't here. Last year some people came in and said, "Who gave you permission for this stove? You have to take it out!" There was no record. They'd forgotten. We just ignored them and eventually they forgot. The stove was donated by the Maytree Foundation.

Then the lights, awful lights, fluorescents. Home Depot showed up to donate \$1,000 worth of stuff, so we got this track lighting in here. The

old fluorescents made people look green. I felt that behaviour around here would get better if people looked better. And it was true.

Then we realized that the wall separating the men's and women's change areas was a pain—boys and girls would raid each other's sides; there was so much fighting and cursing, and graffiti. There was all this tension created. It took one weekend day to take it down. Then we thought if it smelled a little better in here it would help. Maybe food. The kitchen was a slop room where caretakers kept their pails, and that was our water supply. Typically the office at a rink is used for the staff and their pals—you could see it through the window but you couldn't talk to them. We got the permission/suggestion to take the picture window out of that office. Then we had an open hatch. Then when winter came, the zamboni staff came and found their office was a community room. They were not happy.

Then we started to bake cookies. The smell was amazing. People came in the door and said "Oh! Food!" Then we thought that the bad behaviour was because people were hungry. So we had cookies, apples, and a Jamaican patty maker... and people started acting nicer. So you've got windows, space, lighting, warmth, food. And then the staff.

1998: Staff changes at the rink were instigated to encourage female employees. The City contract with the private security company was cancelled due to a decrease in crime.

Utopie: Texts and Projects, 1967–1978

Utopie: Texts and Projects, 1967–1978
Craig Buckley and Jean-Louis Violeau, eds.,
Jean-Marie Clarke, trans. Semiotext(e),
2011, 264 pp.
Reviewed by Will Orr

The French interdisciplinary journal *Utopie* is primarily remembered for its endorsement of pneumatic architecture in the late 1960s, and was largely overshadowed by their counterparts in the Situationist International. The aim of Semiotext(e)'s recent edition of *Utopie's* texts is to expand the limited picture we have of this group to one reflecting the diversity of contributors and scope of work published under the apt title "Utopia." The introduction to the volume, written by co-editor Craig Buckley, lays out the historical and social context in which the group of urbanists, architects, landscape architects, sociologists, and various combinations of the above, wrote and produced the journal. *Utopie* was born under the tutelage of Henri Lefebvre, whose influence is particularly clear in the first half of the book, right up to "From Urban Science to Urban Strategy," his own essay. It is unfortunate that it follows a number of similarly titled and themed texts, such that Lefebvre's work seems derivative of his pupils', rather than the other way around. This somewhat repetitive sequence is probably this edition's only flaw.

A number of the texts in the first half are direct assaults on the concept of urbanism itself; they present a series of important critiques, though they could have been further developed with examples. The first relates to the disciplinary question of urbanism. In "The Logic of Urbanism" and "Architecture as a Theoretical Problem" (texts both written

collectively), the authors argue that a "pluridisciplinary team" is required for a thorough analysis of the city, but that unfortunately the product of such work is generally technocratic and fails to address "urbanism" as a problematic category.¹ It appears that in its first incarnation (Issues 1 to 3), the journal was composed of such an interdisciplinary team—one set to tackle the question of urbanism itself. A further focus is the place of the city in history, beginning with the Marxist perspective of the city as the site of the development of industry and production. *Utopie* puts the city at the frontline of revolutionary action and state oppression. The events of May '68 loom particularly large over this section, though, strangely, they are rarely confronted directly. The overall message contained here is that the "urban project," "urban practice," or the question of "urbanism" in general, is paradoxically impossible and yet crucial to virtually every field of research—from sociology and psychology to architecture and economics.

As for the specifically architectural interests of the journal—the ephemerality of modern architecture in general, or inflatable architecture in particular—we get an interesting mix of positions. In the middle of "Becoming Outdated," an article by Jean Aubert celebrating (though not without some irony) the trend of planned obsolescence, there is a marginal text by Baudrillard categorically declaring that the obsession with newness and the "formal research of the architect" can only reinforce "the irrational logic and the strategy of the cultural class system."² And directly following this controversy, we find Baudrillard's own text celebrating the liberating potential of "ephemeral" architecture. This section of the volume, replete with ads, illustrations, and collages, is quite successful in presenting the foment of the early issues of the journal, whose contributors were designers as well as theorists.

As the journal transformed itself into a strictly textual publication in Issue 4, theoretical questions about urbanism returned. The theory developed from this point on, particularly by Jean Baudrillard, seems to have escaped the deadlock of the post-1968 avant-gardes that Manfredo Tafuri addresses in his work of the early 1970s.³ In "The Mirror of Production," Baudrillard questions the centrality of production

itself in revolutionary politics and practice. The result is both more abstract and more precise, retroactively casting a certain light on the earlier importance of ephemerality in architecture.

Particularly striking is the anonymously written (though it was later attributed to Baudrillard) polemical text, “The Environmental Witch Hunt.” Baudrillard and Jean Aspin brought this as their contribution to the 1970 International Design Conference in Aspen, where they appeared as part of the “French Delegation.”⁴ In the current context of global warming and green-washing, where virtually all design funding goes to “developments in sustainability,” this piece has only become more meaningful. It is worth quoting here:

The therapeutic mythology which tries to convince us that, if things are going wrong, it is due to microbes, to virus, or to some biological dysfunction, this therapeutic mythology hides the political fact, the historical fact that it is a question of social structures and social contradictions, not a question of illness or deficient metabolism, which could easily be cured. All the designers, the architects, the sociologists who are acting like medicine men toward this ill society are accomplices in this interpretation of the question in terms of illness, which is another form of hoax.⁵

This critique of environmentalism, which we can now extend to sustainability, biopolitics and biomorality, is precise. Such a clear denunciation of the post-critical hoax leaps from these pages like a lightning-bolt from a turbulent sky. Notwithstanding the aforementioned treatment of urbanism by various contributors in the earlier issues, it is primarily the texts by Baudrillard that provide the explosive force in *Utopie*.

There are a number of other important themes from the issues of *Utopie* covered in this compilation. Two articles dedicated to “technics,” one of which was also written by Baudrillard, develop an interesting critique of technology on the grounds that it participates just like other “cultural” forms in the structuring of the class system. As well, a number of articles dedicated to the question of death mark the end of the volume.

In a design world saturated by images of current and past projects (particu-

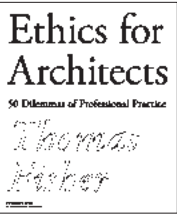
larly en vogue are the radical, utopian projects of the ‘60s and ‘70s) and utterly confounded by post-critical and pseudo-technical discourses such as sustainability, intelligent systems, and emergent forms, moments of critical lucidity such as these are most valuable. The helpful introduction and afterword allow the volume to be read with an eye toward their original context. However, it is equally viable and perhaps more exciting to read these texts against contemporary problems in design and design theory, problems which largely had their roots in the time of this journal’s publication. Utopia was not written in the future tense!

Will Hutchins Orr is a graduate student at the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design of the University of Toronto. His current thesis work involves the difficult relationship between architecture and the city. Drawing on the history of city-states, his project centres on the radical potential of territoriality to combat “urbanism” in the contemporary city.

Notes

1. Craig Buckley and Jean-Louis Violeau, eds., Jean-Marie Clarke, trans. *Utopie: Texts and Projects, 1967-1978* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), 131.
2. Ibid., 91.
3. See Manfredo Tafuri, “The Ashes of Jefferson” in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), 291-303
4. Buckley and Violeau, *Utopie*, 17.
5. Ibid., 243.

Ethics for Architects: 50 dilemmas of Professional Practice
Thomas Fisher, Princeton Architectural Press, 2010, 144 pp.



The Ethical Slut: A Guide to Infinite Sexual Possibilities
Dossie Easton and Catherine A. Liszt, Greenery Press, 1997, 280 pp.
Reviewed by Christie Pearson

Thomas Fisher is Dean of the College of Design at the University of Minnesota. His book, *Ethics for Architects*, irritated me, and I felt the need to have a companion work as a foil to help me understand why. *The Ethical Slut* by Dossie Easton and Catherine A. Liszt jumped off the shelf. The following passages suggest a certain affinity between the two texts:

“To my father, who first sparked my interest in ethics, and my mother, who showed me how to live a good life.”
—Fisher, *Ethics for Architects*, dedication.

“So focus on abundance, and create your environmental ecology rich in the good things of life—warmth and love and sex.”
—Easton and Liszt, *The Ethical Slut*, 183.

These two quotes both take *goodness* to be worthwhile, something we should think about. It is suggested that the reader might share the authors’ definitions of the good, though perhaps they suggest two

Ethics for Architects, The Ethical Slut

tion. People started talking about what a multi-purpose room should be. Why should it be used just three months of the year? You have to just keep saying ‘This doesn’t make sense!’ Eventually though, they will cave in if you are determined enough—but they’ll never say, ‘You were right in the first place.’

It’s interesting how a building so unimaginative can be so flexible, because it’s long and not already set up. And for such a tiny amount of money! I love cheap buildings, cheap parks. People think that’s a bad word: it means you want things to fall down! This is also connected to the feminine, though. Women know what to do: use what’s in the pantry already.

2005: Breastfeeding becomes a public controversy when a community member breastfeeding in the living room-like rink house gets into an argument with Mason, who is pro-public breastfeeding, but objected to the specific context. Media coverage highlights the nuances and complexities of behaviour in public places.

2010: Scandal: a well-loved park supervisor is transferred to another district and local residents suspect the City of trying to undermine the creative collaboration.

SS: These last two events bring us to the present state of Toronto, a shifting territory marked by right-wing privatizers at City Hall and the continuing decline of funding for city parks, public housing, and a host of other amenities taken for granted before the 1998 amalgamation. The newly formed Park People group has grown out of Dave Harvey’s 2010 Metcalf Foundation report on the state of Toronto Parks.³ The report offers Dufferin Grove as a model of what our parks could be if we transformed our passive relation to the city into an active one. However, the report also makes examples of American parks operated or funded by individual and corporate funds. At a Park People summit, Tupper Thomas, the public administrator of Prospect Park in Brooklyn, proudly described the rejuvenation of the park by volunteers, noting at the same time that the number of park employees has declined dramatically over the past few decades. Only one Toronto counselor present at the meeting stood up to contest the under-funding of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division. It is clear that the City of Toronto feels it is unable to dedicate the tax dollars and collective energy that would be required to transform its own parks.

