nine urban biotopes

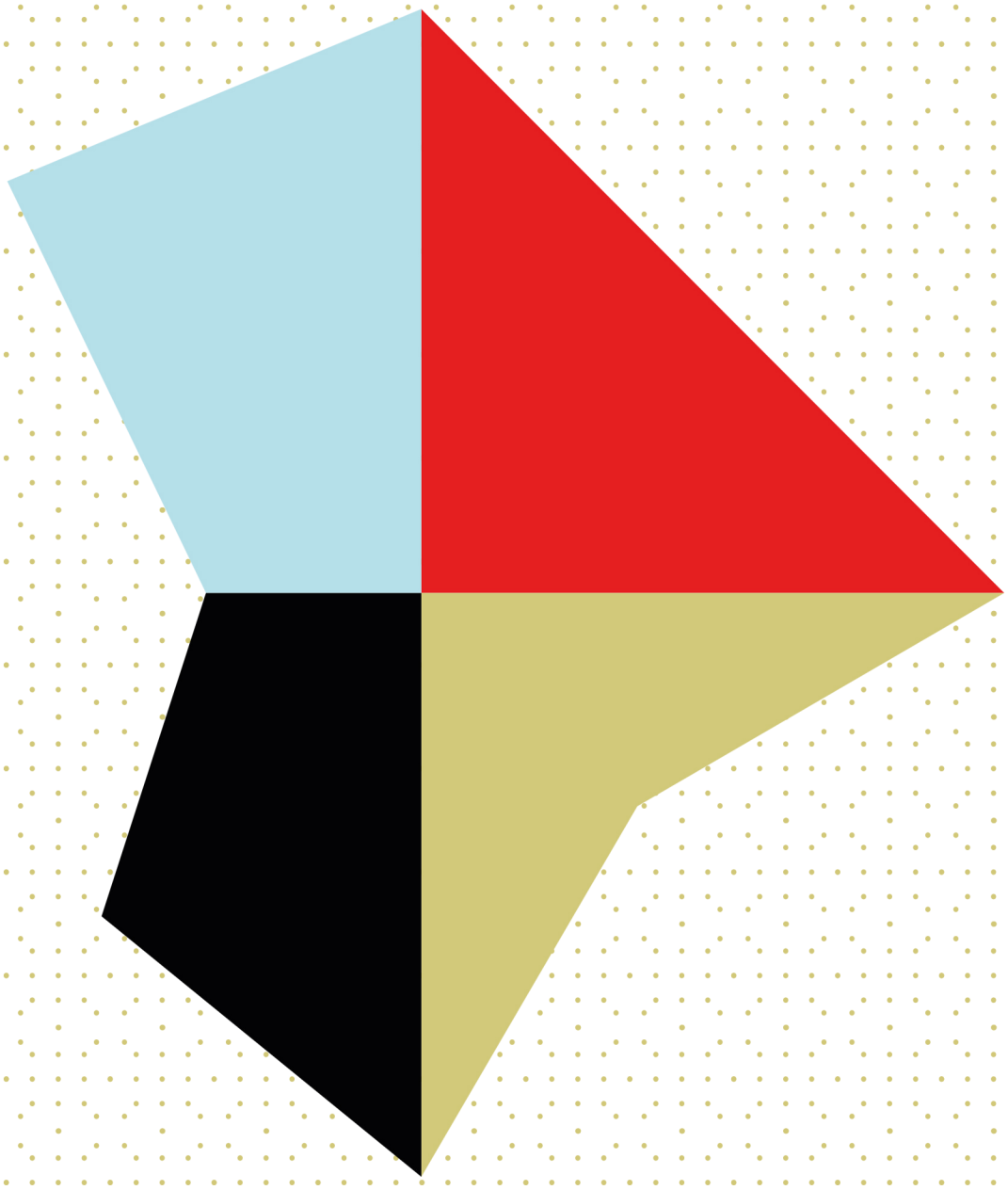
NEGOTIATING THE FUTURE OF URBAN LIVING

Cape Town

Durban

Soweto

Johannesburg



Turin

Paris

London

Berlin I

Berlin II

nine urban biotopes- negotiating the future of urban living

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 around and respond to issues of safety and housing, youth and migration, education and environment, mobility and economic subsistence. They do so ›on the ground‹ and ›in the thick of life‹ in each city, thus ›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 – Armin Linke, Antje Schiffers, Marjetica Potrč and Anthony Schrag – worked in South Africa, while at the same time five South Africans – Athi-Patra Ruga, Dan Halter, Taswald Pillay, Terry Kurgan and Rangoato Hlasane – worked in Europe. Three projects ran simultaneously; each for a period of three consecutive months.

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, this e-Publication both reflects this process and expands its terrain by including contributions from a range of writers, photographers, public intellectuals, urban practitioners and activists, including Bruno Latour, Michael Keith, Sophie Hope, Michael Guggenheim, Marcos L. Rosa, Adam Greenfield, Taryn Mackay, Henk Borgdorff and Alexander Opper, amongst others.

urban biotopes

foreword

Ambassador Roeland van de Geer

Head of the Delegation of the European Union to South Africa

The European Union Delegation to South Africa is proud to be associated with the e-Publication about the Nine Urban Biotopes project supported by the EU.

This project is a wonderful example of collaboration between South Africa and Europe and this e-Book is the result of us sharing information and experiences and learning from each other. I am delighted about the quality of the many ›urban living collaborations‹ and must attribute the success of this project to it having brought together – in a series of dialogues – remarkable ›creators‹ – artists and designers, from Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and from London, Paris, Berlin and Turin.

Ensuring the sustainable and equitable development of cities that cater for the needs of a diversified population is a topical challenge. This is especially the case in South Africa where the differences in levels of development and access to resources remain huge. These realities were also at the heart of the programme of the Cape Town World Design Capital 2014 initiative, and were equally prominent at the 25th World Congress of the International Union of Architects that took place in Durban in August last year. One of the key priorities of the European Union in South Africa is to initiate, in cooperation with Government and civil society, innovative and cutting-edge projects in support of South Africa's economic and social development. Equally importantly, the EU Delegation in Pretoria focuses on support for economically viable initiatives leading to employment creation. In this respect, the cultural and creative industries at the heart of the Nine Urban Biotopes initiative have enjoyed particular attention and support.

It is my hope that the dynamic networks that have been created through the Nine Urban Biotopes project will remain active in the years to come and will continue to assist in sharing vision, innovation and creativity between Europe and South Africa.

With the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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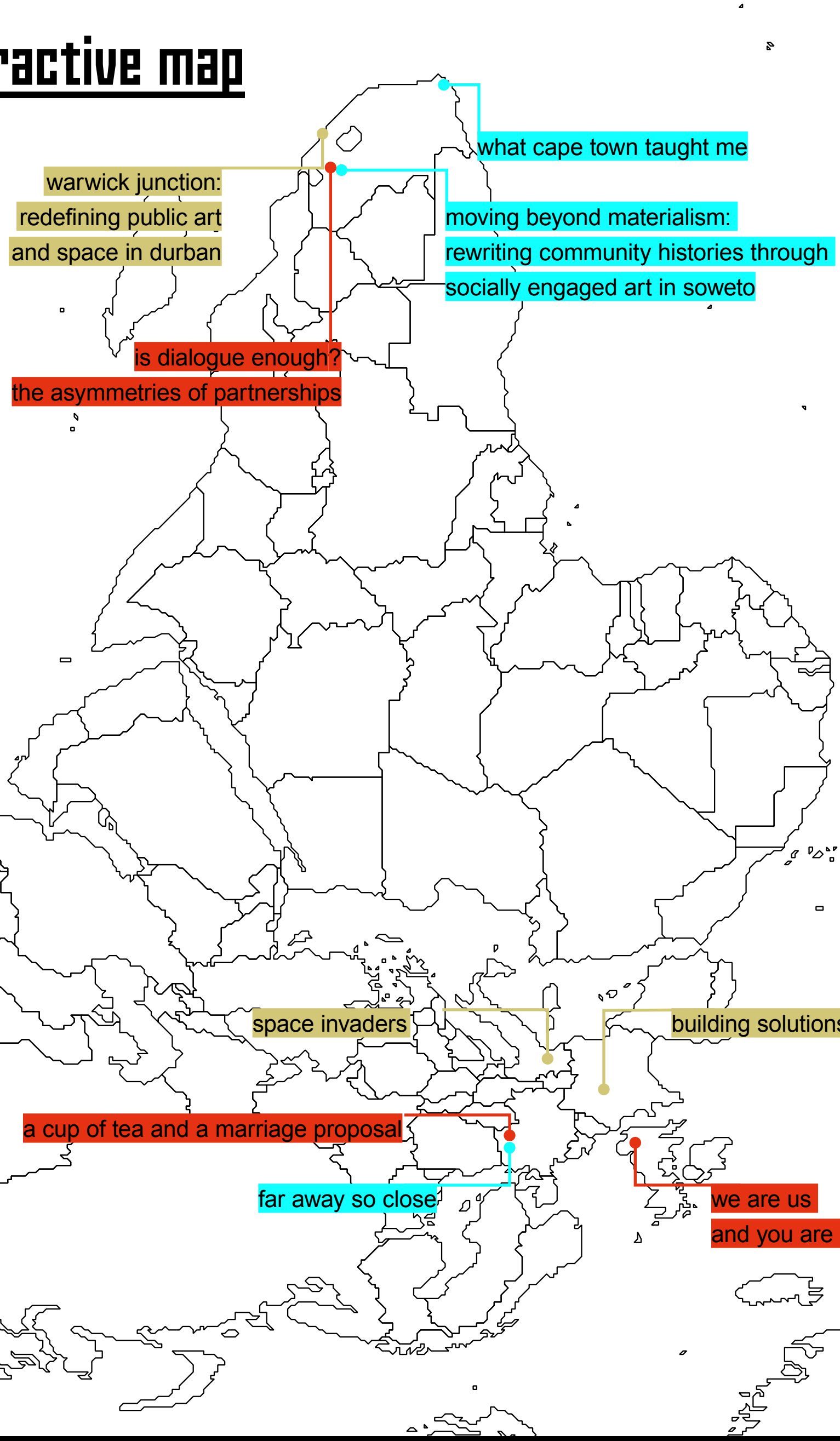


one project and two continents

Stefan Horn

artistic director of Nine Urban Biotopes (9UB)

About innovation in the 21st century

In Spring 1991, as the Iraqi ground forces withdrew from Kuwait, following military pressure from the Allied forces at the end of the second Gulf War, they set fire to around 950 oil wells. Images of burning drilling towers dominated news coverage throughout that summer. The American ›Red Adair‹ in charge of extinguishing the burning oil fields, and probably the most famous fire fighter worldwide, estimated his deployment to have lasted almost three years. Besides the global consequences of this devastating world catastrophe and the resulting increase in commodity prices, it was the total economic loss from their only source of income that persuaded Kuwait's oil sheikhs to think about finding more efficient methods of extinguishing these fires. And so, this is how, in the autumn of 1991, a group of Hungarian engineers came to present their technical innovation with regard to fire fighting. Using a discarded Soviet tank, and engines from an old jet plane, they had built a unique mechanism with extremely powerful water jets that was able to extinguish a burning drilling tower within only a few minutes. After precisely 43 days this vehicle named ›Big Wind‹ had extinguished the blaze in all 950 oil plants and the 78-year-old ›Red Adair‹ had lost his monopoly on global fire fighting. The Hungarian engineers had assembled and recycled the correct parts from scrapped technologies in order to find a solution to a truly burning question.

The 19th and 20th centuries were driven by groundbreaking industrial innovation and the rapid growth of cities, which contributed to great progress and prosperity. These innovations were often grounded within local settings but would, over time, affect life in other places. This ›principle of innovation‹ and its global effects has spread over the years and multiplied worldwide.

But the age of decadence has come to an end. European and other western societies particularly, but in fact most societies around the globe, are living beyond their means.

We are reaching an age of deceleration where the process of innovation is no longer automatically linked to a process of economic growth. Globalisation today is marked less by this diffusion of local innovations, and instead manifests itself in the interdependent relationship between larger cities. The Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman speaks of it as a »liquid

modernity«. Despite the ›multiple manifestations‹ of modernity we are all vulnerable to this, by now, worldwide interdependency and its range of contrasting outcomes. While some cities are immediately affected by certain innovations, others are not. And, where some cities will suffer to a greater or lesser degree, others might in fact profit. The toxic combination of the real estate bubble and the financial crisis in the US in 2008 with its catastrophic global repercussions is manifest and concrete evidence of Jürgen Habermas' »New Obscurity«. We are all now in the same boat, and we need to create and foster dialogue and exchange in order to find global solutions for local questions.

That's why innovation in the 21st century needs to be, more than ever, an intelligent combination of different, sometimes unlikely, elements in order to solve pressing problems. The Hungarian engineers' 1991 accomplishment can be seen as a trans-local management of innovation, which generated a solution to a global problem by thinking and experimenting across borders. They became pioneers for the 21st century by assembling the right combination of ingredients, drawn from the fund of modernity, in order to summon into existence the missing tool.

9UB aimed to formulate such a ›trans-local dialogue‹ by creating a trans-continental and trans-local network in order to discuss innovations and good practices in Europe and South Africa.

It was both a complex and a pertinent framework for a multifaceted and productive ›arena of exchange‹, as it tried to figure out intentions first and then knowledge later on. 9UB created ideas through artistic research in order to convert them into practices ›on the ground‹.

Point of departure

For the last 15 years, the Berlin-based art association, urban dialogues, has engaged with all manner of change and flux around urban issues in Berlin and other European cities, by means of artistic research and urban interventions.

The idea for a project relating South Africa with Europe through socially engaged art practices came up during a conference in Johannesburg in March 2011 entitled ›WIDE ANGLE – Photography as Public Practice‹. As the artistic director of urban dialogues I was invited by the Goethe-Institut to contribute to this gathering with a presentation about an earlier networked project called ›Signs of the City – Metropolis speaking‹, which was an artistic research and youth art project exploring local neighbourhoods by means of photography in four different European metropolises[1].

During my stay in Johannesburg an email from the EU Culture Programme landed in my inbox. It was a call for project applications in relation to European/South African partnerships.

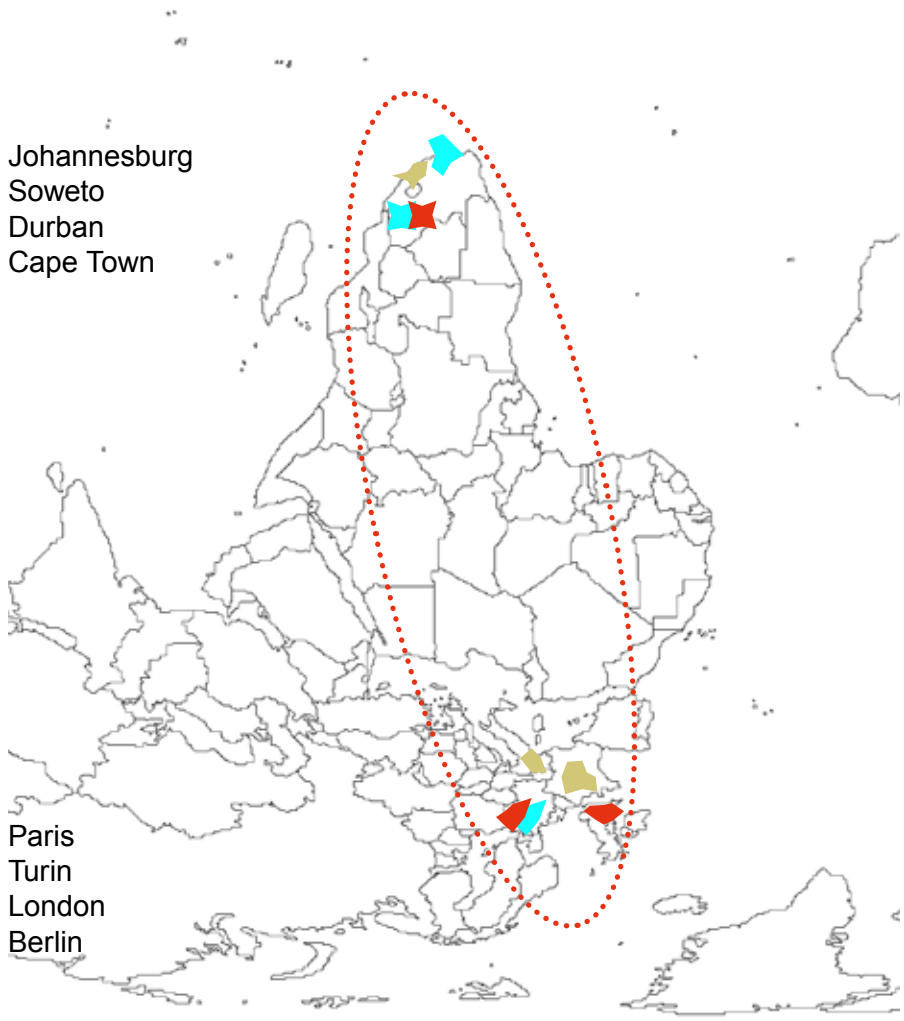
Earlier in 2010 my colleague Oliver Kremershof and I had already been thinking along these lines. We had drawn up a first draft for an intercontinental dialogue in order to create an ›arena of exchange‹ for innovative urban development projects. Our idea was to discuss and discover alternative models and solutions to some of the central problems of contemporary urban development, and, to bring them together in relation to each other in order to strengthen local positions in the articulation of urban futures.

The Goethe-Institut in Johannesburg recognised the potential of the project idea and came on board as a project partner for the funding bid, and during the rest of 2011 we negotiated with possible partners in Europe and South Africa in order to create an efficient and durable partnership for a two year-long networked programme.

Europe and South Africa

»The shortfalls and exposed capabilities found in our social, economic and ecological surroundings can often be deciphered as local expressions of a global phenomenon. Metropolises as living and work places have become the central arenas of globalisation and its resulting social developments. Within the cities' structures, global processes inscribe themselves as ›local colourful complexions‹, giving innovative players ever more reasons to propose site-specific alternatives regarding issues of mobility, food, education, housing, migration, safety and economics.«[2] Focusing on local experience and the transfer of intentions, knowledge and methods between South Africa and the European Union, 9UB followed the global goal of sustainable development. We sought to find alternative ways of driving economic, social and ecological progress by using cultural exchange and artistic research as effective tools towards the installation and establishment of new ideas and structures, and also towards the creation of a sense of awareness and understanding of local intentions.

There are two important reasons to work on such dialogue and transfer. One relates to economics and the other to social change and common identity. First of all, from a European point of view, it is important to work on a sustainable exchange and transfer of knowledge between Europe and countries like South Africa in order to foster the idea of a global modern economy in which knowledge is the crucial resource, and circulation of this knowledge a source of economic growth, with learning as



NINE URBAN BIOTOPES: TRANS-LOCAL DIALOGUE AMONG AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN CITIES

the most important process. In order to unfold fruitful relationships and well-functioning arteries in our swirling globalised world, it is important to learn mutually from each other rather than to just export our knowledge, ideas and goods. Secondly, South Africa and the European Union have more in common than is obvious at first sight. Since the apartheid regime came to an end in the early 1990s South Africa has been trying to forge and shape a new identity including all members of its diverse population. At more or less the same time the European Union has been trying to build a new sense of common identity amongst a diversity of cultures and languages within the framework of European citizenship, which goes beyond the national borders of identity.

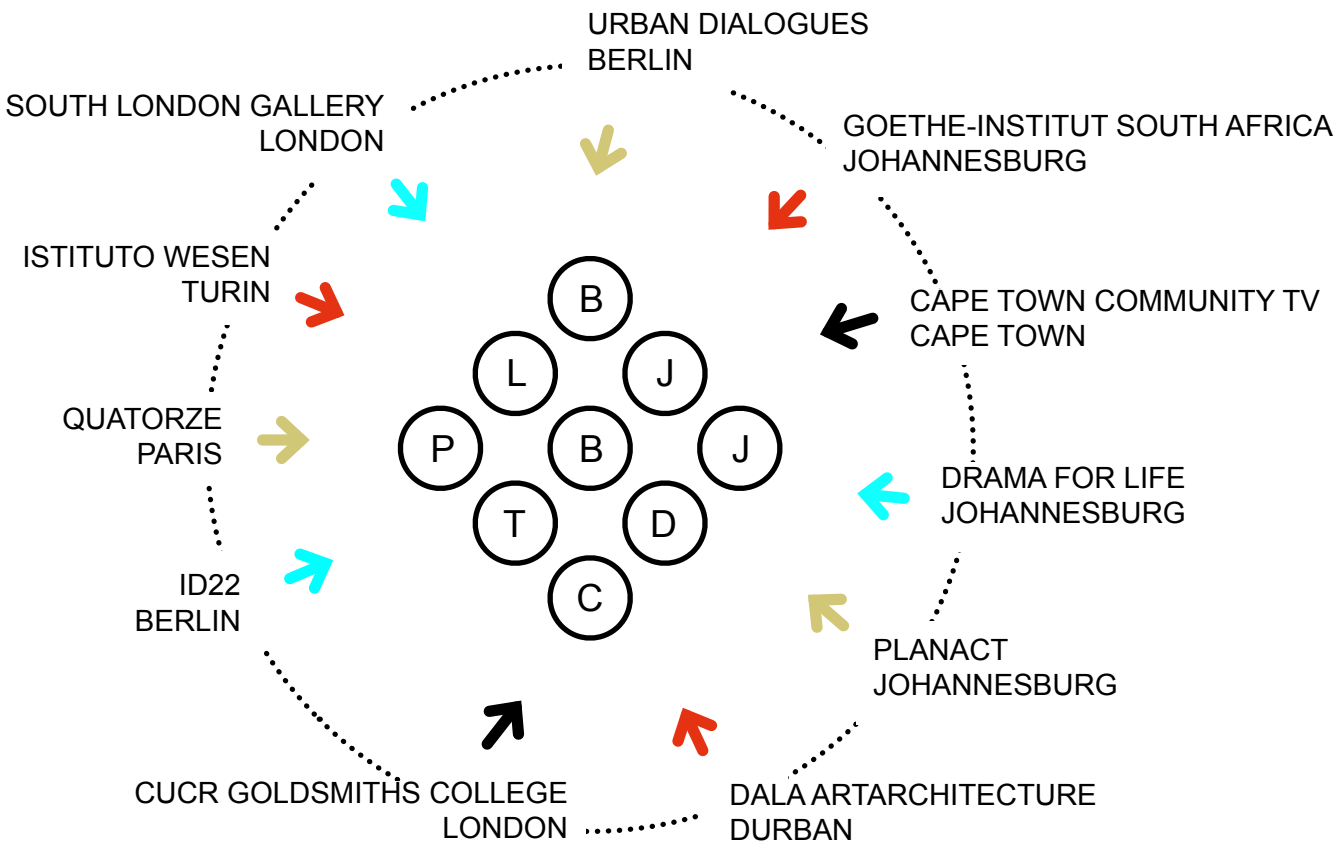
Prominent South African writer and public intellectual, Njabulo Ndebele said in his keynote entitled ›From Sandton to Soweto‹ on 28 August 2014 at the House of World Cultures in Berlin that »the speed of delivery [after the apartheid regime] was not tested for sustainability and durability«. There is an amazing social imbalance in South African society on its journey towards new democracy and the »provision of housing has not produced bold models of settlement. It's not about building millions of houses but about building strong communities«.[3]

Sandton, the new post-apartheid economic centre of Johannesburg and South Africa, which has been built and designed like the typical high-rise, shiny glass and concrete business districts of most western metropolises, is characterised by Ndebele as a »wobbling bamboo bridge« of a transformation which is not sustainable in its future. It is imperative to seek new ways to truly humanise capitalism and therefore Soweto, as a multi-ethnic melting pot, should be looked upon as the »new Mother City of South Africa« – a place where social solidarities are built on their own through time due to the fact of its peoples' multiple roots and different ethnic identities. From a European perspective, South Africa's metropolises and multi-ethnic society with all their challenges can be viewed as vibrant laboratories of urban and social development.

Those times are gone where the terms of ›Global South‹ and ›Global North‹ served as a useful juxtaposition.

There are so many differences and commonalities between global cities and so much local colourful sparkle creating very specific flavours and productive ›mix-ups‹.

We all need to change our mindset in order to uncover the potential in the interconnections and interdependencies within our globalised world. And at the same time we need to solve local questions with regard to the outcomes of global interference. We have to learn from each other – local to local and transfer best practices from one place to another, ignoring global borders and boundaries.



9UB trans-local network, a complex fabric of partners and artists

A networked project that comprises 11 official partners, several more associates, and nine unique artistic projects in five countries on two continents is quite a complex and challenging ›animal‹ to organise and direct. But such a ›superstructure‹ is also in some sense a mirror of our globalised world with all its many interconnections and interdependencies, with all its obscurities and local flavour.

Central to the development of our partnership network was the fact that each of our partners engaged in a range of innovative approaches to alternative urban development. Additionally, they had the capacity to host an artist in residence coming from abroad, and were interested in how that artist might approach, research and respond to their organisational terrain.

The core idea guiding our selection of artists was to find the most appropriate ›artistic incubator‹ for each biotope, in order to create both an outcome with and for the community, and at the same time an artistic output that would also comprise part of the artists' personal artistic agenda. In fact, finding or creating this amalgam of different interests to fit together and complement each other, is what makes socially engaged art practices so challenging.

The first idea was to set up an open call, but then urban dialogues, with the agreement of all partners, decided to apply for a second layer of funding from the Cultural Fund of the Federal Republic of Germany. For this application we needed to provide an already established artists list which necessitated a curatorial process rather than an open call. While our application was not successful, this list then formed the foundation for the final selection process.

In Turin, the project partner Istituto Wesen engages with immigrants from the south of Italy, who have been planting informal vegetable gardens around the Fiat factory in Mirafiori in the south of Turin since the mid-1950s. Immigrants first created these gardens surrounding their company-supplied accommodation, as a way of maintaining a sense of their own identities outside of the big factory, and also as a way of building social networks and convivial meeting places. Almost 60 years later, in a period of deep economic crisis and unemployment in Italy, these urban gardens still symbolise community life; providing essential food for families, but also offering up places of integration and aggregation. The South African artist Dan Halter gardened with community members.

Dan Halter likes to call himself a »fabricator«, who interacts with his art practice from within a social matrix.

He often remakes or reconstructs existing things and objects that are completely plucked out of thin air, drawing attention to those aspects of these things that are truth and fiction. Together they planted vegetable seedlings 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 ›Mirafiori Space Invader‹ on the lawns of Colonnetti Park.

For the Quatorze Association in Paris, architecture always begins with conversation, held on a particular site, with the people who occupy or have a stake in it.

They decided to work with a Roma community on the outskirts of Paris, collaborating with them in a unique attempt to build a bridge between their informal, almost inhuman living conditions and the formal life of the adjacent Parisian suburb. Nowadays, particularly in France, but also in other European countries, the issue of Roma people is a contentious ethical and moral issue on the political agenda. On the one hand, there is the immense poverty and deprivation suffered by Roma communities due to their ›forced migration‹ from countries like Bulgaria and Romania to Western European countries. And on the other hand they are denied the freedom of movement that is theoretically a right of citizens and residents of the now borderless European Union. The South African architect Taswald Pillay worked with the Roma community and Quatorze Association to upgrade the living conditions of their informal settlement, through a process of dialogue and

collaboration between various stakeholders and community members. Prior to his Paris residency, Pillay, a candidate architect, had been part of the multi-disciplinary design team of a corporate company based in Johannesburg. He had been involved in a combination of projects ranging from informal settlement upgrading initiatives to various architectural workshops and area mapping exercises. The Parisian project ended up as a vibrant transfer of knowledge and methods from South to North.

South London is home for many residents of African diaspora communities who are part of the fabric of a multi-cultural society. The South London Gallery (SLG) has a long tradition of working with different sectors of their local community and is involved in partnerships with many local organisations. The SLGs long-standing peer-led group, Art Assassins, comprises young people aged 13-20 years old. They work with contemporary artists, designers and filmmakers to create a programme of events for other young people and a wider audience. In their own words »the purpose of Art Assassins is to engage the young side of society by researching, interpreting and demonstrating our knowledge of art and society to the public«.

Rangoato Hlasane is a Johannesburg-based artist, cultural worker and co-founder of the Keleketla! Library, which empowers inner-city youth and emerging creatives through art, culture and heritage programmes.

A Pan-Africanist cultural worker, writer, and DJ, as well as the co-founder of Keleketla! Library which was based in the historic Drill Hall, Joubert Park, Rangoato connected the Art Assassins to the Mysterious Dance Creatures, another group of young people, based at the Drill Hall, a community arts space in the old Central Business District of Johannesburg, in order to start a conversation between the younger generations across two continents.

Nowadays, many projects and initiatives in Berlin deal with new strategies and forms of alternative and creative city development. Organic vegetables are grown on the roof of a former malt factory and the post-fossil mobile platform provides DIY manuals for fixing together bicycles to transport cargo around the city. New forms of collaborative housing are on the increase – from self-managed and politically oriented cooperative housing projects to luxury, privatised forms of urban living in Central City districts. 9UB collaborated with id22: Institute for Creative Sustainability whose core activities focus on the development of »Co-housing Cultures«; self-organised, community-orientated and sustainable co-housing schemes.

The South African artist Terry Kurgan explored

these phenomena with a ›mobile research lab‹ to uncover some of contemporary Berlin's ›hot‹ issues, and to get in touch with people ›on the ground‹.

Kurgan runs an active Johannesburg studio and public sphere practice and has created a diverse body of artwork that explores notions of intimacy, pushing at the boundaries between ›the private‹ and ›the public‹ in the South African cultural domain. She works across a broad range of media from drawing, printmaking and photography to enlisting public participation in a practice that produces human interaction and social experiences. She likes to work with the notion of ›culture as infrastructure‹ – inserting her projects into existing social infrastructure and everyday practices. Domestic photography, and the complexity of the photographic interaction itself, is a central theme in her practice.

In Berlin, she collaborated with the local ISSS-research+architecture team, and transformed her ›research findings‹ into an exhibition of images, text and a short film, interpreting the outcome of her many conversations and meetings with strangers.

Another biotope project in Berlin was the collaboration 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. Our partner organisation, 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 to them. Importantly, young people are encouraged to develop their own artistic style and are provided with the skills required for self-determined cultural production, not only as actors, but also as directors, dramaturges, technicians and event managers. Athi-Patra Ruga is based in Cape Town and works in the space between fashion, performance and contemporary art. In his daring interventions, self-staging and self-dramatisation in public space – he enacts moments, in which political structures and ideological positions are questioned and caricatured. His videos, photos, costumes and paintings are hybrids; electric works, in which pop-culture, fine art and art as craft merge together.

Ruga initiated a process with members of the Youth Theatre Office in Berlin around questions of identity and self-perception.

While he unexpectedly didn't stay the course and complete his residency, the Berlin team led by Annika Füser managed to develop the ›Sheroes and Villains‹ performance to a strong finish and close.

In Johannesburg the Drama for Life organisation, based at Wits University, aims to enhance the capacity of young theatre practitioners and their communities to take responsibility for the quality of their lives in the context of HIV and AIDS and other local human rights and social justice issues. Drama for Life practices and teaches participatory and experiential drama and theatre that is appropriate to current South African social realities, and also draws on the rich indigenous knowledge of African communities.

The artistic work of Anthony Schrag, an artist based in Glasgow, is accompanied by research and collaborative engagement, which he wants to be recognised as the actual value of his creations. Thus, it is not the product in itself, which is prioritised, but the spatial context and the process of involvement that is shared by both the audience and the people participating in the process that makes up his artwork.

Schrag often uses play, humour, physicality and immediacy in order to engage with people without prior knowledge of aesthetic processes.

Schrag collaborated with different groups within the DFL organisation as well as with people he encountered on the streets, in order to highlight what he perceived to be contentious and prickly subjects; issues at stake in Johannesburg. For example, he explored the ambivalent outcome of South African society's fortification, and their security measures. Another project reflected upon the unpredictable results of gentrification processes that are harnessed to a range of creative industries.

In Durban, dala artarchitecture is an interdisciplinary creative collective that believes in the transformative role of creativity in building safer and more livable cities. dala emerged as a response to the growing need for a sustainable space for creative practitioners actively engaging in art/architecture for social change.

The photographer and media-artist Armin Linke prefers to work in collaborative ways. Moreover he combines different media to blur the boundary between fiction and reality.

He is working on an ongoing archive of human activity in the context of the most diverse and varied natural and manmade landscapes. These issues and interests see him travel to different parts of the world: Palestinian refugee camps or uninhabited islands in the Mediterranean Sea that are used industrially. Linke collaborated in a research process with dala, 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 photographs and opinions and enabled insight into their daily practice. Ten video portraits were produced and installed into the city market.

The final local presentation of the project was a platform for statements of passers-by about the inner city market district, which is currently highly endangered by master plans to build a shopping mall on its spot.

The project partner Planact has, since 2007, been involved in supporting participatory governance initiatives in Orlando East and Noordgesig in Johannesburg. The purpose of Planact's intervention here has been to promote meaningful public participation in government processes and to close the social and racial gap between these two communities.

SOWETO stands for the South Western Townships, a summary of once informal communities created since the early 20th century due to the evictions of blacks from Johannesburg by the white authorities before and during apartheid. Today it is a city in itself, with an extremely diverse population.

For many years now, the Slovenian artist and architect Marjetica Potrč has been interested in the question of how to efficiently solve the practical problems of day to day living.

As part of this quest, she has, for example, built dry toilets with inhabitants of the La Vega informal city of Caracas in Venezuela and initiated together with the Stedelijk-Museum an intercultural kitchen and garden project in a former Garden City of Amsterdam. Since 2011 she has been professor at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg where she runs the course ›Design for the Living World‹ within the Design Department. It is a research-based, cross-disciplinary course focused on participatory design projects where students collaborate with local residents in the tradition of learning by doing.

Potrč and her students of ›Design for the Living World‹ from HFBK in 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 linked and active community hubs.

Cape Town, ›The Mother City‹ was the first European settlement in South Africa. Today it is one of the most multicultural cities in the world, reflecting its role as a major destination for tourists, immigrants and expatriates to South Africa. Cape Town is also home to diverse communities who speak the three main languages of the Western Cape – English, Afri-

kaans and Xhosa – and who still live in largely segregated ways.

The artist 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. These transactions include products of her artwork that are often exchanged for everyday items, such as texts or videos made with the different people she meets.

Antje Schiffers and her partner Thomas Sprenger, assisted by local resident Ziphozakhe Hlobo, attempted to work within and across the complex fabric of Cape Town society. Cape Town Community Television (CTV) was their partner in terms of facilitating contacts with communities within the city. The project evolved into a stop-motion film composed of Antje's drawings, lyrically and subtly representing what it was that Cape Town had to teach them.

Beside the hosting organisations and project partners mentioned above the Goethe-Institut in Johannesburg played an important role as the key linking partner for the European artists working in South African ›urban biotopes‹. Right from the beginning of the development of the trans-continental partnership structure, and later on during the artists selection process, the Goethe-Institut in Johannesburg and urban dialogues in Berlin, worked in close collaboration. From within its ›Culture and Development‹ initiative, the Goethe-Institut focuses on the link between the arts and society with regard to the sustainable development of knowledge-based societies where education in the broadest sense plays a key role. Achille Mbembe, professor in history and politics at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, refers to the relationship between arts and culture on one side and human development and emancipation on the other. »What brings both sides closer together«, he says, »is the capacity to create something new and original through imagination and invention«.[4] Lilli Kobler, the head of the Culture and Development department of the Goethe-Institut Sub-Sahara emphasises and expands upon these ideas and the Institut's policies in her introduction.

The GIZ – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (international cooperation) also joined our network with the ›Inclusive Violence and Crime for Safe Public Spaces‹ – programme (VCP). The programme supports an integrated and holistic approach to increasing public safety in South Africa. The fear of crime and urban violence obstructs the ability of many residents to benefit fully from the processes of urbanisation, particularly in low-income and marginalised urban areas in South Africa. GIZ VCP advocates for public safety within South Africa's Integrated Urban Develop-

ment Framework (IUDF). All over the world the phenomenon of urban violence limits the development of societies in cities. 9UB, supported by GIZ, shed light on the fact that public and community safety is a determining element of the quality of life and in the future of urban living in metropolitan cities.[5]

Last but not least, The Centre for Urban and Community Research (CUCR), Goldsmiths College, University of London lead the academic support of the overall project and evaluated it throughout. CUCR is an interdisciplinary research centre within the department of Sociology with a distinguished history of collaboration with local communities and activists. This collaboration allowed them a constant process of assessment and improvement. Reciprocally and right from the outset, the interdisciplinary approach of 9UB allowed the social scientists involved in the project to critically assess innovative research methods, which produce knowledge by means of employing artistic practices to creatively intervene and comment on the urban and social world. Dr Alison Rooke and Christian von Wissel have produced feedback and a final analysis that are included in this e-Publication in four different articles and angles: safety, socially engaged art, sustainability and participation.

Learning from Each Other, the Complex Dialogue between South Africa and Europe

The project aimed to develop a vital exchange of artists and participatory arts projects from Europe and South Africa in order to develop and express social phenomena to a wider public relevant on both sides. Over the last years new forms of cultural action described as artistic research have proved to be socially impactful.

According to the UNESCO definition the term research means »any creative systematic operation for the purpose to expand knowledge, to include knowledge into culture and society, as well as the utilisation of this knowledge for the development of new applications«.

While we learned to take into account different social codes and conventions across local communities and cultures, we were also able to gain insight into and understanding of certain practices. As just a few examples: in Paris, Taswald Pillay and the students from the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture à Paris-Belleville discovered that the ethics of cleanliness within the Roma community disallows a sink that is used to wash dishes to also be used to wash hands. In Cape Town, Antje Schiffers found that in order to feel safe in a neighbourhood, you must of necessity greet your neighbours. In Soweto, Marjetica Potrč

and the students from ›Design for the Living World‹ learned about an essential transition point in African culture – you have to celebrate the work you have created. And in Berlin, Terry Kurgan discovered that for Germans, there are very few social taboos associated with stripping off your clothes in public spaces.

Things were not always that easily understood, and at times did not always run altogether smoothly, but sometimes, the tougher the situation and the harder it was to gain understanding, the more innovative the solution, and the greater the learning curve.

As one example, in Europe, there is a deeply entrenched, long history of public space as being something good, a place that everybody has the right to access and make use of as both a social, and a spatial system. But in South Africa, there is an equally deeply entrenched long history of quite the opposite, of public space belonging to the minority of the population, and the majority being denied its use or access. South Africans still do not understand, or take for granted, the idea of ›commons‹ as Europeans can do. Both South African and European artists needed to understand something as fundamental as this before getting down to work with communities in foreign and unfamiliar cultural settings. And so in the end, we learnt that above all, socially engaged art practices, which begin with a process of artistic research, must start with a long and deep conversation. We must listen and talk to each other in order to proceed productively and creatively. At its best this dialogue can foster innovation, perhaps not quite as technically ingenious as those Hungarian engineers, but as artists, designers and cultural activists we can create a constant transfer of intentions into knowledge and creative methodology, which is the basic element of constructive interaction in an interdependent globalised world.

Art as a rule and socially engaged art practices in particular are not able to change the world. But art is able to change the perceptions of citizens, so that they are empowered to reflect, to organise themselves and then to become active in order to try and make things better. It is a sensible reason to engage.

Endnotes

1 urban dialogues had initiated and implemented ›Signs of the City‹ from 2007 through 2009, and it was selected as a best practice for intercultural dialogue by the European Union.

2 Quote from an early draft of 9UB in 2011, where my colleague Oliver Kremershof and myself had fixed the conceptual framework for the development of the trans-continental partnership.

3 ›20 years of South African democracy and beyond: Goodbye Sandton, hello Soweto!‹ Keynote by Njabulo S Ndebele, 28 August 2014 at House of World Cultures Berlin: www.hkw.de/en/ app/ mediathek/video/30331. Accessed 15 of December 2014.

4 Achille Mbembe, ›Arts, markets and development in our times‹ www.goethe.de/ges/prj/ken/pup/en9369734.htm. Accessed 15 December 2014.

5 GIZ VCP Programme in South Africa, Sketching Video. www.youtube.com/watch?v=lEfxOFiHXzE. Accessed 10 of January 2015.

Related content

incubations. a recipe for urban and other inventions by Michael Guggenheim et al

interview with Bruno Latour

Interview with Michael Keith

shaping the urban community – negotiating its future

Lilli Kobler

Head of Culture and Development Department

Goethe-Institut South Africa

The word biotope, literally translated, means an »area where life lives«. The subject of a biotope is a (biological) community.

It is estimated that more than half of the world's human population is now living in cities. In this context, the Nine Urban Biotopes (9UB) project developed a framework within which to explore creative, innovative and sustainable approaches to some of our most pressing global urban development problems in cities in Europe and South Africa.

Urban Living

Urban spaces have become the ›central arenas of globalisation‹, yet urbanity does not develop in linear or uniform ways, but in a rather more unpredictable manner. Global cities like London, Tokyo or New York develop differently from cities in post-colonial settings on the African continent. Cities are complex, multi-layered and diverse and exist in trans-national relation to each other forming complicated, far-reaching systems and networks. Within these urban spaces, global processes reflect within local urban structures. The urgent problems and limitations of our social, economic and ecological surroundings might be interpreted as local expressions of global phenomena. Not surprisingly it is within these urban spaces, that social movements emerge, trying to gain influence and the the right to greater social participation. A struggle to participate in the shaping of your own neighborhood, your own city, is often a struggle for a better, alternative future.

The Goethe-Institut has had, for many years, but still today and even more tomorrow, as one of its key focuses, an interest in the meeting of culture with urban space.

How can local initiatives and movements be supported that secure public commodities, or democratic control over urban spaces and public futures within cities? How can we come to understand the systems by which cities are connected to each other? And what role can an international cultural organisation play within this context?

Culture and Development

»The arts, culture, and education play decisive roles in the constitution of societies and in coping with current global and regional challenges. Artists, persons in the cultural sector, and media players are seismographs as well as shapers of social change. Yet in order to be heard and able to act they need a self-confident voice, a professional structural basis, and a sound network.«[1]

Bearing this in mind, the Goethe-Institut in Sub-Saharan Africa implements quite a num-

ber of projects within its ›culture and development‹ initiative.

The initiative's programmes contribute to strengthening cultural infrastructure and the arts sector. They aim to improve framework conditions for the arts and culture and to support the development of education- and knowledge-based societies. The programmes train cultural and educational actors and advise cultural institutions. They network stakeholders with one another and with relevant initiatives and institutions on the African continent, in Germany or other relevant international networks.

The autonomy of arts and culture is respected and considered and is correlated with social as well as economic challenges. It is in this context that cultural management trainings, large regional platforms in the music and film sector as well as arts education projects, studies and academic works around the awareness of the diverse structures and relevance of arts education are implemented in South Africa and throughout the Goethe-Institut's African networks. We endeavor to work together with our partners to create and support the networks, communities and actors in order to find solutions to to some of society's current challenges.

Nine Urban Biotopes (9UB)

From January to September 2014, nine artists produced work and research in nine innovative urban spaces. All of them were participatory in their approach, engaging actively with both citizens and initiators of existing innovative urban development projects.

The participating initiatives in Paris, Berlin, London, Turin and Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban all distinguished themselves by addressing vital matters of concern with regard to contemporary urban living in innovative ways.

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.

This is how the project was defined, thereby creating a platform for exchange juxtaposing (local) innovations with global challenges and using flexible strategies to find practical, site-specific alternatives to the key challenges that communities participating in this project faced. The intention to transfer these solutions across the globe is what makes the local once again global.

Stefan Horn states in his introduction, that »every approach of socially engaged art practices in the field of artistic research has to start with a conversation« and that the project aims »to discuss and discover solutions, models and practical alternatives that reach beyond the key challenges of today's cities, to bring them in relation and to inform each other, strengthening local positions in the articulation of such urban futures«.[2]

The Future

How these futures, especially urban futures are actually shaped, is what the Goethe-Institut has set out to explore in the coming years. We

believe, that shaping the future and future ways of life is also a cultural task. Culture can function as a starting point or space where experimenting with processes of change and social utopias are made possible. Creativity can function as a driving force for social change. But is this task private or public? Can the future even be shaped, or does it just organically happen? What are the utopian notions of future that radiate from the arts and art practices that claim to be socially engaged?

Negotiating

By negotiating the future, 9UB tried to answer some of those questions and to create a space for experimentation and exploration. But this begs the question: Who is it that participates in this negotiation process? How are they empowered and whom do they represent?

Participation is the involvement of culturally and socially different groups within cultural and social processes. This does not only encompass a struggle for awareness or emancipation, but also asks questions about public space, and modes of communication within society and its regulations.

Participation means the involvement of citizens and communities in decision-making processes. It is never a given, or guaranteed, but rather, needs to be constantly asserted and negotiated.

But in the same way that urbanity is immensely complex, multi-layered and diverse, so too is this notion of ›a community‹. A Roma community outside of Paris, a post-apartheid community in Soweto, alternative co-housing communities in Berlin, communities of residents in downtown Johannesburg, West-European and South African artists with professional and academic backgrounds – all of these are communities in their own rights. Shaped by their different countries, their personal histories, their class and their levels of education and privilege, they are moulded from within their very own context and definition of cultural and social codes. And so, first and foremost, in order to create partnerships, exchange and common practice, they needed to try and bridge some of these differences and get to know and to understand each other first.

The approach of the Nine Urban Biotopes project to participatory, artistic practice lines up with the design and approach of the Goethe-Institut's arts, culture and development programme. We too are interested in working towards the shaping of sustainable and socially viable public spaces, and asking many important questions about how better futures can be shaped anew.

The nine urban biotopes are nine urban spaces where ›life lives‹, where local communities constantly negotiate their futures within the broader context of global structures, systems and networks. Given the diversity and mul-ti-layered fabric of urbanity and communities, intercultural and interdisciplinary projects like the Nine Urban Biotopes are urgently required. This approach to social and urban innovation might perhaps have the power to generate the sensitive dialogue that is necessary in order to engage more citizen participation in processes of cultural and social decision-making. And this, in order that we may further negotiate local, sustainable solutions for our common urban futures.

Endnotes

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   Dr. Andreas Ströhl, head of the Culture and Information depart-
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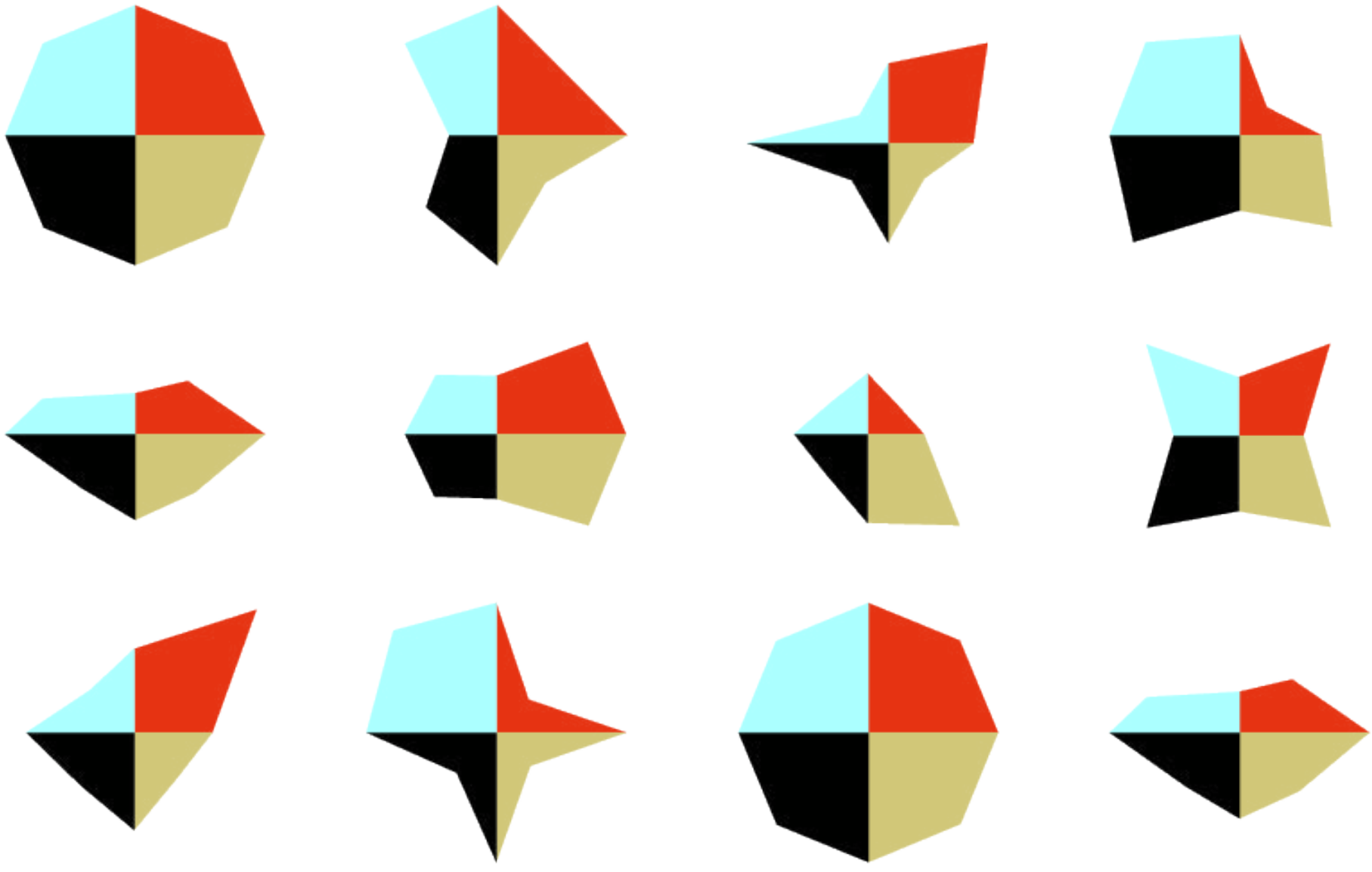
2 9UB EU-1.3.5. Application, 2012



communicating nine urban biotopes

Oliver Kremershof

Urban Media Project, Offenbach

»The Arts need both communication and the public sphere. Without the public sphere the Arts would not be perceived as art – without communication and without the public sphere, the Arts fail and lose their potential. Eventually, the public sphere needs communication to initiate discourse, as defined by the German philosopher Habermas or according to the Cultural Citizenship, in order to launch an independent social process.«[1]

The process of conceptualising and creating forms of communication for cultural institutions and projects is complex and challenging, but it is also stimulating. Culture, in the interests of the claim of art for everyone, needs to be communicated to as large an audience as possible. Communicating arts and culture is an

enterprise that requires exemplary multitasking – curating artistic projects and promoting activities and culture merge together and frequently culminate in the form of a process-leading person. This person may hamper the communicative potential of culture, but as Nine Urban Biotopes has shown, they may also be able to propel productive dynamics and logical programme strategies.

Despite being complex work, communicating culture is most appreciated by designers and communication professionals. The cultural sector particularly demands an independent aesthetic as well as a high quality of design and forms of communication. If the object that must be communicated globally is socially rooted, as is the case with Nine Urban Biotopes (9UB), then the work process is not as predictable as, for instance, an exhibition of the Old Masters. Rather, it is a work in progress where new ideas and approaches emerge every day as a result of collaboration among people from five countries and two continents developing new and innovative forms of communication.

Since its foundation, urban dialogues has focused on creating new forms of public spheres in order to draw attention to urban developments. The means are and have mainly consisted of specific artistic investigation, intervention and participation. The showplace was initially Berlin. As long as urban dialogues worked in a local context, it was possible to address the urban public sphere in a direct way – ideally through artistic work or its results. Along with a growing political integration within the European Union, a new urban notion was developed during the first decade of the 21st century. The topics that emerged from this setting became factors of interest for urban dialogues and led to the initiation of the Signs of the City – Metropolis Speaking project. This project was about connecting larger European cities and collecting an extensive range of their particular urban signs. The project was intended to reach a wider audience using interventional approaches and conventional exhibitions. However, since the audience was local and this contradicted the original networking character of the project, it was necessary to find ways in which people from different places could access the results simultaneously. In addition to the conventional cultural package, composed of an exhibition, conference and catalogue – all of which Signs of the City includes – an online archive was added, which allows both participants and the interested public worldwide to form an ›impression of cities‹ via the public sphere of the Internet.

This first run of digital communication, meant for both urban dialogues and the audience, was a crucial development towards an innovative cultural knowledge transfer that would further consolidate in other projects. Digital communication of cultural projects increases the chance to reach and become involved in different, broader audiences. Compared to rather ›conventional cultural output media‹ – exhibitions, conferences and catalogues – which usually only address audiences with an academic background, the digital sphere offers lower access barriers and more interaction possibilities for interested parties and participants. If cultural projects want to go beyond performing or exposing in a self-referential way and instead aim for content-related and socio-cultural

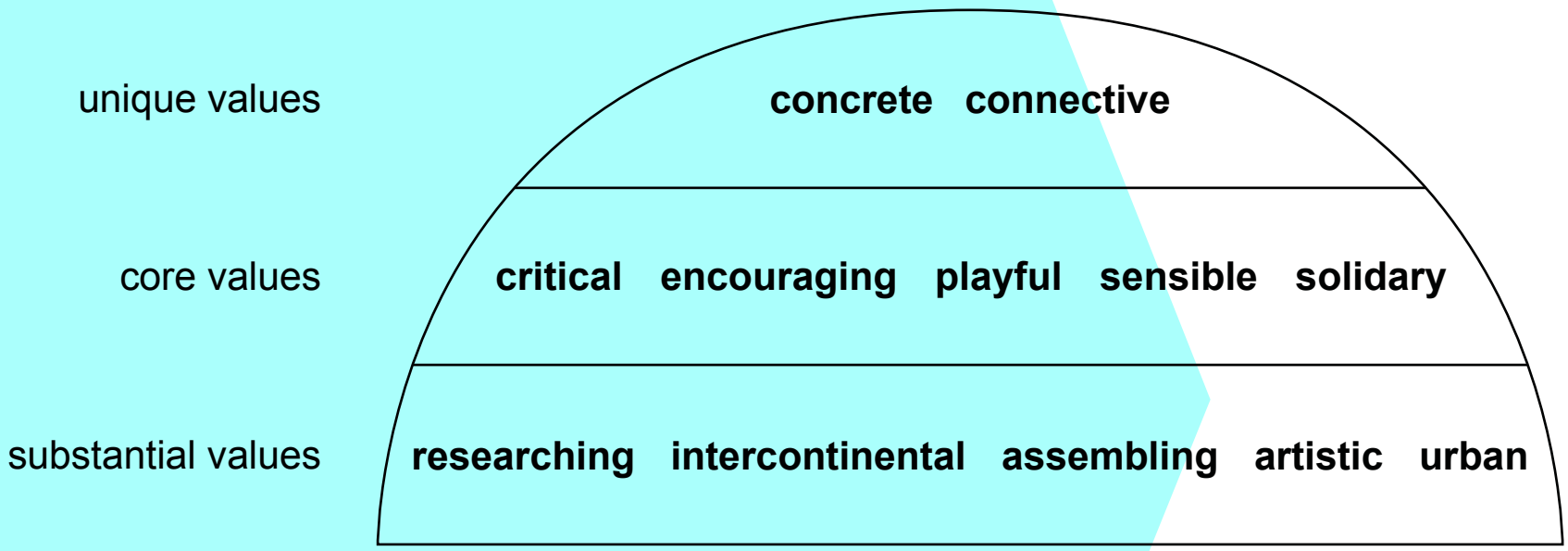


FIGURE 1. 9UB VALUES: RESULTS FROM CORPORATE DESIGN WORKSHOP 1+2 AUGUST 2013

effects, the digital sphere may constitute a new area of opportunity for cultural players. From this sphere, discourse can spread in even more far-reaching ways through groups, topics and site-specific terms.

The gains obtained from digital communication not only consist of new, greater audiences, different ways of interaction and real-time communication, but also of the possibility to treat the digital sphere as a cultural phenomenon itself. A phenomenon that changes our everyday reality and also our perception of the urban sphere – thus our expectations about the city of the future too. The picture we obtain from cities is no longer shaped alone by the constructed surroundings but also by the digital sphere. For just one example consider how people move along in cities using Google Maps or other cartographic services – a cartographic bird-eye perspective which has been constituted in our minds. Hence, it is inevitable that the cultural network project 9UB, that deals with innovative urban developments in the context of an increasingly global world, would go beyond the mere use of digital communication, and base its communicative strategy on the digital.

This strategy aims to digitally connect all forms of knowledge transfer, including exhibition, publication and those communication platforms, which are in current use regionally and and globally, thus allowing transparency and participation at many different levels.

Before commenting briefly on how the communication of 9UB works, it will be necessary to take a look at the project's characteristics and values, since these have shaped the visual design and communication strategy. During a workshop held by anschlaege.de in Summer 2013, project founder urban dialogues, represented by Stefan Horn and Oliver Kremershof, along with the Urban Media Project Studio and Christian von Wissel (from Goldsmiths College's project evaluation team) elaborated a value pyramid in order to determine visual and communicative guidelines.

WEBSITE: WWW.URBAN-BIOTOPES.NET

MOBILE VERSION OF THE SITE

The graphic (Figure 1) shows the results of the workshop. The values are categorised in unique, core and substantial values and colours, and forms were assigned to each value meaning in order to create the visual design of 9UB. Without elaborating further, the graphic then allows the reader to interpret the project, its aspirations and its values.

The visual design and the communication formats based on these values were approved by all members of the project partners at a meeting held in Paris in summer 2013. On several occasions it was demonstrated how communication strategies differed between the different European and South African cities, and steps had to be taken to better coordinate the project communication. This reveals how challenging it is to communicate a project, that one wants to be equally understood in the best possible light in all its nine sites all its nine sites, under circumstances where there were often relatively few resources available for these matters.

Our core task, therefore, was to face this challenge and create a user-friendly platform that would help artists, locals, investigators and creative professionals to act and interact easily with each other across these differences. This was mainly achieved by using existing social media platforms and infrastrcuture such as Vimeo, YouTube, Flickr and Facebook. Another important advantage of these services is that they are commonly used and understood all over the world.

All projects' processes and outcomes, whether they were videos, drafts, photographs or texts, were published on these established social media channels and on the project's website itself, www.urban-biotopes.net, where they were organised along a horizontal timeline. Following the same principle, the website itself was based on three free available services which helped to keep it extraordinary light. The basic content management system (CMS) consists of only two Google Doc pages.

The website allows a chronological overview of the project's events and locations. Both contributors and public audiences were able to follow all activities as the project developed and evolved.

The website was not able to filter, contextualise or associate the contents and results with each other in a more systematic way. This organisational task belongs to the present e-Publication.

It is reasonable to ask why 9UB has not published the scientific and creative synthesis of the projects' results in a conference or a classical hardcopy publication, as this is the more common form in which to conclude such cultural productions.

In keeping with the innovative approach of the 9UB project as a whole, we felt that digital was the appropriate form for this final project product. An e-Publication offers the possibility to playfully present multimedia in relation to text and other forms of documentation. So we include voice-overs of certain videos, audio recordings, film and slide show photography in a reader-friendly format. In a certain way, the e-Publication allows us, if the production process is organised and methodical, to combine the characteristics of a conference with those of an exhibition and a catalogue.

The publishers of this e-Publication have worked intensively to achieve this, hoping that the reader, or visitor, will have an enriching experience in both aesthetic and exploratory ways. Through the linked social media channels the reader can also check in with running discussions of current project topics, and can also get more visual material related to the project, leaving comments or connecting with other readers.

The barriers to downloading the mixed format were kept as low as possible. It can easily be found in familiar large distribution platforms like Google Play or iTunes. We would appreciate it if you would spread this information and support the ideas, aspirations and ambitions of Nine Urban Biotopes within your own networks, far and wide.

Endnotes

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Related content

Interview with Adam Greenfield

EVALUATION INTERVIEW WITH TERRY KURGAN IN THE SETTING OF HER DIALOGICAL INTERVENTION ›LET'S TALK‹, FINAL PRESENTATION, BERLIN SPREEFELD, 3RD TRIALOGUE, SEPTEMBER 2014

on cultural value[s], dialogue and the evaluation of culture

Alison Rooke and Christian von Wissel

›Evaluation‹ is a term that has frequently been used to describe the intent to systematically measure the economic value of the arts and culture. The histories of and motivations for evaluation include the desire to learn from and improve the effectiveness and possibilities of arts-based social interventions, advocating for these and a broader governmental impulse to employ culture as a resource that can be put to work as part of a wider global project of managing social change.[1] For many organisations receiving public and private funding to deliver arts and cultural interventions, evaluation has become a technocratic hoop to jump through in order to demonstrate their value in terms recognised by funders. Evaluation has thus become coterminous with instrumentality, management, accountability and the drivers of cultural policy. At the same time, within academia, evaluation is often looked upon as an insufficiently critical field of research, criticised as being complicit with neoliberal governmentality and methodologically shaky. It is seen as insufficiently

PUBLIC DIALOGUE BETWEEN TERRY KURGAN (BERLIN) AND ANTHONY SCHRAG (JOHANNESBURG), 9UB SHOWCASE IN BERLIN, TRIALOGUE III, SEPTEMBER 2014

robust, ideologically biased and little more than advocacy while the employment of ›toolkits‹ is an example of »excessive simplification«.[2]

Evaluative research is in itself an enactment of the cultural values of intellectual disciplines. The scramble to systematically measure and evidence the value of arts and culture exemplifies what has been described as »the social life of methods«[3]: the relationship between theory and method and the »affordances and capacities«, which are realised in methods themselves. In this sense evaluative research is *in itself* a social intervention that is intrinsically caught up in debates regarding the value of culture and cultural participation and how this should be understood. Attending to the social life of evaluative methods demands acknowledgement of the histories of and motivations for evaluation as well as the ethics and aesthetics of these sociological entanglements.

It is in this spirit of critical reflexivity that 9UB's evaluation was built into and conducted throughout the project. 9UB is a complex constellation of actors, desires, motivations, intentions and actualisations which have gradually aligned in the work of designing, co-producing, distributing and disseminating the socially engaged practice at the heart of the project. Consequently, 9UB is surrounded also by partner expectations and investments, which are, at

once, tactical and strategic, political, aesthetic, affective and economic.

The evaluation of 9UB sits within this constellation of needs, agendas, foci and envisioned outputs. At the same time, it is driven by its own aim to offer partners at all project levels the opportunity to critically reflect on their engagements with the arts, the social, and the realities of cultural exchange, including the role and production of ideas of sustainability and (better, safer) urban life. Evaluation was a keystone in the outline of the project aiming to draw out any lessons learnt whilst providing a space where the value of art and participation could be discussed with 9UB's diverse audiences and critical publics. It is in these terms that the Centre for Urban and Community Research (CUCR) at Goldsmiths, University of London, joined the network as academic partner from the very beginning.

In this role, we avoided trying to invent the perfect externally generated technocratic formula or toolkit to evidence the project's value, which could then be measured against the various partners aims and objectives. We questioned this approach from the outset. Our insider perspective meant that we recognised that this would create an additional level of administration and bureaucracy, which could potentially detract from the demands of delivery on already tight budgets. Instead we sought to recognise the affordances and capacities that are mobilised in and through research methods. This modest ethnographic approach requires negotiating complexity, working in partnership and working with an ethical commitment to criticality, collaboration and change whilst navigating a path between »etic« and »emic« perspectives,[4] simultaneously making sense of the extrinsic and intrinsic cultural values of the project. The project itself was built on multiple and continuous exchange.

Our contributions to this publication reflect some of the themes that emerged from these conversations. They attempt to unpick the complexity of the project and provide an informative, generative, critical and non-partisan perspective on the project's delivery and its relevance to a wider context of contemporary cultural policy. In four essays, spread out throughout this e-Book and interconnected with each other and to the other contributions of the publication, we highlight the particular matters of (1) participation, (2) the role of the artist, (3) sustainability and (4) safety as these were addressed by or surfaced in and through the nine interventions. An overarching fifth consideration shines through all of them and is briefly introduced here as the heart and backbone of 9UB: this is the art of dialogue as it was envisioned and practiced on all levels of the project with its multiple forms, implications and effects.

Learning Conversations

9UB describes itself as a project that has »trans-local« dialogue at its very core, both as the basis for and as a method to »negotiate the future of urban living«. This dialogue was to be achieved by means of socially engaged artistic practices and by bringing these practices in relation to each other across distinct geographic, cultural and institutional contexts. It was also to be achieved in the context of diverse concerns and ways of operating via

both the biotope partners (the residency hosts) and the visiting artists (South African artists in cities of the European Union and vice versa).

Dialogue was envisioned twofold: as hands-on artistic encounters within the biotopes ›on street level‹, and as three triangular trans-local exchanges between parallel-run residencies (the trialogues). In addition, meetings among individuals and among ›stakeholder groups‹ (artists with artists, hosts with hosts, German project partners meeting in Berlin, South African project partners meeting in Durban) took place before, during and after the residencies, both as physical encounters and as tele-mediated conversations. Last, but not least, the collaborative evaluation with its multiple interviews, observations and reflections, the website (www.urban-biotopes.net) and the publication of this e-Book have been conceived as dialogical spaces complementing 9UB's multi-layered »arena of exchange«.

