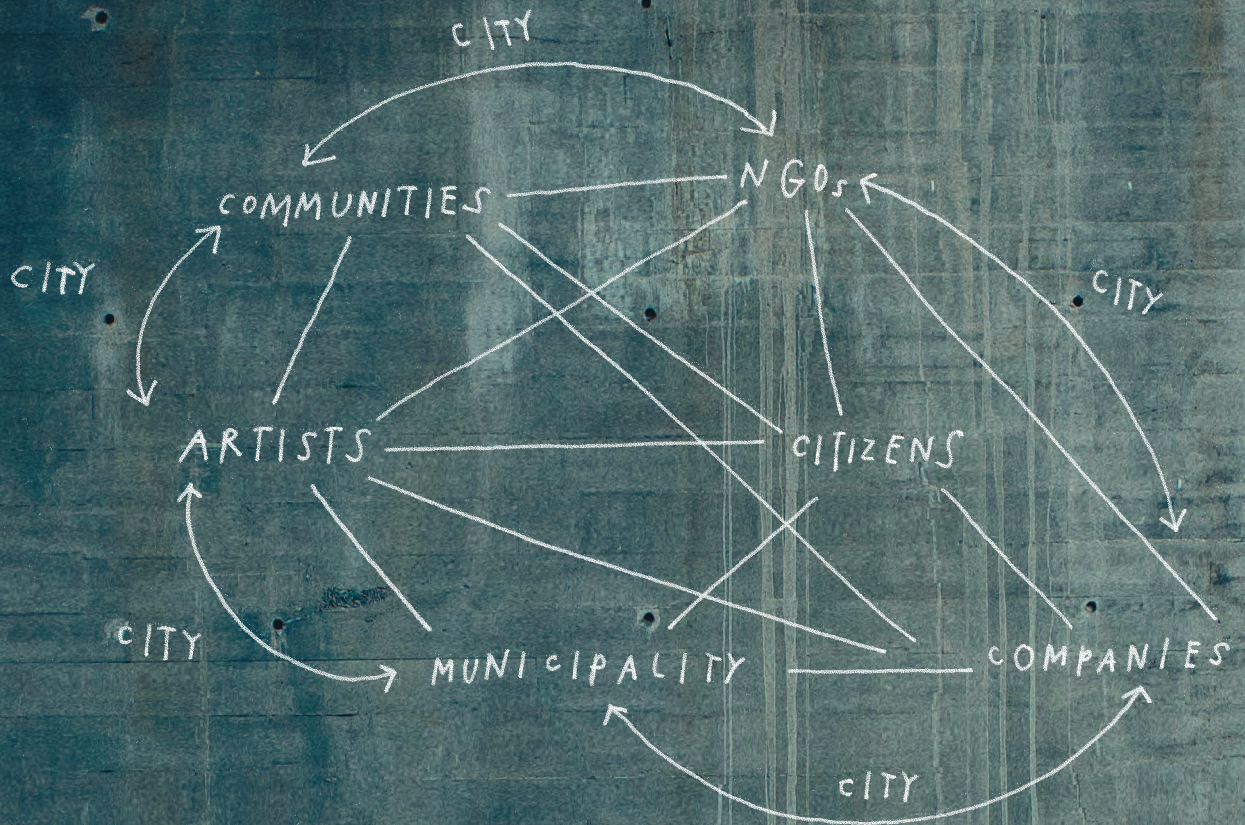


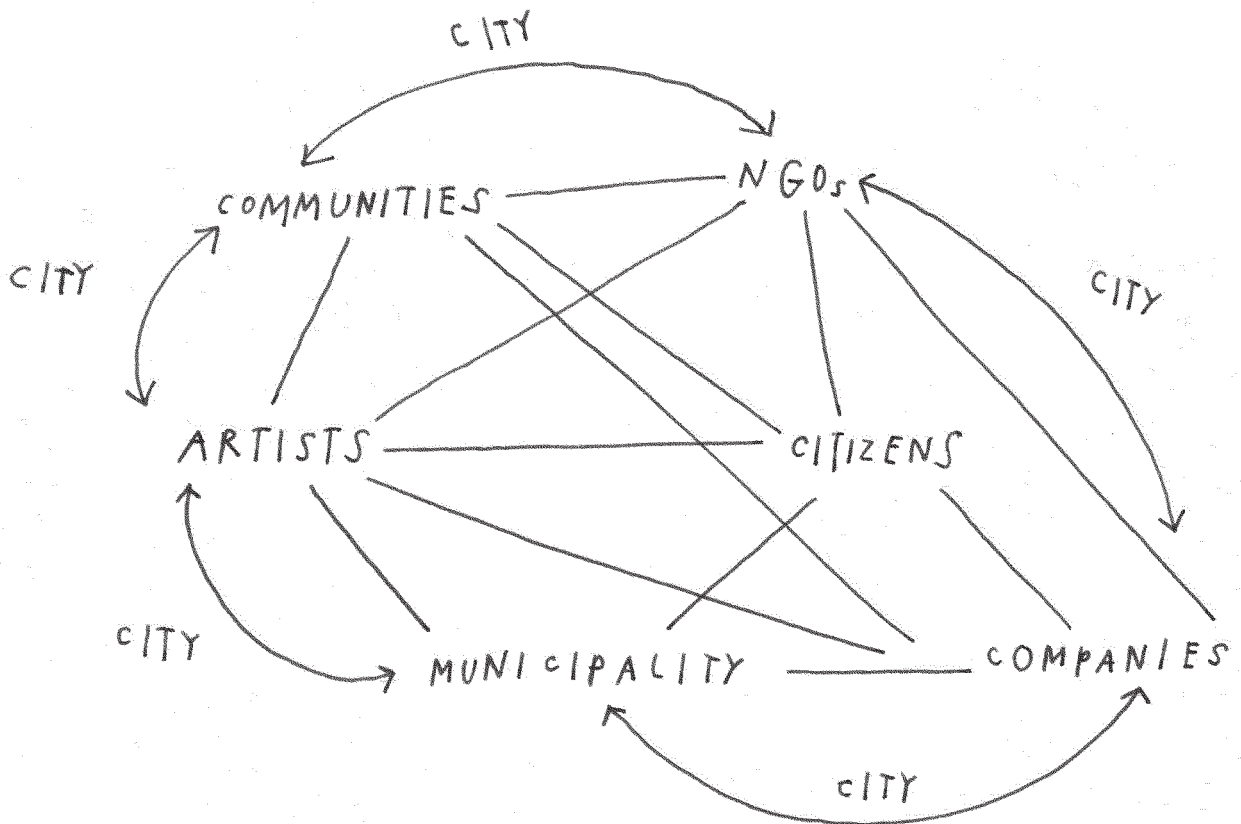
# ARTECITYYA



## 9 approaches to urban challenges



# ARTECITYYA



9 approaches  
to urban challenges

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# Foreword

**BY MoTA**

**I**n 2017, just eight years after the opening of the extremely popular New York tourist attraction the High Line, its instigators, the non-profit Friends of the High Line, launched a peer-to-peer network to advise on avoiding gentrification. Probably the most famous of the recent infrastructure revitalisation projects, the High Line was widely criticised as a “catalyst for some of the most rapid gentrification in New York’s history.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the luxury developments in the surrounding area that followed the seeming success of the project, have caused “rents to rise and local businesses to struggle.”<sup>2</sup> It is not hard to see how this had a negative impact on social equity in the neighbourhood, yet there is another lesson to be learned. While the High Line has proved very popular among tourists, the local community has never accepted or visited it. Its creators now understand that they could have avoided the many problems and criticisms they are facing by involving the local community in the process from the start. The story of the High Line is a glaring example of some of the most pressing issues we are facing in our cities today... And the reasons we have chosen to mention this obvious example are many.

*This book is written from the position of artists, curators and cultural NGOs, and takes as its starting point revitalisation, collaboration and community empowerment through art. It argues that municipalities and governments should not overlook the presence, knowledge and expertise of artists and NGOs when thinking about improving our cities. Rather than instrumentalising them to raise property value, only to displace or evict them later, we propose that city authorities include them in planning and collaborate with them. It also suggests that artists and NGOs should work on understanding the local context first and work more closely with the community. Unlike developers that commonly overlook the locality and tend not to involve and support existing structures and activities in the areas they are revitalising, the NGOs are already present and generating many of these activities. In addition, there is a general tendency to only think about the economic factors when improving certain areas of cities, and it is becoming increasingly clear (as can be seen in the High Line case, among others), that social factors should be seriously taken into consideration. If the needs of the local population are disregarded, we will be left with cities that are increasingly uninhabitable and useless for the actual local inhabitants.*

1 J. Moss, ‘Disney World on the Hudson’, *New York Times*, 21 August 2012, p. A25

2 E. Gibson, ‘High Line creators launch website to advise on avoiding gentrification’, *Dezeen*, [webaite], 22 June 2017, <https://www.dezeen.com/2017/06/22/high-line-network-web-site-launch-offer-advice-avoiding-gentrification/>, (accessed 19 November 2018).

*These, however, are only a few of the problems that highlight the differentiation of city layers when it comes to thinking about the future of our cities. How are our public spaces shaped, not only streets, but also squares, parks, playgrounds and other common areas? How have they changed in the past twenty years and how do they reflect our reality today? How much do we know about the way waste is processed, about the quality of water, air, and soil in which we plant our food? How much do we know about our individual responsibilities or power to make changes when it comes to these questions? And can inclusiveness and collaboration between different areas of expertise from local knowledge, to specialised artistic knowledge, to the connective tissue that is the work of NGOs, in renovation and construction planning at a municipal level, affect and improve plans and make them more sustainable, thus making our cities more ours and more liveable?*

*The 'Artecitya. Envisioning the City of Tomorrow' (2014-2018) project set out to answer these questions through five years of collaborative efforts between nine partners from eight European cities. From the outset the questions to be answered were: How can we improve our cities and how can artistic practices inform and improve the processes of innovation, development and revitalisation? The proposed strategy involved two segments: theoretical and field research, and practical implementation. The project brought together artists, architects, town planners and citizens to stimulate innovative approaches to urban realities. Throughout the project, around 100 people working in cultural NGOs were involved, 250 artists, and more than 100 cultural activities and events took place. Each partner worked closely with local organisations and communities as well as with other partners in the project in sharing knowledge and experience. Even though the partner organisations have such different backgrounds, they all have three aspects in common: revitalisation, collaboration and community empowerment.*

*The Artecitya project is an initiative of Apollonia, a Strasbourg-based organization, which took as a starting point their local context, the 'border' area of Robertsau, where it started a multi-annual project, the Apollonia Garden. The area, which was also home to the Apollonia residency and art centre, could be perceived as an area in need of improvement, lacking common public spaces and organised activities for youths. The programme Apollonia proposed for development of the area countered the usual development practices in that it included, and still includes, dialogues and engagement of local inhabitants in the development plan. The result is an open-air path, sport zone, public garden, a hotel and art centre, which are laid out to improve and open the zone of Robertsau.*

*Two segments were key in the development of this idea and project: the involvement of the local community in ongoing conversations and participation which helped shape the content of the planned revitalisation; and public and private institutions, ranging from investors to municipal structures, which backed the project plan and enabled its realisation. This synergy and the cross-sectorial partnerships are key for the approaches presented in this book.*

*In Prague, the area tackled was one kilometre of arches under the rails of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Negrelli Viaduct. The renovation that was planned by SŽCD, the railway administration company, was focused on the area on the viaduct – the railway tracks and the platforms, while the kilometre of space beneath the viaduct was overlooked, occupied by cars, occasional drug dealers and open-air toilet areas. The CCEA MOBA group initiated a public dialogue with the local inhabitants and local authorities to stimulate expansion of the renovation scope to the potential of this neglected free space in one of Prague’s most prominent districts. With the aim of opening the possibility of a different approach, as well as that of showcasing the existing local creative resources, CCEA MOBA developed the ‘Summer under the Viaduct’ programme. The arches were revived throughout the summer and, due to its success, a revitalisation plan, which included the transformation of the arches into art spaces, cafes, shops, and sport zones, was achieved.*

*Another revitalisation took place within Strovolos III, so-called refugee camps in an area of state housing for Cypriot refugees. It was initiated by the ARTos Foundation and aimed to build a community space for youths and to develop a model for unemployed youths living in an overlooked area of the city. A community space was established in one of the abandoned lots, and during the course of the following years activities such as research, community projects, workshops and art productions took place in Strovolos III, concluding in a one-day festival, which also attracted locals from Nicosia who had never previously visited the refugee camps.*

*The Goethe-Institut’s Artcitya Agency in Thessaloniki included a series of residencies that aimed to change the way the city is experienced by its inhabitants and visitors. To this end it founded the Agency and organised workshops, art projects and symposia that addressed different aspects of perceiving and interacting with the city. In addition to these activities, the Agency instigated the LABattoir project, a laboratory for tackling youth unemployment through a redefinition of creativity, engagement of artists and creative citizens, as well as new forms of social practice. LABattoir is locat-*



*ed in the recently refurbished building of the Old Municipal Slaughterhouse. An artist in residence - Joshua Schwebel - examined the connections between revitalisation and gentrification in the area of Nowy Port in Gdansk. He proposed his project as a subversion of the artist as an instrument for performing cultural policies. The aims of the project were inclusion and collaboration between NGOs in the area, by proposing an exchange of employees between organisations. This model could improve the understanding and communication between local organisations, leading to a more empowered community able to protect and defend the local needs from imposed revitalisation proposals.*

*Helexpo from Thessaloniki proposed to take gaming and playfulness as a model for thinking of social change and urban challenges. Through its annual gaming festival it not only supports the economy but also encourages innovation. In addition to all sorts of games, the festivals also showcased numerous digital and analogue games that address problems such as bullying and games for visually impaired children.*

*In ZKU's 'Artist Dis-placement Programm', the artists set out to interact and work in Berlin's public city institutions such as the fire brigade, the Red Cross, prisons and waste management companies. Through their working residencies ZKU interacted with employees, observed daily work and development projects, both as improvements or contributions to these organisations, or as art projects to be shown in galleries and the art context. The artist dis-placement model encourages deeper involvement with these organisations but also rethinks both socially engaged art practices and the misconceptions of the artists' work.*

*Bellastock's ACTlab, a laboratory for expertise in the reuse of materials, and the Bellastock festival, which joins hundreds of participants in building an ephemeral city in Paris, proposed participative projects to improve social empowerment specifically in the field of building waste. In fact, the redefinition of waste is the first step in its mission, and it targets an immense amount of building material that is thrown away in big construction projects. Each year ACTlab showcases one selected material or proposes a challenge (for example plastic, soil, or tree branches), and develops simple-to-use models for building an ephemeral city with these materials, thus demonstrating a parallel way of building and reusing, that underlines self-organisation, self-empowerment, and education.*

*How much can an individual action influence a global problem such as air quality? The Cyanometer project poses questions of individual responsibility, increasing visibility and data transparency. The Cyanometer is a monument for public space that also has a built-in visualiser of air quality, which shows the data in a transparent and easy-to-read manner. It was, as is the case with all the projects in this book, a project made possible through the efforts of artists, NGOs, private and public companies and governmental and municipal structures.*

*This book is structured into nine chapters, each of which presents one project. Following the project presentation, an interview and a critical essay, readers can find a toolbox, a step-by-step analysis with evaluation and advice on how to implement a similar project. The book is primarily intended as a field-guide of approaches to urban challenges, hoping to encourage municipal, government and public companies to involve local groups, inhabitants, artists and NGOs in development and renovation processes. As the nine approaches in this publication show, their contribution is invaluable for successful implementation and foremost for long-term sustainability, and they come to show that indeed they should be the elementary part of each urban development.*



# Engage in Shaping Narratives of the Future!

**BY JAROSLAV ANĎĚL**

*We live in a different world today than just a few years ago, when the Artecitya project started. With the rise of populism and the extreme right, fuelled by demagogues and opportunistic politicians, setbacks to democracy are spreading worldwide. Unthinkable until recently, public pronouncements that advance xenophobia and racism are no longer uncommon. Europe finds itself in the most precarious position since World War II, due to both internal and external geopolitical challenges to its integrity. On the one hand there are growing differences between both Eastern and Western Europe and the north and the south of Europe, while on the other there is Russia's propaganda war and the eroding alliance with the U.S.*

*We are facing both short- and long-term challenges, which are the result of structural and systemic issues. Driven by new technologies, the world is more interconnected today than at any time in human history, while many institutions aren't ready for such interconnectedness and for the speed at which technological changes bring about economic, political and cultural consequences. This mismatch results in a backlash against globalisation and the rise of tribalism that weakens global institutions when they are needed most to deal with existential threats such as climate change and the destruction of biodiversity. The existing track record indicates that we are quickly approaching tipping points of irreversible changes, with catastrophic consequences. The key question is how fast we can change our mindset and find the political will to implement necessary policies on a global scale. Hence, education has critical significance. Yet our education system is in many ways obsolete and its transformation needs more time than we can afford. Knowledge that is fragmented in specialised silos is unable to deal with the complexity and multiple relations that reach across boundaries of specialised disciplines.*

*Digital technologies, especially AI and big data, are both a blessing and a curse. They promise to provide new tools for dealing with unprecedented levels of complexity but, at the same time, represent new and unforeseen risks and great potential for abuse. They accelerate and amplify both good and bad features and trends. The problem is that the impact of negative trends shows up much faster than that of positive ones. In other words, it takes much less time to break things than to create them. Here the Facebook motto 'Move fast and break things' takes on a new meaning, triggering associations such as Cambridge Analytica, data mining and algorithms used for social manipulation, the spread of disinformation and hatred on social media. After what now seems naive optimism about the internet, social media and big data, different feelings are setting in, summed up*

*in observations such as “As recent U.S. atrocities show, the internet is enabling far-right conspiracies and attacks; social media echo chambers have become a breeding ground for antisemitic and racist activity.”<sup>1</sup>*

*The individual stages of the so-called ‘transition curve’, which tracks the self-perceived confidence of entrepreneurs, seem to apply to the transition curve of technology, culture, or civilization, i.e. much broader subjects. The curve comprises five stages from ‘uninformed optimism’ to ‘informed pessimism’, followed by a ‘crisis of meaning’ and then ‘crash and burn’, or less frequently ‘informed optimism’.<sup>2</sup> Setbacks to democracy indicate that we find ourselves somewhere between the stages of ‘informed pessimism’ and ‘crisis of meaning’. Which trajectory we will follow, towards ‘crash and burn’ or towards ‘informed optimism’, very much depends on us. This is a topic that everybody should be thinking and talking about: we should reflect on it and discuss it as individuals and as communities of practice, on varying scales and levels – starting from family and friends, to broader communities in villages and towns, cities and regions, to nation-states, continents and at a global level.*

*The topic is huge, and guidelines and priorities need to be set that address systemic and structural issues. Fortunately, there have been important steps made in that direction with the creation of the global framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its 169 targets. The problem is that commitments to the SDGs are not binding and that our track record in following the SDGs roadmap so far suggests that some of critical goals will not be reached by 2030. Here again the issues of urgency, timing and political will come to mind.*

*Political will is often defined as the collective amount of political benefits and costs generated by passing specific legislation. Political leadership and the popular will, moulded by dominant narratives, are two decisive factors shaping po-*

- 1 J. Naughton, ‘As recent US atrocities show, the internet is enabling far-right conspiracies and attacks’, *The Guardian*, [website], November 4, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/nov/04/internet-enabling-far-right-conspiracies-attacks> (accessed 11 November 2018)
- 2 C. Herold, ‘5 Stages of the Entrepreneur’s Transition Curve’, *Cameron Herold*, [website], October 11, 2010, <http://www.cameronherold.com/blog/emotional-roller-coaster/5-stages-of-the-entrepreneurs-transition-curve/> (accessed 11 November 2018)

*litical will. While political leadership is in short supply and often isn't enough to make substantial changes by itself, the popular will and its underpinning narrative is more decisive in defining political will. Currently it is the narrative of the populists that is setting the agenda and impacting upon the popular will, while the liberal establishment is in a reactive and defensive mode. The SDGs haven't yet started to shape the popular will. Due to the SDGs' technocratic language, people perceive them as an agenda of global institutions, i.e. that of the global elites. In order for the general public to take ownership of the SDGs, they have to be translated into transformative narratives.*

*This brief account of the current critical challenges poses a number of questions that relate to the role of art and artists, and then, more specifically, to projects at the intersection of art, technology and urbanism. We know that by the year 2050, more than 70% of the world's population will be living in cities. This urban transition provides opportunities as well as risks and challenges. The density of cities may play a positive role in managing sustainability development, including the use of green technologies. Cities that are already becoming leaders in fighting climate change, are politically more progressive than those in the countryside and are less susceptible to demagoguery and xenophobia. Hence, the progress of urbanisation might, on the one hand, reduce the political polarisation that is blocking urgently needed legislative changes, while on the other, it brings increased consumption patterns that could drain valuable resources needed for the urban transition.*

*Urbanisation also contributes to the growing division between culture and nature by creating a false feeling of human independence from nature. I have argued elsewhere that it is the division between culture and nature that is underpinning the modern worldview and enabling the human destruction of the biosphere, manifested in the ongoing mass extinction of species and in climate change: "By separating the human actor from nature, this conceptual underpinning is present even in the environmental slogan 'Save the Planet!' Environmental sustainability, including the urban transition, thus entails questioning and reimagining some of the most basic cultural codes and concepts that we take for granted."<sup>3</sup>*

3 J. Anděl, 'Towards an Education Bill of Rights', [online video], <https://vimeo.com/267641432> (accessed 11 November 2018)

Also see J. Anděl (ed.) *Back to the Sandbox: Art and Radical Pedagogy*, Bellingham, WA: Western Gallery, Western Washington University, 2019, p. 40.

*The issue of urgency raises, among others, the following questions: What should our priorities be as citizens and as artists in addressing today's critical challenges? What is the role of art and artists in taking on these challenges? How can we redefine the current reactive mode of the liberal establishment and convert it into a proactive stand based on a vision of a sustainable future? How can we translate the SDGs into transformative narratives with which the general public identifies?*

*Art is endowed with a special agency that might be critical in answering those questions. Art brings with it multiple benefits: it provides a more holistic view and thus activates transdisciplinary perspectives and collaborations, it aids us in our capacity to deal with today's complex issues, it provides a long-term view that counterbalances the fast evolving sphere of technology, it blurs the division between observing and doing and, perhaps most importantly, it is a key driver in generating transformative narratives. By connecting our reflexive, emotional, and symbolical needs, these narratives can guide us in rethinking the fundamentals of our political, economic and cultural institutions and inspire necessary changes.*

*I believe that this account of art's agency offers an answer to the question, "What should our priorities be as artists in addressing today's critical challenges?" In Europe and elsewhere, we critically lack transformative narratives, and it is art and artists who have the capacity to generate them. Hence, today's critical challenges, and the SDGs' agenda that provides a framework to address them, must be seen as calls to artists to engage in shaping narratives of the future.*

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# ZK/U's Artist Dis-placement 2016-2018

**Location**

Berlin

**Year**

2016-2018

**Studio/Artist**7 artists in residency  
in 7 organisations**Members**Philip Horst  
Lena Enne  
Dennis Lindenau  
Lotta Schäffer**Website**[www.zku-berlin.org](http://www.zku-berlin.org)

ZK/U – Center for Art and Urbanistics is an artist residency, a space for research and production and a platform for exhibitions, conferences and workshops related to social and cultural topics in Berlin Moabit. ZK/U is offering 14 residencies at a time in its headquarters. Artist Residencies are a common tool in an artist professional life – away of one's everyday life, the residencies location and its surroundings give inspiration and eventually a more focused point of view to create new work. In the case of ZK/U, artists are selected based on their interest to connect to their new environment and their ability to create new forms of engagement in the city's life. Artist



mainly work from their experiences in the space and often take form in works in public spaces.

The ZK/U` s 'Artist Dis-Placement Programm' takes a reverse route. Instead of sending artists out to residencies in another country, artists are given access to Berlin's organisations. The chosen organisations are managing city infrastructures, fulfilling the basic needs of Berlin's citizens for safety, transport, social welfare and cleaning.

By placing artists in organisations involved in a city's functioning level, we wish to set up a framework for artists to research in the open field of public or semi-public services. A Dis-placement lasts at least a minimum of 5 months, in which the artist spends a few days a week within the organisation. Depending on the artist's way of working, different artistic forms are created in the process.

The over all process of the 'Artist Dis-Placement' is presented by the artist at least 2 times at the OpenHouse events at ZK/U. These midterm presentations help them condense their findings and by making this experiences accessible, new ideas often come up through feedback of a larger public.

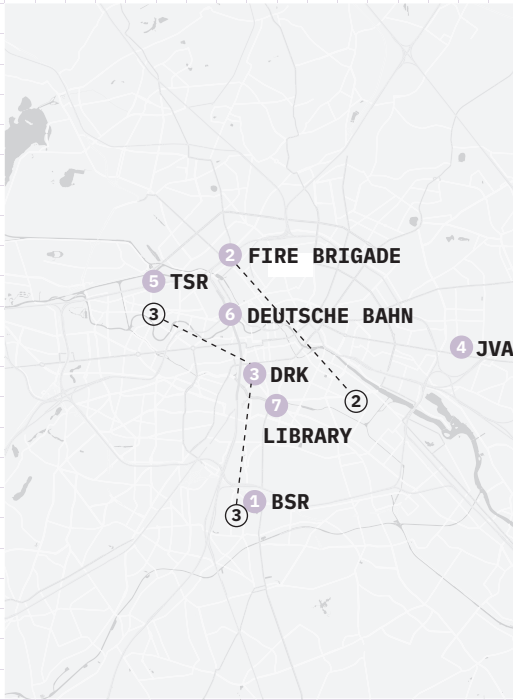
ZK/U initiated the 'Artist Dis-placement Programm', found organisations, chose artists and acted as an intermediary in the process of the Dis-placement.

# 7 artists in 7 organisations

<b>Artist</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Viktor Vejvoda (CZ)	BSR – Berlin Waste Management	04. 07. - 30. 12. 2017
Alona Rodeh (ISR)	Berliner Feuerwehr – Berlin Fire Brigade	12. 09. 2016 - 10. 03. 2017 prolonged 01. 04. - 30. 06. 2017
Jan van Esch (NL)	DRK – German Red Cross	28. 11. 2016 - 31. 03. 2017 prolonged: 01. 04. - 31. 10. 2017
Victoria Tomaschko (DE)	JVA – Women's Prison	26. 06. 2017 - 31. 12. 2017 prolonged: 01. 01. - 31. 05. 2018
Ben Nathan (GB)	TSR – Metal Recycling Company	15. 11. 2017 - 30. 04. 2018
Oliver Walker (GB)	Deutsche Bahn – German Railway	15. 05 -14. 10. 2018
Joël Verwimp (BE)	Zentral- und Landesbibliothek – Public Library	01. 04 - 31. 10. 2018

Working Questions	Output
Viktor's work focused on the communication / relationship between different departments within BSR (e.g. the workers on the streets and the management).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set of Postcards for a new way of internal and also external communication</li> <li>- Blog: <a href="http://homeiswheretrashis.tumblr.com">http://homeiswheretrashis.tumblr.com</a></li> <li>- Public presentations at the Openhaus</li> </ul>
Alona's focus laid on the training facilities and workout regime, the daily routines at the station, and fire control itself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Short Movie: To The Moon and Back</li> <li>- Publication: FIRE: Safe and Sound Public presentations at the Openhaus</li> <li>- Some smaller artistic interventions happened in different departments, such as designing new crew T-Shirts, and a new sculpture for the Feuerwache Friedrichshain</li> </ul>
Jan was interested in the diminishing interest of young people to be part of older volunteer structures. Through his work he made volunteer work more visible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant Observations</li> <li>Publication: Red Zine Public presentations at the Openhaus</li> <li>Drawnclothes (with Website)</li> <li>Making Red Cross a Label (in collaboration with fashion designers from UdK)</li> <li>Live Drawing Performance at Gütermarkt</li> <li>Dress Me Performance in cooperation with Ephrem Solomon</li> <li>(P)RESENT Art Project in cooperation with Ephrem Solomon</li> <li>Waschmaschine 24 Hours Performance at Berlin Art Week</li> </ul>
Victoria's work poses the question on how the prison environment impacts those who work there.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photography</li> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Public presentations at the Openhaus</li> <li>Photo Book (to be finished in July)</li> </ul>
Ben wanted to understand the recycling process and the routes of discarded metal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Film: #Rita1931</li> <li>Ink drawings</li> <li>Photography</li> <li>Public presentations at the Openhaus</li> </ul>
Oliver became interested in the impact of suicides at the railways.	
Joël is going to work on public engagement within community services.	

# ADP Visualisations



HEADQUARTERS OF THE 7 HOSTS



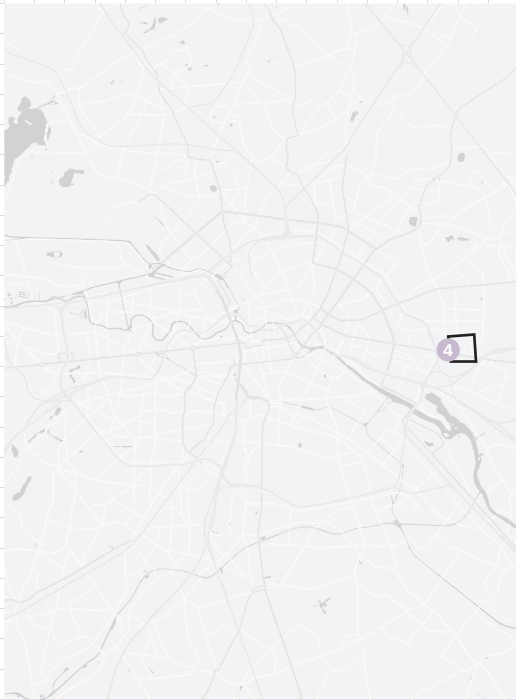
BERLINER STADTREINIGUNG (BSR)



BERLIN FIRE BRIGADE



GERMAN RED CROSS (DRK)



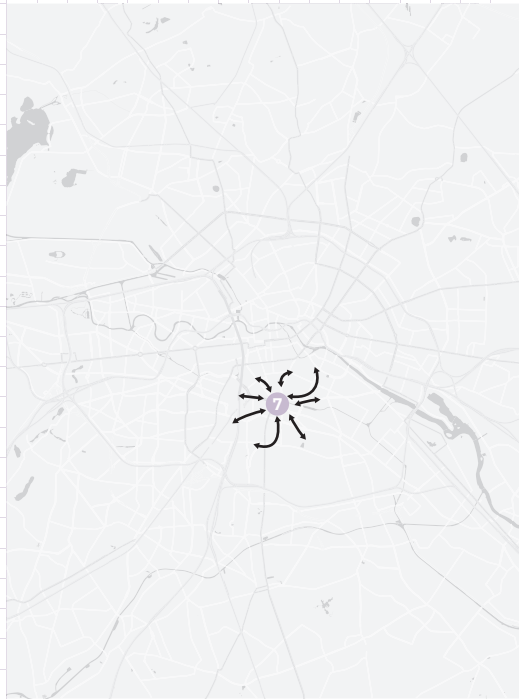
JUSTIZVOLLZUGSANSTALT LICHTENBERG (JVA)



TSR RECYCLING



DEUTSCHE BAHN



AMERIKA-GEDENKBIBLIOTHEK

# How to wash a Yeti?

## And Other Challenges for the Artist on the ‘Outside’

BY LIANNE MOL

“Do you think I can wash this in the washing machine?” As I enter Studio 7 in ZK/U’s residency building, the artist-anthropologist Jan van Esch is holding what looks like a fluffy white yeti suit. He collected his latest thrift shop treasure from the ‘Kleiderkammer’, the Red Cross department that collects, selects and distributes second-hand clothing. The yeti suit is but one of the many items that end up in the heaps of garments that the German Red Cross deems unsuitable for their second-hand shop in Charlottenburg, Berlin. As part of his ‘Artist Dis-placement Programm’ (ADP) project at the ZK/U Center for Art and Urbanistics, Jan collected the most interesting and eccentric pieces from these heaps of ‘unsellable’ clothing, and re-contextualised them as part of his art project ‘Drawn Clothes’, in photo shoots, pop-up stores, exhibitions, fashion shows and auctions, all paired with hand-drawn art pieces of the items for sale.

ZK/U’s ADP project is a residency programme which connects artists with organisations in Berlin that are not situated in the art sphere; organisations that are focused on the ‘invisible’ communal services provided by the city, such as urban infrastructure, social welfare, transport, and safety. As such, they reach a different engagement and an audience that is not naturally in contact with art. The dis-placed artist temporarily becomes part of the day-to-day goings-on of the organisation, in roles ranging from a ‘fly on the wall’ through to a consultant and an active participant-observer. Their involvement allows them to re-think the work within the organisation and help them improve, while at the same time inspiring their own artistic work. The creative outcome of the ADP projects, presented at ZK/U’s OPENHAUS event twice during the course of a residency, is open-ended and context-dependent. With this programme, ZK/U aims to get an artistic overview of what constitutes a city. By placing artists in organisations involved in the city’s functioning level, it creates a framework for artists to re-search the open field of public or semi-public services.

The notion of the artist-as-consultant operating in a non-art context stems from the Artist Placement Group (APG) that was founded in the UK in 1966. The APG initiated the idea of placing artists in industry and public institutions to facilitate research, exchange and collaboration. Their work was founded upon a belief in the mutual benefit of an artist’s presence in an organisation. The group was the brainchild of the artist John Latham and his then-partner Barbara Steveni, who remained the driving force behind the placement of art-

ists in organisations throughout the group's existence from 1966 until 1989, when it became known as 'Organisation and Imagination' (O+I). Its founding members included Barry Flanagan, David Hall, Anna Ridley and Jeffrey Shaw. The APG worked with what they called an 'open brief', an open-ended outcome that depended entirely on the artist's process within the given context. Their work revolved around the premise that artists serve and contribute to society, precisely through their active engagement in its institutions. APG's slogan, "The context is half the work", reflects contemporaneous tendencies towards post-studio work in the art world. Indeed, the APG developed against the backdrop of an art world that was increasingly critical of its own functioning, and which faced a spatial and discursive shift out of studios, museums and galleries and into its perceived 'outside': society.

Derived from the conceptual legacy of the APG of the 1960s, the ADP project ties together historical positions of institutional critique in the art world and notions of social engagement in the contemporary arts. As such it is an exemplary instance of the far-reaching influence of the institutional-critical arts of the '60s on contemporary social practice in the art world. Indeed, some of the conceptions and challenges that socially engaged artists are faced with nowadays can be traced back to the art-historical development of institutional critique; contextualised, however, in today's complex cultural and political climate. How have the anti-institutional and conceptual artists from the 1960s to the 1990s informed social art practice today? And what practical challenges, other than how to wash a yeti suit, are their contemporary counterparts confronted with?

Ever since the 1960s, the art world has been in the grip of an institutional-critical mentality that it cannot simply shake off. Institutional critique is commonly regarded as an art movement that aims to lay bare the power relations, contradictions and inequalities at play in the institutions of the art world, most significantly the museum and the gallery. It has its roots in a diverse range of artistic practices, such as minimalism, conceptual art, land art and performance art. Historically, two generations of institutional critique are recognised. The first generation spread out over the 1960s and '70s, with its main advocates being Marcel Broodthaers, Hans Haacke, Daniel Buren, Michael Asher and Robert Smithson. The second generation came up in the 1980s and '90s and included artists such as Andrea Fraser, Fred Wilson, Renee Green and Christian Philipp Müller.

The art of institutional critique came about in the socio-historical context of the civil rights movements in Europe and the United States around 1968. Political upheavals prompted artists to take a more critical stance and investigate the relationship of art and society. Influenced by feminism and postcolonialism, artists became more aware of the oppression based on ethnicity, gender, class or sexual orientation within cultural organisations and other institutions. Their artistic strategies were inspired by (post)modern artists who had exposed the illusion of neutrality maintained by museums and galleries, most notably Marcel Duchamp, and they were influenced by postmodern thinkers, such as Michel Foucault, writing about modern institutions.

The first generation institutional-critical artists questioned assumptions about the autonomy of art objects and pointed out that works of art do not have an intrinsic value but are assigned meaning and significance through processes of institutionalisation, canonisation and commodification. They demonstrated that museums and galleries are ideological institutions that claim neutrality and

expertise, and frame art works according to historically and socially constructed standards that are constantly reproduced. As such, they create an 'inside' and 'outside' for the art world, and exercise power towards both artists and audiences. In opposition to these processes, the artists of the first phase of institutional critique considered themselves 'outsiders' to the art world, often moving out of the art institutions and into other organisations, like the APG did, or establishing their own 'mockstitutions' (as Gregory Sholette came to call them).

This constant push and pull between the art institution and its 'outside', and the question of whether there is an 'outside' to the art world at all, is at the core of institutional critique. Although the belief that it would be possible to place oneself, as an artist, outside of the arts system has been diminished again by the second generation of institutional critique, the conceptual implications of this idea are nevertheless valuable. Indeed, the act of subversion inevitably places the one that subverts outside of the phenomenon that is being subverted. The paradox here is that by using artistic strategies, whether sincerely or mockingly, the subversion is still a form of art, and therefore part of the artistic realm. Institutional critique thus constitutes a grey zone that is neither inside nor outside the arts system. It is in this grey zone that the borders between the artistic and the social realm begin to blur, and social engagement is made possible.

The notion of socially engaged art is quickly gaining ground in contemporary arts discourse. It is associated with closely related terms such as community art, participatory art and critical practice. Generally, socially engaged artistic practice indicates creative strategies that facilitate dialogue and collaboration between (usually non-art) people or communities, often with the aim of establishing more socially just relationships. Socially engaged art manifests itself in many different forms, approaches and methods, and operates in the grey areas between the art world and the social realm. Especially due to its still evolving pluriformity, social art requires a multi-layered, practice-based understanding that exceeds theoretical and academic thought and is founded on the diverse, day-to-day experiences of its creators, mediators, social workers and audiences.

What is the distinction between artistic and social practice? How do we invite our audiences and communities into our thinking and working processes? How do we mediate the power position of an artist or initiator in participatory projects? What is our ethical responsibility? What role can education play in socially engaged art and vice versa? How do we finance socially engaged artistic projects? Which legislations are we dealing with? In whose interest are we acting? How do we present ourselves towards stakeholders? What is the outcome or 'artwork' of socially engaged art? And what can we realistically expect to achieve? These questions were collected during a series of group discussions with artists, social workers and cultural managers working with socially engaged art. They reflect the common reality of practical challenges that engaged artists nowadays are forced to juggle with their ideological objectives, and to a great extent influence what their projects look like.

The potential of socially engaged art projects, such as ZK/U's ADPs, lies in their ability to re-think social problems. These often require a particular way of thinking that could be called artistic. To implement social change, the change first needs to be imagined. Art can function as a space to imagine potential change and to propose alternative perspectives. The social becomes the material for the artwork. A useful framework to understand the potential of an ADP is Grant





DRK: 24 HOURS PERFORMANCE 'WASHING MACHINE'. PHOTO BY JAN VAN ESCH

Kester's *Dialogical Aesthetics*. Dialogical aesthetics rethinks the usual relationship between artist, artwork and audience. The artistic endeavour starts with the input of the artist who identifies certain problematic contexts, based on their own conditioning and understanding of what a social issue entails. In response to this, the artist instigates a social project (that is the artwork) that usually tends to work on a conflict between two groups whose relationship is based on stereotypes. The artwork is understood as an open-ended social process where people come together in a space that has been created by the artist. The initiator of a socially engaged art project connects the different parties and players involved in a social issue, while appeasing all of them in the process. As such, they create a virtual (and possibly also material) third space for dialogue, where everyone feels welcome and in power. By providing the community with the knowledge, tools and resources to self-organise, solve social issues and co-exist sustainably, socially engaged art projects can generate a strong sense of empowerment.

Discussions of socially engaged, participatory and community art often revolve around the notion of empowerment. However, there is something fundamentally problematic about this term: it implies that people need someone else (an artist) to give them the voice, power, control and capacities to take responsibility for their situation and make a change in their social surroundings. Rather, social engagement in the arts is about self-empowerment: activating the potential of citizens and communities by collectively developing the knowledge and tools needed to tackle a problem. Closely related is the term urban pedagogy. Urban pedagogy consists in encouraging citizens to take on socio-political issues related to the city themselves by raising awareness and offering tools, and brings together artistic work, social work, the phenomenon of the city, and education. Ideally, the role of the artist is that of an initiator or mediator who connects people and resources with each other. Essentially, self-empowerment, especially in participatory art, is about activating the public's agency.

There is a question of outcome and legacy involved here: after the artist leaves the situation, will participants continue to mobilise the potential of their community and neighbourhood? The focus on collaboration complicates traditional conceptions of authorship and ownership. Socially engaged art departs from a sense of co-creation, doing away with the idea that the artist is the one and only creator of an artwork. What is the 'artwork' in socially engaged art anyway? If the outcome of socially engaged art is not an artwork, what is? Social change, one could say. The notion of efficacy comes into play here: social change is not measurable, it cannot be thought of in terms of success or failure. Therefore, socially engaged and dis-placed artists are forced to work with an 'open brief', as the APG already anticipated.

After he found out how to wash it, Jan was able to sell the yeti suit as part of one of his art installations. The money he received for it went to the German Red Cross. What this exemplifies is the way in which dis-placed artists are able to connect audiences and communities that would otherwise not meet. They find creative solutions for the challenges that social organisations and public institutions are faced with, by re-thinking the ways in which they organise work and creating a 'third space' between the art world and its 'outside': a space for imagination. "The context is half the work", the APG once claimed. Could the art be the other half?