In this context, the most entitled citizens of our cities will get what they want in their neighborhoods, but there are many parks in the city that may never find a group of volunteers to make them safer, more beautiful, dynamic or useful. British Prime Minister David Cameron has called on ‘volunteerism’ to relieve government from its role as protector of the public realm. Around the world there is a strong tension today in terms of what we want our governments to be: paternal disciplinarians, invisible entities allowing self-regulating individuals and groups to actualize as they wish, or collective voices serving all citizens equally. We are called upon to make our next move!

Notes

1. Friends of Dufferin Grove Park website, www.dufferinpark.ca/home/wiki/wiki.php
2. Center for Local Research into Public Space website, www.ceios.ca/wiki/wiki.php
3. Park People website: www.parkpeople.ca; see also Fertile Ground for New Thinking: www.8-80cities.org/Articles/Fertile_Ground_for_New_Thinking%20-%20Toronto%20Parks.pdf

2000: Founding of the Centre for Local Research into Public Space (CELOS), a research organization connected to Dufferin Grove.² CELOS, whose acronym is inspired by Ivan Illich’s CIDOC (Centro Intercultural de Documentación), is a non-profit corporation focusing on urban public spaces, commons and parks. Their mandate is to research the use and administration of public spaces, as well as experiment with new ways of using and disseminating information about them.

SS: Are there other places or people who have inspired you?

JM: Yes. One is the Peckham Experiment, which went on between wars in working-class England. Private money built a community centre, and you could join for very little money. They had a farm, the building was made out of glass so you could see everyone. It was drop-in and you could do as you wanted. Another inspiration is the Children’s Storefront in Toronto. Started in 1976 on Bathurst Street, it is just an old store you could drop in five days a week. My kids semi-grow up there. No classes, no circle time, just caregivers and children, and you could read or meet other parents. It’s all about friendship. The key elements here are drop-in, no classes, and fostering friendship in community. Riva Novick started it—respecting parents as full, underslept adults. Not like the community centres where you felt like you were in kindergarten, there was interesting political conversation. Kind of like the playground: the kids are busy, you find interesting people. No infantilization!

2002: Weekly Farmer’s Market begins.
2003: Weekly Friday Night Suppers begin.
2004: City inspectors try to shut down community use of the rink house’s zamboni room.

JM: The building acts as a staging area for the rest of the park activities. The kitchen funds the playground café. Just before Christmas some health and safety inspectors said ‘Hey, you can’t have a kitchen where the zamboni is, take it out!’ They told us lots of made-up rules. It got in the papers. In the garage we had puppets hanging from the rafters—they made them go. They said a space with a zamboni can’t have anything else in it, but there is in fact no such recogni-



Scapegoat Says: You have City staff serving tea in here. How did you convince the staff that their job description was going to change?

JM: Rink guards, they were all guys. So we started by saying we need girls as well as guys. So Tino, the supervisor, said OK. They hired two female university students. It was really hard for them, people gave them a tough time. In 1997 it was very rare to have women working in the rinks because it was perceived as tough, with an edgy vibe. Then the families came.

1999: Ten thousand skaters use the rink.

JM: Every year users doubled. We didn’t anticipate the success of the skate rental. Tino heard you could get equipment from the NHL Players’ Association, like complete hockey outfits. We got 50 sets and kept the sticks, gloves, helmets, and skates. We realized that what was keeping a lot of people from skating was skates, especially new immigrants. Then we got even more donations, over 100 pairs.



love as in architecture. They are both social, communicative, pleasurable, without predetermined outcomes, and can contribute to well-being or disappointment.

The *Ethical Slut* argues that freely chosen agreements are supported by empathy and the assumption of a shared desire for “warmth, love, and sex,” but nothing else. The slut must make a constant effort to articulate to others what their wishes and needs are, and much of the book is an itemization of pitfalls in communication, clarity, and honesty. Most of all, *The Ethical Slut* instructs us to respect our feelings and the feelings of others, which seems to be a recipe for an adult ethics not based on predetermined rules.

Ethics for Architects takes a moral code

enforced by law as a means to achieving a good life. In his emphasis on ‘should’ and behavioural regulation, Fisher has no problem determining the right and wrong answer to an ethical conundrum. For example, the section *Obligations to Colleagues—Office Affairs* offers a nice liaison between the two texts. A married boss is having an affair with an employee, so Fisher recommends that the other employees send their boss an unsigned letter reading, “If we are to have dirty hands, better that it comes from doing what we think is right than participating in what we know to be wrong.”³ The instruction is to focus on a moral law and to model ourselves on an authoritative punitive apparatus to which we are subversive, while at the same time propagating

it. This could be even more miserable in combination with office politics.

Let’s return to my feeling of irritation. *Ethics for Architects* lacks delightful or empathic information that would make an ethics meaningful. Stating that you identify 100% with your role as a public servant is neither believable nor admirable—why should our ethics begin and end there? I admire the effort of the AIA to articulate their identity in word and deed. I admire Fisher for trying to breathe life into a code that is certainly relevant, but which many people have never looked at. But for me, my boredom and irritation signal that the approach is devoid of the liveliness that *The Ethical Slut* offers. In my imagined delightful world, we would all practice a living, situat-

ed practice of ethics based on agreements. Our laws can support our agreements and rules, while we maintain an earthy humour and a recognition of the many emotional dimensions without censor or fear—a good life that includes *all* the goods.

Toronto-based artist, writer and architect **Christie Pearson** enjoys working in collaboration to produce interdisciplinary events, performances, and installations that amplify our bodies’ relation to our natural and constructed environments (www.christiepearson.ca). She a co-founder of the WADE festival of installation and performance art (www.wadetoronto.com); produces sound events with THE WAVES (www.thewaves.ca); and is a member of the performance collective URBANVESSEL (www.urbanvessel.com).

Notes

1. The details of each “obligation” can be found at: www.archrecord.construction.com/practice/pdfs/04aiaa_ethics.pdf

2. Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950).

3. Thomas Fisher, *Ethics for Architects* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2010).

Review

Ethics for Architects, The Ethical Slut



skills of the workers present during construction—women or men. Due to the rotation of jobs, everyone has a chance to learn and teach new skills. At the beginning and end of each day there is a meeting for collective planning and evaluation. These conversations provide important learning opportunities on the construction site and require that the architects who work with Usina also assume educational roles. It is important to direct and potentiate the issues that inevitably emerge by politicizing them and broadening their reach.

The Potentials of Construction Within a Participatory Mutual Aid Approach

Working on weekends, after a week of hard work, is not easy for anyone. This process only makes sense when politicized by:

Gender: Construction is traditionally a male setting, which can be modified with the presence of women on the building site. In this situation, the traditional male role is questioned and diminished.



buildings on the land. As the future dwellers and builders of these homes, the families chose materials and techniques not based on financial return but on their quality and workability. The self-management of resources directed funds towards bigger and better living spaces rather than contractor profit. Command over the whole process has had a very clear political-economic effect: the concrete experience of self-management.

Over the past twenty years, the institution of participatory mutual aid has undergone significant changes. Today, Usina’s main goals are to provide support for the self-management of public financial resources on construction sites and the organization of building cooperatives. Through the strengthening of self-management, families are ever more integrated into the entirety of the construction process, shifting control from capitalist construction companies to the workers. This type of practical and effective popular organizing can be the seed for other organizations with broader social goals. Usina believes that projects organized in this way create different spaces than capitalist developments, and as such, demonstrate a new model for urban production. This process involves practical experimentation—including all of its difficulties and contradictions—necessary for a grassroots rather than vanguardist proposal for an alternative society.

How it Works: The Construction Site

The construction site is “mixed”: during the week it is run by contract workers and on the weekends by the workers’ collective. In the current Comuna Urbana Dom Hélder Câmara project, which is linked to the Landless Movement (MST),² Usina and the participating families formulate a list of materials and pass it to the buyer, who is a worker on the construction team as well as a family member. The buyer is responsible for quoting, sourcing, and purchasing materials. Payments are then processed by another worker, who is also a manager and responsible for making payments and controlling expenses. The manager is also financially invested in the project and the families’ organization. Building materials are organized on site by a stockman, who is also a family member. Necessary services are defined, implemented, and monitored by Usina throughout the week. At the beginning of the process, workers were hired by a contractor. They have since been replaced by organized workers, who are now in the process of forming a building cooperative.

During the weekends, families are divided into three groups (chosen during an assembly) that rotate jobs. These groups have specific functions: to coordinate, to buy or stock materials, to care for children, to monitor worker safety, or to tend the kitchen and clean common spaces. They meet every week to organize the project without the presence of Usina. At the end of every construction stage, Usina meets with the group to evaluate the process and plan future steps. Usina then proposes the necessary services, tasks and a schedule.

The workers’ collective is composed of one

USINA: A Workers’ Collective in Collaboration With Popular Movements by Usina, translated from Portuguese by Paola Ricci



Architecture and Social Movements

The 1989 introduction of the participatory, mutual aid approach to São Paulo’s housing programs meant empowerment in housing construction. Until then, public housing had always been built by the private sector with government support. As a result, housing units were standardized in their design and materials in order to increase contractors’ financial gain. The introduction of self-managed building programs marked the start of a new understanding of housing (and consequently of the city) as a space to be used. The families whose housing was being developed began running the process, starting from the initial project design stage. They would define, together with contracted technical advisory groups, the layout of the units, as well as the siting of the

The idea of service may be reinterpreted through Usina’s re-organization of the relationships among the different agents involved in the production of housing. The aim of Usina is to subvert the typical relationship between professional and client, where one side gives and the other receives. In Brazil, *mutirão* auto-gestão, the housing policy of self-managed participatory mutual aid, was institutionalized during the first Labour Party administration in São Paulo.¹ Usina was born at the same time to provide support and multi-disciplinary expertise to community-led initiatives and housing cooperatives. This approach aims to encourage collectively organized communities through the construction of public housing and related programs. We are seeking a different format for city-making.