In *Conversation pieces*, Grant Kester argues that ›dialogic‹ art requires that we rethink how art is shifting from an emphasis on the individual experience of spectatorship of the visual, or the sensory encounter with the art object, to »the condition and character of the exchange itself«. Doing so, he draws our attention to the

TASWALD PILLAY (PARIS, TRIALOGUE II), ANTHONY SCHRAG (JOHANNESBURG, TRIALOGUE III) AND CUCR EVALUATORS MEETING WITH PARTICIPANTS FROM THE SOWETO RESIDENCY (TRIALOGUE I), SECOND EVALUATION VISIT TO UBUNTU PARK, SOWETO, AUGUST 2014

»politics of the social process, relations of collaboration, exchange and negotiation«.[5] Kester's notion of the dialogical draws on the Russian literary theorist and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin and his theory of dialogism. Dialogism is not merely about engaging in conversation with someone, but rather about understanding each other's cultural practice and to use this understanding to perceive and re-perceive the self and our own cultural constellations. It is about the »intersubjective quality of all meaning«, as Ken Hirschkop expounds, about »the space *between* expression and understanding«.[6] Kester argues that the work of art can materialise this in-between, exercising its dialogical potential by way of being »a locus of differing meanings, interpretations, and points of view«.[7]

In foregrounding dialogue as an intention of the project and as an evaluation criterion, 9UB demands that we pay attention to the processes that do (or don't) make dialogue possible: the forms and conditions of dialogue – what is required from those who wish to take part in it, the extent to which dialogue partners come together, and the diverse understandings of cultural practice that are tested and made apparent in the dialogical process.
At the same time is it important to keep in mind that dialogue is not merely about agreement. Drawing on Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's theory of radical democracy, ›agonality‹, that is, a »battle of meaning«, is as likely and as appropriate as consensus.[8] This points to 9UB's other ›findings‹, namely that dialogue needs infrastructures filled with liveliness – and this liveliness can flourish only on the ground of trust and within protected time and spaces for shared learning, debate and reflection.

As in all projects of this complexity, inevitably, there have been missed opportunities, misunderstandings and structural and operational misconceptions that have impacted negatively on achieving comprehensive dialogue as well as all the other ambitious aims that 9UB had set itself to accomplish (that is: sustainability, research, impact, for example). At the same time, many opportunities have been created and taken, and different understandings have been challenged, debated and jointly enriched. The mutual learning that took place becomes apparent not least in the demand for adapting to unforeseen circumstances and in changing the course of local interventions and the overall project in accordance with shifting needs and possibilities. All in all, the small and big, tangible and intangible successes on all levels of 9UB would not have been possible without vibrant and committed dialogue.

The four evaluation essays of this publication review how participation and an artist's role, sustainability and safety surfaced in the nine initiatives. This includes the critical reflection also on how partners and participants dealt with uncertainties and surprises, how they struggled with the adversities of their particular circumstances, and how interpretations regarding outcomes and successes continue to be the subject of contestation on the grounds of different aims and expectations. Acknowledging the clear *and* the troubled waters is how we hope to contribute to 9UB's culture of dialogue.
We would like to thank all partners and participants for their dedication and contributions to the shared learning contained in these pages.

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Related content

Interview with Sophie Hope

external contributions

Valentina Rojas Loa

Editor e-Publication Nine Urban Biotopes

Throughout the e-Publication, we include a series of contributions from scholars and practitioners, as well as from some of the partners of 9UB, aimed at broadening the dialogue initiated by the residencies in each of the nine urban biotopes themselves. These interventions place the local and trans-local actions of 9UB within broader frameworks and discussions, connecting the experiences and achievements of the past months to current debates in the academic world, to the field of cultural studies, and the worlds of cultural policy, urban development, education and planning. They also educe some of the key issues that arose during the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the project.

Taking advantage of the possibilities offered by multimedia and an experimental e-Publication, these contributions come in various formats: as video interviews and photo journeys, in addition to the more usual from of textual essays.

We would like to thank all authors, interviewers and technical supporters, who in spite of their often tight schedules and wide commitments, took the time to share their enlightening thoughts and words with us.

Texts

Henk Borgdorff, a music theorist, philosopher and sociologist who has walked a long path into the epistemology, the philosophical and the political rationale of artistic research, examines this type of investigation as a valid and deeply insightful form of knowledge production in the text ›Artistic research: Unfinished thinking in and through art‹. Starting with an overview of affinities and differences to other research traditions, Borgdorff highlights how thinking »in, through and with art« produces non-formal forms of knowledge that are equally valid to more traditional knowledge produced by orthodox forms of scholarship.

Coming from the »borderlands of Science and Technology Studies, art and design«, and drawing on their experience of several trans-disciplinary research and exhibition projects, Michael Guggenheim, Bernd Kräftner and Judith Kröll present ›Incubations. A recipe for urban and other interventions‹. In the form of a stew recipe accompanied with illustrations, they present a socio-technical device to create new objects and interactions as cultural interventions, using a wide range of media, methods and theories as their ingredients. Heterodox, fresh and deeply inspiring, this recipe provides us with a sort of anti-framework within which to analyse the 9UB project itself, as well as to make unusual and revealing connections between the different issues presented in the e-Publication.

›The correlation between public open space activation and safety perceptions: Two case studies of local neighbourhood parks in Atterid-

geville, City of Tshwane, South Africa‹ provides an empirical approach to the issue of safety, one of the core aims of the 9UB project and extensively analysed in relation to the nine biotopes in the evaluation realised by the Centre for Urban and Community Research, Goldsmiths, University of London. The investigations were conducted by Ndimphiwe Jamile in the frame of the Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention for Safe Public Spaces Programme (VCP), a joint initiative carried out by the South African government and the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ).

Last but not least, in ›Spacewarz in Cape Town‹, South African journalist, scholar and cultural activist Taryn Jeanie Mackay writes about skateboarding and graffiti in Cape Town, which, despite having enormous importance to the cultural identity and empowerment of the people who practice it, is forbidden by the city authorities. She highlights how these urban expressions constitute a new way of reclaiming public space, and reanimating a connection with Nature and the Earth within an urban context.

Videos

Adam Greenfeld is director of Urbanscale and senior fellow at LSE Cities, London School of Economics and Politics. In his contribution, he elaborates on the transformative effect that contemporary information and communication technologies have on our cities, championing the notion of ›networked urbanism‹. This opens a wide field of connections to 9UB's overall aim of trans-local dialogue, to its use of technology in order to achieve it – not least by means of this e-Publication, and particularly, to the biotope project carried out in Durban with its use of cellular phone technology.

Sophie Hope is co-founder of B+B Curatorial Partnership and lecturer in curating at Birkbeck, University of London. In her contribution she discusses the commissioning, agency and evaluation of socially engaged art practice. Her considerations are of great value with regard to acknowledging and making sense of the cultural policy frameworks, open and concealed agencies and contested experiences that shape endeavours like 9UB and its local interventions. They resonate in particular with the Johannesburg residency and the issues discussed by 9UB's on-board evaluators.

Michael Keith is director of COMPAS, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford, and co-director of the Oxford Programme for the Future of Cities. Interviewed by Stefan Horn, initiator of 9UB, he elaborates on the social sustainability of cities and draws connections between innovation, migration, justice and citizen rights. He challenges dominant perspectives in urban studies and asks questions about the current demands and future imperatives of urban life. His insights resonate in particular with the residencies in Turin and Paris as well as with the principle aim of 9UB, namely learning from grass-root initiatives and across space and time.

Bruno Latour is professor in sociology and director of SPEAP, Program of Experimentation in Art and Politics, at Sciences Po Paris. In his contribution, he reflects on the working of art as a medium for ›making things public‹, considerations that resonate in particular with

the residency at the Spreefeld in Berlin where both issues and publics emerged simultaneously out of the methodology of the artistic intervention. Elaborating on art as (social) research and challenging the notion of art's ›social engagement‹ in the first place, he provides us with a critical perspective on 9UB and projects of its like.

Marcos L. Rosa is an architect and urban planner based in Sao Paulo, and member of the Urban Age network of Alfred Herrhausen Society. He elaborates on urban grass-root initiatives and their potentials for the planning and development of localities and cities. His contributions resonate specifically with the experiences and interventions of the Paris biotope, and opens up multiple points of connection to the conversation between Pillay and Opper on informal settlements and architectural awareness and education.

Photo Essays

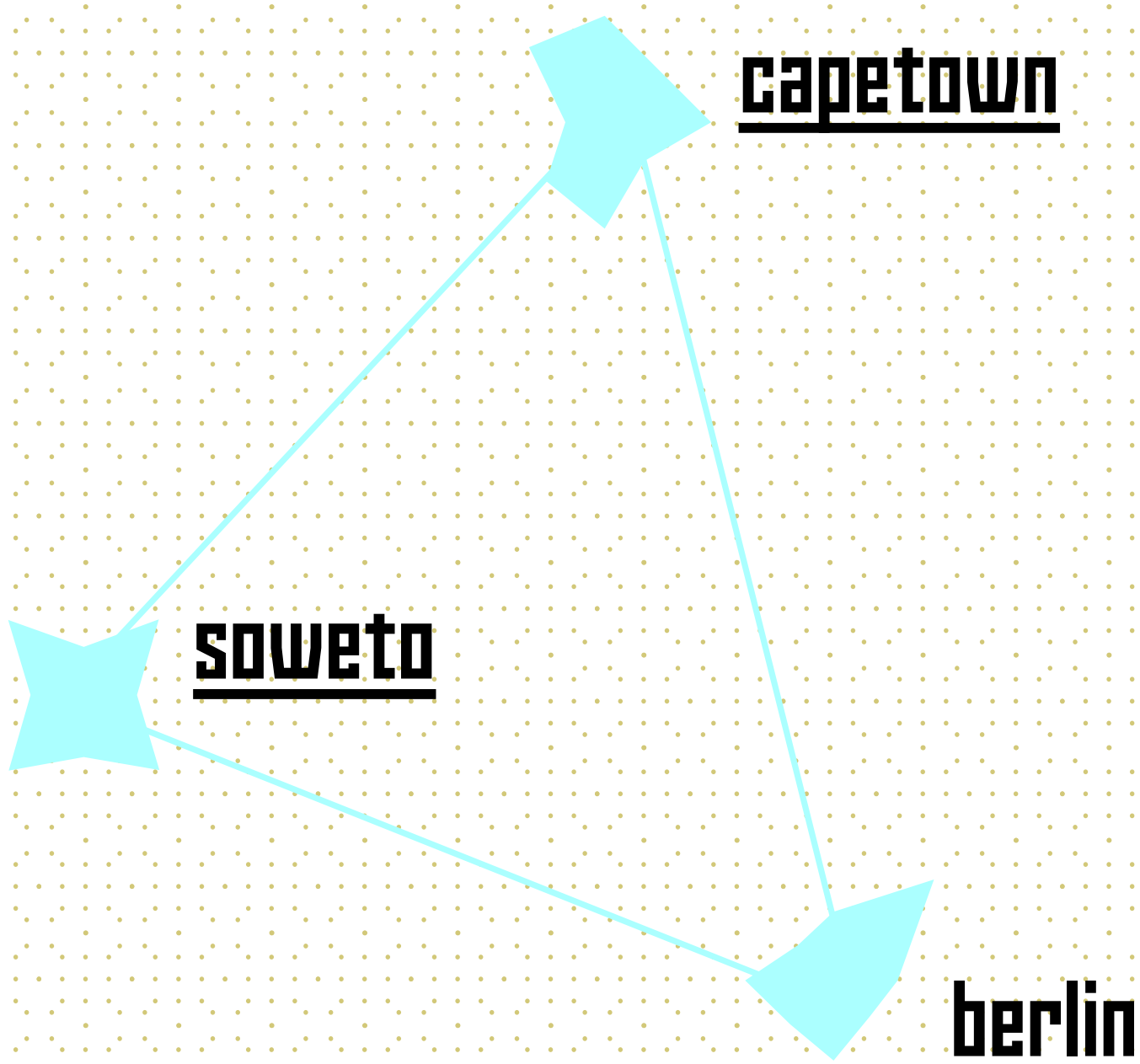
The series of photographic essays that are also part of this compilation takes us on a journey into the thick of life of three of the participating cities of Nine Urban Biotopes: Durban, Johannesburg and London. They are accompanied by drawings by architect-artist and city-walker Doung Anwar Jahangeer from Durban.

›A walk into Durban – the Citywalk Initiative‹ consists of a selection of photographs taken by photographer and media artist Armin Linke during his residency in Durban.

The second photo essay is drawn from a series of ten books by Mark Lewis (images) and Tanya Zack (texts) entitled ›Wake up, this is Joburg‹. In the first book, ›Zola‹, the authors introduce us to the residents of Johannesburg who provide daily informal catering to the 600 taxi drivers that connect people and the city; in ›Butchers‹ we delve into images impregnated with the flesh and blood of an illegal butchery trade, located in an abandoned garage in the city centre; ›Recyclers‹, finally, is an account of the life of those who long before it became a matter of ecological concern, make their living by recycling what the city discards.

From Johannesburg's vantage point, almost at the tip of urban Africa, we dive into London, where photographer Diego Ferrari reclaims life in that city. In this last photo essay, Ferrari casts ›organic matter‹ – water, body and social relations – onto the unblemished surfaces of the built environment drawing on work from his series ›Urban habitat – A co-existence of the senses‹, ›Challenging social codes‹ and ›We are water‹.

trialogue I



what cape town taught me

By Caroline Wanjiku Kihato

It is the contradiction that most stood out for me when I spoke to visual artist Antje Schiffers about her experience of Cape Town. »The first weeks here, I felt really stupid,« she admitted to me one afternoon, speaking from her home-for-three-months in Bo-Kaap, on the slopes of Signal Hill at the edge of Cape Town's City Bowl. »I thought I was a much-travelled person – I have been to central Asia, Mexico,« her voice trailed off, »but I underestimated the Cape Town context. What strikes me most is this beauty combined with so much tension, that is something I have not been used to. I cannot just enjoy the beauty because there is so much tension.«

Antje Schiffers was born in Heiligendorf, Germany. Together with fellow artists Kathrin Böhm and Wapke Feenstra she founded *myvillages.org* in 2003, an artist initiative that uses participatory art practices to build rural communities and celebrate them as sources of cultural production. Antje's art projects have taken her across the globe, from Mexico to Russia, Ghana to Cape Town.

»My work includes a lot of travelling driven by curiosity about what life is like in other places,« she told me. »It was this curiosity that led me to accept the invitation to participate in the Nine Urban Biotopes in Cape Town.« As part of the project Antje approached people in Cape Town and asked them, »What can Cape Town teach me? What do you think a European can learn here?« She wanted to know what people would

VIDEO STILL FROM ›WHAT CAPE TOWN TAUGHT ME‹

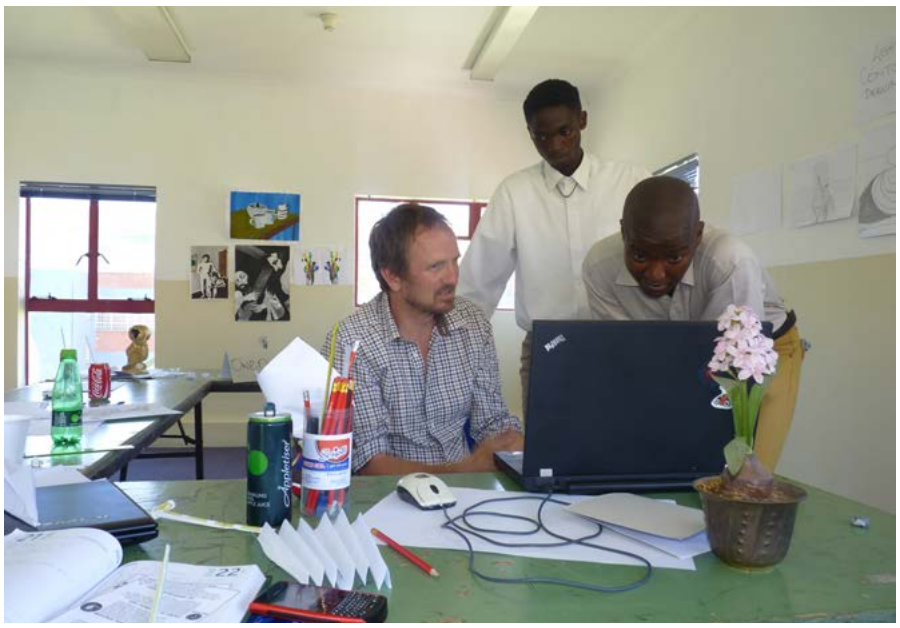
think is different for her and what she could learn from the city.

Antje's participatory art project in Cape Town involved a technique that she had not used before – turning her drawings into an animated movie. Together with her partner, Thomas Sprenger, and Ziphozakhe Hlobo, her guide through the city, they captured Antje's experiences through animated drawings of the setting, and short texts of the conversations that took place between Antje and her Cape Town teachers.

Each narrative starts as an empty canvas, which as the story builds, fills up with graphite two-dimensional images of the setting in which the story is taking place. »It is really like making boxes of every place and explaining the box and then starting the story. It is interesting for me to see how much storytelling works in this way. How often we would use what we expect others to already know.« The twenty minute animation movie entitled ›What Cape Town taught me‹ begins with a Zimbabwean guitarist whose music takes us through Antje's Cape Town. Ziphozakhe's carrying voice narrates Antje's words:

ANIMATION MOVIE ›WHAT CAPE TOWN TOUGHT ME‹

BO-KAAP, YESTERDAY EVENING BY ZIPHOZAKHE HLOBO



THOMAS SPRENGER SHOWS THE TWO YOUNG MEN FROM ›YOUNG IN PRISON‹ THE ART OF ANIMATION.

»Don’t think of the whole world and its problems, you will think you will solve them all but you can’t and it depresses you. Think of the small space of your life and what you can do in it, be open and do your best, then go home and be proud of what you have done.«

Zipho’s voice is clear and confident, sometimes sarcastic, sometimes sombre, sometimes playful, and carries with it the lilt of her Eastern Cape upbringing. However, it is odd that Zipho reads Antje’s words and experiences as her own, in the first person. Perhaps it is part of the artist’s plot to unsettle the viewer? This is left open for the observer to ruminate upon. Zipho is a freelance performance poet and writer who moved to Cape Town in search of work. »It [Cape Town] is not too financially viable for a very young emerging artist« Zipho writes, »hence myself and those I work with have been occupying our time with part-time jobs, establishing our own movements, organising and performing arts events….« Zipho is a graduate in Media Studies from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth. In addition to showing Antje around Cape Town, she also served as the embedded journalist for the project.

»What Cape Town taught me« is a series of short stories that explore Cape Town through Antje’s learning experiences. As she moves through the city, Antje encounters characters and spaces, which form part of her narrative.

As the stop motion movie rolls on, we meet characters like Jonathan, a DJ at Radio Ziboneles, and Vuyo, a former shack dweller, who provides Antje with lessons from Cape Town from practical how-to skills like making koek-

sisters (traditional Malay doughnuts), and an African meal, and growing crops in sandy soil, to learning how people navigate the violence of rape, muggings, drugs and killings in the city; from Ishmael's sound advice, »Don't collaborate with your enemies, stand for what you think is right«, to Vuyo's humanising reminder that »people always aspire for something better, that is the same in a shack as elsewhere.«

When I asked Antje what skill she would rank as most important of the ones she learned, she had this to say: »I would say greeting your neighbours, which is so simple, but is something we don't do in Berlin it sounds so easy and then it means quite a lot.« After a short pause, she adds, »also the concept of sharing, which many people referred to and reflected upon.« The people Antjie encountered in Cape Town were doubtful that they could teach her to share. There was so much sharing during apartheid within the community, everybody was united to fight apartheid. She explained to me that since apartheid's demise, people had become more focused on their own individual or family needs.

Ironically, it is what Capetonians thought they could not offer that seemed to teach Antje the most. She learned what sharing meant in the Cape Town context in her conversations with Zipho who comes from a large extended African family. »There's an African way of having a broader family and not having the concept of my money is my money… That's what we have [in Berlin]. I would never have the idea that if my brother has money he should give it to me.« From Zipho, she learned a more communal understanding of the word. The ways in which the word ›share‹ is laden with varied meanings and responsibilities in different contexts. »I thought about [the word] ›share‹ seriously. Of course we often use the word lightly as in >let's share this experience<; that's easy to say. But to share can be quite a big thing.« For Antje, Cape Town seems to have had an uncanny ability to hold a mirror up to her and allow a kind of unexpected self-scrutiny and reflection. By asking what Cape Town could teach her, the city's quirks and paradoxes pointed to contradictions in her own life and her home city Berlin.

»I get conscious about how little tension there is in Berlin, it even starts to feel a bit strange. This very relaxed feeling is also not what we would find in all of the world.«

It is this introspection that resonated throughout our conversation; that the skills she learned in Cape Town raised questions about herself, as a white European woman, and her hometown Berlin. Cape Town disrupted her settled sense of her ›normal‹ life in Berlin. »Why don't we greet in Berlin? Because we don't need to greet for safety,« she said, answering her own question. »It's nice because it made me learn a lot and made me feel very stupid, which is okay too, because its fine to be shaken around from time to time. You shouldn't feel too comfortable.«

While some of the discussions around crime, the irresponsibility of youth, and unemployment seem to fit the stereotypes of places like Khayelitsha, Antje actively tries to disrupt these stereotypes in the movie through her visuals. The drawings make things look the same; a shack does not look so shack-like when it is drawn. It looks the same as other homes. Indeed there is a way in which the animation

evens out urban space, so that the viewer does not confront the racial, gender, class and geographic inequalities that constitute Cape Town. »I would write something about it being high noon and a hot day in a nice neighbourhood in Khayelitsha, and people would think, how can that be a nice neighbourhood? Khayelitsha is one of Cape Town's notorious neighbourhoods. Located on the Flats, it was planned under apartheid as a residential area for blacks, and has high levels of crime and poverty. Unlike the posh suburbs that hug Cape Town's Table Mountain, these flat areas sprawl in its margins, housing the city's other, the blacks, coloureds and poor that were apartheid's undesirables. This flattening of geography, of creating an anonymity of place allows a retelling of the story of Cape Town, so that the viewer does not judge a priori the value of Khayelitsha versus Tamboerskloof, Bo-Kaap versus Sea Point.« Antje explained that she wanted to leave the places in her story ambiguous, not to for people to say ›aha!‹, that is what I expected in Khayelitsha, or ›it's just the opposite from what I expected from Khayelitsha‹. »Sometimes it is clear and other times it is unclear.«

While this geographic evenness allows us to re-imagine Cape Town, it also erases contemporary and historical boundaries between communities in ways that might make an audience well-versed in Cape Town's past and present uncomfortable. Uncomfortable in that there seems to be an erasure of the socio-historical, political and geographic boundaries that constitute the very fabric of Cape Town's everyday life. For by evening out the city's inequalities, does the movie not erase people's histories, lived experiences and their everyday struggles of class, race and place? Was this part of the artist's right of expression and creativity? Was the flattening of Cape Town a reaction against the very tangible tensions that the artist experienced in her time there? Does the animated image allow Antje to redraw the landscape of Cape Town and retell its story? By drawing the wealthy neighbourhood of Tamboerskloof in a way that is comparable to the Malay Quarter in Bo-Kaap, or the township Khayelitsha in a similar way to touristy Sea Point, can we read resistance in the storytelling of Antje's Cape Town?

It is this ambiguity that creates a tension throughout the film. And, for the artist, the ambiguity is intentional. »I try to keep the interpreting part low, being careful to leave the short stories I tell open too.« It is the simple and almost poetic way in which the film disrupts our stereotypical ways of seeing and allows us to re-imagine Cape Town and its margins that makes this intervention an important one. Cape Town's marginality as a city in the global South is rewritten as a city that is at the centre of global learning. The story allows us to question Cape Town's marginality and Berlin's centrality in global urban discourses. Cape Town, this city in the global South becomes the norm, and Berlin its aberration. Inadvertently, ›What Cape Town taught me‹ inverts the measure by which we evaluate, look and understand world cities.

WHAT CAPE TOWN TAUGHT ME.

Friday 21 March 3 p.m Hubspace Khayelitsha

with performances by
Ziphozakhe Hlobo and Jahfield
The Young Authors' Club Lansdowne

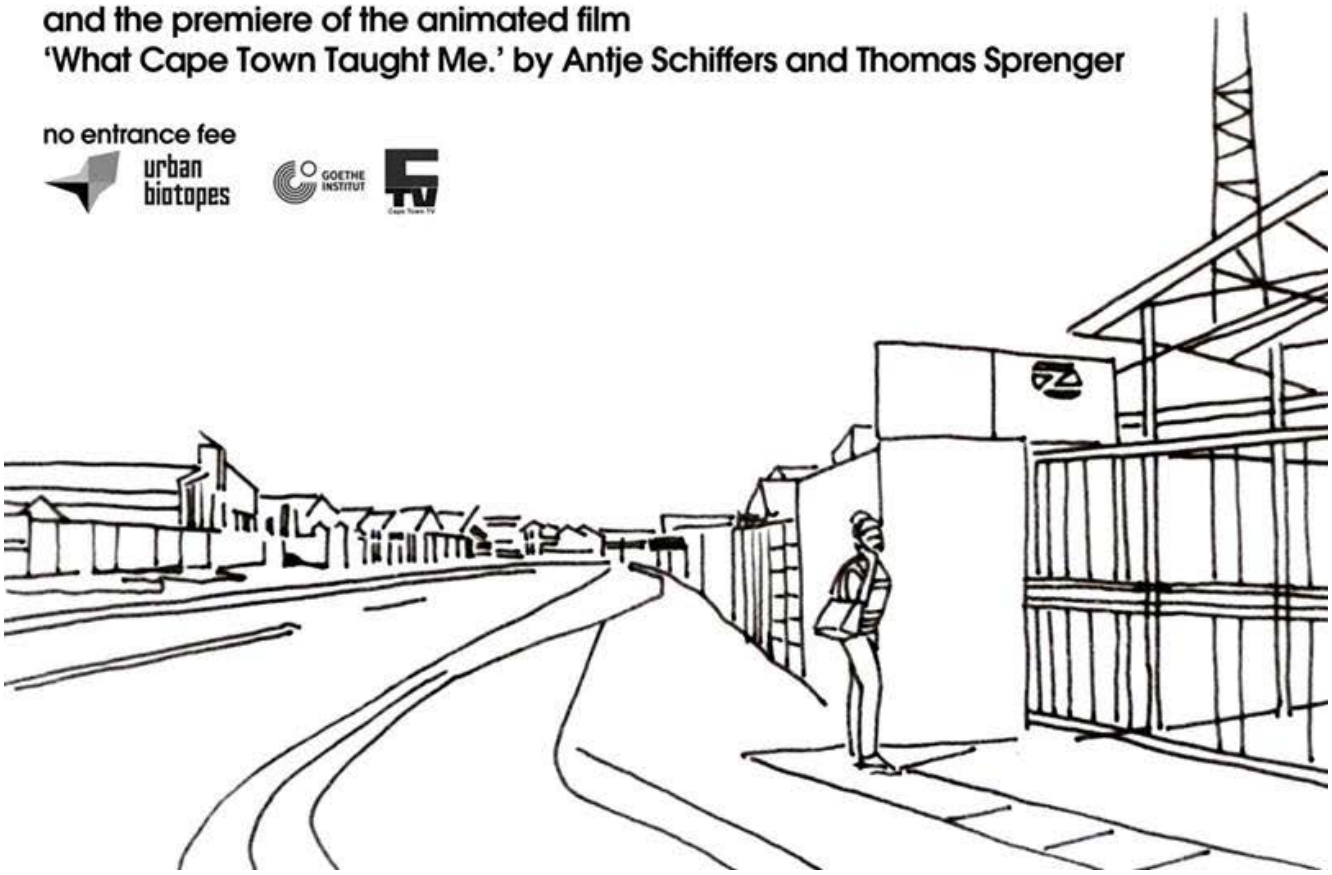
a screening of the short film
'To The One I Love' by Zolani Ndevu

and the premiere of the animated film
'What Cape Town Taught Me.' by Antje Schiffers and Thomas Sprenger

no entrance fee

urban biotopes

GOETHE INSTITUT



More content

Koeksisters Recipe

CV Antje Schiffers

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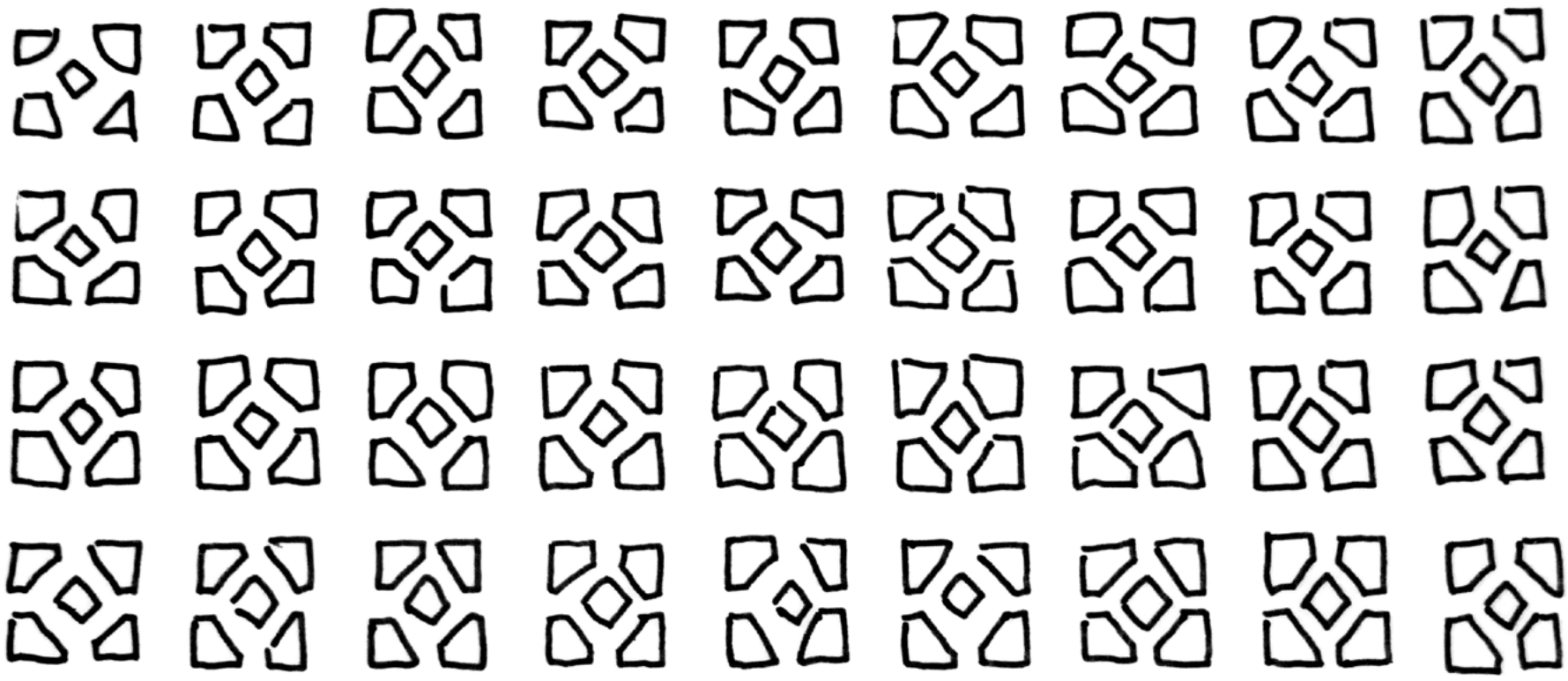


Koeksisters Recipe

Boil 3 to 4 cubed potatoes
Mash the potatoes
Add two eggs

+ Heat 750 ml long-life milk
+ Melt 100 gr butter

+ Mix with your hands:
  8 cups of flour
  1 cup sugar
  1 spoon ginger
  4 spoons anisseeds
  2 spoons cinnamon
  1 spoon cardamom
  2 packages dry yeast

+ Make a hole and add potato, egg, milk and butter, and mix

+ Put some flour on the table
  Oil your hands and the table
  Move the dough for 15 minutes

+ Put the dough in an oiled bowl, close it with plastic and let it rest in a warm place for 1 - 1,5 hours, depending on the weather

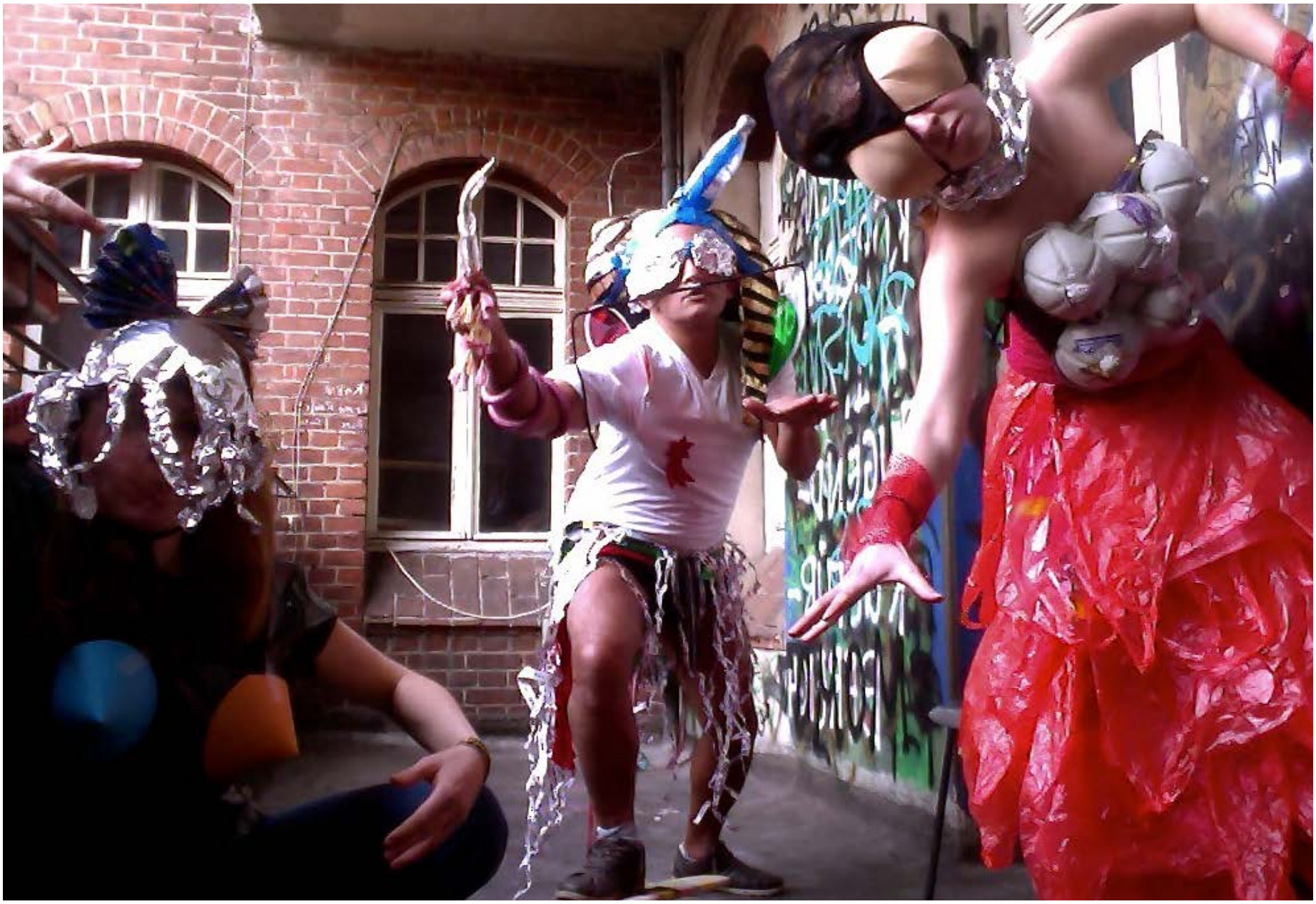
+ Heat a pot with sufficient vegetable oil
  Form balls out of the dough, the size of a small egg

+ Bake the balls in oil – they should swim
  The oil has to be hot, but not too hot; they should be brown within 2 mins, more or less, then you turn them around

+ Cook a syrup out of equal parts of sugar and water
  The syrup should be a little bit sticky between your fingers, but liquid enough

+ Heat the koeksisters in the syrup, then turn them around in coconut flakes

+ It is all about temperature and a feeling for the right degree of stickiness



far away so close

By Valentina Rojas Loa

A black man from Cape Town.
A group of Berlin youngsters with Turkish, Palestinian and Guinean origins.
A world-acclaimed artist working in the liminal spaces between fashion, performance and contemporary art.
A group of young creatives looking for possibilities to expand their practice as actors, stage directors, performers.
A bold iconoclast deconstrucing national ideologies and politics, utopias and dystopias, by playing with his own identity.
A theatre group fostering political self-determination, community participation and social change through techniques of radical pedagogy.

Please welcome: Athi Patra Ruga and JugendTheaterBüro (JTB, Youth Theatre Office) Berlin.

The script

After more than a year of e-mail correspondance, virtual and physical encounters and a lot of planning, the first art residency of 9UB started off in Berlin. The project brief was that

Athi-Patra Ruga, a South African artist based in Cape Town, would engage in an artistic dialogue from January to March 2014 with a group of teenagers between the ages of 16 and 22 at the Youth Theatre Office Berlin in Moabit (JTB). This inner-city borough of Berlin is currently undergoing a process of gentrification, but has been home to many immigrants, especially from Turkey and Arab countries over the last 30 years.

The plan of action anticipated a workshop where the participants would explore questions of social and personal identity within Berlin's urban context. Together, the artist and youngsters would develop a series of characters that would respond to the identified challenges of their time, city and lives. The project would finish in March with a performance that would take to the streets of Berlin in order to explore the different reactions provoked by the encounter between the characters and inhabitants of the city.

The project

At the outset, the residency developed as it was planned. In the first week, Athi and the JTB concentrated on ›shadowing‹ their work, exploring who they are, how they work and what their goals are. Athi then proposed to the group that they work with performativity rather than theatre, in particular with developing personal heroes, that is, with ›alter egos‹ born out of personal engagements with the world and its deficiencies rather than with what we could call ›actor-detached‹ stage characters. »The idea of working with heroes,« says Annika Füser, one of JTB's facilitators, »came from Athi and we thought it was interesting to connect it to villains in order to explore duality in the identity of characters … also because Athi always works with opposites.« Each member of the group had to find his or her own individual hero by asking themselves what they would fight against? With what super powers would they rescue the city? And which specific location in Berlin would be their paradigmatic site of action? The chosen name of the project was to be ›Sheroes and villains‹. »The ›S‹ of ›Sheores‹,« Annika explains, was introduced to take a deliberately female point of view, »because heroes are most of the time male and Athi works a lot with gender roles and performativity of gender.«[1]

Both parties were excited to work with one another. For Athi, the collaboration was an opportunity to expand his artistic practice from working as an individual performer to developing a project with a larger group of young people. Moreover, his expectations were of »going into public spaces« in order to impact immediately on real-life situations, as well as being able to explore together with the theatre

ATHI-PATRA RUGA INTRODUCING HIMSELF

group the »performativness of my work … land, space, migration, our prejudices about place.«

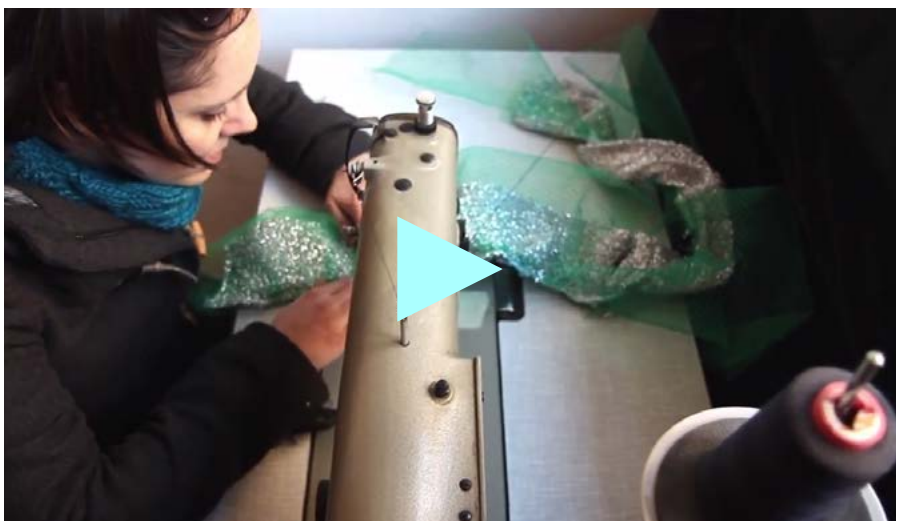
He was looking forward to getting to know who the JTB's members were and how they perform being; and from there, above all, he wanted to go deeper into a »discussion with youth about the roles that are played also when not performing: expectations from society and who you really want to be.«[2]

For JugendTheaterBüro, working with Athi meant the chance to learn about a different approach to performativity. The JTB's work is strongly inspired by the theory and practice of Paolo Freire and Augusto Boal who developed what they called a ›Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed‹. Education, in Freire's approach, is conceived as »dialogical action« and cooperation. Only dialogue can overcome the hierarchical, manipulative indoctrination and »cultural invasion« of the »banking concept of education« that upholds those who learn as the passive recipients of those who teach, the dominant educational model of the 1960s which Freire critiqued. Drawing on this approach, Boal set the foundations for an international movement of participatory theatre practice that aims at exploring rehearsal theatre as a universal language by which both solidarity and humanity can be learned in order to resist everyday oppression.

Through the exchange with Athi, the JTB were able to explore new techniques of character development and visual-performative expression. It is interesting that Athi himself does not have any professional training in drama. However, as a performance artist, he uses his body as a medium to expose »the origins and effects that images have on our everyday politics« as well as to unmask the performativity intrinsic to public life, as art critic Melissa van Rooyen has framed it.[3] In particular, he draws on creative means that stem from fashion and design. First trained as a fashion designer, Athi believes that »fashion by definition is and depends on how you can fashion people.« The way that fashion design »engineers a body« is what interests him and what he says links him to performance.[4]

The invention of the ›heroe's‹ attire hence became an essential task during their creation as well as an inherent component of their heroic traits. In the words of Meike Migaud, the costume designer from JTB, »it was the first time that I created the costumes with the actors, not for the actors. At the beginning there were many abstract ideas and we had to think about how to turn them into something concrete and make the powers of these superheroes visible. That made me think about theatre and about the function of costumes as well.«

During the process, the youth theatre members went out into the city to nurture their characters: they collected scrap materials to make their costumes and found the corners of Berlin that best represented their characters: a garbage



›SHEROES AND VILLAINS‹, VIDEO BY KAY MÖPERT

dump at the river canal, the tube, the shopping district, the World Clock at Alexanderplatz, the roofs of Moabit … bearing in mind also that not only their heroes but they themselves, as the inhabitants of the city, play an important role in the daily urban stage: »We generally create a production and put it on stage with an audience, but in this case,« says Annika, »we had to ask ourselves an initial question: how do you perform in the public space? What is the everyday performance, the small gazes that make you feel less than other people?.«

In particular, Athi's skin colour, the concealed discrimination he sensed during his days in Berlin, and the fact that he came from South Africa was of particular interest to the JTB members. »In the tram or the bus here in Berlin, for instance,« Annika recalls from the days of the residency, »Athi felt that people didn't want to sit beside him. So he was reflecting on how to deal with that by creating these heroes to protect oneself and feel safer in public space.« As a group of politically active young artists with immigrant backgrounds, the members of the JTB strongly identified with the victims and opponents of the apartheid regime. They understand their art practice as a tool to fight »against racisim, sexism, and social discrimination and exploitation, and the violation of human rights.« Through Athi, were therefore eager to learn from black South Africa's history of struggle for their own fight at home in Berlin. In their KulTür auf! Manifesto, a cry and demand for the opening of doors to and through culture, they exclaim: »We know what it is like not to be taken seriously, to be unable to gain recognition and acceptance for who we are and what we do, and to often be fit in drawers.«

The challenge

Once the objectives of Athi's residency at JTB were set, they began looking for a way to reach them together, with the awareness that they both had very different approaches to work and that that would inevitably lead to several challenges that had to be overcome.

The first challenge – omnipresent in the practice of socially engaged art practices and the debates around and within them – was the point of departure. For JTB, »the way we work is that we start from politics and the issues we want to address. From there we build a performance around it or a piece.« On the contrary, Athi starts with the visuals and then the politics come into the process. As mentioned before, the youngsters were keen on learning from South Africa's struggle against apartheid in order to enrich their own artistic and political agenda and to develop a co-authored piece with Athi. However, although films such as Otello Burning and Sarafina, both films about young people and their quest for political freedom in South Africa, were seen and discussed during the workshops, Athi was more interested in exploring the personal experience of racism

MEETING, VIDEO BY KAY MÖPERT

in the lives of the Berlin youngsters themselves and from there to create a performance connecting the personal with the political.

Athi decided to work with the word ›trauma‹ to spark the exploration: »I was very enthusiastic so I wanted to jump deep and dig deeper,« he expounds in one of his interviews. However, according to Annika from JTB, working with a particularly strong notion such as ›trauma‹ was way too much for the youngsters: »When confronted with trauma, the things that came up in the workshop were far too strong, and the youngsters asked themselves whether they wanted to expose themselves like that with someone they hardly knew … There was pressure to work in a particular way, Athi's way … His work is about himself, about his personal things and he brings them out in performance, but the JTB people couldn't bear that Athi wanted them to work all the time with their personal past … Athi wanted us to create our inner hero. But the argument from some of the members of JTB was that these heroes didn't have anything to do with trauma.«

This misunderstanding regarding the focus and creative technique to be employed caused both the youngsters and Athi to grow sceptical about the possibilities of success in their collaboration. In order to ease the tensions, the facilitators from JTB tried to discuss the problem. However, according to Annika, when undertaking this dialogue, Athi »didn't see this misunderstanding to be problematic.« Holding in high esteem Athi's outstanding artistic production, they nevertheless realised that he did not have the educational vocation and training to work with JTB: »I felt that for Athi it was very new to work with teenagers,« Annika reflects on the residency. »With teenagers there is a different level of communication. You are seen as an instructor and you have the responsibility to catch people … . « She continues: »I think he didn't realise that he was responsible also for the well being of these people who entered the workshop with him.« Moreover, they identified a gap between their respective artistic worlds. »The art world with its galleries is very distant from what we do,« Annika explains the division. For the JTB working with Athi meant the welcomed opportunity to challenge their »stereotype of the individual artist who from his inner self creates a crazy new world […] yet some of his videos, we didn't understand what they meant. He worked with a different medium that was completely strange to us … .«

Seen from Athi's perspective, the concept of art championed by JTB, where the collective work and the political agenda come before the art piece, was also problematic for the collaboration. This is so even if in essence both JTB and Athi contest the political and the social order of their respective contexts through their artistic work. According to Kay Möpert from JTB »Athi is a famous artist who earns money from his art and we don't. We struggle to be recognised as artists, we are seen as people who do social education, social work with troubled – probably ›criminal‹ as it is often argued – youngsters. We have to fight these issues to be recognised as artists, so from this point of view we do very different art.«

Last but not least, neither Athi nor JTB gave each other the needed time to find the paths toward the building of common ground. During

ATHI LEAVES THE PROJECT, VIDEO BY KAY MÖPERT

Athi's residence, JTB also had many other projects that were being planned or implemented, so they did not have the time nor the attentiveness to concentrate on making this particular project work. Athi, on the other hand, due to other artistic commitments and to personal issues, wanted to leave Berlin way before his residency was completed and was not able to come back for the final performance of the project. The virtual sessions they planned to hold together in order to continue the collaboration from afar also did not take place, due mostly to other committments of Athi's.

The end

On March 23rd, 2014, the members of JTB presented Sheroes and villains in the indoor premises of a beer garden in Berlin. Unfortunately, the public was scarce and the planned virtual presence of Athi via Skype conference did not materialise. The youngsters from JTB performed their characters and their supernatural powers. A poster exhibition explained each of their sheroes' attributes.

The performance took place on what was conceived of as a set of mobile exhibition carts, called MobEx, which transformed into an outdoor theatre with props, and was created in cooperation between JTB and ISSS

MOBEX THE MOBILE EXHIBITION UNIT, ANIMATION BY ISSS RESEARCH&ARCHITECTURE

research&architecture. The MobEx was built primarily from recycled building material as well as from donations by Berlin's Public Cleansing and Minga Networks. The design was inspired by mobile and improvised structures from around the world that provided services of many different types. In the context of this Berlin biotope, it was used as a support structure for the performance of the characters created by JTB and for the display of the process and results of the other biotopes taking place in the first trialogue of Nine Urban Biotopes.

The lessons learned

The collaboration between Athi-Patra Ruga and the Berlin-Moabit Youth Theatre Office had a great deal of potential. It contained at its core radically divergent approaches to theatre and performativity, to political and social awareness and engagement, to different processes undertaken by an artist for the creation of his/her work, as well as to the definition of the ultimate goal of an artwork. If it had rolled out more productively, the envisioned collaboration could have opened very interesting doors: both for the work of Athi-Patra Ruga and for the members of JTB as artists. In addition, the first Berlin residency might have produced some challenging interventions with regard to some of the most heated debates regarding art's autonomy and heteronomy, skill and emotional labour applied within socially engaged art practices, as well as with regard to the relationship between the personal and the political.

Unfortunately, these many doors were closed. The misunderstanding and lack of trust that emerged right from the get-go, along with the reduced time-span of the residency taught us that it is not enough to be an outstanding artist in order to undertake an artistic collaboration, more so with a group of teenagers. Socially engaged artists need both the will and the relevant skills alongside the excellence of their individual art practice in order to be able to successfully face such challenging encounters. At the same time, the encounter reveals how much responsibility is placed upon artists in such situations and how these pressures all too often go unacknowledged. And on the other hand, for artistic groups with such a strong and clear cut political agenda such as JTB, it could have been productive to open themselves to what Athi had to offer to them in terms of work process.

And finally, if both parties had stayed the course it might have been mutually extraordinarily interesting to negotiate or find a way of working together that explored and took into account the reluctance of the teenagers to publicly expose things about their intimate lives through a working process that they were not familiar with, and with a person they did not know. This biotope, howewer, was not only

about mismatches and misunderstandings. The learning experience for both the artist and the host organisation, as well as for the management of Nine Urban Biotopes, emerged slowly once the residency had come to an end, when everyone had enough distance and a cooler head to reflect upon what had happened, and to learn from it.

Endnotes

1 This and all following quotations have been taken from the in-depth project interview held with Annika Füser, Kay Möpert, Meike Migaud and Ahmed Shah from Youth Theater Office Berlin, held on the 4th of April 2014.

2 See: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zt0yQO2tzVA (Accesed 9th of April 2014).

3 Rooyen van, M. 2013. ›Untamed Creatives – Athi Patra Ruga‹, Between 10 and 5. The Creative Showcase. www.10and5.com/2013/11/28/untamed-creatives-athi-patra-ruga/ (Accesed 5th of April 2014)

4 Dlungwana, Pamella ›There is a need for me to constantly re-invent the self. Interview with Athi Patra Ruga‹, Contemporary& – Platform for International Art from African Perspectives. www.contemporaryand.com/blog/magazines/there-is-a-need-for-me-to-constantly-re-invent-the-self/ (Accesed 4th of April 2014).

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moving beyond materialism: rewriting community histories through socially engaged art in soweto

By Caroline Wanjiku Kihato

It seemed not even the rain would quell the energy in Soweto that drab Sunday on the 9th of March 2014. Johannesburg had not seen the sun in days and the country was experiencing the worst floods in 14 years. But the band members of the Noordgesig Boys Brigade (which also has girls) would not be cowered by the rains. They had a plan: to march from the Noordgesig primary school, across the Soweto Highway to the opening of a just-beautified park in Orlando East. Nothing, it seemed, would stop the troupe who were clad in midnight blue scout gear and traditional 1950s garrison hats, from executing it. The eager brigade, their friends and supervisors stood huddled from the rain under the protective roof of the school. The parade was over an hour late and plans were being made to transport the band to the park 3km away by mini-bus taxis. As the rain continued, the young musicians, tired of their containment, became restless. The percussion-

ist began to let out a rhythmic rumble on his Maxtone drum, then the high-pitched tin cans joined in and then the trumpets. In a few minutes, like the rising of a wave, everyone was dancing, singing and laughing. This band was not waiting on the rain anymore. There was a parade to put on show.

The parade was one of the two projects led by Marjetica Potrč together with students from her Design for the Living World class, which she teaches at the University of Fine Arts/Hochschule für bildende Künste (HFBK) in Hamburg. The student group included Finn Brüggemann, Maria Christou, Anja Gerin, Amalia Ruiz-Larrea, Nuriye Tohermes, and Radoš Vujaklija as well as Charlotte Riepe (of morethanshelters, Berlin and Hamburg), as a guest of the class. Marjetica and her students had arrived in South Africa some two months earlier. Anja Gerin said to me, »we came with many feelings which were unsorted, and we didn't know where we were going. It was very surprising what we saw when we came.« For two months, the ›people from Germany‹ as the group came to be known in Soweto, lived and worked in the community. This is an integral part of Marjetica's art practice. »You need to be really embedded in the society to understand their needs and propose what they want« she said at a presentation at Wits University. »To do to something together that makes sense, not just an artistic intervention and then everything collapses when you leave.«

Even the sun could not stay away from the band's sounds in the schoolyard. No sooner had their instruments warmed up, the clouds began to give way and the rain that had come

MIKE MAKWELA PROJECT MANAGER PLANACT INTRODUCING SOWETO

down for weeks began to subside. Before long, the band members had lined up. Percussionists first starting with the young four-year-olds, then the horns, followed by the vuvuzela's, plastic 20 litre drums and tin cans. As the band walked through the neighbourhood, people came out of their homes to join and cheer them on. What started out as a 50-strong procession was, by the end of the march, at least five times that. Even the South African Police Services, metro police, and the fire engine, there to ensure the safety of marchers, could not help but become part of the procession with many of the officials visibly moving to the band's local tunes. »All the police cars became part of the parade,« said Anja Gerin, »it became hilarious, it was huge!«, »I was very happy« ,one of the trumpet players told me when we got to the park venue, »people came out and cheered us!« When the band arrived at the park, there was a hush as the official opening began. After speeches from the councillor of the area and community representatives, Paulina who runs the crèche bordering the park unveiled the park's new name: Ubuntu. »It means humanity,« Gloria who lives in one of the homes neighbouring the park told me.

When they arrived, on January 15, the Hamburg-based group knew that they wanted to work in the Noordgesig and Orlando East communities. Research undertaken by Planact, a Johannesburg based non-profit organisation, had pointed to a historical rift between the coloured community in Noordgesig and the black community in Orlando East. According to Mike Makwela, project manager at Planact, »Noordgesig is predominantly coloured and Orlando East black. The two communities don't mix, especially the younger generation.« Separated by the Soweto Highway and the suave new BRT station, the community, according to their research, remained culturally and physically apart. The artists and architects wanted to explore ways of uniting both communities. »First we had to talk to community leaders. I wouldn't do it in other countries,« Marjetica explained, »but to meet community leaders here [in South Africa] is very important.« »We follow protocol here [in South Africa] and we had to go through our leadership structures,« said Mike Makwela. »It was strategic to bring in the officials,« he continued. »Everybody loves a winner, all of a sudden they see something is happening and because there is something to celebrate they are now on board.« With the leadership's blessings the group, together with their Soweto hosts began to talk to community members to understand what their needs were and what they wanted to do. »We came up with three projects,« Maria Christou told us at the Wits presentation. »A community garden project at the Noordgesig primary school that serves as a role model for enhancing food security in the community and encouraging the production of food by students and community members; a park in Orlando East; and a parade that celebrated youth culture in both communities«.

VEGETABLE GARDEN AT NOORDGESIG PRIMARY SCHOOL, SOWETO

Conceptual artist and architect Marjetica Potrč, a winner of the prestigious Hugo Boss Prize, teaches participatory design in Hamburg, Germany. »It is my passion to do projects with students for more than two months in a specific location,« she said, in the hot and packed room at Wits University about 21km away from her temporary abode in Soweto. While short-term art interventions have their place, she believes that »it is important to understand the social and political background and the challenges of the people you work with.« Typically, her embedded art practice involves four phases: conducting in-depth research before entering the community; talking and listening to the community and co-designing the project; working with the community to implement the project; and transferring responsibility for the developed project to the community in order to leave behind a sustainable work that benefits the community in the long term, before leaving

MARJETICA POTRČ ON COMMUNITIES

the project. »The fourth step is very important, you need to leave the project so that the project lives on.« For Marjetica, it is the act of leaving the project that allows it to have an after-life beyond the artist, as if the artist's ultimate success is measured not in the ›thing‹ itself, but in what life it grows and sustains beyond the artist. »I never actually follow up when we make this transition. My projects they take on a life of their own.«

»There is a shift from object art to relational object,« said Marjetica when reflecting upon her participatory art practice. »Are gardens art? We are talking about co-authorship,« she said, making the point that the process of creative collaboration may be more important than the outcome. Participatory art shines a light on the performative aspects of the collaboration; the nature of conversations; the dynamics of coming together; and the productive value of engagement. But even the notion of co-authorship is not guaranteed in collaborative processes. Can we ignore race, class and the imbalance of power dynamics that are inherent to collaborative art practices in contexts like contemporary Soweto? What about the role of the artist, their intentions and creative direction. Are these ever at odds with community needs and priorities? It is these tensions between aesthetics and process, artist and

Beyond materiality: the symbolism of public space

CLEANING CAMPAIGN IN ORLANDO-EAST

community that allow a critical reflection of the Soweto art project.

On a sunny afternoon a few weeks after the parade, a group of community members involved in the cleaning and building of Ubuntu Park gathered together around one of the newly installed wooden park tables. They were reflecting on their experience of working on the project, the collaborations with »the Germans« and the park's future. The group included: Lebo Nkosi, the secretary of the newly formed management team; Bongani Lukele and Patrick Moshebi, members of the security group; Phumelelo, who runs a youth chess club; Zithulele Malinga; Gloria Makwela; Themba Skosana; Sophie Luthuli; and Paulina Khomo who runs the neighbouring crèche. It was hard not to get carried away by the exuberant discussion on the park's future. »I'd love for a day or two

to have kids playing chess in the park,« Phumulelo said. Turning her eyes towards the newly constructed concrete stage that was part of the art initiative, Sophia interjected, »When I see that stage I see poetry sessions, music, dancing, kids doing positive things. That's what I see around here.«

»If people don't dump here, grass is gonna grow, life is gonna grow, trees are gonna grow,« Phumelelo continued, »I would like to some day organise something.«

»We have a very painful history and we wanna tell our stories in a positive way, in a way that would tell this child,« said Sophia pointing to her son, »yes it happened but we are moving forward.«

In a way, Ubuntu Park is about the rewriting of a community's history. It moves beyond the materiality of the park, its benches, braai (barbeque) stands and concrete stage. Indeed, the park's realisation touched at the heart of a deep-seated questioning of self and community, history and future, empowerment and disempowerment.

When Orlando was built in 1931, it was, according to the Johannesburg City Council then, to fulfill the needs of the »better-class native, the new Bantu who has a sense of beauty and proportion. Like other people, they appreciate variety.«[1] In truth, the buildings were poorly constructed, the houses had no water or toilets and there were no tarred roads. The homes were not plastered and were far away from the city where jobs, shops and economic opportunity resided. The building of Soweto was part of the government's plan to separate the races and eradicate »black spots« in the city where blacks lived too close to whites. Sparsely scattered amidst what were known as ›matchbox houses‹, because of their identical monotonous grid blueprint, are vacant plots. Local lore has it that these empty lands were meant for shops, parks and other community services that failed to materialise, but have become convenient places for dumping waste. From above, Ubuntu Park looks like a courtyard flanked by a crèche, a church and residential houses on its four sides. But until the coming of »Masechaba [which means mother of the nation, the community's term of endearment and respect for Marjetica] and her team,« a resident who lives in one of the houses facing the park told me at the park's inauguration, »this was a dumping site.«

»It was where they were dumping rubbish; if the refuse company didn't come, they dumped here. Then they would burn old mattresses at night. Think about how unhealthy it is to live around here,« another resident chimed. »The houses where we lived had so many flies in summer and they smelled bad because of the rubbish.«

»It was an evil place,« Paulina who runs the crèche said, »lots of things rotten! It was dusty and stinky for many years.«

And this was one of the puzzles that got me asking how a community that surrounded this piece of ground had allowed it to become so decrepit. »And why,« I asked the group gathered around the picnic table on the warm Sunday afternoon, »did it have to take Masechaba and her ›team from Germany‹, for the community to reclaim this park in their own backyard?« There was a brief silence before Bongani Lukele, a member of the security team said this:

»Lack of community communication, some of the people are too ignorant. I believe that if one or two of us can say come and help us, people will find excuses and say ›I must go to church‹, but at the end of the day as the youth we have learned a lot. Although we wish this would have happened long ago. We have learned a lot from Masechaba and all the guys who have come from Germany. We should stand up and have that power.« The conversation that followed involved a frank dissection of contemporary urban life. It is not that people were content with the squalor of the park that they had lived next to for so many years, it was that other things had taken over. The anomie of city life; the busy-ness of the everyday; the clashing priorities of the self, family and community; and the disheartening feeling of dealing with officialdom, city officials and elected leaders. For the group that gathered around the park table, »the Germans« allowed people to step out of their routine and see something new. Gloria, who had helped to clean the park said: »The Germans came and held our hand and gave us strength.«

One of the frustrations facing community members who had previously tried to address the decaying site was the inaction of the council. Some of those I spoke to said that they had approached their councillor who had not done anything. Some months before though, a City Park's truck had arrived on site and had cleared the area and planted trees. A few weeks later though, the park was once again dirty and the trees were all dead. Some of those I spoke to blame the council for this neglect. »They planted trees and never came back,« one woman walking in the parade said to me, »they don't maintain the park.« While some blame the council, others argue that it is not the council that destroyed the trees, nor is it the council that prevented the community from coming together and cleaning up their neighbourhood. »It is ignorance,« Zitulele who has been involved in the landscaping of the Bus Rapid Transit route in Soweto said emphatically. »People are ignorant destroying the flowers, plants [and] trees.

Young children are not taught how to take care of their environment.« »There is a lack of knowledge and motivation,« Bongani added, »people were busy with other things.«

Debates around the relationship between space and human behaviour have a history in psychology, social science and urban planning[2]. In 1982, George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson explored the relationship between policing and neighbourhood safety and realised that vandalism and urban disorder were closely linked to the nature of the urban environment. They wrote: »Social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken. This is true in nice neighbourhoods as in run-down ones.«[3] What Bongani and the rest of the group had witnessed of their own community in Orlando East is similar to Wilson and Kelling's observations. If people see a dump, they will dump: and this anti-social behaviour reproduces itself so that what starts as dumping attracts other crimes like muggings, drugs and so on. The opposite is also true, when an environment is well taken care of, people are less likely to behave antisocially in that space. While the broken window theory makes a compelling argument on the relationship between environment and human behaviour, it has been criticised for encouraging policing practices that target marginalised communities. More pertinent for our case study, the theory fails to explain why the initial destruction takes place.

For Orlando East, an understanding of history – the nature of apartheid, people's resistance to it, and the Inkatha Freedom Party and African National Congress's factional wars in the early 1990s – offers some explanation. In the 1980s, the struggle against apartheid took the form of local insurrection under the United Democratic Front (UDF). The strategy was to make Black Local Councils (seen by many blacks as illegitimate structures that propped up the apartheid government) ungovernable. Public buildings, libraries, council offices were targeted, rent boycotts instituted. Public buildings and resources became equated to the enemy state and became spaces where people articulated their dissatisfaction with apartheid. It is no wonder then, that there is a history of neglect of public spaces, which were seen not as places where communities could come together, but perceived as ›enemy space‹. In the nineties, a new struggle took place in townships like Orlando East. Factional fighting broke out between the IFP and ANC, and public space became associated with violence, police bullets and burning tyres. Sophia remembered the park during that time:

»Before the place was not like this. They called it Hollywood before. We had a big play area with tyres – we used to call it Gomorrah – we had some swings and then it was destroyed in the '90s by burning the tyres. It was chaotic. Every time there was a gathering the police would come and disperse people with rubber bullets. I remember now … it was in 1991. I remember we had fights between Inkatha and the ANC. Even at school we used to leave at 1pm because we were scared of Inkatha.

