

nine urban biotopes



Negotiating the Future of Urban Living

9UB was an international, socially engaged art project delivering artistic research and cultural exchange. It did this both within and among social citizen and art initiatives in cities in South Africa and Europe in 2014.

The participating initiatives all distinguish themselves by addressing vital matters of concern with regard to contemporary urban living in innovative ways. They work about and respond to issues of safety and housing, youth and migration, education and environment, mobility and economical subsistence. They do so »on the ground« and »in the thick of life« in each city, which is the reason why they are referred to as »urban biotopes« giving the overall project its name.

The aim of 9UB was to establish both a »trans-local« and »trans-continental« dialogue by interweaving and connecting new context-specific, socially engaged art projects into the existing social activities of these biotopes. It did so in order to expose, discuss and



share different »intentions, methods and techniques« of imaginative urban practices for building »sustainable cities« and, in order to learn from each other, theoretically and practically.

From January through September 2014, nine artistic projects were produced in nine urban settings. Four European artists worked in South Africa while at the same time five South Africans worked in Europe. Three projects ran simultaneously; each for a period of three consecutive months. Integrated reporters represented each process of each participatory arts project by means of web-based communication and social networks.

By combining, linking and implementing 9UB within a South African – European partnership structure – local answers to global questions were discussed such that they were able to shed light on a range of sustainable solutions and innovative ideas regarding urban development issues on both sides of the equator. As the final product of the project, the ePublication »Nine Urban Biotopes« will be launched in early 2015.



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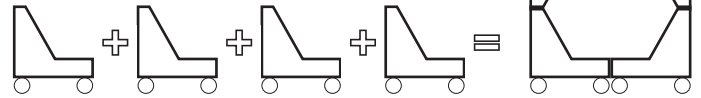
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mobex a mobile exhibition display for 9ub by iss



»The MobEx story«



Commissioned by urban dialogues as a mobile and flexible exhibition display for 9UB with the additional support of the BKA - Bundeskanzleramt Österreich and id22 - institute for creative sustainability, Ingrid Sabatier and Stephan Schwarz from ISSSresearch&architecture started a participatory design process involving the Youth Theatre Office in Berlin and students of the DIY - DIT summerschool from the BTK - Berliner Technische Kunsthochschule. The exclusive use of recycling material was made possible by support from the MingaNetwork, who provided wood from former exhibition stands, the BSR-Berliner Stadtreinigung,

who sponsored trash container wheels, Holz Possling that provided screws and other necessary metal elements and the re-use of leftover materials from previous projects.

Special thanks go to Raimund Binder, Chiara Ciccarello, Ferdinand Schmelzer and Christoph Wiesmayr who supported the project with their energy and enthusiasm.



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athi-patra ruga in berlin with youth theatre office

»Sheroes and Villains«

Athi-Patra Ruga worked together with young people from Moabit, a highly gentrified inner-city borough of Berlin that has become home to many immigrants over the last 30 years.

The Youth Theatre Office Berlin aims to empower young people to use theatre and cultural action as a tool and a platform to engage in social, personal and political issues that matter for them.

Together they worked on questions of identity – both personal and social. Through these encounter, a series of surprising characters were born and came to life during the process of a public performance. In collaboration with ISSSresearch&architecture, the youngsters also developed a mobile performative structure for this occasion.



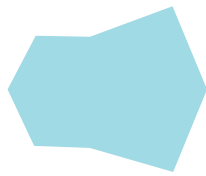
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marjetica potrč in soweto with planact



»The Ubuntu Park«

Marjetica Potrč and the students of »Design for the Living World« from HFBK Hamburg collaborated with members of the Community Development Committee in Orlando East, a suburb of Soweto. Together, they turned two formerly derelict, open spaces into two active community hubs.

In Orlando East, they transformed a wasteland into a space where the community can gather around a children's playground, a performative stage, a garden park, a market place and a barbecue area.

In Noordgesig, they implemented a »Food Awareness Programme« as well as a vegetable garden into the grounds and curriculum of a local primary school. On the 9 March, a street festival, including local marching bands, musicians and other performances, linked these two sites.