Where Art Belongs
Chris Kraus, Semiotext(e), 2011, 171 pp.
Reviewed by Emily Stoddart

Where does art belong? And, should we care? The French theorist Jean Baudrillard wrote *The Conspiracy of Art* 15 years ago, and the text ushered in a comportment of skepticism toward art practice by aligning art production with the takeover by capitalism.¹ For many critical readers, a theory of art stems from other readings about art, the result of a prevailing distrust toward any material production. To confront an art object without such theoretical buffers is rare. Presumably, in many intellectual circles, art belongs to art theory and thus runs the natural and inevitable risk of getting raped by the art market. In *Where Art Belongs*, the eighth in Semiotext(e)'s Intervention Series of small but urgent books, Chris Kraus offers a provocation on the subject in question—and deftly sidesteps an answer. But what her work is not is deliberate conspiracy

theory. While it may be an assumed requirement, *Where Art Belongs* has no manifesto, and Kraus avoids an explicit condemnation of capitalism or art production. She offers no rallying cry. Rather, using a similar style of reportage applied in her last book, *Video Green: Los Angeles Art and the Triumph of Nothingness* (2004), Kraus writes for and about the contemporary art scene. There is narrative integrity, however. By emphasizing the self through her repetitive use of the first-person pronoun, Kraus actually pinpoints the “truth” of contemporary art-making via the truism of “self-help”—a manual mindset for modern times. Being both unnecessary and subjective, she brilliantly exploits her intellectual platform to create an extremely contemporary, and politically driven, text-based work of art. Beginning with the essay “Tiny Creatures,” Kraus describes in great detail the activity of Janet Kim and friends as they mount and subsequently take down a successful arts space in the now-gentrified Echo Park neighbourhood of Los Angeles. Describing the venture from its meager beginnings to its rise—and eventual downfall—as coveted art world hotspot, Kraus incorporates the various manifestos written by Kim to declare the mandate of the space while revealing its temporality. Using avant-garde structures and theory for traction, Kraus expounds on political philosophical references while purposely embracing the daily activity of Kim. The essay has no real point other than to emphasize the life of those involved in the Tiny Creatures project. However, a growing complexity concerning

the greater narrative/protagonist occurs throughout the essay. It's akin to remembering Tony Smith's experience of driving through the New Jersey turnpike at night—Kim's recollection of her gallery's formation points toward the “unfinished”—and offers a depiction without any resolution. Indeed, the physical space of Tiny Creatures—its creation and subsequent demise—mirrors the state of ruin and decline so often explored and romanticized by the Ab Ex cliché, and further embraced by artists like Cady Noland or Robert Smithson.² By both remembering and acting upon the memories of activity, Kraus invites the reader to participate in a sense of promise that is unformed, unresolved, and temporary. The book's most important move occurs when Kraus goes beyond the emptiness and hallucinatory potential of L.A. as her source material, taking on a wider contemporary context that originates in Kraus's own practice and bases itself only temporarily in an artist or art object. While she traces the remnants of a still influential European critical lens, her focus on the daily practice, habits, and particularities—the temporalities of existence—confronts default theoretical positions as mere repetitions of avant-garde structures. Take, for example, Kraus's essay on the Bernadette Corporation (BC) and their decision to mount an epic poem at Greene Naftali in New York in 2009. Deciding to show the poem as their primary installation (framed and hung on the gallery wall, without any online or print reproduction), BC was met by confused colleagues who were shocked to see a poem

as a work of art. Coily, Kraus addresses the topic of “art writing”—namely, the growing trend of writers who have no art historical background taking on the task of writing about art. In doing so she addresses those artists who presume that text will “take over” conventional art-making. By shedding light on our conventional categories without didactically assessing them, Kraus utilizes her text to offer up suggestions about making while nimbly emphasizing the actual event. Armed with a poetic sensibility and phenomenological appreciation, *Where Art Belongs* is far reaching and, inevitably, a failure: in short, it is a great example of a living, breathing piece of contemporary visual text-as-art. In her essay about Malcolm McLaren, “Twelve Words, Nine Days,” Kraus remarks, “It is possible for someone to be highly intelligent, and yet have no information.”³ Her looping, irreverent text also signals the “brilliance of boredom.” Absence, displacement, and negation are key ingredients. In the essay “Untreated Strangeness,” Kraus thrusts upon us three artists who seemingly have no direct connection to each other—Jorge Pardo, Naomi Fisher, and George Porcari—taunting the reader to wait it out. Without direction, we relay back to considerate deliberation, mimicking the oft-tortured creative process. What is important to emphasize is that Kraus is not simply “surrendering” herself to the spectacle that is normally attacked for its lack of coherent content or ability. Instead, *Where Art Belongs* characterizes the broader context, and problem, of being an artist and making real, tangible work in the

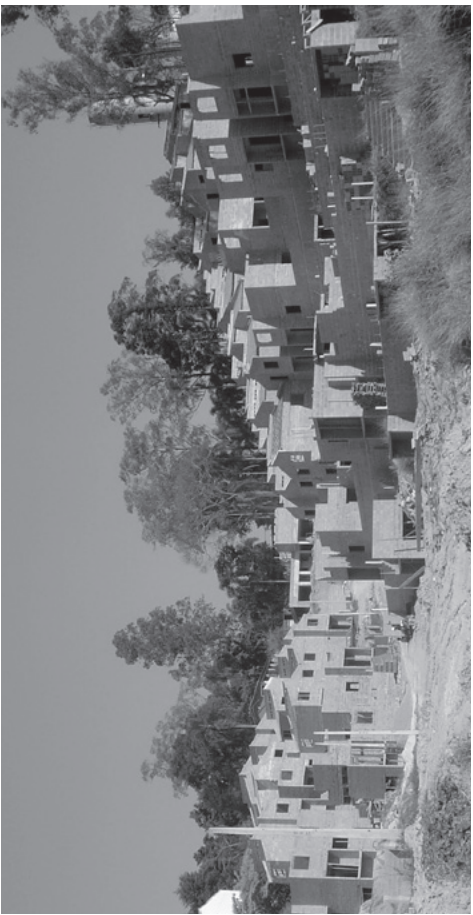
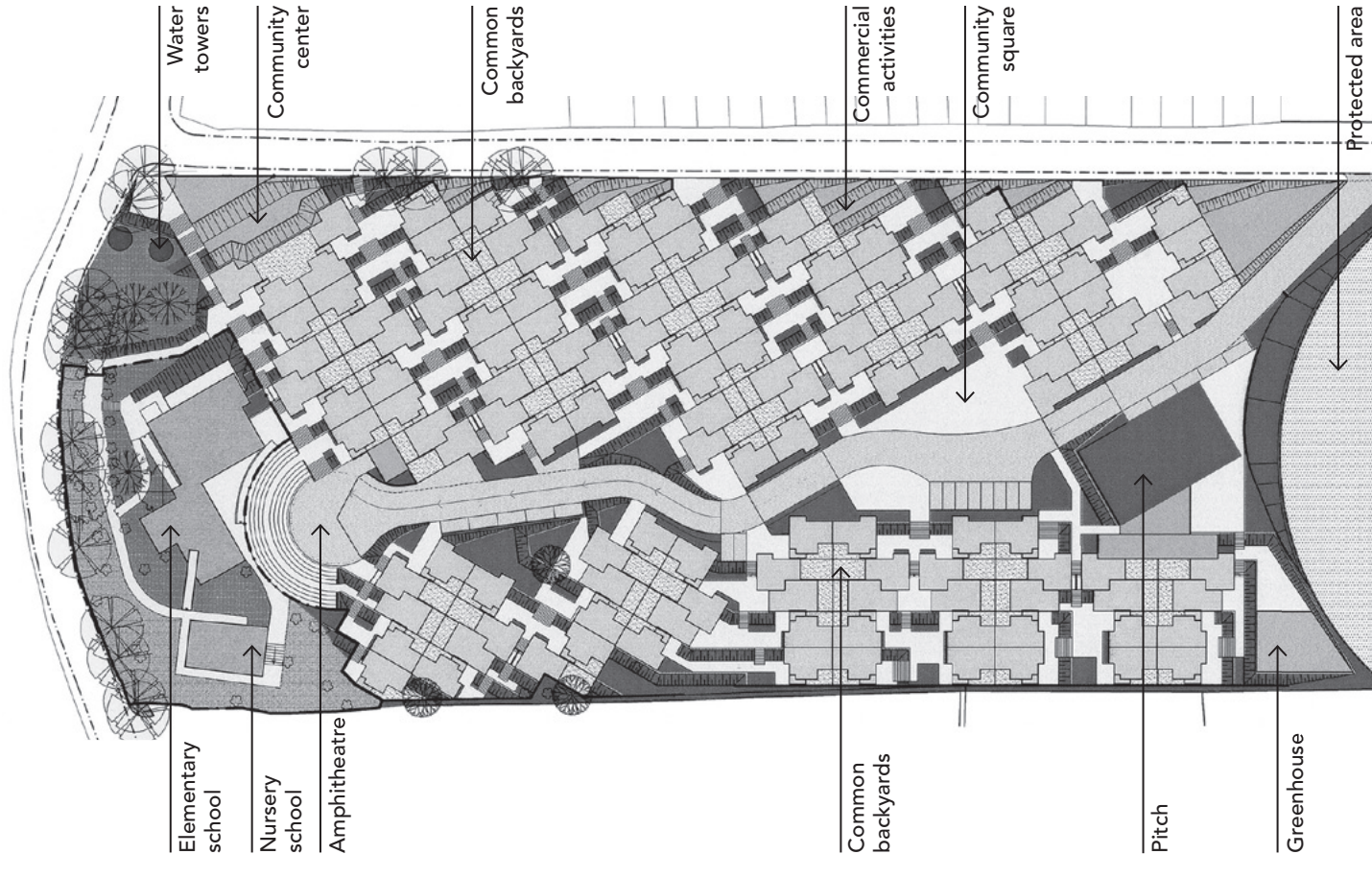
world. Because a ‘practice’ is a daily routine, it is never a masterpiece. In this regard, rather than assuming the position of critique with regard to capitalist conventions, Kraus examines what can actually be made as reproducible, visible, and perceivable in spite (or because) of the blinding light of an expanding global capitalism. Rather than a “triumph” over nothingness, Kraus offers a bit more hope toward a return toward visible, tangible, and perceptive art practices.