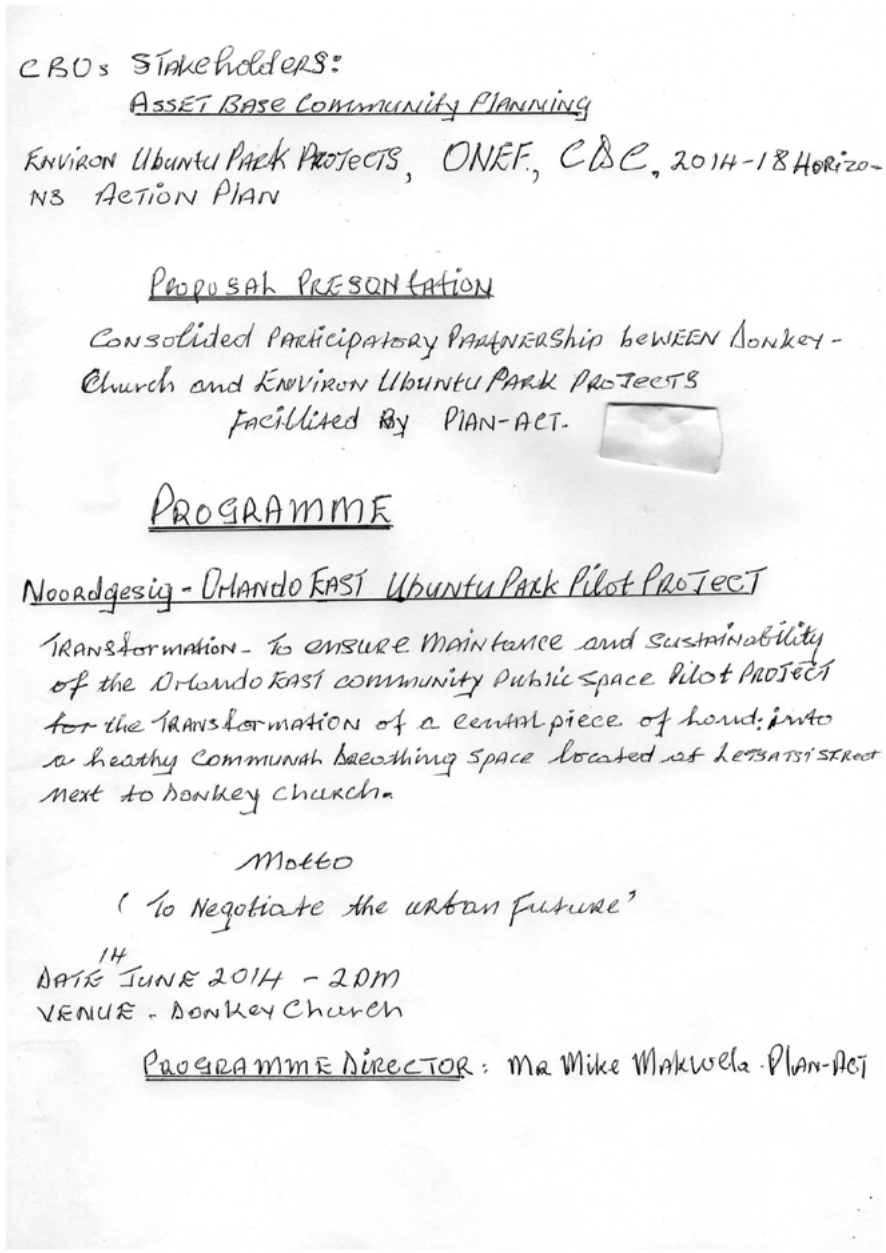
Yet again, the notion of public space became associated with fear, violence, and danger – not building community and empowerment. If seen in this context, it is understandable how the empty lot in Orlando East suffered neglect. The community's association of the area with violence, destruction and disempowerment can explain why it has taken a long time to see and experience the space differently. It is also understandable why it required people without the collective memory of destruction and other baggage to ignite a new way of seeing the park. Mr. Skosana, an elderly gentleman that the group seemed to defer to said, »The presence of the professor's crew came with the seed. The seed must stay and we need to grow it.«

Sophia's reflection on the engagement is illuminating. »They taught us something that we know but didn't have the courage to do it. We have strength knowing that we can do it. We are going to take it further. They did it without fear, and they did it with love. I am writing a poem ›From Germany with Love‹. Orlando East is blessed because of them.«

March 9 became an important date not only for the opening of the park, but for bringing together two communities that had been separated by apartheid. »So did the parade bring the two communities together?« I posed this question to Anja Gerin, Amalia Ruiz-Larrea, Nuriye Tohermes, Finn Brüggemann and Rados Vujaklija, the Design for the Living World students, on Skype, a few weeks after they got back to Hamburg.

»It was a symbolic march,« said Anja, »it was going from the one project to the other project

and connecting them. The big symbolic act between coloured and black became small and super personal. The people who were important were those that we worked with on a personal level.« »As Planact we learnt a lot,« said Mike Makwela, »some of the [official] doors we were trying to open, they were able to open with the city and province. They became a strategy that Planact and the community could use to access development.« »The Soweto parade was important for Ubuntu Park because it was the symbolic transition of the park from our hands to the community,« said Marjetica from Hamburg. »From that moment on, the community felt ownership of the space after March 9. I got invited to many meetings with the community that I did not organise.« Indeed there is evidence that the Soweto parade was the first of many. According to Mike Makwela, »The Johannesburg Development Agency and the Johannesburg Heritage Company have committed their support for the project.« »The celebration in the park was the last act,« said one of the students. For those in the Noordgesig and Orlando East communities, we hope it was the first of many more constructive engagements in their communities.



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PROGRAMME

Noordgesig - ORLANDO EAST Ubuntu Park Pilot PROJECT

TRANSFORMATION - To ensure maintance and sustainability of the Orlando East community Public Space Pilot PROJECT for the TRANSFORMATION of a central piece of land into a healthy communal breathing space located at LETSATSI STREET next to DONKEY CHURCH.

MOTTO
' To Negotiate the urban future'

DATE 14 JUNE 2014 - 2PM
VENUE - DONKEY Church

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR: Mr Mike Makwela - PLAN-ACT

LETTER BY THEMBA SKOSANA ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ENVIRON UBUNTU PARK PROJECTS AND DONKEY CHURCH

Endnotes

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space invaders

By Valentina Rojas Loa

In April 2014, the artist Dan Halter landed in Mirafiori on the outskirts of the city of Turin. This traveller brought with him the experience of very distant places, cultures and parts of the world to what was used to be called Turin's ›Bronx‹. For decades the otherwise bourgeois and industrial north-Italian city considered the Mirafiori district to be a synonym for ›danger and crime‹ and looked down on it as an antithesis of the ›urban‹.

Mirafiori soil

From the 1940s through the 1970s, thousands of people arrived in Mirafiori in search of work at the FIAT factory plant located in this very district. These immigrant workers first came from the Piemonte region, but soon poured in by growing numbers from the most distant corners of southern Italy. Arriving in Mirafiori they found themselves faced with a total lack of housing and urban infrastructure, which is why they started building their homes with their own hands. It was not until the 1960s that the local authorities met their demands by constructing low-cost public housing, and by providing basic services such as water and electricity.

Right from the beginning – and long before urban gardening became fashionable in cities such as Paris, London or New York – the immigrants of Mirafiori improvised sophisticated vegetable gardens in order to produce their own basic food and to preserve some aspects of their rural identity. Mirafiori became a melting pot of distinct geographical and cultural origins and dialects, in part, precisely because of the common rural origin of most of its newcomers. It is because of this shared transitory rural-urban heritage that northern Italians scornfully called these migrant workers ›terroni‹ (›earthy‹).

Years later, around 2000, Turin's City Council undertook a major programme of urban renewal of the district of Mirafiori, including the reconstruction and management of the vegetable gardens. Such programme, which in part was also implemented by local citizens associations, produced remarkable results in terms of security and a sense of belonging. However, in relation to the gardens, the Council failed to acknowledge the complexity of the social – and natural – fabric that, throughout decades, had grown and flourished on site. Instead, they completely demolished most of the old gardens in order to rebuild them anew, and failed to encourage inhabitants to participate in the reconstruction process. As consequence, as the agronomist and local activist Marco Bottignole recalls, the authorities destroyed all traces of the rich network of public spaces that formerly existed, and where people used to meet.

Once the gardens were turned over, the Council opened a restrictive call to Mirafiori's low-income pensioners to apply for new allotments. Due to these limitations in the application process, the group of local garden users today consists of a homogenous population in terms of social background and age, and their energy and resources to keep the gardens productive has withered (at this point, 40 per cent of the gardens have been left to decay). There is also not much sense of community among the current gardeners.

At the same time, approximately 200 of the original gardens were preserved in their state prior to the renovation. These so-called, ›spontaneous gardens‹ are tolerated by the local authority, yet due to their ambiguous legal condition they are isolated from the ›official‹ gardens and from the infrastructure that connects the area with the city. High fences block the view and access is rough and disrupted. Nevertheless – or, rather, because of this secluded location – these gardens are inhabited by yet another group of people who have made the site their well-organised camp settlement.

Within this complex constellation of rural and urban, home and foreign affairs, Instituto Wesen, an Italian NGO supporting local development, citizen participation and cultural

SOUTH MIRAFIORI TOUR, VIDEO BY MARCO BOTTIGLONE

A MIRAFIORI IMMIGRANT STORY, VIDEO BY DAN HALTER

heritage preservation for more than 20 years, prepared the ground for artist Dan Halter's 9UB Turin residency.

Growing the project

When Dan arrived in Mirafiori, he spent his first weeks trying to understand the social and natural context of the place. Given his long experience of working on issues of migration, (born in Zimbabwe, brought up by Swiss parents and living in South Africa, he himself has a history of geographical and cultural displacement), Dan developed a project where gardening and migration could be brought together: »My idea was to use the plants to tell the story of migration. The plants themselves have an inbuilt message depending on what kind of plants they are, and where they come from. The way they have moved around the world is political. A lot of plants that are considered to be ›Italian‹ come from somewhere else, such as tomatoes, basil or corn.«[1]

DAN HALTER, BORN IN ZIMBABWE, IS WORKING ON ISSUES OF MIGRATION

Dan's first idea was to use flowers to compose a planted sculpture of the image of the space invader, a metaphor he has used in his artistic production before, drawing on »its simple iconography and playful representation of aliens/ immigrants«. However, he soon realised that in Mirafiori flowers are perceived as luxury items. He therefore decided to work with useful plants such as herbs and vegetables that locals grow in their gardens. With the help of Marco Bottignole, the local agronomist who also acted as 9UB's integrated reporter, ›gate-opener‹ and interpreter at Dan's side, he spoke to the Mirafiori gardeners in order to find out what they were interested in growing. In this sense, Dan's artwork started with learning: learning which plants to choose that would grow fast and well during the Spring-Summer season of his residency, and that could easily be transplanted in order to ›draw‹ with them and, last but not least, learning which plants offered an interesting colour palette for his extraterrestrial invasion.

The project then unfolded with the sowing and cultivating of the plants on the grounds of the Casa nel Parco, the community centre of Colonetti Park and project space for the residency. Once the plants had grown to a good size, Dan assembled a space invader image by using the trays with their different coloured plants to represent pixels. On June 14th a public event was celebrated to mark the end of the project.

A documentary video of the growing and performing of the living sculpture was shown along with a presentation of the art project within the context of Nine Urban Biotopes. At the end of the day, the plants were given away as gifts to the visitors and neighbours of Mirafiori.

Working with plants and people

The notion of fabricating things is central to Dan's artistic practice. He repeatedly works with different materials and is very keen on exploring their intrinsic characteristics in order to shape the art piece both in its physical and symbolic expression. However, he had never used living material before. Now, the project Dan envisioned meant that he had to incorporate into his practice working with living plants that needed to be nurtured and looked after continuously. »It has been nice to create something that grows from something very little … but it has been quite an effort to keep those plants alive!« Dan explained the emotional relationship he developed with his artwork and its process of growth. And with regard to the scale of his living sculpture, he experienced first hand why sustaining and managing »productive uncertainty« is intrinsic to what in experimental architecture is called ›botanic construction‹.[2]

In addition to working with plants, Dan had to incorporate the local gardeners as active stakeholders in the delivery of the project. Working with others was a new experience for Dan. By joining the 9UB project framework, he expanded his practice to include working in this way. Both the novelty of making something together with others, and the social context of the Mirafiori biotope made the process particularly challenging. Most of the gardeners belonged to a different generation, and came from a different cultural and social background. They did not have much interest in what gardening had to do with art and why what they were doing was supposed to be art in the first place. Moreover, language issues troubled their

MARCELLO'S GARDEN, VIDEO BY MARCO BOTTIGLONE

conversations. Dan did not speak Italian and, according to Marco, the gardeners spoke in dialects or with strong accents that even for a native speaker were difficult to follow.

The support offered by Marco along with Silvia Magino and Marta Colangelo from Istituto Wesen proved crucial to building a bridge between the artist and the local inhabitants. According to Silvia, most of the gardeners were reluctant to participate in this or any other art project. Hence engaging them in a discussion about what Dan was trying to do with something as concrete and familiar to them as growing plants was as challenging as the new outlooks and perspectives that they gained were rewarding. During the process, some of the gardeners, such as Marcello Allotta, acknowledged that the effort and craft they put into their allotments, as well as the fact that they use their gardens as a means of self-expression, was indeed, their own way of making art. Dan, too, found his first encounter with participative art work very enriching: »The positive side of working with people is that I have been able to do much more than I would have been able to do by myself. It is a very collaborative and collective work: the ideas came from the workshop, the words from the people, and the plants from the people and Marco. The difficult thing, however, was that I don't normally ask for permission to do what I do, and here I had to ask for permission for everything we did, even to cut the grass and hang posters.«

Invaders to space invaders

Asking for permission might have been bothersome, but it was nevertheless one of the minor issues that were at stake during the residency. The ›real‹ challenge was the invitation that Dan extended to a group of Roma children to participate in the project – clashing with the request of the community centre Casa nel Parco to exclude them.

The Roma children interested in Dan's work belong to five families that came from Bosnia as political refugees and who live in campers on the edges of Colonetti Park, right next to where the community centre is located. They live isolated from another Roma camp nearby who refused to integrate them in the settlement because they belonged to a different family branch. When Dan realised the kids were his neighbours, he invited them to help sow the seeds in trays and then later, when they had grown into plants, to assemble the pixel image of his living sculpture using the trays. As a matter of fact, he quickly recognised that engaging with these children was essential to him and his work: »The way Roma people are treated here was an eye opener for me. They are actually banned from here. Most of the work was made with the help of the Roma children. Dealing with the real immigrants of Mirafiori, the real out-

A VEGETABLE MIGRANT IN TURIN

INSTALLATION BY DAN HALTER

casts, was the point for me. The migrants from southern Italy are integrated. Some of them have even become snobs, if you like, but with the Roma the efforts to integrate them have failed.« Silvia from Instituto Wesen confirmed his observations. She described the situation as »history repeating«, because »Most of the families from Mirafiori treat them [the Roma settlers] like they themselves were treated back in the 1950s.«

However, the picture is of course much more complicated. The Roma are not simply the ›new victims‹ and the inhabitants of Mirafiori and the staff of the community centre the new ›culprits‹ unable to learn from their own history and experience, or refusing to grant the present day immigrants the same rights that they fought for on arrival (and which they now hold). According to Paola Monasterolo, director of Casa nel Parco, past efforts to integrate the Roma into the community centre were undertaken but failed. Paola claims that when the Roma people were invited to the community centre »They took over the facilities, in particular the toilets, and thus other people from the area were not very keen on having them in the centre.« In addition to that, there have been constant incidents of theft, possibly perpetrated by the Roma kids, but often done quite openly by them as direct provocation.

Acknowledging these different points of view, we might ask ourselves about the more concrete circumstances that shaped this and previous encounters between the Roma and community centre staff. Perhaps building trust was not given enough time to succeed, or perhaps there was not a developed enough common language with which to reach an agreement. Moreover, the notion of integration itself needs to be reviewed. The will and need to integrate –either in the micro-cosmos of the community centre or in the larger city of Turin and Italian society– is likely to be contested both by the ›new‹ and the ›old‹ residents. Beyond being a buzzword to solve the problems that relate to migration, what does integration really mean? And on what grounds is it possible to achieve?

The interesting point here is that an event that was apparently only tangential to the project was

to become its very kernel: the Roma children were the space invaders of the Space Invaders project. And their situation as the new migrants on the edge of the city was not perceived by the gardeners as having anything in common with the experience of earlier generations of migrants to Mirafiori. Tackling problematic issues when they belong to the past and have been ›solved‹ is always safer than embracing a current situation with all the contradictions and complexities it entails. On the surface, the outcome of Dan's residency concealed the tensions among host, formal and informal participants. In between the lines, however, he allowed the situation to claim its space: at the end of his documentary video, he uses the pixels of the space invader image to write the Romani expression ›Hokkani Boro‹, which translates as ›the great trick‹ and is used to describe a person who has gained a client's trust in order to get hold of his money.

Conclusion

On the rainy evening of the project's final presentation, the neighbours, the local authorities and the members of Istituto Wesen kept mentioning that the most important outcome of Dan Halter's artistic residency for the community of Mirafiori was that they became part of an international network. From being considered the antithesis of the urban, this district became a point of reference for an international discussion on the construction of sustainable urban futures around the globe. This, of course, provided encouragement for building a sense of pride among the local people that, for more than a decade, have been striving to combat the ›fate‹ of being the perilous and unwanted peripheral daughters of Turin. Moreover, it invited the rest of the inhabitants of Turin – who hitherto had been afraid of setting a foot into the area – to start including the supposedly scary district of Mirafiori both physically and mentally as a worthwhile part of the city. Beyond the importance of this sense of pride and transformed urban imaginary, the relevance of Space Invader lies in the fact that it succeeded in creating a metaphor of the history of migration of Mirafiori, 60 years ago and today. By using endemic and foreign plants for his living sculpture, ephemeral and interrelated nature of migration and settlement. Given the continuous and world-wide movement of both plants and people since the beginning of history, when do we start considering a plant or a person to be an ›original‹ from one place instead of another? How and when do we decide that a plant has ›the right to stay‹ even if it is an invasive specimen that destroys other ›endemic‹ plants? The South African Mesembryanthemum used by Dan in another installation he made in Turin illustrates this because today it is highly coveted in Italian gardens due to its ornamental value.[3]

As Dan mentioned before, some of the most typical ingredients of Italian cuisine – or any other cuisine when traced back in history – came from different corners of the planet centuries ago. The ›aboriginal‹ human population is also originally constituted of nomads who migrated around the world looking for a suitable place to live. Countries such as the United States are very proud of their migrant origins (although not very welcoming to their present migrants). The same is true with the Roma population both in the micro-cosmos of Mirafiori and on the European continent:

Where do they belong? What belongs to them? Are they not part of a pan-European culture? Does a nomadic population have the right to roam a territory that crosses national borders? Who decides whether they are entitled to stay and under what conditions? Dan Halter's 9UB residency in Turin revealed that a project about something as innocent and benign as gardening can address some of the most pressing issues of our human condition.

Endnotes

1 This and all following quotations have been taken from in-depth project interviews held with Dan Halter, Silvia Magino, Marta Colangelo, Marco Bottignole, Paola Monasterolo and Marcello Allotta on the 14th and 15th of June 2014.

2 See Schwertfeger, Hannes. 2012. ›Productive Uncertain‹. Oase Journal for Architecture 70 – 78.

3 This plant was part of an artwork developed by Dan Halter at the exhibition Vegetation as a Political Agent, which took place at Turin's art centre Parco Arte Vivente, during the time Dan was doing his residency at Mirafiori.

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warwick junction: redefining public art and space in durban

By Caroline Wanjiku Kihato

In the quest for public space in South Africa it is premature to put the words ›public‹ and ›space‹ together. Post-1994 we never started by asking, who is the public? How many publics? What is the public? Where is the public? before attempting to create a public space or public art.

by doung anwar jahangeer, Johannesburg, May 2014.

It was the events of the violence of 2009 that the market traders at the Warwick Junction in Durban kept recounting to me at the launch of ›Compliments and Complaints‹. The day was Friday, 27 June 2014 and my question to the traders could not have been further (at least in my mind) from the five-day standoff in June 2009 between the Ethekwini Metropolitan Police and the market traders. I asked the traders simply, what do you think of the project ›Compliments and Complaints‹? Like a wound that will not heal, the response would take us back to that fateful time almost exactly five years before. »The municipality came down on us saying that the market was going to close,« Money Govender – a third generation market trader told me. »They closed the gate of the

morning market and for five days the Metro Police harassed us.« »2009 I can't forget,« said 65-year-old T. Naidoo who has been selling in the market for fifty years. »The police started shooting at us … me and my friend dived under the cartons until the shooting stopped,« she said pointing underneath the empty cartons in her stall. »Since then, the market has been slow.« »The bullet hit my cheek here,« a middle-aged woman interjected pointing at her right cheek. »At that time I didn't even feel anything; I was even helping other people. Only later did I realise that I was bleeding.« »We fought our battle, it was too violent,« said Alfred, who has been in the market for sixty years, »they put the cops on us.« So the memories of the time the traders almost lost their market would continue, and as if to understand the significance of ›Compliments and Complaints‹, the traders needed to take me back to five years earlier.

›Compliments and Complaints‹ is a collaboration between photographer and media-artist Armin Linke and architect and artist doung anwar jahangeer of dala artarchitecture. Armin lives in Milan and Berlin. Working with both photography and film, his ongoing work archives human activity in varied manmade and natural landscapes. doung hails from Mauritius and has lived in Durban since 1992. I met doung on a sunny autumnal afternoon in Johannesburg. »You must keep me in line« he warned me, »I am terrible, I don't stop talking.« In a gap year travelling through Asia, doung witnessed something that would change the way in which he understood architecture. It was the end of the day in Mumbai, the sun was setting, hawkers were folding up their belongings as people made their way home to their evening activities. doung had paused to take a break and in front of him, a family – mother, father, grandmother and two children – unfolded their meager belongings and began to set up for the night. The father opened up his board game and began playing against himself. Next to him, the mother began to cook dinner on a mobile stove and next to them the grandmother entertained the children. This home had no walls, interior or exterior, to separate the family from the bustle around them. They focused on their evening activities, oblivious to what was going on around them.

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS, VIDEO BY DALA

doung watched this staging with interest and decided to test a hunch. »I walked in between the father's game and the mother's kitchen, pretending I was lost,« he told me. »They did not notice. I walked through again, and the family kept on with its evening activities, as though no one had entered their space.« They were home now, and in their minds had erected this invisible place that was impermeable to the world outside. Trained as an architect at the University of Cape Town, a discipline that is about the built form, concrete walls and spaces,

THE AFRICAN CITY, VIDEO BY DALA

the very idea that architecture was a state of mind, invisible, and ephemeral was antithetical to what he had learned; that in fact what we call urban is about the invisible and transient spaces, constructed of both visible and invisible rules, formal and informal spaces. It is this experience that informs his activist and creative practice.

The project involved providing cameras to ten traders who work at the Warwick Junction in Durban's Central Business District. The idea was for the traders to take images of their lives in the market and tell their stories of their experiences there. This was vital for Armin since, »As a photographer it was important not to make the images myself, but to create an infrastructure that people with real and long-time knowledge of the place could use to create their own visual narration,« he said. »Photography could be an objective way to speak about everyday problems that often are forgotten or not visualised because they are considered too banal.« As each trader talked about their photographs, they were captured on camera and their short films formed part of the exhibition located in the morning market. Opposite the market, on the other side of Julius Nyerere Road, the team set up an exhibition stall on the pavement with poster images and words taken by the ten traders. Each poster hanging from the makeshift marquee communicates a message:

My permit lies

Senza Ubuntu Ngokudayisa Edolobheni
Foreign traders, fair traders, legal traders
Phansi ngemoli phezulu ngemakethe
Trade pride: I am proud of what I sell

ALFRED RANGASAMY – FLOWER TRADER,
VIDEO BY ARMIN LINKE

As people walked past, they slowed down to look at the words, some stopped to watch and listen to the guitarist singing in the marquee, while others spoke to those in the stall. »We wanted to create a project with traders, to capture their words and collaborate with them to present it in a different form,« doung told me. »We are engaging in a subversive exercise where we start to define an alternative language at looking at urban and personal development.«

›Compliments and Complaints‹ aimed at using a method, which would provide a platform for democratic participatory engagement. Both Armin and doung focused on engaging in a collective creative process that redefines and expands the meaning of public space. The project goes beyond telling the stories of traders' experiences. It seeks a way of communicating with policy makers that both humanises and empowers the traders. »The project was part of a process of engaging in new forms of unlearning archaic city planning, and creating a platform to validate the innovative practices of emerging local initiatives,« doung said. Just how considered this modus operandi was, was articulated by Mzwandile Mavula, a fruit seller and the provincial secretary for the African Cooperative for Hawkers and Informal Business:

»The manner in which we have been dealing with the municipality, communicating a message through pictures, we are trying a new way of communicating where the traders can be treated as subjects rather than objects. The pictures are coming from us and this gives us a voice that was stolen by the municipality. It gives the municipality a chance to change their mentality. I think they will start to learn, it gives them an opportunity to re-learn our culture. It will have an impact for future generations where those who design our cities will accommodate street vendors.«

And it was this sense of recovery and ownership of voice, of history and of power that resonated throughout the day of the launch. As the ten television screens looped the short films,

SAVE THE MARKET, NO FORCED REMOVAL PICTURE

traders from the market clustered around the screens to see and listen to their own. I asked one woman sitting on a makeshift crate what she thought of the exhibition. »I came to see my friend on television. I can't hear what she is saying.« After a short pause she continued, »But it is good to see one of us there talking.«

The choice of Warwick Junction as the site for the Durban biotope was not accidental. According to Armin, »It was important to select an exhibition space that was not a gallery space, but a space in the urban context itself, where a typical art public would need to make an effort to get in contact with the real space and people.« Warwick Junction lies in Durban's Central Business District where the city's trains, buses and taxis converge around Warwick Avenue. It is a maze of layers of colonial, apartheid, and post-apartheid constructions, linked together by a fragile patchwork of corrugated iron, fencing, bridges and people's memories. By midday, the Junction is a cacophony of sounds from vehicles coming in or leaving town, people buying and selling, eating, meeting or just passing through. With at least 460,000 commuters passing through each day and between 5000 to 8000 vendors in its nine markets and along the streets, Warwick Junction is touted as South Africa's ›most authentic African market‹.

July 2009 was not the first time the traders had come into contact with city authorities, however. In fact, Warwick Junction has his-

torically been a site of contestation between city dwellers wanting to make a living and the municipality seeking to regulate and control trading activities in the area. A 73-year-old woman who has been in the market since 1957, remembers the days of the ›blackjacks‹. »That was during apartheid,« she explained, »that's what we used to call the metro [police] in those days. They used to harass us to prevent us from selling.« The Early Morning Market has its beginnings in the late 1990s, with indentured sugar cane cutters from India. As many labourers began farming, they needed a market to sell their fresh produce. Even at the time, the colonial government sought to keep the races apart. Indians were unable to sell at the European market and after protests, the city built an Indian market on Victoria street in 1910 where the farmers could trade. Even then there were protests by the Indian traders that the new market was too small and close to blacks. Before long, a Street market, which was known as the ›squatters market‹, mushroomed along Victoria Street. In January 1934, the Durban Council built a structure comprising 618 stalls for the traders. But the stalls were not enough to accommodate all the traders, some of whom were forced to continue trading illegally on the streets. During apartheid, street trading was tightly controlled and traders and blackjacks clashed often. According to Caroline Skinner, in the '90s, the post-apartheid city administration made significant strides to accommodate street vendors with its progressive antipoverty policy. However, over the last decade and particularly since 2009 when the council announced its plans to build a mall in the area, traders' positions have been precarious. That is when they vowed to fight for their right to the city.

MZWANDILE MAVULA INTERVIEW, VIDEO BY ARMIN LINKE

Yet the growing pressure to ›modernise‹ Warwick Junction and the clampdown on informal street trading is contradictory to people's needs and everyday lives. In this part of the city, traders have mastered their clients' needs and budgets. Whether you have one or one hundred Rand, you will find something here that suits your budget. It is no wonder that state agents, like Ethekwini's Metropolitan Policemen and -women will do their shopping at stalls, which they have orders to destroy. Mzwandile Mavula, a fruit seller at the corner of Canongate Road and Julius Nyerere Street, and one of the ten participants in ›Compliments and Complaints‹, points to this paradox in a photograph he took:

»The reason I took this picture is to show [how] the metro police harass us when we trade. You can see here is the metro police coming to buy from the very same people they don't want to operate. It also serves them during their work. That was the reason I wanted to expose [how] it is not only helping the local residents, [but] even those who hate us.«

MONEY GOVENDER – HEAD OF THE WOMEN TRADERS GROUP, VIDEO BY ARMIN LINKE

And so the everyday practices of ordinary urban dwellers reveal the contradictions of the city. Talking about her images for ›Compliments and Complaints‹ Money Govender put it this way: »I talked about the metro. I never thought in my entire life that human beings could be treated the way we were treated in 2009. They wanted to take this place. I want to tell people what we went through. I feel that it is a reverse government. They talk about job creation, how are they creating jobs when they are taking away from us?«

Warwick Junction captures the paradox that confronts South Africa's post-apartheid cities. At this junction, there is a disjuncture between policy makers' and ordinary people's vision for the city; people's needs and the city's need to regulate; people's participation in the economy and the city's economic vision.

Whether on the streets or in the markets, or on the busy roads of Warwick Junction, this space is more than a trading place. It is a place where migrants from India, South Africa and other parts of Africa and the world begin their journey to self-reliance and freedom. It is a place that has fed and educated multiple generations. It is a place where the struggle for the right to the city is continuously fought in ways that compel us to rethink what humanity means in the city.

»We would like to be treated like humans with dignity and respect, like the officials. What we would want is for the government to support us, not treat us like dirt, as if we are nothing,« Mzwandile Mavula says in his video interview. »This fight is not for me,« says Money Govender, pointing at the project installation in the market. »It's for the rest that come behind me. This is our market … it is where life began. They can't take it away. We will fight. We can't allow the municipality to take something so beautiful and important from our country.«

Perhaps it is here, in this space, at this junction, that we begin to redefine what public space and public art mean in a contemporary African city. And maybe, just maybe, the participants in ›Compliments and Complaints‹ take a step towards that redefinition.

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CV Armin Linke

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building solutions

By Valentina Rojas Loa

That afternoon of July 2014 was the first time that the Roma woman went through the front gate of the site where she had been living for almost six years. Until then, she and the other members of her extended family had been accessing the settlement through an improvised entrance located at the back. With a laughing and fearful eye she took a few steps, casting a swift but careful look at the street to both sides of the reclaimed entrance to her home. None of the neighbours were there, or at least they were not visible. She moved forward. By making her appearance and crossing that delicate line that day, a space of possibility opened up for renegotiating her family's presence and right to the city in a neighbourhood that had treated her with mixed feelings for so long.

Setting the scene

In 2008, in the Parisian suburb of Montreuil, a family of four brothers leading a community between 40 and 50 people built their informal houses on a heritage protection site called Murs à pêches, where back in the 18th century peaches were grown for the European kings behind hundreds of regular lines of stonewalls to shield them from the climate. Although listed

in 2003, the site was left to its own faith with many of these walls still standing, but showing desolate conditions. Beneath these walls, rivalling Roma groups have gathered for protection in order to cover their camps from view. At the same time, interest in reviving the urban agricultural tradition has soared, and surrounding Montreuil is currently undergoing rapid transformation by mid- to up-market real estate developments. In other words, the urban constellation was heavily burdened by open and smouldering conflict.

In 2010, the new settlers were received by the City Council of Montreuil and threatened with eviction – and they were also received by Colette Lepage and a group of neighbours founding the civil association Ecodrom 93 in order to assist them with legal and financial support to fight for their right to stay. In an historic trial, this right was granted, allowing a Roma community for the first time ever to maintain their camp. However, such right was fixed to certain conditions: it was limited to the amount of seven ›nuclear families‹ (together about 50 persons); the buildings were to remain temporary, that is, they were not to permanently affect the protected ground and walls of the heritage site; and the site was to be put to some cultural-educational use (a condition that derived from the trial of the Roma claiming such use as the proof of their positive intentions). The permission to stay was to be annually renegotiated on the basis of the Roma fulfilling these terms and showing their ›good will‹ regarding their cultural integration into French society. In other words, they are under pressure of finding stable jobs (a pressure that by the way, has always been there), sending their children to public school and continuing with the gardening project which they had started on the advice of Ecodrom and which had won them their case in the first place. The last of these ›signs of good will‹ proposed by their sponsor, was the building of a cultural centre bringing together all neighbours of the area. At this point, the 9UB Paris-Montreuil residency takes its beginning.

Complex constellations

From the outset, the issue of the cultural centre was problematic. Although the Roma knew that such a centre, together with the gardening project, was necessary to fulfill a key requirement of the City Council, they were reluctant to build it. The remains of a violent attempt to breach the wall of the camp were proof that neighbourhood relationships among different Roma camps were still too strained to build a community centre and simply be expected to hang around together.

In order to find a real and long-term solution to the situation, Ecodrom called in the not-for-profit architecture studio Quatorze – an organisation dedicated to participatory architectural practice and education whose philosophy of the city is that of a »multi-phonic mediator« – as project manager to plan and build a community centre that did have the possibility to actually work. Quatorze started their commission by introducing further agents to the site. They invited a group of students from the National School of Architecture Paris-Belleville, under the direction of Ludovik Bost, to realise a design and build project with the Roma. During this ›course‹ they constructed a bathhouse with toilets and showers and a common kitchen building. At

the same time, Quatorze created the 9UB residency inviting Johannesburg architect Taswald Pillay to spend three months on site. Being experienced with the complexities of informal settlement upgrading, Taswald took on the role of a ›brakeman‹ to create time for (re)considering what was actually needed to improve the situation of the camp. Using the network Quatorze is building around social and solidary architecture, he invited the not-for-profit initiatives Cochenko Collective and Sixième Continent to offer specific skills development workshops for the male and female residents.

In addition, Quatorze brought on board Fondation Abbé Pierre as well as other local and national NGOs, including Habitats Solidaires and Compagnons Bâtisseurs, working on social, ecological, urban and heritage aspects. By means of their valuable contributions in content, practice, dedication and financial support, a comprehensive dialogue evolved that drew connections from the ›local troubles‹ of the site to the overarching concerns regarding marginalisation and housing in Paris and beyond. Looking at the multiple stakeholders and achievements, what Quatorze did was to make of the Roma camp a complex constellation of people working together and alongside each other to accomplish an array of partly shared, partly opposing aims that all circled around the benefit of the resident family. On the day of the final presentation, round table and farewell party, the Murs à pêches thus resembled the image of a beehive.

The 9UB residency

As described, the artist's residency of 9UB was only one element, albeit a central one, of Quatorze's broader Roma camp initiative. Taswald Pillay's contributions will therefore be at the focus of the following considerations. According to Quatorze, he brought »fresh eyes« to the project and helped to see all stakeholders as »equal partners«, particularly with regard to deconstructing the relational hierarchies and dynamics between the Roma community and their ›aiders‹ as well as questioning the role of ›building‹.

Resisting the pressure to start right off with the construction of a physical building, Taswald wanted to take his time to understand the situation in depth in order to come up with solutions based on ›true‹ participation. For Taswald, the challenge was not erecting an edifice, but achieving what he calls »place-making with spatial qualities«. The knack with architecture, he suggested is, »Responding to what people want – because, at the end, they are the specialists of their lives and needs.« Taswald therefore emphasised the importance of the action: to build a building over is to practice social sustainability; the building as finished object is not. Consequently, for the site he insisted on including the bigger picture of the social and economic context in order to take small steps towards a better future. Improving the built environment would only be possible if, first, the social foundations were laid out to carry the project.

His residency thus took an unexpected turn. In order to meet the expectations of a cultural centre, he proposed delaying the process. Together with Quatorze he organised a workshop with the children in order to see if through such a workshop he could find

A NEW DOOR FOR THE OLD FRONT GATE – THE PROJECT CONTINUES

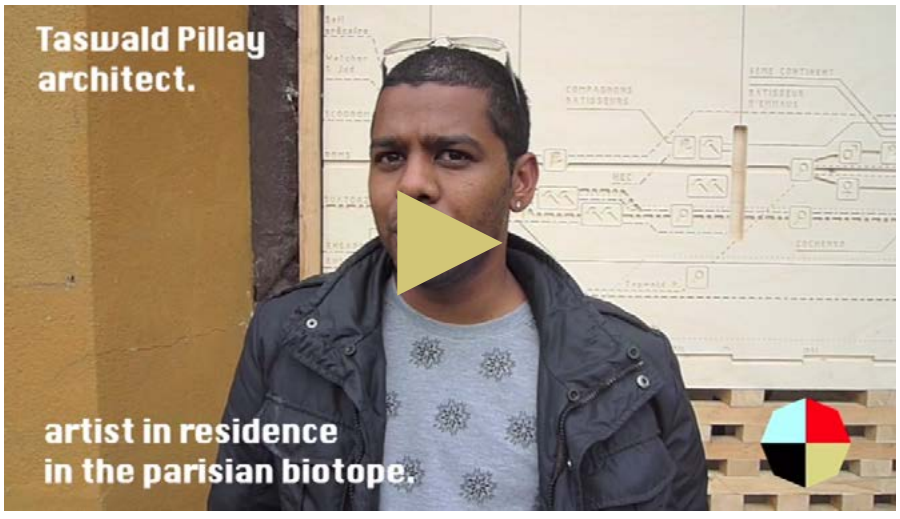
out what the Roma family really wanted and needed. According to Taswald himself, this workshop was »a failure«, yet it successfully showed him that he still had to spend more time with the family in order to construct the »true participation« he was aiming for. From there, he directed attention to a concern that was raised by Quatorze since the beginning of the project, namely the lack of employment possibilities for the camp members, and to their need to improve and stabilise their economic situation while being able to live their way of life. His intervention, therefore, was to invite the participation of Cochenko Collective and Sixième Continent, through Quatorze, in order for them to carry out a silk-printing workshop for the women and a carpentry workshop for the men. With the first earnings, the women wanted to buy a sewing machine to learn yet another skill and professionalise their production. Finally, towards the end of the residency, Taswald set up a platform to further discuss the matter and determine the architectural programme of a future cultural centre before building it. Once again, coming together as action rather than cultural centre as edifice was his call. At the same time he was very conscious of the politics of place to which the meeting (as activity) had to subscribe. Carefully pushing the boundaries, Quatorze's mobile atelier – a temporary construction conceived for ›hands-on‹ engagement and discussion in the run-up to the 9UB residency – was therefore relocated to the back of the Roma settlement, towards what was effectively the front door of the plot.

The fourth and last intervention collectively made by Taswald, Quatorze and the students, was to re-inaugurate the original entrance to the site. For a new door for the old front gate, a graphic representation of the project's multiple stakeholders and actions was collectively designed, which was engraved on the door panels. This gate is the marker of what both Taswald and Romain Minod from Quatorze considered to be »the end of the residency but the beginning of the project«.

The future

For Anna Recalde, integrated reporter to Taswald and member of Quatorze, one of the most positive outcomes of the project was shifting existing positions and ways of doing for the partners involved. For the architecture students, she suggests, it was »a little revolution« to engage in a ›truly‹ participatory design process and be confronted with the array of often conflicting implications. Between the common kitchen and the workshops, a wheel of different ›levels‹ of participation was opening up that ranged from allowing participants to »re-consider« a proposed design all the way to »handing over decisions«.

ANNA RECALDE MIRANDA, 9UB INTEGRATED REPORTER IN PARIS, VIDEO BY CHRISTIAN VON WISSEL



TASWALD PILLAY, 9UB ARTIST IN RESIDENCE IN PARIS,VIDEO BY CHRISTIAN VON WISSEL

Several months later, Quatorze continues their engagement by building up an administrative and financial framework with partners brought together during 9UB that will stabilise the Roma family's situation and continue to help them to build their future. The silk printing workshop has been running since Taswald's residency, and nowadays has additional funds for a two-year project, aimed at creating an autonomous cooperative of production. At the same time, they are working with the University Pierre and Marie Curie on a project on urban planning on the street directly outside the Roma community's site.

Considerations

9UB's Montreuil residency was a long process of conversation and negotiation between various partners with different interests and agendas. The ›urge‹ to see finished buildings was contained for a moment in order to create time and space to ask what such buildings should be used for. Taswald's interventions allowed the asking of a fundamental but difficult question: Are buildings needed at all in order to actually build solutions?

In the meanwhile, the future of the Roma camp remains to be seen. Many more questions remained unanswered, both in general – Roma populations are considered a ›problem‹ in most of Europe – and in the particular context of this settlement. Nevertheless, the project by Eco-drom, Quatorze, 9UB and the other partners has raised awareness, produced concrete interventions and provided visible proof for the Roma to show that they are trying to make an effort to comply with the requirements of the French court. On the other side, it is not clear whether the bathhouse and kitchen might be overstretching the foundations of their right to stay, resting on the unstable condition of being tolerated because they don't produce a permanent footprint on the protected heritage site. At the same time this balance is a tricky business for the municipality too: on the one hand, it helps them to keep the situation under control, on the other hand, it creates a situation of formal-informality (a case of legal extra-legality where permanent living in the heritage site is permitted while being prohibited). Furthermore, the question remains whether this project will benefit the entire neighbourhood and not only this Roma community.

TRAILER: TASWALD PILLAY AND ALEXANDER OPPER IN CONVERSATION (OR WATCH FULL VIDEO)

›Bringing people together‹, however, surely is a good start to practice cohabitation without repressing difference.

Last but not least, the regular reassessment of the Roma's right to stay inevitably opens a debate on who is considered to be a ›good citizen‹ and what shall be ›the right terms‹ by which that person is allowed to claim his or her right to stay. The urbanist AbdouMaliq Simone suggests in this context to be aware of the two-sidedness of the idea of development. »As a specific modality of temporality,« he writes, development »is not simply about meeting the needs of citizens. It is also about capturing residents to a life aesthetic defined by the State so that they can be citizens. It is about making ethical beings; about holding people in relations that make them governable.« Following Simone's thought, the undercutting question raised during Taswald's residency is thus whether the »life aesthetic« of the Roma is compatible – and if so, to what extent – with the ›life aesthetic‹ defined by the French state and forced upon the newcomers by the City Council.

Reformulating this tension as a window for future urban sustainability we can thus ask: Can we envision and implement a new conception of urban development in which citizens are free to decide on what they need and how they want to align their lives with each other without necessarily falling into conflict over the authorities' competing definitions? 9UB might not have provided us with all the answers, but it highlighted this one in particular by shifting the focus from fixed solutions to the open-ended practice of searching.

Endnotes

1 Simone, AbdouMaliq, For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities, Duke University Press, Durham, 2004, p. 7

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EPISODE 1, THEORY FIRST

EPISODE 2, FROM THEORY TO REALITY

EPISODE 3, ACTORS AND GOALS OF THE PROJECT

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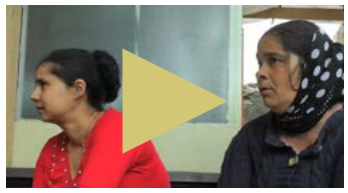
EPISODE 7, WORKSHOPS WITH CHILDREN



EPISODE 8, WORKSHOPS WITH WOMEN

EPISODE 9, WORK WITH STUDENTS

EPISODE 10, WORKSHOPS WITH THE INHABITANTS

EPISODE 11, CONCEIVING GREAT WORKS

EPISODE 12, REALISING GREAT WORKS

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EPISODE 14, FINAL STEP QUATORZE

dialogue with quatorze

Quatorze

By Romain Minod

In the last paragraph of her text, Valentina Rojas constructs a dialectical relationship between the Roma ›life aesthetics‹ and the French state ›life aesthetics‹, which is exactly the opposite of our understanding of the Bidonville problem.

From the very beginning of the project, the ethno-cultural considerations were knowingly kept out of the picture: we did not work on a so-called ›Roma life aesthetics‹, but on what is an informal, and therefore illegal settlement. We did not work on the bridges between the Roma life aesthetics and the French state life aesthetics, but on the empowerment of people constituting the settlement. If mainstream media strategically points out an ethno-cultural layer when showing the poverty of these persons, we, Quatorze and Cochenko, worked on an economic layer to uncover their contributive potential (Stiegler 2014). Alex, Maria, Memo, and all the members of the community have more to express than a mere ethno-cultural identity; they have competencies, professional skills, and a willingness to live some kind of ›normal‹ life.

Let's stop romanticising, and therefore objectifying these people. Did they choose to live on the fringes? What is it the French state refuses to face; their lifestyle, or their poverty? Who are we to assume that they chose and want to live together? A few years ago, I had been a ›squatter‹. I remember that community living – when one didn't choose it – can generate insane situations, in which one decides to stay only because one does not have another option.

I cannot condemn this text for stressing on ethno-cultural differences, since they do exist, nor for emphasising the life of this particular group of people in their quiet romantic environment of ›les Murs-à-pêches‹. However, I must insist that our work did not focus on this element. On the contrary, we endeavoured to deconstruct this ethno-cultural understanding of the situation.

Our hypothesis, from the first reports on the situation we produced, was based on an economic layer; they ›decided‹ to live in these conditions (rain entering their homes, rats eating their walls ...) because they had no other economic option. If they did have options, they might have chosen to build a co-housing complex in the Murs-à-pêches, and keep their life aesthetic, but this is not the main issue. For instance, I remember a question asked to one of the inhabitants at the end of the round table, for the restitution of the project: »What do you want, Alex, for the future?« His very first answer was: »I want to find a modern apartment, in a social housing complex.« Then, he said: »If it's possible, I'd like to stay here, and build proper houses for me and my family; that would be the best.«

These two answers raise a paradox; just as many of us left wing not-so-wealthy-people, Alex would love to live in a co-housing complex, with his friends and family. But first of all, he wants to live in a decent home with his wife and children, and have a decent job, with a decent salary, in order to pay for this home.

This situation can, indeed, question the patterns of our modern life aesthetics, but it also questions, and maybe more importantly, our modernity from many perspectives.

One of them being, at the end of the day, the kind of alternative life aesthetics we look for, and that our occidental states do not provide.

Pragmatically, our work with the settlement is to create life opportunities. On the one hand, as this e-Book is being edited, the first interventions to support the printing cooperative's project in the ›Atelier Mobile‹ with the women of the settlement, were delivered in January 2015 and Cochenko will be able to install it in February 2015. On the other hand, Quatorze is developing a professional training programme; to build the ›15bis‹ as well as the street; the infrastructure, the landscape, the furniture with Alex, Memo, Milosh, and their neighbours; and to do up the street and improve the amenities by generating professional training and employment, with the same amount of money that would be consumed for a classical market with tendering processes; also to use architectural artefacts in order to empower local citizens. A third association, Lieux Possibles, has joined the project. Its objective is to provide social support for all the individuals of the settlement. Generating economic activities does not erase social problems that need to be addressed. To secure the project, with its three legs, we asked the new mayor, whom we met just after the end of 9UB, to stabilise the situation for the next two years. The municipality now supports the project. In four months, the first economic model will be produced with the women of the settlement, based on the sales concluded until then. The first prototype of public space will be constructed by the residents, in partnership with the Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris IV. One of a milllion steps towards contributive city planning.

The ›considerations‹ taken from the 9UB project in Montreuil, published above, call into question the place of the so-called Rom population in France, and asserts the existence of a cultural model (›life aesthetic‹) of the ›good citizen‹ which does not apply to the Roma ›community‹.

Besides the difficulty of applying an ethnic approach to the French situation (the French constitution does not allow ethnic statistics), this claim does not corroborate the considerations for which we have supported this project. Indeed, some firmly-rooted representations would imply that certain communities hold different global aspirations, while not taking into account each individual's will. We however realise, through the various projects supported and monitored by the Fondation Abbé Pierre, that the aspirations of people living in shanty towns, in the streets, in squatted housing and other forms of precarious housing are strictly personal. Each individual has a different project in life, in terms of career, housing, education, health ... It therefore appears inaccurate to consider the aspirations and cultural specifici-

ties of a social group in a homogeneous way. More importantly, to define a global theoretical framework from a specific experience in a particular territorial context seems far-fetched. We also believe that the fundamental question of shanty towns is not one of discrimination, although it surely plays a part, but rather one of great precariousness. Nobody chooses to live out in the streets. The so-called Romas are no different. Great precariousness, mostly poverty, is more likely to be at the root of the problem. Therefore, the 15,000 to 20,000 people living in slums, who do not necessarily fall under the ›Roma‹ category, have to be taken into considerations along the same lines as the 141,500 homeless individuals. Their situation may be similar, but they remain intrinsically individual ones (and not divided along community lines).

As written in the first article of the French *Déclaration des droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen* (which in France, is part of the constitutional body), one of the main building blocks of citizenship is the equality of rights, which could be, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the equality in »dignity and rights«. And it is indeed for this equality in ›dignity and rights‹ that the Abbé Pierre Foundation has been working. Which brings us to consider that the French citizenship model is not defined by cultural specificities, but by the recognition of the each individual's dignity and rights (and once again, not of a specific community). Therefore, given those considerations, we cannot support the idea of a presumed incompatibility of a particular fringe of the population with a constitutional model of rights (as opposed to a cultural/aesthetic model).

In conclusion, we follow the Montreuil project insofar as it allows us to tackle and work on these principles of dignity and rights for the eventual implementation of an exit strategy from the shanty towns, and accompanying these families towards common rights.

response by abbé pierre foundation

By Florian Huygues

The »considerations« taken from the 9UB Project in Montreuil, published above, call into question the place of the so-called Rom population in France, and asserts the existence of cultural model (»life aesthetic«) of the »good citizen« which does not apply to the Rom »community«.

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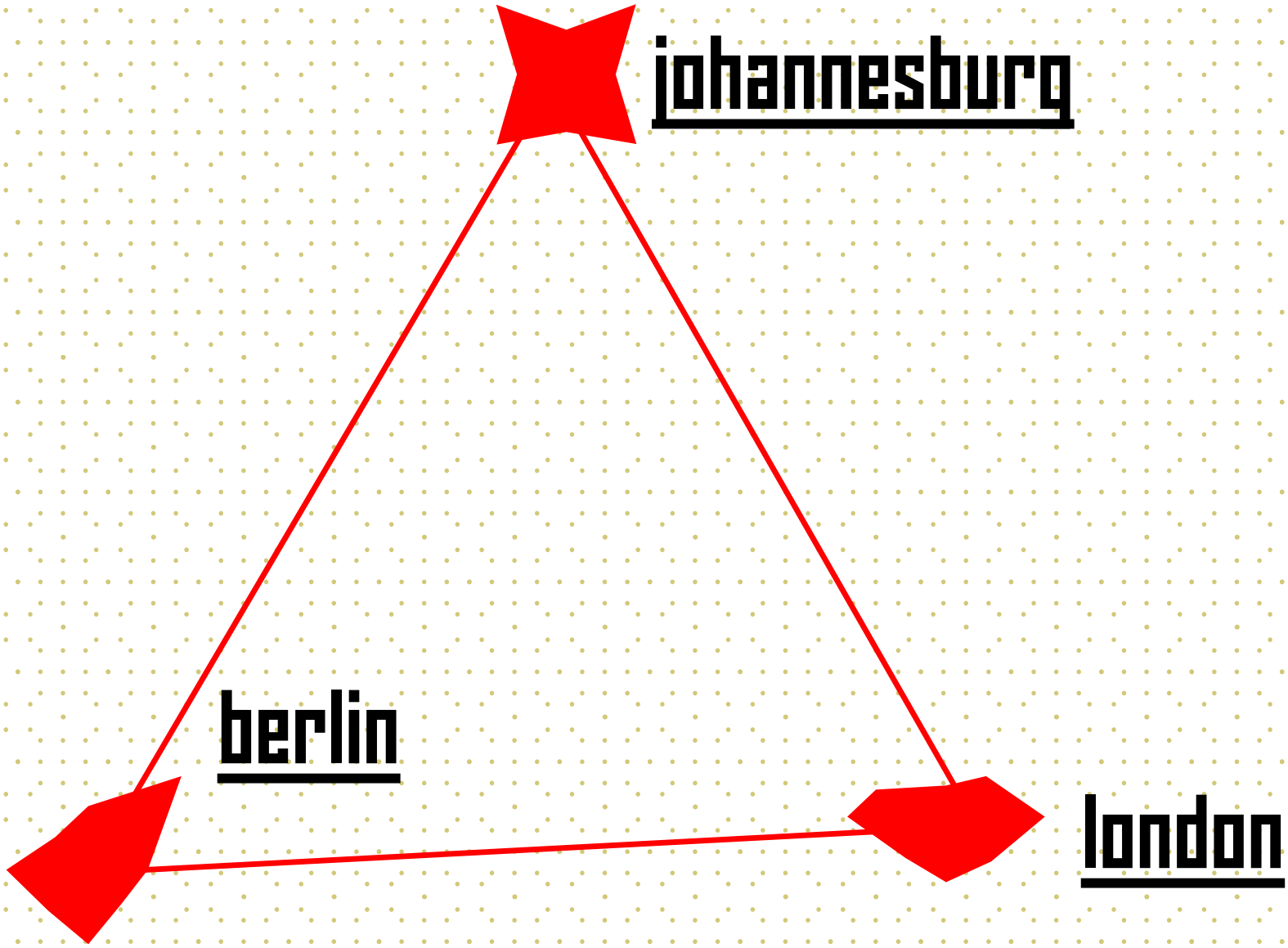
trialogue III



a cup of tea and a marriage proposal

By Valentina Rojas Loa

The trains of Berlin pass by on the opposite shore, one after another, non-stop. The city too keeps moving, rushing towards its future, sometimes blindly, other times with eyes wide open, and often with the memory of the recent past still tingling upon the iris.

Amidst the rush, a South African woman places a table at the Spree riverside and for 30 days, offers almost 850 cups of fresh mint tea to passers-by in exchange for a photograph and a conversation.

The conversation circles around the past and the future of the city of Berlin; and the layer upon layer of history turned into concrete, debris and dreams; around personal stories, and paths not chosen, individual possibilities, fears and dreams; and somehow, also, about ›marriage‹: the alliance of citizens bonded by building and living together – under a plastic tepee, or by contrast, and in close proximity, within an ecologically and socially sustainable brand new building project; the awkward yet profitable connection between high-end apartments, a housing cooperative and a fleeting micro-utopia; the match between Berlin and Johannes-

burg; the partnership between artistic and social research; and the ›marriage‹ marriage.

The smartphone photograph taken at the end of each conversation seals the exchange, and exists less as an object than a gesture; the remnant and proof of participation in a process; an acknowledgement perhaps, of human connection.

Living together

The biotope where artist Terry Kurgan conducted her residency is located between the boroughs of Kreuzberg and Mitte, right on the former border between West and East Berlin. After the Berlin Wall came down, the area fell into a deep sleep. Despite its proximity to the city centre, and its fabulous, scenic location on the banks of the river Spree, it remained a collection of empty lots and derelict buildings that were the temporary homes of some of the city's most legendary nightclubs: Kiki Blofeld, Tresor, and Kater Holzig.

During the last decade, however, rising pressure on the Berlin housing market has directed keen attention to this neighbourhood, which has resulted in dispute and conflict with regard to competing ideas about possible development paths to follow. For example: Kreuzberg residents' autonomous resistance to the business development plan of Mediaspree (as well as against culture-driven gentrification disguised as architectural research á la Guggenheim Lab), new Spreefeld residents against the party crowd of the club scene, the city-wide public against the privatisation of the river's shoreline, and local home owners against the unbridled greed of international investors. Today, the site and its surroundings are characterised by different experiments in communal living, and by relatively unchecked real estate speculation.

Terry's residency covered an area containing three sites: the three brand new, eco-friendly, eight-storey buildings of the Spreefeld Housing Cooperative, the temporary settlement of self made shelters called Teepee Land, an »experiment« and »political statement« in democratic planning and societal conviviality;[1] somehow evoking the spirit of Berlin's pioneer days of the early 1990s; and finally, the Seifen Fabrik, an upmarket residential development of a former soap factory, currently being converted into luxury apartments as private investment. What unites these three ›worlds‹ are the extensive public, semi-public and private land running along the Spree River front, and upon which all of them rest.

The artist was particularly impressed by the physical proximity of such contrasting types of dwellings and lifestyles, superimposed upon the many visible layers and traces of 20th century history embedded within the site. »In South Africa, I work a lot with the notion of the palimpsest. In Johannesburg, there is so much past and present history alive at the same time, having to co-exist and ›get along with each other‹, so to speak, in such conflicting, complicated and of course, conciliatory ways. I was at home on the Spreefeld once I understood how many different chapters of Berlin's history the site told … I was also struck by the extraordinary juxtaposition of different kinds of co-housing communities, and how so many pressing contemporary Berlin urban and social issues were

evoked by the very particular one square kilometre upon which my project was based.«[2]

Terry's residency was planned as a collaboration with the host organisation id22, Institute for Creative Sustainability, a not-for-profit association »supporting cultures of sustainable urban development and innovative housing«. Michael LaFond, director of id22 is also a resident member of the Spreefeld Cooperative and believes that art can be very helpful when »communicating creative sustainability, creative methodology, publics and networking«.[3] Moreover, id22 was particularly interested in seeing what the cooperative could learn from Terry's work. »We expected that there would be some kind of research produced that might enable the members of our cooperative to reflect upon their lifestyle choices, their dreams, their fears and their own visions.«

Creating an ›issue‹

Terry has a diverse and extensive artistic practice exploring the borders between the private and the public in the South African public domain. Her original idea for the residency, which came along with the ready-made brief – to explore alternative housing cultures in Berlin – was to do a project on ›intimacy‹ in the context of the physical space of the different communities living on the Spreefeld. She thought about creating a project, a ›monument‹, or an installation composed of gestures from everyday life. Her plan was to speak to people in Teepee Land, the Spreefeld Cooperative, and a range of other co-housing communities in close proximity, and ask them questions that they would respond to by photographically documenting moments in their personal lives. These would then be uploaded onto a platform like Instagram, and shared amongst a larger group. But there was not much take-up and so she went about researching the social and physical infrastructure of the site to come up with ›Plan B‹. Terry was anxious to find ›an issue‹, or ›a problem‹, to work with, or reflect. »These different co-housing projects, they mostly made people's lives look so perfect! And so I decided to try and understand the space surrounding, and in-between them more carefully instead.«

For id22 and the members of the cooperative the ›issues‹ that were relevant or represented ›problems‹ to them were hard for Terry to grasp or identify with. This points to important considerations regarding the creation of issues as Bruno Latour expounds. »Issues«, just like publics,« says Latour in his contribution to this e-Book, »have to be created.« People are not born with passions, interests and concerns for a certain topic. To the contrary, any such interests are created through the knowledge and experience a person acquires about a certain situation, the assimilation of such knowledge and its integration into what the person considers relevant.

In this light, id22 and the cooperative's concerns were perhaps not raised clearly enough, and therefore the artist's process of identification with these did not take root, in order to engage them as the ›issues‹ of her residency project. Both the host and the artist mentioned that one difficulty in involving the members of the Spreefeld cooperative in the project more directly, was that they were either too busy with their daily lives, work and errands to sit down

and talk, or were away on their annual summer holidays. Additionally, Berlin is full of pop-up public art projects and many might have perceived of Terry's proposal as just another artist doing her thing. id22 was also preoccupied with organising their annual co-housing expo, ExperimentDays, and were not able to support her residency as much as they'd hoped, or as she anticipated they might.

And so Terry went her own way searching for issues to emerge; observing the particularities of the site and conducting research on Berlin's housing history and contemporary situation. She spoke to a range of ›experts‹, and read the articles they recommended. She noticed the contentious debate on the ›question of housing‹, and the ensuing ›right to the city‹ argument it generated. »It seems to me,« she later reflects on the site-specificity of her artwork, »that 20 years after the Wall has come down, public land is being sold to the highest bidder … gentrification and rampant speculation are transforming Berlin from a city where just a short while ago, 90 percent of residents were living in rent-controlled apartment buildings, into a city where now, in 2014, mostly wealthy people live, who can afford to buy their own homes or buildings, and the rest are being pushed out to suburbs on the edges. The issue seems to be about gentrification and its threat to the fabric and identity of the city« – and it ran right through the middle of the Spreefeld.

A cup of tea

For 30 days Terry Kurgan parked a mobile lab in the middle of several public paths running through the Spreefeld cooperative and Teepee

ISSS RESEARCH & ARCHITECTURE: CONCEPT AND REALISATION OF THE FINAL PRESENTATION OF 9UB IN BERLIN

Land. »I put myself right in the way, it looked really odd, and so people just had to talk to me,« says Terry with a laugh. »I offered them a cup of tea … and then I asked them about their origins, Berlin's layered history and modernity, and the quite contemporary ghosts that seem to haunt this particular spot at this moment.«

Terry held conversations with lead representatives and more recent members of the cooperative, the residents and overnight visitors of Teepee Land, Berliners at leisure, many curious tourists passing by, nudist philosopher river bathers, apartment-hunting prospectors seeking value at low prices, and also with some of the builders and workers of the Seifen Fabrik site. The ›Spreelab‹ mobile furniture she used was developed with students of the BTK summer school design&build workshop hosted by id22 and Stefan Schwarz and Ingrid Sabatier of ISSSresearch&architecture.

Terry's presentation of her process, developed in collaboration with architects Schwarz and

Sabatier, and graphic designer Pablo San Jose, represented a selection of these many conversations. The exhibition comprised a short stop-animation movie, a series of portrait photographs and linked narrative text that were installed into a perfectly intact former GDR river police boathouse right in the middle of the square kilometer within which she'd been roaming. The boathouse had been one of the famous – post-fall of the wall – nightclubs and was now also part of the property owned by the Spreefeld cooperative.

However, for her, these outcomes were almost by-products or documentation. »My piece,« she explains, »was process driven and became a performance.« »As a matter of fact,« she continues, »I have never performed in this way before, and I was terribly aware and self-conscious that I was performing a version of myself in order to engage people in a particular way.« With regard to her placement in this biotope in relation to her own practice and to the larger 9UB project, she felt that her work related to Antje Schiffer's and Anthony Schrag's residencies in Cape Town and Johannesburg; with Anthony contesting the role and purpose of the artist performing in the public realm, and Antje acknowledging, just as Terry has, how challenging it is to engage in such contrasting urban contexts and social realities; urban South Africa by comparison with Berlin.

Artistic research

Terry Kurgan's intervention raised another issue for her, alongside the gentrification debate, about the role of socially engaged art practices in different contexts. Speaking

UNEQUAL SOCIAL POSITIONS ARE SOMETIMES PART OF THE NEGOTIATION OF SOCIALLY ENGAGED ARTISTIC PROCESSES

about her larger body of work, Terry claims to be working »in a research driven way« with a particular focus on »pressing contemporary South African political and social issues«. And she explains, that »In the South African context, with its deep history and legacy of racial and social injustice and inequality, artistic public engagements often seem to try to ›help‹, or to make reparation, and inescapably raise the question for me of the role and purpose of public art; and of the extraordinary tension between artistic and social narratives. In Berlin, it was a great relief somehow to be working in a context and amongst people who did not need my ›help‹, and it was an extraordinary coincidence that while I was thinking about this in Berlin, Anthony Schrag picked up on exactly this issue in the South African context on his residency in Johannesburg, and provocatively walked through the inner city with a huge sign saying »Art cannot help you«. This reflection draws attention to the often hidden agendas and unequal social positions that are

sometimes part of the negotiation of socially engaged artistic processes. The specific practice and research contribution of this kind of art is the de- and re-materialisation of the production and life of issues and their publics.

Regarding the standards of artistic research, Henk Borgdorff points out in his contribution to this e-Publication that in the past century a »qualitative research paradigm« has developed in the social sciences, where »interpretation and practical participation are more relevant than logical explanation and theoretical distance«, and quantitative standards. In this regard, Michael LaFond raised the concern that the ›public‹ of the Spreefeld from which Terry drew her sample, was a selective one. It was mainly passers-by that accepted her offer of a cup of tea, while the members of the cooperative mostly did not or could not make the time. Michael describes Terry's work as a practice of mapping: »Terry created a space with her table and documented this space … There was a complex constellation of actors and possibilities and mapping it out was the artistic part.« It was not as »representative and rigorous as an academic survey might be« – yet precisely because of this lack it had the qualities of other forms of knowing: it reconfigured the site and matters of concern in an engaging, multi-coloured and inventive way and allowed fresh questions to be asked about the issues at the heart of the cohabitation model of the Spreefeld cooperative. Michael explains: »For us it was interesting to see from Terry's work what kinds of people move through our space: how open it is, how public, and how private, and whether it is okay for people to keep coming through, or whether we need a fence: all these questions are very relevant to us.«

Reflecting on the extent to which this residency has been a form of research and what findings it has produced is a central outcome for 9UB as a dialogical platform for mutual learning and exchange. Only by making the experience productive in dialogue can it be a case study for others to learn form.

Learning from each other

Digging deeper into the particular knowledge produced by Terry Kurgan's intervention we find at its core precisely the exploration of cohabitation that in the beginning was discarded as a possible ›issue‹ for her residency. Via engaging critically with urban renewal and gentrification, the co-housing model resurfaced in the focus of both the artist's and her host's interests. »The cooperative housing model is an incredible model« Terry muses. »It's an example of purposeful exploration of environmentally and socially sustainable forms of living together, that is also capable of integrating sociability, individuality and conflict.« But her project did not neglect to raise the thorny issue of the borders and boundaries that social groups tend to want to erect around themselves; and Berlin, in this particular neighbourhood, is renegotiating the borders between public and private in a way that needs to remain transparent, honest and open.

For Michael LaFond, one of his hopes was that the 9UB project should enable communication between biotopes in order to see how people can learn from each other between north and

south. »To what extent, if at all, can we learn from each other without romanticising? Can we in Berlin be influenced by Soweto?« Unfortunately, as with other encounters, these significant questions, resonating with the ambitious aims at the core of 9UB, were hindered from being pursued due to time constraints and overstretched workloads. The shared space of this e-Book, Michael concluded, would be an important space for continuing such learning and reflection.

Bright futures (instead of a conclusion)

LET'S TALK, VIDEO BY TERRY KURGAN

As described above, the poetic narratives and compelling portraits that comprised an exhibition of Terry's dialogical encounters at the Spreefeld were presented during the fourteenth edition of id22's annual ExperimentDays in September 2014. They were installed into one half of a former GDR police boathouse together with an exhibition of all of 9UB's eight other residencies. This final exhibition, innovatively designed by ISSSresearch&architecture provided the material connection between all nine biotopes, and was also the context in which a live public chat between Terry Kurgan in Berlin and Anthony Schrag in Johannesburg took place. They discussed the role of public art in their different contexts, and the value of the ups and downs of their personal experiences during their residencies.