*\*Parts of this text have been published in the zine ART as/is SOCIAL: On Engagement in Contemporary Cultural Theory and Practice, 2017. See also [zkuartsocial.wordpress.com](http://zkuartsocial.wordpress.com) for the project blog.*

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DRK: PERFORMANCE  
'4 SEASONS'.  
PHOTO BY JAN VAN ESCH



# “A fantastic experience”

## Interview with Jan van Esch, artist

Jan van Esch was placed at the German Red Cross Berlin (DRK) because he was interested in an organisation that combined some of his past experiences, social and public health topics, and where he could use his anthropological approach to create an art project. After the initially planned six months, his dis-placement could also be extended at the request of the DRK. At first he was interested in the diminishing interest of younger people to work in older volunteer structures, then his focus shifted to the recycling practices of old clothes donated to the Red Cross. Through this he made volunteer work more visible and found links between different parts of an organisation that were previously not obvious.

### What is your feedback on the Artist Dis-placement project?

It was a fantastic experience from my perspective: a transition back from living outside of Europe for over 20 years, a connection of my background as an artist, art manager and social scientist, and the opportunity to really focus for a longer period on one project.

### As an artist in a non-artistic environment, what were your major struggles and how did you overcome them?

My main struggle was not getting involved in the managerial and more practical issues that I became aware of during the initial period when I was in the position of observer. Staying

focused on the initial task was a challenge, as well as not becoming an instrument of the organisation – not by their demand but out of a commitment to try to change and improve the methods and practices that I observed. Talks with the other artists and the ZK/U staff helped to keep me on track.

### How did you influence the host and how was your practice influenced by DRK and the working environment?

Over the course of the project the focus shifted from volunteer engagement to the second hand clothing practice of the Berlin Red Cross, and in that setting I was able to connect different parts and questions about the recycling process. It opened up direct discussions about their current approach and the openness to try new things.

“Over the course of the project the focus shifted from volunteer engagement to the second hand clothing practices of the Berlin Red Cross, and in that setting I was able to connect different parts and questions about the recycling.”

After finishing the project, do you think there was some sort of added value for you and/or the organisation, and if so what?

Yes! By coming up with several events and works that were immediately used – two events in their shop, photo material and the connection to ZK/U's events like 'Guetermarkt' – DRK was able to profile itself and receive donations. These events also offered the possibility to engage with a different audience, one which usually doesn't have any contact with such an organisation and was therefore hard for the DRK to reach. The initial scepticism shown by some of these people towards the Red Cross was eliminated and more open discussions were possible, which might also have an effect on future collaborations.

If anyone reading this is interested in starting a similar project, what would your advice be for artists and organisations?

I would say that more regular curatorial feedback to the artists would be appreciated, including directives on how to deal with bureaucracy and the rules and regulations of social organisations.

It would also be good to find a way that both parties - the artist and the host organisation - can be really committed and involved.

# How to implement an artist dis-placement

After seven dis-placements in different organisations and companies, we can say that there is no such thing as a master plan to place an artist in non-artistic institutions, but rather a set of strategies which every party – the artist, the intermediary organisation and the host organisation – can use to make the dis-placement happen. This is a collection of strategies showing what we found important, what obstacles we faced and how we tried to deal with any problems that arose.

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## 1.

### **The idea**

Before starting a dis-placement, a basic idea of what is going to happen, what questions will be posed and how each project relates to the host organisation's special environment needs to be developed. We experienced three different situations as starting points:

**a) The host organisation as the starting point:**

The idea, developed by us in close co-operation with the host organisation, outlines their needs and gives the context for a closed call which is then sent to suitable artists.

**b) The intermediary organisation (we) as the starting point:**

We think about the questions to be asked referring to the overall project, develop the starting idea together with an artist and then look for a suitable host organisation.

**c) The artist as the starting point:**

Artists who know about the project approach us with an idea and we, together with the desired host organisation, act as a facilitator, helping to get the contacts and translate the issues to the host's institutional language.

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## 2.

### **The first contact**

Convincing decision-makers of the advantages of having a person with a totally different background in the organisation is probably the most challenging step. It is very useful to have a personal contact within the host organisation – needless to say, the higher the person is in the organisation's hierarchy, the easier it is to convince the management.



If no personal contact is available, we have found that it is often best to contact the organisation's PR person. Having a well-written and designed project description, which highlights the positive impact of an artist within an organisation and describes the possible scenario, helps a lot. Generally, trying to arrange a personal meeting with a decision-maker is always best.

3.

### **Closing the deal**

After the host organisation agrees to be part of a project, all parties should agree on some key points such as:

- contact persons (artist, intermediary organisation, host organisation)
- working hours/artist's presence at the host organisation
- payment/artist's honorarium
- the artist's role (we always make sure that the artist is not bound by instructions)
- insurance
- feedback meetings (how many? when?)
- the outcome/artwork (we have found it is crucial to give the artist as much freedom as possible; as we see it, the dis-placement should be strongly focused on the process – not on the finished artwork)
- the rights to the artwork
- a communication plan

4.

### **During the dis-placement**

Regular feedback meetings with the artist are central to a successful dis-placement. As working in a completely foreign environment can be demanding, close support for the artist is very important. We have learnt that, as a minimum, there should be one meeting per month with the artist and one feedback meeting with the artist and the host organisation in the middle of the dis-placement. These meetings are designed to give feedback on the artistic process but should also help with administrative issues, communication with the host organisation and other personal support.

5.

### **The artistic process and outcome**

In the dis-placements we try to focus on the process, the collaboration of the artist and the host organisation's employees and on the questions to pose - not on the finished product. As previously mentioned above, it is very important to set out this approach in an agreement all parties have signed. A very open artistic process can be hard to understand – especially by people who work in a very different context and with a different focus. The agreement helps to define this open approach and protects the artist from unrealisable demands or from being a mere consultant.

## **Struggles/Solutions**

1.

### **Bureaucratic issues**

The bigger the organisation, the more complicated the procedure. Decisions need to go up and down the hierarchical ladder, which can consume months causing already (verbally) agreed upon dis-placements to be delayed. Approaching a host organisation a minimum of three months in advance is generally the best solution.

2.

**Artist vs employee**

Legal and insurance issues are sometimes hard to get around. There is no such role as that of a visiting artist within a company's structure. As we always make sure that the artist is not bound by instructions and does not have to report to someone, the usual roles within a company such as an intern or volunteer are not suitable in most cases. One workaround that has helped in some cases was to create a kind of research position for the artist.

3.

**Diverging understandings of art**

This is, of course, not only a struggle but also an interesting challenge within a project. Nevertheless, it is an issue that came up from time-to-time and had to be tackled within the feedback meetings. Also in this case, an agreement that included a paragraph on artistic freedom was helpful.

4.

**The artist as consultant**

It was proven that having an artist within an organisation can be very advantageous for the host organisations. Unconventional artistic views can offer innovative solutions or pose questions which would have otherwise remained unidentified. It is important not to let the role of a consultant become prevalent.

5.

**Language**

Most of the artists participating in the project were non-German speakers, whereas the majority of the host institution's employees only speak English at a very basic level. What could have been a problem was in most cases a very interesting starting point or advantage, as it brought into question the usual way of communication and forced everyone to find a new way. Nevertheless, it was interesting to have German speaking artists in organisations as they were able to get involved on a different level.

The mediation between the host organisation's institutional language and the artistic language is a main task for the intermediary organisation throughout the project.

**Effects**

The host organisations appreciate the improvement of internal and external communication as well as questioning the status quo and showing innovative and new solutions through unconventional approaches.

1.

For the artists the dis-placement gives access to a range of research, work and communication opportunities and the possibility of receiving feedback from outside the artworld in order to re-evaluate their own practice.

2.

For us, the intermediary organisation, the dis-placements have shown a different perspective on what constitutes the city and its 'invisible services'.





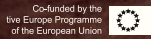
DISCUSSION ROUND WITH ARTISTS AT OPENHAUS IN ZK/U. PHOTO BY LISA JOHANNA THIELE



JVA (C). PHOTO BY VICTORIA TOMASCHKO

# TO THE MOON AND BACK

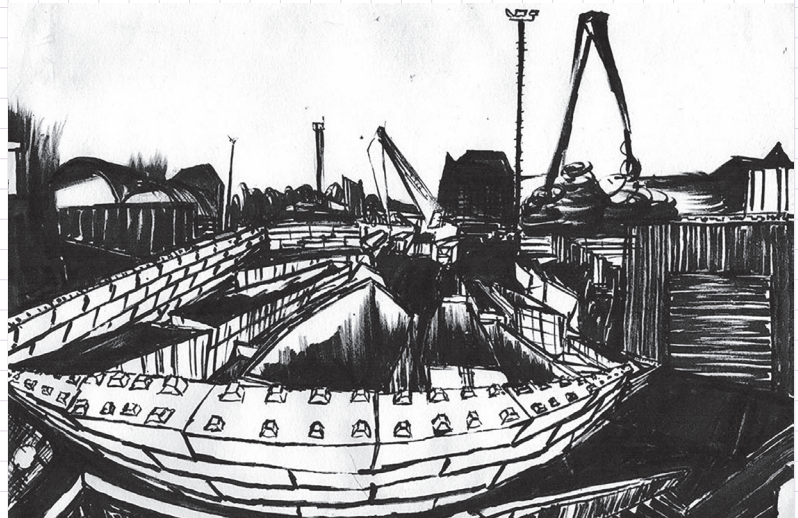
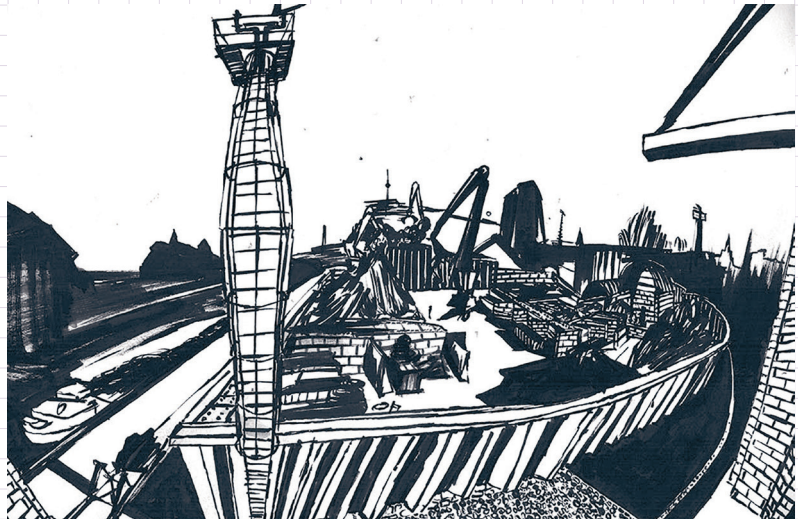
A SHORT FILM BY **ALONA RODEH** PERFORMED BY **FROM THE BERLIN FIRE BRIGADE** FROM FRIEDRICHSHAIN, WEDDING, KREUZBERG AND CHARLOTTENBURG NORD FIRE STATIONS  
INDIVIDUAL FIREFIGHTERS  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY & LIGHTING **ITAI VINOGRAD** LIGHTING ASSISTANT **STEFAN BLAHUT** SOUND & IMAGE EDITOR **DAPHNA KEINAN**  
MUSIC SAMPLES **BUDDY RICH, "CARAVAN," 1961** PYROTECHNICS **STEFFEN HÄNEL, THE BERLIN FIRE BRIGADE**



'TO THE MOON AND BACK', POSTER FOR THE SHORT FILM. PHOTO BY ALONA RODEH



JVA (C). PHOTO BY VICTORIA TOMASCHKO



TSR (C)  
BEN NATHAN





# Laznia's A.I.R. program

**City**

Gdansk, Nowy Port district

**Year**

2016–2018

**Artist**

Joshua Schwebel

**Website**[www.laznia.pl](http://www.laznia.pl)**Number of  
organisations  
involved**

3

**Number of  
employees  
involved**

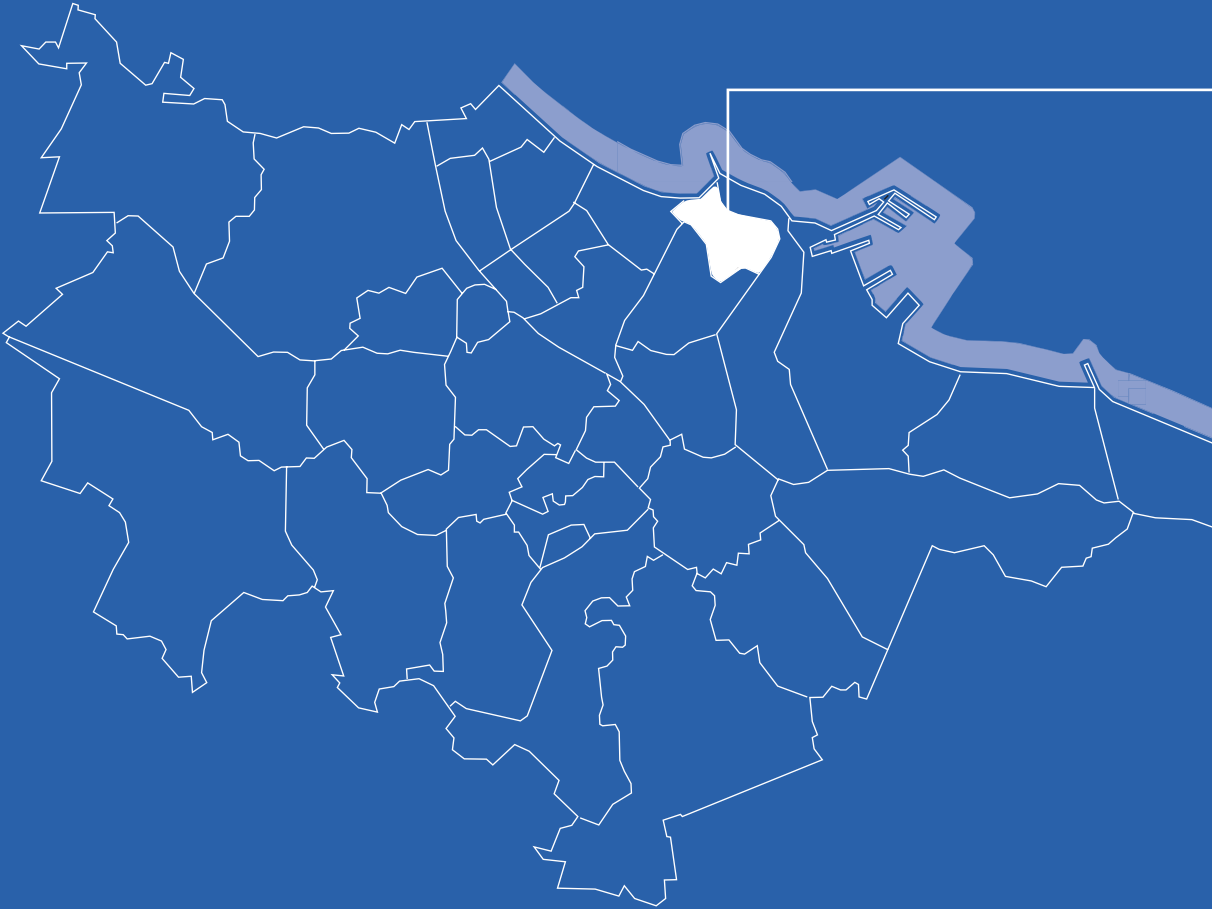
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*Exclusion versus Inclusion* is a project that reflects on the instrumentalisation of contemporary art in the service of capitalism and profit. Joshua Schwebel attempts to examine and subvert the connections between revitalisation and gentrification (which are so often camouflaged). The relation between the two cannot be ignored or discounted. (...) *Once revitalisation meant something very positive to me, today it has become a synonym of events such as carpet bombings, sieges or volcano eruptions* (...)<sup>1</sup> – wrote Krzysztof Jachimowicz, one of the inhabitants of the district of Nowy Port. What is the role of

1 K. Jachimowicz, 'Revitalisation of Nowy Port', *Nowy Port Żyje. Zapiski z dzielnicy*, Summer 2015, p. 14.

artists and art organisations in this whole process? Art and art institutions are seen by some as a way of opposing and exposing neoliberal narration while by others as an instrument for performing cultural policies. How aware are they of their role as the spinning element of the whole machine? Numerous worldwide cases fit into the pattern whereby artists and art initiatives act as a magnet and are a prelude to changes that benefit investors, while fragmenting the community with whom the artists themselves might feel an allegiance. Though often undoubtedly honest and participatory in nature, interventions also involve a colonising gesture. In many cases revitalisation is a well arranged and executed plan which stimulates changes directly connected to the value of a place. However, the fact is that local inhabitants are usually excluded from such a place.

# Gdansk City Districts



NOWY PORT IS LOCATED IN THE SEASIDE PART OF GDANSK AND IS BOUNDED ON THE NORTH-WEST BY THE WATERS OF THE GULF OF GDANSK AND ON THE NORTH AND EAST BY THE PORT CHANNEL AND DEAD VISTULA; IT BORDERS TO THE SOUTH WITH LETNICA AND TO THE SOUTH-WEST WITH BRZEŻNO DISTRICTS



# Exclusion versus Inclusion

BY ALEKSANDRA  
KSIĘŻOPOLSKA  
&  
JOSHUA  
SCHWEBEL

Nowy Port is one of the districts of Gdansk which is strongly connected to the port. The periods of its greatest development date back to the first decade of the 20th century and after World War II up to the 1980s. Due to de-industrialisation and the countrywide socio-economic crisis in the 1980s, Nowy Port started to fall into recession.<sup>1</sup>

Today, buildings with valuable architectural details from the 19th and 20th centuries co-exist with socialist realist architecture, while the mural *Nowy Bronx* (New Bronx) highlights the district's unobvious and rough character, functioning as a symbol of local identity.<sup>2</sup> The panorama behind the mural features gigantic ships, silent and anonymous witnesses of the massive changes that are about to happen. As nothing is ever constant, things started to change in Nowy Port, too. New initiatives often connected to EU funding can be observed, streets and buildings are being renovated, flowers planted, fountains and public squares built, art institutions set up, and artists' studio stipends are being promoted. Since 2007 the district has been involved in the revitalisation plans which are now in the second phase and due to be accomplished by 2023.

The Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art (Laznia CCA) was set up in 2013 in Nowy Port in the framework of the revitalisation programme. One of its aims is to engage strategies of contemporary art in the renewal processes of the neighbourhood. The gallery programme is based on the analyses of issues of state of contemporary art on the one hand, and on the interrogation of culture and education immersed in a social context on the other. One of the main pillars of the programme is the Artists in Residency Programme, as part of which three long-term residencies were initiated in 2016.<sup>3</sup> Artists were invited to send applications in response to an open call:

- 1 The problem was analysed in the work: M. Grabkowska and T. Tobis, *Nowy Port – Social Identity of the District and Participation of Its Inhabitants in Culture*, created for Laznia CCA as part of the *Artecitya* project, 2015.  
[www.laznia.pl/uploaded/\\_user/Micha/NOWY\\_PORT\\_raport\\_EN\\_1.pdf](http://www.laznia.pl/uploaded/_user/Micha/NOWY_PORT_raport_EN_1.pdf), (accessed 1 June 2018)
- 2 Nowy Bronx graffiti was created in 2010 by a Nowy Port inhabitant, street culture activist, and local writer (graffiti artist).
- 3 Residencies have been established as part of the international project 'Artecitya. Envisioning the City of Tomorrow' (2014-2018). It is based on a collaboration between nine partners from across Europe and brings together artists, architects, town planners and citizens to re-create cities into cities we would want to live in. The priority is to stimulate a vigorously innovative approach to the concept of urban life, taking into account sociocultural evolution and people's needs.  
*Artecitya*, [website], 2016, <http://artecitya.eu>, (1 June 2018).

Łaznia CCA would like to provide three long-term residencies based on research and collaboration (...) Residency will give space and time for the artists to be able to get critically engaged. The projects should be based on deep involvement built on thorough research (...)

This kind of long-term co-operation will aim to build a deeper understanding and means of investigating the local contemporaneity shaped by the ways and practices of its users. The district of Nowy is currently undergoing a process of revitalisation, which reflects the entire spectrum of related aspects, issues and problems. We are therefore looking for socially engaged and developed works from a critical point of view. The aspect of reaching out to new audiences plays an important factor as well as ways and methods for building and sustaining a public dialogue (...).

Excerpt of the open call as part of the Artecitya project published in 2016

Working with the residency programme often poses questions about how to construct an open call text. The relevant information that can be found on the internet is very often superficial and distant from the local context. Information found on websites is often banal and exploited, resembling a theatrical façade rather than a representation of the actual situation.

What chance can the proposals have based on local context for artists coming from different realities with a different background, lacking, for example, knowledge of the Polish language?

One of the artists selected in the open call is Joshua Schwebel, who in his proposal from September 2016 wrote:



DISTRICT OF NOWY PORT. PHOTO BY ADAM BOGDAN





DISTRICT OF NOWY PORT. PHOTO BY ADAM BOGDAN



EXTERIOR OF LAZANIA CCA 2 BUILDING IN NOWY PORT DISTRICT. PHOTO BY ADAM BOGDAN

(...) In my work I devise strategies to reveal the politics of exclusion, expropriation and competition that both mandate and conceal the conditions of valuation in late Capitalism. Through strategic interventions, displacements, and withdrawals, I attempt to unbalance and open up these seemingly impartial processes.

The long-term research and residency project I am proposing to develop at Laznia CCA Nowy Port will be focused on the theme of gentrification, and aimed at discovering strategies to engage and empower local residents of the community to resist this process.

(...) Can we redirect this process? In the proposed project I am interested in finding strategies for working with community members to not just study this pattern, but to attempt to subvert it.

While artists and cultural centres are ambivalent or even politically hostile to the gentrification process, we can no longer deny that we are wholly implicated within its machinations (...)

Excerpt of Joshua Schwebel's proposal to the open call

People who are victims of gentrification (in cities like Gdansk that do not have such a long tradition in revitalisation processes) are in many cases not aware of it. Misled by innocent and attractive initiatives, they soon realise that they are powerless against the changes that are taking place around them. Their sporadic protests do not impact or influence the redevelopment, inflation, and erasure of their homes. City plans are carefully planned well in advance by town hall planners, administrators and construction companies. The battle is hard to win.

Joshua Schwebel's intention is to find a key to the dormant, rigid system. To release the energy that can carry the potential to act, rather than create an artistic vision, or site-specific reinterpretation. He is far away from the figure of an artist translating or explaining to the local community their problems and how they can solve them. Taking a step back, he gives local players the possibility to act, re-think and re-define their roles.

We are now in mid-2018<sup>4</sup> and Joshua Schwebel's residency has been partially accomplished, even though the most crucial moment is about to happen. His proposal results from his observations and research conceived in the district of Nowy Port. It is based on the lack of dialogue and interaction between the main local players, both governmental and non-governmental, and little or no knowledge about each other's activities. It examines the structures of institutional power and how they are articulated. His proposal is about shifting the optics, stepping out of the comfort zone, and setting challenges for oneself. Schwebel has proposed an experiment, a provocation, a temporary exchange of places by the employees of three local organisations<sup>5</sup>.

4 The text was written in June 2018.

5 Joshua Schwebel's project is planned to take place in September 2018. As of 1 June 2018 all the involved parties have agreed to take part.



In his letter, dated 24th April 2018, Joshua Schwebel stated:

I propose conducting a three-way exchange of office-spaces between the administrators of Laznia, the employees of CIS (Centre for Social Integration), and the staff and facilitators of the grass-roots social organisation Youth 180°. (...)This displacement and temporary resignification of the institutional space is to be my artwork. (...)I propose this project as a gesture to resignify the function of the Laznia 2 building for the local community, and to engage the staff, who have a long-term tenure in the building, and therefore in the neighbourhood, in forging lateral connections with other local socially-active workers.

The activities of these groups, sustained over several years, and emerging from within the needs and demands of the local population, intersect with the community-building mandate of social practice-based art projects, and the socially-engaged curatorial mandate of Laznia in practical and generative ways. By intermixing the staff (...)my hope is that day-to-day interactions over coffee might offer a platform for more topical conversations and exchanges. The potential for resource-sharing, community building, collaborative organising and problem solving, and even for Laznia to support the arts activities of these other programmes, proposes a broader base for Laznia in the neighbourhood, and offers a way for the institution to build trust amongst the local community.

My reasons for suggesting this exchange are strategic and considered. Rather than proposing my own platform for engaging directly with the local community (a process frustrated by my inability to speak Polish), my work turns that offer back to the institution that is hosting me, reflecting the obstacles, prejudices and value structures internal to the institution that obstruct the socially-engaged mandate I have been requested to perform (...).

The *Inclusion vs Exclusion* project can be seen as a gesture for re-examining the role of art institutions and artists in the gentrification process. Richard Florida's idea for city planners advocates that, in order for a city to regenerate, it should attract a 'creative class', i.e. he identifies that artists are the pioneers in the revitalisation of a district. Joshua Schwebel takes a step back and looks critically into his own practice and the role of Laznia CCA in the revitalisation process. He is an artist after all and Laznia CCA is an art institution, and both are present in Nowy Port thanks to the city's revitalisation plan. Is their presence in the neighbourhood the precipitation of the gentrification process? Are they just merely instruments in the hands of the city administrators even if their own interests

differ from the intentions of the others? Is there a way to work against this process of erosion of local identity?

The switching of places, untypical situations, and meetings that were not planned, carry with them the potential for change on the level of relationships between organisations' employees and the ways they function and co-exist in the district. This intersection among local practitioners carries a power to create a space in-between, on the margins, unidentified, in opposition to the given hegemony. As Chantal Mouffe stated: (...) *The objective of artistic practices should be to foster the development of those new relations, which are made possible by the transformation of the work process. Their main task is the production of new subjectivities and the elaboration of new worlds. What is needed in the current situation is widening the field of artistic interventions, intervening in a multiplicity of social spaces outside traditional institutions in order to oppose the programme of total social mobilisation of capitalism (...), creating the condition for the self-organisation of the multitude(...)*<sup>6</sup>

6 C. Mouffe, 'Critical Artistic Practices as Counter-Hegemonic Interventions', This troublesome, uncomfortable and questionable relevance of art. In public space. In search of a Possible Paradigm, Laznia CCA, 23-24 November 2012. p. 47



XARAVALD



NOWY BRONX,  
MURAL IN NOWY PORT.  
PHOTO BY ADAM BOGDAN

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# Culture, an integral element of revitalisation

Interview with Aleksandra Przyk, Senior Consultant in the Senior consultant in the Revitalization and Cultural Heritage Department, Gdansk Development Office

BY ALEKSANDRA KSIĘŻOPOLSKA

## How do you perceive the activities of the Laznia Centre of Contemporary Art (Laznia CCA) in Nowy Port?

When I began to work in the BRG (Biuro Rozwoju Gdanska, The Office for the Development of Gdansk) revitalisation team, the Laznia CCA was for me the product of the first stage of the revitalisation of Nowy Port. The entire building was renovated, and the idea for its function fitted in very well with an area that needed support. In my opinion, the Laznia CCA is an important place in the district, which has a significant impact on its attractiveness. However, when I started to work on the second stage of the revitalisation, during my conversations with the residents, it turned out that their perception was different. For many, the Laznia CCA is a locked castle, which they do not normally enter. The art which is on display is too difficult, inaccessible, targeted at a rather different audience than the local one. However, looking at the education that it offers, such as metalwork workshops, it should, in theory, attract the attention of the local community. The lack of interest may result from the fact that residents have to deal with everyday problems and art is not one of their foremost needs. The social analyses that were

carried out within the GPR (Gminy Program Rewitalizacji, The Communal Programme of Revitalisation) indicate that this is an area which accumulates various problems, especially those of a social nature. It is home to a large number of people who live in difficult circumstances, with educational and financial opportunities below the city average.

Nowy Port has a specific location in the city, it is distant from the centre and therefore access to cultural initiatives is difficult. The Local Culture House, which was closed in the 90s, also deprived the residents of cultural activities.

For a while now I have been observing the number of positive changes that have been taking place in Nowy Port. It seems to me that they result from grassroots initiatives that were inspired by urban social programmes. On the one hand the Laznia CCA fits into the community due to its activities for children and seniors, which touch the local community here and now. On the other, however, residents are not willing to participate enough in such activities. Perhaps it is the building that poses a problem as



“There was a very strong message that we are starting to build a new program and we want the inhabitants to come and talk about issues that concern them.”

it does not seem welcoming, or maybe the outdoor space could be more open and inviting, which would encourage people to sit and spend time there.

**And what are the future revitalisation plans for Nowy Port?**

We are planning a big operation at the former ferry crossing, development of the park at Szaniec Zachodni and other activities that will emphasise the identity of the district.

**What questions do residents ask during consultations? What is the topic of their interests, their concerns, and hopes?**

Residents come to the consultation points with very specific problems. For example, they want to have benches and rubbish bins. They turn to me for what are often very mundane matters. People from local organisations also approach us wanting to do things together and to involve them in our initiatives. Residents do not have any particular concerns in connection to our activities. They are rather impatiently waiting for visible effects. Residents perceive us in

an infrastructural rather than a social dimension. They report typical urban problems, which are also found in other parts of the city. During workshops held in 2016 for the local community, what came out as the results of many hours of joint work were demands such as a clear need for a greater presence of city guards, more activities for young mothers or activities for children aged 0-3. Currently, however, such demands are not being met. The reason is perhaps because the revitalisation is primarily associated with infrastructure and such activities are visible on an everyday basis. Another reason may be the difficulty in articulating one's own needs, because people often have trouble identifying what they want. The current revitalisation programme is the result of the aforementioned workshops and it mostly includes residents' ideas.

**How do you inform the public about consultations?**

In 2016 a major information campaign was held before the Communal Programme of Revitalisation was drawn up. Posters were hung in various venues, among others on trams. There was a very strong message that we are starting to build a new pro-

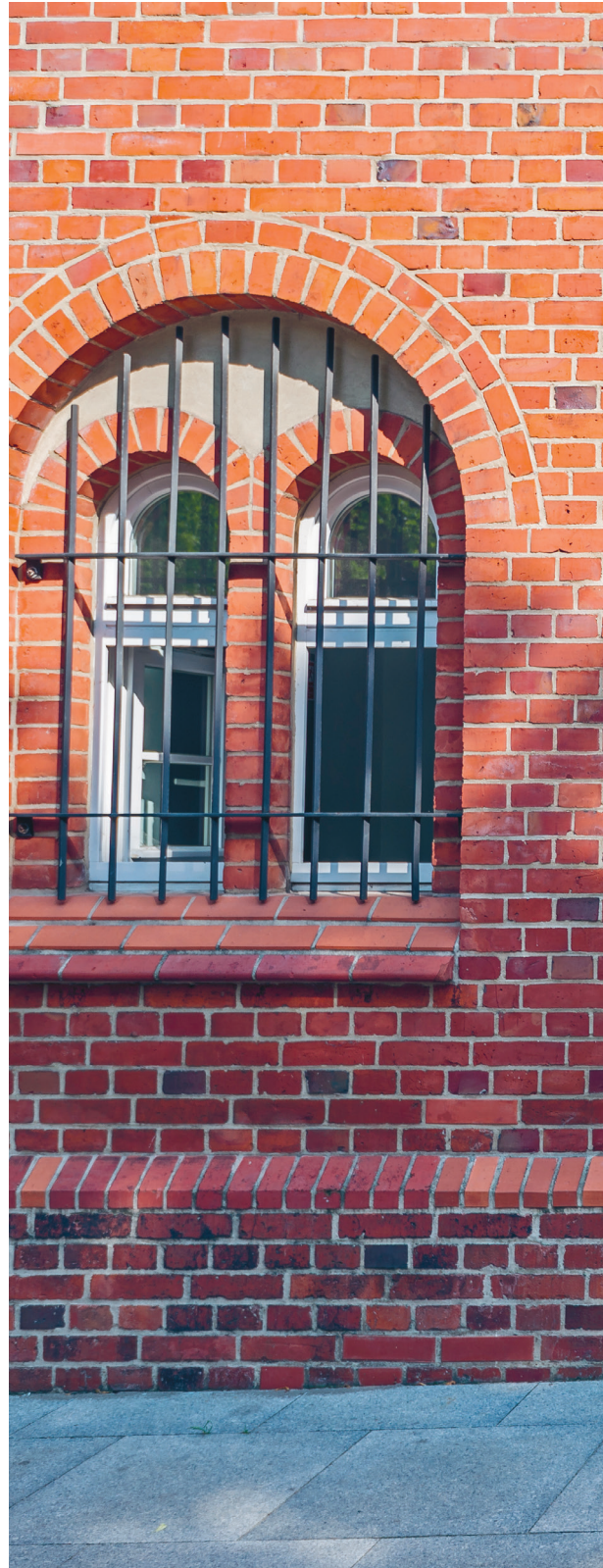
gramme and that we want residents to come and talk about issues that concern them. We were very active at the consultation points, we did surveys, and then we organised workshops. We wanted residents to know that we were starting in their district. The year 2016 was a breakthrough one, we talked a lot and met with members of the local community. It seems to me that this has now paid off to some extent. Today, residents exchange information with each other, which is the best way to reach them.

**What is the relationship between cultural centres and revitalisations in your opinion?**

I see culture as a complementary activity, an additional value, one of the factors of a revitalisation. In our activities we have certain goals, both infrastructural and social. Cultural initiatives have their place in the programme, too. I hope that they will be implemented successively and will help the neighbourhood to get out from its specific position. The range of cultural activities is very important as it builds a certain brand of the area.

**How do you perceive the relationship between revitalisation and gentrification?**

I hope that the social structure in the district will not change, that the residents will not move out because they deem it to be too loud or expensive. There is a moment in the revitalisation process when new participants enter the space. In the Nowy Port district we have quite a lot of municipal–communal premises. It is important for us to leave them. This balance between communal and private apartments gives an opportunity for various participants of the district's life, which is very valuable. This social mix is healthy for the city. You do not have to be a town planner or have education in this field to know that diversity is much better. I hope that the current residents will stay. Of course, we also expect new ones, moreover, there are a lot of potential investment sites here and a lot can change. We hope that the activities that have been carried out thus far will provide the expected results, however, we will have to wait a few years for the results to be seen. Only then will we be able to verify and evaluate the programme and the measures taken, and in doing so we will find out what turned out to be positive and what needs to be changed.





ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING OF LAZNIA CCA 2. PHOTO BY ADAM BOGDAN

# Organising an inclusive residency

Having invited a number of international artists in residency rises a number of questions. How can a foreign artist engage in the local context? Does a lack of knowledge of the local language act as an obstacle? Is it possible to become engaged in a project within a month or even a year? Our doubts are built on the experiences of the accomplished residency projects and the difficulties that have emerged.

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1.

**Time**

Enough time to develop a project is needed. A large number of projects are built on long-term relationships and trust that can only be built over a longer span of time.

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2.

**Numerous visits**

Multiple visits provide artists with the possibility to change their perspective and to delve deeper into the problem. The research phase allows an artist to confront his/her vision of the place with the actual situation.

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3.

**Sustainability**

Often the end of the project is the beginning of the next step. It is then that new ideas appear, which often propose a deeper dimension of the problem. A possibility to continue co-operation is essential for building a strongly rooted project. This approach demands trust and a willingness to continue the co-operation from both the hosting organisation as well as the artist.

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4.

**Assistant and language support**

A person who supports the artist, translates and is active during the periods when the artist is not working on site. He or she should understand well the problems of the project and be engaged in it.

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5.

**Networking**

Contact local organisations who can be potential partners in the project in order to create a working group that can offer different insights.

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6.

**Multi-layered actions**

Different activities in the frame of the project make it possible to create a deeper understanding and to create the possibility to reach out to various interest groups.

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7.

**Dialogue and expectations**

Co-operation between host organisation and artists should be built on communication and dialogue. The host organisation should be ready and willing to adapt and be open to the unexpected.

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8.

**Mutual trust:**

The host organisation should trust the artist(s) and support them without judgement throughout. If there are obstacles they should help the artist(s) find ways around them.

Avoid pressuring the artist(s) towards measurable outcomes, allow them to experiment, and to fail.





# MoTA's Cyanometer

**City**

Ljubljana

**Year**

2016-

**Artist**

Martin Bricelj Baraga

**Production**MoTA - Museum of  
Transitory Art**Website**[cyanometer.net](http://cyanometer.net)

The Cyanometer – A Monument to the Blueness of the Sky by the Slovenian artist Martin Bricelj Baraga is an interactive monument for public space. The 3-metre high blue glass monolith is both a monument, an open source software that processes air quality data, and an instrument that measures the blueness of the sky. The Cyanometer gathers data from a nearby weather measuring station. These data are visualised on the monolith itself for passers-by to read, but they are also recorded and sent to an online archive, where they are joined with blueness data. The installation runs on solar power, making it completely self-sustainable.



The first Cyanometer monument was installed in Ljubljana within the 'Ljubljana Green Capital of Europe' programme in 2016. Placed in the recently renovated pedestrian zone of the capital, Slovenska cesta, which used to be one of the areas of the city with the highest traffic pollution, the monolith aims to shift one's attention to the quality of air and air pollution, and direct ones gaze to the sky.



JAZZ  
festiva  
ljubljana  
Surnatural Orchestra  
Cirque Inextremiste  
Tatiana Mosio-Bongonga

CYANOMETER IN LJUBLJANA.  
PHOTO IZTOK MEDJA



cyanometer

Adecco

Adecco

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# Inventing a Monument

BY NEJA TOMŠIČ

**T**he artist Martin Bricelj Baraga envisioned the Cyanometer as an artwork for public space on the intersection of art and science. His idea joined the monolithic, almost ritualistic form with a scientific method, collecting data on blueness and air quality, and technology that improves data transparency, the Cyanometer visualiser.

His idea is to install several Cyanometers across the world (a project in the process of realisation), creating a unique archive that joins data on air quality and blueness across Europe. As part of his Nonument series (Lumitronomes, Sun Calendar, Moonolith, RoboVox,..), Baraga's long-term engagement with public space aims to rethink the role of public sculptures and propose new approaches to activating the public in public spaces through monuments. The Cyanometer marks the start of his Nature (as opposed to Culture) Nonuments, that aim to shift our focus to natural phenomena (osmosis, air, sun, water,..). Joining a politically engaged stance with a transcendental approach to nature, the works in this series propose a model for public space that incorporates natural elements as activating forces in urban landscapes. In this way, in addition to being an ecologically aware monument, the Cyanometer is also a commentary on the over-presence of digital technologies in our daily lives. The Cyanometer, as a primordial monolithic body that mirrors and merges with its surroundings, is also a public body that calls for stillness and presence, and a body that calls citizens to pause and look into the real sky and clouds. If read in a more radical way, the Cyanometer proposes that in a society driven by technological development, looking into the clouds might be a rebellious act.

On the other hand, the Cyanometer calls for data transparency in relation to a vital source of life: air. Air pollution is one of the biggest global threats to humanity; it impacts health, longevity, climate, and the economy, among others. Although the project is addressing a global problem, Slovenia, where the first Cyanometer was installed, is not an exception. Despite having acquired the title of 'European Green Capital 2016', air pollution is still one of the most pressing issues in Ljubljana. Due to its position in a basin, poor ventilation and the high population density, Ljubljana has increased levels of particulate matter (PM<sup>10</sup>), especially during winter. The main causes are emissions from furnaces and industrial sources in the broader Ljubljana basin, as well as transport emissions. During summer, air pollution is linked to ozone, transferred from the Po Valley in Italy, from which the Primorska region suffers the biggest impact.

Taking into consideration the different agencies that are involved in responding to this problem, the Cyanometer project was a collaboration between an artist (Baraga), an NGO (MoTA - Museum of Transitory Art), several municipal units (Ljubljana - Green Capital of Europe, Ljubljana Tourism, Department for Environmental Protection, Department for Culture), a governmental agency (ARSO – Slovenian Environment Agency) and an energy company (Energetika Ljubljana). Over the course of one year, these organisations worked on different stages towards developing an artwork for public space that would raise general public awareness of air quality, whilst also showing air quality data in a transparent and understandable way. The development of the algorithm and the design of the visualiser on the Cyanometer itself were the biggest challenges of the project. The visualiser now displays the levels of pollution presented on a colour scale from red to green, and also indicates the main pollutant, as well as the cause of pollution (i.e. increased levels of ozone, industry, traffic, or furnaces/individual heating systems). For easier readability, the exact numeric data of the measurements can only be read on the Cyanometer website. The opening of the Cyanometer was held in May 2016 and in the past two years it has become one of the city's icons. It was permanently acquired by the Municipality of Ljubljana in 2017.

In addition to displaying data, the Cyanometer also periodically collects images of the sky. These images, taken with a built-in camera, are then translated by an algorithm into one of fifty-three shades of blue. The blueness archive that joins a photo of the sky and a number of the blueness shade according to de Saussure, is a somewhat utopian act. Far from being confined to 53 shades of blue, the sky in actual cities includes oranges, pinks, violets, greys and browns. In this way, the Cyanometer again underlines the experiential and the natural as opposed to the digital and, instead of de Saussure's 'are air pollution and blueness of the sky related?' proposes a different question: which colour shades would form the measuring scales of today's Cyanometers? And how would they differ from city to city? These new colour wheels are created and archived on a daily and monthly basis on the Cyanometer website.



CYANOMETER IN WROCLAW. PHOTO BY MIREK KOCH

In 2017 a second Cyanometer was erected in Wrocław in Poland as part of the 'WRO Media Biennale: Draft Systems', where it received the Critics and Editors of Art Magazines Award and was recently also purchased as a permanent artwork by the City of Wrocław. The Cyanometer website now displays images of the sky in real-time in both Ljubljana and Wrocław. Since 17 May 2017 the installation is located in a public space on Joliot-Curie Street in close proximity to Wrocław University Library and National Museum. Since then the Cyanometer has been enriching the cultural map of the city with a programme of specially prepared events called Cyan Walks. Inspired by the artwork of Martin Bricelj Baraga himself, as well as by the 18th century instrument measuring shades of the sky by Horace-Bénédict de Saussure, the WRO Art Centre initiated a series of walks during which its art mediators together with audience trace blueness on the way from the WRO Art Centre to the Cyanometer installation. Each time, the event becomes an occasion to discuss the air quality in the city and to check how the installation works. This is a perfect example of how media art can become a starting point for discussion about crucial environmental issues via creative artistic performance.