Emily Stoddart is a painter and writer. She is also the co-founder and managing editor of CART NY, an online media channel and content creation atelier for Canadian artists working in New York City and internationally. She is currently an MFA candidate in Painting at Hunter College in New York.

- Notes
1. Jean Baudrillard, *The Conspiracy of Art* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2005).
 2. The concept of “unfinishedness” in art practice is a term explored by the art historian Katy Siegel, to whom I am indebted for this research. She discusses the term in greater detail in a recent interview; see Phong Bui, “In Conversation: Katy Siegel with Phong Bui,” *Brooklyn Rail* (May 2011), 24-26.
 3. Chris Kraus, *Where Art Belongs* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2011), 155-56.

Review

Where Art Belongs



Notes

1. The first Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) government in São Paulo, led by Mayor Luiza Brundina, lasted from 1989 to 1992.
2. Dom Helder Câmara Urban Commune project, linked to The Landless Movement (MST). This is the first “urban settlement” of the MST and aims to integrate housing (128 houses), work, education, culture, recreation and environmental preservation in the same project. The families were evicted twice from the slums where they lived and were organized under through the proposal to build an ‘Urban Commune.’ The families rejected standard social housing design offered by City Hall and hired Usina, who were already working with the MST to develop their own project. After several collective activities four types of semi-detached houses were designed, at 66m2, and about 10 units each, representing the core organizational system implemented by the MST. Urbanization has been designed with living squares, including productive landscapes, permeable streets, amphitheater, sports court, workshops, community bakery, preschool and nursery. The houses include shared backyards; the families decide whether to keep the backyards open or to create partitions.

the improvement of living conditions for the lower-income population and provide support in political engagement processes, in the struggle for social justice, and in the recognition of rights to land, housing, and the city. For more information, see www.usinaacta.org.br

Paola Risci lives in São Paulo, where she works in early childhood and environmental education. She's been involved in urban social and environmental assessment projects, and developed the company Samba to promote equitable and sustainable Brazilian products. Paola is, at the moment, a mother, educator, lover of cities, of people, and of nature.

Hierarchy: Construction is an extremely hierarchical environment. When agents change roles to exchange experiences and create a mutual learning environment this structure is affected. Each agent may contribute and all workers are, and feel, necessary.

Denaturalization of processes: When conflicts are resolved through self-management, construction processes are denaturalized and treated in a more rational manner, as they are intended for use rather than exchange.

Right to the final product: When a worker will also use what they make, there is a greater sense of responsibility for the final product. This is unlike usual capitalist relations of production where the worker is violently alienated from what he makes.

Collective gains and difficulties: Through the participatory mutual aid approach the difficulties of the project are explicit to the workers, strengthening the process of self-management.

Effectiveness of self-management for all families: If self-management were limited to coordinating the building site, it would be much harder for everyone to participate because the management roles are very few and the need for workers very large.

The Internal Organization of Usina
Usina is a self-managed collective. All workers, regardless of age, gender, experience or profession, have the same rights and duties. Everyone receives the same hourly wage; all make proposals and decisions, and have access to all financial and operational data in the office. There are weekly general meetings to discuss current projects, exchange experiences, and make decisions about the collective. Everyone rotates through different roles such as coordination, stocking, and financial and operational management. Each member fills out their own timesheets, partakes in administration, general meetings, and soliciting new projects. All hours receive the same pay, signifying that all roles are critical to Usina's work. Workers also account, and are reimbursed, for the time they spend on transportation to the office, projects or communities, taking into consideration that work includes traveling to the outskirts of São Paulo (often, more time is spent commuting than working on site). With everything specified and separated, the necessities of each participant are better understood.

This horizontal work structure, which seeks quality over capitalist productivity, is typically poorly rewarded, particularly as housing production requires vast economic resources. This type of work, which stands in opposition of the dominant trend, needs external support to continue. Today, Usina members must work extra jobs in order to support the work of the collective. Therefore, the collective is always understaffed and always struggling.

USINA—Centre of Projects for the Built Environment is an architecture collective that for 20 years has been working with self-managed vertical housing. Supporting community-led, high-density urban-housing initiatives, this organization has worked with nearly 5,000 families from more than 15 urban popular movements across São Paulo. Appropriate technologies have been developed to allow for the construction of complex multi-storey buildings by the residents themselves. Housing is built through a participatory mutual help (“mutirão”) approach, with the self-management of resources. Following construction, community facilities and income-generating activities are developed, including community bakeries, childcare facilities, cultural spaces and professional training courses. The main objective of USINA is to promote

Stadtstaat
by Metahaven

This project consists of the mise-en-scène of an urban experiment, city merging. Stuttgart and Utrecht try to become more competitive by joining forces and establishing unlimited network power. Stadtstaat is managed via an information architecture called 'Trust,' a social networking platform that governs through participation. Stadtstaat renders the role of design in a managed and technocratic European reality more tangible and debatable. The graphic surface becomes a platform that turns communication into political interaction. Stadtstaat was presented in 2009 as an exhibition at both the Kunstlerhaus Stuttgart and Casco: Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht. It also appears in Metahaven's recently published book *Uncorporate Identity*.



Euroslums

Friend,

Thank you for your letter, in which you voice a number of important concerns regarding our civic freedoms here in Stadtstaat.

Utrecht and Stuttgart have, after their merger, maintained a reasonable level of economic prosperity. This is certainly not true for every other Western European state. I don't believe the wild stories about slums—they are inventions by those who want to destabilize our common sense of belonging. Slums may exist in Latin America, but not in Stadtstaat!

You should be happy about the fact that the government will have a major Kunsthalle built where, finally, artists from Stadtstaat may properly exhibit in conditions comparable to those in the Gulf region. There will be a display of works there dedicated to the concept of freedom of expression!

Stadtstaat is a hotbed of foreign investment, and we are a climate-neutral, equal opportunity employer with a large gay and lesbian community.

I do not share the concerns you have when weighed against the many pros. Bringing our two cities together has revealed that we have a great deal in common in terms of identity!

As children of the Enlightenment, we are the natural defenders of progress, appalled by human rights abuses and violence. These deeply engrained ethical and moral values characterize our common identity as citizens of Stadtstaat.

Of course, we are vigilant to stand up against those who threaten and abuse our civic freedoms. This is one of the reasons why 'Trust,' Stadtstaat's online social network and panopticon, is such a huge success!

Let us foster great free minds here in Stadtstaat, where we have overcome the evils of the past by conquering the future.

—Friend

DÖNER
KEBAB
INTERNET
TRUST
MARKET



SOCIOCONNECT
Wir sind verbunden.

stadtstaat

Dutch Deregulation with German Precision

Friend,

Thank you. Your reply strikes me as evidence that something is definitely wrong. It is all about how you define commonality in Stadtstaat. We are together because of the lowest and most pragmatic levels of our common reality. Not because of our high ideals and beautiful ideas, not because of our national origins, but because of the place we inhabit. Correct me if I am wrong, but the fact that we live in the same place does not (and should not) make us the same people. As much as we are in the same place, we are in different spaces. Forgive me for sounding vague—a tangible example are the grey satellite dishes which feature so prominently on the balconies of our crumbling Staatsarchitektur, the repetitive housing estates.

To me these are a hundred times as interesting as your Kunsthalle, and they say a hundred times as much about the strangers gathered under the Stadtstaat banner than this pathetic gadget with its atrium does. Same goes for the internet cafés, the gambling offices, the copy shops and the other

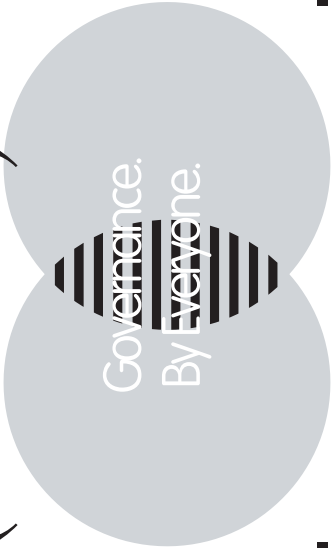
—Friend

'improper' forms of business as they sprawl around Utrecht and Stuttgart. You describe our 'common' identity as if it were a temple to be restored by unesco. You are forgetting to ask the question of who owns this network architecture of 'Trust.' Or, perhaps you are taking the answer already for granted. In the past, people used to either worry, or put their faith in, security cameras. The poor city of London became the European capital of CCTV. The tragedy of the security camera is that it is not part of social reality; it merely observes it. First the observers, the security personnel, but also police inspectors, prosecutors, secret service officers, became implicated in the social because of their Facebook accounts. They were no longer just the observers.

Now the real invention of Stadtstaat is a security paradigm. 'Trust' is social CCTV. Further, it is a new democracy paradigm. And I am questioning whether that is desirable. Stadtstaat adopted Dutch deregulation with German precision.

STADTSTAAT
STUTTGART

Stadtstaat
ist ein
Sozialstaat
(kind of).