This was also the moment when, as often happens with socially engaged art processes, some of the special and private moments of her artistic process did not come to light, such as an offer that was made to her to stay in Berlin to explore the ups and downs of living together, but this time for a life-long residency.

Endnotes

1 Ballhausen, N and Kleilein, D. 2014. ›Spreefel‹. Bauwelt, 39: 14-23.

2 This and all following quotations from Terry Kurgan have been taken from the in-depth project interview held with the artist on the 10th of September 2014.

3 This and all following quotations from Michael LaFond and Ragna Sparger have been taken from the in-depth evaluation interview held on the 26th of September 2014 by Christian von Wissel. August 1st

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Conversations at the Spree

CV Terry Kurgan

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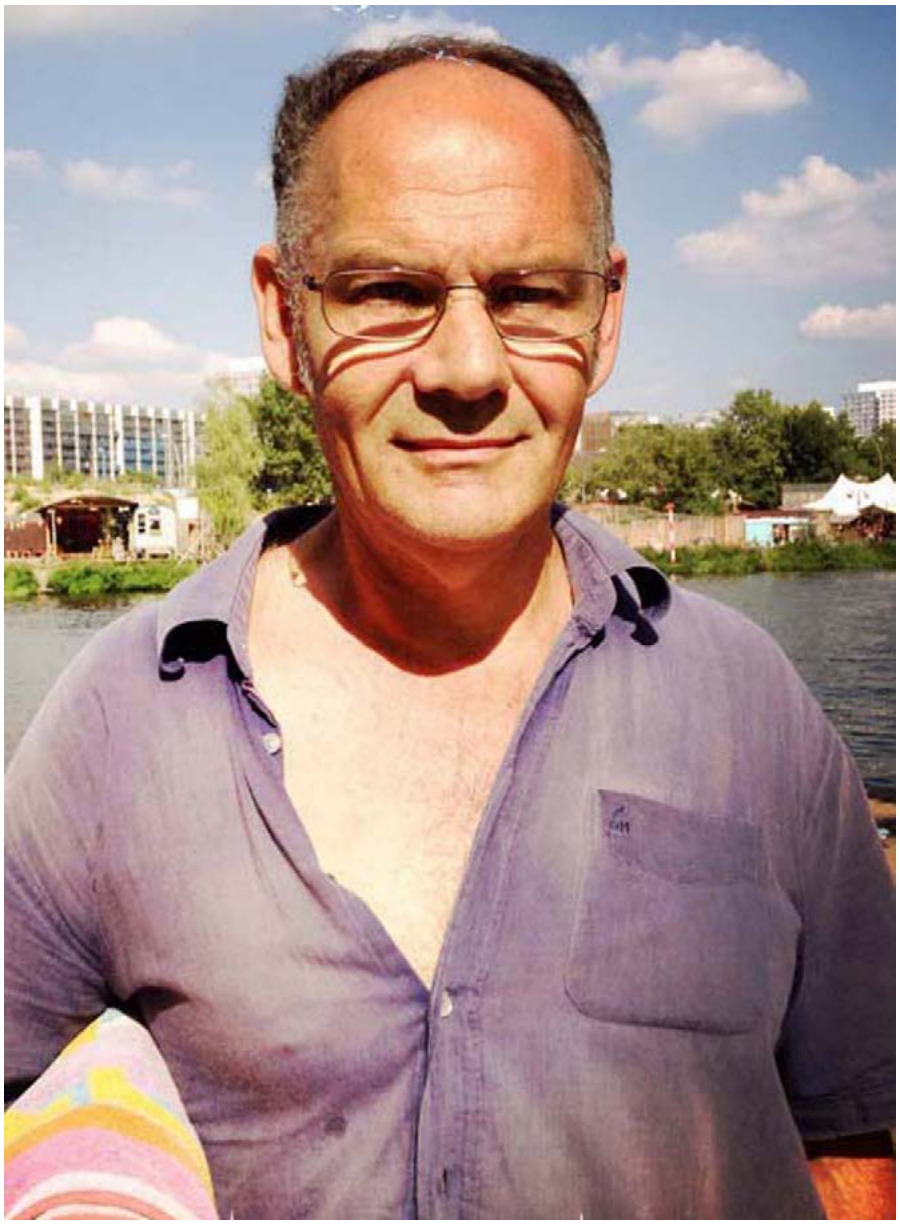
conversations at the spree

The following selection represents a small sample of the many conversations that were held during Terry Kurgan's residency project, culminating in her final presentation.

On my first few days in Berlin, to find out exactly where I was, I went to see a large and extraordinary 3D architect's model of the city at the Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment. And there I met Ralf Dehne who was the friendly civil servant (as he called himself) sitting behind the information desk. In exchange for a good recipe from my country (and the only other African he had ever met was from North Africa and she gave him a recipe for grilled grasshoppers), he said he would help me source photographs and records of the area where my project is based, going back 100 years. I thought a good southern African recipe for Mopane worms would be in keeping with the grasshoppers, but had to think of something else that I actually cook and eat; like *bobotie*, which is a traditional Cape sweet curried beef dish. He also told me he was a family historian. That he found people for people. Who wrote to him from all over the world. »They are usually looking for lost dead people, or for their graves.« When I thanked him for his generosity, he said very charmingly that it was a mirror of my own. He captivated me instantly. Not because of his compliment (which of course wasn't lost on me!) but because he's the keeper of certain key records of the city of Berlin: an archivist and a family historian. And like me, he works with family photographs to find clues to the past. He was interesting and a wonderful, open conversationalist. We sat down together and he took out his maps and began 750 years ago, patiently explaining the history and development of the city of Berlin, right up to the present moment. Ralf has been working for the Berlin government since 1968, and in this particular job since 1975, and is very well placed to comment on the direction that he sees the city is going in. He says there is an alarming shift which in 15 years time may have transformed the city into a place for wealthy professionals who own their own homes, with most middle class and working class people, who formerly used to live in rent-controlled apartments in the city,



being pushed out to the edges, or even further afield where they can more easily afford to live. Ragna Spargel, my assistant on this project, took this photograph because she said that he seemed to be a treasure trove of knowledge, and every time he drew another interesting fact up and out of his memory he closed his eyes like this, perhaps to be able to retrieve it more easily. So Ralf Dehne is where these conversations began.

August 8th

I meet Johannes, beach towel tucked under his arm, on the path down to the river. »Let's talk? ... Well, what about?« he says. I explain myself and he happily sits himself down at my table. Johannes was born in Munich and has lived in Berlin, (always in Kreuzberg), since 1978. 36 years now. He's a Doctor of Philosophy and used to be affiliated to Berlin's Free University. But now he's retired from scholarly life and works as an urban activist. »I'm watching developments around here very closely,« he says, »and I'm not so happy with what I see.« We stand on the path between the three brand new buildings of the Spreefeld Genossenschaft and the noisy building site upon which the old red-brick Seifenfabriek used to stand. This 100-year-old building survived two world wars, and a long, derelict vacancy during the period that it stood on No Man's Land between East and West during the time of the Wall. Then it was squatted and transformed into Katerholzig, one of the most famous riverside club venues of the 90's, and now, is being demolished (except for some aspects of its external façade) to make way for the construction of high-end, internationally marketed, river view, luxury apartments. Johannes remarks: »This global marketing and luxury living is ruining Berlin. All the poor people in this city are getting chucked out! Now that's not a solution. This gentrification is a strategy to optimise the financial returns that flow from owning land, and it will turn Berlin, like Paris, like London, like New York, into a city that was! A city that is a museum of itself. Worse! A museum of a museum! In the end, there will be only two extremes left. The rich and the homeless people, with nothing in the middle. Our government, these Christian Democrats, they are criminals! They brush over this issue and make it appear to be invisible.« When I ask him how he feels about the Spreefeld Genossenschaft's development, he says, »What you see here is a strategy to maintain a certain sort of heterogeneity and prevent private ownership and high

end luxury, and while it is a much better solution than the one going on right next door, it is still private ownership of a sort, and of course, they have built much too close to the river. The city's rule is that building needs to be at least 30 metres away from the river. Look how close they have come.« When I ask him what inspired his career as an urban activist he says: »If you live in a building which has two times been sold, and you have to move out because the rent is now totally unaffordable, and then, are living subsequently in a new flat which is similarly threatened, what else can you do? It's as simple as that. Land grabbing is the strategy that enables late capitalism to survive.« »I suppose,« he muses, »that's still better than war.« And with that, he takes off all of his clothes and dives into the river.

August 15th

Brigitte finds me at my table on the path between Teepee Land and the river. She lives in Düsseldorf, is a retired schoolteacher, and is in Berlin today »as a not quite typical tourist,« she says. She was born after the war, and grew up in Potsdam and Berlin until her parents moved across the country. But, she says, like Marlene Dietrich famously said, and also sang: »Ich hab' noch einen koffer in Berlin«, and then she sings it to me. Quite beautifully, I have to say. Brigitte keenly follows television and radio stories about development and change in the city and she often comes to see what it is that she reads about. Today's newspaper cutting bears the headline: »Ein weiteres Stück Mauer ist gefährdet: Teile der früheren Grenze stehen einem geplanten Uferweg an der Spree im Wege«, and she's exploring the neighbourhood that the article describes. She was astonished to see that since she'd been here last, the club Katerholzig has been demolished and the Spreefeld Genossenschaft is already built and inhabited. She feels tolerant of these developments and hopes the city retains some sort of balance between the need for affordable housing, clubs, culture and investment. She's off next to a special factory shoe shop called Trippen, on Kopernickerstrasse where they have stylish shoes for her very big feet. We compare and then commiserate about our mutually ›too big‹ feet, embrace very warmly, and off she goes.

August 17th

Silke was born in Essex, in the UK, but grew up in the north of Germany, near Hamburg. She's

been living in Berlin since 1995 and is currently unemployed, but involved in urban activism in many ways. She gave birth to her child in 2000 and says that »the added significance of this millennium baby made working to make the world a better place even more important« to her still. She lobbies for the legalisation of drugs, and is involved in the Transition Towns movement. Her primary involvement, however, is in the group Dach Garten Für Alle, which is what brings her down to the Spreefeld on her bicycle at this moment. She's coming to look at the gardens in this area. »Dach Garten Für Alle?« I ask. Silke explains to me the importance of urban gardening in 2014. »Everywhere you look, worldwide, people are moving to cities. Climate change and density are causing a heat island effect so that cities are much hotter in summers than they ever used to be. So much so that some years many people die of this heat! We need to plant and plant, grow and grow and make cities greener and cooler, as much as we can. Roof gardens do that for you, and they also give small animals and insects a place to live.« I ask her how she feels about the development and construction we can see all about us here upon this space that still reveals the scar of the old divisions between East and West. And she says that the building sites worry her a little, in terms of what she sees being built upon them. And, the closing of easy public access to the Spree in some places is also very worrying. But she largely feels very welcoming toward all the new Berliners. »We need them and their new ideas, but we need them to understand that we must share the economy!« She works some of her time in a Leihladen, which she explains to me »is a borrowing shop but also a sharing

shop, where you can pick up other people's unwanted, old stuff for free (shoes for example, or a warm winter coat), but where you can also borrow, if you need it, the use of a drill, an electrical extension or even a microwave oven!« I ask her where she imagines she will be in ten years time and she says the fantasy is that she will be happily living in the countryside, growing trees, flowers and vegetables. But her friends don't take this vision of hers seriously. They think a quiet country life will never be exciting enough for somebody as socially and politically engaged as she is. She smells, then caresses the flowers in their jug on my table, makes sure I've recorded all the relevant activist websites, then hops back onto her bicycle to complete her summer garden tour.

is dialogue enough? the asymmetries of partnerships

By Caroline Wanjiku Kihato

Sometimes dialogue is hard. It exposes the distance in our assumptions, our understanding of each other and our ways of seeing. Sometimes our cultural references and registers may be too far off to have easy conversations with each other. The ways we understand who we are and what we do can be questioned in a difficult conversation. Yet while difficult conversations may be uncomfortable and painful, they are also the ones that most give us the opportunity to learn. The collaboration between Drama For Life (DFL) and Anthony Schrag provided such an opportunity. It tested the limits of dialogue in ways that were at once productive and disquieting. Yet this difficult space was also a platform for re-examining difference and questioning long-held assumptions about art, the nature of collaboration and the possibilities of dialogue. This was true not just for Schrag and DFL, but for Nine Urban Biotopes, the project that brought them together.

Drama For Life is an independent programme located at the Wits School of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Its

mission is to »enhance dialogue for purposes of social transformation through research, teaching and learning, and community engagement.« For Chatikobo Munyaradzi (Chati), DFL's Programme Manager, there were numerous reasons why DFL was excited about the Nine Urban Biotopes project. »It provided DFL an opportunity to share and exchange ideas with others,« he said to me in an interview. »It strengthened existing partnerships with Goethe-Institut and it provided a learning platform for students and academic staff.«

On his website, Anthony Schrag admits, »[that he has] a difficult relationship with art. I think that it is because ›art‹ is fundamentally an amorphous thing – it's the thing that constantly ›challenges our perceptual habits‹ (L Magor), but [which] sometimes gets formatted into galleries and museums [with] there being the expectation of what it should be, what it should look like. And I have difficulty with that.« In an interview, Schrag told me: »Nine Urban Biotopes seemed like a good match in terms of my practice.The project was about exploring things on the ground – urban life and the joys and problems faced by people living in cities. All of my work is quite participatory, so I work with specific communities developing programmes for them and with them in collaborative ways.«

Schrag's time in Johannesburg was productive. He produced over 30 artworks that included solo and collaborative pieces.

Anthony's residency in Johannesburg questioned the world around him. His artworks continually resisted the urge to take the obvious as the answer – education as good, art as useful and armed security as the solution to high levels of crime in Johannesburg. In some of these works he interrogates his role as a white, Scot-

HIS PIECE ›I AM HERE TO HELP‹ DID JUST THIS, FOR HIM AND THE PEOPLE HE ENCOUNTERED

tish/Canadian born-in-Zimbabwe man, and inserts himself into situations and positions where he is an anachronism. His out-of-placeness disrupts people's habitual ways of seeing in ways he hopes will result in greater reflection. His piece ›I am here to help‹ did just this for him and the people he encountered.

In »I am here to help«, Schrag sets up a table and chair on a street in Johannesburg with a sign that says: »I am here to help.« In this piece he challenges the notion that art is supposed to help. »Art is about dissent, challenge and provocation, it shouldn't aim to help, because the notion of helping is paternalistic,« he said to me in a conversation. But being in South Africa, which has extreme poverty and inequality, Schrag's understanding of art and its role was necessarily challenged. »It did challenge me to think about art in a context that isn't in northern Europe where the vast majority of people are predominantly wealthy. In a context like South Africa, is it moral [for art] to not to try to help? I don't know, because even though I did help people even by giving them directions or making someone laugh, or by making their day a little better, this did not change the structures of inequality, and so in some way it was merely a distraction from a real moral/ethical change. So, perhaps it is not ethical to try to help people, but instead change systems.«

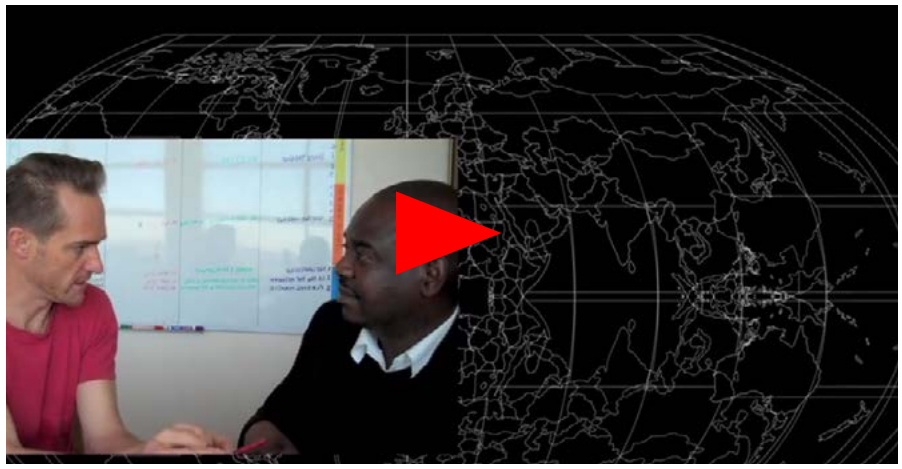
While the residency was productive, it was not without its challenges.

Difficult questions

From the outset, the collaboration raised difficult yet pertinent questions about public art practice, dialogue and collaboration across cultural, geographic and institutional divides. What is art? Who is the community? And how can groups that sit in different institutional locations, with varied mandates, work and learn from each other? With teaching and learning being one of DFL's key areas of work, it was important for them to locate Schrag's visit in an existing academic programme. The expectation was to provide Schrag with a platform to explore his practice in relation to DFL's work and programmes. »We made a conscious decision to embed the project within one of our courses, the theatre as activism course, which is a Master's course. Anthony was given six students to work with to explore spaces in Newtown and Braamfontein,« said Chati. »The first major hiccup was that how I see community engagement was quite different from the way they (DFL) see community engagement,« Schrag said. »In my understanding of community engagement you have to have proper understanding of the community, know what you are giving and what you are getting out of it. They assigned the seeking out of communities to students who did not have long term sustained relationships with the communities they approached.« As Taryn Lee, DFL's Sex Actually Festival Director put it: »One thing that stood out for me was that our [DFL's] understanding of community was located in space on a specific site, and it seems that Anthony didn't understand that.« For the most part, DFL's community work is located in specific areas, rather than specific individuals or groups. »Most of the communities we work with are highly mobile and occupy many geographic spaces in the city. And do not necessarily stay together in a collective,« Lee explained. Because of this DFL's model of engagement

seeks to work in specific locales, where local institutions (such as schools) or organisations host populations that they can work with. Schrag's practice differs from this, exploring the relationship a community has to an institution and how they are mediated by formal institutional structures.

It is perhaps both fortuitous and problematic that DFL and Schrag were paired together for the project. DFL is located at a university, which in addition to teaching, conducting research and working with communities, also has to attract students, manage budgets and look for funding in a context of ever-shrinking institutional funds. Schrag's practice seeks to ask difficult questions of institutions, art practice and its role in transforming societies. In doing this, his work questioned the very basis upon which DFL (and other institutions) are founded. The DFL/Schrag interaction necessarily highlighted both the vulnerabilities of institutions to funding streams and the ways in which institutions sometimes compromise practice to accommodate everyday demands such as timelines, practicalities, donors, student needs and so on. These compromises are not necessarily negative or positive, but are strategies required of institutions such as DFL if they are to survive. Schrag admits that as an independent artist he is in a position of privilege and can be more critical of institutional workings in his art practice. »In northern Europe we have a lot more funding and freedom to critique and question institutions. South Africa is a different context and may not have the freedom,« he argued. Whether Schrag's analysis is correct (certainly many western organisations face similar limitations to DFL), his position as an independent artist



THE THIRD SPACE: PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR MUNYARADZI CHATIKOBO AND ARTIST ANTHONY SCHRAG REFLECT ON THE JOHANNESBURG RESIDENCY

allows him freedoms that others working within the confines of institutional might not have.

Unequal relations?

But perhaps in these conversations lies an even more fundamental questioning of the asymmetries of north-south collaborations. And, it is not simply the unequal resource distribution, but more significantly about how knowledge is produced, who has access to it, and how developing nations more generally, and Africa in particular, can participate on an equal footing. This was the topic of a frank video conversation between Chati and Schrag. Chati, articulates this clearly when he says:

»The idea [of Nine Urban Biotopes] is to facilitate a conversation in the virtual space where the biotope from the north and south exchange information. There is a lot that can be benefitted [...] But somehow I get stuck in the fact that there is a disproportionate transfer of knowledge, in the sense that we don't all have the privilege of easy access to the Internet and, as such, [only] a few priviledged people in the

south will get access to that. To what extent then do we facilitate that transfer of knowledge and perceptions and ideas with the broader community?«

This question perhaps opens up a broader discussion around knowledge production – question which academics, writers, and artists interested in Africa have reflected upon for a long time. African scholars like Mahmood Mamdani and Tiyambe Zeleza, among others, argue that this unequal terms of exchange of knowledge relegates Africa to producing raw material (data) while the west produces the ideas and theories. One of the missed opportunities in this biotope was the opportunity of the host organisation to assert itself on the global stage. A comment made by DFL in an evaluation report articulates this:

»We felt that the whole project, particularly the London and Berlin biotopes missed opportunities of seeing Johannesburg from the perspective of young Applied Drama and Theatre students, as their Theatre as Activism projects were not documented and uploaded on the Nine Urban Biotopes website to be seen by artists and participants from the eight other biotopes. The project ended up being more about the artist.«

Perhaps there is a question to be asked about the extent to which South African partners were involved in the conceptualisation of the Nine Urban Biotopes before they were approached to participate. Would this have made it easier to navigate the different conceptions of community, art and participation that faced DFL and the Schrag residency? Is it even feasible to involve all partners at the inception of a project? And would this have smoothed the relationships in this biotope? It is difficult to answer these questions. But in reflecting on the DFL/Schrag biotope it is important to examine whether co-producing the project with partners from its inception would have yielded more productive dialogue in terms of knowledge sharing and learning across continents. What is clear, is that collaborations such as these need to take into cognisance that all voices are participants. Whether either partner likes the other's agenda, product, or point of view, giving everyone equal opportunity to present their work is essential; to ensure that no voice is stifled and in order to to strengthen cross-cultural dialogues.

Despite the project's shortcomings and difficulties there were important learning areas on both sides of the dialogue. Chati pointed out that it was »a very profound learning experience; a platform which allowed me to reflect on how we can begin to imagine our programming in such a way that it could be even more beneficial to us and the communities we serve. There is a need to do that and it is possible to do that.« Schrag said: »Being here has challenged me to consider what my role is and what the role of art is in a different context. I wouldn't have got that if it hadn't been for that clash of concepts.«

It takes courage to question, it takes even more courage to listen, reflect and learn from criticism. Hopefully the experiences of this biotope go some way towards allowing us all to reflect upon our own practices in our communities, countries and our world.

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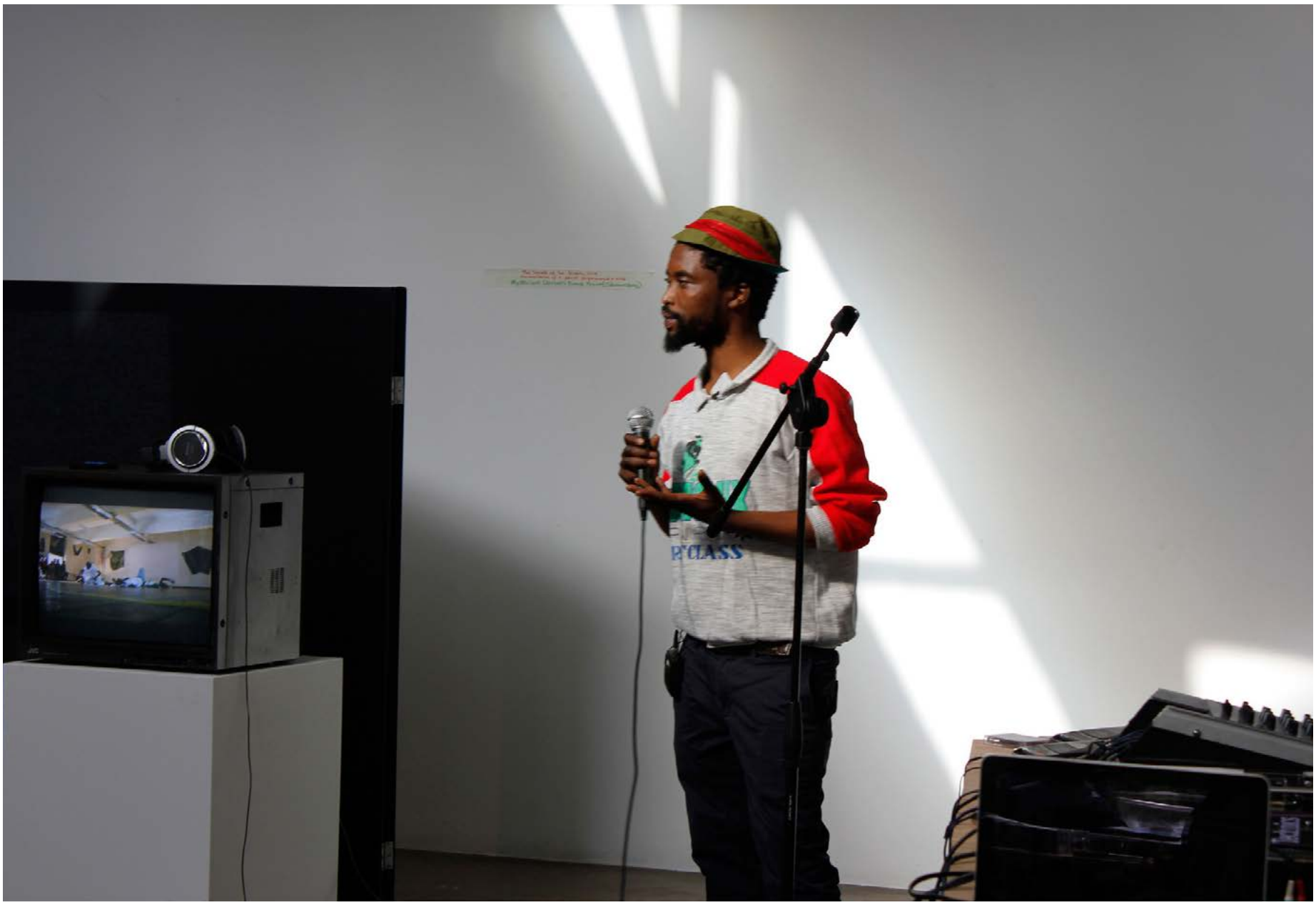


we are us and you are you

By Valentina Rojas Loa

›Dialogue‹ is one of those buzz words that always comes up as a goal statement of governments, institutions or projects working with the inevitable challenges set by the pervading multiculturalism and globalisation of today's urban societies. But what do we mean by ›dialogue‹? What are our expectations and preconceptions of this ubiquitous term? What comprises its raw materials? Is it at all measurable? When can we say a dialogue was ›successful‹? And, last but not least, once dialogue has taken place, what then?

These and more questions concerning the ›art of dialogue‹ were at the core of 9UB's South London Gallery residency. Through the project, two groups of young people, the Mysterious Creatures Dance Fusion (MCDF) from Johannesburg and the gallery-based collective Art Assassins (AA) from London, explored the creative potential of aligning their geographies for a given amount of time. The engagement between the two groups was initiated as a series of exchanges trying to unpick what Rangoato Hlasane, the artist-in-residence of the exchange, had framed as a »global conundrum«: »We knew about each other but we

didn't know much about each other.« Hence, the residency challenged some of the pre-conceptions of international exchange and trans-local dialogue itself, while at the same time opening new horizons for the participants to reconsider their own city and role as young artists living in urban contexts.

Agents and aims of dialogue

The exchange between the two groups was facilitated by Rangoato Hlasane, a visual artist, writer, illustrator, DJ and educator based in Johannesburg, with long experience in art/s education, and co-founder of the Keleketla! Library in downtown Johannesburg, an inter-disciplinary, independent library and media arts centre established in 2008. Mysterious Creatures Dance Fusion was born as part of the library's after school programme in 2011 »To grow and expand in dance and to find collaborations independent of facilitators; to explore creative movement in both physical theatre and outside.«

Art Assassins, on the other hand, is a group of young people between 13 and 19 years of age, many of them black or of immigrant origin, who once a week gather at South London Gallery in Camberwell, London. The group was constituted on an initiative of the gallery's education programme among youth from the immediately neighbouring estates. They now form the flagship of the gallery's public outreach activities and engage regularly on a long-term programme of non-formal cultural/creative education and engagement with the local community. The initial idea of the project was that each group would produce material portraying their experience of the city they live in and send it to the other group. Then each group would organise a series of workshops to review and respond to the material sent to them, aiming at »deciphering and cataloguing what one can know about the experience of young people« in both metropolises. The series of exchanges would serve to develop a framework for a peer-led cross-continental resource centre, with the aim to become »a permanent space to foster on-going conversations and publish material that uses artistic research to document the experiences of young people in Johannesburg and London«. Finally, according to the detailed initial draft of the project, the exchange sessions between both groups would conclude in »a peer-led colloquium to take place in Johannesburg and London in 2016 where delegates of the groups will visit each city and work with the host group to facilitate the colloquium.«

Practicing dialogue

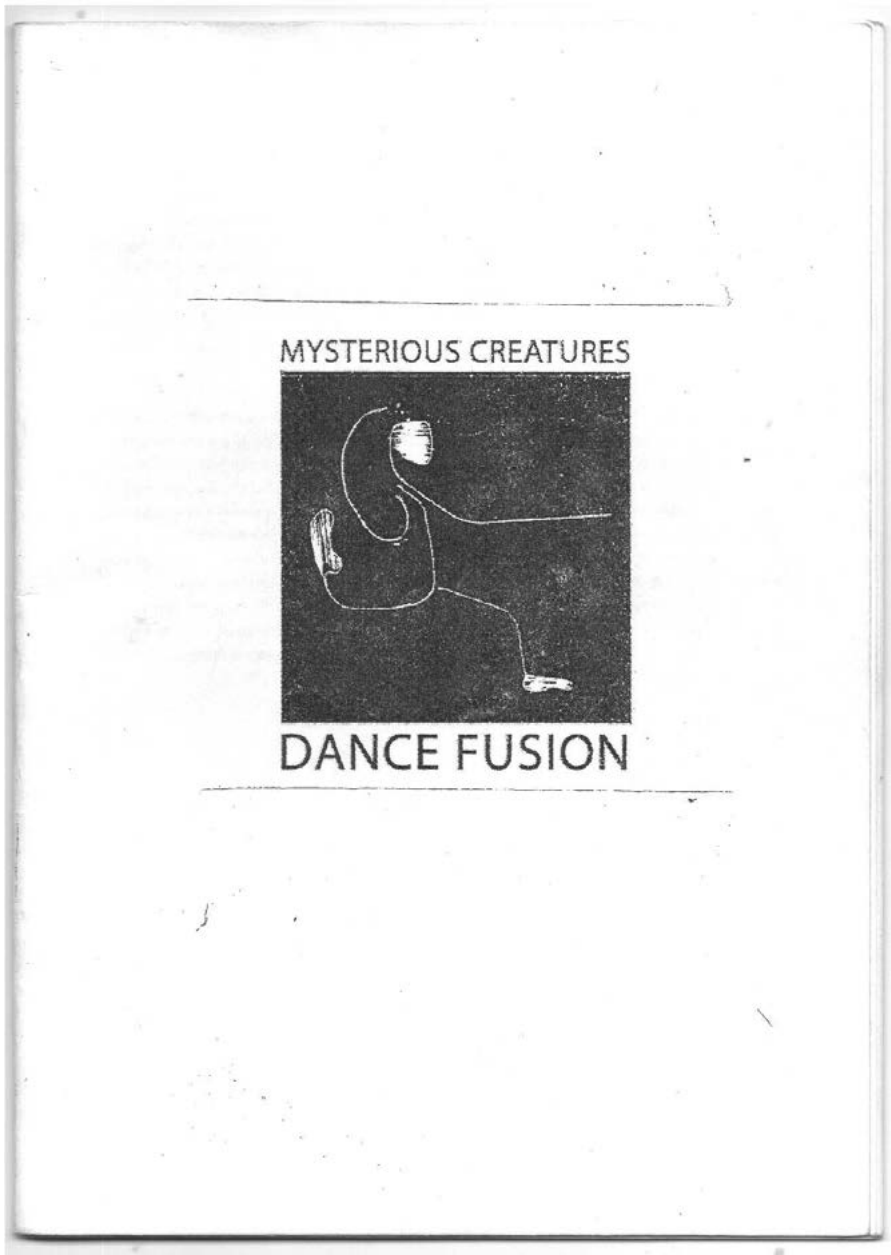
Putting two groups together to reflect on their identities as young urbanites was not as easy as it seemed. Despite widespread faith in information and communication technologies such as Skype, virtual reality still has a long way to go before it produces conditions of ›shared presence‹ in ›real‹ space. This is particularly so in the case of dialogue among groups of people, and when movement and space become agents proper of the conversation. According to Rangoato, »for a dialogue such as this one to really take place, it was necessary to create an environment of trust that could have been created only if they had spent plenty of time together, an impossible thing to do given they were located in different cities.«

THE SECRETS OF THE STREET, VIDEO BY MYSTERIOUS CREATURES

Beyond the physical conditions of dialogue it is also important to point out that a common language used between the two parties participating in the dialogue also needs trust and time to develop. This is particularly important when the discourse is not articulated in terms of clearly understood codes and conventions. AA and MCDF rather expressed their conception of identity and their relation to the city through feelings, ideas and creative expressions in dance and music that needed time to take shape and turn into the common language of their conversation. Moreover, as Scott Burrell from SLG points out, AA felt »a bit intimidated« by the self-assurance and eloquence from MCDF, hindering the easy flow of communication. In July 2014, Rangoato spent ten days in London working directly with AA brokering the communication between both groups. This amount of days was certainly not enough.
In light of the multiple hurdles entailed in trans-local conversation, AA and MCDF, as well as Rangoato as their mediator, decided to concentrate on what they could do together rather than on getting to know each other. The narrow and fragile matrix of their encounter was thus built and sustained by action, by getting down to work and actually practicing dialogue. AA started by leaving the confines of the gallery and immersing themselves in the streets, looking for those places and situations in their hometown that spoke to them as significant markers of their identities. There, among hair salons and market stalls, sound systems, bus rides and council flats they recorded the multiple voices and noises of ›pan-African‹ London, tunes full of city life, imagination and memory, which they later sampled into nine musical variations called ›God‹, ›Ice Cream‹ and ›Tumbleweave‹, and compiled on a series of tapes titled We are us and you are you.

AA then invited MCDF to initiate the cassette sleeve illustration. MCDF proposed to illustrate one side of the sleeve, leaving the opposite side for AA, completed during Ra's residency at SLG. MCDF had already created a choreography called ›The secret of the streets‹ before they heard the music coming from AA, and they sent work to AA first, to trigger the exchange. Once they received the music in return from AA, MCDF responded with a new choreography, related thematically to ›The secret of the streets‹, which was performed at the listening party in Johannesburg, then filmed and sent to AA to be screened at the final listening party.

According to MCDF, the purpose of their response piece was »to show people what is happening on the streets of Johannesburg and how people react towards homeless people«. They, too, went out into the streets of their hometown in order to put their contribution to the dialogue together, searching like



FANZINE OF THE MYSTERIOUS CREATURES DANCE FUSION

AA for props and things that inspired them and investigating how homeless people navigate the street. At the end of the process they performed their choreography unannounced and merged into the pedestrian life of the Johannesburg Central Business District, inviting passers-by to risk a second glance at the »ever-present but invisible existence of the homeless.« MCDF filmed the performance and then sent it back to London. In addition, together with Rangoato, they created a fanzine with the ideas behind the choreography, which they sent to AA, this time for them to follow the call. This mode of exchange that the two groups employed, based on and driven by call-and-response, has been proven by the sociologists Nirmal Puwar and Sanjay Sharma to be a fertile methodology for capturing complex imaginaries and social formations that necessarily rest on multiple responses. The iterative and multimodal approach can thus be understood also as a creative and bipartite research endeavour into the identity construction of urban black youth in Johannesburg and London: an experiment in trans-local, process driven and generative dialogue.

Other kinds of dialogue

As is the case with open artistic processes, things often turn out differently to how they were expected. It is precisely with such surprises that the potential for learning can often be greatest, resulting in projects that grow beyond preconceived – and thus limited – results. In the AA and MCDF' exchange, for example, the two groups were »neither very aware nor explicit« about the actual conversation but rather, according to Rangoato, this exchange »was hidden and took place in the work both groups, undertook.« Its ›impact‹, therefore relied »not so much on the dialogue established between both groups but in the dialogical process that was triggered by the work they produced in each location.« In addition, the cultural artefacts (oral, aural and visual) that both groups created were »dialogical in themselves and«, as Rangoato emphasises, dialogical also »in the process throughout which they were created.«

Thinking of a particular but unknown audience half way around the globe was the catalyst for the production of new work that could be meaningful both in London and Johannesburg. In

order to achieve that, AA and MCDF engaged in a dialogue with and in their urban environments – albeit separately – »reinforcing setting perceptions of how their city is perceived and reflecting on what was the critical impact of their work.« Each group on each side took to the streets to give a second ear and look to the myriad details of everyday life that are so often overheard yet overlooked: the lively presence of African migrants in South London and the pervasive yet invisible presence of homeless people in downtown Johannesburg. Profound cosmopolitanism is what they found and with both astonished and critical eyes they explored its textures while initiating a discussion about the ›Right to The City‹, the right to participate in »negotiating the future of urban living« (9UB), of those in need who are often deprived of voice and course of action.

Learning from each other: Keleketla! Library and South London Gallery

Yet another dialogical process initiated by the 9UB residency that had not been anticipated was the exchange between SLG and Keleketla! Library. Both centres are located in highly culturally diverse neighbourhoods and run strong arts education programmes, seeking not only to integrate the local into their cultural spaces and activities but likewise to integrate themselves into the spaces and activities of the local in ways that can be meaningful for all stakeholders involved: neighbours, art practitioners and cultural players.

For both institutions their arts education programmes are essential to comply with their ambitions in neighbourhood outreach and audience development. In particular, both aim to attract youth who otherwise would not step in at all, trying to engage them in creative explorations of topics that are meaningful to them. Responding to their own ideals, as well as to policy and funding drivers (in London), their wish is to bridge the gap between the often exclusive world of contemporary art and ›ordinary‹ citizens in order to build and perform »other narratives, and not only the dominant ones.« A sense of ›radical education‹ was in the air and together Rangoato and members from SLG were able to discuss their different experiences and share their strategies and tactics to reach beyond institutional confines, invite in local, alternative communities and imagine and bring to life transformative education.

›We are us and you are you‹: beyond some of the preconceptions of international understanding

Besides contesting some of our preconceptions on dialogue, Rangoato's 9UB South London Gallery residency was also revealing regarding how expectations about international understanding are often infused with idealisation. One such fantasy, formulated at the outset of the project, was that the two groups of youngsters from such distant urban settings would come together to share what they had in common. It was assumed that as both are young and somehow live in the cultural, social and geographical periphery of two of the most multicultural cities in the world they would have endless points of connection. While they did identify similarities between London and Johannesburg in terms of cosmopolitanism and social marginalisation, they reflected these separately

and without exploring potential affinities in any depth. The title of the music composed by AA was, in fact, rather eloquent in this regard: ›We are us and … you are you‹, a title that, even if not chosen »very consciously«, suggested entrenching separate identities rather than bringing AA and MCDF together based on resemblance or commonality.

Confirming difference, however, should not be seen as a negative outcome, or be regarded as a failure of the exchange. To the contrary, according to Sarah and Scott, the SLG's arts educators acting as the coordinators of the exchange, this reflects that when it comes to international dialogue and understanding, one of the first steps is that each party knows and then asserts who they are and from which context they come. It is not until they have done so that they can open themselves up to the challenges posed by the ›other‹, including, of course, contesting the preconceptions one might have had about oneself.

In the case of AA, for instance, liaising with MCDF – whom, apart from being a group of independent cultural practitioners, stood for young ›blackness‹ in Johannesburg – made them reflect on their own identity as black youngsters living in London. According to Sarah and Scott, some of AA have developed a deep-rooted identity as ›black young men‹, very proud of their African origin and, of course, still subjected to the negative implications that their immigrant origin and skin colour has in a city like London where social exclusion pervades. The encounter with an ›African origin‹ made of bone and flesh, who speaks, creates, dances and lives in a country where the majority is black, made the idea of such ›African origin‹ suddenly very concrete, triggering questions about the foundations and directions of such trans-local identity constructions.

Conclusion

The London-Johannesburg residency was the only one in the overall 9UB project that designed, at its centre, the challenge of working in and across two cities at the same time. This is by contrast with the structure of most of the other projects within each trialogue, which aimed to stimulate conversations between parallel-run residencies in different cities. By so doing, the notion of dialogue was put under test; not only in its practical application – which ended up placing more weight upon the ›how‹, or the ›doing‹ of dialogue than expected – but also, in what we actually mean by it and how we expect it to succeed. The interlocution about youth identity and cities that was supposed to take place between AA and MCDF resulted rather in a series of dialogical process that were embedded in the artworks that each group carried out in conversation with their own city. This helped them to explore the relationship they have with the places they live in, the urban issues that matter to them, and also to mature and expand their artistic practice. In the case of MCDF their approach to their project helped them to further consolidate themselves as an independent and professional dance group.

Finally, this exchange has revealed that while carrying out a dialogical process, the amount of time actually spent together and the physical interaction actually taking place is in fact of great consequence. The project has now come

ART ASSASSINS LISTENING PARTY

INTERVIEW WITH RANGOATO HLASANE

to an end and while the prospect for the two groups to physically meet in the near future has been excluded as a real possibility due to both financial and time constraints, it is still worthwhile to ask ourselves in what ways projects such as this one might be differently designed. In the field of socially engaged art practices,

we often find ourselves faced with the uncomfortable fact that given the short time-span and limited financial resources of the project, many valuable seeds that are planted in the first place are not able to continue to germinate and grow with enough strength and endurance to bring about lasting effects and transformative change.

Endnotes

1 This and all following quotations have been taken from the in-depth project interview held with Rangoato Hlasane in October 2014.

2 Rangoato Hlasane, Detailed Project Plan, 2014.

3 Puwar, N and Sharma, S. 2012., ›Curating Sociology‹, The Sociological Review, 60, p. 54 www.dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2012.02116.x.

4 Lefebvre, Henri. 1996. In Kofman, E and Lebas, E (eds). Writings on cities. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, p 158. Lefebvre defines this right as »a transformed and renewed right to urban life«.

5 A conference exploring this notion was held in London a few months earlier to Rangoato's stay at SLG. See: Radical Education Forum and Libertarian Education, ›State of Education 2014 Conference at Oxford House, London‹, State of Education 2014, 2014 www.stateofeducation2014.wordpress.com accessed on 4 December 2014].

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While the project was met with sustained interest, and the MCDF indicated the value of the work project with regard to their own development, my position within the entire project has caused ongoing personal reflection of what it all means.

Pen-pal style exchanges as a peer-led learning environment

The issue of audience, and the power of the audience to ascribe their own meaning to what was presented created a critical space between Art Assassins and MCDF. In the case of MCDF, the group engaged with how the work they share with Art Assassins might be dangerously read. MCDF wanted to create a work in response to homelessness and they chose to perform an interdisciplinary dance piece wearing clothes that looked like those of the homeless. They wanted to perform the piece in the streets, using symbols that speak of scavenging. This choice offered fertile ground with regard to considering their position in relation to homeless people of Johannesburg and of the world. MCDF did not take it for granted that homelessness was a global issue, and took into consideration that this representation could reinforce a misreading of Johannesburg in the eyes of their London peers.

Through the zine, MCDF used text to reflect on the process of making ›The Secrets of the Streets‹. This exercise enabled a space for reflection on their work. It also created a space to further engage with the initial question/justification of the exchange: ›we know each other but we don't really know much about each other‹. This also happened through the omission of content on some of the pages on the zine, inviting Art Assassins to respond to their work through text, drawings and other mark making in the publication.

This invitation was mirrored by Art Assassins' invitation to MCDF to design the cassette sleeve of their limited-edition release ›We Are Us and You Are You‹. Rangoato Hlasane suggested that MCDF designs one side of the sleeve, and Art Assassins designs the opposite side in order to further stimulate and encourage the notion and practice of co-authorship that reflects the working methods of both groups.

At this stage, both groups have emerged from the project with a series of co-authored material that suggests even more exchanges; each work proposes another, each step taken obliges the other party to respond in return, just as it is in a conversation.

FACES AND VOICES OF THE SPREEFELD, ›LET'S TALK‹ BY TERRY KURGAN, FINAL PRESENTATION, BERLIN, 3RD TRIALOGUE, SEPTEMBER 2014

temporary public spheres. arenas of social participation in 9ub

By Alison Rooke and Christian von Wissel

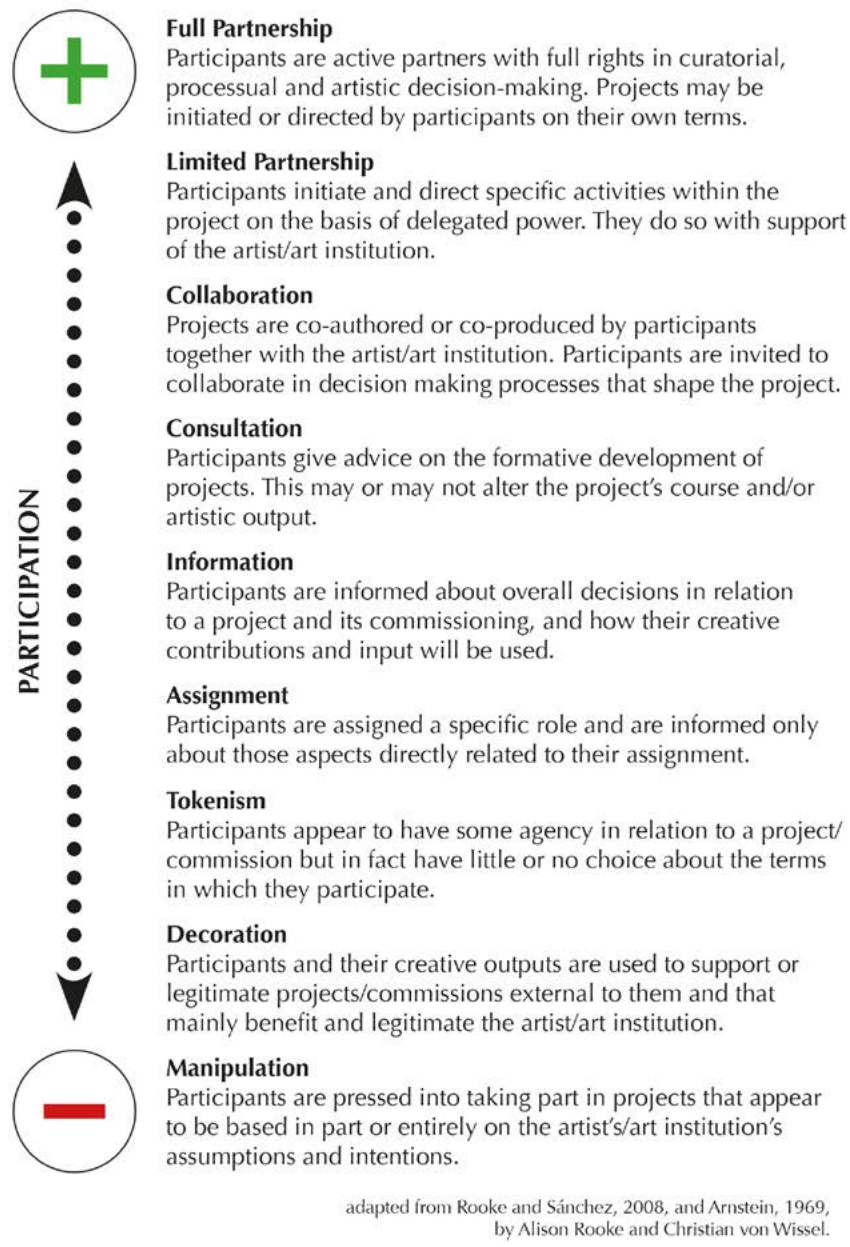
Socially engaged art in 9UB and elsewhere is difficult to imagine other than resting on participation. Be it relational, dialogical or community art, projects that sit under any of these labels all rely on engaging, in one way or the other, with multiple formations of participants. The politics of such participation are a contested site and thus need our careful consideration.[1] In this first evaluation essay we will discuss different modes of participation as they arose during the delivery of the nine residencies of the overall project.

Preliminary Considerations

The first preliminary thought is concerned with the kind of participation that 9UB is built upon, namely ›social participation‹. Following Claire Bishop's argument, at the heart of social participation lies the engagement between artist and ›other‹. Collaboration and collective social experience, as well as the proximity and physical involvement by which they are sustained,

are therefore essential expressions of this art form. This is in distinction to other artistic expressions such as interactive art or installation, happening or epic theatre, which aim at ›activating‹ the spectator through a moment of confrontation rather than commitment.[2] In other words, socially engaged art projects, by necessity, have to be able to create interest and to constitute and maintain safe spaces of trust and hospitality in which they can unfold[3] – including the possibility of unfolding as conflicts.

Secondly, it is important to think about the values attributed to participation. In much socially engaged art, participation is often appreciated as ›good‹ per se – without questioning the how, who and why of its realisation. Claire Bishop has criticised the political imperatives and presupposed righteousness of such claims, and questioned the fact that the critical evaluation of participatory arts overshadows artistic principles of critical autonomy and aesthetic judgment.[4] In order to assert art's aesthetic autonomy without falling into naive affirmative and idealistic political orientations, Bishop argues that socially engaged art practices should embrace the potential of contradiction and conflict in their actions. She draws on Ernesto Laclau's and Chantal Mouffe's theories of radical democracy and agonistic pluralism, reminding us that democracy, too, is not a matter of common agreement but a social system of permanent negotiations that brings us together precisely because we disagree.[5] In this spirit participatory artistic interventions can be understood as constituting temporary experimental public spheres: ›public spheres‹, because they act as arenas for social negotiation; ›experimental‹, because the publicness of these spheres is deliberately constructed in order to imagine, articulate and test alternatives to the current state of affairs; ›temporary‹, finally, because these spheres are bound to the duration of the experiment.[6]



adapted from Rooke and Sánchez, 2008, and Arnstein, 1969, by Alison Rooke and Christian von Wissel.

A third consideration here is the degree of social participation at stake in each project. Here, Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation is useful for identifying how differences in the »quality of invitation«[7] influence the involvement of participants in the development of a project. The first three levels, citizen control, delegated power and partnership constitute participation ›proper‹: decision making powers are transferred to, or shared with participants

and participation is lived as »civic practice«.[8] In the middle ranges, three merely rhetoric forms of participation, placation, consultation and informing, are indentified as tokenism. At the bottom of the ladder Arnstein identifies therapy and manipulation. Instead of empowering participants, these forms of non-participation hold people in place as the passive targets of decisions made from the top-down.

Arnstein's diagram is useful when critically assessing the ways in which claims are made for reducing power inequalities through participation. If we map socially engaged artistic interventions to Arnstein's ladder we can identify a gradient of arts participation ranging from full or partial partnership and collaboration, via consultation, information and assignment to tokenism, decoration and manipulation.[9] We have elaborated on this gradation in the accompanying figure. However, we recognise that this is a very general typology when applied to the nuanced and complex aesthetic, educational, agonistic and sociological intentions of artistic processes. Naturally, with varying levels of ownership and decision-making power for participants, the role of the artist, too, is changing. This we address in the second evaluation essay of this e-Publication.

Nine Arenas of Participation

Taking proximity, value and level of participation as the foundations of the following reflections, we can analyse and compare modes of participation as they unfolded throughout the 9UB residencies. The Soweto projects by Marjetica Potrč and her team are a good starting point for the discussion. In the Ubuntu Park initiative the quality of the invitation allowed the residency to quickly develop a network of participants that spanned from neighbours to local activist groups to local political bodies. A steering committee was formed and decisions concerning the park were taken together and in public (on the site of the ›park-to-be‹). Both artists and neighbours learned about local political culture by jointly ›feeling their way‹ through the process. Neighbours were thus supported in taking the future of an abandoned site into their own hands.

With the end of the three-month residency, however, neighbours were left on their own. In particular, making decisions about how to move forward became the group's principle obstacle. Unfortunately, the host organisation that had introduced the residency to its social context so carefully in the beginning was unable to support the ›community-in-formation‹ and to build on the achievements of its ›experimental civic practice‹. At the time of this writing, the future of the park and project is uncertain. On the one hand, the difficulties in sustaining the park can lead to frustrations among direct participants. On the other hand, both the group and the park-in-formation still persist and the positive memory of the collective social experience and own capacity to transform their neighbourhood live on. A hip-hop and poetry slam held in August 2014, proves that some of the spirit and agency born out of the hands-on engagement with the site still survives.[10]

The second project of the group was a gardening project at a local primary school. Unfortunately, this initiative did not develop synergies with the everyday lived realities of potential

user-participants. The project involved the school children and was built under the guidance of a local gardener, but a lack of interest, time and work commitment by teachers and parents hindered the extent to which it could, literally, grow and bear fruit. The street festival, finally, aimed at binding the other two projects together across space. It was a symbolic and one-off event and, consequently, participation was limited to being symbolic, too. However, one would be wrong in evaluating the ›critical success‹ of this third initiative to rest in the street event itself. Rather it has to be seen as an outreach strategy for the other two projects, spreading awareness of the park and vegetable garden far beyond the confines of the local.

In Montreuil, Paris, the 9UB residency was an even more complex assemblage of different and competing levels of participation. Taswald Pillay's hosts, Quatorze, had themselves been invited by the civil association Ecodrom in order to work with an extended Roma family. In addition to the 9UB artist, Quatorze invited further partners on board the project, including Bellville Architecture Faculty, and Taswald invited even more to accomplish his intervention. The multiplication of partners allowed reconfiguring the initial relationship between the Roma family and their sponsor Ecodrom. It also allowed a redirecting of the focus of the initial call. Taswald, in particular, took the opportunity to shift his role from being one of working with the community to one of challenging architectural interventions that pretend to work for the community. In doing so, he raised the question of the level of participation on which the Roma family as well as all the other actors on site were included into the process. The building of a bathroom responded to an urgent need identified by the residents themselves, but a consecutive kitchen was exposed by Taswald as a ›gift‹ that was made to the ›target group‹ without being asked for. Nevertheless, the Roma family thankfully received it; on the one hand, because they were aware of the political benefit which the engagement of all project partners brought to them, and, on the other hand as Taswald suggested, because they knew that they would be able to appropriate and adapt it to their needs at a later stage.

In accordance with the gradient of participation introduced above, in Turin we can speak of an approach on the level of an assignment. Even before inviting the artist, Dan Halter, the South-Italian pensioner gardeners were already envisioned as helping in the production of his artwork. However, while fostering interest among this first group turned out to be difficult, a second group, namely some Roma children from a neighbouring camp, was eager to join – because the Children were perceived as potential ›trouble-makers‹ by the Community Centre, this unintended candidate for participation was repeatedly rejected.

In the Cape Town project, the residency of visual artist Antje Schiffers was conceptualised as a dialogical dérive with spoken-word artist Ziphozakhe Hlobo. Antje's project brief called the integrated reporter to show her around town and to accompany her in her learning about the city. The learning itself was envisioned as being based on making random encounters, but turned out to rest essentially also on Zipho's engagement. Two types of participation were practiced during the execution

UBUNTU PARK PARTICIPANTS MEETING, SOWETO, 1ST TRIALOGUE, MARCH 2014

of the project: first, by forming a ›research tandem‹ the integrated reporter was placed in the position of collaborator to the project. Second, their informants, that is, the inhabitants of Cape Town whom they met and who taught them about the city, acted on the participatory level of consultation, informing the artistic outcome by guiding it according to their particular experiences and concerns.

In Terry Kurgan's Berlin residency, passers-by of the Spreefeld site were also drawn into the artistic production as informants to a research-like project. The characteristic of this project was that participation was both symbolic and lived as artistic practice. On the one side, people were invited not only to a conversation, but also to experience this conversation as an aesthetic encounter offered by the artist, yet which they could actively shape by means of their engagement. On the other side, their participation was ›symbolic‹ because it was filtered and edited by the artist in order to speak about her interpretation of the site and the matters of concern it attracts. As was the case in the Cape Town residency, participants handed over their voice to the artist who transformed it to give it back (and pass it on) in the form of a video or installation.

In Durban, to the contrary, market traders refused the terms of participation initially proposed by Armin Linke and insisted on their own agency and control of the emerging project. They claimed the role of a limited partnership and were supported in doing so by the

strong intervention of the host of the encounter, doung jahangeer from dala art/architecture. They also had a good sense of their role, and of their importance to the project due to effective community organisation, previous experience with culture-based urban activism and their long-standing and trustful relationship with dala. In the course of the project, Armin reduced his role to that of initiator and consultant and transferred important parts of the authorship of the process to the participants. At the same time, like dala did, he resisted disposing of his control over the representation of the outcomes.

In Berlin Moabit and London, as in Cape Town earlier, the two residencies were laid out not as socially engaged art projects in the common sense, but as dialogical encounters of two artists or artist groups. From there, things developed differently. In London, Rangoato Hlasane facilitated a dialogue between South London Gallery's Art Assassins and Johannesburg's independent dance company, Mysterious Creatures by employing a methodology based on ›call-and-response‹.[11] With full partnership on either side, the two groups' participation in the dialogue moved back and forth by means of audio recordings, videotaped dance performances and Internet-based telecommunication. In Berlin, to the contrary, the encounter between Athi-Patra Ruga and the JugendtheaterBüro Moabit suffered some challenging drawbacks. Above all, agreements regarding the implementation of the residency and responsibilities of the partners were partly ignored. Disagreement on the nature of their mutual engagement produced bad feelings on both sides regarding the invitation. As a consequence, trust and a common language were not found among the partners. Also, the subtle irony of Athi-Patra Ruga's performative art required different modes of participation to the pedagogical orthodoxies of the ›theatre of the oppressed‹ inspired by Paul Freire and Augusto Boal.[12] Nevertheless, the antagonistic clash between the two partners led to a series of unintentional outcomes that enabled questions regarding the challenges faced by participatory art encounters. In particular, the role and value – as well as the risks and price – of misunderstandings and unmet expectations were made a topic. Group discussions among the members of JugendtheaterBüro also reflected on the social skills needed for encouraging, guiding and protecting participation and for making it thrive even if in the form of creative disagreement and productive conflict.

Last but not least, at the Drama for Life residency in Johannesburg, participation itself was made the matter of concern. Here, too, educational theatre and visual arts disagreed on how and why to engage with ›participants‹. In the absence of what Anthony Schrag considered to be a stable and trustful relationship with an outside group of participants to work with, the visiting artist shifted the focus of the residency in order to encourage his host organisation to reflect on their conceptual approaches and practical assumptions. In several small-scale interventions he juxtaposed playfulness, (gentle) ›shock therapy‹ and his own vulnerability with Drama for Life's notion of ›art as healing‹.[13]

Comparative Study of Participation

As a space to study participation, 9UB has been a great success: few international art

›SPACE INVADER‹ BY DAN HALTER POTENTIAL INVADER TO THE INVADER PROJECT? FINAL PRESENTATION, TURIN, 2ND TRIALOGUE, JUNE 2014

projects allow for such in-built comparison of their social engagement across diverse sites, contexts and practices. The opportunity to draw conclusions from this study is certainly one of the achievements of the local and trans-local activities of all partners. In the following, we will suggest some of the points that emerge from this mutual learning.

One: The duration of the direct engagement between artist and participants was not as important as the on-going and trustful relationship between host and participants. This confirms O'Neill and Doherty's call not simply to prefer long-term art projects over those of short duration, but to foster the potential of consecutive projects of variable length »to be realised as part of longer-term, cumulative engagements«.[14] The incessant process of life's accumulation is key for participation. At the same time this call is surely a major challenge for commissioners, artists and funders in considering their role. A first step out of this dilemma may lie in a shift in the language we use to conceive of artistic social engagements. As doung jahangeer suggested, it is about thinking in ›initiatives‹, not ›projects‹, because social responsibility does not know of an end point to participation.[15]

Two: Fostering participation requires not only critical knowledge of the circumstances, but also social skill and live commitment. Even in the ›top‹ rung of the ladder of participation, transferring, sharing or nurturing decision-making powers among those who did not have them before is a delicate endeavour. Furthermore, when placed in the context of urban develop-

ment, we have seen that socially engaged art initiatives have to deal with two directions of decision making. On the one hand, decisions are directed to the outside: taking them ›against‹ the adversaries of the group in order to improve the circumstances. This requires understanding the context and constellations that are being acted within as well as the skill to identify their continuous becoming along the way. On the other side, decisions have to be made to the inside: the group will constitute itself and thrive only if it finds its terms of communication and enunciation of internal positions and thus building up social capital for making cultural democracy come alive.

Three: Many of 9UB's projects engaged with the possibility of participation to be enacted as ›collective critical practice‹.[16] Social change is only likely to be pioneered if participation is allowed to grow bottom-up and to take the project off-road and into the unknown – even if ›new shores‹ might not (yet) be reached interests of artists, hosts, commissioners or funders are being upset. Top-down predefined social values, even if we agree with them, have to be challenged and re-assessed in action by the cultural expressions and critical knowledge of those that are regarded to become their beneficiaries.[17] In the context of urban agendas, it is the open-endedness of (artistic) participation as civic practice that has the potential to reveal also the flipside of development and institutional intervention. As the urbanist AbdouMaliq Simone suggests, it is only by critically engaging with their inherent »life aesthetics« that we can expose them as strategies not only to meet citizens' needs, but for binding residents »in relations that make them governable«.[18]

Trans-local Dialogue and Learning

As well as focusing on the nine case studies, the project's overall layout and network has also to be reviewed with regard to participation. In particular, participating in trans-local dialogue and learning requires our attention as these have been the core objectives, albeit challenging tasks, of 9UB.

During the implementation phase, actors from all biotopes and on all levels of the project experienced a considerable tension between the requirements simultaneously set by local action and the aim to share these actions globally. The immediacy and direct engagement that social participation requires were difficult to achieve throughout 9UB's complex dialogue structure: many of the connections between the partners of the network could not be filled with everyday life and interest; all to often, the encouraged direct exchanges among hosts, artists and integrated reporters of the three trialogues did not develop the necessary energy to thrive; and the transitions from one trialogue to the next turned out to be structural ruptures to the overall project's arena of exchange. In general terms, during the operation phase, all agents of 9UB were far too busy with their own actions and responsibilities to be able to make the time and create the distance necessary for reflecting on own and other's positions.
At the same time, integrated reporters struggled with technical implications of the editing process and required additional time for developing narratives that responded appropriately to the different processes of the various interventions. This caused delays in communicating local achievements into the global arena.

The website, in turn, did represent the overall project's processuality very well, but did not provide a space for active exchange and discussion to accompany it. The possibility to comment on the multiple contributions from the biotopes was deferred to external social media platforms (facebook, youtube, flickr), which were used for uploading the material onto the website. These sites remained secondary to the project's online representation and did not attract much traffic. Last but not least, local participants were usually left outside the endeavour of trans-local dialogue. This was not because of bad intentions but due, simply, to a lack of resources to deal with the workload this would have implied (an exception here is the London residency that placed the exchange between Johannesburg and London participants at its centre).

In order to meet these structural and operational obstacles, 9UB's general coordinator, funders and academic partner tried at points to create spaces of cross-communication among partners but they could only encourage this. Dialogue, it became apparent, is about live conversation and cannot be sustained by providing the technical infrastructure alone. We will follow up on this thought in the third evaluation essay forming part of this collection.

Despite the challenges we have discussed here, there have been many instances in which participation in trans-local dialogue did grow and thrive: this is, firstly, on the symbolic level of working within a shared network of residencies, as Marjetica Potrč pointed out; secondly, by means of a ›call-and-response‹ methodology for conversations between sites and issues; and thirdly, in the form of ›bilateral‹ connections between individuals of the network (eg the Paris hosts being invited to Durban for future projects). Last but not least, dialogue continues to grow on the ground of ongoing reflections and the collective construction of the memory of 9UB – not least in the form of the texts and videos of this e-Publication. Building ›safe spaces‹ and ›safe time‹, spaces and time that are protected by trust and financial resources, and foreseeing their long-term, cumulative growth are key for fostering learning among partners.[19]

Related content

interview with Marcos L. Rosa

building solutions taswald pillay in paris by Valentina Rojas Loa

interview with Adam Greenfield

Endnotes

1 for an overview on socially engaged art practices and related concerns regarding participation see Rojas Loa, V and Von Wissel, C. 2013. ›Socially engaged art practices‹. London: CUCR Goldsmiths: www.urbandialogues.de/uploads/pdf/biotopes/9UB_RojasLoa_Wissel_Socially_Engaged_Art.pdf Accessed 23/01/2015

2 Bishop, C (ed). 2006. *Participation* London and Cambridge MA: Whitechapel and MIT Press: 10-11.

3 O'Neill, P and Doherty, C. 2011. ›Introduction. Locating the producers: An end to the beginning, the beginning of the end‹ in O'Neill and Doherty, C (eds). *Locating the producers: Durational approaches to public art*. Amsterdam: Antennae Valiz: 1-15.

4 Bishop, C. 2004. ›Antagonism and relational aesthetics‹ *October Magazine*, 51-79.

5 ibid. 65-66. Cf. also Latour, B. 2005. ›From realpolitik to dingpolitik or How to make things public‹, in: *Latour and Weibel (ed) Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*. Exhibition catalogue, Chicago: MIT Press: 4-31.

6 See Holmes, B. 2004. >Artistic autonomy and the communication society‹, *Third Text*, 18(6): 547-55. O'Neill and Doherty (2011) op cit.

7 Arnstein, SR. 1969. ›A ladder of citizen participation‹ 35:216-24. The term »quality of invitation« was used by Loraine Leeson at the AHRC Curating Community Meeting in London in May 2014

8 O'Neill and Doherty: 9

9 *A. Rooke and C. von Wissel*; adapted from an earlier version produced in 2008 by Alison Rooke in collaboration with Cristina Garrido Sánchez.