The original cyanometer is actually a simple analogue measuring device, a circle painted with 53 shades of blue with which the blueness of the sky could be measured against the actual sky. The device was invented by Horace-Bénédict de Saussure in 1789. De Saussure was a Swiss physicist interested in geology, physics and topography of the Alps region. Through his work, he found that the blueness of the sky is influenced by both moisture and the amount of suspended particles in the air. This original blue colour measuring scale now sits atop of Martin Bricelj Baraga's monolith and allows visitors to measure the blueness of the sky each day.

# Calling science back into the arts is a crucial gesture

BY ALESSANDRO  
LUDOVICO

## Why art and science are crucial

Creating art with scientific principles is more crucial than ever. It pushes us off our endless flux of information, possibly confronting us with critical issues, through the facts of science and the often destabilising perspective of artists.

Art made with science produces specific aesthetics, appealing to the scientific rigour and methodology which is frequently mediated by the physical presence of scientific machines and their encoded authority. Art made with science has a consequent quality of apparently being trustable up to a point to be inappellable.

In a historical moment when any certainty, either recent or historical, can be virally questioned through a randomly rapid social media spontaneous (or artificially created to seem spontaneous) outrage, calling science back into the artistic discourse is a crucial gesture.

## Why sharing the sky is a universal gesture

In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, social media has escalated the personal exchange of information to an unprecedented level. Even if this takes place at different ratios, the most popular part by far is now purely visual. The omnipresence and proliferation of online visuals is expanding as a stable trend in mass media, since the technical transmissibility of images has been enabled. This was initially accomplished through classic broadcasting systems (television, cinema, printed media and advertisements), and then increasingly consolidated with the personal dimension of broadcasting, fully realised once high bandwidth internet became accessible to the same masses. This 'oculocentrism' has been reflected in every other medium, from zines to video, and has progressively and dramatically reduced the amount of produced text content, privileging the visual at all levels. However, the so-called 'sharing' practice on the various social media platforms is indeed a 'publishing gesture', or a release of information which becomes 'public' the very moment friends/followers notice it in their own customised timelines/streams (it can be argued that it is not 'public' if literally nobody notices it within the crowded information jungle). The underlying golden rule in these processes seems to 'be popular'. This is often



accomplished using equally universal visual symbols, which anybody can relate to, be attracted to/repulsed by, or by using the same social media jargon, everybody can feel 'engaged'.

Among these symbols, the sky is certainly one of the most 'universal', and thus successfully 'shareable', with its fascinating blue colour and vast distance, which allows it a lot of different feelings to be projected onto it, including our future, our dreams and the need to overcome our limits dictated by gravity. The sky potentially appeals to everybody with its mesmerising finiteness/infiniteness (it is our visual gateway to the universe), familiarity/abstraction (it is one of our main daily references, both when we see it and when we don't), closeness/distance (it is part of our visual landscape, but we never truly reach it), also becoming an instant mental refuge from the possible uneasiness of our human dimension. Thus, sharing it means sharing a specific space, both a mental and a physical one.

## Why measuring the colour of the sky can become a political gesture

When Horace-Bénédict de Saussure devised his 'cyanometer' instrument in the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1</sup>, to quantify the intensity of the blue of the sky, he was serving a specific scientific need. He was trying to prove that the colour of the sky was dependent on the amount of suspended particles in the atmosphere. So, through his paper instrument, dyed with 53 different shades of Prussian blue, he measured the colour of the sky in Geneva, Chamonix, and Mont Blanc, historically proving his thesis. Alexander von Humboldt carried out similar experiments during his voyages in South America, concluding that the blueness "indicates transparency and the amount of water vapour"<sup>2</sup>. While de Saussure measured the 39<sup>th</sup> degree of blue on Mont Blanc, von Humboldt measured the 46<sup>th</sup> degree of blue on an ascent of the Andean mountain Chimborazo.

1 H-B. de Saussure, *Description d'un cyanomètre ou d'un appareil destiné à mesurer la transparence de l'air*, *Memoires de l'Academie Royale des Sciences*, Turin, 1788-89, Vol. 4, p. 409-24.

2 *Wikipedia*, [website], 2018, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyanometer>, (accessed 13 November 2018)

The immediacy of the instrument has been frozen for a long time, but the interest towards the sky as a universal, shared and symbolic visual territory has never diminished.

In 1971 Yoko Ono, together with Edition Staeck (by the artist Klaus Staeck), published an artwork edition titled 'A Hole To See The Sky Through'<sup>3</sup>, consisting of a postcard with a small hole in the middle and the title printed on it as both a statement and an invitation to use it accordingly. In her classic conceptual art spirit, Ono tried to formalise a small gesture made through an affordable material to induce a possibly inspiring, momentarily different view of our familiar assumed reality.

The cyanometer as an instrument was relatively soon dismissed, however, a couple of centuries later it has been rediscovered by the 'Institute of General Theory', in which an artist developed a 'New Cyanometer' in 2009, quite similar to the original concept but with 64 shades digitally produced.<sup>4</sup> Here the artist was manifesting a possible collective observation, suggesting a new dimension of the portable tool, consequently changing its possible extent.

Being explored with a chromatic scope, the collective observation transcends its, still present, scientific value, possibly becoming an hymn to the awareness of environmental changes, personally and intuitively. This is the basis onto which an all round critical gesture has been built.

### **Why the collective dimension of data makes a difference**

Ono's work can be taken as an initial reference to Martin Bricelj Baraga's 'Cyanometer: Monument to the blueness of the sky', which takes several steps up to unify the original scientific rigour with the liberating collective potential. The project brings permanent highly technological instruments to the collectivity, enabling both the emotional element and the precise accumulation of international data. Baraga elaborated a sophisticated IT 'totem', installed in public places (two have been permanently installed in Wroclaw and Ljubljana). They gather precious environmental data through various sensors and an external data stream, and take periodical automatic pictures of the sky. This data is aimed at measuring the quality of air consistently with the original proven cyanometer theory. This data is then digitally archived, together with some analyses, and is also available to the scientific community. It has thus already been proven, for example, that even though Ljubljana was awarded the title 'Green Capital of Europe', the claims about the greenness of the city are actually partially wrong.

The project, in fact, extends the perception of the sky through time, instigating a comparison of colour shades as an historical investigation, and inherently recalling the realistic and real representations of it in art history (as the celebrated skies in Van Gogh's or Turner's paintings). The qualities of interaction of the cyanometer with the public, combined with the clever use of solar power and a polished mirror exterior, confront the viewer with a new way of making art pub-

3 Y. Ono, *A Hole To See The Sky Through*, Heidelberg, Germany, Edition Staeck, 1971.

4 *Institute of General Theory*, [website], 2018, <http://www.iat-research.com/index.php/work/archive/95-new-cyanometer>, (accessed 13 November)

lic<sup>5</sup>. The key is in the combination of a sophisticated and easy to understand environmental data displayed on a monolithic, monumental public sculpture. Data about pollution and its inevitable relationship with the blueness of the sky is displayed and stored, allowing a re-appropriation of the sky, finally perceived as a common and a live collective resource. Furthermore, Baraga produced stacks of postcards with his own version of the original cyanometer, allowing everybody to use it potentially anywhere and to send pictures, or just report, in an extended collective gesture which possibly might even further fuel scientific research. The sky is both our limit and our gateway, and so this dynamically ever-changing sculpture simultaneously looks forward and back.

## Why the cyanometer talks about our future

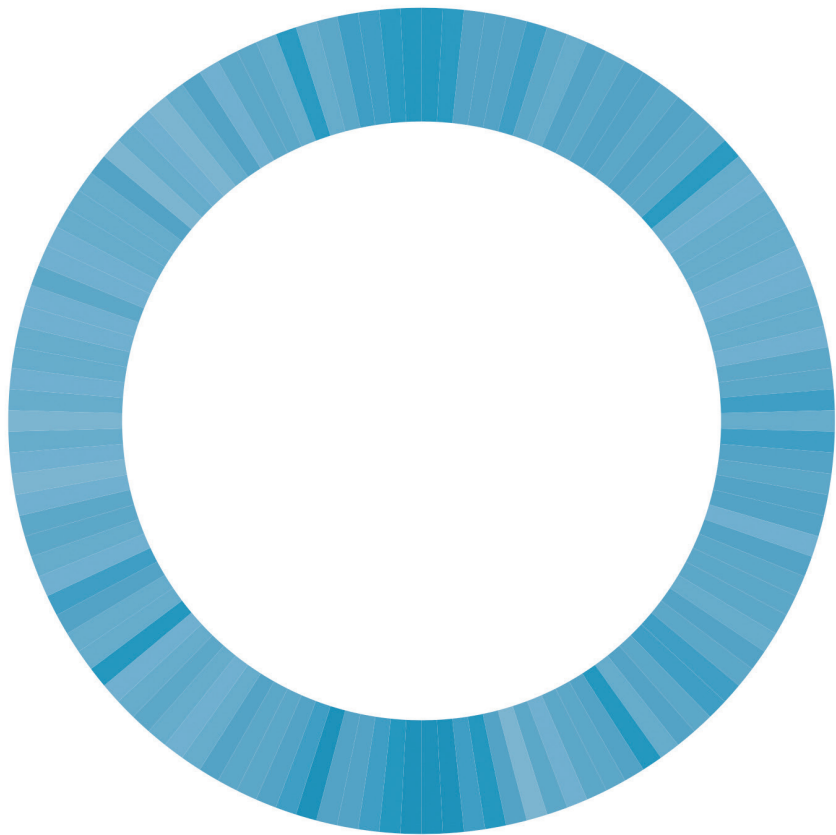
These two streams of information, the pollution and the blueness, resonate as the two sides of both society and technology, going in different directions. They represent the beauty which inspires and supports us and our inability to manage the artificiality we also create. It shines as a beauty which holds the truth of its hidden, pervasive and present shared dangers.

This relationship between an attractive aesthetic and its hidden dangerous meanings perfectly expresses the complexity and duality of contemporaneity, and its omnipresent ambiguity. This ambiguity is particularly embedded in the relationship between technology and nature, as the former is created to exploit the latter and its resources beyond what would be sustainable. But then technology is often contrastingly used to better understand nature, supporting natural processes in order to recover from the previously provoked damages, in a sort of infinite loop. It is one of the contradictions now embedded in science, elevating our understanding of the world through the construction of tools which are structurally damaging it.

An open relationship between art and science, then, would crystallise this ambiguity at a new aesthetic level, showing its striking contradictions outside of art circles gathering in museums and galleries, and eventually installing it in the public realm. This new kind of critical public art can finally and hopefully completely dismiss the purpose of urban decoration, intervening with a critical purpose in the public space, intrinsically augmenting it, and becoming a precious common, which would contribute to the general knowledge and personal perception of our close and distant realities.

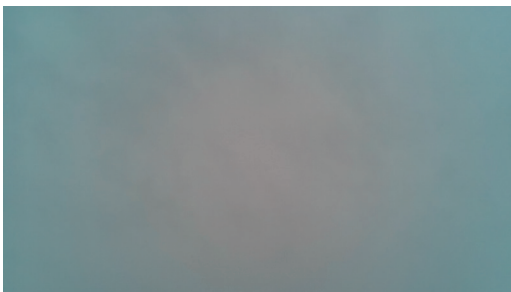
5 *WRO 2017*, [website], 2017, <http://wro2017.wrocenter.pl/en/nagrody-wro-2017/>  
<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/a-scientist-invented-the-cyanometer-just-to-measurethe-Blueness-of-the-sky>, (accessed 13 November 2018)

Photos - every 15 minutes / Blueness archives:  
(follow them at:<https://archive.cyanometer.net/#location/1>)



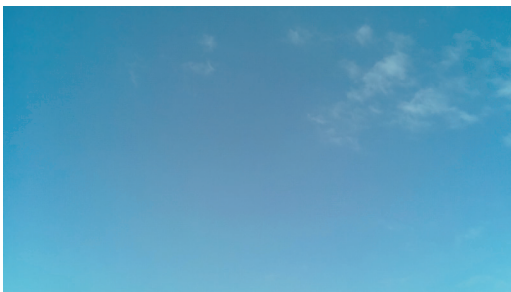
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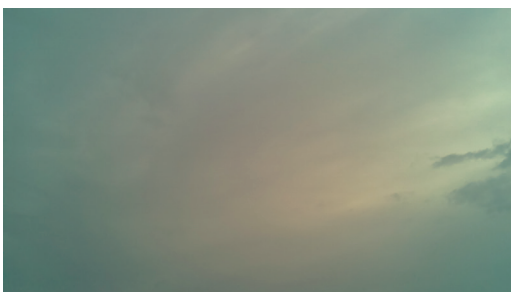
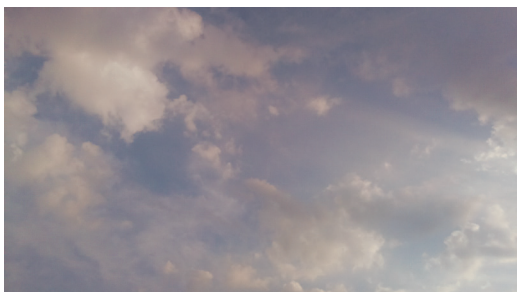
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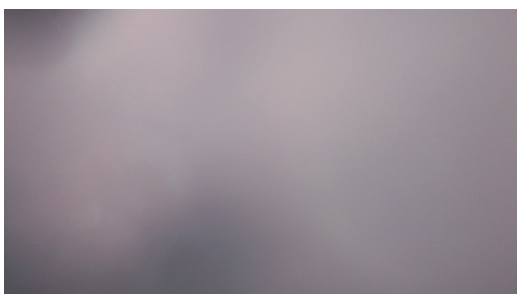
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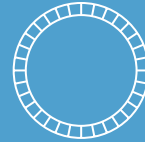


24.06.2018 / 18:29:30

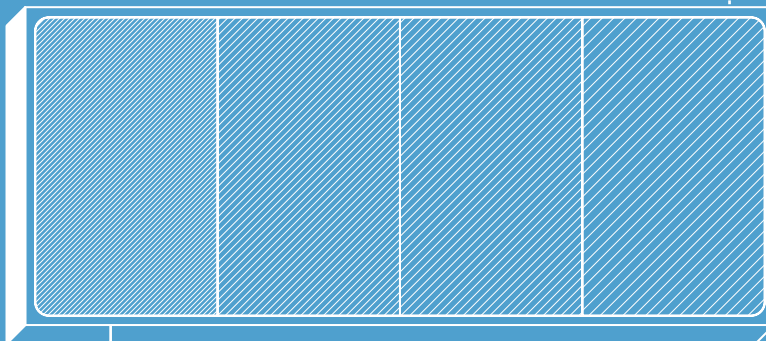
24.06.2018 / 20:34:04

# How does it work?

The Cyanometer displays the air pollution level on a colour scale from green to red and points out the main pollutant in the event of pollution. The pollution index is calculated from the concentration values of individual pollutants (PM10 particles, O<sub>3</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>), which are refreshed every hour.



The Cyanometer's camera periodically captures images of the sky. Each image is uploaded to the website and translated into one of the 53 shades of blue. Images are then joined in a simple spectrum that forms the blueness archive.



## LEDs show air pollution

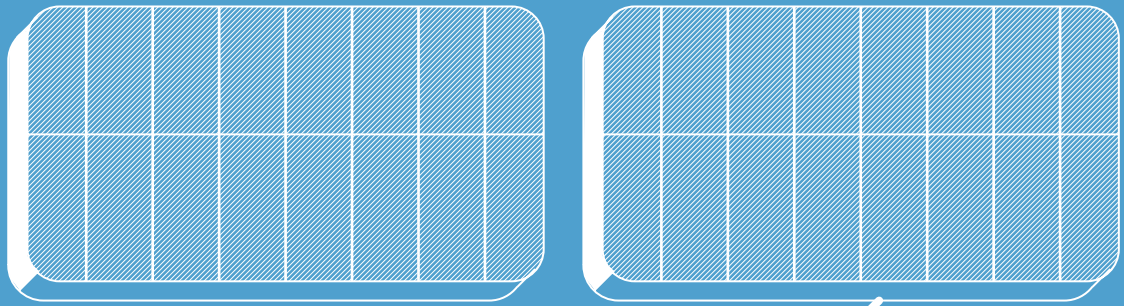
The air pollution level is determined by the pollutant with the highest calculated index. On the basis of this value, the state of air pollution is divided into four categories: low (green), moderate (yellow), high (orange), and very high (red).

If the air pollution level is high or very high in a particular time period, the Cyanometer displays the icon connected to the pollutant with the highest index. In the case of ozone, the icon indicates a connection to solar radiation, while in the case of other pollutants the icons indicate those emissions that cause (the) increased levels of the most problematic pollutant.

The proposed index of air quality is based on the CAQI (Common Air Quality Index). The Cyanometer's index consists of four levels, while the CAQI determines five concentration levels. This results in a minor adaptation of concentration levels of each pollutant.



## Weather station



USB WIFI modem

Raspberry  
PI computer

2x solar panels

Powered by solar panels, the Cyanometer is a self-sustaining organism that can be fully functional in any remote natural habitat, even in the most distant of areas such as the Alps.

2x 12V rechargeable batteries

Raspberry PI camera

A photo of the sky is taken from a Raspberry-Pi camera and matched with one of the 53 shades of blue. These variables are combined with current atmospheric data and visualised in a simple spectrum showing the quality of air.

In the case of increased levels of concentrations, three different icons indicate the main pollutant source (PM<sub>10</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>), while the fourth one indicates the essential condition connected to elevated ozone concentrations (O<sub>3</sub>). The pictograms in the first row indicate the cause of pollution.



**O<sub>3</sub>**

ozone



**PM<sub>10</sub>**

PM<sub>10</sub>  
particles



**SO<sub>2</sub>**

sulfur  
dioxide



**NO<sub>2</sub>**

nitrogen  
dioxide



The accompanying programme for Wrocław's Cyanometer included:

Premiere walk as a part of the 'Little WRO' activities during the Biennale WRO opening events and special 'Wrocław Nights of Museums' programme

Guided walk for a group of school children

Walk as a part of 'WRO Sunday Matinee'

Walk as a part of the Visegrad conference for museum staff organised by the Pan Tadeusz Museum of the Ossolinski National Institute

Walk as a part of the 'Wrocław Senior Days'



CYANOMETER IN LJUBLJANA.  
PHOTO IZTOK MEDJA



# “Big problems could be approached through small artistic gestures”

## Interview with Rob La Frenais, curator and writer

Rob La Frenais has been working as a contemporary art curator for more than three decades. Before becoming an independent curator and writer in 2014, he was based at The Arts Catalyst, where he established an ambitious art programme and organised some of the most advanced and innovative art and science exhibitions. As the first curator to experience zero gravity in 1999, he enabled around fifty artists and scientists to work in “an environment previously only experienced by astronauts and space scientists.” His recent projects and exhibitions as an independent curator include ‘Aerosolar’ and ‘Aerocene’ by Tomás Saraceno, ‘When the Future Was about Fracking’ with the Paris-based group HeHe, and ‘Exoplanet Lot’. In 2005, he defended his PhD thesis ‘Ubiquity and Fluidity of Art, Science, Performance and Technology: 25 years of critical and creative curatorial practice 1979-2004’ at the Arts School of Brunel University. La Frenais is currently a visiting fellow of Bournemouth University, visiting curator at the Maison Des Arts Georges Pompidou in Cajarc and visiting curator at FACT Liverpool. He also runs the ‘Future of Transportation’ project at the Srishti Institute in Bangalore and is a regular contributor to Art Monthly UK and the [mastery.info](http://mastery.info) website. La Frenais

“believes in being directly engaged with the artist’s working process as far as possible, while actively widening the context within which the artist can work.”

BY NEJA TOMŠIČ AND KATJA PAHOR

In your PhD thesis, you introduced the twin axes of ‘ubiquity and fluidity’; ubiquity to describe the way that art spreads into the areas of science, technology and real-life situations including political issues; fluidity to describe the artist’s ability to adapt quickly to circumstances. Are these aspects now, more than a decade later, still relevant or have new ones appeared, especially in the context of artworks in public space?

I’ve always worked with artworks in public space. I’ve been curating projects since 1987 and did my PhD in 2005. When I presented my PhD, it was eight years since I had even thought about it, and at that point I was working at The Arts Catalyst, which was the art and science organisation for the UK (now renamed Arts Catalyst). I worked with the organisation from 1997 to 2014, when I became an independent curator and writer. Going back to the concepts of ubiquity and fluidity ... it’s very interesting that you should pick up on that concept, because I think those twin axes still operate in quite an interesting way, even if we consider the growth of new media, the internet and the questioning of reality with fake news and all of these things we see today. I think ubiquity and fluidity are quite relevant and could probably be applied again.

In the late 90s, the notion that artists could be anywhere, including a nuclear reactor, space agency and a scientific lab, was really not particularly well established. Now it has changed and we have artists in residency at CERN, artists in residency at big

observatories, such as Daniela de Paulis’s work in the Dwingelo Observatory in Holland, and there are many European schemes bringing artists and scientists together. However, the fact that it has become a more popular field doesn’t change the fact that there is a built-in resistance to these kind of projects, which is related to the fact that artists still have a very critical and unusual relationship with the concept of data. I think the German artist Agnes Meyer-Brandis is the best example to illustrate this, because she studies her scientific experiments very well, but she inserts this sort of poetry, poetic data, you could call it faking it or you could call it fiction ... but the interesting thing with her work is you can’t see where fiction ends and where reality begins or vice versa. So, I think there’s a sort of jouissance, a sort of playing with this notion of data that goes along with those twin axes of ubiquity and fluidity. Therefore, in the graph we could possibly bring in a third axis called reality.

What, in your experience, is the process of connecting scientists and scientific agencies with artists?

One of the things we spent a lot of time doing at The Arts Catalyst was explaining the whole notion of the utilitarian aspect of art as not being so relevant to artists in their collaboration with scientists. So, for example, when The Arts Catalyst had a contract with the European Space Agency to do a study on the cultural utilisation of the International Space Station (ISS), the first thing we had to do was to explain to the space scientists how the notion of scientific peer review, for example, could be applied to assessing the quality of art. And this is kind of a difficult thing, because there are many different

aspects in judging the quality of an artwork, which range all the way from aesthetic experience to the creative trajectory of the artist, to the critical writing, the number of audiences that have seen the work, to many, many different things... and they're not entirely measurable as scientific data. So, it was a matter of explaining how, while there is a similarity between the artistic process and the scientific process, they are in fact very, very different. One of the things that happened during this growth period of art and science is that some people tried to argue that a hybrid form could be created. In his book *Colliding Worlds*, Professor Arthur I. Miller, for example, argued for a sort of sci-artist or art scientist... there was a notion that there was a hybrid form of scientist and artist. We spent a lot of time opposing this notion at The Arts Catalyst. One of the main goals was still a matter of creating conversations between art and science, creating a dialogue between art and science, but not trying to hybridise it by saying that the processes are the same. It's this kind of approach that I think we should insist on. That the difference between artists and scientists is still really important. It's a matter of different approaches and appreciating them, rather than trying to claim that they are the same.

**What about artworks that address the issues of privacy, data transparency and environmental issues? How can we communicate those issues to the public through art?**

In a multidisciplinary approach to any new scientific field, such as big data at the moment (in the past there has been synthetic biology, nanotechnology, all of these new fields), whenever scientists start to approach it what they generally do is to set up an interdisciplinary research group. They meet up and there are around fifteen people, from mathematicians and neuroscientists to computer scientists... And, our argument was, that artists could also contribute to that multidisciplinary approach with their different approach, intersecting, if you like, in a new form of thinking, such as data privacy, for example, which is a very important one. The artist can bring an almost sort of sideways point of view to such issues.

Currently I'm very interested in the issue of infrastructure development. I wrote a paper called *Bicycling on Mars* in which I suggested that big problems such as planetary transportation could actually be

approached through small artistic gestures, small movements, that could actually have a vast effect on policy-makers. So, what I'm saying is, yes, there is a role for artists in the interdisciplinary research work. And, again, what artists and scientists do is not the same thing. The value of artists in the interdisciplinary research is their difference.

**Do you think artists have a responsibility when working with scientific data? How would you define this relationship? In the case of the Cyanometer, for example, one of the aims was to improve data transparency when it comes to air quality in Ljubljana. We've worked with concrete data and algorithms and also took on the responsibility of showing data through an art piece in a correct way...**

Well, there are different approaches... If you want to get scientists to just give you the data you could present, that's fine, that's simple. However, if you are going to go a bit further and say that what your work is doing is actually bringing more transparency to the scientific practice, then you enter some quite interesting territory, because of the notion of consensus in science... This is what we have seen recently when the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report (which stated that we need to stick to the 1.5°C warming level, or the Earth may not be inhabited by humankind less than 100 years from now) was published. It's a really shocking report. One of the interesting things is that the full report was not entirely made immediately clear, because of this need for consensus, which shows that artists don't have to operate by consensus. They can just provide the data, they don't have to worry about research funding or consensus. What we are seeing now is the idea that artists may be in position to cut through these consensus issues, because they're not tied to the ethical and funding constraints the scientists are tied to. Not all the science that should be done, is done. It's political. "All science is political", said Bruno Latour, and he is very worth referring to in discussions about these matters. He quite controversially started pointing out some 20 years ago that science is not necessarily objective. That science is socially constrained by what it can or cannot present. This was very unpopular at the time, but I think we're now seeing it. What we're seeing in terms of climate change is climate scientists actually breaking the consensus. In the UK there is a

group of scientists called the Extinction Rebellion that practices fairly extreme forms of civil disobedience. They have started training people in London to protest on climate change issues. They are making it very clear that this is a scientist-driven protest, actually. In general, there are two approaches for scientists, one is to say it is not fair that artists are allowed to do all this stuff, but on the other hand they could say it's great, because artists are starting to tell the truth for a change. So, there's an interesting dialogue to be had, I think.

What about artworks in public space? You have done a lot of projects in public space. While the notion of public space is broad, we would still like you to reflect on some differences between working in such an insular space as the International Space Station or producing an artwork somewhere in the open air and showing it in a public space with the aim of improving the visibility of an issue.

A standard public artwork is one thing... You put something in a public space and many people see it and experience it. That's one way of experiencing it. I've done a lot of these kind of projects, but I would like to suggest that you broaden the definition of what is public and say that even if you do something in private, the repercussions can be very public, depending on the story you're telling and the way that story is spread. So, I like to give an example in my lectures of Joseph Beuys and his performance I Like America and America Likes Me. Beuys was transported to the United States from Germany and taken in a closed vehicle from JFK airport to the gallery in New York, where he spent three days in the space with a coyote. At the time, very few people saw it. You can now see that performance on YouTube and many millions of people have seen it or heard about it or learned about it in art schools... So, I would suggest that the social nature of what Beuys did, the social sculpture nature, actually had public repercussions. Like a Navajo Indian telling stories around a campfire... What I'm trying to say is that the way in which something is disseminated in the public is important. Obviously, the internet meme is another really good example of the way something spreads through the internet. This is another form of public space, but it's very similar to the one I was describing which is basically a storyteller around a campfire and stories being passed down through genera-

tions. Maybe we could argue that the repercussions of public art, say a piece by Christo which is seen by many people, would go on for years and years, long after the artwork is over. So, you always have to include the time-base into the notion of public art. I think putting an object in a public square, however radical the object, is only one approach. There are many, many more dimensions to the public realm than this, including time, space (physical and electronic), belief systems and indeed the human place on the planet.







CYANOMETER IN WROCLAW. PHOTOS BY MIREK KOCH

# Using public space as an agent of public awareness.

## The Case of Cyanometer, data transparency and air quality.

1.

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### Situation before

- High air pollution, especially during winter
- Low public awareness of air quality risks
- Air quality data published numerically online and difficult to read
- Low public awareness of individual responsibilities and contributions to improvement in air quality

2.

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### Goals

- to increase data transparency and to improve general understanding of air quality data, as well as the causes of low air quality, underlining the impact of citizens and raising awareness of citizens' contribution to air quality,
- to provide daily data in a transparent and comprehensible way, thus raising the visibility of the problem,
- to connect different agencies in the development of an artistic initiative supported by an NGO (in the case of the Cyanometer these were Energetika Ljubljana, the Municipality of Ljubljana's Department for Space and Environment Regulation, the Department of Culture and the Ljubljana Green Capital project team, as well as the Slovenian Environment Agency).

- to develop a contemporary, engaged and engaging monument in public space, joining public interest and different agencies.

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## 3.

### Struggles/Solutions

- developing a visualisation system
- finding an appropriate location for the Cyanometer
- developing a programme of activities around the installation
- sustaining the installation

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## 4.

### Evaluation/Recommendations and tools

- In addition to the strategy of solving global issues through policies, citizen engagement can have enormous power. Devote a significant amount of budget for projects that help to raise the visibility of common problems, and think about how to increase their visibility.
- Engage artists, creators and thinkers who have innovative visions that address these problems and issues.
- Connect different interest groups and agencies responsible and involved with the problem. This should include citizens, governments, private companies, and municipal organs, NGOs, and cultural and scientific institutions.
- When developing a project, also develop a long-term sustainability plan that involves engagement of workers that are already employed by the municipality (for example tourist guides, local environment NGOs, workshops and public walk coordinators). Develop a public engagement programme as an essential part of a public space sculpture.

# Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki's Artecitya Agency & LABattoir

**Production,  
organisation**

Goethe-Institut  
Thessaloniki

**General Director  
of the programme**

Rudolf Bartsch (Director  
of Goethe-Institut  
Thessaloniki, 2017-2018),  
Peter Panes (Director  
of Goethe-Institut  
Thessaloniki, 2014-2017)

**Artistic Director**

Christos Savvidis  
(ArtBOX Founding Director)

**Co-ordination**

Aris Kalogiros  
(Goethe-Institut  
Thessaloniki), ArtBOX

Artecitya by Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki's mission was to reinvent the city's image and change the ways in which the city is experienced by its inhabitants, visitors and people worldwide. Creative individuals who participated in a series of specially designed programmes have proposed specific solutions and have built prototypes towards the realisation of this goal. The conceptual backbone of the programme was the formation of an agency, aiming at cross-fertilising critical theory, artistic practices, political decision-making and an active network of national and international players. Drawing on the term 'agency', that is, an individual's or an entity's

capacity to engage with the world and act within it, the ‘Artecitya Agency’ aimed to become a trigger, a springboard and an emancipator that explores the potential, the problems and the politics that lie behind the making of a culturally dynamic city. The ‘Artecitya Agency’ developed and implemented a conference, six residencies, several workshops, and socially engaged and public art projects. The Artecitya Agency acted as an inventor of work, functioned as a hub of creativity and aimed to develop a best-practice model for reinventing the city’s image.

In the context of the ‘Artecitya Agency’, the Artecitya activities functioned essentially as prototypes for the establishment of the project ‘LABattoir’, that became the brainchild and sustainability project of the ‘Artecitya Agency’. ‘LABattoir’ started in the recently refurbished building of the Old Municipal Slaughterhouse, made possible thanks to the active involvement of the Municipality of Thessaloniki in Artecitya, and implemented through a founding grant from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF). ‘LABattoir’s mission is to introduce a new conception of creativity, to invent new activities and practices, and to engage artists and creative citizens with art, design and new forms of “social practice”. To achieve this, ‘LABattoir’ collaborates with established universities, artists and specialised researchers in order to map the

**Scientific Advisor**

Sotirios Bahtsetzis  
(ArtBOX Research Director)

**Concept**

Goethe-Institut  
Thessaloniki and ArtBOX

**Curator of the  
residency programme**

Lydia Chatziakovou  
(ArtBOX Co-Director)

**Website**

[www.goethe.de/ins/gr/de/sta/the](http://www.goethe.de/ins/gr/de/sta/the)

city's human geography, identify the problems and needs of the community and design and implement workshops, educational seminars and public projects. 'LABattoir' also offers possibilities for practical training within a controlled, safe environment (market simulation) or even the use of existing structures and cultural activities aiming to test the proposed model and its resilience. Their ultimate goal is to include creative individuals into the city's network of production through new approaches to practices and innovative work models.





THE UNLEARNING SERIES,  
PUBLIC ACTION #2:  
INTERACTIVE BUS STOP  
POSTERS DESIGNED BY THE  
PARTICIPANTS.  
9 APRIL 2016.  
PHOTO BY GEORGE KOGIAS





# Rethinking work and socially engaged art practices: Artecitya Agency

BY DR. SOTIRIOS  
BAHTSETZIS

**Y**outh unemployment is one of the major problems in Thessaloniki, while finding a job that makes sense, that is, a job which is creative, fulfilling and with potentials for personal growth, is one of the main problems of young people worldwide. In this regard, the issue at stake is how to tackle youth unemployment in times when the basic idea of work has changed? The 'Artecitya Agency' deploys two interrelated strategies: Art for Social Change and Post-industrial Design and examines novel approaches towards concepts of work as well as socially engaged art practices.

Many artists engage with specific cultural strategies, which aim to promote real changes in society and address pressing social issues. Their work does not remain at a level of aesthetic representation and philosophical reflection but effectuates 'real' changes in our everyday practice. So-called 'social aesthetics' emphasise inter-personal relationships and aim to promote social cohesion and civic engagement. Artists today often critique recent developments, such as the condition of post-democracy, the environmental crisis, the scarcity of resources, the emerging difference between the rich and poor. Art for social change may offer alternatives to a precarious living, permanent unemployment, indebtedness and deprivation of civil rights. Moving beyond the function of commenting and responding to society by means of creating visual, auditory or performing artefacts, socially engaged art can ignite demands for change, and provide a platform for reflection, collaboration and laboratories for building socially resilient practices of work.

Civic society, public institutions and the economy, in particular, have entered unmistakably into the post-industrial era, which is characterised both by emerging technological innovations and changes in the organisation of communities (residents of a region) as well as symbiotic relationships around new forms of economy (commons, post-growth society, multiple anthropological identities). This development has an impact on our understanding of the concept of work, which is often linked to industrial wage labour and employment. Through paid work, the meaning of life and the social legitimacy of individuals and collectives is combined. This mental understanding becomes increasingly precarious, while corresponding with changes in the welfare state and the globalised society. In



GOETHE'S DREAM, POINTS OF VIEW BY GIORGOS GYPARAKIS, REDESIGN OF GOETHE-INSTITUT THESSLAONIKI'S GARDEN. OPENING. NOVEMBER 2016. PHOTO BY GEORGE KOGIAS



RESIDENCY #3, YOU ARE FOOD BY LYNN PEEMOELLER. SUMMER 2016. PHOTO: GEORGE KOGIAS

the post-industrial society technological developments (the internet and digital networking as well as mobility of labour) enabled various alternative forms of human labour to emerge, thus challenging conventional modes of work. New forms of work focusing on an interaction with the social and natural environment are currently emerging. The intersection of leisure and work, for instance, is symptomatic of these novel developments. Experiments by artists and designers engage both with the notion of creativity (e.g. low and high culture), as well as with a redefinition of work (e.g. DIY, Makershops, fab labs, alternative economies).

Work has been always understood “as invention of new social structures with a new kind of work which relates to it.” Digital craftsmen and activists, permaculture makers, post-industrial designers, as well as innovative policy makers want to invent new forms of work as an interaction with the social and natural environment. Art and design can ignite demands for change, and provide a platform for reflection, collaboration and laboratories for building practices of work, which are socially resilient and empowering and strengthen self-empowerment and community self-governing.

Thus, the strategies of post-industrial design respond to some of the major problems in Greece, supporting small but pluralistic production, a variety of standards, connection between innovation and market research, universal communication and the promotion of ideas and products. In this way, post-industrial design proposes solutions to existing challenges and offers opportunities to escape from a mortgaged future of poverty, marginalisation and ecological disaster. The ‘Artecitya Agency’ creates experimental sites that empower young creatives to imagine work and redefine the economy in local contexts through the prototyping of innovative services. By bringing together artists/creative agents with the market dynamics of social entrepreneurship and the creative economy, it creates tools to address the needs of today’s economy. The ‘Artecitya Agency’ proposes novel and diversified models of envisioning the city, through the sharing of informal education and lifelong expertise.

The brainchild and sustainability project of the ‘Artecitya Agency’ is the ‘LABattoir’ project, which demonstrates long-term outcomes and proposes a best-practice model. ‘LABattoir’ is a socially engaged machine for the production of culture; a laboratory of applied creativity that responds to society’s needs and problems introducing solutions and alternative strategies with the contribution of artists as a catalyst and citizens as co-producers.

‘LABattoir’s method aims to:

- Enhance existing capabilities and the acquisition of new ones, which will lead to a more meaningful engagement of individuals with the expanding realm of social entrepreneurship.
- Consolidate innovation, empowerment for self-action, and community building within the real economy.
- Expand the participation and enhancement of social cohesion through specially conceived projects for the city of Thessaloniki.

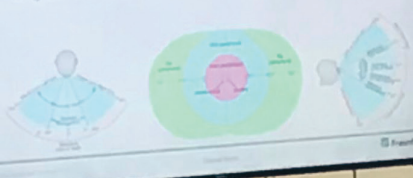
The ‘LABattoir’ project collaborates with established universities, artists and specialised researchers in order to map the city’s human geography, identify the problems and needs of the community and design and implement work-

shops, educational seminars and public projects. All these activities focus on individualised enhancement of capabilities and offer education in novel, informal professional skills, leading towards the establishment of self-organised groups (LABs), that emerge through the workshops offered, and carry on designing and implementing long-term projects. 'LABattoir' offers those groups the possibility to use and train on special tools - such as media equipment and a makershop. 'LABattoir' also offers possibilities for practical training within a controlled, safe environment (market simulation) or even the use of existing structures and cultural activities aiming to test the proposed model and its resilience. The ultimate goal of the project is to include creative individuals into the city's network of production through new approaches to practices and innovative work models. A key element for the achievement of 'LABattoir's goals is the use of theories and practices on post-industrial design.

Why does VR (still) look so bad?

Required Resolution for 360° Sphere

- acuity of human eye is about 60 min.  $\rightarrow$  60 pixels are needed for 1 degree
- sphere has 360 x 180 degrees  $\rightarrow$  22k x 11k pixels for full 360 video panorama



RESIDENCY #6, ARTISTIC  
APPROACHES TO IMMERSIVE  
TECHNOLOGIES WITH  
THOMAS KOCH.  
SUMMER 2018.  
PHOTO BY LABATTOIR TEAM





RESIDENCY #1: SWAANTJE GÜNTZEL & JAN PHILIP SCHEIBE, PLASTISPHERE. PHOTO BY GEORGE KOGIAS



CONFERENCE, WORK AS INVENTION. ART FOR SOCIAL CHANGE, 31/03-01/04/2017. PHOTO BY GEORGE KOGIAS





RESIDENCY #4, SPATIAL PRACTICES FOR 'LABATTOIR' WITH CHRISTOF MAYER. NOVEMBER 2017-SEPTEMBER 2018.  
PHOTO BY LABATTOIR TEAM

## Eric Ellingsen on Perceiving Academy

Within the context of the Artecitya Agency, a fundamental element in the invention of work is the development of collective practices as a vehicle for empowerment and emancipation. Eric Ellingsen's residency sought to establish an experimental Perceiving Academy that functioned as a platform for learning how to learn, and as a sustainable community practice run by the participants, after the residency ended. Indeed, the Academy led to the establishment of practice (in)cognition, a creative collective that later developed into Coalesce - a group of artists, architects and city-planners that is currently one of the main creative groups (Labs) operating within and supported by the LABattoir project. Therefore, the Perceiving Academy played an instrumental role towards the shift in the participants' mentality and practice that the invention of work demands.

The Perceiving Academy was launched in Thessaloniki in July 2016 in the context of Eric Ellingen's residency for the Artecitya Agency by the Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki. As a result, a group of young creatives emerged, first called Practise(in)Cognition, which later evolved to Coalesce, through their continuing relationship with Artecitya and LABattoir. Through LABattoir, the Perceiving Academy in Thessaloniki will soon embark on a new phase.

**S**herlock Holmes said that a good detective doesn't make the crime fit the facts, but rather the facts fit the crime. Today, whether it is learning how to democratically design cities, public spaces, or disciplinary departments, the crime is that we often make spaces and citizens fit into pre-existing creative processes and in-the-box branded ideas, rather than co-produce new place-and-people-specific models. However, merely 'thinking' about something doesn't get you out of the proverbial box. In designing our cities, we often want what risk generates without wanting to take real risks, and our design departments are better at making renderings of the world rather than rendering the world more real.

*The Perceiving Academy* is a discourse of doing. This discourse generates new proofs-of-concepts for the place-making design of our cities and public spaces. We need new spaces of democracy in order to generate new ideas of what democracies can be. "One must imagine it possible before one can see something", said the poet Rita Dove. This is what the Perceiving Academy set out to do, to imagine what is possible by materialising our imaginations.

*The Perceiving Academy* is a work of art that a city, institution or public group can commission. Each Academy takes its own unique, equitable form. The Perceiving Academy is place-based and play-based. Each edition is choreographed around specific needs, resources, and people. Each Perceiving Academy shares the same method.

The Academy requires local curatorial partnerships, a critically oriented group of curatorial visionaries that have a vested and invested commitment to equitable and inclusive spaces in their city.

The directors of *the Perceiving Academy* (Eric Ellingsen and often artist and planner Lynn Peemoeller), work closely with the local curatorial team to understand what parts of the city are of particular interest within the frame of the project. Those parts of the city become the context for public walks and actions which are the core designed content of each Academy.

*The Perceiving Academy* works with the curatorial team to select group-specific public talks and discussions with local lawyers, professors, theorists, engineers, designers, politicians, etc. These guests are Ambassadors of the Why. These ambassadors help focus the research content of the project whilst it is in motion. They help participants to understand the complexity of space and processes and help to critically frame what we are doing.

*The Perceiving Academy* can be open from one day up to two years. The duration of a typical Perceiving Academy edition is two weeks. A group of committed participants meet every day, for around eight hours a day.

Each *Perceiving Academy* (1) materialises as a precise object (a pavilion, installation, a vinyl record, etc.). To generate a 'process' and participant 'experiences' is not enough. (2) materialises as a public performance in a public space whose content is co-produced by the participants.