SOCIOCONNECT
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stadtstaat

STADTSTAAT
STUTTGART

PIZZA
DYSTOPIA
CALL
TRUST
CENTER



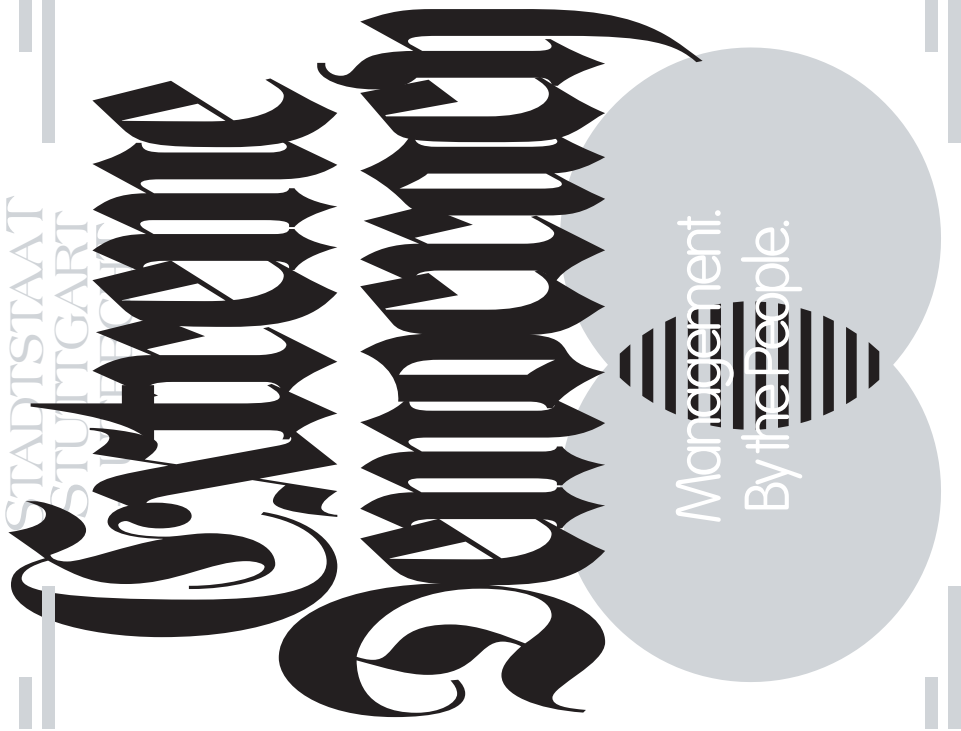
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stadtstaat

What State Are We In?

The transformations of 21st-century Europe are best gauged by cities, such as Stuttgart and Utrecht, situated in the hinterland. Along with other European cities, Stuttgart and Utrecht are now witnessing the disappearance of formerly 'cohesive' urban fabrics and the 'orderly' and 'predictable' definitions of the city and its outskirts. In its place have emerged emergency measures—surveillance cameras—and emergency politics—right wing Populism. Pizzerias, call houses, internet cafés, night shops, kebab restaurants, and satellite dish antennas are the emergent symbols of a coming multicultural 'hybrid' society that no longer relies on the general security of the welfare state. Let's call it the society of Euroslums—an advanced type of unplanned society. Grand infrastructural projects become infinitely long-term endeavors. The 'modernization' of the built environment has stalled. The future has arrived.



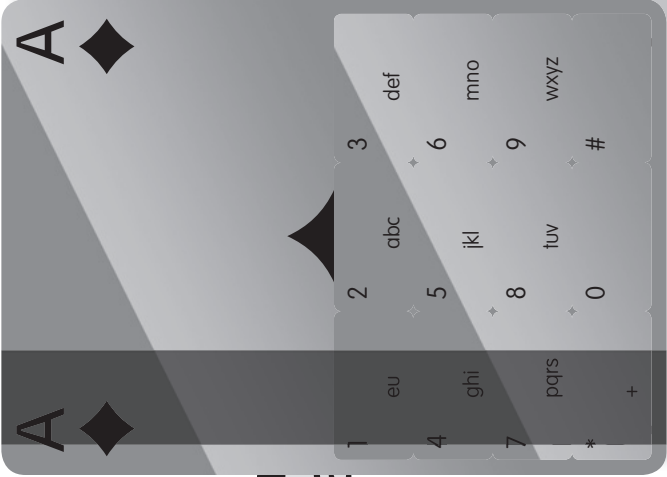
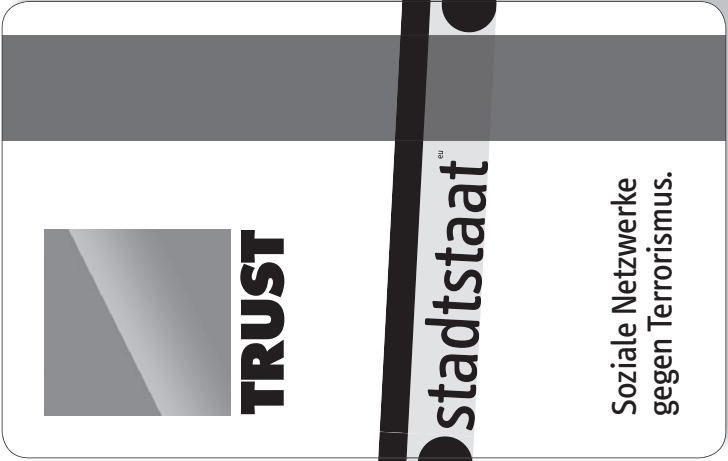
Coming Democracy
Going beyond place branding, Utrecht and Stuttgart form a regional Stadtstaat (city-state). This programmatic reflection on the urban fabric created by European unification invites us to interrogate policy decisions to weather the economic downturn while enhancing net-working capacities. Stadtstaat is managed via an information architecture called 'Trust.' A socio-political Facebook, Trust is a network-ing platform that governs through public participation—an 'open system' presenting a shift from central decisionmaking to managing social dynamics.¹ The progress and partial vic-tory of network architecture over built form is one of the core attributes of Stadtstaat's new equilibrium. The transformation of urban space into an arena for networked sociability brings about a new understanding of what makes a place public. Not a public guaranteed by polic-ing, but one negotiated by groups within the territory. Endure the politically correct jargon in the city-state of the oxymoron: 'Managing diversity.'

The apparent lack of order seems to be the new order.

Metahaven is a studio for research and design based in Amsterdam, consisting of graphic designers Daniël van der Velden and Vinca Kruk, and formerly, architectural designer Gon Ziironi. Since 2004, Metahaven has developed projects that investigate the political po-tential of graphic design and as a tool for research. Metahaven's previous projects include the "Sealand Identity Project," a research into a national brand for a micronation and tax haven, and "History vs. Future" which investi-gates the People's House in Bucharest and its double existence as a post-communist icon and contemporary art museum.

www.metahaven.net

Notes
1. See Colleen Graffy, "The Rise of Public Diplomacy 2.0," in *The Journal of International Security Affairs* 17, Fall 2009, 48.



Waiting

Friend,

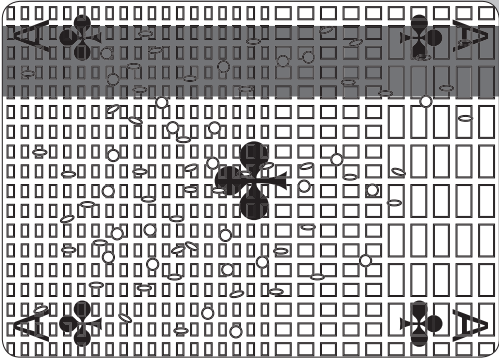
Are we the Hinterland? Stuttgart and Utrecht, twinned by their new operative unity, share a particular type of position both on the Euro-pean map and in geopolitical space-time. Softened by the welfare state and regional planning (and possibly by a Western European wealth buffer), the impact of global develop-ment reaches our cities in the form of a suspi-cious absence of events.

An 'analysis.'
Neither Stuttgart nor Utrecht is metropol-itan. But there are agreeable living conditions, knowledge capital, proximity to airports, etc. Neither of the cities experiences the stagger-ing changes encountered in the global East and South. In a combination of melancholia and relief, it seems as if both cities—united by a strange managerial invention, called Stadtstaat—are merely waiting for the storms to impact. Or, perhaps even more plausibly, Stadtstaat is subject to a low-intensity trans-formation revealed through an increasingly pe-culiar urban and social vernacular, sometimes called a 'Pizza-Staat' or 'Gadgetopia.'

If I sound like an architect, that is no coin-cidence. I am one. And all I have produced are plans and studies. Not one of them was se-lected for realization. Every project we pitched was forever postponed. Initially, responses were always positive, even affirmative. In the lingo of the creative industries, 'the client loved it.' Then things stalled. A manager took the stage. Invariably he would begin by stating his diagnosis that we architects are defining architecture too narrowly and too formally. Architects, he argued, misuse the brief to avoid real needs and erect monumental structures—vain and unsustainable. Instead, he persisted, architecture is everywhere, and 'produced by real people.' There are many other and more relevant architectures, like 'social architec-ture,' 'network architecture,' 'choice architec-ture,' and 'trust architecture.' By the time he was done explaining all the different architec-tures, the client no longer believed in realizing a building, but in fostering 'change.' Systems managers and web designers moved in and they talked about haptics, intuition, aggrega-tors, and heat maps. This is the new Esperanto of the global Hinterland.

So what should I do? Burn my architecture degree and move to the Black Forest?

—Friend



Renaming Things

Friend,

I will bring this letter to Utrecht myself to pro-tect its confidentiality and so that you see it in time. Early one Sunday morning, you will hear the envelope touch the floor in the hallway. As you open it, I will have disappeared already.

The journey leads through the Stadtstaat In-terurban Corridor, the Axis. That name sounds grandiose, but 'Axis' is just a new name for an old highway.

It occurs to me that our Stadtstaat has taken the task of renaming things very serious-ly. They said that fusing the two cities would generate 'synergy,' 'high quality government,' 'Extreme democracy.'

Regionalists claimed that the identity of the smaller city, Utrecht, would be swallowed by the larger one, Stuttgart.