10 Galaxy Records (2014) ›Sunday Session, Ubuntu Park Orlando East‹, event poster (evaluation copy).

11 Puwar, N and Sharma, S. 2012. ›Curating Sociology‹, The Sociological Review, 60, 40-63.

12 Freire, P. 2000. Pedagogy of the oppressed, 30th anniversary edition. New York: Continuum. Boal A. 2004 ›Theatre of the oppressed‹, online resource: www.theatreoftheoppressed.org/en/index.php?nodeID=3 Accessed 12/10/2014

13 We address this antagonism with more detail in our evaluation essay on the role of the artist elsewhere in this compilation.

14 O'Neill and Doherty, p: 13: emphasis added.

15 doung jahangeer, of dala art/architecture, Durban, during 9UB's kick-off meeting in Paris, Thursday September 12th, 2013.

16 Hope, S. 2011. *Participating in the wrong way? Four Experiments by Sophie Hope London*: Cultural Democracy Editions.

18 Simone, A. 2004. *For the city yet to come: Changing African life in four cities*. London: Durham and London: Duke University Press: 7.

19 Compare the principles of the CUCR collaborative evaluation that places a sense of safety and trust at their heart in order to encourage participation.

›THE SCHOOL OF NO‹, ANTHONY SCHRAG AS ›CRITICAL FRIEND‹ TO DRAMA FOR LIFE, JOHANNESBURG, 3RD TRIALOGUE, AUGUST 2014

sitting between chairs: the role of the creative practitioners in 9ub

By Alison Rooke and Christian von Wissel

Throughout 9UB's interventions, artists have been operating in different constellations and under different terms and conditions. They have also been working under different regimes of expectation regarding what 9UB should accomplish. The agendas of hosts, artists, local participants as well as coordinating and funding partners have been diverse, including research, developing curriculum, provoking dispute, healing cohesion, learning and teaching.

The term ›artist‹ here is, however, misleading. Rather, the ›artists‹ of 9UB have been cultural workers and urban practitioners with diverse backgrounds and training spanning architecture, arts education and design as well as fine art, photography and public/participatory art. At the same time, the ›artistic‹ practice at the centre of 9UB has also been interdisciplinary, forming nodal points in 9UB's multi-layered network where skills, expectations and agendas of hosts, local participants, coordinating and funding partners have come together. In order

to achieve these interdisciplinary and intersectoral aims, funders have influenced hosts, hosts have directed artists and artists have engaged participants. However, this ›utilisation‹ chain has also worked in reverse, with participants taking the lead over the intervention or an artist reorienting the aim of their residency. Viewed from either side, these debates and negotiations over the direction and focus of the encounters are far from being shortcomings of the overall project. To the contrary, they are important reflections on the antagonisms that are inherent to participatory work[1] and thus valuable contributions *in practice* to 9UB's concern with »negotiating the future of urban living«.

At the same time, these reflections speak of the frameworks and theoretical constructions under which art, ›artists‹ and culture in general, are commissioned and produced. Struggles over the different roles of each partner, and the role of the artist in particular, is informed by the ethical, political and ideological framework which project partners, hosts and artists address. They are also shaped by, and actively shape, different understandings of the nature and purpose of art and of socially engaged art and artist-residencies in particular. The socially engaged, creative practitioners of 9UB, thus, found themselves at the centre of a dense and often contested network of expectations, desires and hopes. It is these expectations surrounding their work that will be reviewed in the following.

Motions and Tensions in Socially Engaged Art Practice

In general terms, socially engaged art practices de-emphasise the materiality and ›closed objecthood‹ of the artwork in order to re-conceive it as an open and collaborative process. Doing so, they not only challenge conventional notions of art but also set the frameworks by which to assess art, and its achievements into motion.[2] At the same time, socially engaged art practices raise ethical dilemmas and political tensions. They are, unavoidably, part of the discussion on what the humanist and cultural scientist George Yúdice has termed the »expediency of culture«, whereby culture is an expedient and malleable resource employed and managed on a global scale to stimulate economic growth and manage social conflict.[3] Yúdice argues that art has »folded into an expanded conception of culture that can solve problems, including job creation« and that art's often concealed agency and applied purpose is that of appeasing the systemic crisis of capitalism.[4] In this regard it is telling that socially engaged art practices usually take place within contexts of deprivation and marginalisation in order to bring about social change inspired by the ideals of democracy, equity and equality.

Instrumentalised by such agendas, artists are often tasked with producing positive experiences and ›impacts‹ when there are inevitably moments where the opposite is the case. Feelings of disappointment, debilitating pressure, indifference and uncertainty are also navigated and managed.[5] In this context, much of the work of the artist-in-residence is concerned with understanding the nature and ›quality of the invitation‹, questioning their own and ›local‹ assumptions, as well as analysing and acknowledging how own creative practices and objectives sit within the wider horizon of expectations surrounding the residency.

WALKING AS RESEARCH, INTERVENTION AND POLITICAL STATEMENT. DALA CITY WALK INITIATIVE, PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE AT WARWICK JUNCTION, DURBAN, 2ND TRIALOGUE, AUGUST 2014

Furthermore, when taking up their residencies, the agents of 9UB were placed within local and often competing frameworks and understandings. These include the nature and purpose of art as such, and of socially engaged art and artist-residencies in particular, as well as the relevant local and trans-local landscapes of cultural policy. Last but not least, visiting ›artists‹ arriving in their temporary host city cannot escape what Cape Town based cultural producer and researcher Zayd Minty describes as »the burden of history embedded in the landscape«.[6] Arguably, this is particularly the case in 9UB's apartheid-torn South African biotopes, yet certainly also relevant when engaging with tangible and intangible presences of, for example, German history in Berlin.

Taking these factors together, it becomes apparent that artists are often in a difficult position of ›sitting between chairs‹ at the centre of a dense network of expectations and desires when negotiating competing aesthetic and cultural value systems, urban formations, complex socio-political agendas, contested ethical obligations and sometimes turbulent emotional waters. A key characteristic of socially engaged art practice therefore is that of continuous and skillful dialogue and exchange between all stakeholders regarding their varying criteria of success. Futhermore, rather than concealing the simultaneously public and intimate quality of these endeavours, there is a case for finding value in the experience of uncertainty, negotiation, success *and* failure, agreement *and* disagreement, reflection, dialogue and the act of paying attention to these through a collective, creative and critical process.[7]

At the same time, we recognise that this flexible, open and iterative approach to developing creative residencies within an evaluative framework can be at odds with the demands of many funders and commissioners who usually require the delivery of planned projects with predetermined aims, outputs and impacts. In an affirmative commissioning and evaluative culture the artist's experience of uncertainty, ambivalence or even just not knowing can often be concealed when projects are public-facing and evaluated according to predetermined measures of success, which do not allow for failure and unanticipated or uncomfortable outcomes.

Residency Models in 9UB

Three principle residency types underpinned the artistic encounters and interventions of 9UB. They were born out of the contested role of the socially engaged artist and were distinct from each other on the basis of their particular host-artist-participant relationships, the duration of the encounter and the implied political-ideological frameworks of cultural programming.

In the first model, artists were understood as ›contracted cultural workers‹, whether for social development, education, community building or facilitating dialogue. Here, the residency merely provided the site of action for the cultural endeavour. In the second model, residencies were understood as laboratory and research projects with the artist as the principle researcher. In this type, the residency was held as an ›experimental system‹ for the production of knowledge.[8] The third model understood the fostered encounters between artist and site/context/participants as the space and time for co-production, critique or mutual learning. Here, the residency set the conditions and framework for such exchange. Drawn together, this typology reflects the perceptions and expectations of 9UB's different partners rather than presenting definitive categories, which is why they often overlapped in one and the same residency. A fourth mode of residency present in 9UB was that of the »act of dwelling«.[9] To think of the residencies in terms of this last category, that is, to draw on the etymological meaning of the Latin *residere*, is to understand the different artist-host-participant encounters as a specific time lived in a specific place, shaping this place and being shaped by it as the result of this engagement.

Multiple Roles from the Cases of 9UB

Antje Schiffers' residency in Cape Town comes closest to what we could call an artist-led act of dwelling, exploring and creatively responding to the city on her own terms. At the same time, her project might be regarded the least socially engaged of all of 9UB's interventions. The ›teacher-participants‹ in ›What Cape Town taught me‹ primarily acted as informants. Reciprocal listening and shared learning, however, was at the heart of Antje's relationship with Ziphozakhe (Zipho) Hlobo, the ›artist intern‹ hired to assist her as ›gate-opener‹ and interpreter.

In contrast, Dan Halter was commissioned in Turin primarily as part of a project of community building. However, he found himself in the difficult situation of working with one group, the pensioner gardeners, who were somewhat tentative about the project, while another one,

the children of the neighbouring Roma camp, was keen to participate, but kept at a distance. The difficult experiences of both artist and host point to the skills required by stakeholders in socially engaged art practices and to the high demands and expectations of them. This case made it apparent that socially engaged art is much more than a merely social encounter and the conjoined production of collaborative, process-driven art. Dan was stretched in all kinds of ways that he did not anticipate. At the same time, host and artist tried to make the most out of their encounter in order to sustain or expand their networks; Dan by building his curriculum as a global artist, and Istituto Wesen by building theirs as a local cultural player.

Meanwhile, at his Paris residency, the architect Taswald Pillay found himself placed in the role of consultant. He was treated as a ›specialist‹ in the needs and tactics of the urban poor and marginalised due to his previous work in Johannesburg – a role, however, he himself felt uncomfortable with. From the perspective of the host, Taswald helped them to accomplish their own commission, which consisted of revitalising the relationship between the Roma family and their sponsor Ecodrom, as well as improving the Romas' living conditions while carefully navigating the ›permanent temporality‹ of their situation. Within this constellation, Taswald developed a series of skills development workshops (together with Cochenko and 6ème Continent) as a critique to ›non-sensitive‹ architectural solutions. His role, therefore, became multidirectional: sympathiser with the target group, dialogue partner to the host, commissioner for additional partners and ›peer reviewer‹ to the other resident architects, the

ANTJE SCHIFFERS (CAPE TOWN) MEETING WITH STUDENTS FROM HFBK HAMBURG (SOWETO) AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM JUGENDTHEATERBÜRO (BERLIN) FOR A SHARED REFLECTION ON THEIR RESIDENCIES, 1ST TRIALOGUE ARTIST MEETING IN BERLIN, APRIL 2014

students of the design-build studio from Bellville University.

In London, arts educator Rangoato (Ra) Hlasane, was invited to facilitate a creative exchange between two artistic collectives, the South London Gallery-based Art Assassins and Johannesburg dance company, Mysterious Creatures. Ra acted as the medium through which dialogue unfolded, that is, as a ›living infrastructure‹ (compare AbdouMaliq Simone's notion of people as infrastructure[10]), albeit supported by video conferences. Taking the iterative, multimodal and intrinsically reflexive form of a call-and-response methodology,[11] exchange also happened via interpretative audio-recordings, dance and musical performances and written documentation that were sent back and forth between the two cities. In this residency, expectations were widely met among visiting cultural worker, host and creative participants largely due to the fact that they all acted on the common ground of a shared understanding of dialogical artistic prac-

tice. At the same time, the residency model envisioned by 9UB was challenged by the particularly short duration of Ra's stay in London. Rather, it was transferred into the realm of virtual communication and the facilitation of the above-mentioned trans-local and cultural artefact-based ›chain reaction‹. The encounter was turned into a successful example of what Ra described as an »online residency«.

In Soweto, the role of the artist was multiple and changed over time. Marjetica Potrč and her team acted as diagnostic devices, social workers and mediators: trying to sense what people wanted for their neighbourhood and to help them constitute as a group in order to articulate their interests. They also tried using their outsider and privileged position as white foreign artists to make connections and advance negotiations with government officials on their behalf. In exchange, they made the Ubuntu Park project become a successful example of what Marjetica frames as »design for the living world«.[12] Making connections became a key aspect of the artist's engagement; and in the process of so doing, the structures that hold people in place in Orlando East became visible, which in turn, helped residents realise their own position within the local political and institutional landscape with its respective ›protocols‹.

Regardless of their admittedly contested successes,[13] the different projects set out by the group did sound out the possibilities and adversaries of collective bottom-up agency inherent to the particular context of Soweto. Responses to this residency and its multiple parts have been diverse: oscillating between »there is nothing there« to celebrating the case as ›best practice‹ in social urban development. Some perceived this residency as an example of misreading the cultural context, others as exemplifying a school of shared learning. These comments highlight the contested site that socially engaged art practices and their often complex, contradictory and unconventional outcomes can be. The project sat between all seats, with cultural policy frameworks, development paradigms and aesthetic judgements all pulling it into different directions.

Last but not least, visiting artists of 9UB also explored the roles of interlocutor and researcher. In the Berlin Moabit residency, Athi-Patra Ruga and the young actors of JugendtheaterBüro tried to engage in a conversation on racism and resistance, memory and trauma. Two trialogues later, Terry Kurgan intercepted the paths, lives and stories of those who, like her, explored and practiced the in-between spaces along the river Spree. This way she was able to sound out the dreams and fears that immediate users attach to this particular site that contains all the issues currently at stake in Berlin's urban development.

At the same time in Johannesburg (and in frequent exchange with Terry Kurgen in Berlin), Anthony Schrag, in addition to critically responding to his whiteness and Voortrekker ancestry, took on the role of the antagonist. He operated as the possibly arduous but eventually helpful provocateur that allows reconsidering one's own perspective and relational position. In his art, Anthony enacts what Sophie Hope has explored as the figure of the »critical friend«.[14] By means of successive performative

›HAVING A POSITION TOWARDS …‹ BY JULIA SUWALSKI AND JOHANNA PADGE, PERFORMATIVE WORKSHOP HELPING TO IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP FURTHER KEY ASPECTS OF THE SHARED REFLECTION, 1ST TRIALOGUE ARTIST MEETING IN BERLIN, APRIL 2014

interventions he pushed for dialogue with his host organisation, urging them to resist both their routine and success, and to take the time and space for questioning the core of their practice with its underlying assumptions of the concepts of art and participation. Particularly disputed here were competing notions of art either as healing power[15] or as the site of (positive) struggle; pointing to philosophically distinct paths for achieving better futures: either as *overcoming* conflict by means of achieving consensus; or as *channelling* conflict in what Chantal Mouffe has coined »agonistic pluralism«.[16] In a world where the critical potential of art seems to have been co-opted by the capitalist project, Mouffe claims that a »widening of the field of artistic intervention« is needed in order to »undermine« capitalism's »imaginary environment«, a movement that Andre Holmes describes as the potential to actively and collectively reflect through artistic practice on the very figures we depend on.[17]

Conclusion

Reviewing the residencies of 9UB by focusing on the different roles they ascribed to the artist or, more accurately, to the socially engaged creative practitioner, we can conclude that neither the encounters themselves, nor their ethical, political and cultural frameworks, have unfolded without dispute over what to do and how and why to do it. There is a strong case, therefore, for finding value in identifying conflict and tension; and in making conflict and tension apparent through a collective creative process. Only by coming together on the matters that divide us – matters that are indissolubly social *and* material[18] – can inclusive futures be imagined as truly open, open even for on-going dispute.[19]

However, as we have foregrounded in the beginning, this flexible, open and iterative understanding of the arts and artists' roles can be at odds with the demands of convenors, funders and project partners who require the

delivery of predetermined or expected outputs. In the case of complex constellations of active and passive stakeholders, consequently, a labyrinth of competing desires and obligations places those working at the centre of socially engaged practice in difficult ethical and political positions.[20] Socially engaged creative practitioners have to pursue their initiatives in many simultaneous directions and are often at the risk of being overstretched. This experience of significant pressure repeatedly goes unrecognised when it comes to providing an account of failure or success. It is usually the artist who is expected to guarantee the social sustainability and artistic integrity of the projects whilst simultaneously accomplishing the anticipated outcomes invested from outside the process. The roles of the host – as well as that of potentially supportive partners of the project's coordination and funding tasks – are regularly spared providing evidence of having fulfilled their responsibilities.[21]

Finally, 9UB has shown that in socially engaged art practices the figure of the artist, as well as common notions of art, are deconstructed and multiplied in many ways. From biotope to biotope, residency to residency, artists and teams of artists have worked to foster dialogue, produce research, facilitate exchange, operate as cultural diplomats and encourage reflection and critique as provocateurs. In other words, above all, they have laboured as creative cultural workers. At the same time, they have kept high art's autonomy, detouring, where possible, the expedience of their agency.

Related content

interview with Sophie Hope

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Endnotes

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›THE END IS THE BEGINNING‹, ROUND TABLE WITH PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE PARTNERS, PARIS MONTREUIL, JULY 2014

experiments in sustainability

By Alison Rooke and Christian von Wissel

In this third evaluation essay we will focus on the issue of sustainability as it was addressed and lived throughout the delivery of 9UB and its parts. According to 9UB's self-description, 9UB aimed to establish a »trans-local dialogue« in order to »shed light on sustainable solutions and innovative ideas regarding urban development issues«.[1] In general, the term sustainability, the ›holy grail‹ of urban development,[2] implies that urban development is »meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs«.[3] The concept of sustainable development encompasses and responds to ecological, social and environmental dimensions of city living.[4] A sustainable city, thus, is one able to ›envision and carry its future‹ by continuously working towards the specific, context-dependent equilibrium of all its internal and external dynamics, the material, social and imaginary processes by which it is produced.[5] However, discourses of urban sustainability are increasingly received with scepticism as this once radically critical ecological agenda has become problematically entwined in the perpetuation of market-based solutions to urban problems which so often

(re)produce social inequalities and hasten environmental deterioration.

Situated within this discussion, 9UB was formed through a concern with what social sustainability might look and feel like in the nine biotopes and host cities of its network. Rather than being caught up unnecessarily in policy level discourse, the nine interventions worked at the grassroots level. It is at this ›street level‹ of urban (artistic) engagement that the question of social sustainability was meaningful to the project and to the specific contexts that the artists were working in. By paying attention to the quotidian experience of getting by in cities, the discourse of sustainability was returned to the fundamental question of how liveable a city is for its inhabitants.

Here, unsurprisingly, experiences of the everyday and the standards of liveability varied enormously across the participating socio-material contexts of each site. This, in turn, lead to the challenge of the idea of social sustainability speaking differently to the artistic interventions and their host biotopes. During the residencies, the creative practitioners worked on multiple issues, following multiple perspectives and employing multiple methods. They explored the experience of being migrants, educators, provocateurs and gardeners, among many others. This variety of perspectives and ways of operating also put the role of the artists under review as we have discussed elsewhere in this compilation. The issues at stake ranged from migration, race and identity to education and reconciliation; from public space and participation to the impact of urban regeneration and to informality both in housing and the provision of livelihoods.

9UB's local engagements were simultaneously linked into a trans-local network that aimed at facilitating exchange on the issues raised at each site. Hence, the way sustainability was addressed by 9UB was twofold: on the one hand, local initiatives advanced on their capacities to ›make up‹ and ›carry‹ their urban futures; on the other hand, the overarching objective was to encourage open-ended and trans-local conversations about these capacities in order to produce and share knowledge between hosts, artists, participants and publics in South Africa and the European Union with regard to how such socially sustainable urban futures are being imagined, articulated and implemented – in short negotiated and pursued – worldwide.

As we have pointed out in the introduction to the evaluation strategy earlier in this compilation, dialogue was understood both as a method and as an objective of the overall project. Thus, in addition to fostering dialogue on the topic of sustainability, 9UB was envisioned also as a space of sustainable dialogue itself, that is, as a platform and driver to build lasting relationships among participating partners. From the outset the robustness and liveliness of relations among partners were seen as crucial for the delivery of the artistic interventions, for fostering dialogue and for meeting the project's own demands. There was a clear sense that the success of the conversations held both on street level and trans-locally would rest to a great extent on the capacity of the partners to cooperatively ensure the longevity of the initiated processes. In this sense, 9UB was a launching point for on-going social initiatives rather than a container for a set of temporally fixed art projects.[6]

In the following we will highlight the principle roles that the topic of sustainability played within 9UB. In order to do so, we will concentrate on selected aspects of selected initiatives of the nine participating biotopes, carving out the distinct spheres and ways of doing by which sustainability was treated either as a topic of the urban or of socially engaged art practice, as well as enacted as a practice.

Sustainability as Topic of the Urban

During the local and trans-local conversations of 9UB, social sustainability became a topic in distinct ways. On the first level of concern, it was addressed as an issue of urban development.

In the Paris biotope, for example, Taswald Pillay challenged local assumptions of sustainability by questioning the potential of architectural solutions to solve social issues. He did so by introducing additional partners to address social rather than physical needs (furniture and printing workshops for the creation of job opportunities) and by initiating a discussion on what is needed for ›community building‹. The backdrop to Taswald's critique is his scepticism about a widespread orthodoxy among design professionals that material interventions on their own can prompt lasting improvements. The ›social production of space‹ (Lefebvre), that is, the ongoing negotiations by which society as ›user-producers‹ of space (de Certeau) shape their habitat is often subdued in favour of fixed (and necessarily reductionist) design solutions. This is not to say, that the material is not of highest importance, but that sustainable solutions require holistic as well as humble approaches in order to account for life's complexities. This is to ask with Taswald Pillay: »How sustainable is a building, if it is not being used?«[7]

At the same time in Durban, the question of social sustainability became a question of access to, and influence within the discursive spaces (city council, specialist conference, newspaper, etc) where urban futures are being negotiated and decided on today. By learning to employ video interviews and installation art as ›medium‹, as well as by using the host organisation dala as ›transmitter‹ and the visiting artist Armin Linke as ›amplifier‹, the street traders of Warwick Junction explored alternative paths to raise their voice and countervail their marginalised speaking position.

In line with this extension of speaking capacity, in the Soweto initiative, social sustainability became a topic as Marjetica Potrč and her team's intervention raised awareness regarding the different political spaces that exist and the knowledge and skills and forms of social and cultural capital that are required in order to access them. The project resembled what we could call the Ubuntu Park Applied School for City Rights; and its ›curriculum‹ was wide-ranging: from the ›protocol‹ of local political participation that has to be followed (and, at times, not to be followed in order to speed things up), to the different forms of self-organisation available in order to speak to different institutions about different needs. This space worked in a similar fashion as the artistic interventions that Rike Sitas and Edgar Pieterse call a »platform of affective democratic imagining«.[8]

In Turin, finally, the topic of urban social sustainability was expressed as a playful comment

on the tensions and contradictions of globalisation and its perception. While starting out as a project asking how migrants build their identity abroad, Dan Halter subtly introduced an antagonistic sub-layer questioning the uneven perception of the foreign at home. By means of the specific use of a South African invasive plant highly popular in Italy today, as well as by giving the last word of the documentary video to the Roma children excluded from the project, he pointed to the interlaced proximity of what is endemic and cosmopolitan, welcomed and unwanted.

UBUNTU PARK STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF TASWALD PILLAY (PARIS, 2ND TRIALOGUE) AND THE CUCR EVALUATORS, SOWETO, 1ST TRIALOGUE EXPANDED, AUGUST 2014

Sustainability as a Topic of the Arts

As well as being a matter of urban policy discourse and grassroots action, social sustainability has also been discussed in regard to the ethical and temporal implications of artistic interventions. In particular, here, the quality of relationship between hosts, artists and local participants and the long-term effects and underpinning worldviews of cultural programming came under review. At times, hence, the focus of the artistic interventions was recast onto the project itself, raising the question of the ›social carrying capacity‹ of this kind of dialogical art practices and of 9UB's own architecture and delivery, as well as of its partners' standing and working.

On the Autonomy of Participants

The education department of South London Gallery (SLG), through their long-term work with local residents of the neighbouring housing estate, has considered the political and ethical dimensions of ›artist placements‹. Rather than commissioning artists and placing them in local social contexts, SLG have chosen to work closely with residents in selecting artists, jointly assessing the merits of their work and their understanding of participation, in order to ensure that the work reverberates with residents and their concerns. After all, residents themselves are a heterogeneous group in terms of gender, ethnicity and age, for example. In this light, 9UB's visiting artist to London, Rangoato Hlasane, was chosen in order to facilitate an exchange between two ›self organised‹ artistic youth groups: South London Gallery's Art Assassins and Johannesburg's Mysterious Creatures. This exchange prompted reflections on the modalities of young people's participation in the art world and its constitutive limits, and the future trajectories of participants in the ›creative sector‹. While the Art Assassins operate entirely under SLG's umbrella, Mysterious Creatures have been able to establish themselves as an independent dance company autonomous from their former host, Keleketla! Library, who, by now, act as cultural sector workers for themselves. The two groups' dis-

tinct relations to their hosts raised questions about the extent to which participatory projects in the gallery education sector are used to provide the participants needed in order to respond to policy and funding drivers that reward socially conscious work in the arts sector, rather then to empower them.

Critique and Counter-critique of Parachuting

The duration of 9UB's residencies varied between two weeks to three months. This relatively short time span was received with criticism even from within the actual project partners: throughout the implementation of the various interventions it was reaffirmed that the consequences of ›parachuting in‹ must be addressed through deeper insights regarding the limits of one's own position and perspectives. This can only be realised through dialogue; and this is the case both for the art interventions and their evaluation, since judgements, too, are often made on the grounds of first impressions and preconceived cultural values.

Providing the cue for dialogue, one of the advantages of the ›parachuting outsider‹ approach is that it can allow the visitor to see the social situation with fresh eyes and ask questions about matters that locals may have grown familiar with. To do so, however, individual and collective commitment to reflexivity is crucial. In Berlin, for example, Terry Kurgan was able to investigate and make apparent the ways that discourses of sustainability were employed with regard to settlement type, the production and politics of housing and the management of urban regeneration with its treats of gentrification and population displacement. Likewise, in Soweto, Marjetica Potrč's central intervention was to ask again and again about the forms and practices of local political participation. This interrogative practice, however, was difficult to communicate and thus repeatedly overlooked.

Acts of Hosting

In light of the discussions on itinerant, globally mobile artists being dropped into local contexts, it has been argued that the duration of the socially engaged art intervention is important primarily in as much as that these time-limited encounters have to sit within »longer-term, cumulative engagements«.[9] Hence, the extent to which short-term interventions have a sustainable impact depends, ultimately, upon host partners and their engagement with the site and its people prior, during and after the implementation/operation period. In light of this, 9UB's host biotopes were selected precisely on the basis of their longstanding relationships with local residents, participants or the ›targets‹ of their ongoing work. In addition, visiting artists were paired with ›integrated reporters‹ who were intended to act as supportive links between the local and the trans-local. These ›acts of hosting‹, that is, of embedding the artists within the site and social texture of their intervention and supporting their ›projects‹ to become ›initiatives‹, have been significant in ensuring the social sustainability of the artists' engagement with participants, partners and publics.
Inevitably, realising the ambitious claims of 9UB turned out to be challenging. In Soweto, for example, the host and South African coordi-

UBUNTU PARK APPLIED SCHOOL FOR CITY RIGHTS. MEETING WITH RESIDENTS AND ACTIVISTS ON THE TOPIC OF LOCAL PATHS TO DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION, SOWETO, 1ST TRIALOGUE, MARCH 2014

nator carefully introduced the artist team to the context, but then could not support the newly constituting group of local actors with the birth and nurturing of their initiative. In Durban and London, to the contrary, the actual durations of the artists visiting the biotopes were extremely short, yet these visits were supported by in-depth online exchanges and successfully enmeshed with long-term host-participant relationships so as to enrich the work of all parties and to contribute to their wider aims.[10] At the same time, the integrated reporters were employed beyond their mere function as project communicators. In Cape Town Ziphozakhe Hlobo guided Antje Schiffers as her cultural translator, and in Paris Ana Recalde grew her role into that of an interpreter, interlocutor and friend.

Risks of the Gift Economy

Beyond the challenges of living up to the ambitious objectives of 9UB, acting as host (as well as acting as artist, coordinator, ›silent partner‹ or participant) at times also implied taking severe risks. Almost all of 9UB's project partners were investing much more time and energy than they were ever paid for and the sustainability of the smaller of these organisations in particular was put in danger. This was exacerbated by the regime of 50% match funding required by the EU Cultural Programme for European project partners. In this regard, we can assert that much of the cultural work accomplished both in South Africa and in the EU is sustained by the dedication, goodwill and commitment of the cultural workers operating in what could be described as a gift economy.

Nevertheless, whilst for the Paris host Quatorze, for example, a small organisation of young professionals, delivering the residency and attracting the requisite matching funding was a huge challenge, it simultaneously built up their reputation and longer-term development prospects as well as their capacity in project management.

Sustainability as Practice

Yet another aspect of sustainability raised through 9UB was that of the sustainability of dialogue, and in particular of trans-local dialogue itself. How can conversations and interest be built and sustained across spatial, temporal and cultural divides, as well as bridging different issues and interests? As we have argued in the other contributions to this e-Book, what the more than two years of preparation and implementation of 9UB show is that dialogue rests primarily on the people who are committed to engage in it and fill it with life. Sustainability and dialogue, as well as their combination, are essentially practices, that is, they both are an open-ended set of ongoing processes that aspire to maintain and improve the conditions and possibilities of social reproduction. Infrastructure does matter, but matters far less than the ›matters of concern‹, as Bruno Latour has expounded, that bring people together (both to agree and to disagree). This has been the quintessence of Marjetica Potrč's art intervention: it was not the newly constituted park as ›park‹ that was the centre piece of her engagement, but rather the park as »relational object« (Potrč), which serves primarily and essentially as the social and material ›thing‹ that assembles all actors and interests.[11] Here, then, it is highly rewarding to follow AbdouMaliq Simone in his move to »extend the notion of infrastructure directly to people's activities«.[12] Developed in the context of African cities, »people as infrastructure« is a concept that recognises how people sustain their lives by making and nourishing connections that allow them to expand their radius of action. The notion thus presents the »ordinary practitioner[s] of the city«[13] – the practitioners of dialogue, dialogical art and sustainability – as the infrastructure they put to work in order to access opportunities, knowledge and skills that allow them to ›enact‹ their (urban) futures in the here and now.

Conclusion

9UB has at its core interrogated both the notions of sustainability employed in the nine participating urban biotopes and the sustainability itself of the socially engaged artistic practices the project initiated in order to do so. It addresses such social ›carrying capacity‹ both as the topic and as the practice of »negotiating the future of urban living« (9UB) in the concreteness of the now, responding to the distinct material, social, political and cultural situations of the nine biotopes and their specific artistic interventions. 9UB does so, explicitly, also in response to the current overuse of terms like ›sustainability‹, ›participation‹ and ›community‹ aiming to countervail the degradation of these terms into meaningless signifiers that can be discursively employed expediently by any political and economic agenda.

What the nine artist residencies and overall framework made apparent is that interest,

access and exchange lie at the heart of social sustainability. This responds to the urban social sustainability literature, which highlights the central role of information, stimulation and network building in order to reach and develop urban social sustainability.[14] Building the future today rests on initiatives, not on projects.
It depends both on financial and on social resources, on investment and commitment, while always bearing in mind that it is the people that are its most important infrastructure. In this regard, 9UB has met and overcome important challenges and thus been very successful in raising awareness and building capacity for sustainable behaviour. As Mathieu Hilgers pointed out towards the beginning of 9UB, »the comparison and the construction of networks is a way to share experiences and experiments, to identify potential alternatives [and] to promote and reach urban sustainability«. [15]

Related content

interview with Michael Keith

interview with Marcos L. Rosa

interview with Sophie Hope

spacewarz in cape town by Taryn Jeanie Mackay

Endnotes

1 Nine Urban Biotopes Project Partners (w.D.) ›Nine Urban Biotopes. Negotiating the Future of Urban Living (English Synopsis)‹: www.urbandialogues.de/uploads/pdf/biotopes/9UB_synopsis_en_may05_web.pdf Accessed 13/11/2014.

2 Pieterse, E. 2008. *City futures: Confronting the crisis of urban development*. London: Zed Book. 112.

3 United Nations (1987) *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*. New York: United Nations General Assembly, 11 December 1987: www.un.org/documents/ga/res/42/ares42-187.htm Accessed 07/11/2014.

4 Imrie, R. and Lees, L. 2014. ›Sustainable London? The future of a global city‹, Policy Press.

5 Hilgers, M. 2013. ›What Is urban social sustainability?‹ London: CUCR Goldsmiths: www.urbandialogues.de/uploads/pdf/biotopes/9UB_Hilgers_Urban_Social_Sustainability.pdf Accessed 23/01/2015. This text provides a useful overview on social urban sustainability.

6 The distinction between initiative and project was suggested by doung jahangeer, of dala art/architecture, Durban, during 9UB's kick-off meeting in Paris, September 12th, 2013.

7 T. Pillay according to the author's notes during the final presentation and round table discussion in Montreuil, July 5th, 2014.

8 Sitas, R and Pieterse, E. 2013. ›Democratic renovations and affective political imaginaries‹, *Third Text*, 27(3), 328–9. We are referring here to the knowledge and skill needed to engage with the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process and Ward Committee System in particular. See ibid.

9 O'Neill, P and Doherty, C. 2011. ›Introduction. Locating the producers: An end to the beginning, the beginning of the end‹, O'Neill, P and Doherty, C (eds).›Locating the producers: Durational approaches to public art‹. *Antennae*, Amsterdam: Valiz: 13.

10 With regard to the two weeks he actually stayed in London, in contrast to the long-term engagement between the two artists groups involved in the exchange, Rangoato Hlasane coined the term of the »online residency«.

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12 Simone, A. 2004. ›People as infrastructure: Intersecting fragments in Johannesburg‹, *Public Culture*, 16: 407.

13 De Certeau, M. 1988. *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California Press: 93.

14 Hilgers : 7.

›GREET YOUR NEIGHBOURS‹ OR DON’T? »INEQUALITY, POVERTY, INSECURITY AND DEPRIVATION MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AS FORMS OF VIOLENCE« (E. PIETERSE); IMPRESSIONS FROM CAPE TOWN, MARCH 2014

art practice and urban safety: a relational perspective

By Alison Rooke and Christian von Wissel

Questions of urban safety and how they have been met and dealt with within the different artistic encounters are at the centre of this last evaluation essay. In early 2013, when 9UB formally initiated its actions under the EU Cultural Programme, the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) in South Africa – a service provider acting on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) – joined the network on the basis of their Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention for Safer Public Spaces Programme (VCP).[1] The inclusion of GIZ-VCP in 9UB as an additional partner introduced a specific focus on ›safety‹ to the project, honing the project’s understanding of urban sustainability to include matters of individual and collective, physical and mental well-being in conditions of risk and fear.[2]

Introducing safety was fortunate in many ways. Edgar Pieterse suggests that without acknowledging routine and quotidian violence it will neither be possible to understand the way

South African cities are shaped and inhabited, nor to seriously engage in envisioning and constructing futures that are built on their own terms. Taking the South African urban experience seriously, he specifies, means that inequality, poverty, insecurity and deprivation must be understood as forms of violence in their own right.[3] The »lack of perceived and actual safety«, the GIZ confirms, causes severe drawbacks for South Africa's sustainable urban development. »Rapid urbanisation and a legacy of apartheid create unique challenges for the governance of urban areas. Insufficient access to basic public services, high rates of unemployment, poor future perspectives and a lack of positive role-models for young people contribute to high levels of social and interpersonal violence«.[4]

This ›amalgam of adverse conditions‹ is the driver both of ›unsafety‹ – a term specifically introduced by the GIZ[5] – and of entrenched socio-economic segregation. At the same time, these issues are of course not exclusive to the South African context. Gated communities, automated vigilance and privatised security forces as well as ›defensive design‹ solutions are features of an array of urban technologies and systems of exclusion and privatisation that produce polarised social landscapes on a global scale.[6] The South African government, for its part, is ambiguous in its response. On the one hand, they have declared their commitment to the vision that by 2030 »all people in South Africa are and feel safe«; on the other hand, the dominant street level response is that of »hard-line law-enforcement«, ultimately driving societal disintegration.[7]

This context has been the undeniable backdrop to 9UB's engagement in South Africa. At the same time, it resonates also with several of its European sites of action. What lessons then, if any, do creative interventions as exemplified by 9UB offer to the complex debate on safety in South Africa and beyond?

Intervening Unsafety

The creative practitioners operating within 9UB did not set out to explicitly address matters of safety or crime reduction. However, while responding to the conditions of each biotope, they inevitably had to make sense of the ways that lack of safety shaped their experience of the socio-spatial contexts they engaged with. By analysing and comparing the different cases and initiating a dialogue on their ›findings‹ 9UB offers discrete but significant insights on how socially engaged art practice can contribute to the obtainment of, and discussion on urban safety.

The residencies of 9UB created moments and encounters that can be understood as social interstices. As we will see, these interstices are of heightened significance in the context of any discussion on safety. As the curator and art critic Nicolas Bourriaud argues in his influential book *Relational Aesthetics*, »[t]he interstice is a space in human relations which fits more or less harmoniously and openly into the overall trading system but suggests other possibilities than those in effect within this system«.[8] In this sense, the socially engaged art encounters of 9UB did not attempt to address matters of crime or safety directly, nor did the evaluation of 9UB aim at measuring the impact of the res-

RE-INAUGURATED FRONT DOOR TO THE ROMA CAMP, PARIS MONTREUIL, 2ND TRIALOGUE, JULY 2014

idencies on fear of crime or levels of community safety. To the contrary, the interventions provided a rupture from such an instrumentalist approach by experimenting both with social and creative forms of communication and with the kinds of social spaces within which this communication might take place. Rephrased in accordance with Bourriaud, what the residencies of 9UB tried to do was to constitute interstices in space, time and everyday experience in order to suggest other possibilities of practice within the nine participating biotopes. Hence, as relational interventions, the encounters fostered by 9UB had an important function: they provided a break from quotidian life and its usual modes of communication and participation, a break that was without doubt limited but nevertheless enabling and thus significant for each context[9] – including that of (un)safety.

At the same time, 9UB's responses must be understood within the condensed nature of the residencies. Under the constraints of time, the artists were not able to fully immerse themselves in the complexity of the situations they found themselves working in. They have been particularly reliant on the coordinating and hosting partners and on the social and cultural networks these coordinators and hosts did or did not sustain for them. These and other ›external effects‹ have had their influence on the practices which the artists subsequently developed. We have discussed the various modes of participation, the challenged sustainability of artistic interventions and the diverse roles of the artists in the other evaluation essays that form part of this publication.

Johannesburg: Playful Confrontations

One theme emerging from the 9UB residencies in South Africa has been the ways that fear and crime shape cities, produce its public, semi-public and private spaces, and encroach on the social interactions that are encouraged or discouraged, or that do or do not take place within them. For example, in his residency with Drama for Life, Anthony Schrag purposefully explored the city of Johannesburg on foot, seeking encounter and communication with people on the street in spite of being constantly warned about its imagined and real dangers. Through his seemingly naïve but determined practice, Anthony diagnosed the malaise of the fearful white urban dweller.

Anthony Schrag's artistic practice makes continuous use of strategies deriving from ›play‹. Through the humour, physicality and risk employed in play, as well its resistance to aesthetic judgements, he believes play is able to explore and develop new and collective knowledge.[10] On this ground, Anthony took to the street holding up cardboard signs that offered help and admitted his privileged social and racial position (three such signs read: »Art Cannot Help You«, »I am here to help«, and »White Foreigner«). In so doing, he resembled a contemporary but inverted and critical version of the Benjaminian ›Sandwichman‹, the human billboard. Anthony's cardboard signs, on the one hand, mirrored more familiar ones in Johannesburg's urban landscape with pleas for help of those who navigate the city out of conditions of precariousness and despair. On the other hand, the seemingly simple act of holding up a sign in the street punctured the everyday urban indifference and fear of the stranger. Through the signs Anthony ›superimposed‹ himself onto the context making his own body become the site where positions and perceptions of the self and the other could be publicly disputed.[11] In this way he invited dialogue as much as he was met with confrontation and refusal. In Bourriaud's terms, he constituted an interstice with his body (and with his artistic practice), raising questions on how we construct our identity, force others into the categories of our own limited judgement and act upon the world from and with our bodies. The black body, Achille Mbembe reminds us, has been the »main site« for the racial state to exercise its brutal power.[12] Offering his white body the other way round, that is, as a medium of inquiry and not an instrument of control, Anthony acknowledges apartheid's »debts« resulting from serialisation, commoditisation and physical violation of black bodies.[13] At the same time, he also inscribes a different narrative of bodies in space, this time a potentially emancipating one, for which Elisabeth Grosz has raised our awareness by suggesting that »[i]t is our positioning within space, both as the point of perspectival access to space, and also as an object for others in space, that gives the subject a coherent identity and an ability to manipulate things, including its own body [parts], in space«.[14] Drawing on both these considerations, Anthony Schrag thus inventively points to the racialised body being the territory where unsafety exercises its power.

In another intervention, ›Free from care‹, Anthony Schrag explores the urban experience of living within the paradigm of security. In his artistic ›experiment‹, Anthony hires a body-

guard whom he then tries to escape from. However, and in spite of of his multiple and agile attempts, Anthony cannot escape his protector. Making sense of his performance, we can read his action as a playful comment on South Africa's complicated relationship with safety and security. Anthony aims to be safe from security, showing us how urban space and life are narrowed down through a defensive approach to fear. Due to the generalised state of real and perceived threats of violence and crime, the private security industry of South Africa has grown into one of the largest worldwide.[15] ›Security‹, according to the GIZ, is defined as a negativist notion built around the idea of »protection against a perceived or known threat«. Security's answer to violence and crime is the tangible promise of fencing, surveillance and policing, creating an urbanism of retreat. While held to be an effective response to the situation, it actually only addresses the symptoms and even generates fear in order to legitimise itself. Re-framing the situation in the light of ›safety‹, to the contrary, offers a more optimistic approach. Safety describes a state where threat and fear are absent, thus portraying a positive quality of life. This allows a widening of the horizon in order to address social and interpersonal violence at its roots.[16]

Soweto: Collective Action

One of the strengths of 9UB is the diversity of creative approaches to urban conditions. Anthony's provocative and agonistic[17] practice of play provides a stark contrast with Marjetica Potrč's residency in Soweto. We have discussed her project and the challenges it encountered earlier in the evaluation essays of this compilation. Here we will trace its connections to the topic of urban safety.

Soweto is a complex social, political and spatial constellation burdened with its systemic historical and contemporary, tangible and intangible marginalisation. In addition to this challenging terrain, Marjetica and her team sat between many different interests imposed on them by their host, local stakeholders and actual participants as well as by 9UB itself and its South African funding and coordinating partners. Arguably, therefore, the first achievement of Marjetica and her team was to (re)claim the capacity of (citizen) action – and action was also the means by which their project touched upon the discussion of systemic violence.

Safety, as Peter Gotsch et al assert, »is intrinsically grounded in space«, appearing »at the level of the street« and »principally generated by the people, and their relationships and economies in places and territories«.[18] The Ubuntu Park was just this: collective street-level citizen action that improved local safety by ›making a park‹, that is, by laying hands on the condition of an abandoned piece of land and – gradually and step by step – transforming it into a self-made public space. The day that more than fifty people came together and cleared the site of waste was the moment the park, and with it a safer neighbourhood, were born as collective action: not (yet) as material space of recreation, but as the tangible formulation and enactment of a desire for a better city, as the material projection of what should be done in order to change oneself and the city, asking what kind of city we want by intervening its course.[19]

The project also provides us with a strong example that community safety needs holistic and process-driven approaches that »build citizen capacity«[20] rather than implementing punctual one-off fixes. Safety here, was understood as interrelated with other matters of collective concern, namely public space (access, appearance, perception today and in the past, multi-purpose and multilateral use, maintenance and ›fiduciary‹ control), active citizenship (knowledge about institutions and how to address them, decision-making skills) and economic participation (articulating and pursuing opportunities for the provision of livelihoods). Participants responded to these matters with their hearts and hands as continuous debates and discussions addressed which path to take in regard to what aim. The second key outcome of the project was the creation of a platform for jointly envisaging and articulating wishes regarding the future, that is, for exploring and practicing »affective democratic imaginings« as Rike Sitas and Edgar Pieterse have called it.[21] This included a critical reflection on Soweto and South Africa's particularly violent history of the use, abuse and perception of urban public space, allowing them to review their own position, their spaces of participation and the drivers that kept them from claiming the park before 9UB's intervention.[22]

Whilst the Ubuntu Park project had immediate successes, maintaining and further developing this still fragile possibility of a ›community park‹ has placed the participants under severe pressure since the residency finished. As we have mentioned in our contribution on participation in this collection, in the winter months of 2014, the tables and seating that were made for the park gradually collapsed, showing evidence also of having been purposefully destroyed and dismantled. At the same time, cars are now using short cuts through the park. This ›poor‹ appearance half a year in was read by many as the failure of a promising project. However, we argue that the park continues to be a functional relational object, still socially successful, albeit in crisis and under pressure in terms of its physical condition. Discussions live on regarding how the park could be maintained as a safe and usable space and how it could be developed into a social platform to help building local opportunities. Coming together in order to articulate and reflect upon possibilities of action is a precondition to shift from security-based to safety building measures. At the same time, collective street action must be sustained, too. Only through everyday use and by developing a sense of shared ownership will long-term solutions be able to grow and flourish. For the neighbours in Soweto, improving their built environment is a long, and in many respects, difficult and often frustrating path, but walking and learning along this path is one way to building a better neighbourhood and city.

Durban: Inspiring Voice

The importance of the practices and knowledge of everyday pedestrian users of city space was also a theme central to the Durban biotope and residency. Here, the photographer Armin Linke worked with dala art/architecture complementing their ongoing work around the market of Warwick Junction. At the heart of dala's interest lie street-wise practices of survival and exoneration, practices that dala co-founder doung jahangeer understands as informal ›pathways‹ that »reveal the characteristics of

»DEVELOPMENT IS NOT SIMPLY ABOUT MEETING THE NEEDS OF CITIZENS. IT IS ALSO ABOUT HOLDING PEOPLE IN RELATIONS THAT MAKE THEM GOVERNABLE« (A. SIMONE); IMPRESSIONS FROM PARIS MONTREUIL, JULY 2014

society« and which he examines and highlights through walking.[23] dala also recognises the role of creativity and the contribution of creative practitioners in building safer and more liveable cities. By facilitating creative engagements between individual and institutional stakeholders, dala's work offers lessons in how ›sustainable change‹ – transformative actions envisioning positive futures in the now – can be brought about. Important here, are the spaces of democratic participation and collaboration they create (by walking) in order to question the extent to which the transformations promised through South Africa's democracy have been fulfilled. In particular, dala explores the power of place making and the production of fear of difference in processes of urban renewal. This work opens up debate regarding the challenges that the city of Durban, other African cities, and cities in general face.

Within the 9UB framework, ten market traders were given disposable cameras in order to document their daily lives. This resulted in ›Compliments and complaints‹, an installation that included photographs, video interviews and a space for commenting on the lived realities and challenges faced by the traders.[24] The space of dialogue and participation between an internationally renowned artist and the traders was an opportunity to challenge preconceptions and misunderstandings of the space and everyday reality of the market and its people. The project thus made an argument for the

importance of »taking seriously the embedded practices and sensibilities that underpin routine economic, social and cultural reproductions«.[25] Recognising Warwick Junction as a space produced through associational and experiential practices offers a deep understanding of the thick sociability and cooperation that is integral to the area's successful functioning, economic vibrancy and to the social fabric of the city more generally. This contradicts misconceptions of the market as dangerous, chaotic, unruly or ungovernable.[26] The historic struggle between the market traders and city administration arose out of a failure to listen to and recognise the capacity of the traders to ›co-produce‹ the space of the market whilst prioritising ›top-down‹ international development agendas and architectural solutions as part of mega-event led development.

The collaboration inspired by dala allowed the traders to explore other forms of expression for making their voices heard. In addition to using audio-visual methods, the traders presented their results in several small exhibitions, both at the market and in cultural spaces around town. In these showcases, 9UB opened up new representational spaces and their possibilities for public intervention. This allowed the traders to expand their radius of action and to grow and strengthen their identity and visibility as a group. An exhibition is a privileged place where ›instant communities‹ can be established by immediate engagement with the work and concerns on show. Depending on the degree of audience participation, the nature of the works being presented and the models of sociability that they represent or suggest, an exhibition can generate a particular domain of exchange. In Durban, this domain fostered re-imagining the use and expression in and of public space. It critically reversed institutionalised notions of dialogue as it is generally operationalised in participatory processes: not a top-down ›call‹, but a bottom-up ›claim‹. The project, therefore, became an exercise for practicing democratic imagination for those, like the traders, who are constantly negotiating the delicate balance between inhabiting the informal (invisible) realities of the pavement and the formalised structures that govern them (the institutional gaze). We have referred to the different rungs of the ladder of citizen participation in socially engaged art practice and urban planning, and to the ›quality of invitation‹ they imply, in the first of the evaluation's contributions to this e-Publication. Yet another achievement of the Durban project was that thanks to dala, among others, the area of Warwick Junction was chosen as one of the four key sites of focus for the International Union of Architects (UIA) World Conference 2014. The area exemplified the conference theme of ›Architecture otherwhere‹ by pointing to ›other ways of knowing and doing‹ that drew attention to the importance of the social and cultural dimensions of urban place-making.

The European Cases

The discussion on safety proposed by GIZ for 9UB's South African cases also provided valuable grounds for the European biotopes. Project partners in Paris, London, Turin and Berlin, similarly, had to make sense of how the lack of safety shapes cities and places and how playful confrontations, collective action and inspiring voices can dislocate deadlocked presumptions

and single-tracked approaches. The dynamics of splintering urbanism[27], of segregation, gentrification, privatisation and the retreat from public space, are also at work in London or Paris, for example, and the social realities of minorities and migrants in Berlin or Turin, and in particular of Roma communities all over the EU, certainly create the need to navigate and manage violence, threat and fear.

Paris: Doors Open Both Ways

In the Paris biotope, carefully negotiating the sense of safety of the Roma family was central to the project's development. The residency revealed the camp's delicate politics of visibility and invisibility: on the one hand, the Roma need to demonstrate their willingness to integrate into French society in order to be granted the ›permanent temporal‹ permission to stay and reside on what is officially a National Heritage Site. In order to do so, they agreed to their sponsor Ecodrom's idea of building a community centre at the back of their settlement, which is, effectively, the former front of the site of their camp.

On the other hand, to be able to actually live their lives on this particular site, the extended Roma family tries to go unnoticed by their neighbours in order to avoid confrontation. The camp is literally ›hiding‹ among Montreuil's Murs à pêches and one of the tactics was, precisely, to enter the camp from the highway at the back. This was partly because of an open and, at times, violent conflict with an immediate neighbour. Challenging the architectural logic of providing built solutions to solve social problems, Taswald Pillay had purposefully delayed the construction of the cultural centre, pushing his creative work to be »a critical social practice« by which to rethink the configuration and working of different perspectives.[28] Hence, he and Quatorze initiated skills development workshops and carefully negotiated opening the site's former front door, which was re-inaugurated on the last day of the residency.[29] The door crystallises all the tensions and susceptibilities of the site and its context. It is the material marker of integration and fear, of access to possibilities as well as of the incursion of the neighbours and state into their »life aesthetics«, forcing them into »relations that make them governable«.[30]

Turin: You Move, You Don't

The 9UB Turin residency showed similarities with both its trialogue partner-residencies in Durban and Paris. Safety was addressed in terms of the, often, violent powers of (outsider) imagination, and art showed that it can make an intervention but is also subject to being co-opted by hegemonic narratives. On the one hand, the international interest created through 9UB challenged citywide biases and misreadings regarding the space and everyday reality of the Mirafiori neighbourhood (as was the case of the market in the Durban biotope). Mirafiori is regarded to be a rough part of town and locals appreciated the possibilities of an artistic intervention to narrate a different story about their place, one that challenged dominant urban imaginaries and relocated their neighbourhood with regard to its discursive (and spatial) peripheralisation.

On the other hand, popular imaginaries regarding Roma populations interfered in the planned

development of the project. Here, artist Dan Halter and his host, Istituto Wesen, sat in-between difficult frontlines as Dan's intervention found itself affected by narratives of otherness and fear. During the process, neighbouring Roma children were repeatedly excluded from helping him with growing the plants for his intervention. At the same time, Dan resisted this co-option by playfully problematising it in his documentary video ›A Mirafiori immigrant story‹.[31] The video shows the movement and transformation of the image of the ›space invader‹ while posing a series of related questions which he literally wrote into the space and consciousness of Mirafiori with the plants used for his intervention – a South African invasive species which is highly popular among Italian gardeners. After referring to Fiat and finance, as well as to the North-Italian expression »terroni« used for offensively designating people from the South, the last two concepts read »Bogia Nen« and »Hokkani Boro«, aligning the popular nickname used to denounce Piedmontese stubbornness (literally, »do not move«) with the Romani expression for a con artist's scam (›the great trick‹).

Berlin Moabit: Heroes of Flesh and Blood

In Berlin, the residency of Athi-Patra Ruga at the Jugendtheaterbüro Moabit took a symbolic approach to the concern of unsafety. The project suffered a series of modifications in its design and operation that hindered it from performing to its maximum potential. Nevertheless, the short engagement between Athi and the theatre youth did spark important conversations and initiated a valuable project, in particular with regard to developing creative responses to the conditions of difference and otherness that can lead to states of perceived and real lack of safety.

Form the very beginning, the conversation between the black South African performance artist and the (mainly) Turkish-German theatre youth circled around the experience and meaning of apartheid and post-apartheid. From there, Athi pushed the conversation towards managing fear and trauma in general, including the fear/trauma experienced by migrant bodies in Berlin and queer bodies in heteronormative society. The members of Jugendtheaterbüro responded to the provocation by redirecting the fear/trauma of female, young and oppressed bodies in a world of abuse, false promises and ecological disaster. The output from these conversations was the creation of ›Sheroes and Villains‹, ›fearless‹ alter egos made and performed by the participants of the workshop and photographed in emblematic locations around town.[32]

Artists' (Sense of) Safety

Last but not least, the safety of the artists – and their sense of safety – has been a further topic within 9UB. The residencies of Berlin Spree, Cape Town and Soweto are of particular interest here. During the evaluation interview, Terry Kurgan, resident artist of id22 at the Spreefeld in Berlin, remarked that the way different social groups and worldviews coexisted and overlapped on the site of her intervention had surprised her. Used to navigating spaces of fear as much as spaces of social retreat and exclusion in Johannesburg, the ›discreet conviviality‹ and easy co-existence of lifestyle campers, coop-

erative home owners, tourists and property investment seekers spoke to her of the high degree of public safety and trust that Berliners and their visitors have in public space.

A similar, but inverse, experience was that of Antje Schiffers during her residency in Cape Town. One of the things the city taught her was to greet her neighbours in order to build relationships of trust that serve as mutual protection. In addition, Schiffers was made to (re) consider her whiteness and the violence it had brought into the life of black South Africans. The »act of dwelling in a place« other than home, the innermost meaning of the term and concept of ›residency‹,[33] sparked continuous comparisons between one and the other, between what is familiar and what is not, allowing her to see both anew.

Finally, in Soweto, the residency of Marjetica Potrč and her team point us to yet another variation of this theme of artists' sense of safety. Before bringing students from Hamburg to Orlando East, Marjetica, as their teacher and responsible project manager, was concerned about the safety of her team. Once there, however, the sense of vulnerability of the white foreigners was soon forgotten. They felt safe. So much so, that they did not even notice that it is unusual for a white girl or boy to walk alone at night in Soweto. Their neighbours considered it a courageous thing to do. Evaluation interviews showed that the artists' sense of safety was both effect and cause of two important achievements of the art project: first, it was claimed that it was the neighbourhood that was actually »safe-guarding« them, making sure that nothing would happen to them. At the same time, seeing that effectively nothing did happen filled the neighbours with pride and was taken as proof to the world and to themselves that Soweto is much better than its reputation. 9UB thus gave the neighbourhood the opportunity to intervene in the collective imaginary of their hometown by developing a sense of responsibility for the ›guests‹, and through their guests' positive experience promote a different reading. Residents in Letsatsi Street, down the road of Ubuntu Park, described this ›side product‹ of the intervention with the following words: »We saw them walking around our streets at night. I think everybody could see and everyone can know that Soweto is not a bad place. You see they [the artists] could walk at night and you could see them, not accompanied by anyone, just by themselves, and I think they felt free … I think the community was safe-guarding them, watching them. Nothing could happen to them. I would say Soweto is a better, safer place then people thought it is … And now they [the artists] can tell. Around nine o'clock at night they would walk around and you would see that they were not scared. They were free. Which is nice … That is what Ubuntu is about«.[34]

Conclusion

The artistic endeavours of 9UB did not in and of themselves improve the safety of the biotopes where they took place. This confirms qualitative research on other public art projects in South Africa and resonates also with common sense understandings of the possibilities of art.[35]

However, what socially engaged art practice can offer is an insight into other ways of being together in the city. »Imagination«, the anthro-

pologist Arjun Appadurai reminds us, »is actually a collective tool for the transformation of the real, for the creation of multiple horizons of possibility.« Imagination, he continues, produces locality as much as material social constructions do, and he then draws the conclusion that it can »reach into multiple scales and spaces and forms and possibilities« on the basis that it shapes our »structure of feeling«.[36] In this sense, socially engaged practice intervenes at the level of the taken for granted, whilst simultaneously opening up opportunities to experiment with what Rike Sitas and Edgar Pieterse describe as »democratic renovation«.[37] Socially engaged art can instigate social dialogue[38] and create exceptional, experimental spaces for reviving trust in public space, culture and society at large. In so doing, it can inspire collective imagination, and thus become an agent for creating »platforms for democratic enrolment«.[39] However, this agency should not be thought of as being necessarily linear and harmonious. To the contrary, as the commitment to engage with diverse publics and the social bodies that constitute them is inherent to this practice, so too is antagonism integral to pluralistic participatory processes.[40]

Reimagining possibilities and modifying our structures of feeling in relation to urban space implies also revising our sense(s) of safety. 9UB has provided valuable experience of how fear can be confronted, how lack of safety can be identified and tackled, and how presupposed narratives of violence can be redrafted. However, the residencies have also shown that prejudices and misreadings can infiltrate and co-opt good intentions and that socially engaged art initiatives are not immune to carrying along with insufficiently reflected upon activities.

In addition, posing the question about what art can do to improve safety immediately raises the issue of art and its instrumentalisation.[41] The task of increasing a sense of safety or reducing crime becomes yet another policy issue laid at the feet of the socially engaged arts practitioner whose practice will now be scrutinised, debated and re-imagined though the lens of safety. Nevertheless, establishing a relationship between socially engaged art practice and urban safety can be fruitful with regard to developing a nuanced understanding of the working of affect in building our cities.

Related content

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Endnotes

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spacewarz in cape town

By Taryn Jeanie Mackay

Almost every Sunday a group of about 20 people convenes on the roads that map Cape Town's heart. Ranging in age from 10 to 45, this crew of Capetonian long-board skaters has, for the past decade, taken part in Alpha Lazy Sundays with a commitment that mirrors a religious rite.

From midday till dusk they ›bomb‹ down the hills of Stephans Street, perform gravity-defying tricks around the corners of Christiaans Street and close the day with a series of races along Keizergracht Street from Walmer Estate to the edge of town. The winners of these races earn the title of ›king‹ and social media bragging rights for the week. The only condition for participating in the event is that skaters wear helmets and protective knee and elbow guards.

At the core of the weekly event is 32-year-old Kent Lingeveltd, founder of the best-known local long-boarding brand, Alpha Longboards. His destiny was charted on his 14th birthday, when his older cousin, South African Idols finalist Ezra Lingeveltd, gave him a skateboard as a gift.

Like many South African families displaced by a long history of geo-political racism, Kent

Lingeveltd's moved around a lot. Lingeveltd, who has now relocated from Mitchells Plain to Woodstock, has also called Hanover Park and Atlantis home. Unable to make friends because of his transient life, he embraced movement and the skateboard as his lifelong companions.

His oval face and eyes that narrow sharply at the corners are framed by thick silver sleepers in each ear and a beard reminiscent of a goat's. It's an apt comparison because Lingeveltd's determination is another quality he shares with the unrelenting, mountain conquering Billy goat.

After competing in the Red Bull Downhill Extreme in 1999, when he was 19, he realised what type of board he would need to compete internationally and, with the realisation came the financial implications. With little to his name he retreated to his family garage in Westridge, Mitchells Plain. Here, through a dynamic blend of trial and error, research and intuition, he unearthed the skill that would come to represent his unique contribution to society – shaping and customising long-boards to reflect the form and design of individuals.

Today, operating from his workshop at 52 Wright Street in lower Woodstock, he labours meticulously to craft works of moveable art for both the local market and a growing international client base that includes some of the most respected names in skating.

As part of his design process he collaborates with graffiti and other artists. Recently he completed the ›Local Legends‹ series, which, he explains, ›paid homage to the people who have shaped our current society by portraying them on long-board canvases‹. Legend has it that one of these boards adorns a wall in Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu's office.

For most people the name District Six conjures up images of an interracial, diverse and explosive cultural mélange: an oasis of love and possibility in a country torn to shreds by institutionalised hate and violence. It is these invocations that guided Lingerveltd in his choice of skating location. »Skating is for us a true expression of freedom. All of our families are from District Six and it's important for us to express our freedom in a place where it was taken away,« he says.

He speaks in a staccato rhythm: short, sharp bursts of information that mimic the pushing action required to coast on a board. Central to the activities of a typical Lazy Sunday is mentoring and encouraging the 52 Crew – a development group of ten young people between the ages of 10 and 18.

Shortly after setting up shop in Woodstock in 2003 Lingerveltd was harassed by neighbourhood youngsters curious about the activities taking place inside the building from which skateboarders emerged. Seeing a reflection of his younger self in these kids, who were mould-

ing their identity in a harsh urban context, he realised that the only way to reclaim the ground floor of his studio would be to structure a development programme for them. He and his fellow skaters began providing informal training for the youngsters, making them custom boards at a discounted price.

Fifteen-year-old Fagroedian Rahim is one of those kids – a tiny young soul with an explosive attitude. Living in Woodstock, he has been skating with Lingerveltd for »five months and two weeks«, he states proudly. »Kent helps us. Because of him I've improved a lot of my skills. I'm connected to my board.«

Despite the fact that the Alpha Longboards crew has skated in District Six for the past ten years, on this Sunday a police van pulls up and issues a warning to them to stop and vacate the area. To placate the cops the team moves to an even more abandoned road, with a barrier and rubble, increasing the danger for them. Resettled, the threat of the authorities still lingering in the air, Rahim, in the blunt and simple manner of a child, suggests a way to resolve the situation. »I think we must go to the government and make it legal for long-boarding. It makes me angry when the police come because they take our fun and throw it away. We waited our whole week to skate and they come around and tell us we can't, for no reason.«

Little scenes like this are playing out all over Cape Town. Viewed independently it is easy to dismiss them as inconsequential skirmishes between the culturally and economically marginal and an over-zealous police force. But when the incidents of skateboarders being criminally charged and graffiti covered over at the whim of a citizen who calls a hotline to complain are aggregated, the battle lines over the rights to public spaces are clearly drawn.

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The morning of February 26 was calm, with a light southeasterly wind along which the smell of the ocean travelled to Lavender Hill. It was one of those rare glorious days that visitors to the city pray for and are offered rather grudgingly by Hoerikwagga – the flat-topped Mountain in the Sea – and the ocean from which she rises.

It is this same mountain range, immortalised in tourist brochures, postcards and photographs that rises tall as part of the visual landscape of Lavender Hill. Nature is, after all, much fairer than the humans who occupy her. Despite the visual fantasy of rolling hills covered with blossoming fragrant purple flowers that its name evokes, Lavender Hill is a harsh and complex space. The township is one of the sites where the discarded people of District Six and Muizenberg were dumped by the apartheid government.

Here people were piled on top of each other in uninspired three- or four-storey council flats, where overpopulation and fierce competition for scarce resources conspired to cocoon a hotbed of social ills. Today the media, writing of this community, refer to Gangland, or »the most dangerous place on the Cape Flats«.

On that Sunday morning, however, with the weather promising to play its part, a community-based nonprofit organisation, Resources


ALPHA

Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RapCan) had organised a one-day festival called ›Taking It to the Street‹. Since 1997 RapCan has advocated the promotion of children's rights. Through a combination of child protection services, research and community awareness projects, the organisation tries to unsettle the disease at the core of a nation that rapes and abuses. The work is aimed at creating a new construction of what it means to be a South African born and raised on the Cape Flats.

The day's activities for this festival included workshops, dance, visual art and live performances from children who have worked with RapCan to produce a CD entitled, Lavender Hill for Life. As part of the programme RapCan approached One Love Studios, commissioning them to create two murals in the area.

The co-founder of One Love Studios, which he runs from his home in Muizenberg, is Serjio Rinquist, who was raised on the Cape Flats. Combining his self-taught graffiti skills with the talents of his business partner, fine artist Claire Homewood, he set up the design studio with the intention of increasing the amount of public art and the number of murals in Muizenberg and its surrounds.

IsJa, Rinquist's graffiti name, is a slim 27-year-old, with shoulder-length brown-golden dreadlocks. He lives his life in pursuit of his two passions – graffiti and boarding (both on land and in the ocean), and his skin has the complexion and slightly leathery texture of someone who spends a lot of time in the sun and surf.

He explains how the two RapCan murals, one on Prince George Drive at the entrance to Lavender Hill, the other on the wall of a three-storey council block of flats, came to be. »The murals were workshopped with the community and welcomed with open arms. The one on Prince George drive was a display of the rights of children. The flat was decorated with a tall tree that contained messages of love and peace. Below it, we inscribed, Lavender Hill for Life, the name of the CD the children were launching«.