Crucially, the Perceiving Academy's method does not predetermine the outcome of what materialises. Rather, the Academy's directors design, choreograph and

conduct emergent conditions through which new options emerge from the values and interests of the specific-participants and site-specific place.

*The Perceiving Academy* engages the city as the Academy's classroom. The bulk of the first week is spent walking and performing actions together in public spaces. These actions consist of constraining one or more of the senses in some physical way that slows us down. To perceive how our cities can change, we need to literally see, hear, smell, taste and feel the city differently. Rather than merely knowing what needs to change, the Perceiving Academy's method cultivates the know how to change.

Each Perceiving Academy works with trainers from a training school for the visually impaired to understand how we can hear what the city has to offer rather than just to see what it has to offer. We use blindfolds and white canes while moving through a part of the city. We do this not to know what it feels like to be visually impaired, but for the experience of what not seeing a space we think we already know feels like.

It is said that we all have a lot of "shit in common", which is why each Perceiving Academy visits a local waste water treatment plant to speak with hydroelectric engineers. We want to know where all our waste goes, literally, not just metaphorically. From each private home to rural farms, cities become over-romanticised and their complexity becomes underrepresented when we don't know how they work. *The Perceiving Academy* seeks felt connections, not just intellectual ones. Such visits also connect each Perceiving Academy to a public food component that is at the core of each Academy. We engage urban food systems by choreographing food activists, Academy participants and curators to cook together, forge together, break-bread together, ethnographically bringing our recipes, heritage and taste to the Academy table.

Recognition is a large part of Perceiving's know how. The Academy's method is to take time to recognise what is around us, and each other, without presuming to know what is there ahead of time.

The method engages our bodies as scientific instruments and tools to measure, listen and feel what is going on around us. Intuition becomes scientific. The city becomes perceived not statically as a picture or an architectural plan, but dynamically as an emergent choreography of pulses and rhythms, of nimble vitalities, speeds and relational repetitions, of intensities twisting human and animal and bacterial bodies and material systems together.

*The Perceiving Academy's* method choreographs actions and content whereby participants start to assume the consequences of their own learning.

Finally, the Academy's method does not strive for meaning but instead instigates feeling. Hermeneutics is replaced by vulnerable ontologies. One's perception of the world and one's relationship as a world citizen is felt differently. One's art changes. One's disciplinary and political positions are reproached. Being outside one's comfort zone is not merely a concept to talk about. One actually feels uncomfortable being outside of one's comfort zone. When this is shared with others in precisely choreographed ways, a 'trust space' emerges. It is in a social trust where our cities and lives will represent and be represented by living democracies, rather than stubborn ideals.



RESIDENCY #2, PERCEIVING ACADEMY WITH ERIC ELLINGSEN. SUMMER 2016. PHOTO BY GEORGE KOGIAS



RESIDENCY #2: PERCEIVING ACADEMY BY ERIC ELLINGSEN, SUMMER 2016. CLOSING FESTIVAL. 14/07/2-16.  
PHOTO BY GEORGE KOGIAS

# Artecitya Agency by Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki 2016 - 2018

Six artists and creatives residencies

Swaantje  
Güntzel  
Jan Philip  
Scheibe

Eric  
Ellingsen

Lynn  
Peemoeller

Christof  
Mayer

Evi  
Karathanasopoulou

Thomas  
Koch



Innovation Gym  
by **Achilleas Kentonis**

The Unlearning Series  
by **Eleni Garoufalia and Rania Emmanouilidou**

Preparatory workshop and media lab workshop for  
the conference "Work as Invention. Art for Social Change"

Perceiving Academy  
with **Eric Ellingsen**

Stories with Sound and Radio Documentary  
with **Evi Karathanasopoulou**

Artistic Approaches to Immersive Media  
with **Thomas Koch**

Spatial Practices  
with **Christof Mayer**



Two groups of young creative entrepreneurs

Media Lab

Coalesce

Three socially engaged public art projects

Goethe's Dream

by Giorgos Gyparakis, Alexandros Psychoulis and Theodoros Zafeiropoulos

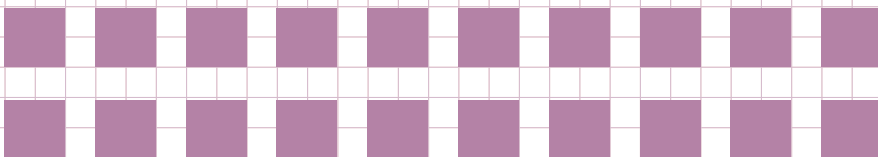
Explosion of Speech

by Mats Bigert & Lars Bergström

Symphony of Resonances

by Bruce Odland & Sam Auinger

20 workshops in schools



(in the context of the 'Homeland' project by Theodoros Zafeiropoulos)

## Ten dissemination and publicity events

Artecitya Launch

Artecitya Agency Launch

'Explosion of Speech' in Venice

'Unlearning' exhibition

'Plastisphere' exhibition by Güntzel & Scheibe

'Perceiving Academy' and 'You are Food' closing festival

'Goethe's Dream' public presentation

'Homeland' presentation to school teachers

'Symphony of Resonances'

'Points of View' opening

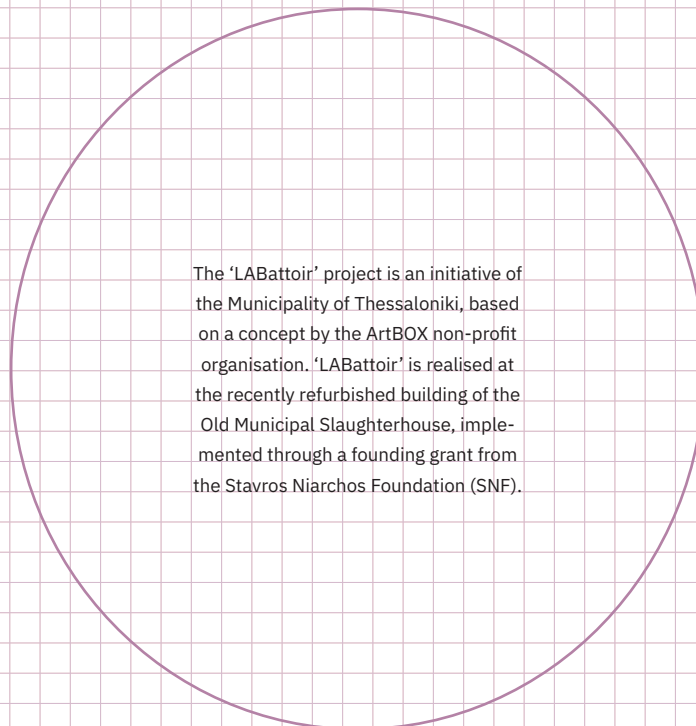
## 1 major international conference

115



**One major international conference:** The conference took place at the Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki (GR) from the 31st March to the 1st April 2017. The event was conceived and organised by the Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki, in collaboration with ArtBOX Creative Arts Management and in partnership with the Municipality of Thessaloniki - 'LABattoir' project and the Hyperwerk Institute for Postindustrial Design - Academy of Art and Design FHNW. The conference was live streamed to 12 institutions around the world.

## 1 sustainability project



The 'LABattoir' project is an initiative of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, based on a concept by the ArtBOX non-profit organisation. 'LABattoir' is realised at the recently refurbished building of the Old Municipal Slaughterhouse, implemented through a founding grant from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF).



GOETHE'S DREAM,  
ALEXANDROS PSYCHOULIS,  
ARKADIEN, 2015.  
PHOTO BY INGO  
DUENNEBIER



ARKADIEN

# How to tackle youth unemployment in times when the basic idea of work has changed

Read the following as an inspiration, a description of the process behind a project, a case-study that can influence what you do and how you conceive and implement ideas, rather than an absolute recipe or panacea. The main element in the success of any art for social change project is that it addresses the issues of a specific community. It is a long process of negotiation and self-reflection that begins with research into local circumstances and particularities, and involves the main stakeholders.

## **How the Artecitya Agency evolved into the LABattoir project**

1.

### **Create your environment**

Even from the first stages of designing Artecitya, the Agency and other activities, we contacted the local city administration and its cultural department as the obvious partners of a programme that aimed to 'Envision the City of Tomorrow'. We therefore started by identifying key partners and stakeholders: the city administration, local and international partner institutions and experts, as well as the main target group of the project - young unemployed from the creative fields.

2.

### **Choose your allies - support your participants and build trusting relationships**

At the same time, we started a dialogue with the creative community and reached out to young creatives in order to conduct initial research and development that would enable us to function as a springboard for the emergence of self-organised creative groups through empowerment, offering workshops, training and project-based commissions. The artists residencies, workshops and conference we designed played a major role in introducing this mentality (a novelty within the local environment), to build trusting relationships with partners and participants, and support the international networking and dissemination of the project.

3.

### **Evaluate what you are doing - go back and adjust when necessary**

Thanks to these strategic movements, the possibility of developing the Artecitya Agency idea into a long-term project for the City of Thessaloniki

beyond the Creative Europe funding, emerged at quite an early stage in the project. Our planning therefore shifted from the short term (the four-year duration of Artecitya) to the long-term, with self-reflection, flexibility and adjustment according to developments becoming a key component in the process.

4.

#### **Build a common language**

As things developed, several keywords were identified and became the project vocabulary, a set of concepts that contributed to better communication with partners, participants and audiences: art for social change, post-industrial design, capacity building, empowerment, self-organisation, collaborative working, participatory design, social cohesion, vocational education, informal education.

#### **The result of the Artecitya Agency > the LABattoir model:**

The final result of the Artecitya Agency is a whole new beginning - a new project for the city and a new model for tackling youth unemployment in times when the basic idea of work has changed.

The model functions as follows:

1.

#### **Research**

mapping the city's human geography; identifying society's assets, problems and needs - possibly through collaboration with universities and researchers; building a self-reflective methodology for evaluating the project impact (the Social Reporting Standard guide is a good tool).

2.

#### **Workshops**

designing workshops that focus on redesigning existing professional activities aiming for more effective distribution of those activities within the market. Inviting international and local experts from various fields and encouraging participants from a variety of backgrounds through an open call process. Desired result: participatory design of prototypes of products or services and new approaches to innovative models for work.

3.

#### **Training/Mentoring**

offer training and mentoring that complements the knowledge acquired through the workshops, adding practical skills in the form of individualised support for capacities and education on specific, novel, informal professional capabilities through seminars. Designing similar measures for the enhancement of capabilities for the wider public.

4.

#### **Labs**

encouraging the establishment of self-organised groups that emerge through the workshops offered, and that design and implement long-term projects within and without a project/structure.

5.

#### **Stage/Platform**

creating opportunities for practical training within a safe environment or using existing infrastructure and cultural activities that aim to test the model and its resilience. Introducing a new concept of creativity and communication with citizens through arts and culture. Expanding participation and enhancement of social cohesion through specially conceived projects.

# CCEA's Negrelli Viaduct

**Location**

Prague

**Year**

2012 - 2018

**Artists**

MOBA

**Producer**

CCEA

**Website**<http://viadukt kreativni.cz>

The 'Negrelli Viaduct – Opportunity for a Creative Prague' was a project led by the architects of CCEA MOBA. Initiated in 2012, it included a series of activities and small subprojects aimed at improving the quality of public space surrounding the 19th century Negrelli Viaduct. The viaduct is located on the border of Prague's historical centre and the district of Karlin. It is one of the most important technical constructions in the Czech Republic and the second oldest bridge in Prague. With a length of one kilometre, until 1920 it was also the longest stone bridge in Europe.



The project started when SŽDC (Railway Infrastructure Administration), the renovation investor, presented its plan to reconstruct the bridge. The planned reconstruction primarily focused on the technical aspects, such as the railway tracks, and did not consider the possibility of the revitalisation or the use of the spaces under the structure. This neglected environment was being used as unofficial parking lots, a drug dealer zone, opportune public toilets, a junkyard, etc.

In response to the renovation plans, CCEA MOBA's negotiations with the public sectors (the representatives of the Capital City of Prague, Prague 8 city district, SŽDC) have resulted in several interventions on site during the course of four years. The large-scale 'Summer Under the Viaduct' intervention in 2016 created the most impact. This programme tested the impact of involving the inhabitants in the use of the arches and communicated the new possibilities for their use. The 'under the bridge' public space has become a popular destination, not only for the local inhabitants and people that work nearby but also for tourists. Areas were created not only for relaxation but also for sports, music, theatre shows and other events. The programme was a result of direct input from the inhabitants of Prague. In parallel, CCEA MOBA presented its vision, which aims at permanently transforming the

spaces under the arches of the bridge – in the form of bistros, craft workshops, art galleries and studios – and therefore supporting minor productions and creativity, which is the basis of the DNA of the district of Karlín.

Thanks to the ‘Summer Under the Viaduct’, an agreement between the public sphere and the local inhabitants regarding the reuse of the spaces under the viaduct has been reached. Transformation of the viaduct has therefore progressed to the further stages of preparation, in co-operation with the Capital City of Prague council, SŽDC and the Institute of Planning and Development (IPR), with the planned end for the reconstruction envisaged in 2021.

SŽDC started the renovation in August 2017. In October 2017 the City Municipality of Prague 8 accepted the study proposed by CCEA MOBA for new activities under the viaduct and new public spaces along the structure. The negotiations with the representatives of the Capital City of Prague about financing and the next stages of the project are still underway and CCEA MOBA believes negotiations regarding the next phases of the project will be completed before the end of the year (2018).

The project proves that an architect, as well as a citizen who is passionate about the surroundings, is capable of

initiating such a reconstruction on a scale of one kilometre. The ‘Negrelli Viaduct – Opportunity for a Creative Prague’ is a quest for a path where creative activity can contribute to an improvement in the cityscape.

Specific interventions of the long-term project initiated by CCEA MOBA could only be realised thanks to the generosity of our partners: Consortium for Karlín, Vodafone Czech Republic Foundation, Programme of Czech-Swiss Co-operation, Capital City of Prague, Municipal District of Prague 8, and the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic.

# Infrastructure and Community

BY IGOR KOVAČEVIĆ

**P**ermanent pressure on the main players in towns to negotiate with inhabitants and create common solutions brings more democracy to current European cities. Those experiences start to become standard procedures in the new developments undertaken by cities where community topics are not just a mechanism to assert development but also a guarantee of the future qualities of life in the newly developed parts of cities. Even looking at business models of development focusing on housing projects financed by private investors, it can be seen that the involvement of existing communities in neighbourhoods is more or less a rule for successful housing projects. Meanwhile, investments in office buildings by private investors and developers are almost never led with this in mind: The debate is more focused on political representatives and institutions issuing permits to the community. When investigating the reasons why projects other than housing are less discussed in public, one such reason could be the type of clients of housing projects, the potential buyers of flats, who are an unhomogeneous group with a lot of different interests, while buyers or tenants of the retail and office spaces are bigger companies with higher capital, whose integration into the new neighbourhood is led by aspects other than local community interest. Of course, all companies will oppose this with their internal policies on how much they bring to a community, but if we try to locate where companies and retail outlets are concentrated, it will become clear that it is in the mono-functional neighbourhoods of office buildings or shopping centres.

A similar attitude can be observed in public investments into infrastructure in Central Europe. Office developers are using the same argument: we are creating new jobs, so in order to be as effective as possible we can ill afford to lose time with community work in the preparation phase of big infrastructural projects. Developers would likely argue that because this is infrastructure, there is no time to communicate, they need to be fast and effective etc. This is the reason why infrastructural projects are developed with a lack of focus on the community.

In response to this problem, the Centre for Central European Architecture (CCEA) initiated and led a community involvement programme that independently connected and organised different interest groups in the project that was to become a complete revitalisation of the Negrelli Viaduct.

The project started in 2012 when, while working on the Prague Magistrala, a multi-year project of CCEA, the centre learned from the media that a new railway connection between Prague city centre and the airport will be developed using the current rail network. This huge infrastructural project also included reconstruction of the Negrelli Viaduct, the second oldest bridge in Prague, prepared with the Heritage Department of Prague. The project to repair and reinforce this unique technical monument focused on the rails and everything that was happening on the viaduct itself. However, on looking more closely, CCEA realised that the investment of a few million euros did not even include a new project for lighting for the areas under the viaduct.

In order to start a public debate about such a big investment, whilst not opposing it, and a future project which is important for the City of Prague, during autumn 2013 CCEA organised a three-day event call 'Line Galleries' where 10 Prague galleries were invited to exhibit art work under the viaduct, which, at that time, offered poor conditions for exhibitions. It was a one-off installation of the future possible qualities following reconstruction of the viaduct. For three days Prague's galleries, curators, artists and, most importantly, Karlin's inhabitants, gathered in the district of the city where the viaduct is located. People living next to the dangerous and crime-ridden place were confronted with the new qualities of the viaduct which could be realised through its reconstruction. With huge media coverage of the initiative that followed, the Railway Infrastructure Administration (SŽDC) also changed its opinion, and from the negative position it had at the beginning of the project, it understood that improving the area around the viaduct will also help to sustain its investment. The event was visited by thousands of inhabitants and, for the first time in the 21st century, the viaduct became a connecting point rather than a bridge dividing the historical and industrial parts of the city. In the following two years, CCEA organised a series of round-tables with stakeholders. The meetings with officials of City Hall and the SŽDC that followed led to a decision to unite all the possible areas under the viaduct under the administration of the City of Prague.

In 2015 CCEA organised a second public discussion with inhabitants of the area in order to start a conversation on what the arches should look like and what should be proposed in terms of programming. The conclusions from



ATMOSPHERE OF THE VIADUCT BEFORE CCEA INTERVENTIONS



SUMMER UNDER VIADUCT – PLAYGROUND. PHOTO BY ARTYKEL CREATIVE FORM, LUKAŠ CETERA

the discussion were then presented to officials of Prague's municipality, its districts, various land owners, and officials of the other related structures.

One of the main aspects of working with communities is not to promise what cannot be delivered. Supported by the local community, CCEA took the next steps to organise official meetings where, for the first time, all stakeholders and important players were invited. The event, organised as a symposium, took place at the premises of an insurance company located next to the viaduct. It was the first meeting between all the concerned organisations and it resulted in the set-up of a new more operational mode for communication between the various entities, as well as helped to increase the future quality of the public space and life following reconstruction of the viaduct in the Karlin neighbourhood. The aim of the symposium was to create a prerequisite for initiating a creative incubator in the areas below the viaduct. All the participants agreed on the revitalisation of the neglected area.

Following this agreement, CCEA began to develop an event. In 2016, which was to be the last event before actual reconstruction started in 2017, CCEA prepared the next example of future life under and around the viaduct through the organisation of a three-month event, which again focused on the community living around the viaduct and in the Karlin district.

The neglected environment, used as uncoordinated parking lots, was transformed into a space for relaxing and spending free time. A beach volleyball court and a multifunctional terrain for dance, yoga and aerobics emerged. Under the viaduct's vaults, ping-pong tables, outdoor fitness facilities, equipment for gymnastics, a basketball hoop, a trampoline and chess tables were installed. An integral part of the project was the creative programme, which included competitions, classes, concerts and open-air film screenings.

Around 60 organisations and a whole range of individuals participated in the project. Control of the area took place informally through the many activities created by the inhabitants themselves, thus lowering the levels of crime. Around 5,000 people visited the revamped areas during summer and more than 1,200 people signed the petition for the revitalisation of the area under the viaduct. Those three months showed that the public area under the viaduct works very well and that it was actively used by inhabitants.

Due to the success of the project highlighting the potential of this public space, the Mayor of the City of Prague, Adriana Krnáčová, requested that the project be continued until the beginning of the reconstruction, which SŽDC started in summer 2017. The 'Summer Under the Viaduct' project has managed to reverse the intended use of the space as parking lots in the forthcoming plans for parking lots in Prague 8.

Following the successful event and with the support of the local community, in co-operation with the City of Prague, the CCEA MOBA studio created an architectural study. It was the first comprehensive study of the public spaces around the Negrelli Viaduct and their future use as a new creative incubator in the heart of the city. The main focus of the study was to create a sufficient platform for an active public space. Today, most of the sur-

rounding buildings are in the hands of private owners and therefore it is not possible to expect that their ground floors could be used for the revitalisation of the street level. For this reason, the Negrelli Viaduct will be crucial in initiating an improvement of the parterre in this forgotten part of the city. In order to make the initial potential functional, CCEA carried out analyses of the street, traffic, cycling and pedestrian networks in the area. Detailed analyses of the daily use during the various activities over a three-year period were also incorporated into the study. These pilot projects verified the potential of each space under the viaduct, which spans over a length of 642 metres. Of the viaduct's 74 arches, 44 were defined for reuse. The spaces were grouped into six units, each of which is different for the specific parts of the public space - the Viaduct Park, around the Former Barrack's, Negrelli Square, the Karlín Gate, and the Jerusalem Island. In the long term, it is expected that the Florenc bus station will follow most developed cities by going through major modifications so as to increase its effectivity. By transforming and reorganising the areas and surroundings of the Negrelli Viaduct, CCEA has created a catalyst for interaction not only for Karlín's residents but also for the other inhabitants of Prague. By installing cafés, bistros, galleries, workshops, shops and studios in the spaces below the vaults, a living urban character has been created with adjacent public spaces, with front gardens, small pieces of urban furniture and vegetation. The architectural study was approved in 2017 by Prague 8 District where the viaduct is located, and CCEA is now developing plans for the transparent NGO management, which will ensure creative activities continue under the Negrelli Viaduct in the long term.

Nevertheless, the activities described above would never have happened without the support and positive responses of the people living around the viaduct. CCEA now has a huge responsibility to execute the project as it was agreed by community, politicians and hopefully by SŽDC, which has begun to invest in the reconstruction. The current status of the area is a huge building site in the middle of the city centre.





SUMMER UNDER VIADUCT – FREE TIME INSTEAD OF ILLEGAL PARKING. PHOTO BY ARTYKEL CREATIVE FORM, LUKAŠ CETERA



SUMMER UNDER VIADUCT – SPACES FOR KIDS. PHOTO BY ARTYKEL CREATIVE FORM, LUKAŠ CETERA

# Project timeline

**2012****2012****SŽDC PROJECT**

SŽDC, the owner of the viaduct, announced in 2012 that it is planning to start reconstruction of the Negrelli viaduct. The thorough renovation project, financed by the Ministry of Infrastructure, did not originally consider the use of the space below the arches, because the primary reason for reconstruction was the technical state of the rail tracks.

**2013****19. - 21. 9. 2013****LINE GALLERIES**

The first intervention initiated by CCEA MOBA under the arches of the Negrelli viaduct took place. This project gathered Prague's galleries, curators, artists and inhabitants of the district of Karlín. The cleaned spaces under the arches, free from illegal parking lots, opened up an opportunity for the hosting of concerts, projects, bars, children workshops and theatre, dance and culinary performances. The aim was to highlight the potential of the Negrelli viaduct and to offer possibilities for how to integrate it into city life.

**2014****2014****Property change between SŽDC, ČD and MHMP**

The Line Galleries project, which attracted considerable media attention, resulted in meetings between the initiators (CCEA MOBA) and officials of the MHMP (Prague City Council), SŽDC (Railway Infrastructure Administration) and ČD (Czech Railways), which led to the decision to unite all the land under the viaduct under the administration of Prague City Council.

**Winter Semester 2014/2015****CO-OPERATION WITH THE FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE TU BERLIN**

During the 2014/2015 winter semester, twelve students worked on the 'Mutating Infrastructure' research project, which focused on the transformation of the Negrelli viaduct. The work was supervised by the Institute for Sustainable Planning and Urbanism CHORA City & Energy, TU Berlin.

**2015****14. 1. 2015****DISCUSSION WITH THE NEIGHBORS**

CCEA MOBA organised a meeting with neighbours of the Negrelli viaduct in order for an open discussion about the future possible activities under the arches of the viaduct and about the potential of public space around the structure. There was mutual agreement to offer these specific small-scale units under the arches (60-80 m<sup>2</sup>) to creative citizens.

**15. 1. 2015****SYMPOSIUM VIADUCT METAMORPHOSES IN EUROPEAN CITIES**

A symposium was organised by CCEA MOBA in co-operation with the Consortium for Karlin. It gathered the main parties of the Negrelli viaduct reconstruction around one table. It was the first meeting between all stakeholders, and it succeeded in setting up an operational mode for communication between the various entities. All the participants agreed to offer the space under the viaduct for different creative activities and to revitalise the surroundings with the planned reconstruction.

**16. - 17. 5. 2015****OPEN HOUSE PRAGUE**

Within the international organisation of Open House Prague, one of the arches of the Negrelli viaduct was opened to the public. The former city paper waste collection was changed by CCEA MOBA into a small ephemeral exhibition space showing the past, present and future of the viaduct.

**2016****June - September 2016**  
**SUMMER UNDER THE VIADUCT**

The main aim was to test the potential of the public space along the viaduct. The neglected space was transformed into areas for leisure and relaxation. A beach volleyball court and a multifunctional platform for dance, yoga and aerobics have emerged. Under the viaduct's vaults, ping-pong tables, outdoor fitness facilities, equipment for gymnastics, a basketball hoop, a trampoline and chess boards were installed. Around 60 organisations and a whole range of individuals have participated in the project. The space is controlled informally by the many activities created by the inhabitants themselves and has thus led to a reduction in the levels of crime. Around 5,000 people visited the altered spaces during summer and more than 1,200 people have signed a petition for the revitalisation of the space under the viaduct. Due to the success of the project highlighting the potential of this public space, the Mayor of the City of Prague, Adriana Krnáčová, has requested that the programme continued until the beginning of the reconstruction, which SŽDC had planned for summer 2017.

**2016**  
**STUDY TRIP TO ZÜRICH**

The study trip, planned in co-operation with CCEA MOBA's Swiss partner, presented the latest European transformation of Zurich's IM viaduct to Prague's political representatives.

**2016**  
**SYMPOSIUM NEGRELLI VIADUCT – AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A CREATIVE CITY**

CCEA MOBA organised the second symposium in order to present the most renowned European projects for the transformation of viaducts (Paris, Zürich, Vienna). Viduc des Artes (Paris) was presented by representatives of the managing company of the project. The IM viaduct (Zürich) and Gürtel (Vienna) were presented by the architects of the transformations. Last but not least, CCEA MOBA introduced the architectural and urban study of the Negrelli viaduct at the symposium. The event was supported by Adriana Krnáčová, the Mayor of Prague.

**2016**  
**ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN DESIGN STUDY**

The architectural study designed by the MOBA studio, in co-operation with the City of Prague, is the first comprehensive study of the public spaces around the Negrelli viaduct with plans for the new use of its arches, and its future as a new creative incubator in the heart of the city. By transforming and reorganising the spaces along the Negrelli viaduct, CCEA MOBA will create a catalyst for interaction, not only for neighbours of the district of Karlín, but also with the other inhabitants of Prague. The study presents various uses for the arches and the corresponding spaces, designed to support habitable spaces.

**2017****2017****RECONSTRUCTION OF NEGRELLI VIADUCT**

Reconstruction of the viaduct structure and rail tracks, managed by SŽDC, has been running since August 2017. The viaduct is intended to be the major connection between the airport and Prague city center. The SŽDC reconstruction project focusses on technical improvements of the structure, and reconstruction should be completed by 2021.

In August 2017, Municipality of Prague 8 district accepted the MOBA studio study for revitalization along the viaduct and new use of viaduct arches. Now the documents are getting prepared for Capital City of Prague City council, where the project for creative incubator should be finally officially accepted.



SUMMER UNDER VIADUCT –  
WEEKLY DANCE  
UNDER THE VIADUCT.  
PHOTO BY ARTYKEL  
CREATIVE FORM,  
LUKAŠ CETERA



# “The ‘Summer Under the Viaduct’ changed everything.”

An interview with Štěpán Holub,  
resident of Karlin

Štěpán Holub has lived in Karlin since 2006 and has been there with his wife Barbora since 2013. They both work in Karlin; Štěpán as an attorney at Holubová attorneys, Barbora at the Artlingua translation agency, and she also co-operates with the ‘We Plant Trees’ organisation. They have two young children called Albert and Emilia.

BY YVETTE VAŠOURKOVÁ

**You live with your children in the centre of Prague, not far from the Negrelli viaduct, which is now undergoing a complex reconstruction. We met thanks to the unsupervised area surrounding the viaduct, where we are involved in the transformation of the space under the arches. What does the viaduct mean to you and what was your experience of it prior to the reconstruction?**

I began to think about the viaduct after talking to a neighbour who lived one floor above us. He lived in the same apartment in Za Poříčskou bránou street for his entire life. The Negrelli viaduct and our streets are indeed in Prague 8 in Karlin, but he previously said that everything up to the viaduct was considered by most people as ‘downtown’, or Prague 1. He warned me that the houses up to the viaduct were built in a luxurious style, a floor or two higher than those behind the viaduct. Everything changed in the 1970s with the construction of the Magistrála motorway that separated Karlin from the city centre. However, unfortunately, the viaduct attracted our attention

in a different way. There was a huge parking lot beneath it, and all that space for the cars offered a slice of heaven for people who needed it in any way, including for illegal activities. So, luckily for you, you have discovered the viaduct ‘after the smoke’. From today’s point of view, it is absurd to remember the fact that two years ago under the viaduct, a self-appointed guard chose to operate a parking lot, even though he had no permission at all to lease it or anything similar.

It is clear that after the repairs are completed, the viaduct will be completely different. If everything goes to plan, the space around the viaduct will become very popular.

**Many people and locals could not imagine that the space underneath the viaduct could turn into a place where people would want to come. That’s why we chose to challenge ourselves with the four-month ‘Summer Under the Viaduct’ test project. What did you think of this project?**

Yes, ‘Summer Under the Viaduct’ changed everything. All of a sudden, everybody realised that the small space around the viaduct began to serve as a leisure



area. There were people of all ages walking around beneath the viaduct. Our neighbours, whom we would never have expected to see, regularly played ping-pong there, and we too have spent a lot of time under the viaduct. The fact that the unpleasant stench has gone has definitely made it more pleasant for people to spend time down there.... Seriously, the project has completely changed our view on what to do with the viaduct after the reconstruction. Nowadays, thanks to the 3D renders that have been published and thanks to the 'Summer Under the Viaduct' project, citizens can easily visualise all the creative shops that could open under the glazed arches. The project recorded significantly stronger approval ratings than the initial reason for the renovation – the new fast rail link to the airport. The bridge was repaired mainly for these trains. Isn't it strange?

**If we implement the proposed continuation of the project and start the reconstruction under the viaduct, there will be bistros, shops, studios and small workshops. This will have a major impact on the area surrounding the viaduct, which will mean that a certain degree of gentrification will likely be unavoidable. The new form of the viaduct will transform the local economy, and the price of rent and property will rise accordingly. How do you feel about such changes in your neighbourhood?**

Karlin has already changed a lot. Property prices have increased and instead of the old venues there are now vegetarian bistros and fair-trade coffee places. I remember that when we moved our law firm to Karlin, we were a little worried about how clients would perceive the fact that we were moving into a 'dirty' neighbourhood, an area which a 'decent' person would rather avoid. And now, this autumn, 'Time Out' magazine ranked Karlin among the top 50 "coolest" neighbourhoods in the world! Sure, once the reconstruction is completed, the arches will be glazed and all the services will be created underneath the viaduct, it will be even more trendy here. Perhaps we will go from being in the top 50 to the top 10 in the world. It can be assumed that the prices will jump even further and other things will likely also change. Karlin may well compete with Prague 1, but it would be a totally absurd idea to prevent positive changes and improvements in the

environment with the fear that it might be too good. After all, there is nothing preventing us from moving away if something no longer suits us.

**You are actively interested in the environment you live in. How do you think the residents themselves can influence and improve their surroundings? Where are their limits?**

I realised that I could change something like any other ordinary citizen when I announced to the Technical Administration of Communications that there was a hole in the pavement in front of our house. I simply filled out a form on their website and asked for it to be fixed, and within a week the hole had been repaired. So I did the same thing with another hole, and it also disappeared. Then I wrote three emails to the Traffic Enterprises, asking if they could overlay a scorched wall in the Florenc metro station, and they did exactly that. So, I started talking to citizens and encouraging people to get more involved in general. I began writing suggestions to politicians and I realised that the power of a positively thinking individual is unreal. The limit is, I think, just laziness, comfort and pessimism.

**Does age play a role in taking interest in your surroundings - are young people more involved than the older generations?**

In principle, no matter how old you are, you can change something in your neighbourhood. But I think young people are more sanguine and are no longer burdened by the past regime. They are much more optimistic and believe that things can change in life, as well as in their neighbourhood. These people also ask and communicate more easily. Elderly people, I think, are more likely to expect any suggestions for improvement to be seen as an inadmissible criticism, but of course this is not a rule.

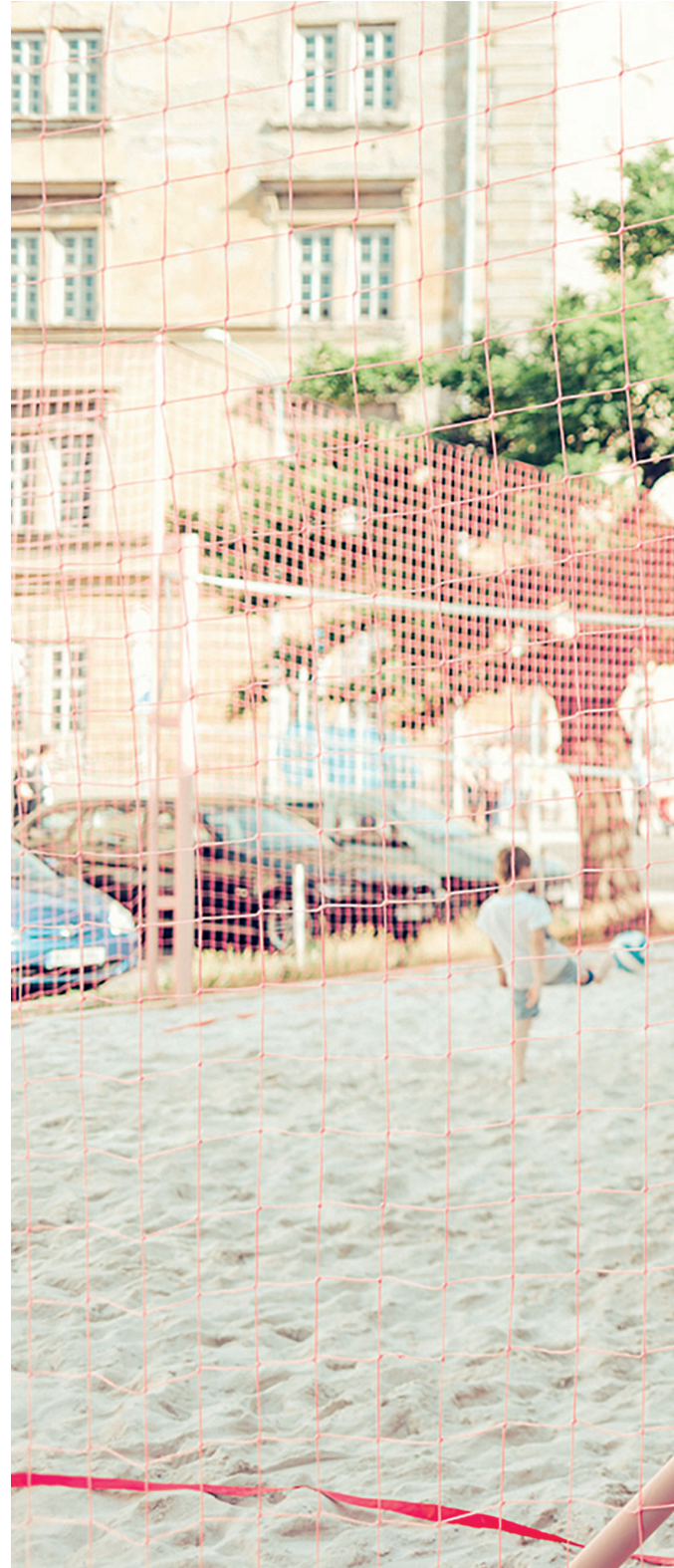
**What is the inspiration for the inhabitants to gain interest in the quality of their surroundings?**

I think the best motivation for everyone is the knowledge that they can change something; for me, it has been fixing the holes in the street. Sometimes you need to write three emails instead of one. People also change the way they perceive their surroundings. They are no longer just simply look-

ing around, instead, people are suddenly thinking about what needs to be improved and, at the same time, they are wondering how they could help make that change happen. I am currently trying to set up a crossing over the busy Rohan riverbank street to reach the Vltava river directly on foot. I have written about five emails and nothing has happened yet. I recognise that this is a bigger challenge, and it will take longer, but it will certainly happen, I'm sure. That is why I took the opportunity to be interviewed; perhaps someone will read it, and it will help to get ideas like this one recognised. And if not, thanks to my activities, the right person who can influence that change could learn about it.

**What changes have you already made in your area and the city?**

A couple of repair works in our street and the new mural in Florenc metro station, which I previously mentioned. Otherwise, I think we haven't done anything revolutionary. On Rohan Island, following the model of the 'Man who planted the trees', we planted many chestnuts and acorns, and we will see if they grow there. I just want to help the world with good projects for the local surroundings, sometimes by legal counsel, and sometimes by doing little things. Probably the most obvious success was that, as an attorney at the Auto\*mat, a Prague association, I have abolished measures which introduced a ban on using the cycling routes that cross the historical centre of Prague, of which I'm really proud. It is good to start from small things.





SUMMER UNDER VIADUCT – NO ACTING. PHOTO BY ARTYKEL CREATIVE FORM, LUKAŠ CETERA



SUMMER UNDER VIADUCT –  
MORNING PREPARATIONS.  
PHOTO BY ARTYKEL CREATIVE  
FORM, LUKAŠ CETERA



# How to improve the quality of public spaces

The 'Negrelli Viaduct', organised by CCEA, is a long-term project that acts as an idea incubator, merging urbanism, architecture and art. The project was initiated together with partners from public and private sectors and was successful because, since the outset, it included local residents in the activities and planning.

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1.

## **Open discussions**

### **A) Discuss renovation plans with developers:**

When SŽDC (the Railway Infrastructure Administration), the owner of the viaduct, announced its plans for renovation of the viaduct, CCEA pointed out that they had neglected the space under the viaduct. CCEA started discussions with the developer and over time managed to include the space under the viaduct in the larger renovation project.

### **B) Open public discussions:**

After agreeing on the importance of including the space under the viaduct in the renovation process, the City of Prague, SŽDC and CCEA worked together to open a public discussion about the current state of the space and plans for the future. This included public discussions with people living around the viaduct, artistic interventions to promote the potential of the viaduct as a public space, and a symposium where all important parties sat around one table for the first time. The results were better than expected. After artist interventions, SŽDC announced that it could support a new usage of the space under the viaduct. Following the symposium, the Heritage Department of the City of Prague also gave the green light to the idea.

### C) Open discussions with neighbours:

Last but not least, invite the local community to the discussion. We cannot stress this enough: your project cannot work if you don't have the neighbours on your side from the beginning. CCEA invited neighbours to an interactive public discussion, where all the parties presented their ideas about the future of the locality and the public space under the viaduct. The conclusions from the public discussion were used for setting the grounds for the project.

2.

#### Research and look beyond your local environment

It is important to know the history of the public space and its surroundings that you are planning to improve. After researching the public space in question, look further and find examples of good practice in similar settings elsewhere. CCEA organised two symposiums which brought together the authors and managers of the most successful viaduct renovation projects. Connecting with organisations that already have similar experience is crucial for surmounting some of the initial struggles and becoming aware of some of the troubles that may lie ahead.

3.

#### Small steps

Start by testing your ideas with small-scale actions in the public space. Before organising the 'Summer under the Viaduct' festival, CCEA organised several smaller events under the viaduct. These smaller events had an immediate impact and showed which direction to take. Don't forget to invite local initiatives, NGOs, organisers and artists to collaborate in organising the event, and be sure to send your ideas to the Ministry of Transport or your government, and always write to the person you find on a public contact list. Never send generic letters. Think in a big scale, but act in small steps. Always say what you do not want to happen in the future with the project. For CCEA, it was about avoiding gentrification. In order to do so we declared that the project should not be a profitable business model but rather an NGO project. To prove that we founded a civic association called Viadukt.

#### Media

Always think about the media and try to focus on different formats for different events: for youngsters use Facebook, while to attract older people, contact national TV and try to develop co-operation with them by giving them unique material. When we wanted to celebrate the history of a place, we didn't use academic media but rather one of the biggest newspaper companies, which, by coincidence, was just 500m from the viaduct.

#### How to communicate?

Create a sentence which will be repeated every time, never change it. Our sentence was "We want to create a creative incubator under the viaduct". Then create a sub-sentence for each partner. For SŽDC it means having somebody to take care of the nicely reconstructed bridge, for the Prague 8 district it means not needing to spend money for cleaning the space, and for the City of Prague that means creating a new citizen-oriented project.

#### How much will it cost?

This is one of the very important questions that should never be underestimated. Do the calculations as accurately as you can. If you have a specific request from the owners or developers, calculate specific budgets.

**Who will pay for that?**

We always use plurality. Everybody sitting around the table will benefit and everybody should pay.

**What should be done if something is not going according to plan?**

Do not change the plan but try to push it another time. If it does not work, wait and push it again. This way you will make it clear that you have a plan. Do not modify your plan with every new piece of information.

**How to make it work**

Talk about your project in all different formats, meetings, in the public space, wherever and whenever you present your organisation... After a year or two everybody will identify the project with your organisation.





# Bellastock's Ephemeral City & Actlab

**Location**

L'Île-Saint-Denis (93450)

**Year**

2017

**Team**

Bellastock

**Website**

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

Bellastock is an association for experimental architecture, founded in 2006. It acts for the valorisation of places and resources and initiates innovative, ecological and social projects. Tackling subjects such as reusing and repurposing materials and transient urbanism, Bellastock's aim is to propose alternatives to the conventional building act.