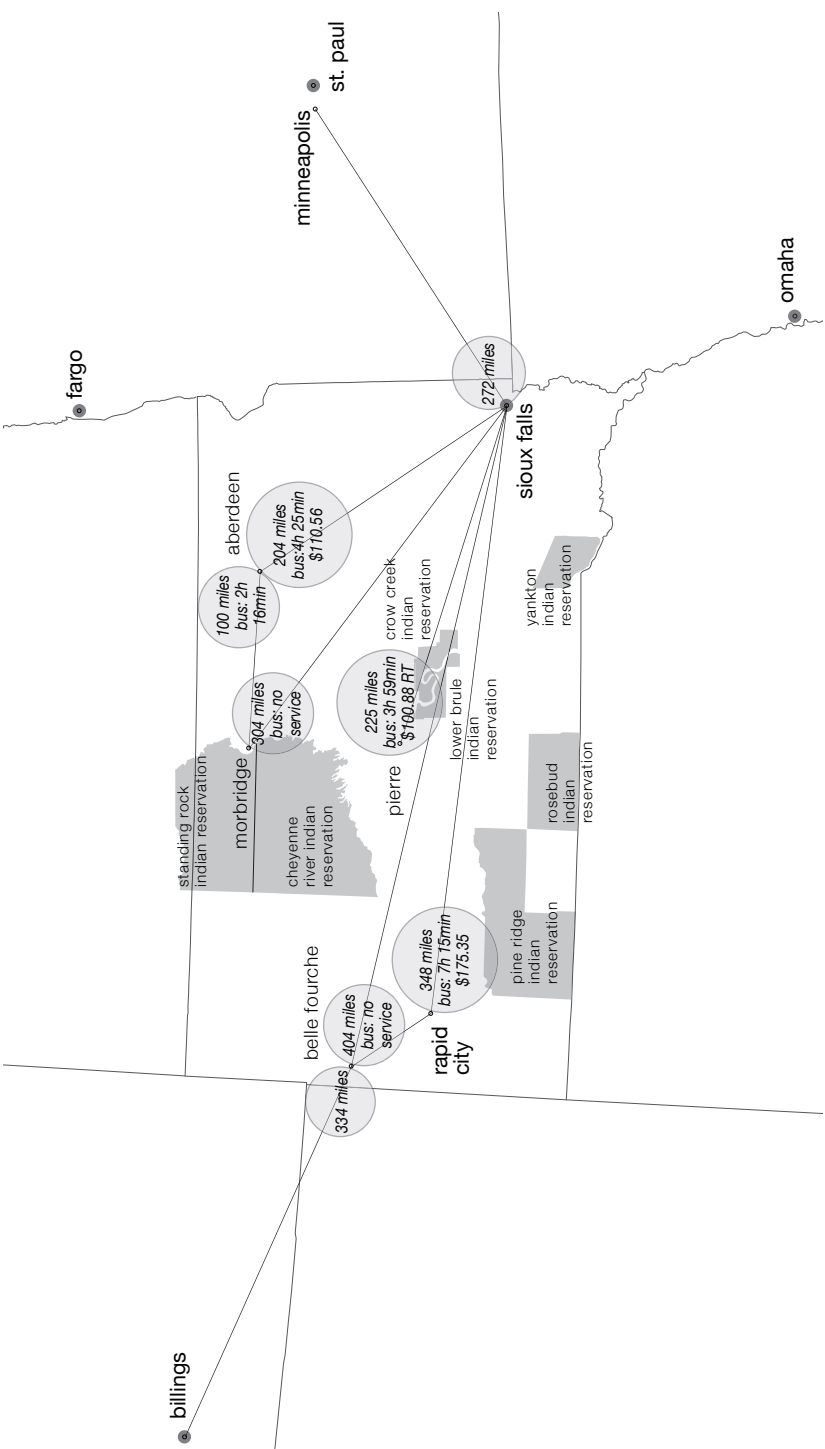
It turned out there wasn't any grand sense of identity in need of preservation. What we share are standards, routines, and meeting places. The housing estates, the franchise stores, the rainy skies, the infrastructural projects (forever stalled), the business parks, the kebab restaurants, the night shops, and the internet cafes. What we share is the cracked and imperfect world.

—Friend

First there were the mission statements about the future of civil society—and how Stadtstaat would become the testing ground for a unique experiment. Primitive man, politi-cians argued, needed no policing because of the natural bonds that held society together. Primitive man lived without social welfare because communities managed their own survival.

The future of this revived heritage would be digital. We were given 'Trust,' the informa-tional backbone of Stadtstaat. An electronic network with its own embedded social con-tract, taking away the last barriers between politics and daily life.

'Trust' rightly assumed that social network-ing and surveillance create the same paradigm from different paths. If you invite an entire society to link-up, common values self-gener-ate while discouraging isolationism. Citizens are kept in check by thousands of their best friends. Stadtstaat, in a stroke of genius, has sold our mirror image back to us.



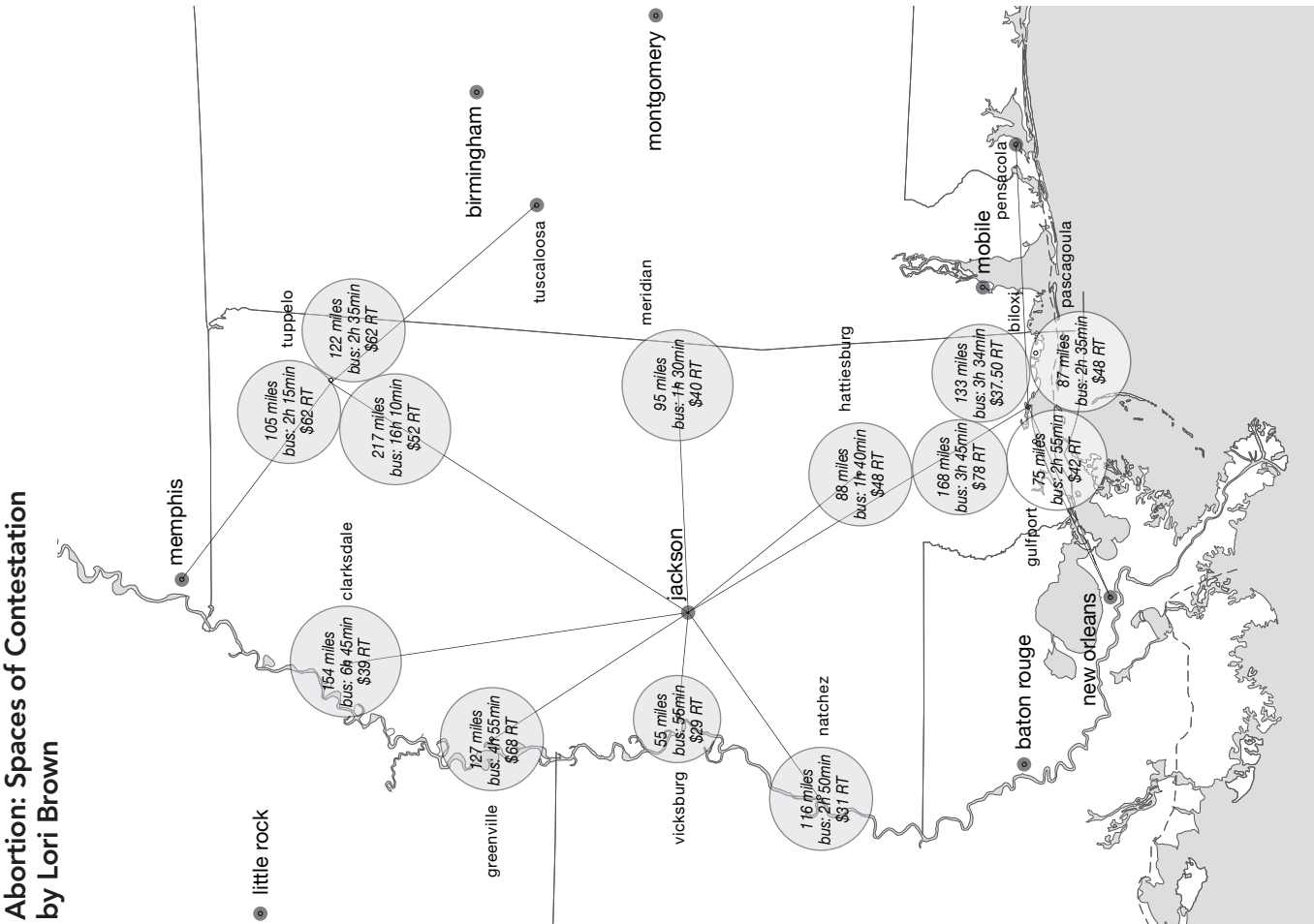
One of the courts' primary concerns with bubble laws is the First Amendment and the degree to which the law restricts one's freedom of speech and freedom to peacefully assemble. In the two court cases mentioned in this article, one of the most discussed issues was whether restrictions violate or unduly restrict the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech. When the courts consider whether free speech is being unduly restricted, they inquire as to "whether the challenged provisions of the injunction burden no more speech than necessary to serve a significant government interest."³

When considering free speech and abortion, the question has to be asked: how much is too much? At what point does the right to clinic access become an equal or greater issue than ensuring the right for someone to peacefully assemble? And what does *peacefully* really mean? Concerned with public safety, the courts must ensure the protection of abortion procedures, ensuring a woman's constitutional right to interstate travel to have an abortion, and that this right [is] not "sacrificed in the interest of defendants' First Amendment rights."⁴ When this is no longer the case, to what extent should the courts go to ensure access and safety?

Legislated Bubbles
Through a number of court rulings legislating physical boundaries around clinics and those entering and exiting such spaces, a series of terms emerged codifying spatial relationships as they pertain to the First Amendment. The cases reviewed below are now legal precedent and are typically referenced in abortion cases where limits of the First Amendment are debated.

Hill v. Colorado, 530 U.S. 703 (2000)
The Boulder City Council passed the first bubble law in 1986. Originally referred to as a "Buffer Zone Ordinance," it protected those entering abortion clinics and doctors' offices from severe harassment by anti-abortion protesters. The law stipulates that, within 100 feet of a clinic, a demonstrator cannot approach someone closer than eight feet without explicit permission, thus creating a bubble of protection. Senator Mike Feeley and State Representative Diana DeGette determined the eight-foot dimension through testing distances in a small hearing room. As they figured out how big the bubble should be, DeGette said, she looked at how far apart two people could hold a conversation, but also how close they should be for the woman to accept a pamphlet. "It's about two arms-lengths away," DeGette said. "If a protester holds up a leaflet, I can lift my hand and take the leaflet."⁵ The City Council ordinance was signed into Colorado state law in 1993. The Supreme Court upheld the 1993 Colorado measure, calling it a "prophylactic approach."