As a Cape Town graffiti artist IsJa is well aware of the bylaws requiring permits for graffiti art and had offered to fulfil the necessary obligations for the event. RapCan, however, had felt that permission would be more likely to be granted if the application came from them. IsJa busied himself with the other logistics entailed in a job this size – assembling the right team for the production, engaging with the community to determine the content of the mural and renting a cherry picker for hard-to-reach areas.

The day before the event permission had still not been granted. IsJa went into solution mode. »We knocked on the door of the local ward councillor, pleaded our case and asked for his endorsement of the community process. He refused.« Undeterred, IsJa made another plan. »I called J P Smith [the mayoral committee member for safety and security] and explained the situation. He granted us a provisional permit.«

Relieved, IsJa and his team set to work. The festival and the mural were both a success and IsJa remarks that »whenever we paint in

communities, children of all ages come to us with their sketch books or with pictures on their phone. All of them want to know how to paint. So many of them want to be artists«.

In addition to the community, the police were present on the day. Their presence in Lavender Hill is a norm and on a day of festivity it is expected. Throughout the day they watched the activities of the graffiti artists from a distance and never approached or interacted with them. However on the following Monday, IsJa found himself in trouble with the law and was slapped with a R1 500 fine for contravening Clause 9 of the graffiti by-law of 2010. What followed was a lengthy process in which he had to prove to the court that his actions were defensible. After weeks of persistent engagement the fine was scrapped. »I shouldn't have been fined in the first place,« says IsJa. »The whole process takes time and money that we don't have. Time and money we could be spending on our work and our community.«

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Skating and graffiti are regulated by the City of Cape Town through two provincial legislative enactments: the »By-Law Relating to Streets, Public Places and the Prevention of Nuisances, 2007« (the ›nuisance by-law‹) and »the City of Cape Town: Graffiti By-Law, 2010« (the ›graffiti by-law‹). In terms of these by-laws, the two activities have been declared to be a nuisance, attracting criminal sanctions unless they are conducted with the direct consent of the city.

The nuisance by-law asserts that skateboarding is a dangerous activity. Clause 15(a) prohibits »skateboarding, rollerskating and dangerous acts« on all public roads, unless permission is explicitly granted by the city. Other activities deemed illegal according to this law include begging more than once, climbing a public tree, washing or cleaning a motor vehicle, or drying and hanging washing in a public space. All these acts can result in the guilty party being fined and/or imprisoned.

Brett Heron, the member of the mayoral committee for transport, finds it hard to explain why exactly the city has adopted a hard line on skating. Heron is the kind of guy you want to like: the type of person who wears well-fitted slacks and a tasteful cardigan to work on a wet and grey Cape Town winter morning. He is reasonable and presents a dispassionate, well-paced description of the search for common ground between the city and the skateboarding community.

He contends that the decision to outlaw skateboarding on city streets is »probably historical«, that the by-law was »probably written at a time when skateboarding was not regarded as a legitimate mode of transport« and that »the thinking around that is changing«. With the by-law updated as recently as 2007 it's hard to know to what history he refers. He proffers another explanation for the restrictive regulation: »Concerns of safety of vulnerable users, the most vulnerable of which being the skateboarders themselves«.

What he doesn't seem to acknowledge is that cycling, rock-climbing and paragliding are all dangerous activities that take place in the city, yet all of them remain legitimate, legal, recre-

ational activities in which enthusiasts assume responsibility for their own safety.

The preamble to the graffiti by-law states that »graffiti affects the quality of life of all residents and visitors, and constitutes a public nuisance which damages the image of the City known worldwide for its beauty and makes it a less desirable place to visit, live and work in«. The law has ostensibly been promulgated to eradicate gang graffiti from the visual landscape of the city by introducing a complex permit process for artists who wish to paint.

JP Smith, to whom IsJa had turned for help, has been at the helm of a ten-year-long process that culminated in the enactment of the graffiti by-law, which forms part of an integrated public safety strategy aimed at removing signs of social disorder. Smith doesn't present himself as the nice guy but rather as a necessary and tireless defender against the forces of hooliganism. Tall, slender, blond and blue-eyed, he is wearing a suit and a blue-striped shirt.

He views the permit process as a legitimate means of regulating the use of public space. »It's not an unreasonable provision that has been made in terms of enabling the environment [for art], what there is a determination by some of the – in quotes – artists to cling to a complete laissez-faire scenario where they are permitted to do what they want, which is, in my mind, exceedingly unreasonable to the communities who they inflict that on.«

The legislation provides for two avenues through which mural artists, a term employed

by the law to define an acceptable form of art on walls, can produce work. Firstly by obtaining a permit from the city, as outlined in clause 9, and, secondly through a system of self-permits, which is set out in clause 10.

In order to obtain a permit from the city the artist requires the permission of the property owner and his or her neighbours and other interested or affected people. The permit application must be accompanied by a full motivation for the artwork as well as a sketch. The by-law stipulates that the city has the right to grant or deny permission, while giving no indication of the grounds on which its decision is based.

Smith contends that »the only grounds on which we would turn a permit down would be a technical reason like the surface is not appropriate for the application of paint, or it constitutes some kind of traffic risk in the assessment of the traffic engineer. These same principles are applied to advertising and commercial signage«. He is adamant that »… there is no power for the official to turn the application down based on the content of the sketch«.

However, in the absence of express guidelines, Smith's assurances offer little comfort. Guidelines would go some way to ensuring that the constitutionally entrenched right to freedom of expression is not trampled on by arbitrary decision-making.

If an artist fulfills three criteria, namely, the successful approval of five consecutive permits, membership of the Visual Arts Network of South Africa (a Johannesburg-based voluntary arts body which was vocal in its opposition to the by-law during the period of public participation) and the absence of a previous conviction for any offence relating to graffiti, the artist is able to apply for the right to self-permit – to decide for him/herself when and where he/she places graffiti. Even this concession requires artists to submit a self-permitting notice prior to the creation of artwork, containing proof of consent from affected parties and an accompanying sketch. The law also provides that the city will keep a database of all mural artists and their accompanying sketches.

Contraventions of the by-law are met with heavy sanctions. First-time offenders are liable to a fine of R15 000 or six months' imprisonment. Conviction for a second offence makes them liable to a fine of R30 000 or six months' imprisonment. The by-law allows for alternative sentencing at the discretion of the court.

Smith also says the city has established a dedicated »Graffiti Enforcement Unit« with the task of removing all offending graffiti. This team, he says, paints over graffiti art that has caused complaints. The team uses grey cement wash – a substance that obstructs future spray-painting on the wall.

Cape Town is the only city in South Africa to have specifically enacted legislation to control graffiti. In Jo'burg, for example, graffiti rates only a nominal mention in the public open space by-law that says no person may, within a public space, deface, damage, destroy or remove any municipal property. In general, unwanted drawing on walls is dealt with as malicious damage to property, a criminal offence.

The tacit arrangement in most of South African urban centres is that painting a mural requires the permission of the owner of the wall. Private property owners in Cape Town do not have that option. If you want to decorate your private wall with artwork, you need a permit from the city.

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The current legislative position in Cape Town has the effect of making criminal ways of life to which many young citizens have gravitated in pursuit of a self-sufficient, creative life of meaning. Cradled in the political expression of hip-hop culture, graffiti and skateboarding tracked their way back to Africa from America, where the descendants of slaves had forged them as a path to self-recovery.

Hip-hop galvanised itself as a cultural response to the structurally violent collapse playing itself out in New York's Bronx neighbourhood from the late 1960s onwards. From these drug-infested and bloody sidewalks rose a generation of socially and politically conscious youth. Guided by the messages encoded in Rap (rhyme and poetry), graffiti images and expressive movement, hip-hop, at its formation, was about providing black youth with the knowledge, tools and community to embark on a process of decolonisation.

It's easy to understand the historical and political similarities between the Bronx in the 1960s and the teargas-filled, petrol-bombed streets of South Africa in the 1980s. Hip-hop powered onto the South African scene in 1982. The conscious messages of African-American emcees advocating revolutionary social change connected with a South African generation frustrated by a life of surveillance and limited opportunity. The cultural movement that hip-hop embodied presented these young people with an artistic expression rooted in knowledge of self and people's power.

In South Africa in the early 1990s the message of self-determination appealed to a wider urban youth reality and skateboarding bonded with hip-hop culture. Skating forges an intimate relationship between skaters and their natural environment, as every crack, crevice or donga in the earth's surface ripples through their body.

Drawing on walls also connected with Southern Africans at a primal level. The Qua-Qua, the Abantu – the first people to walk the Earth – have etched and painted in ochre and blood since the beginning of time. Through this practice they connected with the earth, from which separation was unimaginable. Rock art also served as a tool to document history, connect to the spiritual realm and create a more expressive world.

World-renowned and respected graffiti artist, mak1one, was one of those courageous enough to have participated in the embryonic moments of hip-hop in South Africa. Even if you don't know him, his appearance gives the game away. His slightly baggy jeans are covered with multi-coloured paint splats and he has personally customised his white Adidas shell-toes so that white is only something they once were.

Inevitably he is wearing a hoodie or T-shirt, often one that contains his own design: a

rough-sketched break-dancer doing a one-hand stand. A huge soft Afro frames his brown face, which exhibits features that corroborate his Indian ancestry. His stance is confident, his chest pushed forward, a ready-for-action pose that looks like a body language residue from his days as a break-dancer. His commitment to the practice of graffiti is evidenced in the fact that he has trained himself to be ambidextrous, ensuring that if anything happens to one of his hands he »can continue doing what I love«. When speaking on matters of art, mak1one prefers to use his nom-de-plume. Profiling mak1one, he asserts, focuses attention on the art, not the artist.

mak1one spent his formative years in a one-room shack in Cafda, one of Cape Town's original apartheid-created coloured settlements, where his mother raised him and his younger brother and sister. His father would spend long periods away from home, working on ships to sustain the family. It was there that he received his artist name from his grandfather, a painter who worked in the affluent southern suburbs. »My grandfather taught me you can do something with your hands. You can plant flowers, build and paint things. He called me Mak and it stuck.«

The family lived in Cafda for ten years, waiting for the development of Mitchells Plain. At the age of seven they were allocated a home in Beacon Valley in 1982. This waiting period was punctuated by evictions, displacement and separation, a context that made learning impossible, mak1one contends.

»I failed Sub A, because I couldn't concentrate. All the trauma at home, it affects you as a laaitie, and drawing was the only thing I had; a way to another world.« His language weaves between emotive English and the playful Afri-Kaaps that is typical of a Cape Flats upbringing.

For those present at the inception of the hip-hop culture in South Africa, The Base, a club on Shortmarket Street in the Cape Town central business district, is fondly remembered as the site of the magic. Here hip-hoppers received a ritualistic weekly dose of sweaty beat boxing, breakdancing and emceeing. The daytime session created a reason for black youth from the Flats to enter the white city centre, shifting the visual landscape by their presence and in doing so, reclaiming the space.

»We would catch a waaintjie (train) into town from Mitchells Plain,« says mak1one. »All along the way, Bonteheuwel, Mannenberg, ooense (guys) would be jumping on and you could tell from their clothes that they were hip-hoppers. We used to gather in one carriage and build a vibe all the way to town. When we got to town we would walk as a mass group from the station up Green Market Square to Shortmarket Street. For a few hours there was this amazing space we all shared.«

Only 13 at the time, he would catch the last train out at 7.30pm to make it home in time for supper. His mother, unaware of the excursion, thought he was playing in another street.

He explains why hip-hop captured the imagination of Cape Town's youth in the 1980s. »Hip-hop was born out of poverty and violence. It was the collective consciousness of

people living in a certain space who decided that a change needs to happen and with very basic materials or information. First you need to learn about yourself completely. If a boat's sinking you need to save yourself before you save anyone else, otherwise you'll both drown. You have to be conscious and aware of yourself and what you're doing and why you're doing certain things, before you can go out and educate other people. With time, the people realise that everything around you is up to the people living there, it's up to me. Why did hip-hop happen? It needed to happen because a change had to happen and that change had to come from the people.«

In Cape Town particularly, the incubator of South African hip-hop, the culture fused with other lived experiences engendering a new hybrid to the perpetually evolving coloured identity. In doing so, Hip-hop offered a productive form of expression to those with few options, »Hip-hop gave you a different route if you wanted to be something other than a gangster. The conscious music that came out of hip-hop in the early days was my education. We didn't have any culture to be proud of. You're part of this bastard race and hip-hop comes along and you can be part of it, you can empower yourself to do it and the more you grow, the more the culture grows«.

Having been declared a nuisance under the graffiti-by-law there are no conditions under which those who self-identify as graffiti artists c an legally produce graffiti art. Only mural art, a term that has no intrinsic meaning in this culture, is permitted. Regardless of the fact that

it defines him as a pest, mak1one asserts that he is a graffiti artist, not a mural or street artist. »Graffiti art is part of a culture. It has a history and origin as one of the elements of hip-hop. Like any other culture, there are things attached to it, things you learn, things you stick by, things you defend. I call it graffiti ,cause that's what it is, it's nothing else.«

As the political wheels turned and a change became eminent, these young people began, in the early 1990s, to push the physical boundaries of freedom of movement. Still on Shortmarket Street, next to The Base, was skating legend Errol ›Bong‹ Strachan's Skateshop. Six-times national freestyle skateboarding champion, Errol Strachan began skating in 1975 at the age of 13, a time when the sports and cultural boycott meant he was never able to compete internationally. Instead what he did was create a »Hobbit-hole« for young black skaters who were navigating the city streets on makeshift boards.

Kent Lingerveltd remembers it as the safe space for young skaters from the Flats. »We used to go there on Fridays and hang out. Being a coloured skater back then wasn't easy. Everyone saw you as trying to be white and Bong's shop created a space for us where it was OK to be coloured and skating.«

Thibault Square was another important social site during the 1990s where skaters could forge a culture that transcended race and class. The square, a paved courtyard in the centre of town, surrounded by banks and cafés, has steps, benches and a small amphitheatre, all of which lend themselves to re-interpretation by skateboarders.

»It was a home for everybody. There was nothing like coloured guys or black guys can't skate here. It was just if you were good enough to skate the ramp you skate the ramp.« But by 1995 skating at Thibault Square was outlawed as business interests squeezed the ragged-looking young people out of the space and into Boogaloos, the mall-based skateparks that popped up around the country.

Hip-hop has maintained its core belief in the power of each-one-teach-one and the relentless commitment to a craft. Today graffiti artists, critical lyricists and those who reach towards the limits of the body-possible continue to amplify the voices of black city youth economically and racially oppressed in heavily policed ghettos. »At the core of hip-hop is the upliftment of myself from the condition I was born into – the victory over the streets,« says mak1one. »I was born into poverty, born into the category of human being that was neither here nor there but everything, and I had to learn to be OK with that and believe in what I do and the gift I've been granted. I had to learn to be self-reliant and, then to go back and teach what I learnt.«

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The National Skateboard Collective (NSC) has committed itself to galvanising a movement that works to change the perception of skateboarders among members of society and lawmakers. Marco Morgan, city planner for transport and public works and a founding member of the NSC, shares his thoughts on why skateboarders are seldom welcomed in public city spaces. »Skateboarders deny the production of archi-

tecture and urban space as a commodity for exchange, or a place where the exchange of commodities might take place. As a result, we experience similar exclusion from public space to others who are not potential consumers and are therefore perceived as a nuisance by shop owners and the general public.«

Morgan has been skating since 1990, when he was six years old. As a commuter on his board, skating is a fundamental component of how he does life and expresses himself. Often found wearing an old school hat, a nose stud and a smile, Morgan elaborates, »For me skating is mine. It belongs to me. It's not to impress, race or be number one. It's something that is very pure. For me it's the push. Sometimes I wake up at three in the morning just to push down the road and come back home and sleep. I'll be doing it till the day I die«.

In October last year, after an extensive lobbying and public awareness campaign, the NSC managed to convince the city's transport authorities to lift the ban on all forms of non-motorised transport on the Sea Point promenade. The ban was lifted for four months, which ended in February. During this time the NSC launched the Promenade Monday campaign under the Share the Space slogan and invited skaters to come through in their numbers.

»The idea was to liberate skaters and say that we have as much right as everyone else to be here on this road. The other part was to start showing conservative people that Sea Point doesn't belong to the residents of Sea Point, it belongs to the city; it belongs to all residents,« explains Morgan.

Behind the decision to lift the ban provisionally is Brett Heron, who is happy with the outcome of the initiative. »People began to understand that this is a space that other people can enjoy and we need to learn to tolerate and share. Overall, it went very well and I would like to see the ban lifted. And, in fact, the ban is probably de facto lifted. I don't know how you go back when you had no incidents and people embraced it.«

Around the globe, town planners are embracing behaviour that contributes to a greener environment. This, in turn, guides intelligent cities towards the implementation of non-motorised transport (NMT). The NSC asserts that skateboarding as a mode of transport can contribute to this process and they promote a »push don't pollute« philosophy among their beneficiaries. At present, the by-law criminalising skateboarding conflicts with two formal documents issued by the city.

In its bid application for World Design Capital 2014, the City claimed that »[a]long with getting their own parks, skateboarders are now more welcome in a City that recognises skateboarding as a viable mode of new mobility transport«. Furthermore, the city's NMT policy of 2005, which pre-dates the most recent amendment of the by-law, defines NMT as including »all forms of movement that do not rely on an engine or motor movement«. The list of examples that follows explicitly includes rollerblading and skating.

Heron contends that his work requires him to deal with these contradictions. To do so he has set up a task team in which members of the

skating community are invited to participate. »The by-law doesn't prohibit it [skateboarding] entirely, he explains. »Unfortunately, no one ever sat down to work out how we would grant permission. I think the conflict, the inconsistency, derives from the fact that as a city transport planning authority we acknowledge skateboarding as a mode of transport and we would like to encourage more people to use active mobility or NMT. So we need to accommodate that and we can't accommodate it entirely on NMT lanes because they don't go everywhere.«

Heron believes the progress made in the task team meeting is moving the city towards a new milieu in its interaction with skaters. »I would like to remove the conflict between the bureaucracy and residents who happen to use skateboards either for transport or their recreation; to find a way, through a collaborative process, to accommodate skateboarding as a legitimate form of recreation and of transport.«

There is, however, a gap between Heron's reasonable position and the day-to-day reality of police harassment and violence that skateboarders testify to. Sitting on the pavement of Christiaans Street, opposite the church – one of the few buildings in District Six that was saved – by the protestant morality of the apartheid state – from demolition – the Alpha Lazy Sunday crew claim that simply holding a skateboard in the city attracts the attention of the authorities.

As dusk begins to fall and the Azan – the Islamic Call to Prayer – echoes across the City Bowl, skater after skater tells a story of near escape or of being »klapped« and roughed up by security guards. Morgan says: »Cops don't like people with rights. If you're a 12-year-old laaitjie and you're caught by a security guard they don't tell you, ›The by-law says this and that,‹ they're like, ›Hey! Foetsek (fuck off)!‹ They hit you and punch you. You get treated like shit«.

With regard to graffiti, IsJa believes the laws infringe the rights of young people to express themselves freely and exclude from the economy those who have built their livelihood on these creative skills. »Like me, many people have built their careers on graffiti or skateboarding. With the new by-laws people are less willing to commission murals because they are too afraid. They don't want the drama of being in trouble with the law.« He insists that the tense struggle over the conditions imposed on graffiti artists in Cape Town is ideological, »The authorities have a problem with skaters and graffiti artists because most of us are critical thinkers. We question the things that we are expected to accept«. The glass partitioning in Smith's office is decorated with laminated images of the Brooklyn Bridge lit up at night and a long aerial shot of Central Park, visual clues to the type of city space to which he aspires. Fittingly, the graffiti by-law is informed by the Broken Windows Theory, a criminology position made popular by Rudy Giuliani, mayor of New York City from 1993 to 2001. The theory asserts that crime is likelier to occur in areas where there are visible signs of social disorder, such as broken windows. This policy position gets tough on graffiti, portraying it as the first step in the downward spiral of neighbourhoods into crime.

Both Smith and the website of the ›Graffiti Enforcement Unit‹, the special purpose team employed to enforce the by-law, refer to the fact that »graffiti, vandalism and tagging … have been scientifically proven to promote social disorder and increase crime«.

The science to which they refer was research conducted by the University of Groningen in the Netherlands in 2008, entitled ›The spreading of disorder‹. As part of the research, a number of experiments were conducted in both a pristine environment and in a littered environment where graffiti was visible. One such experiment was exhibiting a bank note in an open addressed envelope close to a post box. Respondents were reportedly more likely to take the bank note in the dirty, graffiti environment than in the clean one. This was said to prove that theft was more likely in an area that demonstrated signs of social disorder.

These experiments were hardly conclusive. While the Groningen research supports the Broken Windows theory, the University of Chicago Law Review conducted a five-city social experiment in 2006, which, like a number of studies before it, concluded that there is no causal link between the reduction in nuisance crimes and the reduction in serious crimes. Smith contends that the legal position is creating much-needed job opportunities. Homeless people are employed to paint over graffiti as »part of a rehabilitation and reintegration process so that when they go back to their families and communities, they do so with some form of cash in their pocket«. In the past three years, Smith says, the budget for this work has

increased from R1.3-million in 2012 to a projected R2.5-million for next year.

IsJa sees the situation differently, »Lots of beautiful art has been deleted. Art by some of the greatest South African artists has been erased and is now lost to another generation. This is our graffiti heritage, they are sites of inspiration and history for our culture and now these same sites are grey empty walls«.

Both graffiti artists and the city seem to agree that safety and the eradication of gangsterism are important goals. The point of disagreement is in assessing the harm caused in pursuit of these goals. Is the right to freedom of expression adequately protected or does the by-law constitute an unjustifiable limitation of this right? In assessing this question one must consider whether crime and gangsterism could be reduced without making drastic incursions into artistic creativity.

Expression is the lifeblood of a democracy as it is the means through which the will of the people is communicated. Here again, the apartheid experience serves as a warning. Coming from a past of state-sanctioned and legislated large-scale suppression of the communication of ideas, it seems prudent that South African law-makers be wary of limiting this right and bear an obligation to consider whether there are less restrictive means of achieving their purpose.

Smith is adamant that the city merely requires a reasonable process of consultation. »Why should they be allowed at their own direction to dictate other people's public open space? It's grotesquely self-serving and narcissistic. You're living inside your property, you look at the inside of your boundary wall you're not looking at that art mural. If it is important enough to spend money and time to do then it is important enough to consult the people who have to share that environment with you. It's called good neighbourliness, it's called respect for the community around you, and, in my mind, it's only reasonable.«

Graffiti artists like mak1one and IsJa assert however that they do consult, just not in the bureaucratic way in which the city would like them to. For them, graffiti represents a different kind of politics; a way of practising politics that's face-to-face and community based. »Whenever I paint I ask for walls,« says IsJa. »When you're out on the street you're talking to people and they take you on and question what you're doing and why. You have to deal with those questions on the spot.« The by-law, he says, has the effect not only of criminalising the act of graffiti but a particular form of solidarity and interaction and it does so because it requires this expression of publicness to be subjected to a bureaucratic process.

Throughout the ten-year process of implementing the by-law the city has consulted with only four graffiti artists and has not set up any mechanism through which they can communicate as a community of interested and affected parties. Smith asserts that the process has been representative and his door has been open. »Nothing stops them from requesting an interview during the public participation process, nothing stops them from requesting an interview with the portfolio committee and nothing stops them from making a formal submissio.«

Unsurprisingly, there remains an unresolved situation of conflict between the city and the street artists within its jurisdiction; conflict that Smith claims cannot be solved through discussion. A visibly agitated Smith says »there's a difference of opinion and speaking about it over and over is not going to change that. It's not that we're not listening, it's that we disagree and repeatedly communicating that, using other fora to try and impact on that is not going to change it«. He asserts that graffiti artists need to come to the table instead of resisting the permit process.

»If they applied a fraction of the energy by just becoming au fait with the permit process we could have been a lot further down the road. Their insistence on being allowed unfettered access to public open space is what has been a stumbling block here and I think they're insanely unreasonable.«

Sitting with IsJa at the Empire Café in Muizenberg, a small, trendy spot where deliciously special Florentine treats are complemented by a beautiful sea view from the top floor, he brings into sharp focus the issues at stake in this battle. »Just because it's law doesn't make it right. Twenty years ago it was illegal for us to sit in this restaurant but that didn't make it right. People organised and fought to change the laws that they thought were wrong, to create a free society. We're simply continuing that work.«

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The visual landscape of the city is severe. We are greeted by income inequality and discomfiting privilege at every robot. The natural environment bears witness to centuries of ecological atrocities inflicted upon the Earth – from septic rivers to the flurry of commercial waste that catches the wind and drifts across the sky. Billboards, posters and digital projections assail the psyche of city dwellers, never allowing them for one moment to forget the purpose of their existence: to consume.

Graffiti as a form of public address intervenes and presents an alternative voice in a consumer-orientated visual landscape. Skateboarders, who are propelled only by their natural energy and four wheels, disrupt the dominant consensus that human movement should be confined to motor vehicles.

The dull concrete-washed walls of Cape Town, beneath which lie pieces of art that took time, energy and love, cast the mind's eye 500 years into both the future and the past. The only true traces Qua-Qua have of their cosmology before the violent rupture from land and culture by European imperialists are the drawings on the walls left by the ancients. The last pieces of rock art were drawn during the late 18th century and depict the violence and domination of the settlers as they made inroads into the interior.

The rock art of the Qua-Qua was a ritualistic practice that expressed not only their talent, beauty and beliefs, but also their intimate relationship with their physical environment. As this relationship was savagely severed with the commodification of nature into land, so, too, the meaning of, and therefore the need to draw on walls dissipated from the rituals of our ancestors.

Skateboarding and graffiti are avenues through which urban youth reanimate this ancient conversation with the Earth. Their unapologetic expression stakes the claim of Qua-Qua to remain connected to nature. Except now, nature has changed. It's urban.

This article first appeared in 2013 in Writing invisibility:

Conversations of the hidden city. Mail & Guardian and African

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incubations. a recipe for urban and other interventions

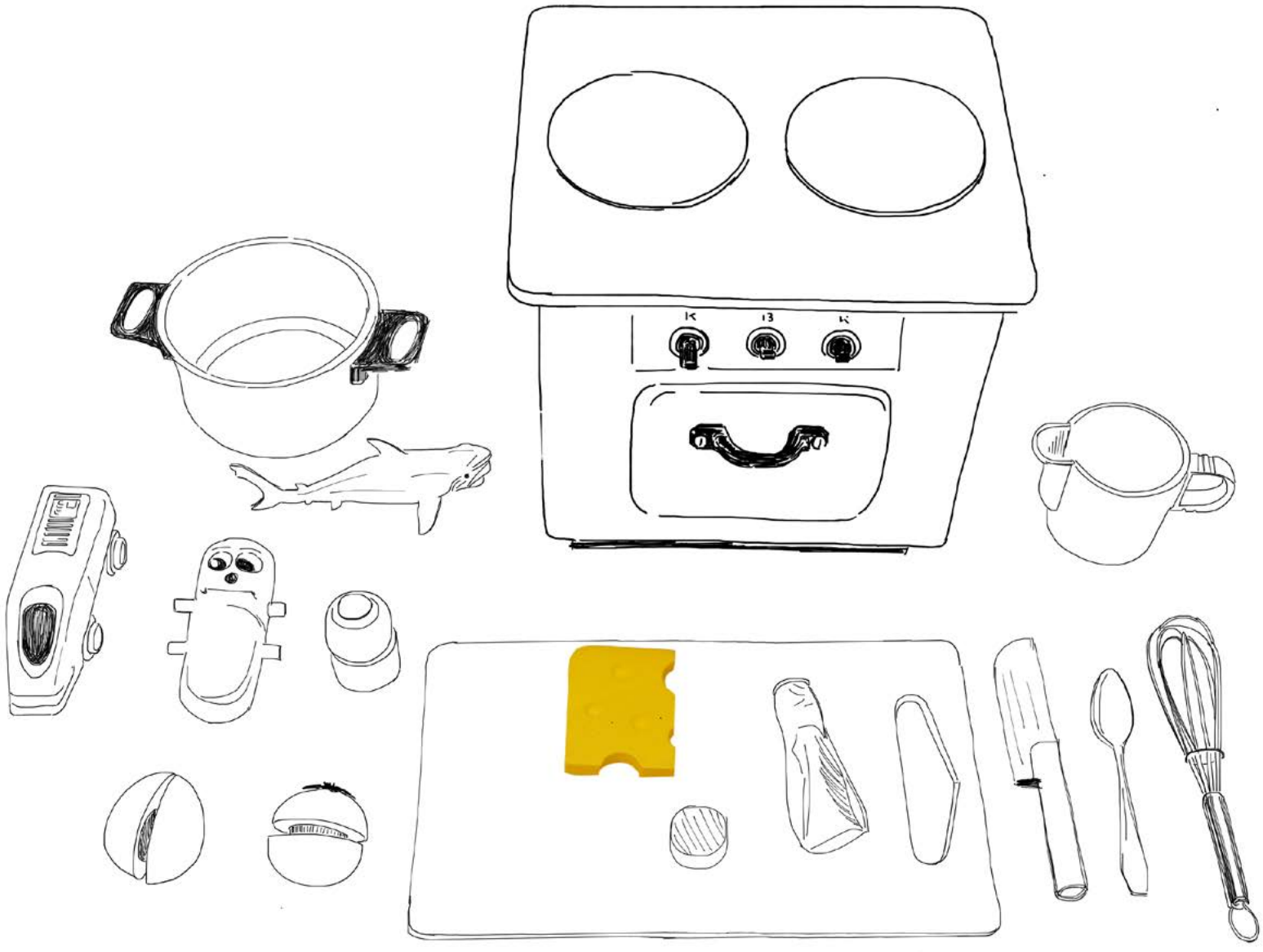
By Michael Guggenheim, Bernd Kräftner and Judith Kröll

The following is a recipe that the authors developed after having worked for a number of years on various projects. Many of these projects were situated in the borderlands between Science and Technology Studies (STS), art and design. While working on these projects, we did not have a language to describe them. We only knew that somehow, they did not fit existing descriptions of academic or artistic work. For academic works, the projects relied too much on strange technologies, invented and inventive methods, and unusual media of presentation. For art works, they came with too much methodological elaboration and their form of presentation was often text heavy. Further, they could neither be easily understood as scientific description, as they were too interventionist, but for people coming from an activist angle, these projects rarely were explicitly critical or took an easily definable stance against something.

What we aim for here is to offer a positive description of what we did. The result is a ›recipe‹ that is addressed to ourselves, because we wanted to be able to make sense of our ongoing practice. Maybe this recipe can help others who engage in similar projects that defy classification, to think about what they do. Having said this, it is also clear that we do not want you to copy our approach. Rather, it may help you to sharpen your own approach, by understanding in what ways it is similar or different. The background in STS informs a number of discussions in what follows, and some of the references may appear unusual for the reader having a background in urban studies, art or design. But this background should not hinder you to link back our description to whatever field you are coming from.

Introduction: A Recipe for Cultural Interventions as a Stew

An incubation is a socio-technical device that uses situational, social and time-based pressure to form new objects and interactions by using knowledge, interactions and objects. This definition is necessarily vague and it will become clear through the course of this article why this is so. This vagueness derives from the fact that in terms of existing art or science language an incubation is difficult to catch and is, to begin with, easier to understand by explaining what it is not. Firstly, an incubation cannot, and should not, be defined in terms of its media. Secondly, it is the case that an incubation is not an academic text, an exhibition or an artwork, a piece of visual sociology or a webpage. An incubation can be any of these, but incubations do not start with such objects in mind. An incubation also is not an ›intervention‹, as opposed to a scientific research project, it is not a scientific research project as opposed to an ›intervention‹, and it is neither an art project as opposed to a research project. An incubation is all of these, and can result in any of them, but at its heart it is neither.



The recipe that follows is a recipe for a stew, not a neatly defined dish. It is a proposal for getting an edible result, with an intended specific flavour, rather than a recipe that has to be slavishly followed lest it fail. If the result disappoints nonetheless, the best way to continue is to tinker with the recipe.[1]

Not all of the ingredients listed below are necessary for each incubation, and the amounts in use can vary from one instance of practice to the next, but it helps to keep all of them in reserve and ready for use. A successful incubation cannot be judged by whether the recipe has been followed, but it has to be judged by its process and gustatory result. This also makes it impossible to judge incubations according to conventional, product and text-oriented standards. Like good cooking, the quality of the final result also depends on good, locally sourced ingredients, the specific skills of the performers and the technical facilities at hand. The following recipe should thus be taken with a pinch of salt.

1. Mise en place.
2. Add descriptive and constructive ingredients.
3. Add a good dose of pressure.
4. Mix ingredients.
5. Use leftovers.
6. Let the incubation macerate.
7. Taste frequently and develop adequate consumption situations.
8. Expiry date: when and how to stop.

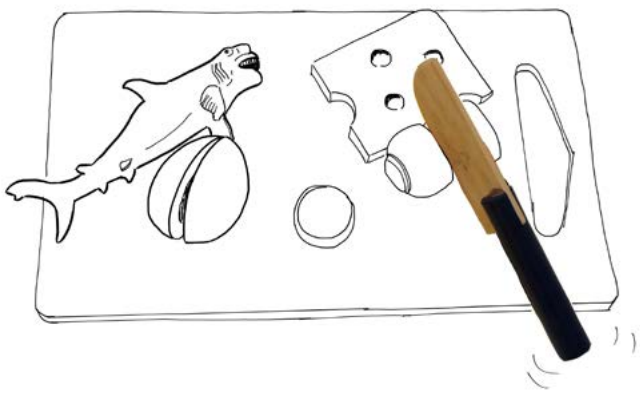
1. Mise en Place: Begin with the Setup of a Suitable Organisational Environment

One cannot cook in a kitchen without a proper stove and other kitchen utensils ready at hand. Similarly an incubation is impossible without a proper organisational environment. As with cooking, this is not about flashy kitchens with computerized steamers and branded furniture that you should not scratch. It is about an environment in which you can act freely and according to your needs and that is made for quotidian use rather than display. The organisational background that we have found to be the most enabling for our project work is a mixture of direct funding for specific projects, combined with either specialized departments devoted to non-disciplinary research, or a (loose) attachment to Science and Technology Studies (STS), sociology or anthropology departments. Since funding explicitly for ›incubations‹ does not exist, we depend on funding possibilities that at least encourage projects at the border of social science and the arts. Incubations need materials, some of them costly. Work with humans necessitates spaces that are comfortable, and do not implicitly replicate the affect and organisational structure of offices.

2. Add Descriptive and Constructive Ingredients

An incubation consists of a range of ingredients, from descriptive methods to ways of recording the world, and to interventions and different media required to produce a result. An incubation resembles a stew or an Indian curry: it is based on an eclectic mixture of ingredients comprising various qualities and quantities. The quality of the stew depends on the skill of the cooks to add ingredients at the right time in the right quantities, to taste and adjust over and over, and to be open to adding new and unexpected ingredients to improve the complex interplay of textures and smells. A precise recipe for a stew is impossible, but also unnecessary. It depends on the circumstances and the variability and extends to the final product: its aim is not a predefined dish but something that tastes well. The central quality of the cook is not to follow defined rules to achieve a given result, but to juggle various ingredients to achieve something good to eat. An incubation, like a stew, is not based on pre-defined ingredients such as those needed for steak with chips, or alphabet soup, where the quality of the result depends primarily on the pre-defined exact quality of ingredients and the timing of the cooking. Take bad quality meat and cook it for too long and you end up with something inedible. Within the context of sociology, activist art, and STS, there is a long-going debate about the problem of intervention. In the context of STS, to which we refer here, the discussion resembles a dispute between one camp who wants to cook steak with chips and another who wants to cook alphabet soup, both claiming to know the perfect recipe to cook their dish and both pointing out that a mixture of the two dishes is impossible. But an incubation is neither steak nor soup, yet it is also not a compromise: one would simply end up with chips soaked in broth, so to speak.

There is a shared assumption held by most participants in the debate lining up behind a division between description and intervention, between inaction and action and between



politics and neutrality, between either cooking steak and chips or alphabet soup. One is either an interventionist with a political agenda or an observer who believes in the neutrality of science. This lining up is in our view neither empirically correct nor fruitful. As Ian Hacking argues in his introduction to the philosophy of science, science itself is about »representing AND intervening« not »representing OR intervening«.[2] The either/or view of the problem entirely depends on a fixed view of the result. If I know that I want to cook steak and chips, it becomes impossible to consider adding a dash of cardamom. Only cooking a stew allows for the consideration of more, and wildly different, ingredients with different qualities.

One way out of this impasse is to point out that the underlying notion of ›action‹ and ›intervention‹ is limited and that descriptions are interventions as well, as both Zuiderent-Jerak and Vikkelsø argue.[3] Indeed, an analysis of politico-scientific controversies would probably easily identify many »descriptions« that ended up acting as crucial interventions at times favouring one side or the other. But from the viewpoint of incubations, we would rather like to question the reverse assumption, namely that an ›intervention‹ needs to be based on a defined political program and a known direction for intervention.[4] We believe that neither are such interventions necessarily particularly successful, nor are these the only forms for cultural interventions. It is possible to cook without knowing a recipe and without knowing the dish that will result beforehand. But doing so requires a certain openness and mastery of basic cooking procedures, rather than an ideology that favours certain ingredients over others.

Incubations are not a form of critique but a re-assembling, a re-construction of an issue. Bruno Latour hints at this shift: »the critic is not the one who debunks but the one who assembles«.[5] This shift from critique as debunking to ›critique‹ as assembling (and doing incubations), is the shift from one medium to another. An incubation takes a completely different view of how methods work. Since an incubation is always a process of assembly and not of debunking, any method is always supposed to represent, intervene and transform. An incubation never starts with the primacy of writing, but with the search for intervening and representing devices appropriate for the object under study. How much a given device is an intervention, a representation or a transformation cannot be defined in an abstract way beforehand. The incubation proceeds not by ›applying‹ a method or taking what the method does for granted, as both the descriptivists and the interventionists do. An incubation is always also an inquiry into the transformative, descriptive and interventionist capacities of different methods, objects and ways of working. An incubation accepts that each kind of pan will have an influence on the end result, and that for different kinds of ingredients we need different kinds of pans.

3. Add a Good Dose of Pressure

All participants in an incubation, including the researchers, have to be brought into a situation in which they act differently than they would under normal circumstances. Since incubations need to bring different kinds of realities together, such pressure also helps to erase and redistribute status differences among participants. Incubations create their own realities that facilitate the creation of new products and new forms of interaction that would otherwise not exist.

How to create pressure? Among the different ways we have used, the easiest is simply to add objects that act as attractors for interactions that challenge participants. Other forms come simply with the project form of what we do, the fact that there are deadlines and »products« we need to develop with participants. Finally, or more unusually, we often work with laboratory situations in which we create environments, which challenge the participants and ourselves to do certain things. This also involves the creation of affective atmospheres, which may spur emotions ranging from interest or consternation to fear.

The pressure of an incubation is similar to that of a pressure cooker: it *transforms and softens* the materials inside the incubation. Hardened positions, worldviews and bodily practices stabilised by habitus are softened and opened up to collective transformation.

Incubations do not produce pressure on the participants because we oppose their views, even if they may politically be opposed to ours. We create pressure on all of the involved, including ourselves, to produce new situations and new solutions to commonly perceived problems.

4. Mix Ingredients

The central part of an incubation is the bringing together and mixing of various ingredients. From the beginning, one should not worry about the measurements. You are off to a good start if you can identify some ingredients, and have an approximate idea about how to mix them together. By ingredients we mean anything and everything, from scientific theories and methods, to different practices, objects, and ways of speaking and seeing the world.

An incubation is therefore never the application of a theory to an object. Incubations become impossible If ›actor-network theory‹ is applied

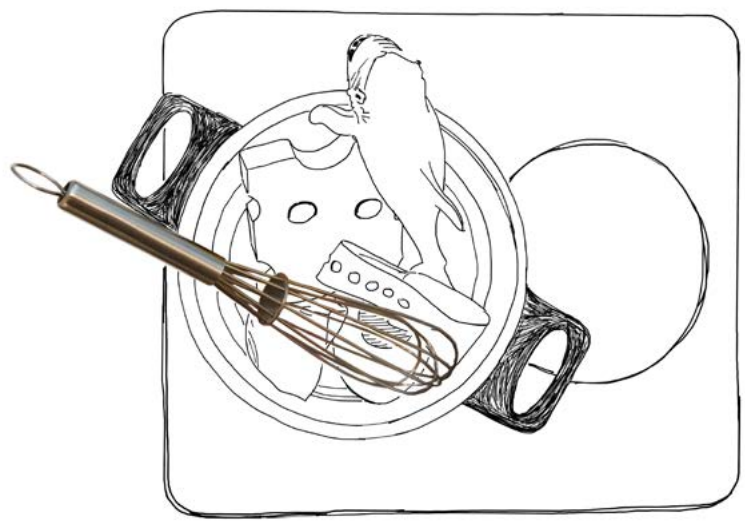
to ›housing in France‹. Such an understanding already starts from a disciplinary framework that subsumes an object under appropriate theories and methods. The theories and methods become distancing devices that keep ingredients at bay. In incubations, theories and methods are used as ingredients and mixed together to become one dish. By mixing ingredients during incubations it is sometimes not easy to understand to which reality one is contributing. Oscillations between different ways of speaking and seeing may become cumbersome, since these oscillations put ones own worldviews to the test.

This mixing of ingredients and the fact of having an increased set of options for action does not imply that it necessarily results in a ›positive‹ course of events, or that it unequivocally ›empowers‹ an actor, but it does weaken the excluding and disqualifying effects of an impoverished version of reality. To find ›good options‹ means to stay in the kitchen and try out various recipes.

5. Use Leftovers

As every cook knows, it is easy to placate eaters by throwing together some first class beef fillet and truffles. It is far more difficult to work with the half portion of moussaka from the day before, the two carrots forgotten in the fridge and the spoonful of mustard left in the jar. To work creatively with leftovers is not merely a matter of household economics, but also of creativity. Scarcity spurs creativity.

The same is true for incubations. They start from the assumption that specific (sub) disci-

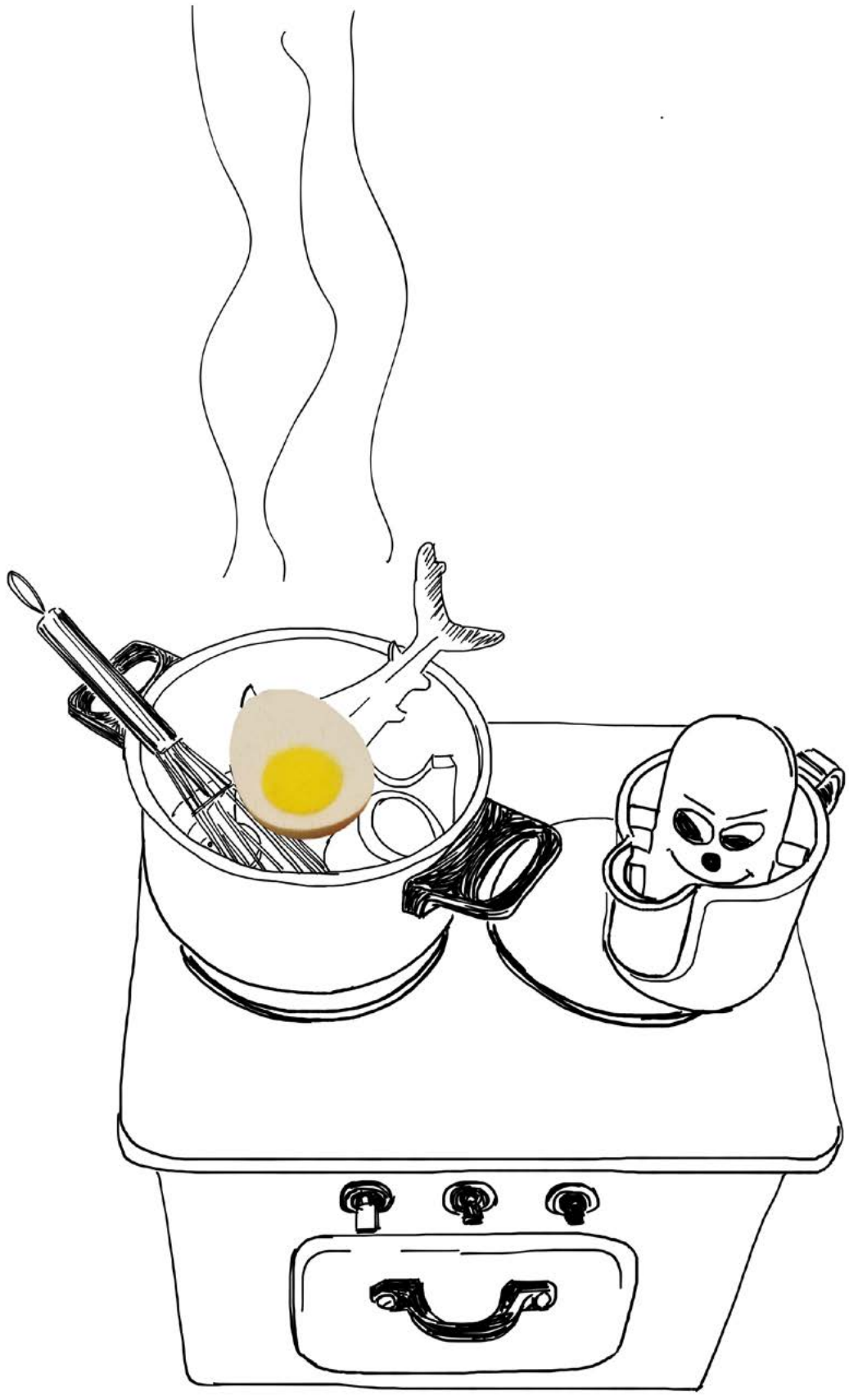


plines, with their small repertoire of methods (interviewing, observation, discourse analysis), unnecessarily limit what is needed in a project. This crucially includes methods and ways of world-making that are not a part of the canon of either the arts or the social sciences.

6. Let the Incubation Macerate

We have already mentioned the softening of materials, worldviews and relationships through pressure. Another ingredient required to achieve this during an incubation is the process of maceration: stay in the field and take your time, try to hang around and lo(o)se your aims for a while. Maceration means not being scared or worried about not fulfilling your work plan or goals. Circumstances that often are considered as ineffective or detrimental, »serendipitous« in Robert Merton’s famous phrase, can lead to surprising situations.[6]

The word ›to macerate‹ describes processes of more or less well-controlled degradation, transformation and blending of components. Its linguistic root is ›maceria‹ – the garden wall made from kneaded clay. To macerate means to be patient and suspend creativity but nevertheless staying in a mode of attentiveness



and passionate repetition, as it is the case with the kneading of dough or with the occasional stirring of a stew.

7. Taste Frequently and Develop Adequate Consumption Situations

In German there is a saying: »was der Bauer nicht kennt, frisst er nicht«: What the farmer does not know, he does not eat. This is not simply a sociological statement about how specific social groups exhibit conservative tastes, but it is also an epistemological proposition that things that are difficult to

classify are difficult to judge and are therefore often simply ignored.

Some people are used to eating alphabet soup. They do not know how to judge stews with unknown ingredients that do not fit their taste experiences. If something comes as a stew mixed with letters, then only the letters in the stew are subject to judgment. The situation becomes even more difficult in the cases where there are no letters at all, as in the case of incubations that are presented to an either purely academic or artistic audience: the audience has to decide whether to appreciate an image, a comic, an ethnographic excerpt, a video fragment or a drawing. This problem is also prominent in the context of art universities and the debate about ›artistic research‹, with the question of how to measure the quality, or ›the taste‹, of a doctoral thesis that is not presented as an academic text.[7]

As we have experienced over and over again, a central effect of an incubation is the reaction by others, which are often rather predictable: In doing incubations one ends up being labelled as a clown or a stranger. The labelling as a clown or a stranger results from a lack of development and differentiation of taste, which in turn is linked to the media used. We have come to understand that it is often easier for others to approach our work if it is already framed as strange and a kind of ›theatre‹, a role-play, and meant to be taken only half seriously. This is both a threat to the integrity of, but also a help to, the life of the incubation. It is a threat, because even though many of our incubations are also intended to be fun and we are not always taken seriously, we are obviously engaged in the art of scholarship and moreover our projects usually tackle very ›heavy‹ themes. But to be labelled as a stranger or a clown is also an opportunity, because it opens a field, and it allows us to do things that otherwise would never happen.

8. Expiry Date: When and How to Stop

Even if a stew has to cook for a very long time at some point, before it starts to burn or the ingredients all melt together into an inedible sludge, it must be eaten. It is of crucial importance to find the point in time at which to stop, when the ingredients' culinary qualities have mingled together, but are still somewhat individually discernible in colour and texture. In theory, the same is true with incubations. But there is a problem: although it is often clear who initiated an incubation, the image of the master chef who seasons to taste with salt and pepper and then, at the perfect moment, withdraws the stew from the flame is wrong. This is because, in an incubation, the master chef herself is part, so to speak, of the stew and thus can merely

influence the stopping of the cooking process. But her vote for cessation may be overruled – what if the other ingredients, humans or artefacts want to continue? What if she wants to continue the incubation that the ›co-ingredients‹ have already stopped?

Typically, different from the work of professions, an incubation is a project limited in time and not an ongoing work. It is not the goal to become a social worker or a nurse, and it is not a goal to turn physicians into sociologists, or anthropologists into artists, or artists into zool-

ogists (although during incubations this is not impossible and happens from time to time). At some point, the incubation has to stop, without betraying the incubation process.

At this point, we provide only one criterion that may answer the question when to stop an incubation: an incubation stops as soon as those who take part, lose sight of, or give up, their research questions. It may also be brought to an end when new questions come to the fore. This criterion gives incubation an artistic flavour, because a question-driven work temporarily gives way to more ambivalent and not determined ways of reasoning, perceiving, creating and living.

An incubation ends not with a description and not with a political statement of hope. It does not end with a description, because this description, which is always also one product or result of an incubation, is merely a preliminary form of representing what happened during the incubation. It also does not end with a political statement, because an incubation has not been set up with a given goal that could have been achieved or alleviated.

Rather, an incubation ends when a situation has been intervened in and represented in such a way that it is reordered. It ends when everybody involved has been shaken and something new is experienced, when everyone has been changed and views the situation from different angles, and when a representation for these new angles has been found. An incubation ends when new structures emerge from within the situation and those involved do not need the incubation anymore to understand and to find their way through these new situations. An incubation ends when those involved need their own space outside of the incubation to enable a better understanding and reordering of the situation. An incubation also ends when a representation, an object, or a space has been created that, at least for the moment, is sufficient to describe and explain the re-ordering of the situation.

Disclaimer: When Not to Use Incubations

Talking of a recipe may imply that using incubations is without danger. But as with many other substances and technologies, the differences between food and drugs, between cure and poison, are blurry and depend on context. As with any other powerful technologies, there are risks and side effects inherent in the use of incubations. There are also many conditions for which the use of an incubation is dangerous. It may seem from the above that incubations are the solutions to all problems for cultural analysis as intervention. But incubations are fraught with problems and these should not be omitted.

Apart from the organisational, reputational and practical difficulties, as related throughout this text, incubations are also not very helpful on a number of occasions. Incubations are needed when situations appear to be stuck in routines, and when ›more of the same‹ would not help to produce particular outcomes. We have plenty of ethnographies of experts; we do not need another one to understand that expertise is situated. We have plenty of studies that demonstrate the discrimination of particular individuals and groups, and we know how such situations are constructed and made to exert their power.

Here, incubations are the perfect means to translate a situation and to come up with new forms of describing and representing such situations. However, if a phenomenon is new, unknown and of a large scale and we need to get an overview, an incubation is of little help.

Incubations work best when applied to stable and continuous situations, involving persons who know what they want, and to organisations that function smoothly, but run the danger of getting stuck in routines that defer innovation. Here incubations can create new translations and transformations that allow for enlightenment and serendipity. If a situation, an organisation or the persons involved are highly unstable, an incubation is of little help. If we are confronted with a social dispute and one side needs help in the form of arguments (textual, visual or otherwise) to win, an incubation operates as a detour and may merely mess things up. If a situation is very fraught with internal and unresolved difficulties, an incubation is probably the wrong intervention. Finally, an incubation is not a mediation or a form of therapy, and incubators are not mediators or arbiters for conflicts. The use of incubations happens at your own risk. But don't be scared of it.

Hyperlinks to projects used by the authors to develop the previous text:

1. Goodbye tomato - good morning rice (1999-2002) (B. K., J. K. with Isabel Warner)
2. Topography of the Possible - What is a Person/a Body? (2003-2007) and Pillow Research (2008-) (B.K., J.K., with G. Ramsebner, L. Peschta and Isabel Warner)
3. Office for Scientific Flotsam and Jetsam/ Researchers Without Borders (2005-)
4. Who with Whom. Inheritance in Action (2006)
5. Gene Doping. A difference that makes a difference (2006)
6. Straight from the Heart. Prevention Indices and Divinations of Researchers (2008)
7. From Spinach to Brain (and other sensory and cooking research projects) (2008) (MG with Florian Keller)
8. "In the event of …". Anticipatory and participatory politics of emergency provision. (2010 - 2013): www.sharedinc.eu/SI/2010_2013.html

Related content

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sitting between chairs: the role of the creative practitioners in 9ub by Alison Rooke and Christian von Wissel

Endnotes

1 The analogy with cooking is well tested within STS and specifically the discussion about interventionist STS. See: Collins, HM. 1996. ›In praise of futile gestures: How scientific is the sociology of scientific knowledge?‹, Social Studies of Science, 26 (Special Issue on ›The politics of SSK: Neutrality, commitment and beyond‹): 229-244; and Richards, E. & Ashmore, M. 1996. ›More sauce please! The politics of SSK: Neutrality, commitment and beyond‹, Social Studies of Science, 26 (2): 219.

2 Hacking, I. 1983. Representing and intervening. Introductory topics in the philosophy of natural science, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

3 Zuiderent-Jerak, T & Jensen, CB. 2007. ›Unpacking »Intervention« in science and technology studies‹, Science as Culture, 16(3): 227-235; and Vikkelsø, S. 2007. ›Description as intervention: Engagement and resistance in actor- network analyses‹, Science as Culture, 16 (3): 297-309.

4 For a clear statement of this link see: Hamlett, PW. 2003. ‘Technology Theory and Deliberative Democracy’, Science, Technology, & Human Values, 28 (1): 112-140.

5 Latour, B. 2004. ›Why has critique run out of steam? From matters of fact to matters of concern‹, Critical Inquiry, 30 (Winter): 226-248.

6 Merton, RK. 2004. The travels and adventures of serendipity. A study in sociological semantics and the sociology of science. (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

7 Lesage, D. 2009. ›Dieter Lesage: A portrait of the artist as a researcher‹: http://summit.kein.org/book/export/html/233, accessed 15/02/2010.

the correlation between public open space activation and safety perceptions:

two case studies of local neighbourhood parks in atteridgeville, city of tshwane, south africa

By Ndimphiwe Jamile

Introduction

This article will present the findings of research carried out within a township in the City of Tshwane in South Africa. The research looked at the users' and pedestrians' perceptions of safety in public open spaces in Atteridgeville, a township within the City of Tshwane. The City of Tshwane has several historically marginalised communities, called townships. These dormitory settlements were planned by the apartheid regime government who created separate settlements for black people. They were envisaged as environments with sub-standard levels of living that were demeaning to say the least, lacking quality public spaces to provide a sense of dignity for inhabitants. A noticeable current disparity of public space quality is evident when the townships are compared to the public spaces available to the more developed areas of the City of Tshwane. Provision of good public open spaces that are perceived to be safe by the users' is important in re-addressing the disparities of the past, as it re-installs a sense of dignity to people. In evaluating public open spaces within townships, the question of safety is put forward to determine the condition from the users' and pedestrians' perceptions. This evaluation is conducted in two separate public open spaces within a township as a case study. The main questions addressed in this research are; to understand how people use public spaces and what their perceptions related to their safety in these public open spaces are? How do user's & pedestrians relate to public open space? Through understanding these perceptions, it is possible to isolate pertinent issues as considerations for future programmes and initiatives that focus on the development of public open spaces of similar settlements.

Research methodology

Before presenting findings, it is prudent to provide definitions of several relevant keywords, namely ›public space‹ and ›safety‹. Thereafter a theoretical argument that presents the perspective of the paper will be elaborated. This sub-section will conclude by describing the employed method of data collection for the study.

Public space

One of the most important attributes that defines public space is ownership and accessibility to the general public. Altman & Zube define the concept of ›public space‹ in the context of urban environments as places and spaces that are accessible, have necessary facilities and cater for different users of different age groups.[1] More important than spatial qualities, Mark Francis provides for a more subjective view that:

»Public spaces are participatory landscapes. Through human action, visual involvement, and the attachment of values, people are indirectly involved in public spaces. People claim spaces through feelings and actions«.[2]

This explanation provides a more innate relationship that exists between people and public space. It can also be proclaimed that the main common denominator of public spaces is that they serve the general public inclusively. Looking at the significance of public space, it is often intended to »engage children in informal, experiential learning through play and shared experiences with peers, laying the foundation for effective formal education«.[3] On the other hand, the American Planning Association has argued that green spaces are settings for frequent, informal interaction among neighbours that nurtures the formation of neighbourhood social ties«.[4] Thus it is of pertinence to elevate the issue of public space as a public resource, capable of serving more than aesthetic qualities. It is therefore possible to see public open spaces as an important community asset due to the social qualities that it serves.

Safety

Safety is an important aspect of any public space, as people generally enjoy using public spaces that are deemed safe. Safety«can mean many things, in the case of this paper; ›safety‹ is defined as:

»… the state of an area [that] is determined based on the real and perceived risk of victimisations…. (Prevalence of violence and crime)«.[5]

Looking at safety, particularly, in public space, there have been many attempts to define what makes public spaces safe. Jane Jacobs has been one of the leading proponents of theory, who professed on a multitude of activities in

public space, carried out by a diverse number of people to be the key factor(s) that determines safety. Jacobs's assertion is that people's control over space is one of the most important factors that determine safety and usage.

»Public peace in cities is not kept by the police, but it is maintained by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves«.[6]

However it is important to also clarify that control is manifested in many ways. It can be positive or negative, restricting or enabling. Control is related to presence, use and action, appropriation, modification and disposition. Francis on the other hand believes that a strong attribute of people feeling safe is attributed to »an ability to feel a sense of control over a spaces…«.[7]

Jacobs makes an argument on controls and standards that are enforced by people themselves as the key ingredient that determines safety. From this statement, the argument is based on users as important components of ›public peace‹. Jacobs' statement supports the notion that when people have vested interest in the public spaces they use, and take initiatives of guardianship of public space, they make public space safer. The theoretical extracts put forward in this paper, elaborate the relationship between public space and people that results in public space that is deemed to be safe. Therefore the research looks to validate the theoretical proponents; diverse activity (usage) and controls as key factors in this research. It will also look to these proponents to guide the research to understanding how people use and perceive safety in active public open spaces. In summary, these explanations show how safety is not dependent on a singular factor, but on a multitude of factors, such as place, people's relation to place and the activities conducted within that place. For this study, the people's relation to public space, public activities and spatial condition are important factors to look at.

In the next section, a methodology to evaluate this relations between people and public space will be discussed to better understand and evaluate these factors.

Methodology

The research has employed the Environmental Psychological perspective, as a study popularly used to evaluate the relationship between people and their environment. For the purpose of this study a Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) method has been adopted to assess the behaviour of humans as their built environments (buildings) affect it. Advances made in

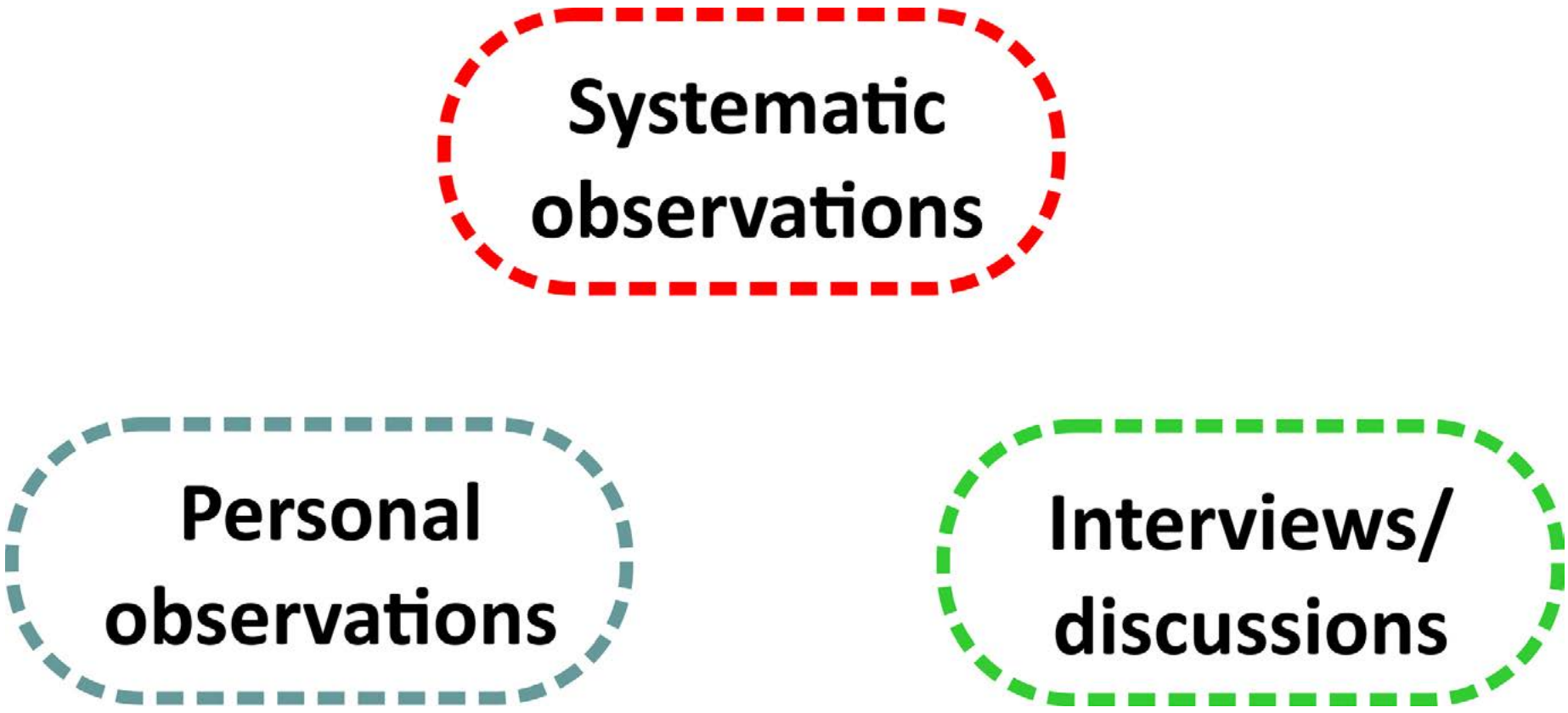


FIGURE 1: METHOD

POE research have made it possible to assess exterior spaces such as parks for better comprehension of transactional processes and relationships between people and public spaces.

Figure 1 diagram shows the mixed methods of data collection that used for the research. The research utilises qualitative methods of collecting data in order to get varied perspectives on the phenomena investigated. Therefore a mixed method of data collection from various social science disciplines allows for analysing of information from different perspectives.

A conceptual framework is constructed from the environmental perspective that explores transactions or relationships between people and the environment. The frame proposes three components of public space, set as boundaries to review within the inquiry. These components are stated as users, public space condition and activities conducted within the space.