Among its other objectives, Bellastock has a will to share knowledge with a wider audience by employing people from the local community to work on construction sites and re-activating wastelands through cultural pro-

grammes. Participative projects are one of the tools that Bellastock uses to promote social empowerment and collective potential in the building act.

'Actlab' is Bellastock's laboratory and a base for expertise in the reuse of material. Located in the north of Paris in the commune of L'Ile-Saint-Denis, 'Actlab' works in close collaboration with different levels of public governance of the locality<sup>1</sup> and forges close links with local planners and developers. Since 2012 'Actlab' has been a demonstrator for reusing materials from demolished builds. Two buildings have been constructed using 90% reused elements, mostly coming from the demolition of the near-by Printemps warehouse, a large storage logistic complex. An experimental garden has been laid out consisting of reused crushed pieces of concrete. 'Actlab' is promoting the basis of an economic model to create a reuse channel of discarded and reclaimed materials. The goal is to articulate deconstructing phases with rebuilding projects, according to European operative regulations (98/2008/EC). Thereby, the Artecitya project is a wonderful opportunity to generate new types of outputs, enhancing the sustainable development sensitisation while strengthening the cultural and artistic influence.

1 The municipality of L'Ile-Saint-Denis integrates the municipality communities of Plaine-Commune, from which the SEM Plaine Commune board is an organ for urban development. The Seine-Saint-Denis region in the north of Paris is a territory of great contrast. It is ranked with the highest rate of poverty yet gathers the biggest number of companies in France.

Since 2006 Bellastock has been organising an annual festival of experimental construction, where from 500 to up to 1,000 participants gather to explore the diverse fields of construction and design. The festival orchestrates the collective fabrication of an ephemeral city around a specific theme. The ephemeral city, built and deconstructed within four days, is a 1:1 scale laboratory for experimentation, triggering contemporary metropolitan stakes, and temporary occupation of urban spaces in mutation. The ephemeral city generates an educative platform for architecture students and for the surrounding inhabitants. In July 2017 the festival focused on building with soil.

From 2016 to 2018 Bellastock decided to focus its actions and research on waste soil as a building material. In the frame of its annual festival, Bellastock developed an 8-month project consisting of educational programmes and building experimentation and awareness events, aimed at highlighting the potential of soil as a building resource. Through the creation of a prototype of a Mobile Factory for transforming excavated soil into compressed earth blocks (CEBs), Bellastock developed a partnership with the CRATerre laboratory, and with Paris Habitat, with the objective of finding an application for fabricated CEBs in buildings projects. Settling on 'Actlab', the project engaged the territory, the citizens and different bod-

ies of decision makers of Plaine Commune in the dynamic of questioning the future of waste soil in construction.





OPENING OF THE FESTIVAL,  
THE PARTICIPANTS ARE DIS-  
COVERING THE SETUP.  
EPHEMERAL CITY 2017:  
»LA VILLE DES TERRES«  
PHOTO BY ALEXIS LECLERCQ

# Soil; from building waste to building material

BY BELLASTOCK

The original text in French was written by: Cecile Marzorati and Gaelle Cozic under the direction of Antoine Aubinais. The text in the book has been translated and reworked by Gaelle Cozic under the direction of Simon Jacquemin.

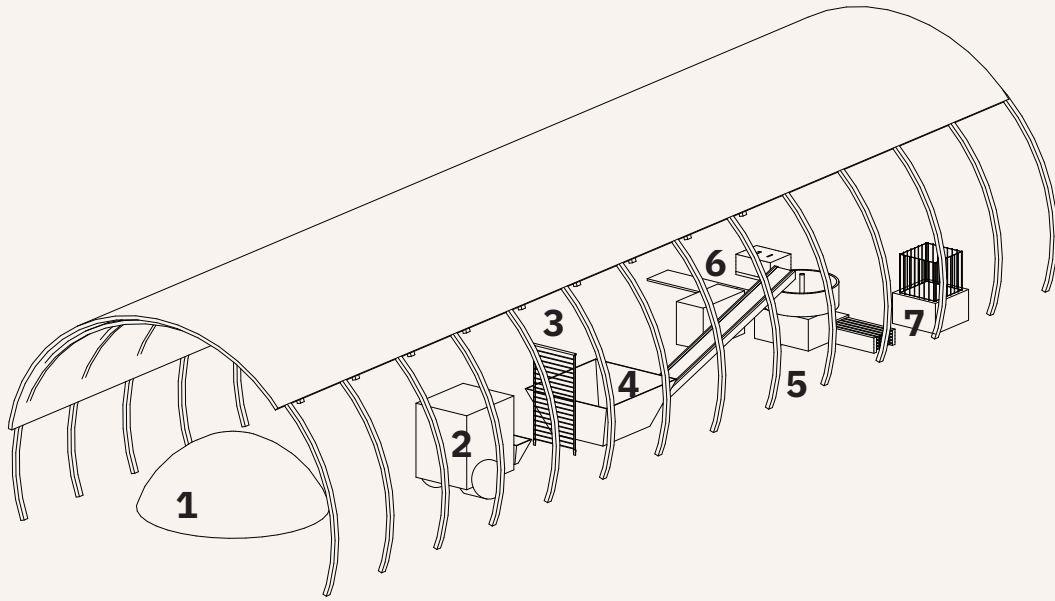
A study by the *Ministère de la transition écologique et solidaire*<sup>1</sup>, published by ADEME<sup>2</sup> in 2017, shows that in 2014 waste from the construction sector increased to 227.5 million tonnes, with 42.2 million coming from the building sector. At a time when large industrial building groups act without any limit in terms of space, time or ethic barriers, exploiting every possible source of raw material, the remarkable and increasing scarcity of raw material such as sand, water and oil, have to be mentioned. Innovative strategies must be adopted. The French Law on the Energy Transition for Green Growth (LTECV), adopted in July 2015, aims to combat climate change and preserve the environment by limiting waste and valorising the circular economy. The law has set a target of a 70% recovery of waste from building and public works by 2020, while about 60% of this waste is currently reused, recycled and recovered. Bellastock offers a methodology for coming out of this waste spiral by mobilising all the stock of material available on a site, offering it a second or even third life.

In 2016, in the context of the large urban development project '*Le Grand Paris Express*'<sup>3</sup>, stretching Paris' infrastructure and borders to the surrounding suburbs, la *Société du Grand Paris*<sup>4</sup> launched a call for projects triggering architects and urbanists to question the future of the 53 million tonnes of excavated soil generated by the numerous construction sites. The *Terres de Paris* exhibition, presented by the *Pavillon de l'Arsenal*<sup>5</sup> in Paris revealed that 40 million tonnes of soil will be excavated every year until 2030.

At a time when the city is becoming an 'urban mine' of materials suitable for construction, producing human and material resources for its own urban development, the potential use of soil is to be re-invented as an alternative to the current raw material crisis. Bellastock decided to get involved in the dynamics

- 1 Ministry of the Ecological and Fair Transition.
- 2 ADEME, Agence de l'environnement et de la maîtrise de l'énergie : Agency for Environment and Energetic Supervision.
- 3 Grand Paris Express: The Grand Paris Express is a public transport network project consisting of four automated metro lines around Paris, and the extension of two existing lines.
- 4 Société du Grand Paris, created in 2010, is a public institution of industrial and commercial activity responsible for designing and implementing the Greater Paris Public Transport Network.
- 5 Pavillon de l'Arsenal is the centre for information, documentation and urban planning and architecture of Paris and the Paris metropolitan area.





- 1**  
Raw earth
- 2**  
Compact loader
- 3**  
Sieve 15mm
- 4**  
Conveyor Belt
- 5**  
Fixed kneader self  
towable tank
- 6**  
Semi Terstamatic Press
- 7**  
Fuel tank 959L\*

of reflection by directing the focus of its annual festival towards the potential of reusing excavated soil, which until now has been considered as waste.

In March 2017 a series of lectures took place, enabling professionals and major players of the theme to speak about their practice. The programme raised awareness of soil construction and acted as a theoretical common ground for the establishment of the ephemeral city. The programme was led by Patrice Doat, cofounder of CRATerre<sup>6</sup> and laureate of the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture. As was shown several times during the lectures, soil has always been used in all cultures as an appropriate solution for specific constraints. Today it enables us to think up strategies to face the energy and climatic challenges of our time. The ephemeral city *La ville des Terres* offered to exhibit a large array of techniques, from vernacular to contemporary, which construction from soil can generate.

In the frame of the organisation of the ephemeral city, Bellastock established a partnership with the CRATerre laboratory. Bellastock used its expertise in reusing waste material and its knowledge in developing fields for the revalorisation of materials, and CRATerre brought its worldwide known expertise in raw soil construction to conceptualise and realise a prototype of a Mobile Factory for CEBs. The project aimed to set up a production line of material suitable for construction close to the mine of raw material, thus enabling it to be transformed directly whilst matching the challenges of construction in a highly dense urban environment. The chain of transformation was composed of every step needed, from testing the soil to the implementation of the finished product - CEBs - in a building prototype. During a period of four months, four social workers undergoing a programme to help them reintegrate into active work were employed by the association Halage<sup>7</sup> to work on the production line. They learned how to use all the logistical and production tools, and produced 17,000 CEBs intended for construction of the ephemeral city and further projects.

It was noticeable throughout the whole *La Ville des terres* project that soil does not stand a chance in popularity nowadays in comparison to other construction materials. In less than 100 years, soil and the knowledge around it has been forgotten and is now basically absent in the building market. Its unpopularity is certainly foremost due to resistance to its use. Indeed, doubts about its waterproof performance were often raised during the different workshops.

One of the reasons for the difficulty in validating soil as a construction material comes from the non-flexibility of a normative frame directly copied from the principles of concrete. Despite soil being tricky to characterise because of its variety of composition, lobbyists of the concrete industry and post-war governments have been actively fighting for fast and cheap reconstruction, which explains the disappearance of alternative building techniques and artisans. As a result, this field faces a lack of professional regulations, and therefore insurances, for the use of soil in construction. It is time to act for the recognition of this material. Several associations in France promote the spreading of knowledge with the aim of raising awareness among the public, establishing apprentice-

<sup>6</sup> CRATerre is an association created in 1979 on the initiative of students of the National School of Architecture in Grenoble and intended to promote the architecture of raw earth.

<sup>7</sup> Halage is a not-for-profit organisation created in 1994 and Centre for Vocational Training in Landscape for men and women encountering social or professional difficulties.

ship programmes, valorising the vernacular earth-built heritage and encouraging experimentation and innovation in the field of earth construction. These associations are currently working on the writing of a good practice guide.

The environmental qualities of a material such as soil are to be considered at a time where pollution due to current building practices must be urgently reduced. Soil is a directly available material. The layer of soil that is suitable for construction lies beneath by the upper layer of soil. It is thus protected and offers exceptional durability. After being used, if no chemical stabilisers are introduced in its realisation, soil can either be reused in another construction or can be returned to the ground. Soil construction does not produce any waste and its energy footprint is almost zero. Furthermore, the idea of using a material which is extracted in massive quantities and considered as rubbish and transforming it into a resource for building is a breakthrough in the field of construction in an urban centre and is one of the most impactful ecological assets of the material.

It is worth mentioning that the sociologic and economic aspects of the development of soil construction in the building sector are valuable in strategies for sustainable development. As it requires a small amount of energy, except for human energy, the soil construction sector represents an opportunity for employment and professional training, as was seen during the Mobile Factory project. Thus, a soil project construction site assumes an innovative pattern as it recruits the usual players - contractors, project manager and developers – as well as future inhabitants. The creation of the ephemeral city and the participative workshops revealed that it is possible to involve future inhabitants of several associations of L'Ile-Saint-Denis in shaping the future park and, in doing so, enable them to take part in the shaping of their territory and to reflect on a territory in mutation.

Easy to exploit and accessible, soil is an opportunity for the revival of the spreading of knowledge of artisanal practices and traditions, thus allowing cultural heritage to endure. CEB production apprenticeships could be a lead for development of marginalised population autonomy. The diversity of techniques is an open door to a multiplicity of architectural forms and textures. Building with soil is possible and is being rekindled, for instance by the Terra Award which highlights great names in the world of architecture such as Wang Shu, Anna Heringer, Herzog et de Meuron, Martin Rauch, etc. However, questions remain about how to compile mechanisation, up-cycle strategies and social potential through this up-and-coming building sector. How can we create a symbiotic and efficient frame in which large-scale building companies, developers and social lessors can co-operate?

# ‘La ville des terres’

## Key dates

### 2016

#### 2016

In the context of the large urban development project ‘*Le Grand Paris Express*’\*, stretching Paris’ infrastructure and borders to the surrounding suburbs, *la Société du Grand Paris* \* launched a call for projects triggering architects and urbanists to question the future of the 53 million tonnes of excavated soil generated by the numerous construction sites.

Bellastock decided to focus its actions and research on waste soil as a building material.

### 2017

#### In March 2017

a series of three lectures were held where professionals from the soil construction sector were invited to discuss the issue.

#### From May to June 2017

construction took place of a prototype of a Mobile Factory of compressed soil bricks (CEBs), during which 17,000 CEBs were produced.

#### From April to June 2017

workshops, building students internships, participative workshops were held to implement Act-lab through several experimental constructions demonstrating soil construction techniques and involving inhabitants and associations.

#### From 12-14 July 2017

The ephemeral city was created.

From its very first actions in 2012, Actlab has been providing guidance to contractors of *L'Ile-Saint-Denis* development project and has brought perspectives for reusing materials from the dismantling of nearby buildings and reusing elements in construction. In 2017 Bellastock, in the term of its mission as a building consultancy for the adjacent eco-district, was requested to find solutions for reusing the 18,000 square metres of excavated soil generated by the first phase of the construction. Stocked in huge mounds at the door of Actlab, it was planned that this soil would be used for the levelling of the eco-district urban park. Meanwhile, this soil would remain in situ for several months. Embracing an up-cycle economy approach, Bellastock raised the idea of testing this soil and figuring out its potential as a building resource. Discussions between the association and developers suggested that this soil could be used in the context of the annual festival, in order to prefigure the landscape of the future eco-district.

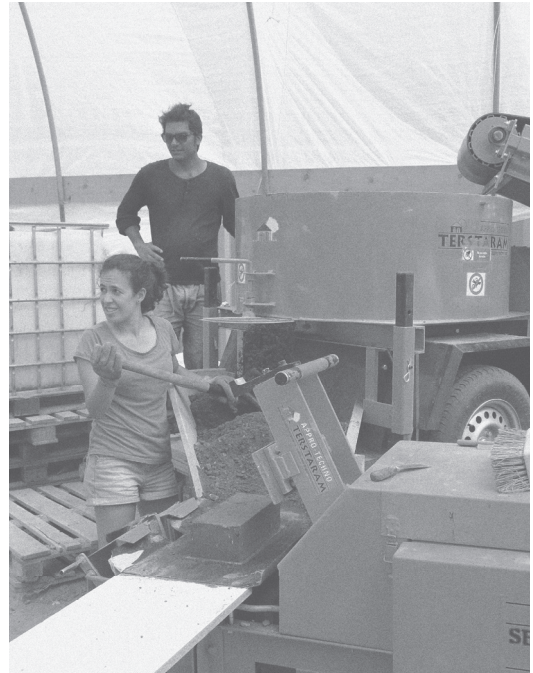
During the months preceding the festival, several players were involved in preparing the ground. Workshops and internships were organised to build the infrastructure required to support the city. Facilities such as toilets, showers, a communal kitchen, and logistical networks such as electrical and water supply, were arranged by Actlab. The location of the city was defined to the south of the site, close to the construction lab, separated from the motorway flyover by a gigantic mound of soil.

As is the case each year, the Bellastock team set the rules to define the scenario of the festival. On day one, each team of five has to choose an area for the establishment of its shelter. Before the end of this first day, their challenge is to make sure they spend the night in a weather-proofed shelter. On day two, participants get involved in shaping the public and collective spaces. On Saturday, the third day, the city is open to the public who are invited to see the constructions. On the fourth day, the city is dismantled. Every piece of material is carefully stocked for use in future projects.

On the first day, each team received a material kit. This year, it was suggested to participants that they dig in, pack, or model the seven tonnes of soil laid out on the ground. A palette of 150 CEBs per team could be used for the layout of walls, columns or bases. Long pieces of timber, 30 metres of rope and six corrugated polyester sheets were available for covering their shelters. A team of 30 building supervisors provided guidance and assistance to the teams in order to prevent any unstable brick-laying or sheets flying-off due to the wind.

After testing the soil present on site, it appeared to be polluted and unusable as a material for the ephemeral city. Therefore, 700 tonnes of inert soil were conveyed by the company Yprema<sup>8</sup> and arranged in 30 metre lines of aligned mounds of soil. Each mound represented 20 tonnes and was destined to be the location and the resource for three teams of five participants. Initially the arrangement of the mounds of soil, spaced at intervals of 1.5 metres, was a source of frustration for the participants who felt pressured and in close proximity to the other teams. Nevertheless, the constraint of the density turned out to be a real potential for expression and a motor for interaction between the teams. Indeed, participants quickly realised the necessity of discussing access roads in order to avoid confined shelters. Debates started to take place on the scale of the entire city. Different levels of circulation arose and intimate living spaces were generated, adding a vertical dimension within the city.

<sup>8</sup> Yprema is a company founded in 1999: a leader in the processing of deconstruction materials, incineration slag and inert soil. It selects, values, recycles and delivers finished products to public companies.



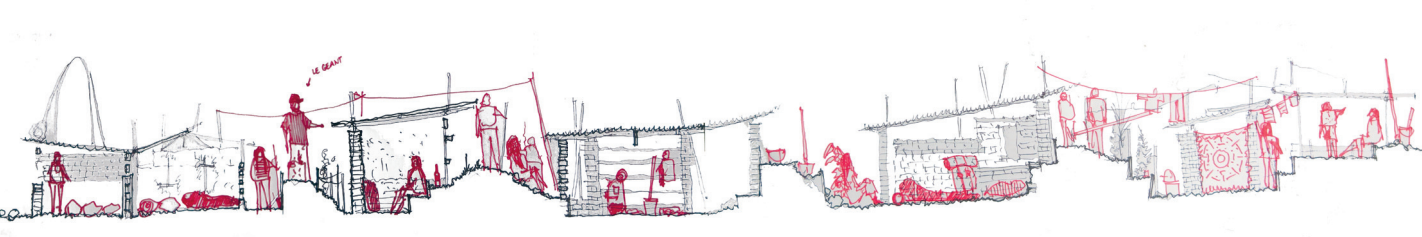
EPHEMERAL CITY 2017 : »LA VILLE DES TERRES» THE MOBILE PLANT. PHOTO BY BELLASTOCK



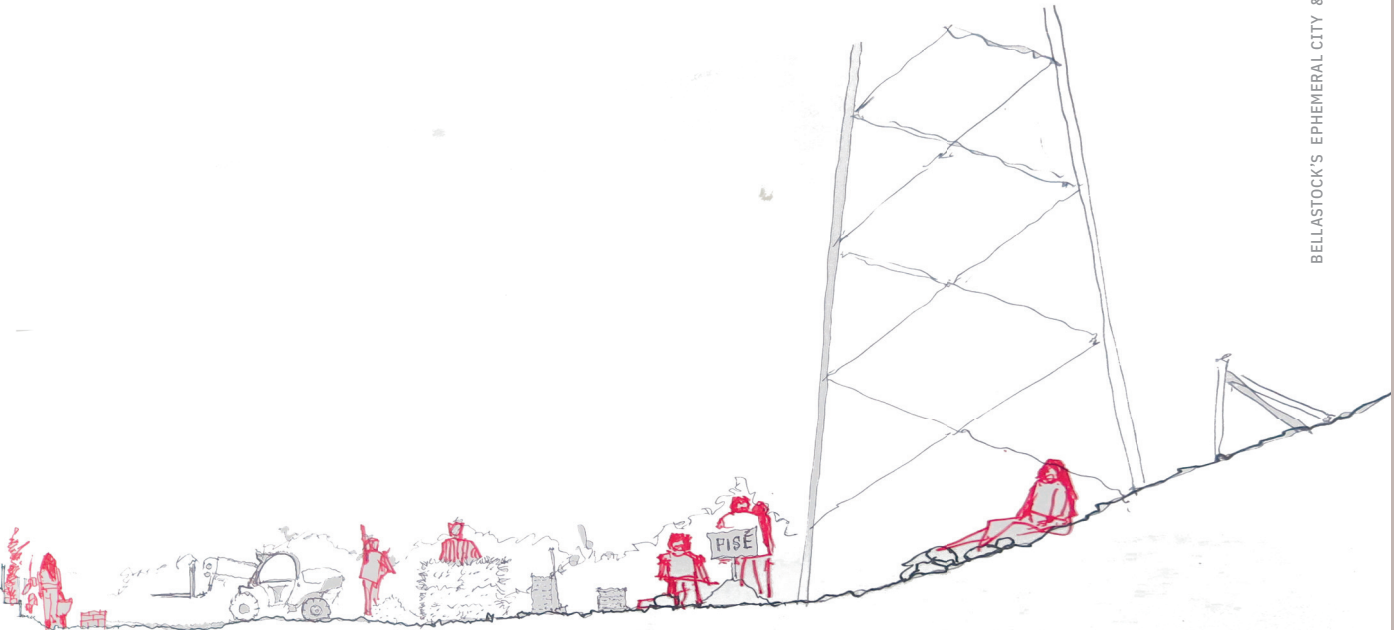
SABRINA FROM HALAGE AND LUIS, MANAGER OF THE PRODUCTION LINE, PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION.  
EPHEMERAL CITY 2017 : »LA VILLE DES TERRES». PHOTO BY ALEXIS LECLERCQ



PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION : HOW TO MAKE ACEB. EPHEMERAL CITY 2017 : «LA VILLE DES TERRES» PRÉSENTATION DE L'USINE MOBILE AU PUBLIC FESTIVAL LA VILLE DES TERRES, JUILLET 2017. PHOTO BY ALEXIS LECLERCO







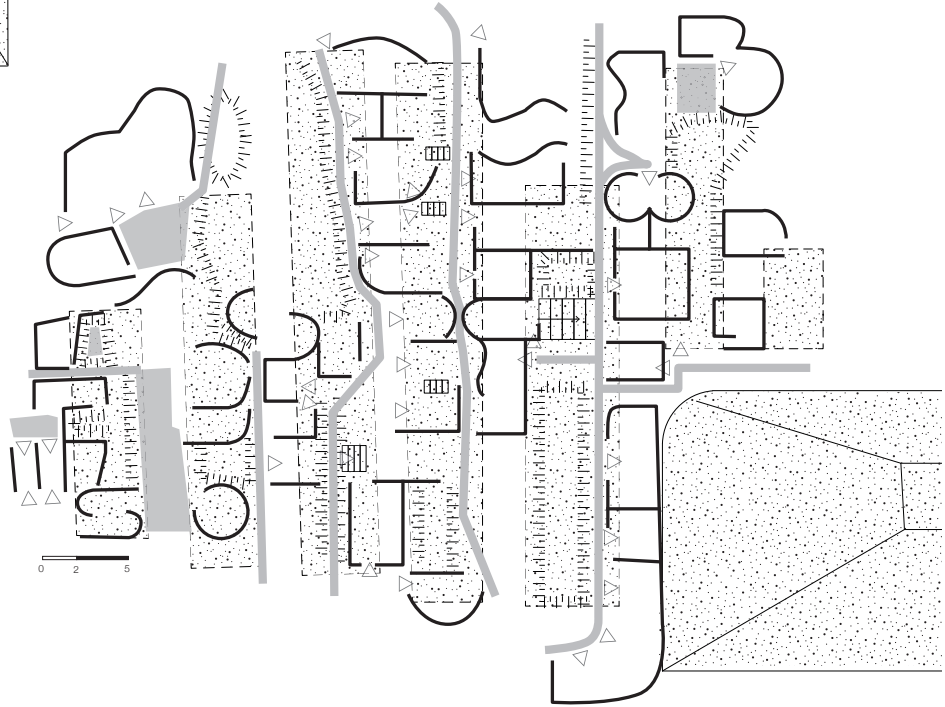
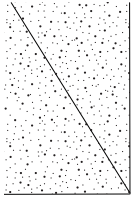
LA VILLE DES TERRES,  
SECTION, DAY 2  
PHOTO BY BELLASTOCK








LA VILLE DES TERRES,  
SECTION DAY 3  
PHOTO BY BELLASTOCK

# DAY 1

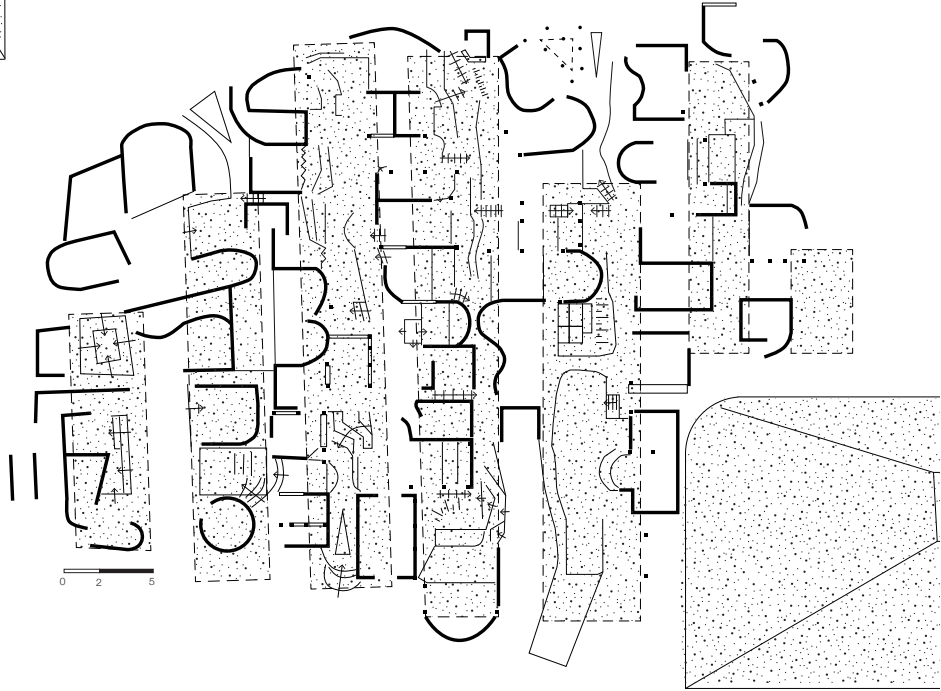
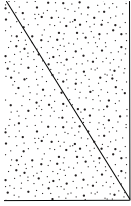
CREDITS : BELLASTOCK



-  WALLS
-  EARTH DUNES
-  LANE
-  ACCESS
-  SECTION

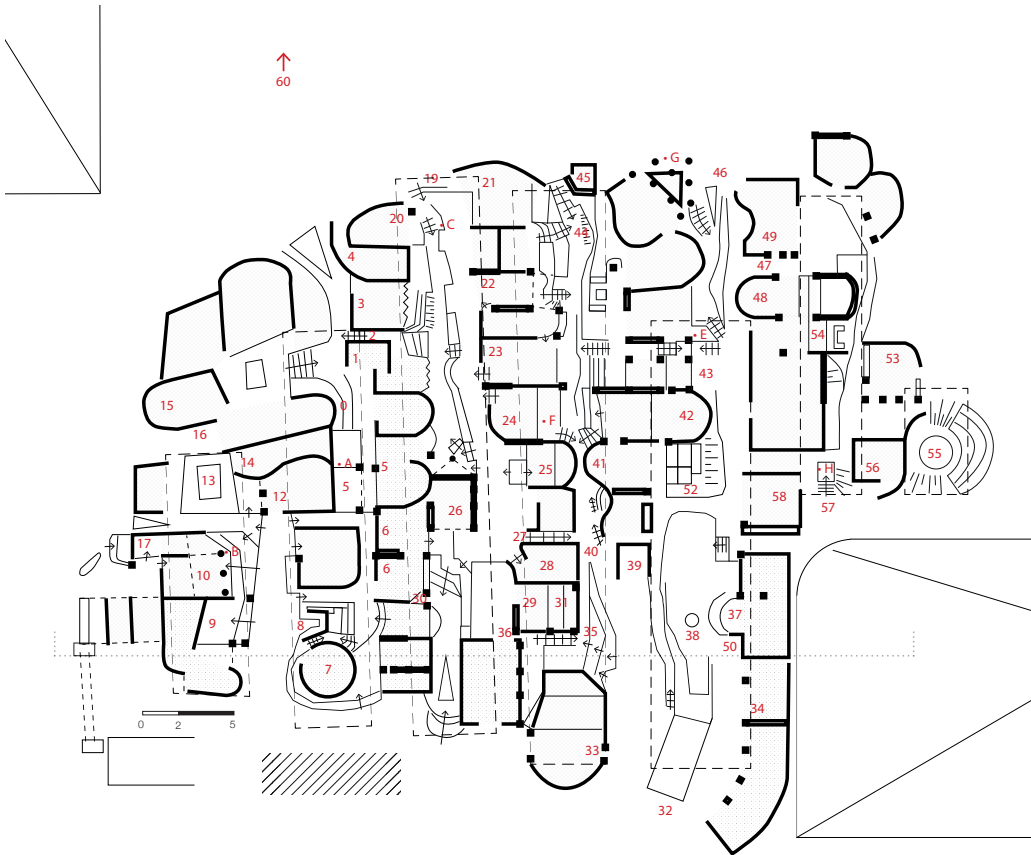
# DAY 2

CREDITS : BELLASTOCK



# DAY 3

CREDITS : BELLASTOCK

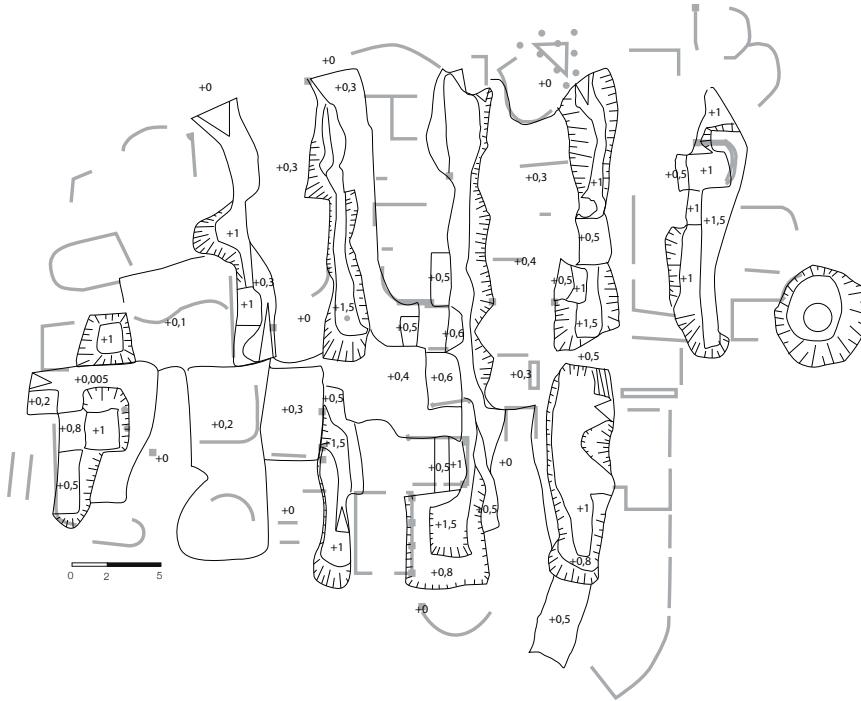


## PROGRAMS

- |                                |                               |                               |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. PASSAGE DES SOURICEAUX      | 4. TEMPLE BELLATRIX           | 26. TERRIBLE                  | 53. BOULE DTR - VUE SUR TERRE |
| 11. RUE BANC                   | 5. BAR À BANANES              | 28. BICHONS                   | 54. LE FOYER                  |
| 13. PLACE DE L'ADULTERE        | 6. RETARDA' TERRE             | 30. RETARDA'T'HAIR            | 55. JABOUZZI                  |
| 16. 45° IMPASSE TISSE          | 7. TEMPLE DE GAÏA             | 31. L'HIPPO DROME             | 56. BOBBIES'SALON             |
| 19. RUE STIQUE                 | 8. L'ABRIS BUS                | 33. LA BONNE PIOCHE           | 58. LE TERTERRE               |
| 27. IMPASSE-PARTOUT            | 9. LE TERMINUS                | 34. LA CAGOLE                 | 59. ATELIERS                  |
| 29. PLACE STIQUE               |                               | 37. LA BENINOISERIE           | 60. BAINS CHAUDS              |
| 32. PLACE TISS                 | 10. ANCA                      | 38. ARBRE À PALABRE           |                               |
| 35. ALLÉE BAUGE TON BOULE      | 12. LOS INCAS                 | 39. U TERRE US                | FLAGS - VERTICAL SIGNALS      |
| 36. ALLÉE VIEEENS!             | 14. MINISTERRE - NIGHT CLUB   | 41. BAR DES P'TITS POTES      | A. «DRAPEAU»                  |
| 40. ALLÉE LOUYA!               | 15. LE CORPS BOUSIER          | 42. LA TERTERRE               | B. «ANCA»                     |
| 44. ALLÉE DE LA CRÊTE          | 17. LE POULAILLER             | 43. EN PASSANT PAR LA         | C. DRAPEAU TIBÉTIN            |
| 46. RUE BRIQUE: PRESSE AGRUMES | 18. LA GUINGUETTE             | LORRAINE                      | D. «BIG BÂCHE»                |
| 47. CHEMIN TRUSIF              | 20. MOUCHARA BRIQUE           | 45. LE POULAILLER             | G. PARASOL                    |
| 57. PLACE DE LA PETITE DAME    | 21. BAUGE TES FESSES          | 48. FAMILLE HM                | OBSERVATOIRES                 |
|                                | 22. L'ÉTABLE                  | 49. MAISON DE LA TEUR         | E. «PANORAMA DÉTER»           |
| 0. TECHNO CRÊPES               | 23. LE VERRE D'ÉTER           | 50. LEGBA - DIEU SEUL ME JUGE | F. LA LONGUE VUE              |
| 1. BECHEROVKA                  | 24. DÉMÉTERRE                 | 51. MOLKY                     | H. «OBSERVATOIRE»             |
| 3. PALAIS DU TROCATERREAU      | 25. E CH' TERRE (L)ILLE HEIN! | 52. BARBECUE                  |                               |

# DAY 4

CREDITS : BELLASTOCK



LEVEL DIFFERENCE

+0,5

HEIGHTS



WALLS



DAY 1. PHOTO BY ALEXIS LECLERCQ



DAY 2. PHOTO BY ALEXIS LECLERCQ



DAY 2. PHOTO BY ALEXIS LECLERCQ



DAY 4. PHOTO BY ALEXIS LECLERCQ



DAY 4. PHOTO BY ALEXIS LECLERCQ



DAY 4. PHOTO BY ALEXIS LECLERCQ

# Interviews

**Hugo Gasnier**  
architect and researcher at the CRA-  
 Terre laboratory:

But what is all this soil for? The city is constantly digging underground to create space for various functions, such as parking, networks, storage, or archives. Let's look at the city as a quarry, a mine of material that can be reused and/or recomposed. Easily and only slightly convertible, just as in a cooking recipe, soil can be transformed into a resource for building. It is our duty to continue such a project in order to change mentalities, and to simply use this good old soil to build with fun.

**Patrice Doat**  
architect and cofounder of the CRA-  
 Terre laboratory, godfather/sponsor of  
 the 'La Ville des terres' festival:

When I came this morning (to visit the ephemeral city), I thought 'it is spectacular, splendid'. The sensitivity, the great ambiance you have created is tremendous. You took soil and you created a city. Polluted or not polluted? This is not the issue. The challenge

is never to forget to act and that we should build using this material that is available below our feet. Don't forget that this soil also feeds you. Your ephemeral city is pure happiness. A pile of soil is a way of creating inventive moments of experience and expression turning a material substance into a symbolic, divine or magical matter. You have just realised the genius of the soil.

**Florian Bulou-Fezard**  
participant and architecture student:

Through dialogue, consultations and hesitation, we agree on a plan. Evidently, it is not the same one for everyone. But let the work begin and the solution will follow. Wading through mounds of soil, we clear out the rubble which will be the future base of our makeshift shelter. We start building according to our scale and the walls within reach and are conscious of the imposed close cohabitation and the technical challenges of this material. Soil takes shapes in our fingers and proves its richness. CEBs, cob coating, rammed earth: all these names are familiar but it is only through testing that we discover the different aspects of earth. Mixed with straw or homogenised by packed and compressed clay, this coarse material



becomes smooth as soon as the casting is taken off. As a 1:1 scale game, we assemble modules one on top of each other, taking care to pay attention to the graphic potential and the stability of the construction. Tonight we will have a roof over our heads.

**Mohamed Gnabaly**  
mayor of L'Ile-Saint-Denis

We have to build bridges. When I say bridges, I mean an ecosystem. Our conception is that in order to realise tangible and practical solutions, we have to work collectively. This means dealing with our differences and this is only possible based on two main factors. The first is trust in ourselves, by taking risks and sometime failing, and the second is trust in others. This is the first part of the equation in order for the ecosystem to function. The first Bellastock festival (in 2012) represented a bet. It is now part of our collective history. I have been mayor for a year and I already feel like I have a family in which everyone has obligations but will do their best to adapt in order to bear the constraints of others. Trust remains the basis, which is not inborn but which needs to be built. How? With goodwill, dialogue and work.

**Patrick Bouchain**  
during the 'Collective fabrication of the city. The circular economy and architecture' roundtable, which took place during the open day of the ephemeral city on 14 July 2017:

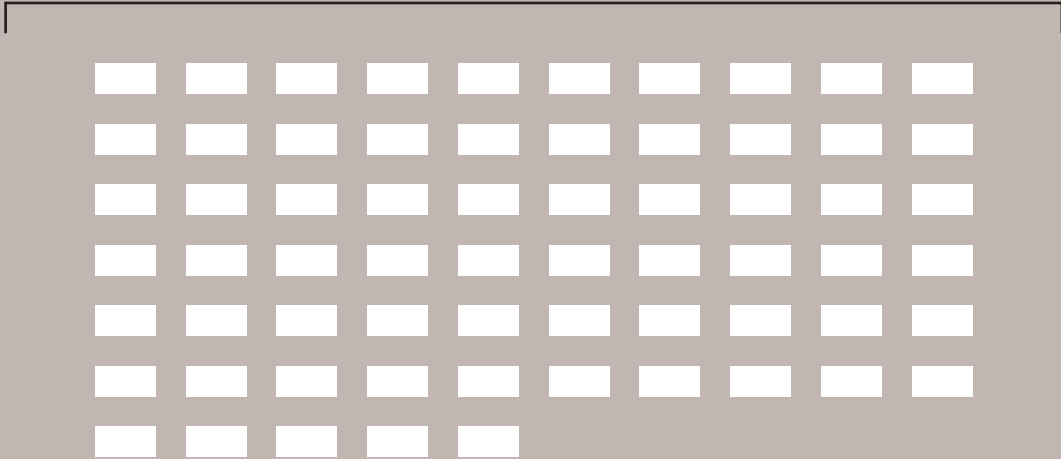
The territory is municipal land lent to Bellastock. Laws are nourished by human actions, adapted to the specific situation in which we stand. However, it is possible that rules and regulations are outdated to the situation. Nowadays, communities/municipalities are not capable of creating the city and they delegate this complex duty to the private sector. This situation is the result of the construction sector realising the necessity of assisting the municipality in creating the city, and profiting from this situation to take control of the command. As amazing as it seems, construction and public work are able to generate the needs of what it builds in order to make financial profit. What you as private individuals have demonstrated today is that you are willing to act for the common good. As private players, you have entered a collective action. You are the representation of a participative democracy of action.