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© Marjetica Potrč and Students from »Design for the Living World«

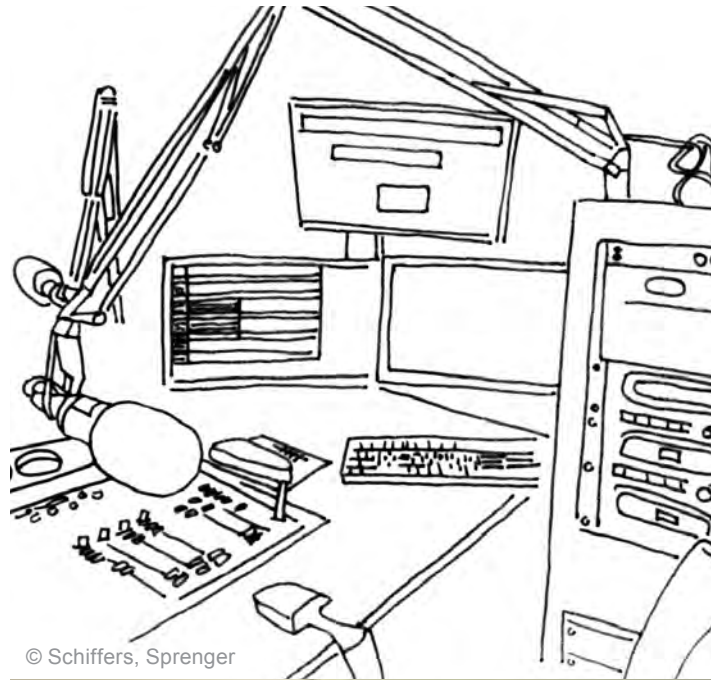


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antje schiffers in capetown with capetown tv



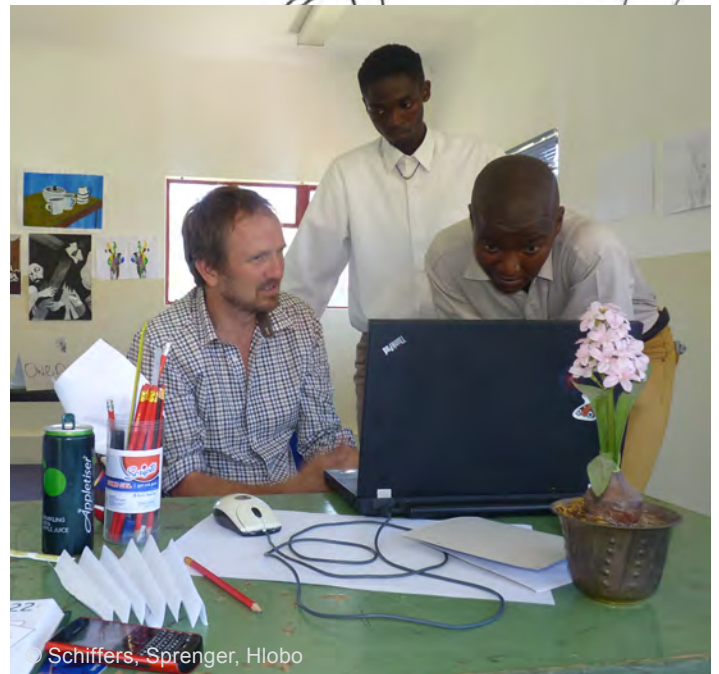
© Schiffers, Sprenger

»What Cape Town Taught Me«

Antje Schiffers understands being on the move as an essential part of her artistic practice. She is interested in the realities of life of different social groups and how economic, political and social conditions –locally and also globally – determine someone's everyday life. Her research method involves exchanging goods with the people she encounters while she is on the move.

Antje Schiffers stop motion movie tells the story of her travels through Cape Town with her partners Thomas Sprenger and Ziphozakhe Hlobo, asking people what Cape Town can teach her.

It is the result of the encounters she had; in the city, through its townships, through its streets, through the places where people shared pieces of their lives.



Schiffers, Sprenger, Hlobo



© Schiffers, Sprenger, Hlobo



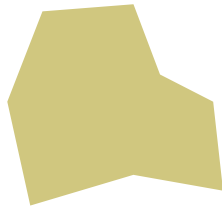
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taswald pillay in paris with quatorze



»Le 15 Bis«

Taswald Pillay spent three months in a settlement, built by a Roma community on the outskirts of Paris, working and building a unique project with them in an attempt to build a bridge between their informal, almost inhuman living conditions and the formal life of an emerging suburb.