A. Case studies

Atteridgeville was developed in 1939 as a ›model town‹ to separate black people into isolated settlements. This separation was a direct

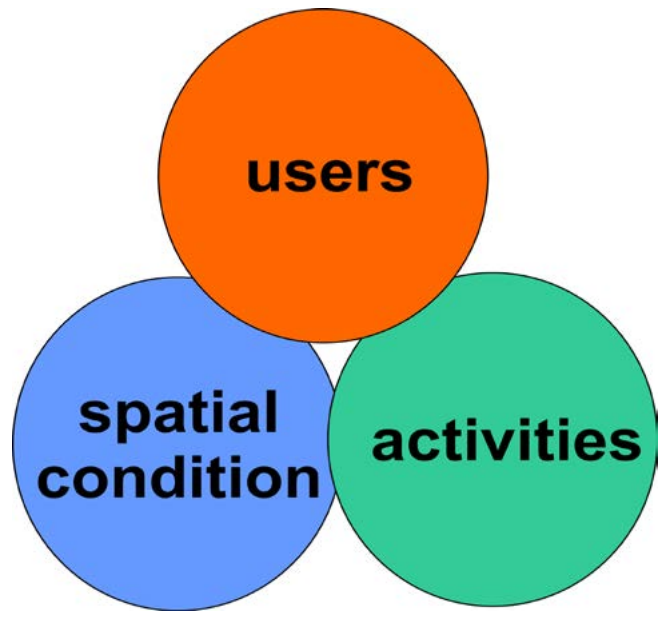
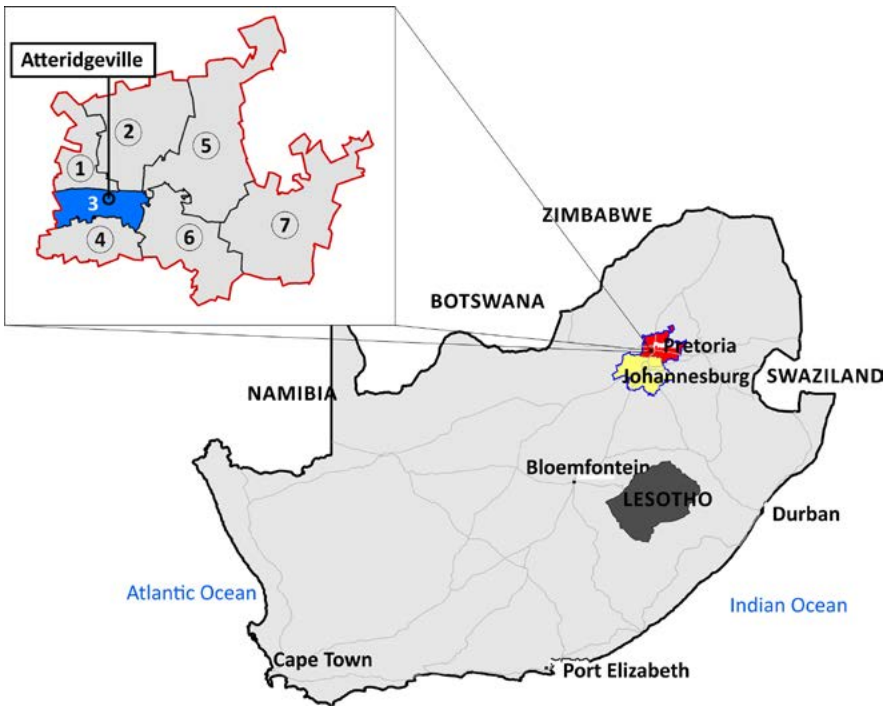


FIGURE 2: COMPONENTS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE



manifestation of the then rampant social segregation laws, such as the Slum Acts, established during the apartheid regime. As Van der Wall has noted, during this time, »Families were uprooted when the Slums Areas Act of 1934 allowed the City Council to clean up Marabastad and Bantule [areas within the city of Tshwane (formerly Pretoria)], and numerous informal settlements around the city«.[8] Figure 3 indicates, Zone 3, of which Atteridgville falls under in the city's regional boundary divisions. For the purpose of the study only public open spaces within Atteridgeville (as indicated in figure 3) were selected. The two selected sites are situated within the central part of Atteridgeville. These are Seeiso Park (assigned number 1_figure 4) and Kalafong Heights Park (assigned number 6_figure 4). Seeiso Park is a vibrant public open space along one of the more busy streets; Seeiso Street (see figure 4). This park is within the older neighbourhood, and is landmarked by the old Methodist Church

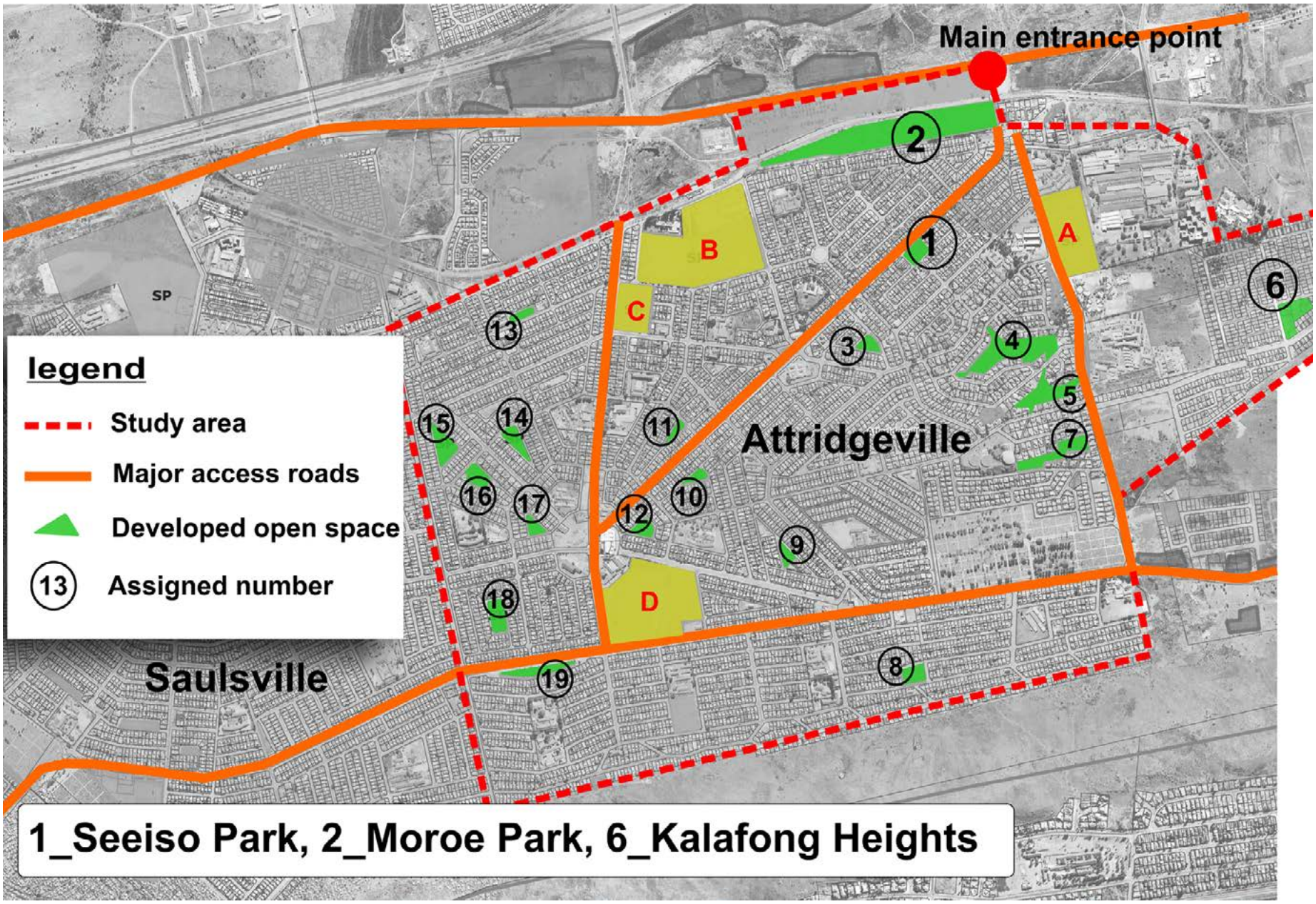


FIGURE 4: PUBLIC OPEN SPACES NETWORKS ANALYSIS

that towers above the space. Built in 1946, the church represents the architectural typology of the time, with this robust looking red face brick structures. The second park is situated in what seems to be a newer middle class residential development of Kalafong Heights adjacent to Kalafong Hospital. The distinctions that were observed within these two spaces were related to the type of activity experienced and ambient character of the spaces. Seeiso Park is poor in terms of spatial quality, but has diverse activities that likely contributes to an assortment of informal and formal trade activity around the edges, whereas Kalafong Heights has a predominantly residential character, with the spatial quality that is superior to the latter. The hub of activities within this park is linked to the spatial quality, as it was designed for multi-activity generators meant to stimulate people activity at all times. What was clearly observed is that stimulation in this park is directly related to the activity generators within the space. The high activity periods, between morning and afternoon were noticeably related to the provided gym and play areas of the park. (See figures 5, 6 & 7).

B. Research findings (synthesis)

In this section, an overall assessment of current spatial conditions within the study area will be elaborated. This will be followed by a synthesis of observations and interviews conducted within the two case studies.

Prior to an in-depth evaluation of the two cases, an analysis was done of all identified public open spaces within the study area. The emphasis on the analysis was based on identifying whether all the public open spaces were developed to meet their intended purpose.[9] More importantly, these public open spaces were evaluated to see if they were provided with the basic public amenities (I.e. lighting, seating, play equipment) that are necessary for the public to enjoy their usage. Issues of lighting were of outmost importance as it is a key factor for better surveillance at night time. A brief windscreen survey was conducted to identify all the designated public open spaces as defined by the Local Open Space Plan (LOSP) of Atteridgeville. The evaluation used the Local Open Space Plan as a guide to understanding how each space is identified and defined by the LOSP as a local spatial framework plan.
It is also noted that, a strategy to make public spaces safe has been documented, by the City of Tshwane. The three pronged strategy based on the ›situational approach‹ focuses on design and planning, maintenance, development and implementation of public open spaces. The strategy elevates the importance of the following issues that must be addressed for safety: »Surveillance, high activity spaces, clear sightlines, and lighting. For 24 hour period, provision of ablutions facilities, signage, and landscaping«.[10] The strategy makes clear assertions on what needs to be done to make public spaces safer. However in the actual physical spaces those assertions were not aligned with the strategy. From the observations received, it was clear that the strategy is not yet operational, as most public spaces were provided with totally inadequate amenities (no seating, no play equipment, no lighting etc). From this process of inquiry, it has become evident that more has to be done to bridge the gap between the strategies and the actual public open space conditions.

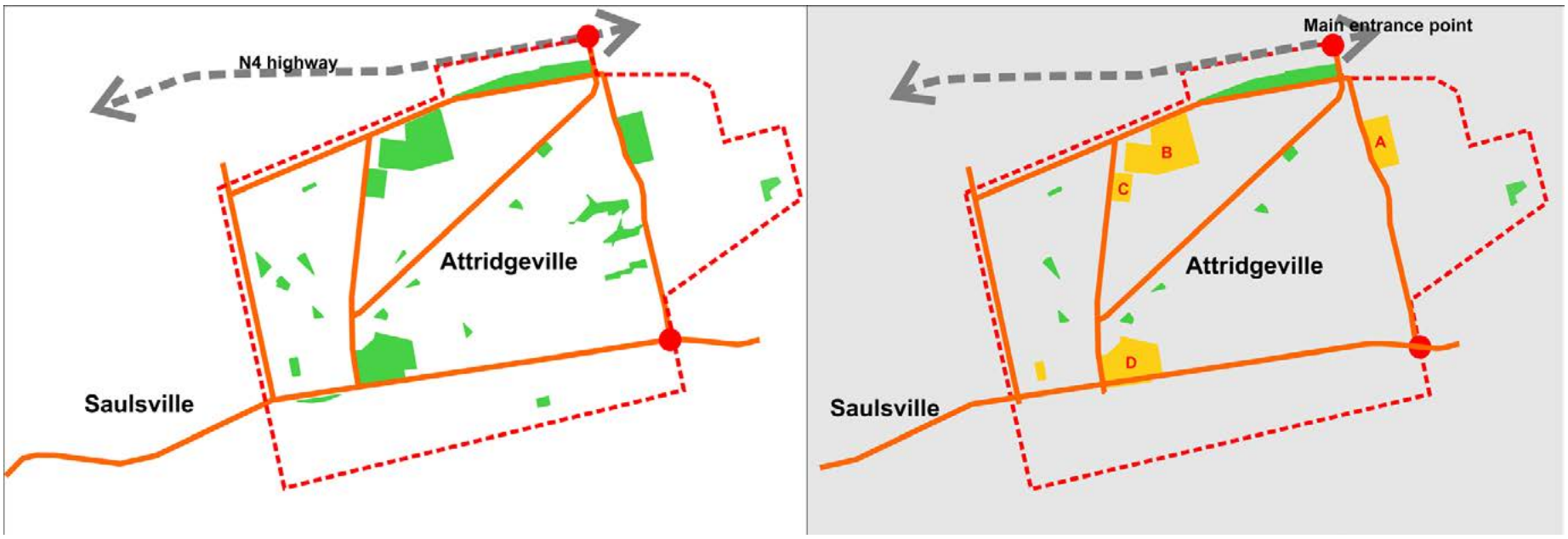


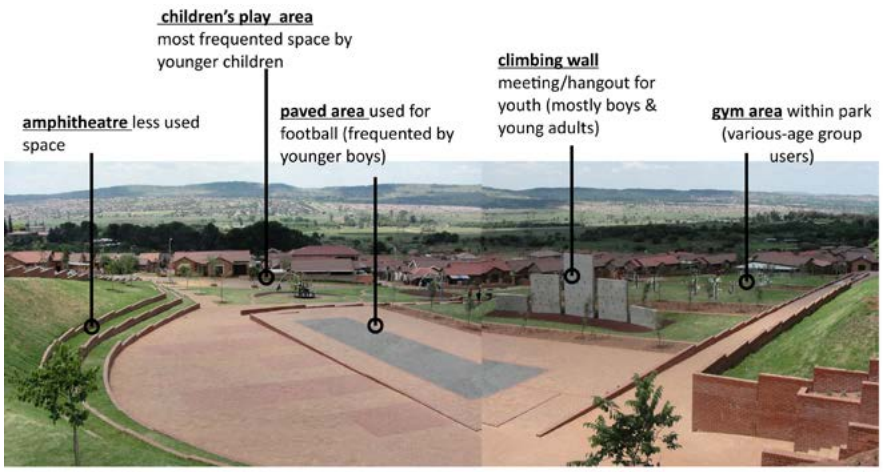
FIGURE 5: PUBLIC OPEN SPACES NETWORK ANALYSIS

Overall Critique on public open spaces quality

The two maps (see figure 5), represent the findings of the overall analysis of public open spaces conditions within the study area. Map 1 shows the overall identified public open spaces within the LOSP. Map 2 therefore presents a disparity of spatial quality within the study area, based on set criteria that looked at quality of public space in terms of provision of public amenities. As a result, Map 2 shows only the public open spaces that met the criteria, meaning they were considered to be sufficiently provided with amenities. This observation formed much of the critique of the spatial quality of public spaces viewed. Thus map 2 of figure 5 was an attempt to document those spaces, which were evaluated according to their level of development (the provision of facilities and capability to be fully used by the public for intended purposes).

Another factor that was observed in relation to the public open spaces (numbered a, b, c, d on the map) is the issue of accessibility. Most of these spaces were not accessible as they were fenced off and locked off from the public. There are many reasons related to the fencing of public open spaces (including prevention of appropriation of spaces by taxis, informal vendors etc), however this poses a challenge as it was observed that youth and other groups in certain instances, are using the recreational parks for sporting activities. Certain challenges posed by the environmental department relate to rapid degradation of public spaces due to high pedestrian traffic and in some cases related to public open spaces such as parks being used for sporting activities. This has however posed a question of adapting public open spaces to cater for a variety of activities (creation of multi-purpose public open spaces). Through discussion with the public office of environmental management, it was revealed that there are ideas to create more multi-purpose parks that could be utilised for different purposes at different times. Currently, these fenced off sports facilities seem to be underutilised, and could be impacting on the over-usage of passive recreational public open spaces. More importantly, public open spaces have to be accessible to

everyone, thus a question has to be put forward on whether these are serving the needs of people on a daily basis.



Kalafong Heights: Predominately residential setting surrounding public open space.

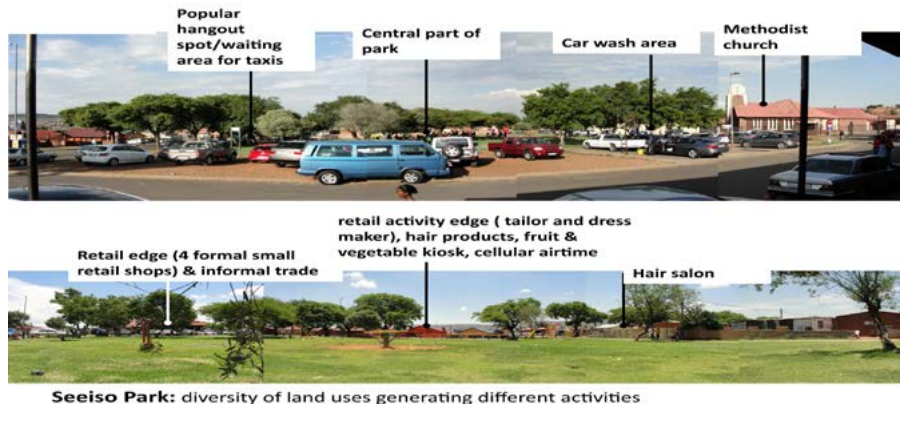
FIGURE 6: OBSERVED ACTIVITIES & USAGE OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

This exercise made it possible to gain a comparative and realistic view of current public open space provision. Through this exercise a contrast of spatial qualities is attained to better understand the spatial inefficiency of quality public open spaces that exists. However the exercise does not reveal how people relate to these spaces and what relationship or transactions are evident in these environments. For the purpose of this study, only two sites were chosen to gain a more in depth analysis of the spatial activity. A series of systematic observations of theses space were conducted to test the usage and perceptions of users and pedestrians. The observations were carried out between three time intervals (morning between 9:30 am & 10:30 am, midday between 12:30 am & 1:30pm, afternoon 3:00pm and 4:00pm).

Observations & Interviews

From the observations, it was noted that Seeiso Park enjoys more continuous activities, supported by a variety of user's as compared to Kalafong Heights, which had mostly activities at sporadic moments and was mainly used by the youth (see figure: 8).

Seeiso Park is regarded as a place of exchange, relief and gathering. The above points were corroborated through both observed activities and interview discussions with participants. Informal activities related to the car wash, the informal trade vendors, the hair salon, the cellular phone airtime vendors were noted as key pull factors of people crisscrossing the space. Besides linkage to monetary trade, there was clear evidence of the social inter-connections that these enterprises have built into the space, as people seem to have created social bonds around it. The informal car wash was noted as a social gathering spot and as a result, this public space has become a point of exchange and reference for many people. It is also important that some of the participants related to their perceived safety due to the ever-present activity and presence of people (informal vendors) – who are thought to be the of the place and also provide a sense of presence related to activity. They seem to appropriate the space for certain activities that give rise to the socially related activities. How-



Seeiso Park: diversity of land uses generating different activities

FIGURE 7: SEEISO PARK PICTURES

ever there were also negative elements associated with a few groups within the park, such as littering, urinating in public and public drinking. Some of these activities were observed from one dominant group that mostly appropriates the central part of the park. (see figure 9).

The samesame, however, cannot be said about the park in Kalafong Heights. The park in Kalafong Heights seems to have sporadic activity that is mainly experienced between specific intervals (before work, after work and after school). The public open space is utilised as a relief space, play space and space for conducting exercise. It was observed that the local community is more vigilant about what activities occur within the park. This was displayed by their self-organisation and efforts that have seen them creating control strategies to curb anti-social or deviant behaviour within the park. This assertion of social control within the neighbourhood is not erratic; but through a self-organised Community Policing Forum (CPF) that manages safety related issues within the park. This was not evident in the discussions or in observations conducted in Seeiso Park. This was also reflected in one of the discussions with a user who resides in close proximity to Seeiso Park, yet chooses to use the park in Kalafong Heights. He stated the following;

»… this park is safer than Seeiso Park. People in this park cannot drink freely in public space«. When probed about this issue, he mentioned that »people in Seeiso Park drink freely, people from the community condone this«.[11]

An explanation or interpretation of the above is related to the relationship of people with public open space. This shows different assertions of custodianship and value by different groups of people in two different spaces.

The other important factor that was evident was that of usage of the space by women. Women in Seeiso Park seem to use the space for shorter periods of time with a few exceptions that were observed whereby a group of young women were seen having a picnic within the park. When compared to their male counterparts, there were clear disparities as to how long they occupied the space. A spatial appropriation of the middle space within the park by a group of males, who conduct different activities such as card games, dice games, and drinking was observed at certain times. Other users somehow perceived this appropriation of space by this group differently. An explanation of this issue was corroborated by a few female participants, who upon discussion, revealed their uneasiness to use the space due to issues related to male domination of space, cleanliness of the space and lack of ablution facilities. In two of the four conversations, the following issues were revealed:

Participant female (1) of the group reflected that she felt partially safe as she sees there being an issue of lack of cleanliness within the park. She was probed about this issue and she responded by stating that there are no toilets and that the park needs more grass and needs to be looked after better.[12]

»No, it is not safe. There are no toilets; people have to ask the owners or residents of surrounding houses to use their toilets while using that park. If you know someone who stays there, then you are lucky.«[13]

There were contrasting views reflected by the women users and non-users in relation to their male counterparts. Women seem to perceive public open spaces as being unsafe as opposed to men. There were however limitations encountered related to access to women users and pedestrians within the public open spaces. This was reflected in the sample (see figures 8 and 9) as a lesser number of women were interviewed in comparison to men.

The study was envisaged to solicit views of actual users of public open space and observe the actual life in said spaces. However it was not always possible to access women users and this issue was related to women's wariness to engaging with a stranger in public space. The same cannot be said about men who were interviewed. The conversations with men were easier to conduct. There were also controversies that were unveiled in the discussions. One of these controversies was linked to the observation that the locals seemed to be condoning public drinking in Seeiso Park (this was corroborated in conversation with respondent_B5M in Kalafong Heights). On the other hand, in Kalafong Heights, the locals seemed to aportion the blame to outsiders, sighting deviant behaviour

FIGURE 8: SAMPLE AND INTERPRETATIONS

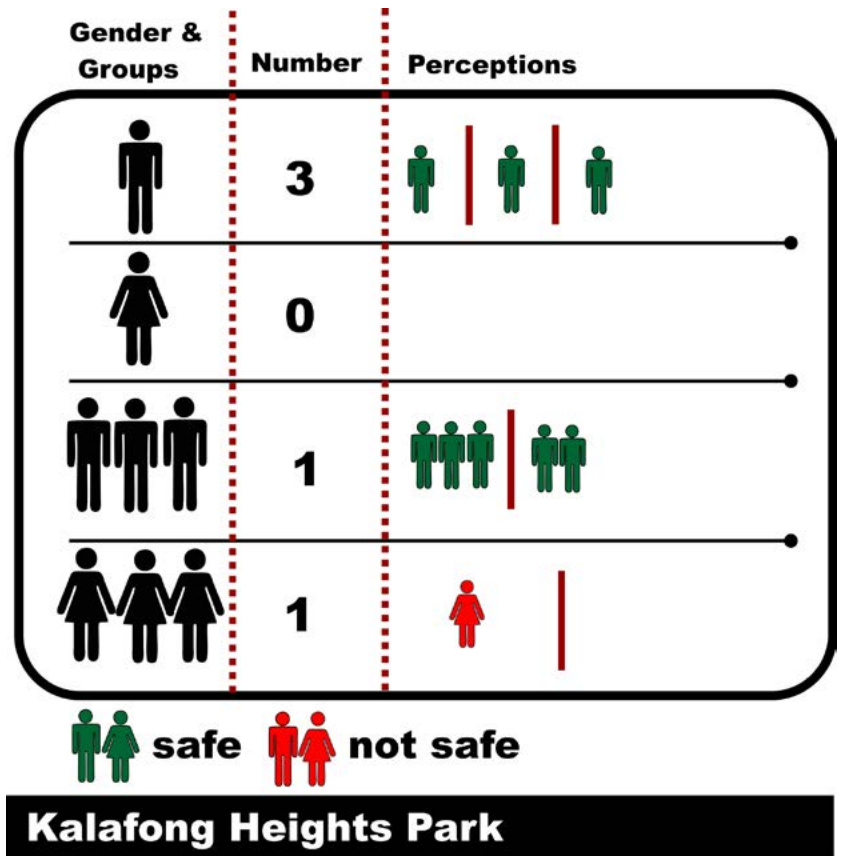


FIGURE 9:SAMPLE AND INTERPRETATIONS

(drug usage and other criminal occurrences), thus concerns have been expressed towards fencing off the park. In Seeiso Park some of the participants revealed their concern with drug related behaviour or activities, whereas in Kalafong Heights it is a more worrying factor for the community and it seemed from the discussion that they are taking steps to control this issue. In Seeiso Park the participants stated their concern, but there was no matching action to this in Kalafong Heights. This was interpreted as the emergence of different ‘standards ‘asserted by the community existing within these two spaces. In one space people seemed to hold a higher regard, hence exerting more ›voluntary controls‹, whereas the same cannot be said about the other space based on observations and discussions.

C. Interpretations of findings

This section will look at interpreting the findings that have been discussed in the previous section. The more important factors that have come out of this study will be summarised to conclude the study. Reviewing the theoretical arguments set out in the earlier section of this paper that emphasise a multitude of activities, carried out by diverse people as the key proponent for safety in public space. This paper concludes in this manner. Firstly it has become more evident through the inquiry that high activity in public space is perhaps not directly translated to overall perceptions of people feeling safe in public spaces. This means that people are not necessarily taking voluntary controls over public open space on the basis of its existence, but rather, on the basis of a mutual relationship with the public open space. This mutual relationship is strongly supported by accessibility to a certain quality of public open space. Figure 10 illustrates summarised findings of what was observed in the two public open spaces and portrays a comparison of how the voluntary controls were not aligned with high activity as the theory supposes. Secondly, it is clear that perceptions of safety across the gender barrier are different and appropriation and usage is also different. However this question in this research has been linked to the appropriation and control of space by male figures. The limitations of the research must be noted as in-depth reasons related to the lesser usage and appropriation of the space by females was not possible to fully ascertain.

D. Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to look at the perceptions of safety within two public open spaces within Atteridgeville. The evaluation of a few selected public open spaces was an effort towards understanding the perceptions of users’

and pedestrians in order to isolate pertinent issues as considerations for future programms and initiatives that focus on the development of public open spaces. The research therefore offers the following recommendations that could be taken into consideration on the subject of safety perceptions in public spaces, especially within similar contexts. One of those considerations is that perceptual views of public open space by female users and a wider pedestrians' perspective need more understanding. It was observed through the study that in both public open spaces, youth are the highest users of the spaces. This is important for future projects that seek to develop inclusive public spaces with particular attention to youth and other groups as likely user candidates. It is perhaps an important reflection as to who should be engaged in the process of developing these spaces. It is important to also state that although Jane Jacobs' theory has been at the forefront in promoting the relation of diversity of activities in public space being linked to people feeling safe, it must be extended to acknowledge that provision of quality public space is also pertinent. In this case, it is evident that although people are criss-crossing public space due to a series of enterprises being present, this does not necessarily relate to all people being able to feel safe. We perhaps have to shift concerns from what is within public spaces (trees, grass etc.) to what happens in public spaces (social activities established by people's interests). As stated before, public spaces are participatory spaces and are constructed by what people do within the space. Public space as a participatory place must be developed and managed with the understanding of all users' needs. Strategies and policies aimed at addressing issues of safety within public space need to respond more to users' needs rather than a predetermined list of ideas that are deemed by officials to suit the public. It is local users and pedestrians who can fully engage in guardianship of their public spaces, but only when these public spaces are catered for in accordance with their needs and wants.

Criteria	Kalafong	Seeiso
Activity	Sporadic	High + continious
Spatial quality	Good	Poor
Activity generator	Public amenities (variety)	Land use + Surrounding enterprises
Voluntary control	Higher	Lower

FIGURE 10: FINDINGS

Endnotes

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8 Van der Waal, G-M. 1999. Local open space plan for Atteridgeville and Saulsville. (Pretoria: City Council of Pretoria), p.1

9 Typically cater to the recreational needs and interests of the residents living within the immediate vicinity and generally comprise of municipal or privately maintained parks and small scale formalized (lit) sport facilities. City of Tshwane. 2005. Proposed Tshwane Open Space Framework: Volume 1. Pretoria: City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality.

10 City of Tshwane. 2005. Proposed Tshwane Open Space Framework: Volume 3: Pretoria: City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality: 37

11 Male participant_B5M, resides close to Seeiso Park.

12 Interview with respondent in Seeiso Park (Female respondent_A4F, 2013).

13 Interview with respondent in Seeiso Park (Female respondent_A6F, 2013).

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artistic research: unfinished thinking in and through art

By Henk Borgdorff

Introduction

This article examines artistic research as a form of knowledge production. It will conclude, however, by saying that artistic research seeks not so much to make explicit the knowledge that art is said to produce, but rather to provide a specific articulation of the pre-reflective, non-conceptual content of art. It thereby invites ›unfinished thinking‹. Hence, it is not formal knowledge that is the subject matter of artistic research, but thinking in, through and with art.[1]

Affinities and differences to other academic research traditions Artistic research has both historical and systematic affinities to a range of philosophical and scientific research traditions. A historiography of artistic research (which remains to be undertaken) might show that, from the Renaissance to the Bauhaus, there has always been research conducted in and through artistic practices.

The domain of art has long been interlaced with that of academia, from the practice of the artes in the late medieval monastery schools right up to today's postmodern farewell to the separation between the life domains of art, knowledge and morality that have characterised modernity since the 18th century. In the current discourse on art, the realm of the aesthetic has reconnected with the epistemic and the ethical. The emergence of artistic research is consistent with this movement to no longer subordinate the faculties of the human mind to one another, either theoretically or institutionally.

On the contemporary research agenda at the interface of phenomenology, cognitive sciences and philosophy of the mind, we now encounter a theme that is also central to artistic research: non-conceptual knowledge and experience as embodied in practices and products. I shall now make a series of comparisons between artistic research and research in the humanities (cultural and arts studies in particular), philosophical aesthetics, qualitative social science research, and technology and natural science research.

Humanities

There is a self-evident kinship between artistic research and the research in musicology, art history, theatre and dance studies, comparative literature, architectural theory, and moving image and new media studies, as well as the research in cultural studies or sociology of the arts. In all such academic disciplines or programmes, art (the art world, art practice, artworks) is the subject of systematic or historical research. A wide array of conceptual frameworks, theoretical perspectives and research strategies are employed, which one might summarise with the umbrella term ›grand theories of our culture‹, among them hermeneutics, structuralism, semiotics, deconstruction, prag-

matism, critical theory, cultural analysis. To study its research objects, each such approach has its own specific instruments available – iconography, musical analysis, source studies, ethnomethodology, actor-network theory.

Important for a comparison with artistic research is that those frameworks, perspectives and strategies generally approach the arts with a certain theoretical distance. That is even true of fields like hermeneutics, which acknowledge that the horizons of the interpreter and the interpreted may temporarily merge, or cultural analysis, where theory may be seen as a discourse that »that can be brought to bear on the object at the same time as the object can be brought to bear on it«.[2] Obviously the dividing lines cannot always be clearly drawn, and any delimitations will always be partly artificial. In the research agendas just mentioned, however, the interpretive, verbally discursive approach appears to prevail above research strategies that are more practice-imbued. And precisely here lies a characteristic feature of artistic research: the experimental practice of creating and performing pervades the research at every turn. In this respect, artistic research has more in common with technical design research or with participatory action research than with research in the humanities.

The kinship with the humanities is often reflected in institutional proximity. Research centres, research groups and individual researchers that engage in practice-based research in the arts are often accommodated in arts and humanities faculties and departments. Outside the traditional universities, at professional schools of the arts, artistic research can develop more freely, although here, too, it may be accommodated in a separate department for art theory and/or cultural studies. The prime focus in artistic research is on concrete creative practice. The research aims to make a substantial, preferably cutting-edge contribution to the development of that practice – a practice that is just as much saturated with histories, beliefs and theories as it is based on skillful expert action and tacit understanding.

Aesthetics

A rich source for the artistic research programme is philosophical aesthetics, which has studied the non-conceptual knowledge embodied in art since the 18th century. I will highlight three examples from this tradition: the liberation of sensory knowledge in Baumgarten, the cultural value of the aesthetic idea in Kant, and the epistemic character of art in Adorno.[3]

Alexander Baumgarten called it analogon rationis: the ability of the human mind, analogous to reason, to obtain clear, but purely sensory, knowledge about reality. Great art is preeminently capable of manifesting that perfect sensory knowledge. In our context, the significance of Baumgarten's views lies in his accentuation of the sensory, experiential knowledge component in artistic research.[4] In post-Baumgarten art research and aesthetics, the links to epistemology and perception became less prominent. The theme of sensory, non-discursive knowledge has regained currency in our times in research taking an embedded, enacted and embodied approach to mind and perception.[5]

Immanuel Kant‘s critical investigation of what today is called the non-conceptual content of aesthetic experience culminated in his legendary articulation of the aesthetic idea as a »representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, namely concept, being adequate to it, and which language, consequently, can never get quite on level terms with or render completely intelligible«.[6] Kant assigned greater cultural significance to this non-conceptual realm of the artistic, which in Baumgarten had remained limited to sensory knowledge. Characteristic of artistic products, processes and experiences is that – in and through the materiality of the medium – something is presented which transcends materiality. Artistic research focuses both on the materiality of art – to the extent that this makes the immaterial possible – and on the immateriality of the art – to the extent that this is embedded in the art world, enacted in creative processes and embodied in the artistic material.

For Kant, art judgment surpasses taste or aesthetic judgment, because it focuses on the cultural value of artworks as well as on their beauty. That cultural value lies in their capacity to »leave [something] over for reflection« and to »dispose ... the spirit to Ideas«.[7] This is the quality through which art gives food for thought and distinguishes itself from a mere aesthetic gratification of the senses. The content of the aesthetic experience is identified more specifically here as that which brings thinking into motion, as it were, or as that which invites reflection. Artistic practices are therefore performative practices, in the sense that artworks and creative processes do something to us, set us in motion, alter our understanding and view of the world, also in a moral sense. We encounter this performative aspect of art in artistic research to the extent that it involves the concrete articulation of what moves and engages us.

The ability of art, as articulated in artistic research, to speak to us is compellingly present in the work of Theodor W. Adorno. Here, the cultural value of art lies in its »epistemic character« (Erkenntnischarakter), through which art reveals the concealed truth about the dark reality of society. Whereas in Baumgarten the non-conceptual content of art liberates itself from explicit rational knowledge, and whereas in Kant the non-conceptual aesthetic content invites us to reflection, Adorno assigns this content an even more potent and critical valence as the only thing that is capable – because it is antithetical to societal reality – of keeping alive the utopian perspective of a better world, and of recalling the original (albeit broken) promise of happiness. As no one after him, Adorno thought through art’s engagement with the world and with our lives.

Art’s epistemic character resides in its ability to offer the very reflection on who we are, on where we stand, that is obscured from sight by the discursive and conceptual procedures of scientific rationality. Noteworthy in Adorno is that thoughts and concepts are still always needed – thoughts and concepts which, as it were, assemble themselves around a work of art, in such a way that the art object itself begins to speak under the lingering gaze of the thought.

Social science

In the discourse about knowledge in artistic research, some observers emphasise the types of knowledge acquisition and production that derive from models of natural science explanation, quantitative analysis and empirical logical deduction, which are encountered in the exact sciences, as well as in types of social science that follow natural science methods. Contrasting with this tradition of explanation and deduction is the academic tradition which, especially since the rise of interpretive (verstehende) sociology, seeks to ›understand‹ social and cultural phenomena. In the past hundred years, a qualitative research paradigm, inspired by hermeneutics, has developed, which in many ways gives direction to social science research being done at present. It regards verstehende interpretation and practical participation as more relevant than logical explanation and theoretical distance.

Artistic research shows a certain kinship to some of these research traditions. In ethnographic and action research in particular, strategies have been developed that can be useful to artists in their practice-based research; these include participant observation, performance ethnography, field study, autobiographical narrative, thick description, reflection in action and collaborative inquiry. The often critical and engaged ethnographic research strategy acknowledges the mutual interpenetration of the subjects and objects of field research. It might serve as a model for some types of research in the arts, given that the artist's own practice is the ›field‹ of investigation.

Action research aims at transforming and enhancing practice, and as such it also has affinities with artistic research, as the latter seeks not only to increase knowledge and understanding, but also to further develop artistic practice and enrich the artistic universe with new products and practices. Artistic research is inseparably linked to artistic development. In the intimacy of experimental studio practice, we can recognise the cycle of learning in action research, where research findings give immediate cause for changes and improvements. This is also recognisable in the engaged outreach and impact of the research – artistic research delivers new experiences and insights that bear on the art world and on how we understand and relate to the world and ourselves. Artistic research is therefore not just embedded in artistic and academic contexts, and it focuses not just on what is enacted in creative processes and embodied in art products, but it also engages with who we are and where we stand.

The ›practice turn‹ in the humanities and social sciences not only sheds light on the constitutive role of practices, actions and interactions. Sometimes it even represents a shift from text-centred research to performance-centred research, whereby practices and products themselves become the material-symbolic forms of expression, as opposed to the numerical and verbal forms used by quantitative and qualitative research. Artistic research also fits into this framework, since artistic practices form the core of the research in the methodological sense, as well as part of the material outcome of the research. This broadening of qualitative social science

research to include research in and through art practice has led some observers to argue for a new distinguishing paradigm.[8]

The methodological and epistemological issues of artistic research are also addressed in the key writings relating to arts-based research in the tradition of the Eisner school.[9] In studying the role of art in educational practice and human development, these social scientists use insights from cognitive psychology to argue the importance of artistic-cognitive development of the self, in particular in primary and secondary education.

Science and technology

Art practices are technically mediated practices. Research that focuses on the technical and material side of art in order to improve applications, develop innovative procedures or explore new artistic possibilities can rightly be called applied research. The knowledge obtained in exploratory technological and scientific research is put into practice in artistic procedures and products.

In artistic research, by comparison, art practice is not only the test of the research, but it also plays a critical role methodologically. In other words, as well as generating new or innovative art, the research is conducted in and through the making of art.

Especially in the world of design and architecture, the methodological framework of applied research seems suitable. Many of the training programmes in these fields have strong ties to technical universities, or are even part of them. At first sight, it would seem that one must choose: either an orientation to art or to science, engineering or technology. In practice, though, most design academies and architecture schools aspire to a fruitful combination. ›Research by design‹ is the peer of artistic research; there, too, the debate is still underway about the methodological and epistemological foundations of the research.[10]

An artistic experiment in a studio or atelier cannot simply be equated with a controlled experiment in a laboratory. Nonetheless, in many artistic research studies we can discern an affinity with fields like engineering and technology that use methods and techniques with origins in scientific research. In that case, the empirical cycle of observation, theory and hypothesis development, prediction and testing, and the model of the controlled experiment serve as an ideal type in the often haphazard context of artistic discovery (just as such principles are often applied in empirical social science research as well). Values inherent in scientific justification – including reliability, validity, replicability and falsifiability – are also relevant in artistic research when it is inspired by the science model.

When artistic research has technological or scientific attributes, collaboration between artists and scientists seems only natural, since artists, as a rule, have not been trained to do those types of research. Bringing together expertise from these two worlds can lead to innovative findings and inspiring insights. Collaboration between artists and other researchers does not, however, confine itself to areas like technology, engineering and product design.

Research in other fields may also serve art practice or form productive ties with art. Consider the cooperation between artists and philosophers, anthropologists or psychologists, as well as economists and legal theorists; projects involving artists are also conducted in areas such as the life sciences, artificial intelligence and information technology.[11]

Roughly speaking, multidisciplinary cooperation between artists and scientists can take two different forms: either the scientific research serves or illuminates the art; or the art serves or illuminates what is going on in the science. Currently there is great interest in the latter mode in particular. The assumption is that the arts will be able to elucidate, in their own unique ways, the procedures, results and implications of scientific research. BioArt can exemplify this; this art form, whereby artists make use of biotechnological procedures like tissue and genetic engineering, leans heavily on scientific research, while often training a critical light on the ethical and social implications of research in the life sciences.

In the debate on research in the arts, these and other kinds of art-and-science collaboration are often wrongly classed together with artistic research as explored in this article. Although the term ›art-and-science‹ may imply convergence at first glance, if anything it represents a reinstatement of the partition between the domain of art and the domain of science, between the artistic and the academic, between what artists do and what scientists do. There is nothing wrong with that, of course; it can only be applauded that these oft-segregated spheres and cultures are now meeting each other in projects where people learn from one another and where critical confrontations can take place. Yet multidisciplinary research projects like these must still be understood as collaboration between different disciplines around a particular topic, whereby the theoretical premises and working methods of the separate disciplines remain intact. The scientist does her thing, and the artist does hers. Even if the artist borrows right and left from the scientist, the aesthetic evaluation of the material, the artistic decisions made in creating the artwork, and the manner in which the results are presented and documented are still, as a rule, discipline-specific. Only very rarely does such multidisciplinary research result in any real hybridisation of domains.

Whilst artistic research is not entirely at odds with these types of art-science collaboration, it should still be regarded as an academic research form of its own. The science model cannot be a benchmark here, any more than artistic research could conform to the standards of the humanities.

Artistic research as academic research

Even if one accepts that artworks somehow embody forms of knowledge or criticism, and that such knowledge and criticism is enacted in artistic practices and creative processes, and also that the knowledge and criticism is embedded in the wider context of the art world and academia, then that still does not mean that what artists do may be construed as ›research‹ in the emphatic sense. ›Research‹ is ›owned‹ by science; it is performed by people who have mastered ›the scientific method‹, in institutions

dedicated to the systematic accumulation of knowledge and its application, such as universities, industrial and governmental research centres.

It is indeed the case that ›what artists do‹ cannot automatically be called research. In the debate about artistic research, the discussions often turn on the distinction between art practice in itself and art practice as research.[12] Few would contend that each work of art or every artistic practice is an outcome of research in the emphatic sense of the word. I shall confine myself here to the question of which criteria must be satisfied if artistic research is to qualify as academic research. I will show that artistic research incorporates both the interests of practice and those of academia.[13]

In the world of academia, there is broad agreement as to what should be understood by research. Briefly it amounts to the following. Research takes place when a person intends to carry out an original study to enhance knowledge and understanding. It begins with questions or issues that are relevant in the research context, and it employs methods that are appropriate to the research and which ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings. An additional requirement is that the research process and the research findings be documented and disseminated in appropriate ways.

This description of academic research leaves room for a great diversity of research programmes and strategies, whether deriving from technology and natural science, social sciences or the humanities, and whether aiming at a basic understanding of what is studied or a more practical application of the knowledge obtained. Artistic research also falls within this characterisation of academic research. Let us focus more closely on the various components of this description.[14]

Intent. The research is undertaken for the purpose of broadening and deepening our knowledge and understanding of the discipline or disciplines in question. Artistic practices contribute first of all to the art world, the artistic universe. The production of images, installations, compositions and performances as such is not intended primarily for enhancing our knowledge (although forms of reflection are always entwined with art). This points to an important distinction between art practice in itself and artistic research. Artistic research seeks in and through the production of art to contribute not just to the artistic universe, but to what we ›know‹ and ›understand‹. In so doing, it goes beyond the artistic universe in two ways. First, the results of the research extend further than the personal artistic development of the artist in question. In cases where the impact of research remains confined to the artist's own oeuvre and has no significance for the wider research context, one can justifiably ask whether this qualifies as research in the true sense of the word. Second, the research is expressly intended to shift the frontiers of the discipline. Just as the contribution made by other academic research consists in uncovering new facts or relationships, or shedding new light on existing facts or relationships, artistic research likewise helps expand the frontiers of the discipline by developing cutting-edge artistic practices, products and insights. In a mate-

rial sense, then, the research impacts on the development of art practice, and in a cognitive sense on our understanding of what that art practice is.

Originality. Artistic research entails original contributions – that is, the work should not have previously been carried out by others, and it should add new knowledge or understandings to the existing corpus. Here, too, we must distinguish between an original contribution to art practice and an original contribution to what we know and understand – between artistic and academic originality.[17] Yet artistic and academic originality are closely related. As a rule, an original contribution in artistic research will result in an original work of art, as the relevance of the artistic outcome is one test of the adequacy of the research. The reverse is not true, however; an original artwork is not necessarily an outcome of research in the emphatic sense. In the concrete practice of artistic research, one must determine case by case in what way and in what measure the research has resulted in original artistic and academic outcomes.[15] In any research study that pretends to make a difference, it is important to realise that it is hard to determine at the outset whether it will ultimately result in an original contribution. It is an inherent quality of research that ›one does not know exactly what one does not know‹. Consequently, guiding intuitions and chance inspirations are just as important for the motivation and dynamism of research as methodological prescriptions and discursive justifications. Contributing new knowledge to what already exists is characteristic of the open-ended nature of every research study.[16]

Knowledge and understanding. If artistic research is an »original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding«,[17] then the question arises as to what kinds of knowledge and understanding this involves. Traditionally, the central focus of epistemology is on propositional knowledge – knowledge of facts, knowledge about the world, knowing that such and such is the case. This can be distinguished from knowledge as skill – knowing how to make, how to act, how to perform. A third form of knowledge may be described as acquaintanceship: familiarity and receptiveness with respect to persons, conditions or situations – ›I know this person‹, ›I know that situation‹. In the history of epistemology, these types of knowledge have been thematized in a variety of ways, ranging from Aristotle's distinction between theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge and wisdom to Polanyi's contrast between focal and tacit knowledge.[18] Different notions exist as to the relationships between the three types of knowledge – notions which are also identifiable in the debate about artistic research. Sometimes the emphasis lies on propositional knowledge, sometimes on knowledge as skill, and sometimes on ›understanding‹ as a form of knowledge in which theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge and acquaintance may intersect.

In the case of artistic research, we can add to the knowledge and understanding duo the synonyms ›insight‹ and ›comprehension‹, in order to emphasize that a perceptive, receptive and verstehende engagement with the subject matter is often more important to the research than getting an ›explanatory grip‹. Such an investigation also seeks to enhance our expe-

rience, in the rich sense of the word ›experience‹: the knowledge and skills accumulated through action and practice, plus apprehension through the senses. In the debate on the status of the experiential component of artistic research, disagreement exists as to whether this component is non-conceptual, and therefore non-discursive, or whether it is a cognitive component that definitely resides in the ›space of reasons‹.[19] The dispute between epistemological foundationalism and coherentism, which mainly concerns propositional knowledge, does not figure at all in the debate about artistic research. Many observers, though, do not view knowledge primarily as ›justified true belief‹ or ›warranted assertibility‹, but as a form of world disclosure (a hermeneutic perspective) or world constitution (a constructivist perspective).
Questions, issues, problems. The requirement that a research study should set out with well-defined questions, topics or problems is often at odds with the actual course of events in artistic research. Formulating a question implies delimiting the space in which a possible answer may be found. Yet research (and not only artistic research) often resembles an uncertain quest in which the questions or topics only materialize during the journey, and may often change as well. Besides not knowing exactly what one does not know, one also does not know how to delimit the space where potential answers are located. As a rule, artistic research is not hypothesis-led, but discovery-led,[20] whereby the artist undertakes a search on the basis of intuition, guesses and hunches, and possibly stumbles across some unexpected issues or surprising questions on the way.

In the light of the actual dynamics of current academic research, the prevailing format for research design (such as that required in funding applications) is basically inadequate. Especially in artistic research – and entirely in line with the creative process – the artist's tacit understandings and her accumulated experience, expertise and sensitivity in exploring uncharted territory are more crucial in identifying challenges and solutions than an ability to delimit the study and put research questions into words at an early stage. The latter can be more a burden than a boon.

As we have seen, research studies done in and through art may be oriented to science and technology or more to interpretation and social criticism, and they may avail themselves of a diversity of methodological instruments. By the same token, the topics and questions addressed by the research can vary from those focusing purely on the artistic material or the creative process to those that touch on other life domains or even have their locus and their telos there. The subject matter of the research is enclosed, as it were, in the artistic material, or in the creative process, or in the transdisciplinary space that connects the artistic practices to meaningful contexts. The research, then, seeks to explore the often non-conceptual content that is embodied in art, enacted in the creative process or embedded in the transdisciplinary context.

Context. Contexts are constitutive factors in both art practice and artistic research. Artistic practices do not stand on their own; they are always situated and embedded. Artworks and artistic actions acquire their meaning in inter-

change with relevant environments. Research in the arts will remain naive unless it acknowledges and confronts this embeddedness and situatedness in history, in culture (society, economy, everyday life) as well as in the discourse on art; herein lies the merit of relational aesthetics and of all constructivist approaches in artistic research.

Contexts figure in artistic research in another way too. The relevance and urgency of the research questions and topics is determined in part within the research context, where the intersubjective forum of peers defines the state of the art. This formally invested, or abstractly internalised, normative forum assesses what potential contribution the research will make to the current body of knowledge and understanding, and in what relationship the research stands to other research in the area. Every artistic research study must justify its own importance to the academic forum, which, like the artistic forum, looks over the researcher's shoulder, as it were.

Methods. I have commented above on the distinctive nature of artistic research in terms of methodology. This is characterised by the use, within the research process, of art practice, artistic actions, creation and performance. Experimental art practice is integral to the research, just as the active involvement of the artist is an essential component of the research strategy. Here lies the similarity of artistic research to both laboratory-based technical research and ethnographic field study. The erratic nature of creative discovery – of which unsystematic drifting, serendipity, chance inspirations and clues form an integral part – is such that a methodological justification is not easy to codify. Just as in many other academic research studies, it involves doing unpredictable things, and this implies intuition and some measure of randomness. Research is more like exploration than like following a firm path.[21]

Much artistic research does not limit itself to an investigation into material aspects of art or an exploration of the creative process, but pretends to reach further in the transdisciplinary context. Experimental and interpretive research strategies thus transect one another here in an undertaking whose purpose is to articulate the connectedness of art to who we are and where we stand. Much of today's visual and performing art is critically engaged with other life domains, such as gender, globalisation, identity, environment or activism; philosophical or psychological issues might be addressed in artistic research projects as well. The difference between artistic research and social or political science, critical theory or cultural analysis lies in the central place which art practice occupies in both the research process and the research outcome. This makes research in the arts distinct from that in other academic disciplines engaging with the same issues. In assessing the research, it is important to keep in mind that the specific contribution it makes to our knowledge, understanding, insight and experience lies in the ways these issues are articulated, expressed and communicated through art.

Documentation, dissemination. The academic requirement that the research process and the research findings be documented and disseminated in appropriate ways raises a number of questions when it comes to artistic research.

What does ›appropriate‹ mean here? What kinds of documentation would do justice to research that is guided by an intuitive creative process and by tacit understandings? What value does a rational reconstruction have if it is far removed from the actual, often erratic course taken by the research? What are the best ways to report non-conceptual artistic findings? And what is the relationship between the artistic and the discursive, between what is presented and displayed and what is described? What audience does the research want to target, and what impact does it hope to achieve? And which communication channels are best suited for putting the research results into the limelight? Questions like these have been the subject of ongoing discussion for the past 15 years in the debate on practice-based research in the creative and performing arts and design – not least in the context of academic degree programmes and funding schemes, which demand clear answers in their admission and assessment procedures.

Because artistic research addresses itself both to the academic forum and to the forum of the arts, the research documentation, as well as the presentation and dissemination of the findings, needs to conform to the prevailing standards in both forums. Usually, though, a double-blind reviewed academic journal will not be the most appropriate publication medium; the material and discursive outcomes of the research will be directed first of all to the art world and the art discourse, one that extends beyond academia. But a discursive justification of the research will be necessary with the academic discourse in mind, while the artistic findings will have to convince the art world as well. Even so, the discursive space of reasons need not remain confined to that of traditional scholarly writings. The artist can also use other, perhaps innovative forms of discursivity that stand closer to the artistic work than a written text, such as an artistic portfolio that maps the line of artistic reasoning, or argumentations coded in scores, scripts, videos or diagrams. What matters most is the cogency of the documentation with respect to both intersubjective forums. For all that, language does remain a highly functional complementary medium to help get across to others what is at issue in the research – provided one keeps in mind that there will always be a gap between what is displayed and what is put into words. Or more precisely: given that the meaning of words often remains limited to their use in the language, a certain modesty is due here in view of the performative power of the material outcomes.[22]

The written, verbal or discursive component that accompanies the material research outcome may go in three directions.[23] Many people place emphasis on a rational reconstruction of the research process, clarifying how the results were achieved. Others use language to provide interpretive access to the findings, the material products and the practices generated by the research. A third possibility is to express something in and with language which can be understood as a ›verbalisation‹ or ›conceptual mimesis‹ of the artistic outcome. The concepts, thoughts and utterances ›assemble themselves‹ around the artwork, so that the artwork begins to speak.[24] In contrast to an interpretation of the artistic work or a reconstruction of the artistic process, the latter option involves an emulation or

imitation of, or an allusion to, the non-conceptual content embodied in the art.

Contingency. The non-conceptual content that is addressed in artistic research is by nature undefined. Although it is materially anchored (in a broad sense of the word ›material‹), it simultaneously transcends the materiality of the medium. Here lies not only the je ne sais quoi of the aesthetic experience, but also a call to reflection. Artistic research provides room for a multidimensional unfolding of this undefined content – in and through creating and performing, in and through discursive approaches, revelations or paraphrasings, in and through criticism encountered in the artistic and academic research environment.

At least two perspectives can be adopted on what artistic research has to offer: a constructivist and a hermeneutic perspective. The constructivist perspective holds that objects and events actually become constituted in and through artworks and artistic actions. Only in and through art do we see what landscapes, soundworlds, histories, emotions, relations, interests or movements really are or could be. Here lies the performative and critical power of art. It does not represent things; it presents them, thereby making the world into what it is or could be. The hermeneutic perspective assumes that artistic practices and artworks disclose the world to us. The world-revealing power of art lies in its ability to offer us those new vistas, experiences and insights that affect our relationship with the world and with ourselves. Artistic research addresses this world-constituting and world-revealing power of art – the ways in which we constitute and understand the world in and through art.

Related content

sitting between chairs: the role of the creative practitioners in 9ub by Alison Rooke and Christian von Wissel

Interview with Sophie Hope

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Endnotes

1 This is a shorter version of Borgdorff, H. 2011. ›The production of knowledge in artistic research‹ in Karlsson, H & Biggs, M (eds). The Routledge companion to research in the arts. Oxon and New York: Routledge: 44-63. ISBN 9780415581691

2 Bal, M. 2002 Travelling concepts in the humanities: A rough guide. Toronto; University of Toronto Press: 61 (italics in the original).

3 A more extensive reconstruction of philosophical aesthetics in its relation to artistic research would draw on topics from Hegel, Heidegger, Lyotard and others.

4 Kjørup, S. 2006. Another Way of Knowing, Another way of knowing (Sensuous knowledge 1), (Bergen: Bergen National Academy of the Arts).

4 For an overview of this cognitive science agenda, see Kiverstein, J and Clark, A. 2009. ›Introduction. Mind embodied, embedded, enacted: One church or many?‹, Topoi 28: 1-7, a special edition of Topoi dedicated to the subject.

6 Kant, I. 1978. [1790/93] The critique of judgement. Claredon Press: §49.

7 Ibid:: §53, §52.

8 Haseman B. 2006. ›A Manifesto for Performative Reserch‹, Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy 118: Special Issue ›Practice-led Research‹, 98-106. Whether artistic research constitutes a new paradigm is not something that can be decided here and now. Biggs and Büchler rightly point out that the »criteria that define academic research per se‹ must be met whether research is conducted under a new or an existing paradigm Biggs, MAR and Büchler, D. 2008. ›Eight criteria for practice-based research in the creative and cultural industries‹, Art, Design and Communication in Higher Education 7 (1): 12. I concur with Kjørup (Chapter 2) that the characteristic of artistic research is »a specific perspective on already existing activities« – a »new perspective [which] in the longer run [will] have consequences for the direction of the development of art.« And of academia, I would like to add.

9 Eisner EW. 1981. ›On the difference between scientific and artistic approaches to qualitative research‹, Educational Researcher 10 (4): 5-9. And Knowles JG and Coles, AL. 2008. Handbook of the arts in qualitative research. London: Sage Publications.

10 See, for example, the discussions about research by design on the PhD-Design mailing list, http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists /phd-design.html Accessed 22/02/2010.

11 For a detailed review see Wilson, S. 2002. Information arts: Intersections of art, science and technology. Cambridge MA: MIT Press/Leonardo Books.

12 Cf. Borgdorff, H. 2006., The debate on research in the arts. (Bergen: Bergen National Academy of the Arts) and Borgdorff, H. 2009. Artistic research, within the fields of science (Sensuous Knowledge 6). Bergen: Bergen National Academy of the Arts.

13 See Biggs MAR and Büchler, D. 2007. ›Rigour and practice-based research‹, Design Issues 23 (3) 62-9. Biggs and Büchler argue for a balance between academic values and artistic values. To strongly simplify the matter, I would suggest that academic values have dominated in the British discourse thus far, whilst on the European continent the emphasis has lain more on artistic values. In their analysis of values – demon-

strated through actions that are meaningful and potentially significant – in relation to the two communities – practice and academia – Biggs and Büchler appear to hold ›artistic practice‹ and ›academic research‹ constant, whereas in fact our notions of what both artistic practice and academic research are become enriched under the emerging ›paradigm‹ of artistic research.

14 An ontological, epistemological and methodological exploration of artistic research in Borgdorff (2006) culminated in the following definition: »Art practice qualifies as research if its purpose is to expand our knowledge and understanding by conducting an original investigation in and through art objects and creative processes. Art research begins by addressing questions that are pertinent in the research context and in the art world. Researchers employ experimental and hermeneutic methods that reveal and articulate the tacit knowledge that is situated and embodied in specific artworks and artistic processes. Research processes and outcomes are documented and disseminated in an appropriate manner to the research community and the wider public.«

15 Pakes, A. 2003. ›Original embodied knowledge: The epistemology of the new in dance practice as research‹, Research in Dance Education 4 (2): 127-49 for a more detailed critical analysis of the originality principle in artistic research.

16 Rheinberger, HJ. 2007. ›Man weiss nicht genau was man weiss: Über die Kunst, das Unbekannte zu Erforschen‹, Neue Züricher Zeitung, Zurich 5 May 207: B3. The full quote is: »Das Grundproblem besteht darin, dass man nicht genau weiss, was man nicht weiss. Damit ist das Wesen der Forschung kurz, aber bündig ausgesprochen.« (The basic problem is that one does not know exactly what one does not know. Put succinctly, that is the essence of research [my translation]).

17 This is the wording used by the Research Assessment Exercise in the UK; for the full RAE definition of research, see RAE. 2006. Panel criteria and working methods: Panel O.London: RAE: 80. <http://www.rae.ac.uk/pubs/2006/01/> (accessed on 20 February 2010).

18 Polanyi, M. 1958. Personal knowledge: Towards a post-critical philosophy. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

19 Biggs, MAR. 2004. ›Learning from experience: Approaches to the experiential component of practice-based research‹ in Karlson, H (ed). Forskning-reflektion-uweckling. Stockolm: Swedish Research Council, 6-21.

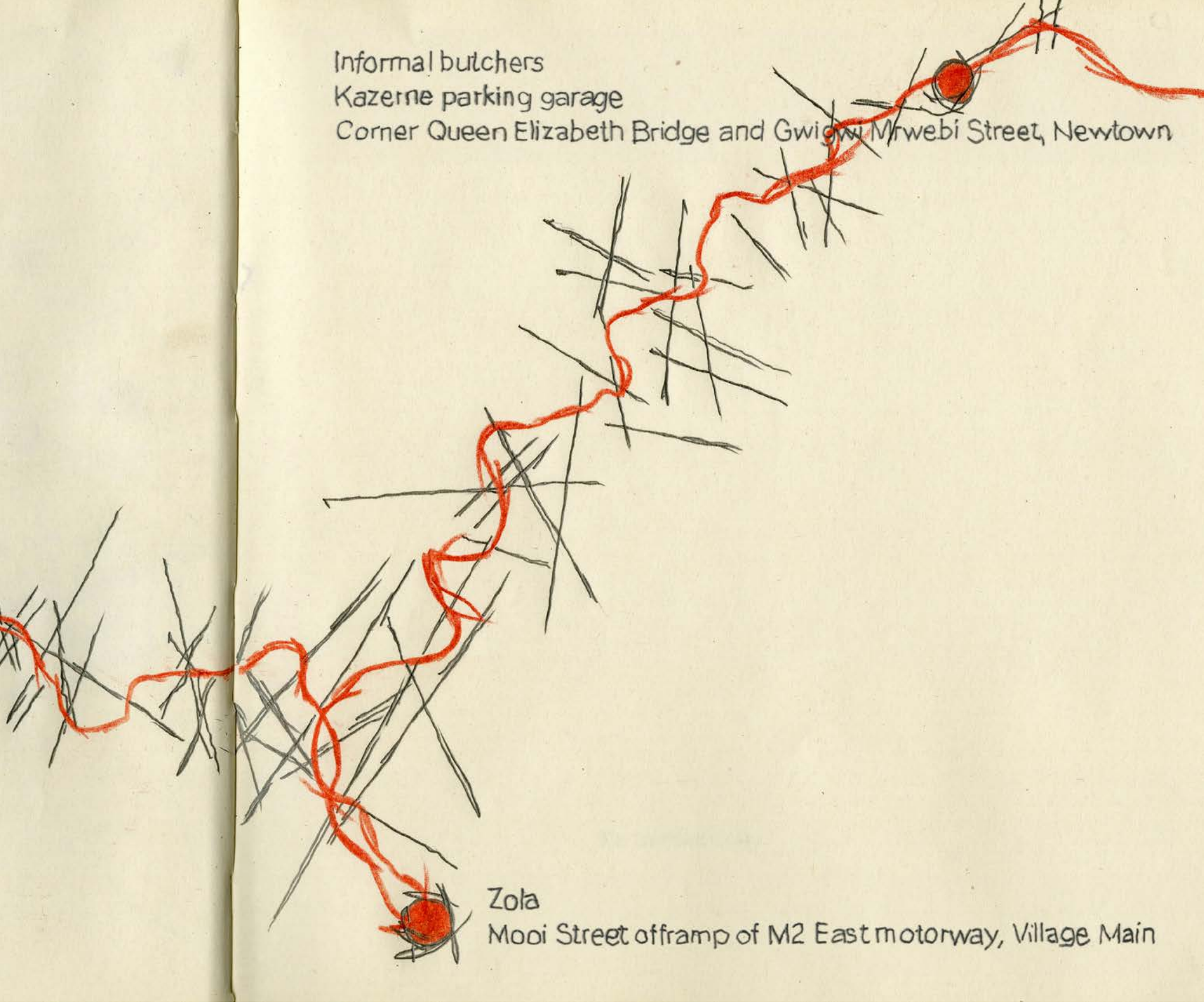
20 Rubidge, S. 2005. ›Artists in the academy: Reflections on artistic practice as research‹, Dance rebooted. Deakin University, p. 8

21 Theoretical physicist Robbert Dijkgraaf in an interview Balkema, AW and Slager, H. 2007. Robbert Dijkgraaf‹, Mahkuzine: Journal of Artistic Research 2:31-7. online. <http://www.mahku.nl/research/mahkuzine2.html>

22 Language-based creative practice (poetry, prose) is a challenge in this respect. Here the performative power of the art is intermingled with and indissolubly connected to the play with the meaning of the words.

23 I decline to discuss here any numerical ratio of the verbal to the material. Any general prescription of the number of words to be required for an artistic PhD does no justice to the subject. An adequate and suitable relationship between the two needs to be determined separately for each artistic research project.

24 Cf. See Note 19.



wake up, this is joburg

Mark Lewis and Tanya Zack

These photographs by Mark Lewis and words by Tanya Zack draw on *Wake up, this is Joburg*, a series of ten books published by Fourthwall Books, about the city we hate to love, but do anyway. *Wake up, this is Joburg* tells the stories of ten ordinary, interesting, odd or outrageous denizens of the city of Johannesburg. Some are newly arrived, some are long-time residents, but all have found a way to inhabit urban space in unusual ways, carving out a living – and a life – in an alternative economy, flying by the seat of their proverbial pants, or working the same job in the same building for decades.