7,000

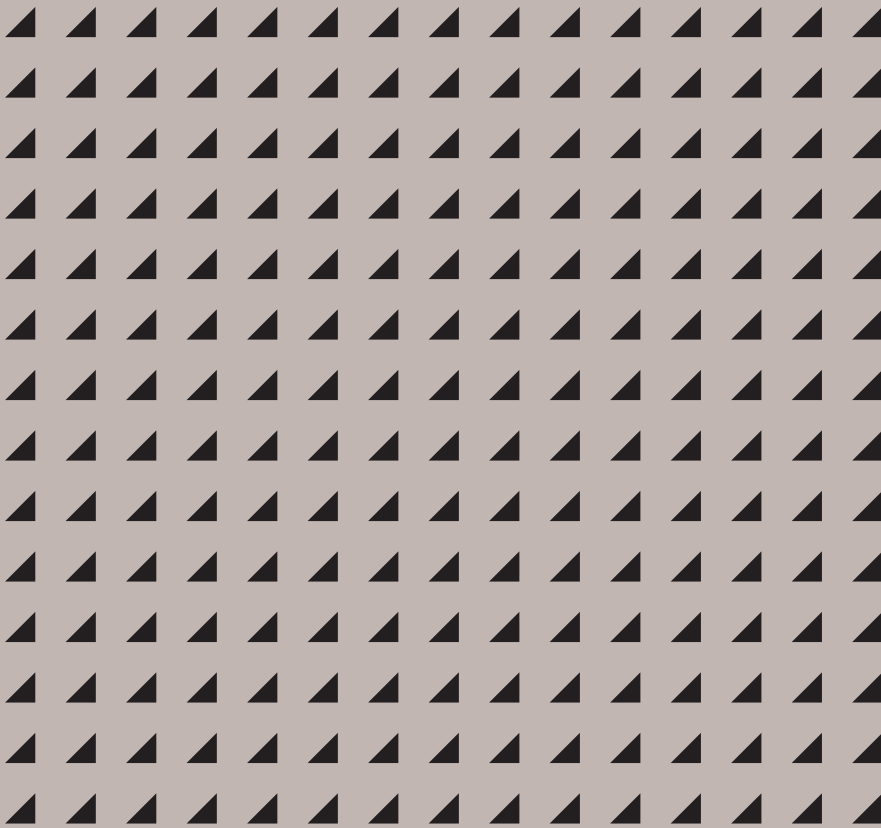
Olympic-size swimming pools of soil

75 trucks

171

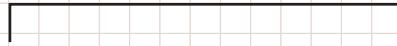


evacuating

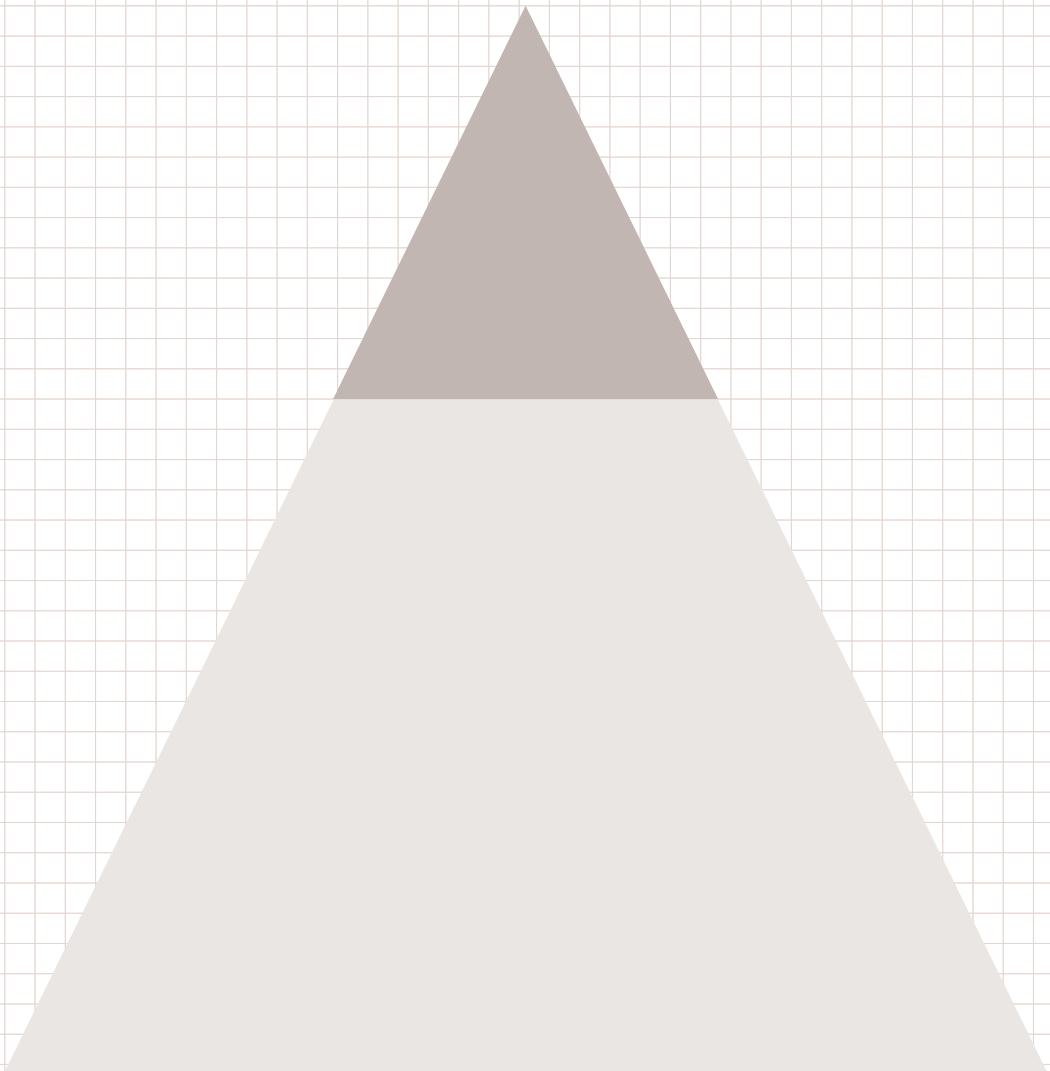


200 tonnes per day over a course of 15 years

Only 20-30% of 18,000,000 tonnes of inert soil were recycled in 2010



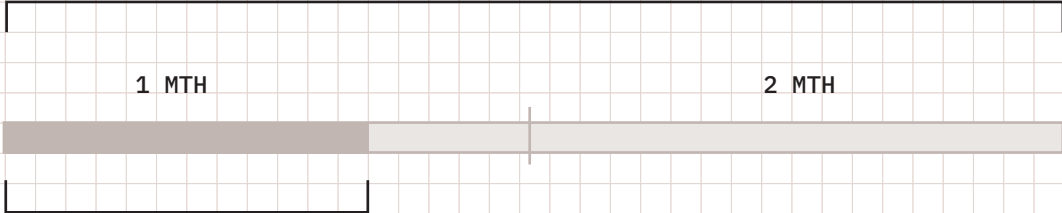
20-30 %



Source : Predec, Plan régional de prévention et de gestion des déchets issus des chantiers du bâtiment et des travaux publics :  
Regional plan for prevention and management of waste from building and public work construction sites, Ile-de-France 2010  
Terres de Paris\*: 45% of inert soil, 45% of gypsum, 10% of polluted soil. Source: study by la Société du Grand Paris

# The Mobile Factory

Objective: 50,000 CEBs in two months

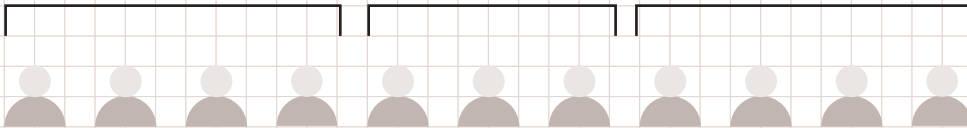


actual production:  
17,670 CEBs in one month

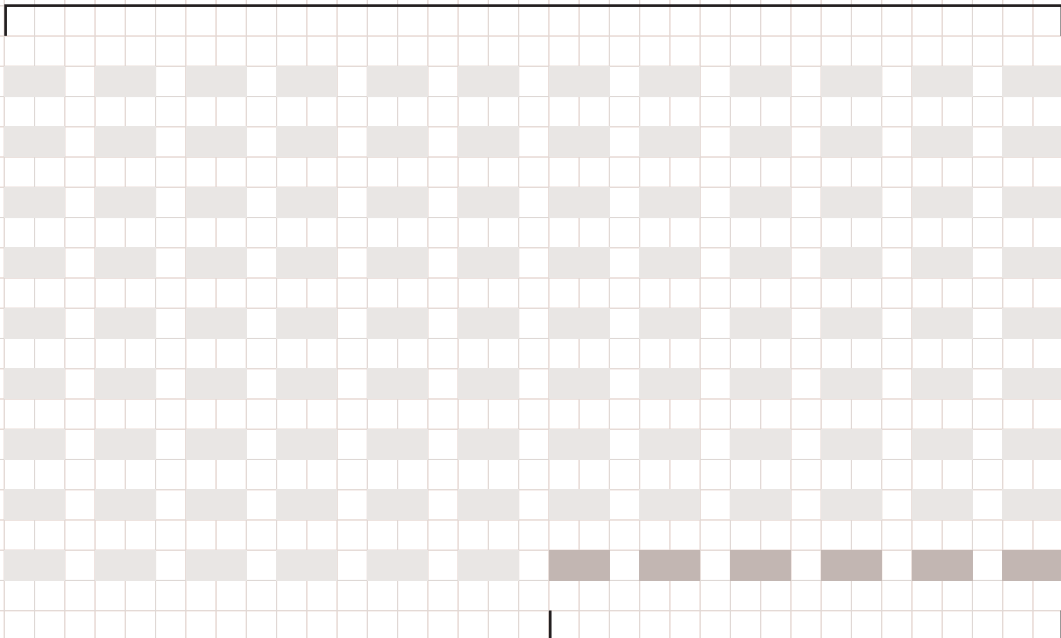
4 social workers

3 supervisors

4 technical experts



Total production: 108 palettes



4-6 palettes a day

The ephemeral city: Objective: 7,000 Olympic-size swimming pools of soil



4

days



25

tonnes of timber



500

participants



3,000

metres of organic rope



80

volunteers



15

associations  
in partnership



100

ephemeral shelters



3,000

visitors



17,600

CEBs



750

kilos of bananas



700

tonnes of excavated soil



PHOTO BY SANDRINE MARC



PHOTO BY SANDRINE MARC



FESTIVAL-GOERS REDOUBLE THEIR IMAGINATION TO IMPLEMENT SOLID STRUCTURAL WALLS IN CEB WITHOUT MORTARS. THE RESULT IS ORIGINAL FITTINGS AND MOUCHARABIEH (CLAUSTRA) AND CURVED ORGANIC WALLS. PHOTO BY ALEXIS LECLERCQ



CATTAIL CATTAILS ARE MADE WITH THE MEANS OF THE EDGE AND ALLOW TO LIGHTEN THE STRUCTURES OF THE SHELTERS. PHOTO BY SANDRINE MARC





THE USE OF RIGID BRICK COLUMNS IS OF CONCERN TO EARTH SPECIALISTS. ALEXANDRE DOULINE, WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE SITE SUPERVISION, THEN INVITES THE PARTICIPANTS TO CONSOLIDATE THEM BY PUTTING THEM IN COMPRESSION USING A ROPE. BACKUP SOLUTION OR THE BEGINNING OF A COMPRESSION SYSTEM OF THE CEB? PHOTO BY SANDRINE MARC



DESPITE THE RECOMMENDATIONS GIVEN TO FESTIVAL-GOERS TO PRESERVE THE CEB (DO NOT PUT THEM DIRECTLY ON THE GROUND IN PARTICULAR), THE LATTER USE THEM AS SUPPORTS FOR THE START-UPS IN ORDER TO FORM THOUSANDS OF CUBIC METERS OF EARTH. PHOTO BY SANDRINE MARC



PHOTO BY SANDRINE MARC



PHOTO BY SANDRINE MARC



PHOTO BY SANDRINE MARC



PHOTO BY SANDRINE MARC

# How to organise a Bellastock festival in your country?

Bellastock is a platform for sharing ideas, tools, methods, media and knowledge. It is cross-disciplinary and provides diversity in approaches in order to make each project an opportunity for new exchanges and partnerships. Bellastock combines research and concrete actions in order to promote experimentation in architecture as a vector for innovation and the learning process. The annual festival represents a moment for exchange, experimentation, and the catalysation of research on a specific theme. The possibility of reproducing Bellastock's ephemeral city in multiple countries is a chance for our young generation of architects. This instruction note has been established after years of experience and acts as a guide for volunteers to develop this format in their country.

## **What does a Bellastock festival represent for members of an organisation's team?**

Organising a Bellastock ephemeral city is an opportunity to learn multiple aspects of a construction system. It also offers the chance to gain experience in managing a building site and managing a team. It requires an understanding of the cycle of a material from its source to its implementation.

What does a Bellastock festival represent for participants? It is a free creative moment during which each participant is able to produce in the way he/she desires. It is a moment for interaction between many people from different cultures, a moment for testing one's capacity to be part of a team.

To be noted: students cannot be employed as workers for a project; they are there to participate and learn and therefore none of the activities are compulsory for them.

## **Instruction note**

### **First step: building the organisation team**

First, building a team is important in order to distribute the work. A team would benefit from being made up of people from different disciplines (architects, designers, carpenters, photographers/videographers, web-designers). A team can be composed of:

- **Co-ordinator:** in charge of co-ordination between the rest of the team. Organises meetings and centralises the information.
- **Materials Manager:** is in charge of finding the material, negotiating with enterprises, managing all the logistics for bringing the material to the site, storing it, making it accessible, and recycling it after the ephemeral city.
- **Site Manager:** is in charge of getting the necessary permissions for exploiting a site during the preparation phase and the period of the festival. The site manager is in touch with the various government bodies and land owners, manages the official paperwork and guarantees the security aspect of the event.
- **Communications Manager:** is in charge of the diffusion of every step of the project and the management of the website and the social network platforms. It is advisable to meet with the web and graphic designers, photographers and film makers.
- **Secretary:** all members of the team gather regularly to discuss the evolution of the project and the next tasks. A report is the best way of keeping track of everyone's tasks and deadlines.

## Phase 1: Explore

1.

### Decide a date

Find the best date according to the architecture students' academic calendar. Depending on the type of construction, four or five days are enough to create something interesting.

2.

### Set deadlines

Most of the tasks are usually distributed by sensitivity and according to every members' personality. At the beginning, difficulties in harmonising the actions can be encountered, however, as preparation progresses, the repartition becomes natural. This document represents a moral engagement for the whole group to keep track of deadlines.

3.

### Choose a construction theme

Each edition of the ephemeral city is characterised by a theme, which can be defined by a material, a construction technique or an environment. It has been important for Bellastock to anchor every theme into a contemporary environmental, social or urbanism issue. The symbolic dimension of a material can facilitate the team to communicate about it and to attract people's attention.

The choice of the theme can also be directed towards a material which is present in large quantities at the chosen site and can be reused.

4.

### Collect references

The collection of references is an important part of the research process because it creates the first base for investigation and experimentation. All the references on the subject are stored on a website and accessible to everyone. Each reference project is described by photos, the name of the project, the architect or the artist, and a short presentation

5.

**Produce a presentation booklet**

This first production helps team members to introduce the project to the various partners and future participants.

6.

**Find a site**

Find a site suitable for experimental construction. A suitable site should already be equipped with networks such as electricity and water. If the site provides facilities such as toilets and showers, the team will not need to build them. Otherwise, the team needs to organise construction phases for building the facilities prior to the festival.

It is important to know exactly who the owners of the site are and if they can contribute financially to the establishment of the ephemeral city. It is interesting to consider the possibility of keeping the newly-built infrastructure on site after the festival. If any facilities on site are let out, it is necessary to plan their maintenance.

7.

**Funding**

Finding subventions is needed to ensure an ephemeral city. Financial support can come from schools, associations, companies or governmental bodies. One of the goals is to lower the price of students' registration. For instance, Bellastock France is supported by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Ecology, and by National Schools of Architecture. French students' applications for four days costs 130 euros, of which students pay 60 euros and the school contributes 70 euros for each application made. The region or the municipality can have an interest in collaborating during the organisation of the festival if the event generates physical or intangible positive implementations.

8.

**Communication**

The communication of the events before and during the festival are meant to gather as many people as possible. A logo, posters, website, social networks, conferences, flyers, exhibitions, parties are different communication tools.

This communication is useful in maintaining the attention of future participants but it is also needed to attract the public during the event and to share the meaning of the work. Documenting actions during the preparation is a good way of keeping track of the knowledge produced in order to produce a report booklet in the months following the ephemeral city.

9.

**Encounter specialists**

During the preparation phase, it can be interesting to meet specialists involved in the chosen construction technique, either to advise the organisation team on how to guide the construction site or in order to organise conferences about the topic.

10.

**Lectures**

It is advisable to organise lectures prior to the festival, triggering curiosity, sharing of knowledge and opinions of the theme.

11.

**Arrange the material**

Once the material is chosen, the team should evaluate the quantity needed according to the number of participants. In order to make an evaluation, a basic structure can be drawn for five people and then it can be multiplied as needed. It is usually necessary to deal with industrial firms in order to obtain the material. Companies can have an interest in supplying the festival and can even agree on a low price because the event represents a wide audience for communication of the product. In that case, the company becomes a sponsor and has to figure in your communication.

**Phase 2: Experimentation**

1.

**Make a prototype**

In order to understand the difficulties and to be able to advise the participants in the construction, the organisation team can make a first prototype. This test helps the team to choose the information to be communicated in the application form.

2.

**Application form**

This document is the compilation of all the research, from the references to the first experimentations. It is an introduction and can be used as a theoretical base for further discussions. It contains guidance for the applicants to draw up a proposition of the project. It introduces the timeline of the three or four days of construction and informs the participants about which tools and equipment are needed. It leads participants through the different step of the application.

3.

**Layout of the site and infrastructure**

When the site is acquired, an initial plan should be drawn up, which includes the electric network and the infrastructure (toilets, showers, kitchen, stage, etc). Accesses to the facilities need to be wide enough to facilitate the circulation of a potentially high number of people. The material has to be placed on the site in a convenient way. This is part of a real urban strategy which facilitates interactions between teams in order to generate a collective construction. Be conscious that the way the material is placed has a direct impact on how the participants make use of the material and the space. Safety exits are required. For each site, a set of rules must be presented to participants at the beginning of the event.

4.

**Final settings**

A team of volunteers is welcomed on site one day prior to the opening of the ephemeral city in order to brief everyone and to create a cohesion within the group.

5.

**Festival: the ephemeral city**

**1st day:** participants build their shelter

**2nd day:** implementation in the city, public spaces and improvement in the construction of the shelter

**3rd day:** opening to the public. Cultural activities, conferences, artistic performances, party

**4th day:** cleaning, conditioning of the material to be reused

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6.

**Cleaning**

This is one of the most important elements to plan in advance in order to retain enough people and energy to ensure that the site remains clean after the event.

**Phase 3: Express**

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1.

**Visual post production**

2.

**Thanking partners**

3.

**Publication**

The publication of a report is important to ensure transmission of the knowledge produced, draw conclusions and keep a memory of the experimentations.





# ARTos Foundation's Refugee Camp

**City**

Nicosia

**Year:**

2017

**Team**Achilleas Kentonis,  
Evanthia Tselika, Agnieszka  
Kaczmarek, Phivi Antoniou**Website**[artosfoundation.org](http://artosfoundation.org)

The challenge of the ARTos Foundation's 'Refugee Camp' project, the aim of which is to change a badly affected neighbourhood into a prospective community, officially started in January 2017. It was initially foreseen that the project would run for several months, however, due to its growing success, it was prolonged for almost another year and will thus end in December 2018. The 'Refugee Camp' project aimed to create a community space for youths at old refugee settlements with measures that will help the concepts of arts, culture, science and innovation to flourish. The ARTos Foundation wanted to help this neighbourhood to get rid of its 'labelled reputation'

and to make the people living there feel worthy and included in social and cultural life.

The focal point was the Strovolos III refugee camp/state housing. It is a residential area containing houses, blocks of flats and shop units placed in the south part of Nicosia (capital of Cyprus) on the industrial peripheries of the city. It is around 1.2km<sup>2</sup> with around 750 units. From the outset the units were settled by 3,000 internal refugees but now only a few hundred are still there. Construction of state housing for internal refugees began in 1976, two years after the war of 1974. By the end of 2005, properties had been turned from public to private and the ownership deeds had been assigned to residents.

The ARTOs Foundation came up with the idea for the project after getting to know more about isolated life in that area, thanks to researchers at the University of Nicosia (UNIC), as well as personal experience of the public, associates, friends and the ARTOs Foundation team.

Social  
Innovation  
&  
Impact

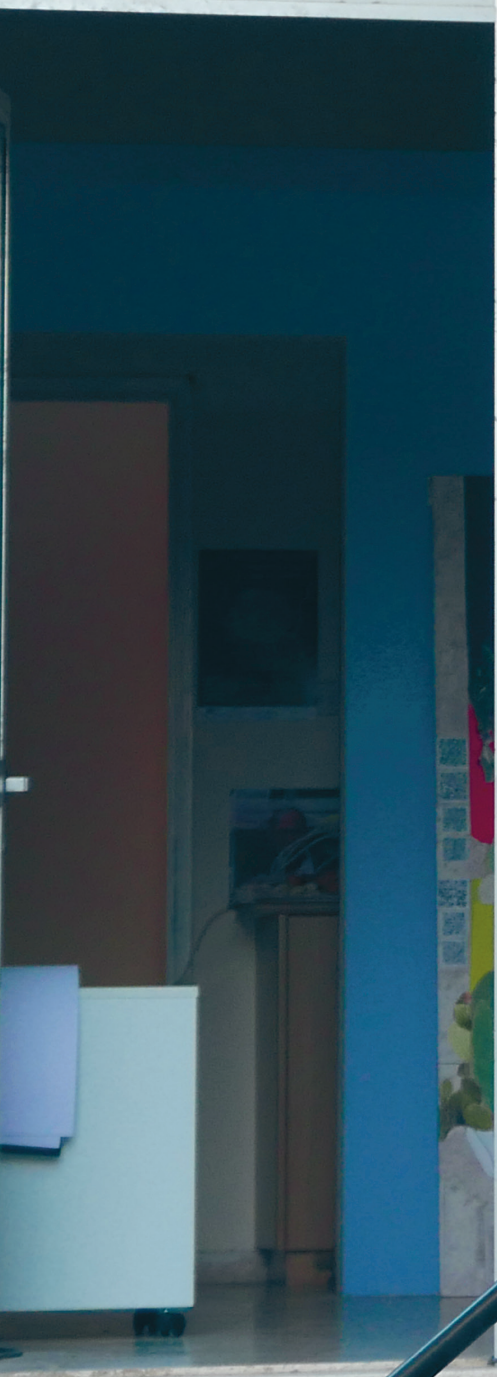


artosfoundation.org  
22445456



ARTECITY  
NICOSIA

Creative  
Europe  
Culture



TYA

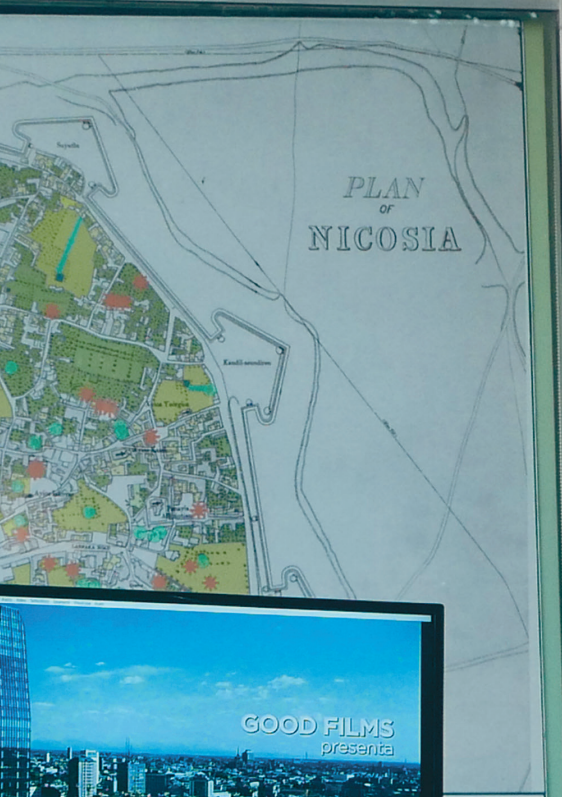
ARTO<sub>s</sub>  
Foundation

STROVOLOS  
MUNICIPALITY

dream

INNOVATION GYM

CULTURAL  
SERVICES  
AND CULTURE



THΛ.96 287015

TO ΚΑΤΑΣΤΗΜΑ  
ΘΑ ΕΡΧΑΖΕΤΑ ΜΟΝΟ  
ΜΕ PANTEBOY  
THΛ: 96 28 70 15

95

# Building the 'Refugee Camp' project

## *Glossary*

**Refugee** in this particular publication the term mostly refers to internal Greek Cypriots, displaced from the northern to the southern part of the country as a result of the war on the island in 1974.

**Refugee Camp** refers to the housing complex built by the local government for the afore-mentioned refugees, who were displaced and lost access to their properties.

**Strovolos III** is a district of Nicosia city where one of the housing projects is located and which was the focus of the ARTos Foundation project.

Comprehensive understanding of the real scale of the problem was a great motivation for the next steps to be undertaken. The project was built on the basis of a 3 step methodology:

STEP

1

**Finding and opening a space in the area. Implementing informal and formal activities**

STEP

2

**Bringing audiences to the area and engaging them with the residents**

STEP

3

**Developing a model for youth employment through artistic projects**

STEP

1

### **Finding and opening a space in the area. Implementing informal and formal activities.**

We decided to move into the neighborhood. It was complex procedure due to the old contracts and it required involvement of three different Municipalities and the Town Planning Department. Luckily they all showed interest and were willing to be engaged, so we can get access to a place. Finally, one of the closed down shops in this area soon became a facility for the Community Centre named 'ARTECITYAshop'. The shop used to operate as a governmental on-site office for the urban planning which manages the refugee camp Strovolos III. It was small and in bad shape. There was no electricity and no internet but we were taking a mobile internet with us. We made an agreement with the municipality of Strovolos and we would get some minor technical support in relation to outside, fixing the toilet facility etc. Beside all obstacles, the most important for us was its central location. To the local community we have announced that we run a social research of the inhabitants of the Strovolos 3 so we could start engaging them into a variety of actions and share their stories and situation while trying to improve their living conditions. Official opening of the shop happened in October 2017.

For us, opening of the Centre was about to help the local economy around the affected area and the small businesses (tailor shop, bakery, DIY shop, one supermarket, cafeteria) that managed to 'survive' over there to develop and evolve. It took us about 7 months to 'move in' and turn into 'locals' but thus had huge impact on later actions and helped to engage internal and external audience and local communities. We are talking specifically about: all age residents from Refugee Camp district, Cyprus and International University students, representatives of local government, officials, teachers, cultural activists, musicians, private and public media and much more.

On the other hand, selected team running the ARTECITYAshop was a group of people related to the arts and culture spectrum and the same time born or still living in the area. Evi Teslika, from the University of Nicosia, was going with her students and researchers at a regular basis doing research. In addition other teams from ARTos foundation were visiting the place and investigate in a distinct manner the social aspect of certain groups there. In this way Shop was exploited at least 4 days a week.

## Major contributors

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>
Co-Curator /researcher	Achilleas Kentonis [ARTos Foundation]
Co-Curator /researcher	Evi Tselika [Department of Design/Multimedia, University of Nicosia ]
ARTos Team	Elia Neofytou
ARTos Team	Agnieszka Kaczmarek
Researcher	Phoivi Antoniou
Researcher	Vito Fodera {DaSud Organization Rome}
Allospos Project	Stelios Tzivas
Mural actions	Leonidas Constantinou
Mural actions	Bugche Bozkurt
Mural actions	Stavroula Tsamourlidou
Mural actions	Lakis Christofidis
Mural actions	Chimezuteh Atemiye
Mural actions	Kayleigh de Sousa
Mural actions	Evangelia Mela
Exhibits/actions by:	University of Nicosia Fine Art students
Exhibits/actions by:	Pancyprian Gymnasium students - Antigoni Sofokleous
Exhibits/actions by:	3rd Primary School of Pallouriotissa - Despo Pasia, Sylvia Ioannou Foundation, Antonis Hadjikyriacou,
Exhibits/actions by:	Digitised Kitchener Map, Sylvia Ioannou Foundation
Screenings:	Xarkis: Voicing Stories, Videos
Screenings:	Taking over the King's Land, Producer director Gillian McIver, Film (London)
	Civic Art: Four Stories from South Los Angeles, Mark Escribano and Sara Daleiden, s(o)ul, 2017 (Los Angeles)
	Adi Atassi: An Interview. Filmed by Polymnia Tsinti for Waves Arts and Culture Journal, 2018 (Cyprus)
	Peter Loizos Documentary- Sophie's People Discussion. Re Aphrodite, Maria Hadjimichael and Georgina Christou
	Peter Loizos Documentary- Sophie's People
Old fabrics patchwork	Tailor and mayor of the estate Mr Panagiotis Paranis
Making our own city Educational workshop for children	Stavri Christou
Performance Two-way arrival	Katerina Paisi
Performance Two-way arrival	Mika Panayotova
Performance Two-way arrival	Sol Burt
Story telling by residents of Strovolos III.	Organised in collaboration with the residents by Phoivi Antoniou
Music performance	Trio NeRo group. Re-contextualising traditional lullabies from Greece, Cyprus and Asia Minor



## **Bringing audiences to the area and engaging them with the residents.**

So how the audience was engaged to the project? Simplest way to explain is to show an examples. During last festival, students from University of Cyprus used a resident poem as an art tool for graffiti. Photographs of the Refugee Camp community became and Expo pieces. The tailor who still run his shop using old techniques and reusable materials, became a master and teacher for young eco-pro activists who came to study his knowledge trough practice. The oldest refugees by sharing their stories publically inspired many of writers, poets and also journalists.

As the collaborations raised from the project seems to continue even after it officially ended, we predict that good practices found in Strovolos III, of: providing small gardens and including such green areas around housings may be implemented in other parts of the City and Island. Not only as decoration but mainly for micro harvesting for personal needs. Especially that eco is in great fashion nowadays.

At the same time the project involved work with youngsters from disadvantaged families which had some issues with the law already. About those children we have learned through collaboration with neighborhood police. It was reported to us that certain kids got involved in: robberies, drugs, disobedience and vandalism. This couldn't stay without attention. We presented via artistic practices to get their attention to a "healthier" and more sustainable lifestyle. Moreover, since December 2017 till today, we are in contact with them and do incognito workshops, by Achilleas Kentonis and with Stelios Tzivas.

On the top of all, reminding about the Refugee Camp to the rest of the citizens brings a memory of the painful and unresolved chapter in Cypriot history. However, the same time is presenting the possibility of implementing good changes and chance of gaining out of existence of this place. It is bringing new perspectives to unity between inhabitants and their ability of understanding and adjustment.

## **Developing a model for Youth Employment through artistic projects. Refugee Camp project and its sub actions revision.**

All actions/sub actions were based on a cross generational (0-97 years old), artistic and innovative approach.

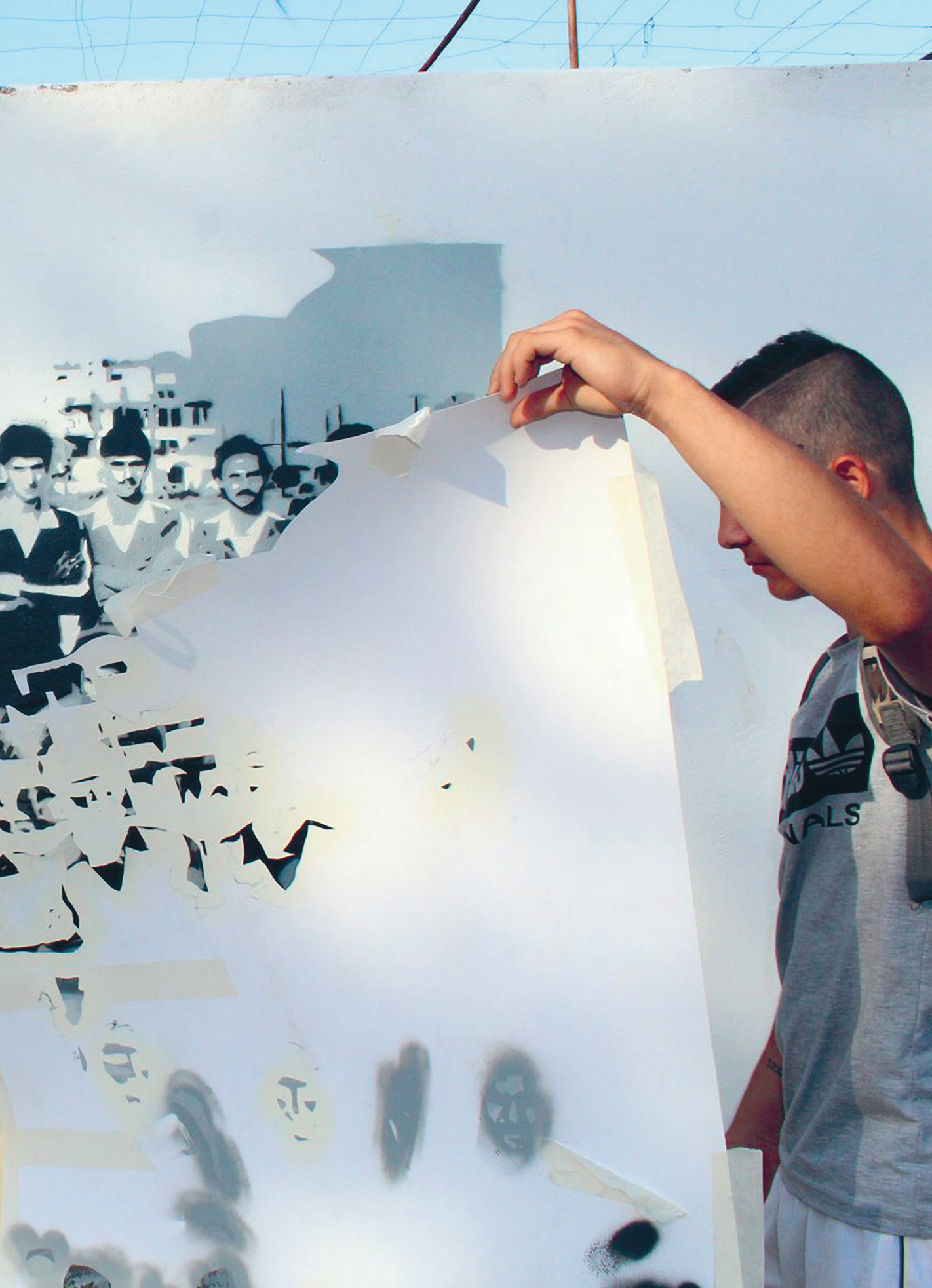
## Major activities:

1. Visit of the RC by Phivi – interview with Evi Tselika, ex resident after seeing the premises she grew up in (March 2017). That was may be the first time the residents had the chance to express themselves and share their personal stories and problems. This gave the ARTos Foundation a good solid ground for obtaining authentic information from the residents who have been there for more than 40 consecutive years waiting in ‘temporary housing’ to return to their own homes and properties after they were violently taken by the Turkish army’s illegal invasion of the island back in 1974.
2. Meeting with the ‘President’ of the Refugee Camp at the Artecitya shop. A discussion took place on the possibilities for use of the area (July 2017). It was very successful as important information and local connections were established.
3. Graffiti action/History de-Tales. September (November 2018). It opened up possibilities for young people to express themselves in a familiar way, enter into creative industry and start to get payment for their work. The action was successful because it enabled those involved to promote themselves with confidence and negotiate a fair price.
4. Work in progress: This is not a cultural place, it’s a place for social innovation which uses training and creative approaches to help and support real contemporary social issues through a transgenerational approach.
5. A patchwork workshop and collaboration between the young and old with the 75 year-old tailor Mr Panayiotis Paranis. Patchworks were made and presented to the public. The workshop was a success as the participants gained knowledge sources other than those they encounter on a daily basis i.e. directly from a local craftsman, who is still running his business.
6. Murals works (May 2018). This event was an opportunity to prepare the young to enter into a new emerging market of murals for public and private places. The event was a success as the ‘canvas’ they were given and the work produced had a significant impact on the local community, which had not originally shown signs of enthusiasm.
7. Best practices exchanges with the Da-Sud organisation in Rome for actively dealing with social issues such as the one in Strovolos 3. The exchange was successful in terms of giving an example of models and strategies for improving and implementing changes in areas with difficulties. It showed residents and officials that there is also international common ground and interest in state estates, which will ease future initiatives.
8. 1st Festival, 1 neighbourhood: 101 villages. Strovolos III estate. The festival will be repeated. It was successful as it engaged officials, locals, artists, children, the elderly, and residents of other parts of the city/country. It created a bridge for new possibilities, connections which perhaps wouldn’t have otherwise happened.

It is worth adding that Achilleas Kentonis – innovation mentor, engineer, cross-disciplinary artist from the ARTos Foundation, and Evanthia Tselika – Fine Art Programme, Department of Design and Multimedia of the University of Nicosia, who had leading roles in the investigation and curation of the activities, managed to set up the afore-mentioned infrastructure which will continue to exist after the Artecitya programme ends.



ARTOS  
REFUGEE  
CAMP ACTIVITIES



# The man who struggled with drugs and found peace in Strovolos III

BY AGNIESZKA KACZMAREK

INTERVIEWEE: MR. SOTIRIS, EX-RESIDENT OF STATE ESTATES, REFUGEE, REGULAR VISITOR

Mr. Sotiris, you moved to this housing estate around 10 years ago, so you were not here from the beginning. As it is known to be an area of Nicosia where people would not choose to live, what contributed to your decision?

Yes, I came here much later but it wasn't really my decision either. However, it all started in 1974, as was the case for the other refugees.

Where were you in the meantime?

Between 1970 and 1974 my father used to have a high class French restaurant in the area of today's 'green zone' in Nicosia. I was only 12 years old back then, but I remember people coming from all over the island, different nationalities, ambassadors, diplomats etc. When the war started, my father decided to move to Greece and continue his business there. When he passed away, my mother had to undertake all the responsibilities. She wasn't used to that as a full-time housewife. It was extremely difficult and overwhelming ... and me – I became a drug addict.

So was that the main reason why you returned?

At that time, access to drugs in Greece was much easier than here and, unfortunately, I fell into it. Additionally, rock music and a kind of a Woodstock free-spirit lifestyle were fashionable. When the problem became very serious, my older sister (there were four of us in total - 2 girls, me and my brother), acted like my mum and decided that we were going back to Cyprus in order to remove me from the bad environment. In the early years we stayed in Limassol (southern seaside). I was a chef like my father, so I opened a restaurant, and I also decided to have a bar. One month after opening, I had to face a very specific customer. When he entered, I looked into his eyes and I knew what kind of person he was. My drug problems started again. This time they were stronger and more powerful, damaging myself day after day.

Until 2004, right? This was the year when you started coming to Nicosia.

Exactly. This was the crucial moment. A rehab centre opened in Nicosia. The programmes they were offering lasted about a year-and-a-half. I was com-

ing here all the way from Limassol. When I was finally clean, workers of the centre advised that I should move to the capital to cut all ties with my previous life. That's what I did. We had a house in Nicosia, but we sold it and in 2005 I found an option to rent a place from one of the refugees in Strovolos III. From that moment, I lived here and for following seven years I ran my own coffee shop nearby - next to the main road. I rented the space for my business from a communist party (PO). There were a lot of youngsters in the area. Lots of life. We had a football team ... Nowadays it's not like that. I closed my café and now run my own organic shop in Engomi (Nicosia district) near the embassies.

**It was here that you also found the love of your life...**

I wasn't any different than my other friends. We grew up with idea of finding this 'stereotype, tall, blond woman'. When I met my wife, I couldn't have been happier and her unique beauty features were the total opposite of the afore-mentioned stereotype. My wife originally comes from the Philippines. She was also residing in Strovolos III and taking care of an old lady. This lady was a refugee from Kyrenia (a city in the most northern part of the island). She lost her son during the war. Later she started to have mental problems so it wasn't an easy job for my wife. When the lady later passed away, her cousins, maybe brothers, rented out her flat.

**You moved away from Strovolos III with your wife some time ago?**

I had thought about it on numerous occasions, then I got married and we stayed longer than expected but, yes, eventually we moved out around three years ago.

**But you are still coming here. Why?**

Because I feel safe.

**You mean it is a safe neighbourhood?**

A: It is, indeed, but what I mean is that I feel safe with myself. As I told you, I was a drug addict and it wasn't easy to stop. Now, whenever I come to Strovolos III, I sit in the cafe near the square and meet people who are not bothered with such things. There are no drugs here, no talking about it, no risk of being exposed to unwanted temptations.

**And what about the rest of your family?**

They stayed in Limassol. I remember how unconfident I was going there for the first time to introduce my wife. She wasn't Cypriot. I didn't know what reaction to expect. It wasn't very common. Luckily, we all grew up along the way: me and my family and they just shared my happiness.

**Since you mentioned happiness, let me ask. People who still live here, do you think they are happy?**

In the past they used to be. Now, most of them are depressed, it is difficult talking to them, they are tired. Their children have moved out.

**But I believe the place has great potential. There are a lot of green areas around, it's close to the highway, close to the Mall of Cyprus. What do you think this place will look like in 20 years?**

In 20 years? (Thinking for a while) No people. No people here. But it is not a bad idea to open a nice restaurant, for example. Everyone is looking for quiet places, inexpensive and pleasant places in which to spend time. This could work here, but only if an initiative is undertaken by one of the refugees' children, otherwise new business people might not be welcomed by the locals.

But the real problem is in people from Nicosia. They care about their image a lot and think that where you come from impacts your prestige.

# 'Poli omorfos!' he said, when asked about ART changes in his neighbourhood

BY AGNIESZKA KACZMAREK

*INTERVIEWEE: MR. ANDREAS, RESIDENT OF STROVOLOS III, FATHER OF TWO, CHEF IN THE HOSPITAL AND AT HOME*

## How many of you came to live in estate housing after the war?

It was me, my father, mother, brother and sister. It was in 1978 when we got a place to move into.

## Were they sad times?

Not at all. Now it's sad. Back then everyone was smiling. We had gatherings in this big café, which is now closed. Every day it was around 100 people gathered to spend time together. From little children to grandparents. It was my father's coffee shop.

## Anything else besides the gatherings?

Yes, it was like a little town. We had everything: a bicycle shop, two supermarkets, a butcher, a bakery (which still exists), a barber and a tailor... as you can see, he is still there... A DIY shop, a pottery, an ice-cream shop, too. Once every month a doctor visited. He was from (the municipality of) Dimotico Strovoulou and came to teach and speak about health: prostate, heart problems and other important things. Always in the main square. Everyone came to listen. He doesn't come anymore.

## You said people were smiling? What other activities did you have here?

For example, birthday parties with DJs, big parties. Either in the café or at people's houses.

## Can we still find so much life here?

The buildings are actually not empty. Only a few are uninhabited. But no, there are not many youngsters.

Maybe around 40-50 in total (0-20years old). It is not a modern place and no one stays here. They go to other parts of the city where their friends, the internet and music are. When the mall and other big markets were built in the surrounding area, the local shops started to close down one by one. Every 2-3 years something was shut down. Now people have cars so they can go shopping anywhere and drive to other places to spend their free time. There is no need to stay here.

## In the past you spent free time in the gardens, here in the neighbourhood. I heard they were everywhere!

Exactly. Everybody was growing something. I had two gardens. One in front of my house, one at the back. I planted tomatoes, marouli (lettuce), melintzano (aubergine), olive trees, apples, lemons. They were delicious. No chemicals. Only sun and water.