Schenck v. Pro Choice Network of Western New York, 519 U.S. 357 (1997)
In 1990, doctors and clinics with Pro-Choice Network of Western New York filed a complaint in the District Court seeking to enjoin petitioners from illegal conduct at their clinics. These clinics experienced numerous large-scale blockades where protesters kneeled, sat, and lay in clinic parking lot driveways and doorways, blocking or hindering car access onto the property and people access into the clinics. Smaller groups of protesters tried to disrupt clinic operations through trespassing on clinic parking lots and into clinic buildings, crowding around cars, and surrounding, pushing, shoving, yelling and spitting at women and their escorts entering clinics. "Side-walk counselors" approaching patients along public sidewalks in order to "counsel" women not to have an abortion used similar methods.



Abortion: Spaces of Contestation

by Lori Brown

As the conservative right in the United States continues to attack *Roe v. Wade* through state legislative restrictions, the legal right to abortion is becoming increasingly more difficult, if not impossible, for poor women of color.¹ With the House of Representative's recent vote to eliminate all federal funding to Planned Parenthood, though it never made it into law, Republicans have demonstrated the political will to eliminate medical care to a vast segment of the female population. This list examines spatial access to such services and how the reconfiguration of physical landscapes expedites the continued elimination of a woman's right to choose how and where she cares for her body. It is part of a larger research project examining emergent spatial forms of securitization in North America, focusing particularly on hospitals, women's shelters, and abortion clinics.

Bubbles & Abortion
Over the past three decades, an intricate legal and spatial scaffold has developed around abortion clinics in the United States. Bubble laws protect people, clinics, and clinic sites from pro-

testors attempting to prevent access to reproductive healthcare facilities. As the geographer Don Mitchell has mentioned, the choice of the word "bubble" to describe these laws is "in and of itself interesting."² Denoting spaces of protection and spaces impregnable to trespass, bubble laws are supposed to evoke zones of safety. However, as past events have demonstrated, bubble zones are easily trespassed and do not ensure real protection for women and employees who brave the crowds to enter the ever-decreasing number of contested healthcare facilities. The bubble is an apt analogy, not for the safety it affords women's rights, but rather for the precarious position it signals for abortion clinics in America.

Legislated distances vary from state to state with most states having not yet enacted bubble laws. Currently, there are three states with legislated zones of protection around a person and the buildings they are entering. In Colorado, there is an eight-foot zone within 100 feet of clinics doors; in Massachusetts there is a 35-foot zone around entrances and walkways of clinics; and in Montana there is an eight-foot zone within 36 feet of a clinic.

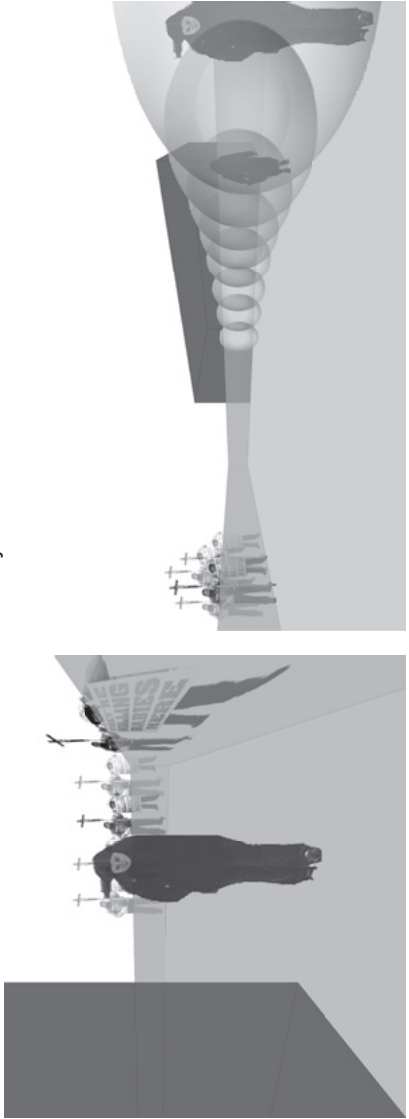
Bubble Terms
Emerging from these rulings are a series of key spatial terms impacting not only the space around particular reproductive health clinics, but also how the public conceptualizes the space of abortion access. The key terms defined by the courts include:

- **No approach zones**
Areas where no person can come within "x" distance of another person while she is within "x" distance from a reproductive health care facility; this zone requires the assent of the person to come closer than the no approach zone permits, but does allow someone to follow another person without consent as long as the follower is not engaging in specified expressive activities such as oral protest or leafletting.
- **Buffer zones**
Defined public areas surrounding health care facilities where demonstrations and access are restricted or sharply limited; they can include public entrances, so that doorways and driveways cannot be blocked; they also limit what people can do around these areas.
- **Floating zones (or bubble zones)**
These zones are similar to no approach zones but "float" with someone as they move to and from a reproductive health care facility as if they were in a bubble.

Bubbles of State Variation
Examining states with highly restrictive abortion laws requires a closer reading of two states where legislation significantly affects, and often times precludes, access to reproductive healthcare. Mississippi and South Dakota have only one abortion provider (flow-in from out of state) and enforce some of the most restrictive abortion legislation in the country.

Of particular interest are the relationships between providers and the distances patients have to travel for healthcare access. Not only must a woman find the money to pay for the procedure, but she must also find the money for round-trip transportation and accommodation because of mandatory delays required by each state. Although *Roe v. Wade* declared abortion legal in 1973, if one cannot physically access a clinic because of numerous state-imposed restrictions, then the stipulation of "without undue interference from the State" is clearly being abused. These statutory and normative abortion policy changes make the medical procedure difficult to obtain, especially for women who are young and poor. As Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg stated, "There will never be a woman of means without choice anymore...we have a policy that affects only poor women, and it can never be other wise...the government has no business making that choice for a woman."⁷

Spatial Complexities
Dr. Warren Hern, director of the Boulder Abortion Clinic and one of the few late-term abortion providers left in the United States, criticizes how difficult the Colorado state bubble law is to enforce. Patients are terrified by close-range harassment and have no way of invoking the bubble law for their own protection. Police are not always present to witness violations, and when they are, they must first issue a warning. Dr. Hern believes the Colorado law is more symbolic



Continued from pg. 5, “In the Presence of Another Being”

WJ: In the last year of the Explorers Club, when I was trying to produce a book, and Stefano was collecting subway stops (we stopped at, or ran between, nearly every station in the transit system), we were both intent on doing our own work. I didn’t feel like I was in a service capacity at all. In a way, we were both gradually outgrowing the club. Stefano is now 15. He has his own rolls of tape and doesn’t need the structure of the club to use them. And I have moved on too.

I think Brett Bloom’s use of the word service is different than how I normally use the word, and I think he makes a really good case for it as another way of being an artist. I would consider using service only within that context. Otherwise, it sets off alarm bells for me, in particular because when you’re working with someone with disabilities. There are many service organizations devoted to that group of people, and so right away that’s the category the work gets ascribed to, and that’s not the category it belongs in at all. The idea of service really does Autism Studio no service.

Bios

Wendy Jacob's work includes sculpture and installation that explores the relationships between architecture and bodily experience. Various recent projects have involved scientists, architects, engineers, and deaf and autistic individuals. Jacob's work has been exhibited at the Centre Georges-Pompidou, Kunsthaus Graz, Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego. Jacob is currently a research associate in the Art, Culture and Technology program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Gina Badger is an artist and writer working between Toronto, Montréal, and various locations south of the 49th parallel. An alumna of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Art, Culture and Technology program and member of Autism Studio, she is currently the Editorial Director of FUSE Magazine.

Notes

1. See Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2002); Ben Schaafsma, “Other Options: Artists Re-Interpreting, Altering, and Creating Infrastructure that Affects Their Everyday Lives” (MA thesis, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2008); Heather Davis, “Growing Collectives: Haha + Flood,” in *Public* 41 (2010), 36-47.
2. Wendy Jacob et al, “Preface,” in *With Love from Haha*, ed. Wendy Jacob et al. (Chicago: WhiteWalls, 2008), 7.
3. Brett Bloom, “Alluvial Deposits,” in *With Love from Haha*, ed. Wendy Jacob et al. (Chicago: WhiteWalls, 2008), 27.

Continued from pg. 11, “Hezbollah’s Urban Plan”

By rebuilding Beirut’s historic core as a high-end commercial and residential district separate from the city, former Prime Minister Hariri created a powerful spatial embodiment for the neoliberal economic ideology with which he sought to develop the country. Similarly, Hezbollah’s plan for Haret Hreik is to reduce the significance of a lived space to the spatial/symbolic embodiment of the Party’s victory and its headquarters in the city. These interventions are not only thought in isolation from the rest of the city—they are actually designed against the city. Hezbollah’s neighbourhood is resistant and pious, against a profane and commercially led city. The Hariri development project in Beirut’s downtown carved a clean, modern, and “livable” urban area against a dusty and messy city.

The Wa’d and Solidere planners like to think of one another as working on two antithetical projects. Yet, I hope I have shown the extent to which the two projects are actually similar. In research conducted with a colleague at Iowa State University, Marwan Ghandour, we outlined the similarities between these projects. To me, the most poignant parallel to be drawn is the way the two projects symbolically complete the destructive and reductive effects of the war, rather than reverse them. If fifteen years of civil war extracted the city’s historic core from the daily practices of city dwellers, making it a no-man war zone, its post-war reconstruction consolidated it as a space outside the city, belonging to the regional jet-setters’ network of commercial and entertainment facilities, divorced from the lives of most Beirutis. Wa’d’s main legacy would also have been to identify—indeed, permanently mark—Haret Hreik as Hezbollah’s territory in the city. To me, this is most poignantly marked by the absence of Hezbollah flags and posters in the neighbourhood, or their relative scarcity in comparison to other areas controlled by the Party. When you have over 200 buildings that stand as the three-dimensional embodiments of your might, why would you need a poster?