For Pillay, as well as for the Quatorze Association, architecture begins with conversation. Being on site, and among the people who occupy it. An atelier was built as an office and working space, and a sanitary block and after school space for kids was erected within the Roma community.

Pillay also collaborated with local designers who are already thinking about and working on strategies to upgrade informal settlement in the Paris region.



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dan halter in turin with istituto wesen

»Mirafiori Space Invader«

Dan Halter likes to call himself a »fabricator«, who interacts with his art practice from within a social matrix. Together with project partner Istituto Wesen, he engaged with informal vegetable gardens that have surrounded the Fiat-factory in Mirafiori, south of Turin since the mid 1950s.

During workshops with these gardeners, vegetable seedlings were planted in trays and Halter introduced the concept of the Space Invader originally designed in 1978 for the famous computer game's symbol of an alien, which in the case of Dan's practice stands for immigrants.

When the seedlings sprouted, they lent their colour to each tray that formed a pixel in the creation of a Space Invader character on the lawns of Colonnetti Park.



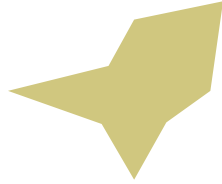
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armin linke in durban with dala art- architecture



»Compliments And Complaints«

In Durban, the photographer and media-artist Armin Linke collaborated with the partner dala artarchitecture, the local organisation of street traders and the cooperative for hawkers and informal business.

Every day thousands of street traders commute by foot between the townships of the faraway hills and the business centre of Durban. The project invited their opinions and enabled insight to their daily practise. Ten video portraits were produced and installed into the city market.

The local presentation was a platform for statements of passersby about the inner city market district. This vibrant market system is highly endangered by masterplans to build a shopping mall on its spot.



© Doung Jahangeer and dala artarchitecture



© Doung Jahangeer and dala artarchitecture



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rangoato hlasane in london with south london gallery

»We Are Us And You Are You«

Johannesburg-based Rangoato Hlasane facilitated an exchange between The Art Assassins, South London Gallery's youth forum, and Mysterious Creatures Dance Fusion, a young people's group from Keleketla! Library in Johannesburg, in an attempt to unpick the global conundrum: 'We know each other but we don't know much about each other.'

The Art Assassins produced new musical material recorded on a limited edition cassette that was reinterpreted by Mysterious Creatures Dance Fusion in their own choreographed performances.

The project culminated in Listening Parties held in both cities and organized by the young people for a public audience.



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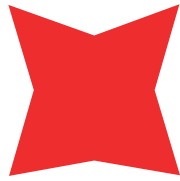


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anthony schrage in johannesburg with drama for life



»I am here to help«

Scottish Artist Anthony Schrag was based at Drama For Life in Johannesburg, exploring if – and how – institutions and individuals working on participatory projects perpetuated new forms of colonisation.

The project exists as a dialogic exchange between the different formal and informal partners, and involved individual public performances, discussion groups, guided walks, presentations, choir groups, poster campaigns, seminars as well as other interventions to encourage reflection.

He also established 'The School of No' within his host organisation as a parallel institution to encourage discussion about the place of educational organisations in replicating colonial strategies.



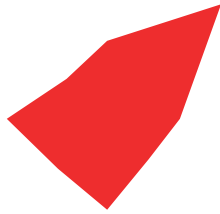
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terry kurgan in berlin with id22



»Let's talk: 30 Days at The Spreefeld«

South African artist Terry Kurgan was based at id22 in Berlin, where she explored the phenomenon of co-housing cultures and the relationship between private lives and public space in the neighborhood surrounding The Spreefeld Cooperative, 3 new housing buildings on the banks of the River Spree.

She parked her mobile SpreeLab on public paths that run through the area asking strangers to sit down at her kitchen table and drink tea. Then she asked them to respond to her curiosity about their origins, Berlin's layered history and modernity, and the quite contemporary ghosts that seem to haunt this particular spot at this moment.

The results of her process are reflected through a series of photographs, texts, and a stop-frame animation video.



© Terry Kurgan



© Oliver Drescher



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