## But now you don't do this anymore.

No, but I am a professional chef and I cook everyday for my family. But yes, we buy in big supermarkets. It is also more convenient as I work at a hospital. We are rather busy with our two children: a 13 year old daughter and 8 year old son who study at an English School, to which my wife drives them every day.

## Thank you very much! I have one last question. What do you think about the art events which were happening here. What do you think, for example, about this colourful graffiti done by students? (pointing to the wall)

"Poli omorfos...poli omorfos!" – (smiling)  
\*Poli omorfos – Eng. Very Beautiful



# Waiting for something big to happen

BY AGNIESZKA KACZMAREK,

INTERVIEWEE: CONSTANTINOS, RESIDENT, INTERNAL REFUGEE, CHEF, EMPLOYEE OF THE HOSPITAL

## What do you remember about the social life of this place from the past?

Festivals. It was the left-wing party. Before it was like a competition. Who is going to make a better and bigger festival and some years it was happening here in Strovolos III. I had my first 'serious' drinking experiences during these events. When I was 17 we had a festival which went on until 2-3 o'clock in the morning! Loud music, DJs, food and alcohol. We were young and we wanted to dance. But this now needs more work. Something big should happen in this place!

## What do you mean?

Led Zeppelin or another legend (laughing).

## I see that you haven't lost your sense of humour, which is great!

Well yes. I moved here in 1977. We spent three years staying in Agios Pavlos (a district of Nicosia) awaiting our turn to get a house. We didn't know where they were going to place us. It was a lottery. We ended up in Strovolos III.

## Where did you come from and how many of you were there?

We come from another district of Nicosia (towards Kyrenia) called Traxonas. My mother had nine children. My father died in 1973. He was a truck driver for public services. They didn't give us a flat, but assigned us a two-storey house with a total of three bedrooms and a room for my mum, but it was nonetheless a hard time. You can only imagine how difficult it was for a single mother with so many kids.

## What are you doing now, if may I ask?

I help people and I hope there will be someone to help me when I am their age. Professionally I am a chef/cook and I work in a hospital. Whenever one of my neighbours needs some assistance, I help them. For example, I go to their homes and take samples of their blood, then I deliver it to the hospital for testing.

## Isn't there a doctor here?

There is a doctor. He is based in the first shop over there (pointing to the end of the square). He comes twice a week. He does general check-ups.

## Yes, I see the shop. Ours is that one (pointing to the Artecitya shop). It's we who held the festival here in May.

Oh yes, I couldn't come that time, but I heard a lot of good things about it later on! Anyhow, it is time to go. We are organising a blood donation session this evening.

# The displaced housing estates in Nicosia, Cyprus

BY EVANTHIA  
TSELIKA

The urban neighbourhoods of the Cypriot displaced state estates were built to re-house the approximately 200,000 internally displaced Greek Cypriots who were forced to leave their homes in Northern Cyprus during the 1974 war. This low-cost grand state housing project was initially undertaken in 1976 with international aid and with the hope that it would only be a temporary solution following the war. Initially, because there were so many displaced people living in tents, construction was hurried; and urban legend has it that adjusted plans of UK council estates were used. The resettlement of people into this large housing project – with more than 14,000 housing units in a country whose population is under one million – was carried out according to income level and the estates were placed on the edges of the city, near industrial areas which could absorb the new influx of workers. Through their placement at the periphery of urban and economic life, the prejudice that accompanied living in them meant that this social group felt labelled by their spatial positioning. In 1997 a political decision was taken, and by 2005 residents were given the deeds to their homes, thus transforming the state housing estates from public to private. These ‘displaced housing projects’ are spaces that have become attached to the notion of ‘internal refugee’, even though they are now urban spaces that are increasingly being inhabited by elderly refugees that are slowly passing away, families on very low incomes, and migrant families seeking cheap accommodation. I come to this from the position of an arts practitioner, an estate resident, and having worked in the conceptualisation and realisation of different art activities in the estates since 2011.

The displaced housing estates found in the south of Cyprus were constructed hurriedly between the years of 1976 to 2000 and they form a primary example of communitarian architectural environments (of common living) on the island. There are 69 state housing estates, which include low-rise blocks of flats and homes. Through this scheme the Cypriot government provided low-cost houses free of charge to ‘low-income’ families following their displacement from the north of the island. In the period from 1975-86, 12,500 families found what was meant to be ‘temporary’ housing in such projects. These were comprehensively planned to include basic services such as shopping centres, community centres, open spaces, schools, playgrounds, medical centres and homes for the elderly. The use of these ‘common spaces’ nowadays is minimal. To date, the state has constructed approximately 14,000 housing units which accommodate approximately 60,000 people across the island (Department of Town

Planning and Housing). All houses, blocks of flats and communal spaces were constructed with the same basic architectural design, building components and materials, thus implementing the concept of industrialisation within house construction. Repetition of individual components was used in the design, thus facilitating mass production, ensuring low costs and quicker delivery at a time of need. Through the 'displaced housing projects' Cyprus was attempting to find a temporary solution for large numbers of homeless people (Tselika 2014, Sini-kismoi- Conflict Transformation Art Booklet 3).

These 'displaced housing projects' are spaces that have become attached to the notion of 'internal refugee', even though now they are urban spaces that are increasingly being inhabited by elderly refugees who are slowly passing away, families on lower incomes, and migrant families seeking cheap accommodation. The social theorist Roger Zetter has researched and written in relation to the issue of the 'refugees' of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) after 1974. He presents the contradictory nature of the re-housing of the displaced Cypriots, by indicating that they were integrated in the southern part of the island but at the same time they were differentiated because of the characteristics of this state housing programme. Zetter indicates the unique nature of the displaced housing programme because of its magnitude and its quality. The displaced – or a large number of them - were re-housed in permanent shelters funded by the Cypriot government. Zetter also emphasises their fiscal integration in the 1980s and 1990s due to the post destructive rapid economic development that the rebuilding brought to the island (Zetter 1986, 1991, 1998). These built-up city environments are isolated in terms of their presence within the context of the public sphere but they have an intense public presence as a reminder of war, ethnic identity and collective memory. The lack of substantial dialogue in relation to the Cypriot displaced estates, which the locals refer to as 'prosfigikoi sinikismoi' (refugee settlements) became the springboard for carrying out research based on the social narratives of these environments. The Cypriot state developed these spaces hurriedly and even used architectural plans for estates that were built in UK. The hurried nature of this endeavour is presented not only through the swift architectural construction but also through the fact that they created new communities. Through its policies the state did not re-house the displaced villages and towns together; instead they separated the uprooted communities, creating new collectives, shaped through the state's re-housing policy of the displaced and their placement in these constructed urban environments according to income and family size.

### **The concretisation of the camp: the internally displaced and the refugees**

The displaced housing estates constructed by the RoC are directly linked to the image of a refugee camp, an image that has become a regular occurrence in the global media. The experience of displacement for the majority of Greek Cypriots took place in the summer of 1974, resulting in a situation where many people lived in tents for several months. Displacement of the Turkish Cypriot community had begun a decade earlier, when ethnic friction and inter-communal violence pushed large proportions of the community into enclaves.

Zetter indicates that the 'refugee housing' in Cyprus "is unlike the stereotyped image in other countries" (1991, p.42). Forced migration in Cyprus was em-

bodied in the built environment of the RoC through the government's housing policy, which moved the Cypriot 'refugees' "rapidly from tents and prefabricated shelters" into "permanent dwellings" within "comprehensively planned estates", located primarily "on the urban periphery" (Zetter 1986, p.108). Writing approximately ten years on from the start of the construction of these housing estates, Zetter informs us that the refugees were "being rapidly assimilated into the urban economy in the factory estates springing up near the housing areas" (ibid, p.109). A very different image is presented approximately forty years later, and the "richly-planted gardens" (ibid) that Zetter observed are overgrown and abandoned, as the first generation of residents (displaced persons) is gradually passing away. Their descendants had rejected the refugee label and had chosen to live outside of these urban pockets (should their finances permit) which exist within the city but which are also differentiated by it. At present houses are being renovated and repopulated by the grandchildren of the initial residents or other buyers and renters who to a large extent are also migrants.

The 'refugee neighbourhoods' in Cyprus are managed by the Department of Town Planning and the Service of Displaced Individuals. There is an ambivalent relationship between the notion of refugees and the internally displaced – which is largely reflective of the time period in which the displacement of Greek Cypriots occurred. The discourse in relation to internal displacement has become much more prominent in the last twenty years, as internal conflicts increased during the 1980s and 1990s (Burn, 2005). The legal definition of the term 'refugee' as outlined in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (UNHCR, 2013) is an individual who due to "a well-founded fear of persecution... is outside of his or her country of nationality" (ibid). What is currently understood as a refugee, however, is actually reflected in much broader terms. As refugee study theorists Alexander Betts and Gil Loescher indicate, the "term 'refugee' means different things in different contexts" (2011, p.5). It includes "people fleeing a range of causes including authoritarian regimes; conflict; human rights violations; large-scale development projects; environmental disasters" (ibid) and extends to the uprooting of people who are displaced within their country of origin (ibid). The political scientist Emma Haddad also points out and reaffirms this "false dichotomy between 'refugee' and 'internally displaced person'" (2008, p.43). Haddad points out, there is "no conceptual difference between the refugee" (2008, p.43) and the internally displaced person. Both groups have been subjected to forced migration, although they are differentiated by access to impenetrable "international political boundaries" (ibid). This notion is reinforced by Zetter, who points out that Greek-Cypriot refugees are not refugees, since they have not been forced "outside their country of origin" (1998, p.308); nevertheless, he continues, they "exist in what UNHCR describes as a 'refugee-like situation' and display the familiar characteristics of refugee populations" (ibid).

The displaced Cypriot persons living in the estates were given the deeds to their homes in 2007, thereby transforming the refugee neighbourhoods from state-owned property to mostly privately-owned property. The inhabitants of these spaces today and the new communities of these semi-state and semi-private environments are mostly displaced elderly Cypriots and migrants, and this is particularly observed in the Strovolos III neighbourhood. In the collaboration with Artos, a key concern was how the arts can activate these largely forgotten urban environments and facilitate a process of dialogue between the residents and the practices developed in relation to the neighbourhood.

## A dialogue between fine art students, University of Nicosia and Strovolos III residents

In the Artecya collaboration with Artos, I worked together with 30 students of fine art from the University of Nicosia from September 2017 until June 2018 in the shop that Artos secured on Palliginisias Square on the Strovolos III estate. Palliginisias square is the central square with many shops lying empty or providing services to the largely elderly population of the neighbourhood. The decision to work together with these students was taken largely due to the interviews and conversations I carried out with the residents where they repeatedly described the neighbourhood as an 'old people's home'. It is also related to the fact that it is a phenomenon which I observe in my own neighbourhood as I also live in such an estate in Nicosia.

### Palliginisias Square

Through a series of visits to the neighbourhood the students interviewed the residents, visually mapped the neighbourhood and assisted in producing an experimental publication (<https://evanthiatselika.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/booklet-lower.pdf>) presented at the exhibition *Whoever has a tree has shade*, November-December 2017 and the festival *1 neighbourhood, 101 villages* (drawn from the number of villages people originated from in Strovolos III), alongside a series of informal actions and interventions which enabled them. These informal and formal actions focused on the voices of the residents, their stories, the decaying built ecologies of the neighbourhood and an exchange between the students and the residents. It was through these exchanges that the actions of the festival were carried out as the students gathered the suggestions of the residents and tried to collaborate in shaping the actions.

Bringing together the students and the residents, through the umbrella shaped by the platform that Artos enabled by providing us access to the shop front they secured, allowed for a context of dialogue and exchange between the students and the residents to be formed. Dialogue presents a key feature of debates that relate to the participatory and socially engaged dimension of contemporary artistic practices that work together with communities (Kester 2004). Within the framework of this collaboration with Artos, a creative dialogue between the students and the residents of the estate presents one of the central elements of my input into this project, insofar as the dialogical practice becomes a vehicle through which relationships between different social groups are facilitated and an increased debate on particular socio-political conditions.

Bacon, Yuen and Korza (in an arts research report drafted for *Animating Democracy*) analyse the nature of "artistic activity that stimulates civic dialogue" (1999, p.38), through the "wide range of aesthetics, artistic approaches, and issues" (ibid), that "artists and institutions have embraced" (ibid) when engaged in civic dialogue arts practice. Some of the dimensions of "arts-based civic dialogue projects" are the "aesthetic possibilities afforded by the social and political variables of civic context", the "multiple goals" that "drive a project" and "dialogue" (ibid, p.39).

There are diverse reasons why art institutions and practitioners undertake 'civic dialogue' projects which implicate artistic practice with engaging more people in the process of civic dialogues and civic action:





THE STUDENTS LEARNING FROM THE ESTATE RESIDENTS ABOUT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD. PHOTO BY STAVRI CHRISTOU



THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER, MR PANAYIOTIS PARANIS WHO IS ALSO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD TAILOR. PHOTO BY AUTHOR



MR PANAYIOTIS'S COLLABORATION WITH MYRIAM GATT IN PRODUCING A TEXTILE ART PIECE. PHOTO BY AUTHOR



MR CHRISTAKIS KARAOLIS,  
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD  
SUPERMARKET OWNER AND  
POET. MR KARAOLIS SHARED  
SEVERAL OF HIS POEMS  
WITH US. PHOTO BY PHOIVI  
ANTONIOU





ONE OF HIS POEMS, TITLED 'THE BLOSSOMS' WAS PAINTED ONTO ONE OF THE WALLS OF THE CENTRAL SQUARE BY A GROUP OF STUDENTS. PHOTO BY AUTHOR



EXHIBITION OF THE PORTRAITS AND RESIDENT QUOTES IN THE SPACE OF THE SQUARE. PHOTO BY AUTHOR



STORY TELLING BY THE RESIDENTS ON THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL. PHOTO BY AUTHOR

- The engagement of “new and more varied audiences” (ibid) through “community discussion formats” (ibid) which are used to interest and educate audiences about the form, process, and content of art (ibid).

- Facilitating “intergroup communication” (ibid), taking into account the assumption that the arts depict the ability to act as “a bridge or platform from which to explore both the differences between and common experiences of or between different cultures, classes, and groups” (ibid).

- The civic dialogue that is fostered through the arts can “raise awareness about an issue” (ibid, p.40).

In the case of the students’ collaboration with the residents and the manifestation of a series of informal and formal actions that shaped this process of exchange, this would not have been possible without the shop/platform provided by the art centre and its collaboration with the Department of Housing and Town Planning and the Municipality of Strovolos. Through this complex and layered network of a local authority body, an art centre, and a university, there was a more varied base of participation involved in the form, process and content of artistic production, facilitating inter-group communication which focused on raising awareness around the stories of the people who live and work in the displaced housing neighbourhoods.

### ***The blossoms***

***BY CHRISTAKIS KARAOLIS, STROVOLOS III***

The orange and lemon tree blossoms  
Are God’s blessing  
They herald spring  
With laughter and pride

When they are in bloom  
Take a walk  
And in a moment  
You will encounter heaven

And when the blossoms’ scent mixes  
With the cry of the birds  
And the buzzing of the bees  
Oh, what a joy!

And when you’ve walked enough  
And are filled with the smells  
Sit under a tree  
And rest

With your body on the ground  
And a stone for a pillow  
Look up to the tree  
And count the blossoms

Also close your eyes  
And let your mind escape  
And beloved Morfou\*  
Will shine in your heart

And when you wake  
Before the sun sets  
Turn up again  
And plead that this dream you had  
Will come to you again

\* A now occupied village in Cyprus, renowned for its orange and lemon trees.

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# Tips for implementing cultural projects in problematic areas

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1.

**Team up with local organisations**

The local communities in these areas are quite diverse, so the approach and tactics should be different and cross-disciplined. The only way of having a chance of succeeding is to be able to team up with local authorities (even sometimes work under their names) and to join with other existing projects from a variety of organisations that wish to contribute project-wise.

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2.

**Be physically present**

By the time ARTos was able to be physically present and had teams working in a cross-disciplinary manner, including artistic practices, the outcome was visible. The space and work created for the creative industry to apply its talent, create efficient dialogue with the residents and the external audience, and ultimately the entire space, had been reused in a sustainable manner.

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3.

**Think about the future**

Though the outcome left behind a positive experience, in order to secure an impact on the community it will be necessary to ensure the presence of our teams and new mentors will need to be trained, so the project will continue to flourish. This good practice should then be repeated in other refugee camp/state social housing developments. This will bring cultural, historic, artistic and mainly human value to the most sensitive part of our body - our memory!



# Helexpo's Art Science Technology Festival

**Organisation/  
Production**

TIF – Helexpo

**Project Manager**

Vicky Dalkrani (HELEXPO  
– Director of the Exhibition  
Research Institute and R&D  
Manager of TIF – HELEXPO  
SA)

**Artistic Director**

Lydia Chatziakovou  
(ArtBOX)

**Co-ordination**

Dimitris Kourkouridis  
(HELEXPO – Exhibition  
Research Institute)

Helexpo, based in Thessaloniki, is the national exhibition agency of Greece, one of the major institutions in the country and an organiser and host of trade fairs, conferences, exhibitions and cultural events. Its annually recurrent and one-off activities support the Greek economy, encourage innovation and build an entrepreneurial ethos for established and emerging companies and creatives. Through the 'Art Science Technology Festival' (AST), Helexpo ventured a new approach to the Artcitya idea, focusing on the relationship between art, science and technology, particularly on the investigation into the possibilities for social change that are embedded into all

three fields. In order to achieve this goal, Helexpo forged collaborations with local authorities and institutions as well as with international organisations and experts from various fields – art, technology, education, social engagement, and featured an interdisciplinary collection of exhibitions and workshops at the intersection of new media art, emerging technologies, gaming, and social entrepreneurship.

**Project officers**

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# The power of game and playfulness

BY LYDIA  
CHATZIIAKOVOU

**T**echnology is rapidly transforming life in cities, shaping the way we interact with each other, expanding our world and perception beyond our physical limits. At a time of rapid, numerous and simultaneous advancements of communication and immersive technologies, can we safely identify the one singular cutting-edge technology that affects us the most? Responses may vary, depending on one's age, background and circumstances. Inspired by the variety of these responses, AST acquired the title 'The New New' and presented the approaches of artists, creators and developers who experiment with the possibilities of technology in terms of form and content and redirect the focus from machines back to humans and their society. Many of the works selected also functioned as reminders of the impact that technology that is not so old – such as video, video gaming and digital imaging, which is now regarded as obsolete – had in our everyday lives. Throughout the process, one key concept kept reoccurring, not only in the featured works' formats but also in the audiences' interaction with them: the power of game (in every form and shape – digital, urban, analogue) and playfulness in shaping our personalities and societies.

According to the myth reported by Herodotus games were invented in ancient Lydia during a time of great famine. In order for the available food reserves to last longer, the people of Lydia invented games using dice, balls and knucklebones. As they only ate every other day, they played on the other days to help them forget their hunger. They endured famine for 18 whole years. Game is play and play is fun, and fun makes us forget our worries and troubles; it makes us forget ourselves in a transcendental way, as we are immersed into a sphere that is beyond reality. A sphere where we are alone or uniquely connected to our co-players and comrades. A sphere where we can learn without realising we are learning. A sphere where we can test and stretch our limits. Putting it another way, fun is play and play is game and game can be competition and sport – amateur and professional. A sphere from which champions and heroes emerge. A vehicle for national pride and propaganda, as much as a multi-million dollar industry. In a society of spectacle, where everything is a product, games – digital, physical, analogue, amateur and professional – have become part of a market that plays off our instinctive need to have fun, develop our talents, be accepted and become part of a community.



Within this context, what is the role of artists who develop games as part of their practice? Can video and urban games function as political art works? Can gamers develop special skills that can be used for social causes? What are the secrets of a successful collaborative creation and consumption of games in the digital and urban space? According to Jane McGonigal (Director of Games Research and Development at the Institute for the Future, Palo Alto, CA), e-gaming can contribute to the creation of a better world, thanks to the special skills ('superpowers' as she calls them) that gamers develop: urgent optimism – belief in an immediate positive result that can be achieved thanks to a gamer's actions; social fabric – individual players become communities that work together towards a common goal; blissful productivity – belief in hard work, endeavour and perseverance; and epic meaning – the search for an epic win. With these skills, solutions to complex, urgent problems become feasible. This became evident through the digital games that were presented at the AST Festival's three Artecitya editions. From the award-winning 'Amanda' in 2016, a virtual reality game that tackles bullying by using traditional game elements such as challenges, different game levels, avatars and scores, which aims to raise users' empathy and self-confidence, to a series of video games for the development of skills of visually impaired children created by students of the Department of Audio and Visual Arts of the Ionian University in 2017, and in 2018 the exhibition 'Games & Politics' by the Goethe-Institut and ZKM Karlsruhe featuring 18 games developed by artists and activists to discuss and raise awareness of political, social and identity issues, and the panel discussion on the artistic and political value of games.

Taking this point further, one could add that games of all types can contribute to the expansion of our perception of space and time. A city – perceived either as scenography or as community – becomes versatile and flowing depending on a gamer's actions and movements. Typical elements of game playing (point scoring, competition with others, rules of play) are often applied to encourage engagement with a product or service (gamification). In the same manner, the use of such elements may be used for the reinforcement of the feeling of community among people from different backgrounds, the solution of social problems and the embracing of a healthier, sustainable way of life.

# Interviews

At 2017's AST, we invited Media Lab, a team of young creatives that emerged through Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki's 'Artecitya Agency', to setup a studio within the space that would broadcast the daily comings and goings of the festival to the world. They conducted 34 interviews with participating artists and representatives of the art and culture world from Greece and abroad. Below is a selection of the most interesting points.

## On AST

### **Vicky Dalkrani**

Director of the Exhibition Research Institute and R&D Manager of TIF-HEL-EXPO SA; Artecitya project manager

Helexpo recently decided to expand to sectors beyond its main area of activity, which is the organisation of exhibitions and conferences. Through our participation in Artecitya, we have established some excellent partnerships and have become familiar with fields that were previously unknown to us.

### **Lydia Chatziakovou**

Co-Director of ArtBOX; Artistic Director of AST 2016-2017-2018

The Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF) is an event that attracts all kinds of audiences from different backgrounds and age groups. Everybody comes to TIF. A contemporary art show does not usually address such a wide audience. Offering something that is interesting and useful for everyone can be a challenge, but at the same time it's also a unique opportunity, since it is rare that a contemporary art

event in Thessaloniki attracts 10,000 people in 10 days. It's a positive challenge since it is a great opportunity to reach out to non-museum goers.

### **Elli Chrysidou**

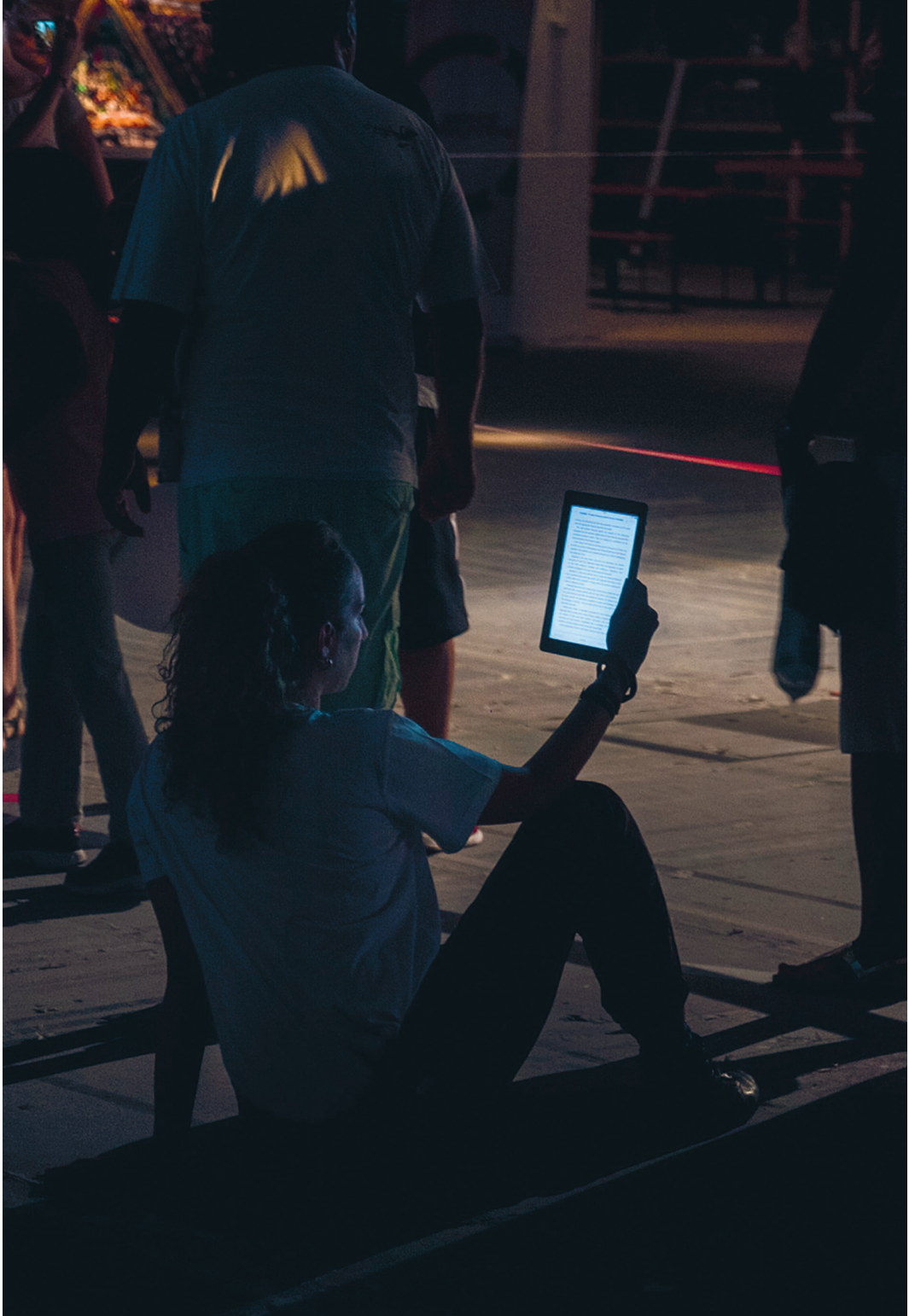
artist, Vice-Mayor of Culture, Municipality of Thessaloniki

AST is a new chapter for the city's future and for local artists who experiment with new technologies. The municipality could not but support this, especially now that technology is everywhere and art naturally reflects its era. AST makes it evident that technology is ultimately defined by how people use it. And this is a valuable takeaway: technology can bring positive change to society and can support the creation of groups and the development of research and new proposals in favour of social cohesion.

### **Klaus Lederer**

Senator for Europe and Culture and Mayor of Berlin

It's a very interesting, impressive mix of arts, technology, culture, social questions and a reflection on material, technical or artificial devices. It's a little



AST 2017, THEO PRODROMIDIS, THE EFFECT OF SUCH AN IMPOTENCE OF THE PRESENT ON FUTURE GENERATIONS. PHOTO BY THEO PRODROMIDIS

bit like a laboratory. It's very interesting to see what artists and young developers are trying to bring together – simple materials, high quality technology, pictures, nature... In my opinion we can only have social progress on the basis of artistic processes, technology and communication between people that focus on social or artistic topics – it's necessary to bring these together.

### **Rudolf Bartsch**

**Director,**  
**Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki**

I'm a little bit dazzled by AST, which is a good thing. If you see something that you already know, it's boring, whereas if you're a little bit dazzled, it's a good feeling. It means you're not oriented, you have to orient yourself. You cannot look at culture and art in an isolated way. There's always a social component. However, I don't think it's necessary to focus on the social aspect, but one does need to be aware that whatever you do in the cultural field, there's always a social aspect.

### **Pablo Mahave Fernandez**

**Filmmaker, VR filmmaker,**  
**VR documentary maker**

There are a lot of different approaches to art at the festival. I was not really familiar with some of them and I was really amazed to see what people can do in terms of video art, using movement sensors to create music, using different kind of projections to come up with a dance performance that matches whatever is being projected on the wall and to see how this organic approach to dance can also be connected to technology. I was not really familiar with these fields and I have learnt a lot. It's great to see kids watching VR for the very first time because they are amazed, they are really into it, they're really immersed. Seniors also have a great time when they watch VR for the first time, when they're not so used to new technologies.

### **Vladimir Storm**

**VR/AR Creative Director**

There's a really good mixture of different media arts. It's really good that people can be introduced to different art forms, while artists can exchange knowledge and experience.

## **On Art and Technology**

### **Daphne Giannoulatou**

**artist**

Artists don't simply communicate with technology. They use technology. Basically, technology is our paint brush.

### **Giorgos Nikopoulos**

**filmmaker**

Some people feel comfortable when staring at a screen playing computer games. Others are immersed in nature. What I'm always looking for is the feeling that I can touch what I'm making – it makes me feel safe. Like I can put my hands into it. In that sense, technology remains a tool, a very important tool. The research and development around this method that I've developed is about performing arts and how technology can be used by performance.

### **Paschalis Chatzityfonos**

**artist**

The overall idea behind the work is how the digital world inhabits the physical world. It's no longer something that lives inside a computer, on a screen, accessible through ordinary peripheral devices, like a mouse or a keyboard. We can interact with it through movement, often without even realising it.

### **Chrysianna Karameri**

**artist**

It's a need we have – to use technology in order to awaken something that is dormant in our times. Technology can become a medium for us to realise who we are.

### **Vladimir Storm**

**VR/AR Creative Director**

I have been designing video games for several years. In the last two years I switched completely to virtual and augmented reality. It's a new medium and for me it's interesting to invent new things – you can still say something new and invent things which weren't there before in other mediums, even vid-

eo games. Technology is evolving very rapidly and there are a lot of things that can't be learnt, even in university, the whole educational system is built a bit differently – you study something for years and then you use it in the industry or the arts. But now technology is developing so quickly that it's way easier to learn it on your own. This is particularly the case with new fields, such as virtual and augmented reality which are so new that people are still inventing them and the whole scene is still building up. You can be a researcher. After finishing my studies, I actually wanted to be a scientist but it was quite hard to do this in Russia, where I'm from. But I am lucky that I have a scientific background and I can go through scientific papers, and can use them to make art. And I have the opportunity to use the newest hardware that is not even available on the market right now. It's exciting to feel like an innovator.

### **Alpha Rats**

**'Wump VR',**

**visual artist and game developer**

For us, what really characterises VR as a medium is, first, interactivity – it's very important to be able to interact with objects, and if possible even with textures, whereby the surface of an object responds when it is touched. So, we prefer to eventually have less objects but to be able to interact with all of them – you can grab them, look at them, play with their surface. And secondly, what makes VR interesting as a medium is immersivity – it's an overall sensory experience. So, what we're really trying to do is create an environment completely different to what people experience in their daily lives; something that really looks out of this world, so we rely a lot on aesthetics and visuals to communicate our idea. We don't really have a storyline with text or a quest that has to be accomplished – we really want to communicate our idea through strong symbols, colour schemes and archetypes, so that we can create something more abstract that people can easily relate to. I switched from 2D games to 3D games and then to VR. My main background is drawing and illustration, so my primary focus is still on visual design.

## **On art, technology and social engagement:**

**Oso Loustaunau**

**Greece Communitere**

There are ways of guiding people instead of telling them what to do. Sometimes you just have to allow mistakes to happen and then come back and make a suggestion. That way, the person learns by him/herself. Due to the way the system works in schools, this is something that does not occur since we must always be right. But in science, research, and the arts, experiments can be done with different things, often things are not going to work, but eventually, we find the one that works and then get a goldmine. That's what research is about – making a bunch of mistakes in order to arrive. There was a carpenter who had been living in camps for three years and he hadn't touched a tool during that time. He was reluctant at first, then he started picking out pieces, sorting them out, arranging them on the floor, in a very particular order. He started cutting, assembling, adjusting... an hour-and-a-half later, he was sitting on a three-seater couch with his friends. It's a beautiful thing, like a small fire that needs air to make it robust and then it ignites. It's about getting the ball rolling.

**Pablo Mahave Fernandez**

**Filmmaker,**

**VR filmmaker, VR documentary maker**

VR and journalism are really connected. It makes sense for both to collide and come up with a synergy. Journalism is about empathy. VR is the best tool I've seen so far for empathy. So, if the goal of journalism is to portray and show human stories of regular people who are being thrown at different drama or trauma situations, and if the goal of journalism is to make the audience empathise with these people at the highest degree, I'd say VR is definitely helping connect the two.

Media Lab team in September 2017: Christos Chatziioannidis, Theodoros Karamagalis, Irene Koliou, Maria Kyrou (interviewer), Iliana Skaragou, Anastasia Tsita; coaches: Giorgos Manos (filmmaker), Despoina Kaviri (director).



EXHIBITION REVOLUTION  
IN ART, 2017.  
PHOTO BY GEORGE KOGIAS



# Cities at play: how games and playfulness can shape urban life

BY MARIA  
SARIDAKI

**I**n 2018 the Dutch town of Spijkenisse officially opened a 'silly walks' road crossing, in honour of the classic sketch from the 1970s BBC comedy programme 'Monty Python's Flying Circus'. The city council replaced the usual crossing sign by the town hall with one of a man with a bowler hat and briefcase flinging his leg high in the air, imitating John Cleese's performance from the 'Ministry of Silly Walks' sketch. In viral videos pedestrians can be seen doing different 'silly walk' routines, either alone or in collaboration with other 'silly walkers'. What is also interesting is that this playful disruption was influenced by guerilla pranks in Norway and was happily adopted by local authorities. Do games and playfulness have a role in our serious and difficult modern urban environments? Is there a purpose of such guerilla or official disruptions?

## Cities that play together

Our cities are constantly evolving. Populations in transit, climate change, different social and financial dynamics and ubiquitous technologies alter the way we live, move and create in our cities. The way we experience our cities is also evolving. Using our ubiquitous smart devices, we try to navigate through the complexity of our urban environment, curating interactions while trying to sustain relationships. Location-based apps alter the way we perceive our surroundings and we organise our day. Who are we going to meet, how and where, needs to be part of a strategy, assisted or choreographed by our apps, calendars, digital maps and social networks.

This type of multitasking and strategic thinking requires considerably different skills from those used by the previous generations in their everyday lives. It also requires the ability to understand these rapid changes and to be able to quickly adapt to them without jeopardising our psychological and emotional health.

Playfulness is but the latest answer to this quest, according to the field of literature that is concerned with the human dimension of the city (Riikonen, 2015; Coppock & Ferri, 2013; de Lange & de Waal, 2013). Urban games, games-based skills, playful design and Playable City movements can be seen as a creative response to the needs, coldness and anonymity of the urban environment, or even highlight and make them visible. We know how to cope when experiencing difficult situations and providing solutions, while our serotonin goes happily



through the roof, because we have been trained by our digital gaming consoles and smart devices.

Video games can be a powerful learning tool, allowing gamers to obtain new skills while acquiring instant gratification. Games can model making tough choices, pushing beyond current mechanics to incorporate more intellectually challenging options. Players are constantly learning new ways of interacting with virtual environments, such as how to be creative and perceptive using Minecraft, boost exploration and curiosity using Pokemon Go, improvise objects into defensible buildings in Fortnite, how to negotiate with other players in DayZ, and how to think about long-term and short-term strategies and explore possible outcomes in the Civilization franchise. And it does not stop at self-learning but also expands to soft skills and community-building opportunities.

Building on that, educational and cultural organisations use gaming, virtual and augmented reality experiences to expand their reach, addressing audiences from all backgrounds and ages. A successful example could be that of the Thessaloniki Art Science Technology Festival (AST). With the subtitle 'Are you a Gamer? Change the World', AST ventured a new approach to the Artcitya idea, focusing on the relationship between art, science and technology and its affordances to the city. According to the organisers of AST, 'the city – perceived either as scenography or as community – becomes versatile and flowing depending on the gamer's actions and movements'. Elements and mechanics of gameplay are often applied to incite engagement, however, the use of such elements may be also used for strengthening of the feeling of community among people from different backgrounds.

Apart from technology-driven game communities, some of the strongest and most inclusive communities are Live Action Role Playing Game (LARP) communities. LARP games are a combination of re-enactment, storytelling and gaming. Players are given a role and act out their character's actions within an overarching story that could be fantasy, medieval, post-apocalyptic etc., forming relationships and bonds, while they could be exploring personal or societal issues. Players meet to play, discuss and prepare, sharing their skills and talents with the community.

Games are about shared experiences that become fortified through interaction. Successful big label games curate huge communities while independent game titles are also based on strong and supportive fan bases and get-togethers. The need for interaction can be explored in forums, collaborative blogs, YouTube channels, online and offline meetings, conferences, festivals and conventions that celebrate not only the medium but also the community, its interactions and inspirations. In recent years, gaming communities have been accused of fostering toxic behaviour towards gamers and game designers. These incidents are, and should be, dealt by the communities before they alter their inclusive nature.

However, it should not be overlooked that gaming communities started as, and some still are, a space of communication and empowerment. The collaboration, joyful competition, and intellectual curiosity found in the gaming community are rich resources for designing and playing games that explore complex questions about sustainability and resource scarcity (Kelly & Nardi, 2014). Scientists and artists describe frightening terrains for our urban futures and gloomy futures are nothing new to gamers. Their willingness and ability to entertain strong no-





AST 2017, ARGYRIS  
ZACHOS JEAN D'ARCT: A 3D  
NARRATION, 2017  
PYRAMID HOLOGRAM, AM-  
BISONICS SOUND DESIGN.  
PHOTO BY GEORGE KOGIAS.

tions of societal decline along with the energising and co-operative nature of gaming communities and gamers' can-do attitude, could be promising means for designing and thinking through scenarios of possible futures. Moreover, apart from games and gaming communities, playfulness itself can be an asset for approaching the serious, daunting problems faced by modern civilisation.

## The Playable City Movement

Many people all over the world are experiencing a certain loss of ownership over city spaces and a powerlessness over their future. Displacement of the poor, the financial crisis, proliferation of chain stores, the destruction of neighbourhood authenticity; people are feeling that their 'right to the city' is being impeded upon by alienating urban spaces (Riikonen, 2015). This has inspired some people to take matters into their own hands, advocating playful solutions as warm, collective, unserious and irrational counterweights to contemporary urban design and planning.

The Playable City Movement, established in Bristol in the U.K. and extended to Sweden, Lagos, Texas, Japan, China and Brazil amongst others, 'puts people and play at the heart of the future city, re-using city infrastructure and re-appropriating smart city technologies to create connections – person to person, person to city.'

Through interaction and creative installations, it unlocks a social dialogue, bringing the citizens into a city development conversation through interactive installations, festivals and conferences. 'Shadowing', the winner of the 2014 Playable City award, designed a 'memory' for eight of Bristol's city lights, enabling them to record and play back the shadows of those who pass underneath.

However, for a Playable City to thrive, it requires co-operation from local authorities as well as with different local grassroots movements. The artist Luke Jerram's 'park and slide' water slide was crowdfunded, so all the council had to do was close the street. His similarly low-budget 'Play Me, I'm Yours' project has seen 1,300 pianos installed in public spaces in 45 cities around the world. The Brazilian urban planner and policymaker Claudio Marinho puts into words what many urbanites seem to be thinking: "there is a need for an affectionate re-appropriation of public places to get back city centre life from our bunker-high-rise isolation." (Baggini 2014)

Urban games festivals are also reclaiming the streets and buildings of cities around the world, inviting citizens and city dwellers to a series of different experiences and playful situations. Urban gaming brings low-tech, playful and videogame-type experiences to real-world settings, for example, 'Pac-Manhattan', in which New Yorkers physically enact Pac-Man in locations around the city, or Blast Theory's experiments, which often combine theatre with gameplay and state-of-the-art technology in the city. 'Come out and Play' in the U.S., 'Play: Vienna Urban Game Festival', Athens 'Plaython' and 'Invisible Playground' in Berlin are just some of the festivals and initiatives that blend physical and digital experiences in city settings.

## Playing for the City

Cool, innovative and playful experiences in the form of temporary installments or the festivals mentioned above, are also very much on the agenda of urban policy-makers. In contemporary urban contexts, play has suddenly emerged as a potential way for people to take matters into their own hands. Play and games are now occasionally being used as forms of collective and non-discriminatory action, as a direct counterweight to technocratic top-down solutions (Baggini, 2014).

Encouraged by a significant body of literature underscoring play's connection to creativity, learning, relaxation and inspiration, an increasing number of people are ready to embrace it as a matter worth looking into (Riikonen, 2015, p.14). Perhaps it is precisely these linkages that have brought the topic into the field of urban studies. People use games to understand and co-design their urban life.

Organisations such as 'Play the City', an Amsterdam-based initiative, have proposed a variety of games as new ways to design urban environments. One of their many games invites a group of people to play a boardgame, consisting of small piece buildings and an intricate set of rules, in order to come up with suitable designs for the circular economy and city planning.

When talking about urban planning, the idea of a Playable City, and collaboration with the local authorities, in addition to the aforementioned playful city councils of North West Europe, a good example to look at is Bogota. The Colombian capital has become somewhat of a celebrity in the field of urban planning for its progressive policies. Bogota's former mayor, Antanas Mockus, focused his efforts on directing behaviour through example and humour. Mockus would dress up as a model super citizen and shamelessly show people what is possible in a public space and what is expected of them. He also came up with the idea of hiring mime artists in the city for a period of time to make fun of traffic violators. This initiative was based on his belief that Colombians fear ridicule more than being fined (Marsh 2013). Mockus's unconventional policies managed to promote a spirit of humorous playfulness in Bogota. This ethos of experimentation, omnipresent in playfulness and celebrated in many videogames, often ignored by research and media, was possibly a factor in the city reinventing itself. Mockus answered the city's need for bottom-up restructuring with a playful and pedagogic example (Riikonen, 2015).