Mona Fawaz is associate professor at the American University of Beirut in the graduate program of Urban Design, Planning and Policy. Her research investigates the modalities in which low-income urban dwellers participate in making the city and how planning projects facilitate or block their interventions. Mona has published several articles on Hezbollah’s post-war reconstruction plan, including “Hezbollah as Urban Planner? Questions to and from Planning Theory,” (*Planning Theory*, Vol. 8(4) 2009); and with Mona Harb, “Influencing the Politics of Reconstruction in Haret Hreik”,

drawings, pgs. 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 28

Olia Mishchenko was born in Kiev, Ukraine, 1980, and moved to Canada in 1997. She primarily works in drawing, ranging from miniature bookworks to large-scale wallworks. She actively works with several artist collectives on installations, sculpture, performance and food based projects. She currently lives and works in Toronto, teaching at OCAD University (formerly Ontario College of Art and Design) in the Environmental Design Programme, as well as design and run innovative collaborative architecture and new media projects for children at several contemporary art and design institutions, Oakville Galleries and OCAD. She exhibits in Canada and internationally and is represented by Paul Petro in Toronto.

in *Lessons in Post-War Reconstruction: Case Studies from Lebanon in the Aftermath of the 2006 War* (London: Routledge, 2010).

Nasrin Himada is a film programmer and writer residing in Montreal. Her most recent curatorial projects include *Images in Time/Images in a Time of War* (Concordia University, Montreal), *Entre Palestina e Irak: La Historia y Memoria de los Archivos* (Espacio g, Valparaíso, Chile), and *Radical Palestine* (with Vicky Moufawad-Paul, Red Channels, and 16 Beaver, NYC). Nasrin has contributed writing to *Inflexions*, *West Coast Line*, and *Montréal Serai*. She is currently completing a PhD in the Interdisciplinary Program in Society and Culture at Concordia University.

Notes

1. Mona Fawaz, “Hezbollah as Urban Planner? Questions to and from Planning Theory,” *Planning Theory* Vol. 8(4) (2009), 323-334.
2. John Friedmann, *Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).
3. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991).
4. Fawaz, “Hezbollah as Urban Planner?”, 331
5. Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobility and the Urban Condition* (London: Routledge, 2001).

Continued from pg. 17, “The Care of the Possible”

IS: Exactly, although I am not sure that it requires that we accompany it, that is to say, also address it—“there is no one at the number you have dialed.” It is, moreover, a matter of pragmatic concern. That is what interests me about witches who have inherited strategies of decision-making through the consensus of non-violent activists. When an everyday group makes a decision, what beautiful tempests we would hear in their minds if we had amplifiers to hear them. But the question is not about listening, but rather about elaborating and experimenting with artifices, which, in this situation, make up the meso.⁶ Notably, the artifice complicates the process, slows it down, welcomes all doubts and objections, and even actively incites them, while also transforming them and listening in a different mode. This is a transformational operation of “depersonalization,” which has been experimented with in feminist groups working (without men!) with the idea that “the personal is political.” But it is also, using other procedures, that which reunites modes of African palaver, where turns of phrase circulate around the facets of the order of the world. And this, it seems to me, is what the neo-pagan witches look for when they close the circle and summon the goddess. The art of the event, which transforms those who participate, which brings forth a consistency that does not deny the molecular, but which gives it a problematic status. Above all, no “hidden truth!”

The politics of the interstices belongs at the level of the meso. But this is not a “new discovery.” It is, moreover, what the State and capitalism have systematically destroyed in the name of individual rationality and large macroscopic laws. As John Dewey emphasized, the problem is that, in our supposedly democratic societies, problematic emergences and recalcitrant productions of new inquiries are rarefied in the extreme, to the profit of what we call “the public,” whose pulse we take as we do a sick person’s. What Deleuze called minorities, who do not dream of a majority (and a group of three can be a majority from this point of view), belong to the problematic of the meso. Deleuze and Guatarri saw their minorities as subversive. I prefer to see them as “practices”—all practices are in the minority. But it requires the undoing of majority amalgamations. It does not require one to “politicize” minorities but instead affirm that their very existence is a political concern because in our world, for minorities, living is resistance, owing to the fact that in this world ‘the minor’

can only just survive, in a more or less shameful way. The figure of the rhizome is a political figure and is that which opens up communication, transversals—always transversals—which are only responsive to minorities. And it is these communications, which could, perhaps better than the “mass,” disturb capitalism, because like it, the rhizome can invent its own terrain and make its own delocalizations. As Deleuze said, “The left needs people to think,” and this definition of the left creates a difference in nature from the right. A determining difference.

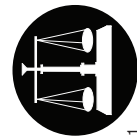
Erik Bordelauau is a postdoctoral fellow at McGill University in Art History, Communication Studies and East Asian Studies. He completed his PhD in comparative literature at Université de Montréal with a thesis on Chinese cinema and contemporary art entitled: *[E]scape. Anonymity and Politics in the Era of Global Mobilization: Chinese Passages for the Coming Community*. He has contributed to several magazines, including *Espai en blanc* (Barcelona), *Chimères* (Paris), *Yishu* (Vancouver), *ESSE*, *Hors-champ*, *ETC.*, and *OVNI* (Montreal).

Kelly Ladd is a first year Ph.D. student in the Science and Technology Studies program at York University. Her current research is on sensual forms of knowing and the apparatus of vision in the context of human-machine interactions and the anthropology of science.

Notes

1. Eds. note: while much of Peter Sloterdijk’s work has been translated into French, only recently have more contemporary texts become available in English translation; see, for example, *Critique of Cynical Reason* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); *Terror from the Air* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009); and *Neither Sun nor Death* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011).
2. Trans. note: “reclaim” appears in English in the original.
3. Eds. note: see, for example, Tiqqun, *Introduction to Civil War* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2010).
4. Eds. note: for a useful introduction to the distinction between process theology and poststructuralism in the context of philosophies of postmodernism, see *Process and Difference: Between Cosmological and Poststructuralist Postmodernisms*, edited by Catherine Keller and Anne Daniell (New York: SUNY Press, 2002).
5. Eds. note: for an elaboration of the concept of ‘forms-of-life,’ see Tiqqun, *This is Not a Program*, translated by Joshua David Jordan (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011).
6. Eds. note: for a more complete discussion of Stengers’ preference for the ‘meso’ as a concept that can avoid the binaries inherited from *A Thousand Plateaus*, see her interview with Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, “History Through the Middle: Between Macro and Mesopolitics,” *Inflexions* No. 3; available online: www.senselab.ca/inflexions/volume_3/node_i3/stengers_en_inflexions_vol103.html

1. Unconstitutional and criminal abortion bans.
2. State law includes an intent to eliminate the right to choice or enact a near-total ban on abortion if Roe v. Wade is overturned.
3. Women are subjected to biased counseling requirements.
4. State requires mandatory delays before receiving an abortion.
5. State prohibits certain state employees or organizations from receiving state funds from counselling or referring for abortion services.
6. State restricts insurance coverage of abortions.
7. State prohibits use of public facilities for performance of abortions.
8. State allows certain entities to refuse specific reproductive health services, information or referrals.
9. State restricts low-income women’s abortion access.
10. State requires mandatory parental notice and/or consent.
11. Targeted regulation of abortion providers (TRAP), state subjects providers to burdensome restrictions not applied to other medical professions.
12. Physicia-only restriction: state prohibits certain qualified healthcare professionals from performing abortions.
13. State restricts post-viability abortions.



than protective, and offers no real security from anti-abortion harassment. He argues for a more effective law, similar to the protection mandated around polling places, where political activity must remain 100 feet or more from the building. This is what he refers to as a constitutional compromise, restricting speech yet still allowing it to happen at a distance.⁸ Another criticism evolved from the *Schenck v. Pro-Choice Network of Western New York* ruling, which struck down the floating buffer zone was struck down because it was considered to be too difficult to enforce. If protesters thought they were keeping the appropriate distance but happened to misjudge that distance, they would be in violation of the injunction.⁹

Conclusion

Where does this leave those who most need protection? Although not always respected and time-consuming to enforce, these laws are still the primary mode of protection for patients and employees of reproductive healthcare clinics. At what point does the legislated bubble become something that is physically actualized? It is at this exact juncture that architecture can physically intervene and provide spaces of safety so desperately needed to uphold women’s reproductive rights. Already, many clinics have had to significantly increase their security measures. After bullets were fired into Dr. Herrn’s Boulder Abortion Clinic in 1988, bulletproof doors were installed at the entrance. Reproductive healthcare facilities have become 21st century equivalents to medieval cities where walls and moats were once used for security from intruders. Protection now depends upon advanced security systems including surveillance cameras installed around entire properties and doctors’ residences, multiple zones of bulletproof glass at clinic entrances, bulletproof vests, and full-time federal protection. How do clinics continue to ensure safety in the space of the everyday lives of those who come and go from such places? The May 2009 death of Dr. George Tiller in his church in Wichita, Kansas illustrates that these domestic terrorists will go to any length to find their targets. Be it at work, at home, or at places of worship, the law’s relationship to protection and public space must be rethought, and the abortion bubble must evolve into a stronger and more protective zone.

Inherent within the discipline of architecture is the ability to foster agency through new spatial relationships. The contested, politicized, and highly legislated space of abortion requires innovative thinking of security, protection, and physical accessibility. In addition to typical security measures, architecture can provide creative interventions, such as siting strategies that consider such issues as the flow of cars into and across sites, and their ability to be used as protective devices and public access points. As well, security-rated materials and lighting must be considered, as well as walls for physical, visual and aural protection that could help provide more security. Architects must engage the social and political once again, lest we forget that our discipline is actually a service provider and not merely an egotistical enterprise. It is through the very idea of service that architecture stands to become more relevant and necessary to the future of the built environment, and to the defense of women’s rights.