In 2011 McGonigal's 'Reality is Broken' brought to light, or actually into the spotlight, gamification – the application of game-design elements and game principles in non-game contexts. In her book and related TED talk McGonigal highlights the potential of games and game mechanics as tools for marketing and community engagement. She emphasises how important games such as Minecraft have become in the lives of millions around the world. In line with Jane McGonigal's (2011) arguments, a number of people are hopeful about the role of play and games as a community engagement tool. Games are seen by some as a potential solution to engaging communities in designing the public spaces of the future (Riikonen, 2015, p.15).

These institutionalised versions of play situations along with gamified or game-based design methodologies have formed new ways that games and gamification can be used in modern urban design. However, even in such formal game-like institutionalisation, the playful and absurd has, or should have, a crucial role.

## Play and the City

Play is an elusive part of adult urban lives. In her paper 'Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception' (2003), Maria Lugones describes playfulness as, "an openness to being a fool, which is a combination of not worrying about competence, not being self-important, not taking norms as sacred and finding ambiguity and double edges a source of wisdom and delight."

In 1939 Johan Huizinga, through his book 'Homo Ludens' (the Playful Man), made the world re-evaluate the significance of play. He identified play as an omnipresent and formative element of human culture. In fact, he insisted that culture arises in the form of play. Even those activities that are aimed at satisfying immediate needs, such as hunting or finding a romantic partner, exhibit playfulness right from the beginning.

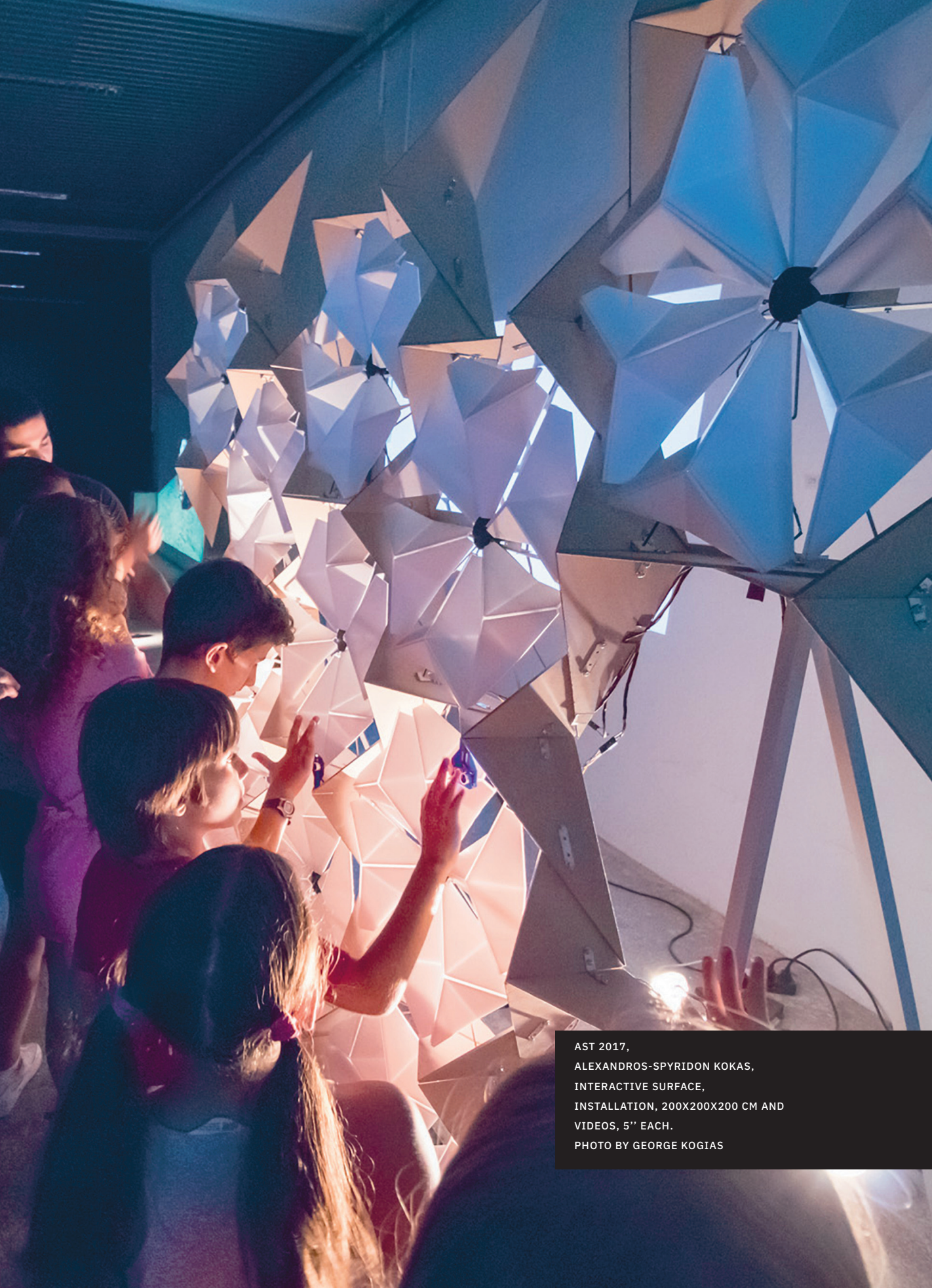
Homo Ludens not only changed the way we understand culture but also the way we understand cities. Inspired by Huizinga's work 'The Situationists and Roma settlements', the Dutch artist Constant Nieuwenhuys worked for 15 years on his vision called the 'New Babylon', a multimedia project of 'a camp for nomads on a planetary scale'. In Nieuwenhuys's vision, 'New Babylon' was a city built for a specific aspect of the human personality: the playful man. After automation took care of production, he thought people would be free to be purely creative and would embrace an environment that enabled this. Currently quite a few artists, city planners, architects and curators feel that the time for such a playful modular city is now, while observing shades of Nieuwenhuys's ideas in everything from refugee and housing crises, to smart homes, and the nomadic nature of the creative and freelancing world (Giaino, 2017).

The way and purpose of this interest in play for our cities should, however, be under close supervision. One of the eternal dilemmas of play is whether it should primarily be seen as an 'autotelic' activity, a purpose in and of itself, or as a tool, a means to an end.

Interactive technologies with more or less playful interfaces are increasingly pervading our lives, through use in industrial (work consoles, robotics), entertainment (computer games, interactive fiction), information (websites, social media, electronic documentation) and communication (mobile phones, tablets) devices (Coppock & Ferri, 2013).

These technology-driven solutions tend to ignore the active role and contributions of citizens and grassroot initiatives which may even have adverse effects on urban life, preventing a sense of ownership (de Lange and de Waal 2013). If we want not just cities but also citizens to be smart, we need to "better understand how people are already clever in a multitude of ways when it comes to participating in and hacking their urban environment, and how we can leverage this creativity to create more interesting cities and make city life better" (Coppock & Ferri, 2013).

And most importantly, if we want our cities to be humane, allowing citizens to foster and highlight the qualities of their own humanity, now is the time to observe how we can infuse possibilities of playful interactions in our cities, exploring technology, storytelling, space and our ability, and need, to connect with one another. Playfulness seems to occur and bloom as a contrast to the serious and



AST 2017,  
ALEXANDROS-SPYRIDON KOKAS,  
INTERACTIVE SURFACE,  
INSTALLATION, 200X200X200 CM AND  
VIDEOS, 5" EACH.  
PHOTO BY GEORGE KOGIAS

conventional. Designers need to come closer to the people they design for, to understand them through play, in order to be able to include them in a co-operative and inclusive design process of our future humane cities. The social significance of play has been historically recognised and seems to be greater than ever, yet it is still not treated as a need of great value. Its connections to creativity, health, innovation and learning should have awoken the interest of anyone concerned with our living habitats.

Play should be recognised as a powerfully motivating end in itself and not merely a tool for motivation and sugarcoating – not just the extrinsically motivating appeal of gamified solutions. The values of a good fair-structured game and those of a creative, open and inclusive playful experience are those which should blend into the design of our urban lives. Allowing individuals, communities and culture to shape, change and persevere.

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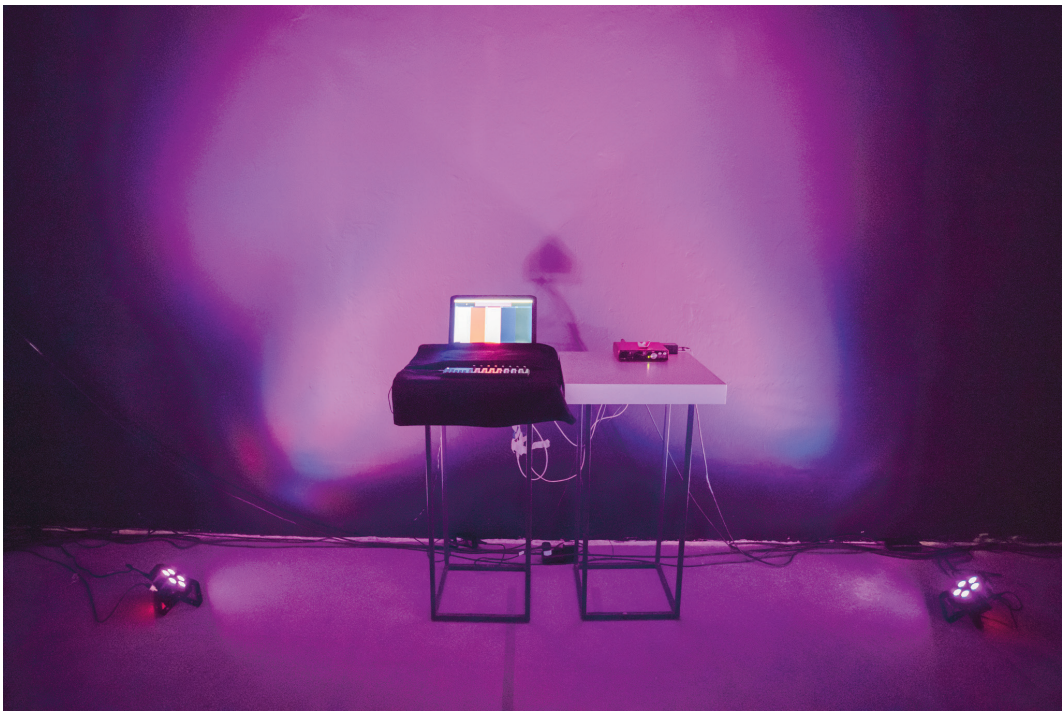
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AST 2018, GEORGE FISHER, ECHOES IN SPACE, 2018, AUDIOVISUAL INSTALLATION. PHOTO BY GEORGE KOGIAS



AST 2018, DANIEL BELL, SPECTRA, 2018, AUDIOVISUAL INSTALLATION. PHOTO BY GEORGE KOGIAS

# How to organise an Art Science Technology Festival in the age of rapid technological advancements

AST is a festival and a study. It is a display, a showcase that offers experiences, information and knowledge to the audience and participants. It is also a collection of thoughts, questions and perspectives on the impact of technology on the production of meaning and art, the formation of community, the evolution of the way our mind works and the expansion of the collective intellect.

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1.

## **Content and audience development**

In all three AST editions, Art and Technology were treated as two elements with equal importance, in order to offer a meaningful experience to a variety of audiences from different backgrounds and of different ages.

To achieve that, we developed three main streams:

- 1.** VR World – showcasing various virtual reality contents (fiction, documentary, music videos, interactive applications and games, animation, 360 video...) and technologies (Oculus, HTC Vive, Samsung Gear), offering the audience the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the medium and its possibilities for the production of meaning and experiences.
- 2.** Alongside VR, more ‘traditional’, ‘new media’ art works are selected through invitation and an open call process, in a more typical contemporary art show. Media might range from video to

interactive installations using moving image, sound, projection, Arduino and Kinect, to performances that map a performer's movement to produce computer generated music and image, to artist-designed socially mindful computer games – challenging the audience to think about the impact on our everyday lives of technology which, whilst not so old, is now regarded as obsolete.

3. Finally, AST supported young creatives and socially marginalised groups to reimagine their future within this new environment through informal education and training. In this context, in 2017 Media Lab was invited to set up a TV studio within the festival, and to broadcast from there on a daily basis. This was part of their continuous training supported by Artecitya and other organisations in Thessaloniki (instigated by Artecitya), both technical and theoretical, on the production of content. In 10 days, Media Lab practically 'lived and breathed' the festival and broadcast it to the world, airing 52 videos, out of which there were 34 interviews with artists participating in the festival and representatives of the Thessaloniki art and culture scene.

2.

### Meaningful partnerships bring content and exposure

AST collaborated with five universities over three years to present experimental, research-based works, as well as with five local institutions and three major international organisations to bring in additional content and dissemination. Universities from Greece and abroad that carry out research into innovative synergies between art and technology were invited to showcase their students' experimental projects. Since the festival was only established in the context of Artecitya three years ago, the selection of invited schools could only be based on existing networks and collaborations, and even though it was not exhaustive, it was definitely representative of the overall trends in research. Local and international partner organisations were invited to collaborate, either due to their status (e.g. the Municipality of Thessaloniki) or due to their focus and programming (e.g. the Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki) or due to a combination of the two (e.g. the internationally established South by Southwest Festival – SXSW).

3.

### There is power in numbers

In a medium-sized city such as Thessaloniki, staging a major festival addressed to potentially everyone, as opposed to a museum exhibition typically appealing to art-lovers and museum-goers, is a challenge. In order to address the challenge we designed an event where quantity is not the enemy of quality. In three years, we have presented 20 exhibitions and 8 projects, featuring works by more than 250 artists, creators and developers, and trained 40 youths in the use of immersive technologies as audience facilitators. As a result, we have welcomed more than 30,000 audience members, who actually rated the experience with a high score of 8.1 out of 10 (research conducted in 2017 among 850 audience members).

# Apollonia's Garden

**City:**

Strasbourg

**Year:**

2014- (ongoing)

**Production:**

Apollonia, European art exchanges

**Website:**

[www.apollonia-art-exchanges.com/en/artecitya-robertsau/](http://www.apollonia-art-exchanges.com/en/artecitya-robertsau/)

In December 2014, at the opening of the Artecitya project, the Strasbourg-based Apollonia Association of European Art Exchanges (hereinafter Apollonia) had an exhibition hall on a 1,200m<sup>2</sup> area of private land at the entrance to Robertsau, an historic suburb of Strasbourg close to the European institutions. Apollonia then had the extraordinary opportunity to rent from the City of Strasbourg a 1,800m<sup>2</sup> piece of land next to the exhibition hall.

Shortly after, a third, 2000m<sup>2</sup> adjoining terrain, also belonging to the City, became available and was added to

the other two, thus opening the way to an overall development plan integrating all three.

It was at that time that the idea for the ambitious project, the 'Apollonia Garden', was formed. Apollonia began on the founding principle of Artecitya, namely to transform and breathe new life into the city by involving artists and citizens and creating new economic models and employment possibilities for young people.

To begin, a participatory and artistic vegetable garden nurtured by local inhabitants was created, which enabled the association to experiment with new approaches in a semi-private, semi-public terrain. However, this dedicated green area also served the purpose of creating a bridge between Apollonia and its surroundings.

It was then that they had the idea of an 'active and creative walk-about' destined to become a practical instrument for urban development and enlivening the cultural and social activities in the area. Multiple interactive operations and art installations have already found their seat in the garden, within the framework of the Artecitya program.

From then on, and based on the three areas of land and the novel walk-about, Apollonia, together with architects, was able to imagine and conceive an overall and

coherent urban development proposal corresponding to the principles of Artecitya.

However, the realisation of this proposition inevitably depended on the building of an economic model and the capacity of the project to attract potential financiers and investors.

Financial guarantees were found quite quickly and Apollonia was thus able to open the initial administrative approaches for this novel operation.

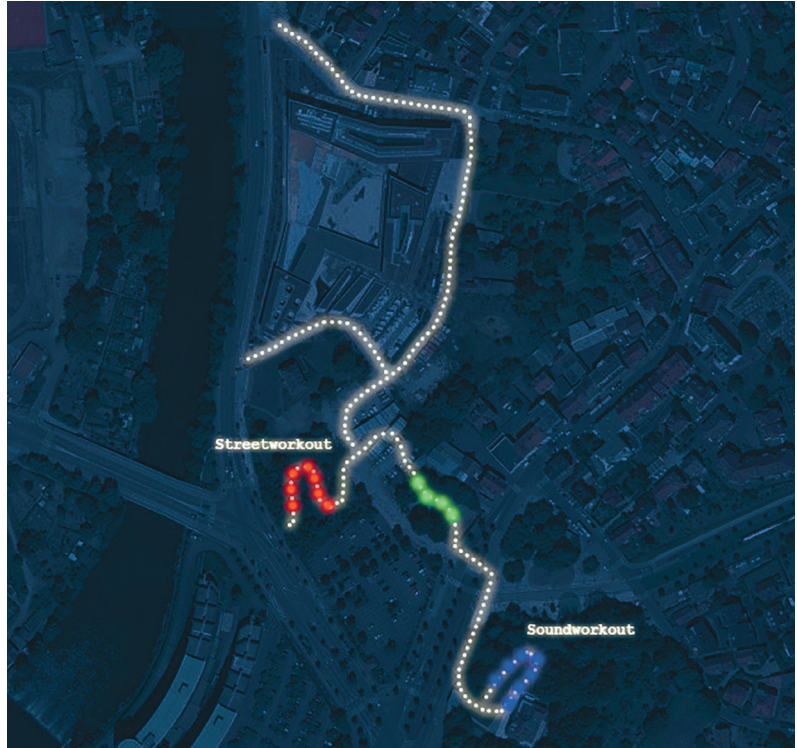
As these lines are being written for the shortly to be printed catalogue, their project will substantially mark the urban planning of the southern entrance of the district.

The plan is to engage an innovative, multi-cultural development based on a novel economic model by combining an exhibition space with artistic events, an art hotel, artists' studios/workshops, a participatory and artistic vegetable garden as well as the point of departure of the active and creative walk-about.

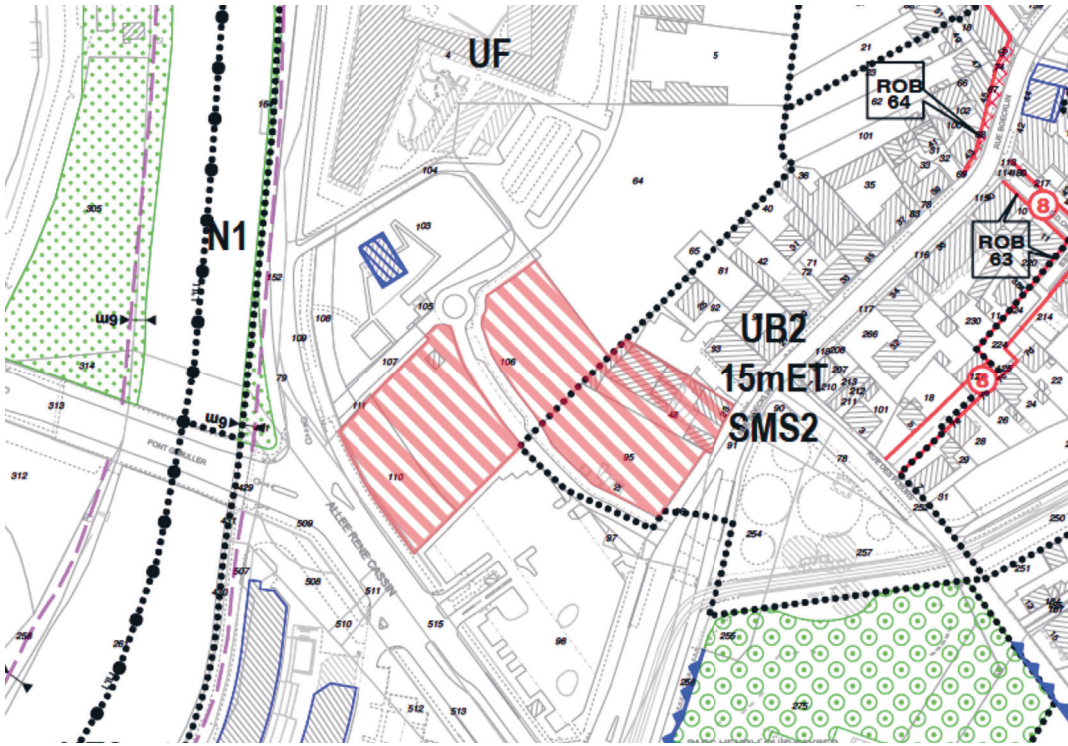
Since the utopian period of 2014, Apollonia has managed to mobilise a large number of partners and is on the eve of an agreement with the local community and the depositing of a building permit.

This project has been made possible thanks to the fighting spirit of our association and the backing provided by the exchanges and the experience of all our partners in the Artecitya project.

GEORGES HEINTZ AND ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING.  
PHOTO BY ©APOLLONIA







**“The finality of architecture is not in building alone; it generates an environment that has an aesthetic impact on our everyday life.”**

## Interview with Georges Heintz

Georges Heintz is an architect, an urban planner and a professor at the Architecture School in Strasbourg (ENSAS). He directs the cabinet of architecture and urbanism, and he's the architect of Apollonia Garden.

The involvement of artists and architects in new town planning projects is one of the chief elements of Artecitya's programme. What is your view of this?

In the classic tradition of architectural avant-gardes, artists, artisans, architects and town planners collaborate in the idea of the 'Bellezza della Città'. Be it in De Stijl of Van Döesburg and Mondrian, the Bauhaus of Gropius and Mies Van Der Rohe or l'Esprit Nouveau (New Spirit) of Le Corbusier, or even before in the Werkbund and Art Nouveau, the city is a place of expression of collective beauty and consequently the object of artistic and aesthetic desires of those who, with reason and ambition, conceive the planning of towns and the lives of their inhabitants. So the Artecitya project, being linked both to the classic tradition and our contemporary adventure, interested me from the outset.

The ambition of the Artecitya project is to re-develop the south entrance of the Robertsau district. You were among the first to become actively involved in this project, at the very time it appeared to be

a utopia. What was your experience of being involved in the project?

Imagining the city, imagining living space, then conceiving and building in the least detail from the origin to the very fact is the absolute essence of the profession I have had the privilege of belonging to. I am experiencing this project as the very nature of what motivates my daily activity in my profession with all those who participate in the act of building. It is my nature. It is also the opportunity of inventing a new form which is a new identity. This is inspired by the 'genius loci' of Norberg-Schulz. My great-grandparents were immigrants from Central Europe who were connected with the technological line of wood and printing. During the huge economic crisis in 1929 they accidentally, but logically, settled in Strasbourg. They lived in the Robertsau and the Ungemacht zone, where I had a lot of contact with family gardens and the market-gardening tradition. This identity, nowadays recognised as bio-diversity and environmental awareness, marked my childhood and inspired the idea of a garden, then of a project around the garden with its heritage of trees that identify and symbolise the ancient vocation of the Robertsau as a food provider for the City of Strasbourg. Coincidences can feed positive utopias;

this one is both symbolic and of a family nature as for many locals in the Robertsau – even though I personally live in the ‘cite de Rotterdam’ district...

What is more, I have moved around in artistic circles since my youth. Christine Peltre, a great orientalist, and Roland Recht, an unrivalled medievalist and art historian, were my thesis directors at the History of Art Faculty at the University of Strasbourg. I have always mixed with artists of all types of expression. Collaborating in what looked like a utopia quite naturally linked me to Apollonia, which is an exceptional and precious network in the complex and varied contemporary art world.

**How did an artistic and participatory garden evolve into a wide-ranging and complex town planning project?**

It was because moving from reflections on town planning to the act of building cannot be dissociated from architecture and public management. So, breaking away from the modern and functionalist vision of the city and of architecture, I feel that the history of the city and that of architecture are ‘cosa mentale’; that form does not follow on from function and that form has meaning; that we should reintroduce ‘bellezza’ and ‘grandezza’ into our projects; that towns must be beautiful after the implacable waste of ‘junk space’ and sloppiness that marks our daily life. Why neglect the beauty of our town environment where we spend the best part of our lives, cut off from the beauty that we constantly seek in our choice of objects and decoration? Why should public spaces not be as subtle and elaborate as our private, domestic spaces? This blindness annoys me and yet considerable public budgets are invested in these undertakings? Why?

The finality of architecture is not in building alone; it generates ‘urbanity’, an environment that has an aesthetic impact on our daily life and on the environment, a footprint on grey energy and ecology. It is architecture that gives a town its true form. It is not a mere ‘envelope’; it bears witness to an epoch and to the archetypes that move through history, laden with symbolic and timeless values. It is a memory built out of collective and individual human action. After our families, buildings are the first element on which life is grafted.

Thus, cities and towns are a fixed scene of human events, where each building bears the trace of historic archetypes in a simple or elaborate language

but one which is understandable by all because it is the common heritage sometimes displaying a remarkable shapely and poetic vision.

This project becomes a complex and complete urban project because its programme and architecture are born of a truly intellectual and cultural act, marked by benevolence and the will to display something aesthetic and well-modelled. This common will shared by Apollonia and my team of architects is a quite singular synthesis inspired as much by public imaginative thinking as by rationalistic, organic and Baroque architecture. It is also timeless and universal, arranged around a participatory garden, a place of memories. It evokes in a familiar way a common memory despite its innovatory aspect, as well as the fact the act of building can still have meaning because the architecture of the town is also the architecture of life and each generation has the duty of re-thinking the meaning of what is being done. Such is the case here.

**In what way is this project innovative in the field of town planning?**

This project is innovative in the field of town-planning because it gives priority to the projection of a creation of a space having a strong relationship with the living functions of the city, and with exchanging and the pleasure of being together. This project, which is built around a natural environment, a garden and an artistic background constituted by Apollonia’s contemporary scene and network of artists, is based on a series of functions which create and bring together local communities around activities that build social links. It sets up functions that are currently missing in the city and its districts.

The programme here is the driving force, the pulsar, which will make this place unique. The whole ground floor is organised around the garden as an artwalk and place of inspiration. Apollonia’s exhibition and animation spaces, the creative workshops, the restaurant, the lounge, the terraces and the co-working spaces of the Art Hotel combine and complement each other, providing interconnections between events and happenings that benefit from this spatial fluidity which is so favourable for all sorts of encounters and get-togethers that can be organised with imagination and fantasy. These activities that go beyond the usual shop opening times will also help identify this new open territory as a remarkable, warm and friendly entrance to the suburb.

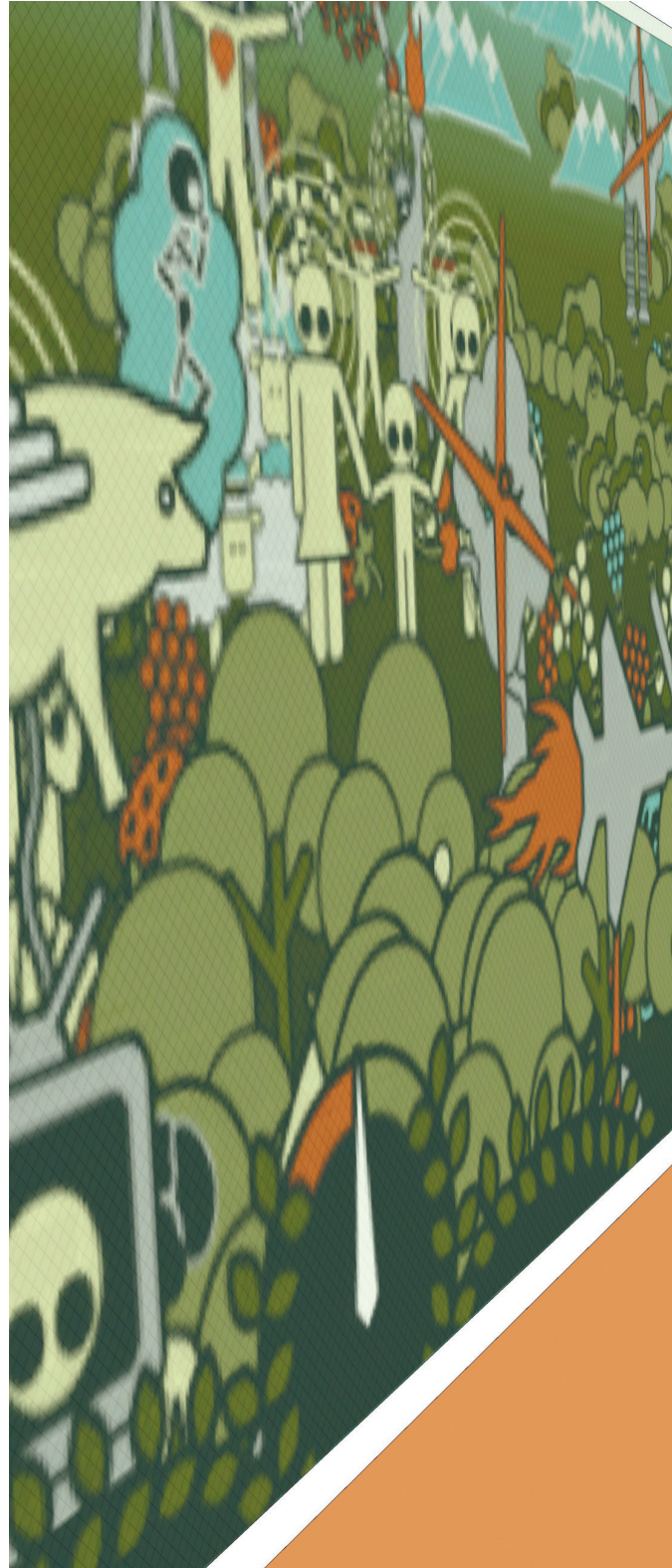


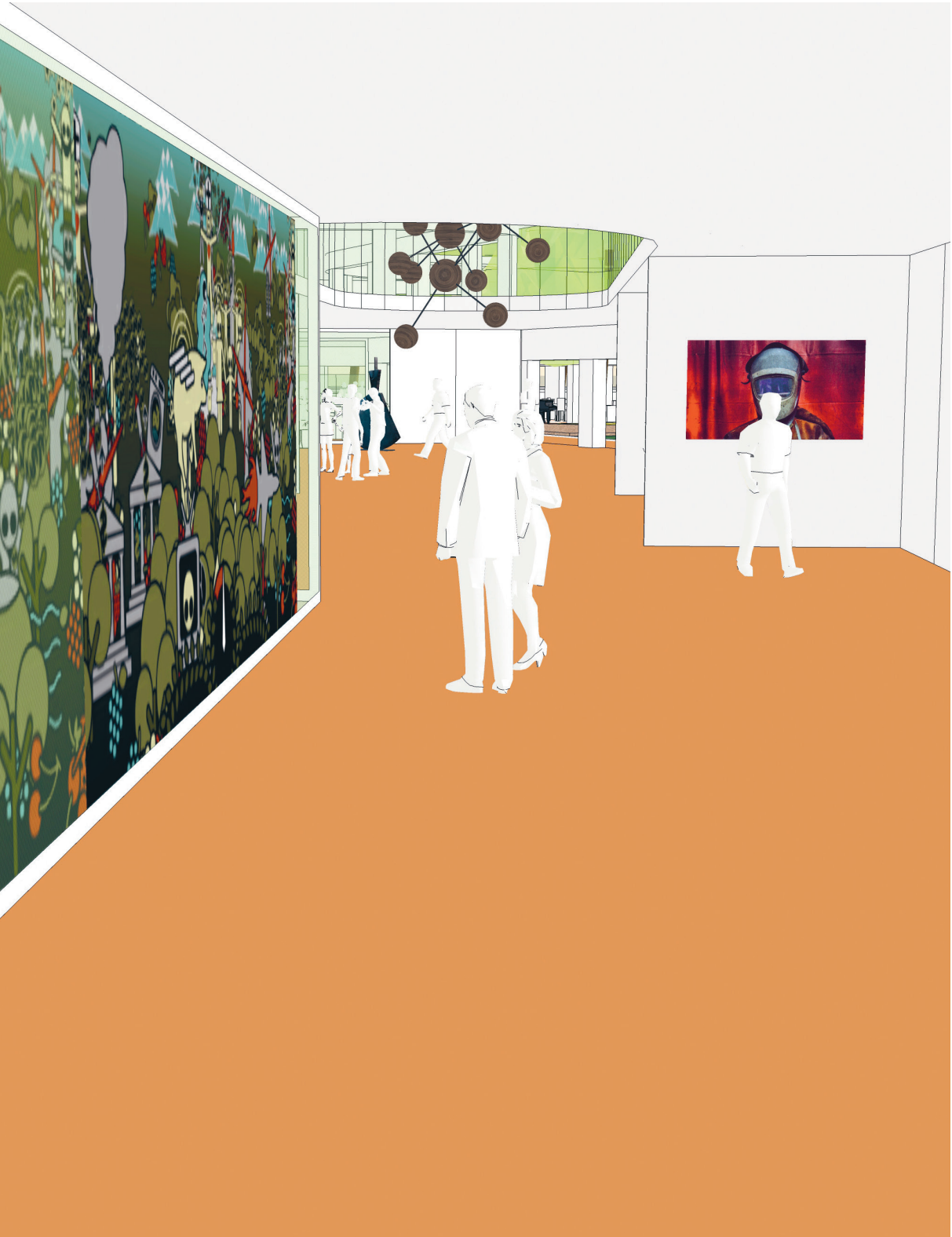
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AND ASSOCIATES,  
ARCHITECTURE AND  
URBAN PLANNING.  
PHOTO BY ©APOLLONIA



Do you feel that this move could contribute, even modestly, to changing our outlook and ways of conceiving and building contemporary townships?

Our societies are becoming increasingly sophisticated and offer ever more opportunities through individual and associative activities for devising investments that give birth to innovatory programmes and bolder architectural forms. With its very precise aims, this type of approach by collective groups will expand in the future. The impact on the form of the townships will remain modest but will be considerable in the way of rethinking relationships between public, private and collective spaces. It will induce local authorities to rethink town planning rules and to adopt a fresh approach to their major role in defining the principal aims of living together - a township based on the blue and green lines along ecological corridors, the diversity of complementary mobilities and the density of a contemporary township placing citizens rather than profits at its centre. A way of reaching back to the art of building cities...





# The Apollonia Gardens – a socially aware urban experiment

**BY LAURENT  
LEHMANN**

We imagine, dream and conceive what is to become a real urban project or remain a mere utopia. Our intention is inspired by the weight of norms, of private and public commissions and the economic model. The temporality of urban policies, for its part, remains dependent on election mandates. Yet we know that the multiplication of elections concerns voting on long-term projects and sometimes interrupts the tempo necessary for resolving problems.

In this atmosphere of compromise, has the citizen-artist any real capacity of influencing urban life? Living conditions? The shaping of townships, and their functions? How can citizen-artists proceed in order to have their voice heard? To be sure, through architecture, their profession is under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture. But artists are also sometimes heard via the work of certain contracting authorities.

It is about this unique and original experience in Strasbourg that we would like to provide details of the genesis and outcome.

Apollonia is a not-for-profit association based in Strasbourg, which aims to promote European art exchanges. At its headquarters, at 23 rue Boecklin, Apollonia organises exhibitions, conferences and artists' residencies.

Thanks to the acquisition of an extension of its land surface, Apollonia is engaged in the short-term re-development of the entrance to the Robertsau district, thereby becoming the animator of the entrance of a major city opening out onto European institutions visible by everyone and radiating well beyond Strasbourg's frontiers.

To this the extension of the local town planning considerations should be added. Recent research has revealed several weaknesses such as the absence of places for going out and the lack of organised activities for young people in the Robertsau. The site of this project is indicated as a zone to be improved and dealt with. At present it is viewed as a 'barrier' zone. One of the preoccupations of the local inhabitants is the creation of neighbourhood meeting places, which could be coffee shops, terraces, leisure areas etc. The artistic dimension has taken on importance in the talks around town planning in the north of Strasbourg.



Apollonia has proposed to the City of Strasbourg a development plan running counter to usual development practices. At its roots is the crystallisation of observations made over a long period in the Robertsau neighbourhood: the expectations, the unspoken desires and the needs of the local inhabitants. It is this proximity and the possibility of dialoguing during the numerous cultural events and meetings that have provided the possibility of hearing local needs in the simplest way.

By proposing a programmatic axis running counter to what is what is being carried out in tense areas, the project offers not only a generous, participative and urban approach but also a method which will become reality by being implemented.

This new space will combine cultural and associative life, lodgings, leisure and sport spaces as well as other meeting places to develop social life. The project is conceived as a whole – not bit by bit. To ensure its economic viability, priority has been given to the hotel model, which will cover a large part of the ongoing revenue stream and produce a rent likely to attract investors.

This method will bring us close to that of transitory spaces such as Grands Voisins on Ave Denfert Rochereau in Paris, Darwin in Bordeaux and, more generally to all the experiments currently being presented in the French pavilion at the 16<sup>th</sup> Architecture Biennale in Venice.

Moreover, since 2015, recent calls for tenders, particularly those concerning the city of Paris and the Grand Paris Metropole, have brought about changes in re-development practices and have inspired many operations since then.

What is new in Apollonia's proposal and could not fail to raise questions in the city services and among the traditional town planners concerns several stages. Considering that it is a private undertaking on both public and private land, it was not necessary to assemble proponents or to join forces with a planning agent, but rather to set up a working party around Apollonia acting as the project manager, together with the city services, an architect, an architect-cum-project manager, a landscape planner, an environmental study officer, an estate agent, and, above all, an investor.

It was quite risky, particularly since Apollonia had no previous experience. Yet month by month, the iterative process around open discussions with all concerned has made the conception of the project possible and acceptable by the city service. The investors have validated the programme. The utopia has become a reality... even if a lot remains to be done.



E.CITY - LJUBLJANA, MOVEMENT FOR PUBLIC SPEECH, POLONCA LOVŠIN, 2017. PHOTO BY ©APOLLONIA



E.CITY - LJUBLJANA, GARDEN WALK, IRENA PIVKA AND BRANE ZORMAN, 2017. PHOTO BY ©APOLLONIA



VIVACITY, LAGOOGLEGLYPH IV, EDUARDO KAC, 2018. APOLLONIA, PHOTO BY ©APOLLONIA



VIVACITY, GEODESIA #2, AZARA SAN, 2018. PHOTO BY ©APOLLONIA



VIVACITY, SILVA, ELPARO, 2018. PHOTO BY ©APOLLONIA

# How to revive an area

Since the 'Apollonia Garden' is an ongoing process with a yet unknown outcome, these instructions should be read as a first steps guide. It all starts with an opportunity and an idea. In Apollonia's case, the project was born when its art centre and the nearby participatory garden were under threat of disappearing, because of the municipality's plans to develop housing estates in the area.

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1.

## **Work with a team**

**Invite experts from different fields and form a team that can help you achieve your goal.**

We were lucky to have the support of a talented architect that gave form and substance to our idea. Being "just" an art association, for such a project we also needed a building company, a lawyer, a notary, a marketing advisor and, of course, investors. We saw that one fully convinced partner could bring other ones. We managed to persuade potential funders that such an achievement would become an important step in their careers and would go beyond an equation for profit.

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2.

## **Community**

**Set up a citizen-lobbying group (private encounters, neighbourhood meetings, influential persons...). Form special committees for supporting, studying and exchanging.**

We started out by expanding and deepening our relationship with the local community, participating in all neighbourhood meetings and bonding with all citizens associations. Listening to their concerns enabled us to adjust the components of our project. Taking into consideration their concerns (urban aesthetics, culture, leisure, nature, the need for a community space) was a vital step towards being confident in the relevance of our ideas in this economical and social context. The general support of the citizens was a crucial argument in our interaction with the political sphere.

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3.

## **Decision-makers**

**Submit your project to politicians and all kinds of decision makers.**

Once we defined the plans with the architect and potential funders, we met separately each of the concerned Strasbourg city council members (deputies for culture, urbanism, ecology and park areas, social housing), from different political moulds. Some of them seemed to support the project; others were

openly against it. However, despite the divergent views, the appeal of the project was such that it ended up reaching the mayor, who then decided to publicly back it up. We were finally able to proceed to its operational phase.

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4.

**Communication**

**Keep a permanent link with the press and any kind of media, however try to keep it in line with your needs – it can help your cause, but it can also harm it substantially.**

When the project was at its lowest in the minds of some stakeholders, an adequate handling of the media and a massive press campaign put us back in the limelight and swiftly strengthened our position.

## **Artecitya** **Envisioning the city of tomorrow (2014-2018)**

*Artecitya. Envisioning the City of Tomorrow (2014-2018) was a collaboration between 9 partners from around Europe. The project brought together artists, architects, town planners, citizens, private and public companies, NGOs, investors, municipalities and government officials which tested innovative solutions that aimed to improve the quality of life in cities. The priority of the project was to stimulate vigorously innovative approaches to the concept of urban life taking into account the sociological evolution and people's needs.*

### **Artecitya partners were:**

#### **Apollonia**

Strasbourg, France

#### **Artos Foundation**

Nicosia, Cyprus

#### **Bellastock**

Paris, France

#### **Centre For Central European Architecture**

Prague, Czech Republic

#### **Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki**

Germany / Greece

#### **KUNSTrePUBLIK**

Berlin, Germany

#### **Laznia CCA**

Gdansk, Poland

#### **MoTA**

Ljubljana, Slovenia

#### **TIF Helexpo SA**

Thessaloniki, Greece



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### **Bellastock**

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### **Centre For Central European Architecture**

*City of Prague, City of Brno, LOŠBATES associated union of the municipalities*

### **Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki**

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### **ŁAŻNIA Centre for Contemporary Art**

*City of Gdańsk, CIS (Centre for Social Integration), CWII (Immigrants Support Centre), Political Critique, Youth 180° Association*

### **MoTA**

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### **TIF Helexpo SA**

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This publication presents nine projects that address urban challenges through partnerships between NGOs, municipalities, private companies and artists.

Each chapter is dedicated to a different project, spanning from reusing construction waste to inventing new employment models, from data transparency to initiating the revitalisation of a deprived city area, and inventing new approaches to renovating buildings and infrastructure.

Artecitya. 9 approaches to urban challenges is intended for decision makers in local governments and their urban development agencies and in companies, and encourages them to include artists, NGOs and local communities in the processes of urban development and revitalisation projects.