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Zola

The single table and large wooden container that comprise Izilda Nzopene's stall are deceptive. This is a busy kitchen, serving fish, chicken, pap, rice and salad at R25 a plate. Two pots are cooking on an open fire and another is bubbling on a gas cooker. A kettle steams on the table. Izilda and her sister divide their attention between chopping onions and tomatoes, plating food and washing the empty plates as they are returned. Hers is one of many micro-enterprises catering to the needs of 600 taxi drivers who park their cars at the Zola binding point at the southern edge of inner city Johannesburg. Here they wait between peak hours. And here their needs and the needs of their taxis are catered to by food kiosks, a mechanic, a barber, hawkers who pass through selling anything from steering wheel covers to insecticide, sweet sellers and cooldrink vendors. Gogo Dudu Mathibela wakes at four each morning to start her shift at five. The two trips she does to the inner city finish at eight-thirty and she parks her taxi at Zola until she is called at twelve-thirty. Does she wait with the other drivers? »Definitely not. In that time I go to the gym at the Carlton Centre. I do an aerobics class every morning.«

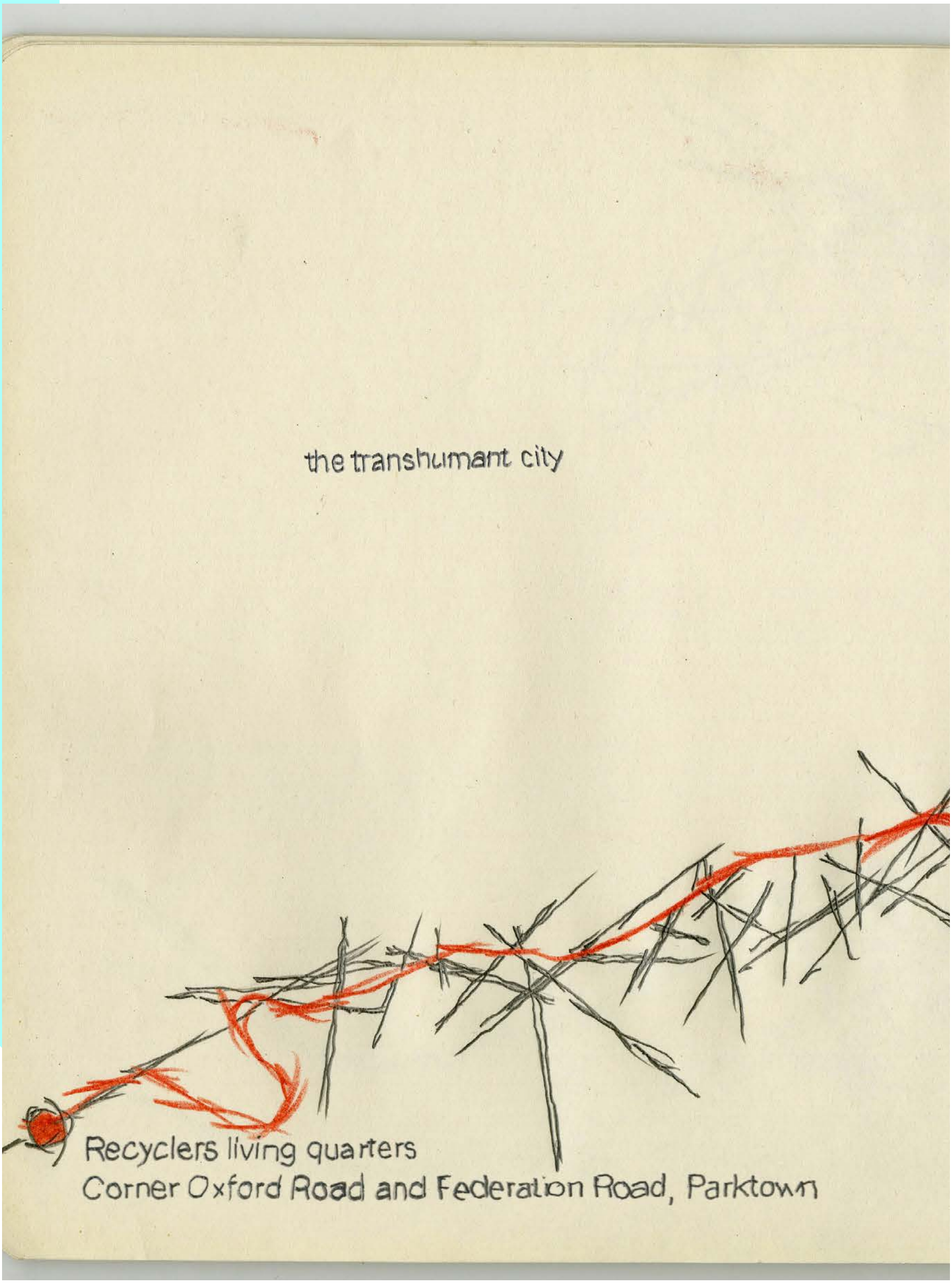
Butchers

In a disused parking garage within the heart of the inner city of Johannesburg an informal and almost medieval trade in the flesh, bones and skins of cow heads is underway. Informal butchers, in an atmosphere of smoke, darkness, blood and rats, undertake the fierce chopping of flesh. Heads arrive in shopping trolleys. They are bought at a nearby butchery and are sent by customers who will pay R10 per head for the cutting service. »On a good day I chop sixty heads«, a butcher says as he slams his axe repeatedly into one of three flesh-covered skulls that are being stripped at the wooden industrial cable spool that is the butchers' block. The surface is barely large enough to accommodate these heads but three other butchers join in and now four bare arms and four axes pummel flesh, fat and skin in a stampede of blows. As the meat is loosened it is tossed into gaping bags at the butchers' feet. Occasionally a butcher pauses to talk to someone or to buy something from the vendor who wanders past with a tray of sweets and loose cigarettes.

Recyclers

The silhouettes of recyclers each pulling a double cart with one or two bulging hessian bags towering behind them through the suburban streets is a regular Johannesburg dawn-time scene. Given Mattatiele, Livingstone Sikunda, and Lucas Ngwenya work cooperatively although each man lives alone – Lucas lives in the cavity of a highway underpass, Livingstone has created a tent-like shelter under a bush and Given occupies a ledge on a rocky outcrop where he is shaded by a tree and overlooks the motorway. Each day they collect waste from a different part of the city, sometimes walking over 30 kilometres in a day, half of that pulling loads of plastic, cardboard and white paper on their trolleys fashioned out of shopping cart bases and ironing board frames. The frames are used to steer the trolley and on downhills they serve as handles as the recyclers skateboard at high speed to prepare for the slow pace and enormous effort required to pull many times their body weight uphill. At 6am on a Saturday morning the men begin their second journey of the morning to the recycling depot. The temperature is four degrees. They will assist one another, as it requires two men to pull one load up the steepest hills. Like the other men, Lucas is pulling a double trolley. At the depot the materials he has dragged for five kilometres weigh in at 265kg. His body mass is 61kg.

Note: Some names have been changed for this text at the request of interviewees.



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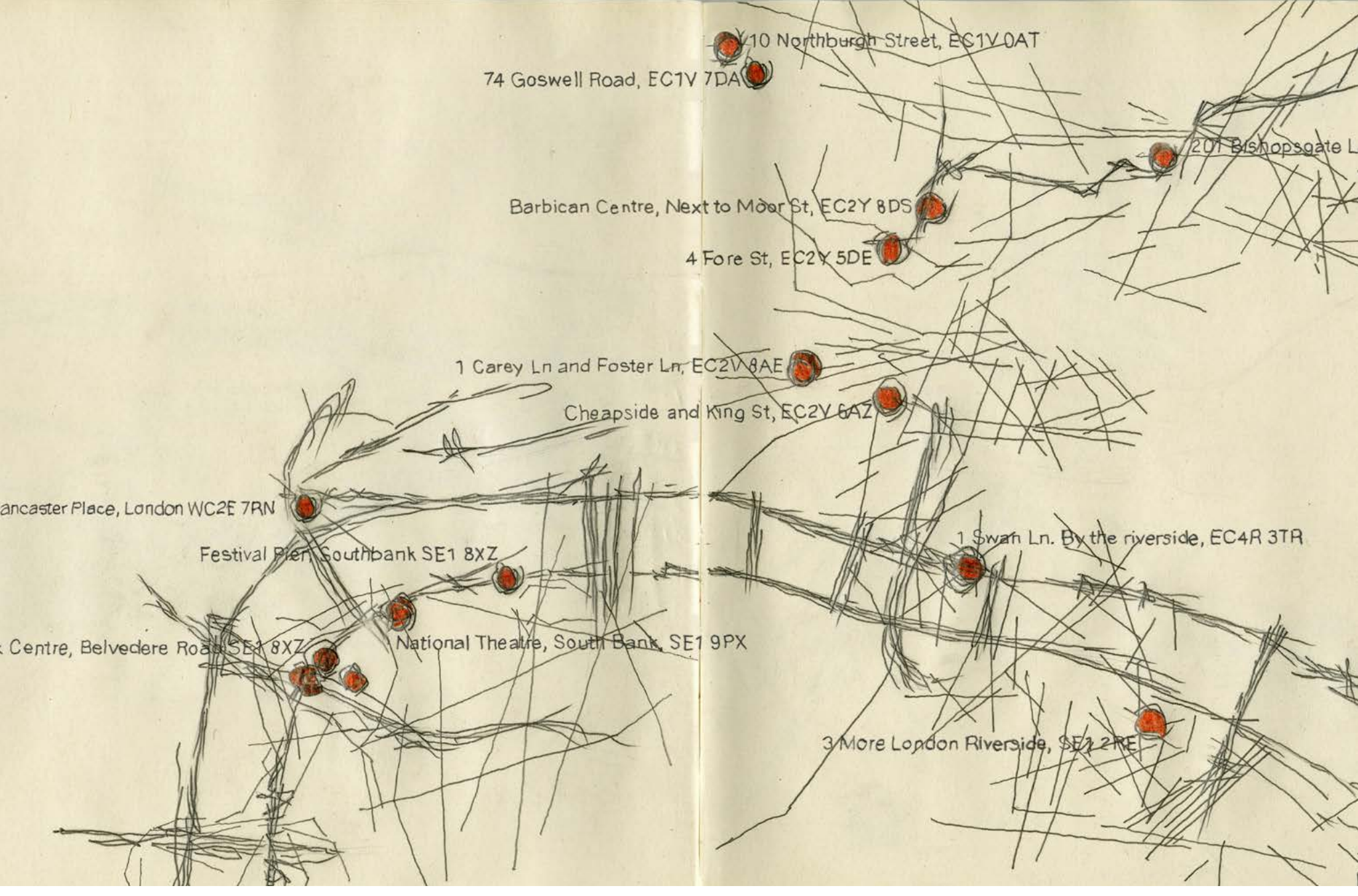


diego ferrari

We can imagine a hardened, brutal version of the urban environment – the city as intolerant of organic matter, which is elusive, uncontained, rebellious. The city as a rationalist project of boundaries and containments, coercive causeways of energy encasement. Where can the body, as radical entity, sparked by unconscious as much as conscious processes, fit in?
In this encounter between the body and the city, Diego Ferrari's photography highlights the role of the photographer, and by association the viewer. Many of the scenarios he depicts are staged encounters with the possible. Taking us to interrogate the relationship between social values and public spaces, with a particular focus on the relationship between the body and its environment, articulating modes of individual and collective experiences and social relations.

Jean McNeil

Urban Habitat

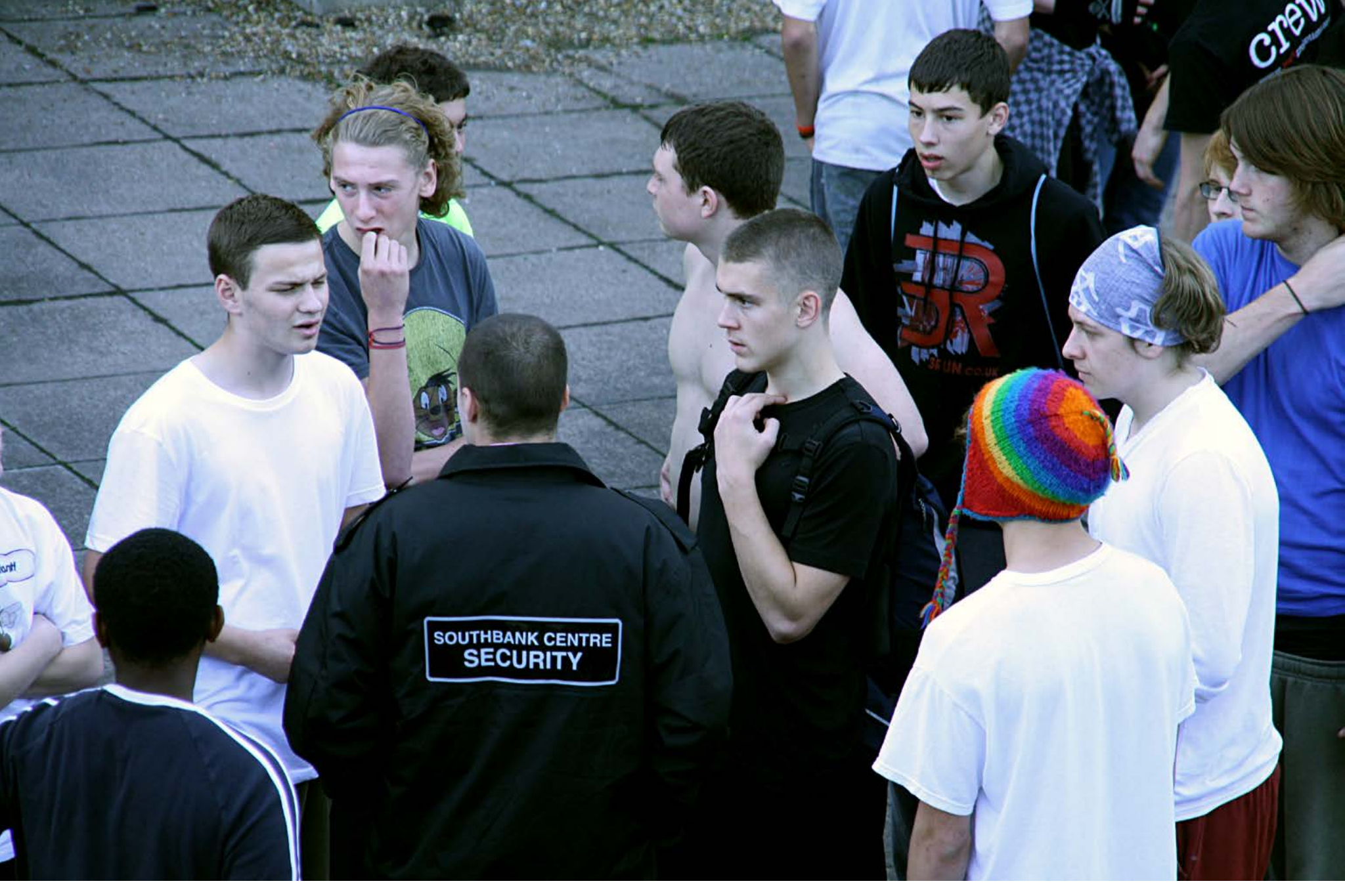
Challenging Social Codes

A co-existence of the senses

Urban space is an expression of a particular society's values regarding democracy, identity and citizenship. Public and private space are key elements of the imagined communities we call nations. This project investigates the individual's relationship with their private habitat and the social built environment. From these two realms we construct our personal meaning of place. The private and the social realm are not segregated, of course; but the spatial ambiguity created between personal subjectivity and social objectivity is a fertile platform from which to critically elaborate a psychological as well as a bodily and metaphysical relationship to space. A lived in space always transcends geometry and measurability.

Diego Ferrari

Nearly everywhere, humanity is becoming urbanised. More than half of all peoples worldwide live in cities. The city is not only about buildings, yet the built environment dominates our experience of living in urban settings. Architectural space is hugely dynamic; at once a container in which we live as much as a physical material that is substantial, tangible and solid. Our predominantly urbanised life is changing time-honoured human relationships with the intangible aspects of space, namely our intuitive relationship with the immediate environment, which has the most profound consequences for human agency and identity and its relationship with culture, politics and society. This photographic project is based on young groups of people, challenging social codes of authority, consumption, and the public mechanisms of



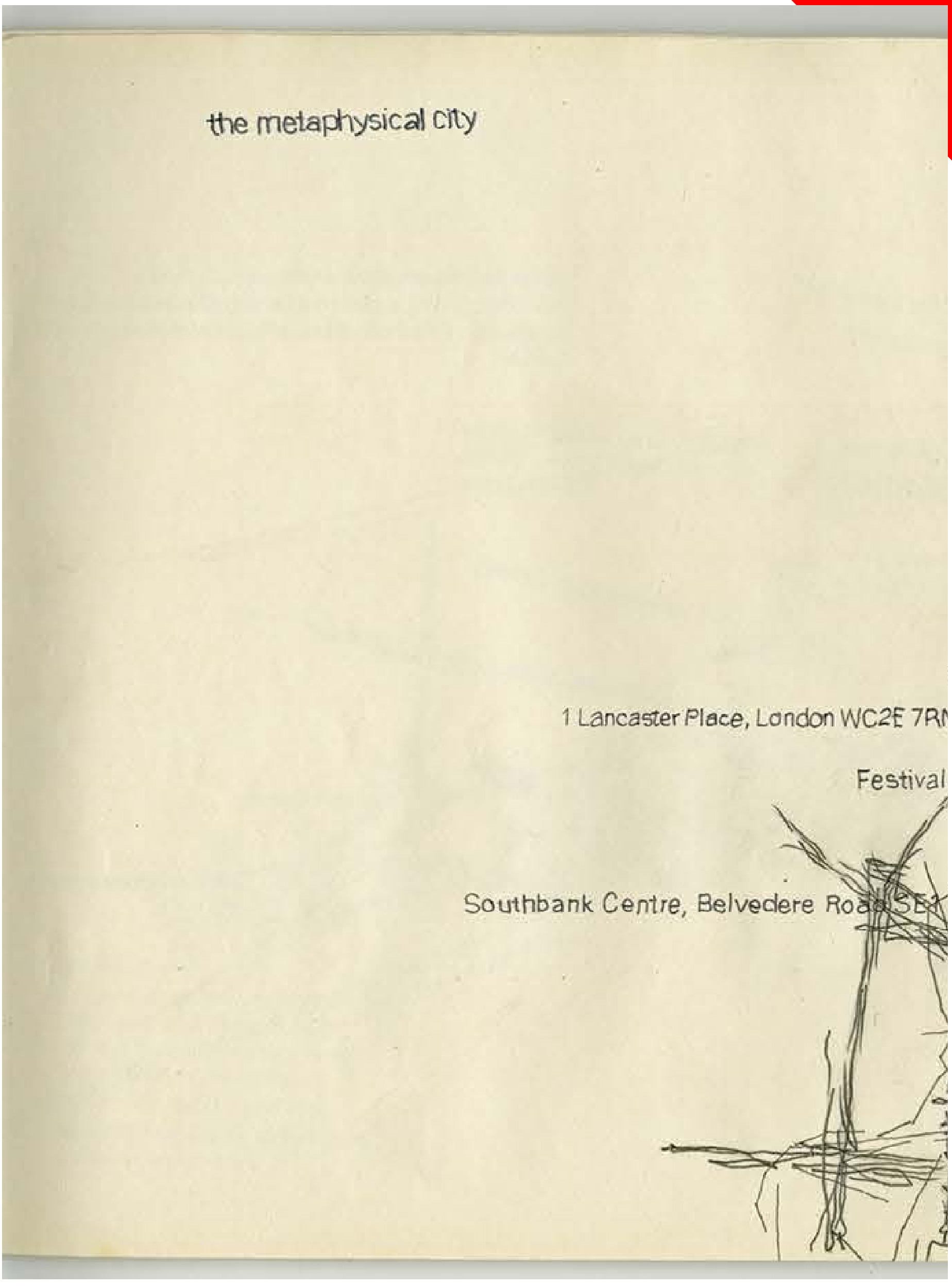
daily life in the city. With their actions they come up with a personal approach which is not about establishing a line of arguments or a theoretical position, but rather about being bodies in space, experiencing their values and conditions embedded in the public urban environment.

Diego Ferrari

We are Water

The constructed space of the city is a solid geometric environment that guides our everyday lives. When the element of water is out of its designed vessel it becomes free and its fluidity cannot be controlled nor can it be measured. By releasing it from the restrictions of its container, it fascinates us by revealing the natural patterns evolving out of its unimaginable fluid structure.

Diego Ferrari



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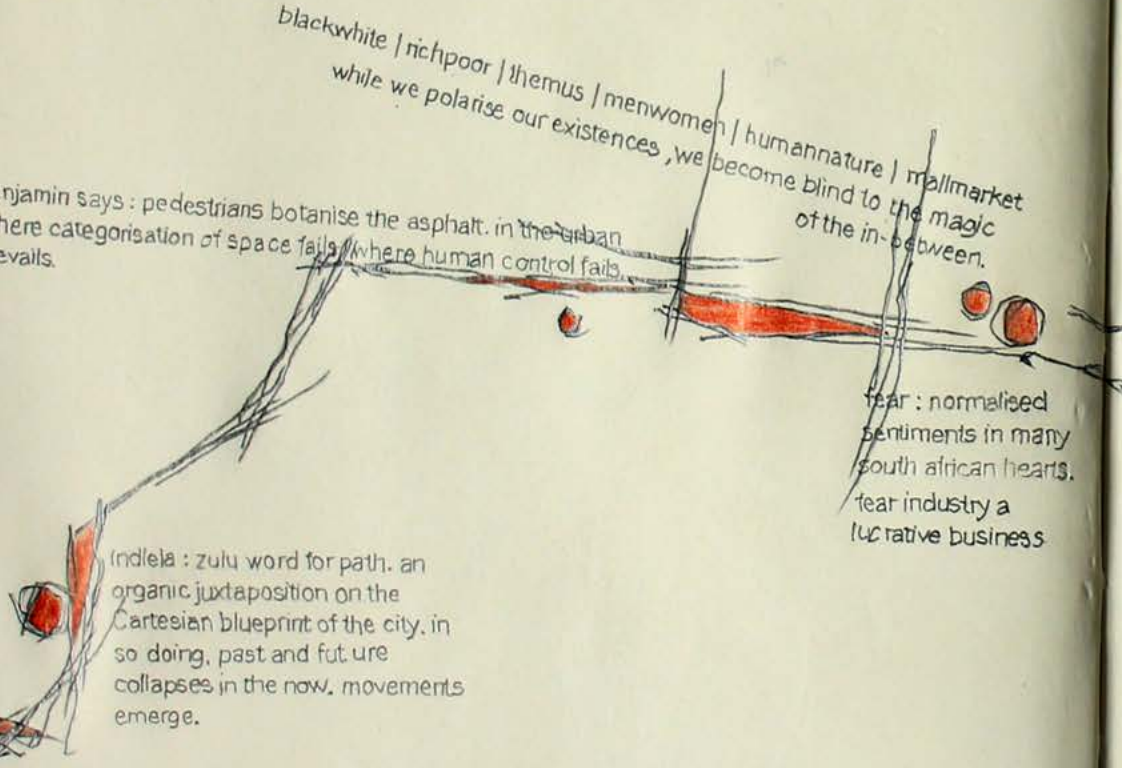
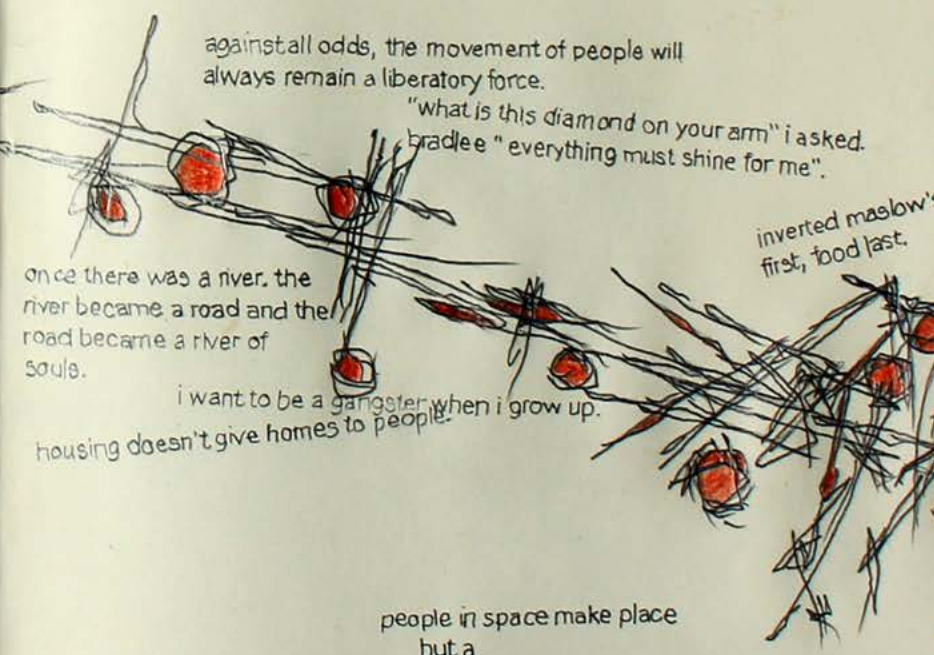




a walk into durban - the citywalk initiative

A selection of photographs taken by photographer Armn Linke during his residency in Durban

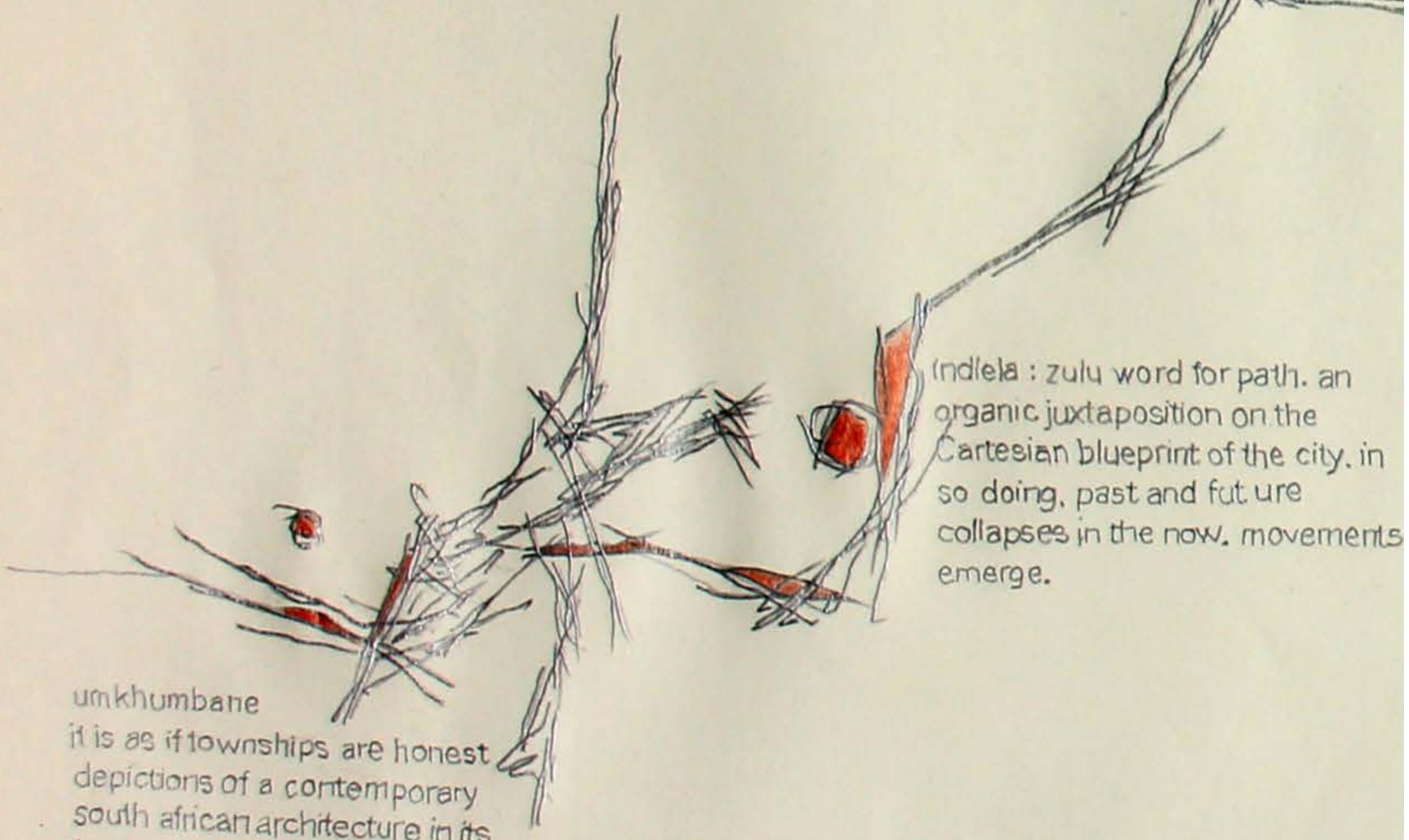
The CityWalk Initiative started in 2001. Since then it has become an increasingly diverse process. Like many city walks that have emerged the world over, the Durban CityWalk Initiative was developed through an intrigue in the spatial working of the city.This initiative was inspired by exploring the architecture of in-between – ›an architecture without walls‹. This means engaging space in a broader sense, specifically engaging the ways in which people live, work and move in and through urban spaces.

Thousands of people walk from Umkhumbane, a township on the periphery of town to Warwick Junction on a daily basis — the majority of whom are people who cannot afford to take public transport between the two sites. Umkhumbane has a rich cultural and political history and has been instrumental in the shaping of contemporary Durban. Warwick Junction is the central hub of the city — the heart of movement, where hundreds of thousands travel through regularly to all corners of the municipality and province.

The CityWalk Initiative takes inspiration from the movements of ordinary people. Exploring these movements and moments gives insight not only into the spatial functions of Durban, but says profound things about the increasingly globalised nature of the world. It allows for a platform for exploring another perspective on understanding the form and function of city spaces. It is a catalyst for critical thinking of existing structures in society, and more importantly it acts as a means to start envisioning alternative futures for city spaces.

blackwhite / richpo
while we pola

walter benjamin says : pedestrians botanise the aspha
cracks, where categorisation of space fails / where hum
nature prevails.



(ndlela : zulu word for path. an organic juxtaposition on the Cartesian blueprint of the city. in so doing, past and future collapses in the now. movements emerge.

umkhumbane
it is as if townships are honest depictions of a contemporary south african architecture in its fragmentation, dissidence, transience, layered spatiality, sense of community and violence. a schizophrenic form.

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Adam Greenfield
Founder and managing director of Urban-scale; Senior fellow, LSE Cities Centre of London School of Economics

Contesting the notion of the ›Smart City‹, Adam Greenfield proposes to use the term ›Network Urbanism‹ to describe a new notion of city endorsed by the use of information technologies and capacities. Drawing on his experience as technology designer, he describes how open and adaptable technological systems can be turned into innovative tools for city making and new forms of political action.

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Dr. Sophie Hope
Lecturer at Birkbeck College, University of London and Co-Founder of B+B Curatorial Partnership

Drawing on her experience as an artist, curator and researcher, Sophie Hope offers a fresh insight into the characteristics of Socially Engaged Art, unpacking the expectations, agendas, contradictions and assumptions that guide them. She analyses the complex constellations and frameworks within which commissions take place, as well as the criteria and measurement of ›success‹ and the ›marketing‹ of advocacy.

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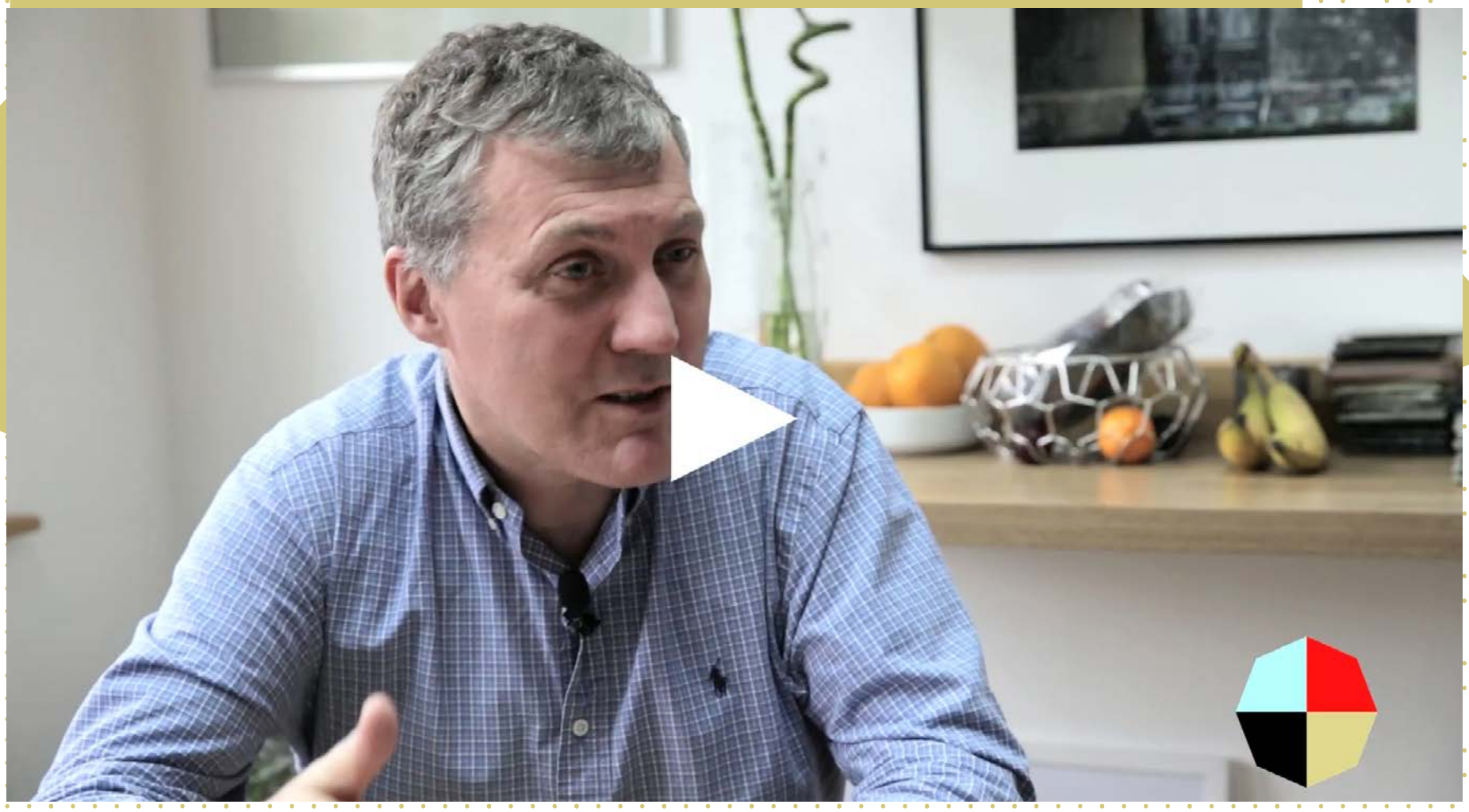

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Prof. Michael Keith
Director of COMPAS – Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford, Co-Director of Oxford Programme, Future of the Cities, in conversation with Stefan Horn, artistic director of 9UB

Michael Keith, expert on cities and migration, and Stefan Horn, artistic director of Nine Urban Biotopes (9UB), engage in a conversation on the demands of the cities of the present and the imperatives of the cities yet to come. They delve into forces like the market that shapes our cities as well as into alternative ways of structuring urban life. They touch upon sustainability and migration in the context of innovation and democratic rights, contesting notions such as the ›global north‹ and ›global south‹.

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Prof. Bruno Latour
Sciences Po Paris
Director of SPEAP – Program of Experimentation in Art and Politics

Bruno Latour disputes the notion of ›social engagement‹ in art practices. Interviewed by 9UB partner, Quatorze, he elaborates on the function of art as a tool to educe new ways of being associated with complex constellations (urban biotopes), thus contributing to the making of issues of concern and the creation of publics. He examines the notion and creation of the ›common‹ within the context of the city when understood as ›ecosystem‹.

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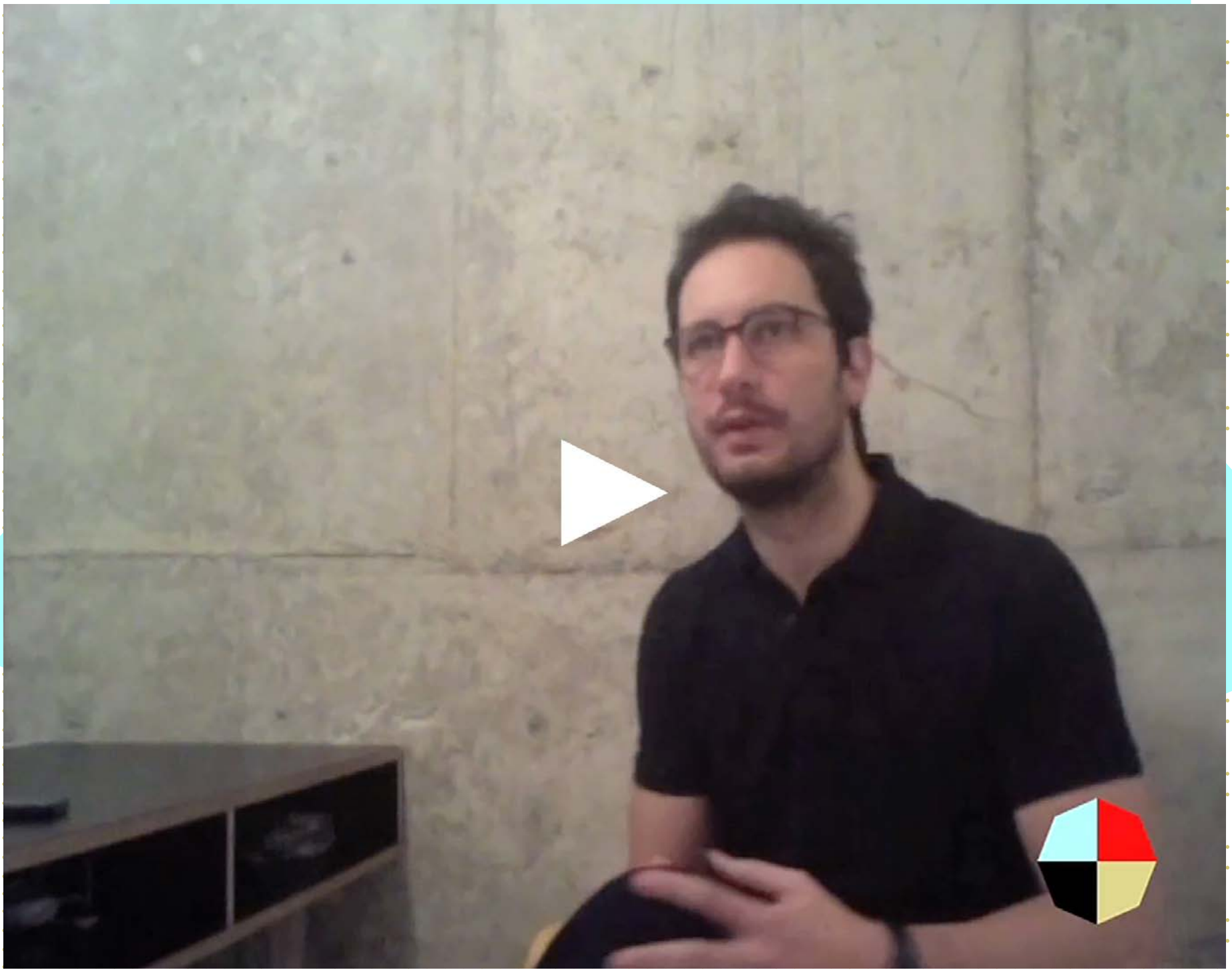

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Arch. Marcos L. Rosa
Member of the Urban Age Network,
Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Society

Drawing from his experience as urban planner and editor of the publication Handmade urbanism: From community initiatives to participatory models (Berlin, 2013) with case studies from Mumbai, Sao Paolo, Istanbul, Mexico City and Cape Town, Marcos Rosa elaborates on the foundations, stakeholders and development stages of grass-roots initiatives and asks how to bring them together with top-down approaches in urban planning.

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project partners

urban dialogues, Berlin
Coordinator and initiator Since 1998 the urban arts association, urban dialogues, has been experimenting with urban spaces in the city of Berlin, searching for interesting sites for temporary and site-specific art projects. The artistic principle of urban dialogues is to bring aesthetic sensitivity to the rapid changes of place and perspective within the city landscape. Since 2001 the non-profit-organisation has worked within social regeneration programmes in urban crisis zones, with an increasing focus on integrating youth and young adults into the production of art and culture. The artistic projects of urban dialogues began in the centre of Berlin as a scrutiny of the dramatically changing environment and then developed into a multi-layered and complex form of research applying artistic methods in urban areas. Since 2006 urban dialogues has developed an international focus, exploring and discovering the means to seek out the complex differences and similarities of cities in our globalised world.
www.urbandialogues.de

Partners in Europe

Istituto Wesen, Turin
Istituto Wesen realises cultural projects and research in the fields of anthropology, local development and sociology. The final products are video documentaries, educational publications, shows and exhibitions. The work team is composed of experts from different fields and has a cross-sectional and interdisciplinary vision. Thanks to this approach the group has been able to commit its communication skills to various areas of interest. Istituto Wesen's mission is to support local development through citizen participation and cultural heritage preservation; to foster the renewed artistic sensitivity of the individual through the search for innovative forms of language; to support policies to promote gender equal opportunities; and to promote an environmental conscience, respectful of the balance between man and nature. The association works with all major local public institutions and has also developed several collaborations on an international level.
www.wesen.it

South London Gallery
The South London Gallery (SLG) is one of London's leading venues for contemporary visual art, and is housed in a Victorian space first built as a gallery in 1895. Over the past twenty years the gallery has focused on profiling acclaimed British and international contemporary art through exhibitions, live events, residencies and an extensive education programme. June 2010 marked the opening of the SLG's building extensions which saw the creation of the Outset Artists' Flat. This enabled the SLG to create a new programme of three annual artist residencies, including one for artists based in Africa. The area around the SLG, called Peckham, is home to one of the largest Nigerian diaspora communities in the UK. The Education team at the SLG aims to play a positive role as a local broker in a wide set of social relationships, promoting the value of art in its widest sense and bringing a commitment to social justice. While some of their projects are strongly ›artist-led‹

they are also open to more devolved processes of exchange and reflection based on collective practices. They are unusual in being able to offer artists these special kinds of on-going, developed publics with whom to work.
www.southlondongallery.org

id22 – Insitute for Creative Sustainability, Berlin
id22 is a non-profit, civil society based organisation supporting cultures of sustainable urban development, urban democracy and innovative housing. id22 assists and publicises self-organised co-housing projects, organises networking events, produces publications, operates Internet portals and works with media partners to qualitatively improve the urban living environment. id22 has been working in Berlin since 2000, and co-operating with networks and initiatives locally and internationally. The Institute is interdisciplinary, emphasising human-scale demonstrations of creative sustainability. id22 explores, reports on and communicates synergies between culture, ecology, economy, participation and self-organisation throughout a variety of educational events and tours, and supports networking and exchanges of experiences.
www.id22.net/en

Quartoze, Paris
Quatorze aims to share processes activated in the transformation of contemporary metropoles, acting at three complementary levels: Pedagogy, Construction and Design. Quatorze developed the idea of ›third places‹: identifying that besides professional internships, educational communities (students, scholars, professors) need to experiment with their so-called utopias outside of universities, in the area of co-building common spaces. Over the years, Quatorze has acquired the competency to organise interdisciplinary construction workshops that allow students, professionals and most of all users to reshape their living environments in terms of their own needs. Quatorze aims to combine theoretical knowledge with constructive know-how and goes beyond utopia to design feasible dreams. Finally, Quatorze promotes the idea of Public Space Invasion, not only to build local projects, but to empower what we call ›heteropoleis‹.
www.quatorze14.org

JugendtheaterBüro Berlin
(Youth Theatre Office Berlin)
JTB is an alternative theatre company that functions at the junction of art and political empowerment. Since 2009 the organisation has worked with a non-hierarchical emancipatory approach with adolescents from all over Berlin. They aim to empower young people to use theatre and cultural action as a tool and platform to engage in social, personal and political issues that matter for them. The plays produced deal with everyday experiences in urban space and relate these to wider societal issues: racism, sexisms, and mechanisms of exclusion of marginalised groups. Importantly, young people are encouraged to develop their own artistic style and are provided with the skills required for self-determined cultural production, not only as actors, but also as directors, dramaturges, technicians and event managers. Based on this work the youth theatre festival FESTIWALLA, which attracts approximately 4000 visitors, is organised annually. In 2014 the Youth Theatre Office established its own stage, ›Theatre X‹: a young community venue that is co-conceived and

co-managed by the youth.
www.grenzen-los.eu/jugendtheaterbuero

Partners in South Africa

Drama for Life, Wits University, Johannesburg
Drama for Life is an independent academic, research, community engagement and social responsibility programme based at the Wits School of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand. Drama for Life is dedicated to the academic, research and professional development of Applied Drama: Theatre in Education, Communities and Social Contexts, Arts Education, Drama Therapy and other related Arts for Social Transformation. Since its inception in 2008, Drama for Life has played three significant roles, namely:

+ An African centre for the professional training of artists, educators, facilitators, therapists and researchers.
+ An African research hub that engages with multiple questions in relation to rich, indigenous African knowledge systems and critical social, health and education problems; with specific reference to HIV/AIDS, Sexual Health and Wellness, Human Rights and Social Justice, Social Transformation through Diversity and Conflict Management.
+ An African network for advocacy for artists, facilitators, educators, therapists and researchers working in the field of arts for social transformation.
www.dramaforlife.co.za

Cape Town TV (CTV)
CTV is a non-profit, free-to-air television channel that provides the greater Cape Town community with access to training and production facilities and the means to broadcast content produced by and for the community. The channel aims to provide information, education and entertainment programming that empowers people. The channel is aimed at the lower income population sectors that make up the majority of Cape Town's population. It addresses people in the languages that they speak, including English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. It showcases local talent, highlights local issues, provides a bridge between government and the community, and reflects the diverse cultures that make up the city's cosmopolitan population. CTV shows a range of programming that is dominated by documentaries, both international and local, together with educational material (high school curriculum aids), talk shows, short films, magazine programmes, theatre shows and music programmes.
www.capetowntv.org

dala artarchitecture, Durban
dala's aim is to investigate and implement a spatial philosophy of urban creativity:

+ That embraces the notion of a creative city.
+ That re-conceptualises and re-appropriates public life – a resurrection of the ›commons‹, where, through creativity, citizens reclaim the use of and the responsibility for urban spaces.
+ That actively engages with spaces and the people who function within public places.
+ That produces a more multi-faceted urban transformation through the endeavour to create more inclusive, liveable cities.
+ That nurtures an active public dialogue about a creative society – not only in the classrooms, but also and more importantly, on the streets. This dialogue is fundamental

to democratic practices of knowledge production.

+ Where citizens can contribute their voices to urban development in the interest of democracy in practice. With participation comes responsibility.

www.dala.org.za

Planact, Johannesburg

Planact is a well-established non-governmental organisation (NGO) focusing on urban development in terms of participatory governance and integrated human settlements, supported by capacity development, and research and advocacy programmes. Planact facilitates participatory engagement between communities and government in terms of urban development planning, implementation and monitoring, specifically addressing issues that are of primary concern for poor communities. Planact assists poor, marginalised communities to work towards improving their living conditions and creating integrated, sustainable human settlements by providing support in the areas of human settlements education; informal settlement upgrading; affordable housing; security of tenure; access to basic services; and sustainable livelihoods strategies. Planact is an active member of the Good Governance Learning Network (GGLN) in South Africa.

www.planact.org.za

Linking Partner Europe / South Africa

Goethe Institut, South Africa

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. It promotes knowledge of the German language abroad and fosters international cultural cooperation. It conveys a comprehensive picture of Germany by providing information on Germany's cultural, social and political life. The Goethe-Institut draws on the rich variety of our own many-faceted open society and Germany's lively culture. It combines the experiences and conceptions of their partners in Germany and abroad with professional skills and engages in a dialogue rooted in partnership. In doing so, they function as service providers and partners for everyone taking an active interest in Germany and in German language and culture, and act independently with no political affiliations. The Goethe-Institut faces the cultural policy challenges of globalisation and develops innovative concepts for a world made more human through mutual understanding, where cultural diversity is seen as an asset.

www.goethe.de/south africa

Academic Partner and Project EvaluationCUCR Goldsmiths College, University of London CUCR is a well-established interdisciplinary research centre within Goldsmiths' Department of Sociology with a distinguished history of collaboration with local communities and activists. It combines theoretical investigation with critical local project implementation from Deptford to Jakarta. CUCR is concerned with key issues in the constitution and social (dis)organisation of city life; it plies the intersections between the built and the social fabric of cities in the global South as well as the global North, with a strong orientation towards the cultural and the visual. CUCR is the ›intellectual‹ home of two MA programmes, MA in Photography and Urban Culture, MA World Cites and Urban Life and a new practice-based MPhil/PhD in Visual Sociology. This unique combina-

tion of programmes consolidates and extends Goldsmiths' international reputation in visual forms of urban social analysis. Academic programmes are supported with urban walks, extra seminars and workshops.

www.gold.ac.uk/cucr

Supporters

The Culture Programme of the European
Union The Culture Programme aims to achieve three main objectives: to promote cross-border mobility of those working in the cultural sector; to encourage the transnational circulation of cultural and artistic output; and to foster intercultural dialogue. For the achievement of these objectives, the programme supports three strands of activities: cultural actions; European-level cultural bodies; and analysis and dissemination activities.
Website of the EU Culture Programme (2007-2013)

GIZ – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention for Safe Public Spaces (VCP) The VCP-programme aims to support the realisation of the South African government's priority outcome number three, namely: »all people in South Africa are and feel safe«. The programme supports an integrated and holistic approach to violence prevention that looks at the social root causes of violence and crime in South Africa.Find out more at the VCP-video

HFBK – The Hochschule für Bildende Künste Hamburg
The Hochschule für bildende Künste (HFBK) is the Hamburg state academy of higher artistic and scientific education. With its wide range of subjects, the HFBK offers the opportunity to study for interdisciplinary artistic and scientific qualifications. A central role is given to engagement with topics chosen by students themselves and project-related and experimental working methods.
International homepage HFBK Hamburg

Fondation Abbé Pierre
Created in 1990 and recognised as promoting the public interest in 1992, the Foundation Abbé Pierre aims to act »in order for the most underprivileged to be sustainably housed in dignity, regardless of their income or social status«. Their assertion is that if impoverished, should have access to decent and dignified housing conditions which are crucial before planning any lifelong project. The Foundation Abbé Pierre is present all over France and works against bad housing on a daily basis: its headquarters are located in Paris and it has nine territorial agencies.
www.fondation-abbe-pierre.fr/en

Partners

Supporters

supported by the Culture Programme of the European Union

external contributors

Adam Greenfield
Greenfield is an American writer and urbanist, based in London. He graduated from New York University in 1989, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Cultural Studies. From 2008 to 2010 he was Nokia's head of design direction for user interface and services, residing in Helsinki throughout the assignment.

In 2010 he returned to New York City and founded an urban-systems design practice called ›Urbanscale‹, which specialises in design for networked cities and citizens. In September 2013, Greenfield was awarded the inaugural Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities at the LSE Cities Centre of the London School of Economics. Greenfield is best known for his 2006 book ›Everyware: The dawning age of ubiquitous computing‹.
www.urbanscale.org

Alexander Opper
Alexander Opper lives and works in Johannesburg, as an educator, writer, artist, architect and designer. In 2007 he joined the University of Johannesburg's (UJ) Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (FADA). In 2010 he conceptualised the UJ's master's programme in architecture, which he directed from 2011 to 2014. In 2015, as part of UJ's new ›Unit System Africa‹, he heads up Unit 1: Architecture and Infrastructure. In this unit, he hopes to reinterpret the spatial eccentricities and opportunities of three post-conflict cities – Johannesburg, Berlin and Abidjan – in new and productive ways. Opper's teaching approach, of ›folding‹ the archi-tectural studio into the field, is driven by a process-oriented and emergent ›conversation‹ between the architectural studio and sites of under-researched sociogeographic conditions in and around Johannesburg. Through this entangle-ment of studio and city, the city becomes the studio and the studio, the city.

Opper's creative productions and writings rely on an approach he refers to as ›Undoing Architecture‹. His site-specific interventions subvert entrenched codes attached to the white cube and interrogate uneven power relationships embed-ded in, and in-between, the contested and complex conditions which embody the contemporary city.
www.uj.ac.za/en/faculties/fada

Alison Rooke
Alison Rooke is a Senior Lecturer in the Sociology Department at Goldsmiths, University of London and Director of the Centre for Urban and Community Re-search. Her doctoral research was ›Lesbian landscapes and portraits: The sexual geographies of everyday life‹, and employed visual research methods to examine gendered and sexual subjectivities in cities by grounding queer theoris-ing in everyday lived complexity.

Since completing her PhD in 2004 Alison has developed expertise in participative and socially engaged arts, action research and evaluation with a specific focus on the social, economic and cultural impact of art and creativity in rela-

tion to ur-ban regeneration and gentrification. Alison's work seeks to challenge the idea that research impacts on society as if from the out-side. In this spirit she continues to be engaged in a wide range of activities that embed this approach in a number of highly practical endeavors.
www.gold.ac.uk/cucr

Bernd Kraeftner
Bernd Kraeftner is an artist and researcher. He has realised numerous transdis-ciplinary research projects on and at the interfaces of science, society and art. He is a founder of the research group ›Xperiment / Shared Inc.‹ and teaches at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna in the Departments of Art and Science, and Digital Art.
www.sharedinc.net

Bruno Latour
Bruno Latour was trained as a philosopher and an anthropologist. From 1982 to 2006, he has been professor at the Centre de Sociologie de l'Innovation at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Mines in Paris. For various periods he has been visiting professor at UCSD, at the London School of Economics as well as in the History of Science department of Harvard University. He is now professor at Sciences Po Paris, and vice-president for research. As of October 2013, he is part-time Centennial professor, at the London School of Economics in London.

While in Sciences Po, he created the ›médi-alab‹ to seize the chance offered to social the-ory by the spread of digital methods. Together with Valérie Pihet he has created a new experi-mental programme in art and politics (SPEAP). For the last three years he has been engaged in the making of AIME, a collaborative digital plat-form and an inquiry into modes of exist-ence for learning how to compose a common world. In collaboration with Peter Weibel, Latour also curated two major international exhibitions at the ZKM centre in Karlsruhe, Germany, enti-tled ›Iconoclash – Beyond the image wars in science, religion and art‹ and ›Making things public: The atmospheres of democracy‹.
www.bruno-latour.fr

Caroline Wanjiku Kihato
Dr. Caroline Wanjiku Kihato is a Visiting Researcher at the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of the Witwaters-rand, Johannesburg and a Global Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington DC. In 2011, she received a MacArthur grant on Migration and Development and spent a year as a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for the Study of International Migration (ISIM), George-town University, Washington DC. Her career has involved both teaching and conduct-ing research in the academy and the non-profit sector in southern and East Africa.

Her research and teaching interests are migra-tion, gender, governance, and urbanisation in the global South. She holds an MSc in Develop-ment Planning (University of the Witwatersrand) and a PhD in Sociology (University of South Africa). Caroline has published widely on urbani-sation for both academic and popular audiences. She is the author of ›Migrant women of Johan-nesburg: Life in an in-between city‹ (Palgrave Macmillan & Wits University Press) and co-edi-tor of ›Urban diversity: Space, culture and inclu-sive pluralism in cities worldwide‹.

Christian von Wissel
Christian von Wissel is an architect and visual sociologist. He is teaching assistant at the chair for History and Theory of Architecture and the City at Technische Universität Braunschweig, lecturer at the chair for Theory and History of Architecture, Art and Design at Technische Universität München and research assistant at the Centre for Urban and Community Research (CUCR) at Goldsmiths, Univer-sity of London, where he is also doing his PhD. Christian is founding member of the urban research collective and curatorial platform Citámbulos in Mexico City. In 2012 he was Schader Fellow at Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart.

He has published on Mexico City, urban peripheries, informality and visual, sensory and artistic urban research. His curatorial work includes the exhibitions ›Un viaje a través del espejo‹ at the National Anthropology Museum of Mexico City and ›Journey to the Mexican Megalopolis‹ at the German Centre for Architecture in Berlin. His research spans from urban life and imaginaries to art as research and the politics of curating.
www.citambulos.net

Diego Ferrari
Diego Ferrari is an artist and photographer. His work interrogates the relationship between social values and public spaces, with a particular interest in the relation-ship between the body and its environment. Ferrari studied Fine Arts at Escola Llotja in Barcelona, was awarded a BA in Fine Art at Goldsmith's College, University of London and an MA in Art and Architecture at the University of Kent. He teaches the Photography, Art and Architecture course at Central Saint Martins and is a lecturer in Photography at Kingston University, London.

Ferrari has also lectured at Tate Britain, Goldsmiths College, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Centre for Contemporary Culture of Catalunya, Barcelona and University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. His recent work takes a fine art approach to street photography.
www.diegoferrari.com

Henk Borgdorff
Henk Borgdorff is professor in Research in the Arts at the University of the Arts in The Hague, Netherlands. He studied music theory at the Royal Conserva-toire in The Hague and Sociology and Philosophy at Leiden University in the Netherlands. The focus of his research is on the political and theoretical rationale of artistic research, where the making of art (creating, designing, composing, per-forming) is central to the research process, and the outcomes of the research are also artworks and art practices (images, compositions, installations, per-form-ances).

Borgdorff co-founded the *Research Catalogue*, an international online multimedia database and workspace for the archiving and exposition of artistic research. He is a member of the Society for Artistic Research and serves as an editor for the *Journal for Artistic Research.* He regularly acts as a reviewer for several funding agencies and research councils in Europe and is a member of the expert panel of the ERC (European Research Council, Social Sciences and

Hu-manities: Cultures and Cultural Production).
www.jar-online.net

Judith Kroell
Judith Kroell is a sociologist and as a member of the research group ›Xperiment / Shared Inc.‹ (since 1999), she has participated in various projects at the inter-faces of science, society and art. She is a lecturer in the Department. of Social Studies of Science, University of Vienna and she is co-founder and coordinator of the association *Researchers without Borders*.
www.sharedinc.net

Lilli Kobler
Lilli Kobler grew up in Bonn, Berlin, Cairo, New Delhi and Tel Aviv, and completed her Masters degree in cultural anthropology, Arabic and psychology at the Free University of Berlin. Her work experience in human rights and development agencies as well as intercultural project management, led her to start working at the Goethe-Institut in Cairo in 2007.

Between 2010 and 2014 she was director of the Goethe-Institut in Khartoum, Sudan and since 2014 she coordinates projects in the area of education, culture and development at the Goethe-Institut South Africa in Johannesburg.
www.goethe.de/joburg

Marcos L. Rosa
Marcos L. Rosa studied architecture and urban planning at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of São Paulo and at the TU Berlin. Since 2010 he has been teaching and researching at the Chair for Architecture and Urban Design of the ETH Zürich. His research is on current urban phenomena in global systems, and its outcomes in the micro-scale, focusing on everyday life, spontaneous urbanism, participation and process design. His design for housing systems represented Brazil at the 4th Bienal Iberoamericana in Lima, Peru, 2004 and was exhibited in the São Paulo Architecture Bienal, 2005.

Rosa produced ›Navigating São Paulo‹, a guide to São Paulo Modernism and to its ›contra-modern‹ favelas, and organised the ›Urban Stories‹ lecture series. He has worked with the Urban Age South America Research Group and co-ordinated a research project for the Alfred Herrhausen Society – the International Forum of the Deutsche Bank. In 2012, he coordinated a group of researchers in Cape Town, Istanbul, Mexico City, Mumbai and São Paulo. The research reflected on the impact of community initiatives on currently used planning instruments and methods which resulted in the publication *Handmade Urbanism*, edited with Ute Weiland.
www.marcoslrosa.com

Mark Lewis
Mark Lewis is a South African freelance photographer, currently living and working out of Johannesburg. For the past 8 years he has been working with the Africa correspondent for various German newspapers and magazines. This work has enabled him to travel throughout the continent, documenting the paradoxes of life in Africa; the co-existence always of beauty and brutality, greed and generosity.

He has participated in many group exhibitions and had solo shows both on the African continent and abroad. His professional objective is

to continue working in Africa, photographing and meeting people that inspire and move him. Lewis is currently working with Tanya Zack on a series of ten books about the inner city of Johannesburg.
www.fourthwallbooks.com/wake-joburg

Michael Guggenheim
Michael Guggenheim is a sociologist who is interested in experts and lay people in fields such as architecture and civil protection. He is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London. Most recently he co-edited a book on *Disasters and Politics*.
www.migug.net

Michael Keith
Michael Keith is Director of COMPAS and Co-director of the University of Ox-ford Future of Cities programme. His research focuses on migration related processes of urban change. His most recent work is the monograph *China Con-structing Capitalism: Economic Life and Urban Change* (2014) and his next, a book for Cambridge University Press, *Power, Identity and Representation: Race, Governance and Mobilisation in British Society*.

He has experience outside the academy as a politician for twenty years in the east end of London serving in the 1990s and early 2000s for five years as leader of a London local authority, Chair of the Thames Gateway London Partnership, and also as a commissioner on the Blair government's response to the 2005 London bombings, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion. He is currently the co-ordinator of the ESRC portfolio of investments and research programme on Urban Transformations.
www.compas.ox.ac.uk

Ndimphiwe Jamile
Ndimphiwe Jamile is an architect with over nine years of expe-rience acquired from community based developments in both, rural and urban environments. He has recently completed a Masters in urban management from the Technische Universität Berlin, Germany, with a research focus on perceptions and usage of public open spaces within townships in South Africa.

He is currently working as a freelance architectural practitioner on medium scale projects for the private and public fraternity with the aspiration of advancing par-ticipatory based approaches in architectural interventions. He hopes to further engage more in both research and experimental work on the development of safer public spaces within the post-apartheid city and further afield.

Oliver Kremershof
Oliver Kremershof was born in 1985 in Frankfurt am Main. He now lives and works – after stations in Freiburg, Berlin, Mexico City and Leipzig – in Offenbach am Main. In 2002, he joined forces with Robin Resch in order to establish the cultural initiative Artoholics (www.artoholics.info) in the Rhine-Main area. This was the starting point for his current work as a cultural manager. In 2012 he finished his studies in this field with a Master of Arts from the University of Music and Theatre.

In cooperation with various partners he developed the international art exhibition ›Global

generation – the young generation lifestyles‹ (www.global-generation.net). Beyond that, in 2009 he developed the project ›MEX.doc - fiction and reality in Mexico‹, that included a book release, a staged readings and an exhibition in Mexico City.

Since 2008, Oliver Kremershof has been involved in different positions and projects for urban dialogues Berlin, such as in the projects ›Cultural Studies: ASCA – Accessibility Standards for Comtemporary Art‹ (2011–2013), ›ID Berlin‹ and in particular ›Nine Urban Biotopes‹, whose conceptual development he has initiated with Stefan Horn.

2012 together with his brother Nicolas Kremershof and Loimi Brautmann, the Urban Media Project. For the Urban Media Project Oliver takes care of research, conception and analysis as well as the strategic project management.
www.urbanmediaproject.de

Sophie Hope
Sophie Hope is an artist and curator and works as a lecturer and academic on the MA in Arts Management and Policy at Birkbeck, University of London.

Since co-founding the curatorial partnership B+B in 2000, she has gone on to pursue her independent practice, with projects such as ›Critical Friends‹ (2008-ongoing), a participant-led investigation into socially engaged art; ›The Wild Spirits of Efford‹ (2010), her first radio play and ›Het Reservaat‹ (2007) a large-scale community performance in a new Dutch town.

Through her work, she tries to inspect the uncertain relationships between art and society. She also writes and facilitates workshops, dealing with issues of public art, the politics of socially engaged art and curating as critical practice, and has recently completed her PhD: ›Participating in the Wrong Way? Practice Based Research into Cultural Democracy and the Commissioning of Art to Effect Change‹.
www.sophiehope.org.uk

Tanya Zack
Tanya Zack is a Johannesburg based urban planner. She has a PhD in town planning from Wits University, and over 20 years' experience in policy research and project work in the city. She has a keen interest in the inner city of Johannesburg with its liveliness, its dynamic moods and views as well as its many surprises. But she also has a deep fascination for the ordinary and extraordinary lives that are led in this space and is a collector of urban stories. These are both tales told to her and pictures that she captures in her wanderings through the city.

The works that she has produced, in collage, greeting cards, postcards and cal-endars are the first products of these explorations. They document something of the daily life of Johannesburg's inner core and celebrate its extraordinary entrepreneurial spirit. Zack is currently working with Mark Lewis on a series of ten books about the inner city of Johannesburg.
fourthwallbooks.com/wake-joburg

Taryn Jeanie Mackay
Taryn Jeanie Mackay is a writer, scholar and cultural activist who focuses on the role story-telling can play in healing and socially transforming

communities in the global South. She completed a Bachelor of Social Science: gender and politics at the University of Cape Town in 2004.

In 2012, she graduated from the University of Witwatersrand in journalism. During this time she was invited to present her research paper at the International Association for Media and Communication Researchers conference in Istanbul, Turkey. She was awarded the Anthony Sampson grant for writing, which saw versions of her story ›Beautyful, radiant things‹ published in the Mail & Guardian and the New York-based *Liberator* magazine. Since its formation in 2003, she has played a leadership role in Imbawula Trust, focusing on Kgantsa Ho Ganye, a community arts project growing a media centre at Thabisang Primary in Johan-nesburg. Originally from Cape Town, she lives and works in Orlando West, Soweto.

Valentina Rojas Loa

Valentina Rojas Loa holds a Bachelors degree in Spanish Linguistics and Literature from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and a Masters in Man-agement and Cultural Policy from the University of London. She has worked as a project manager on the land art project ›The Invisible City‹ for artist Tim Parsa, as well as co-coordinator of the festival of dance and architecture, ›City and Body‹, as management assistant on behalf of the Deutsche Bank – Urban Age Award Mexico 2010, and was in charge of international networking for the sym-posium ›DesignBuild Studio, New Ways in Architectural Education‹ at TU Berlin, 2012.

As founding partner of the urban research collective Citámbulos, she has curated various exhibitions in Mexico and abroad regarding urban issues. She has worked as editorial assistant and proof reader at the magazine *Artes de México*, and participated as author and co-editor of *Citamblers. The Incidence of the Remarkable* (Mexico, 2007), *Citámbulos: A trip through the Mexican megalopo-lis* (Berlin, 2008). She is co-curator of the exhibition ›The Turn of the Bicycle‹ at the Franz Mayer Museum of Arts and Crafts, Mexico City, 2015.
www.citambulos.net

Anthony Schrag (Glasgow, Great Britain)

Anthony Schrag (1975), was born in Zimbabwe and grew up in the Middle East, UK and Canada. He completed his MFA in Glasgow in 2005. Within the ›participatory arts realm,‹ he has worked internationally and across the UK.

He has been the recipient of numerous awards including The Hope Scot Trust, Creative Scotland, the Dewar Arts Award, Standpoint: Futures, British Arts Council as well as a Henry Moore Artist Fellowship. While also being a practicing artist, Anthony is currently completing a PhD at Newcastle University exploring participatory projects and conflict. He often use strategies of ›play‹ as he believes it is an integral way of developing new knowledge and also allows access to a wide audience group, as it employs humour, risk and physicality.

The artist Nathalie De Brie referred to Schrags practice as ›Fearless‹. The writer Marjorie Celona once said: »Anthony, you have a lot of ideas. Not all of them are good«.

www.anthonyschrag.com

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Antje Schiffers (Berlin, Germany)

Born in Heiligendorf, Antje Schiffers (1967), was a flower illustrator in Mexico, a travelling painter in Italy, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirgistan and Uzbekistan, company artist in the tyre industry and ambassador and correspondent for the Gallery for Contemporary Art in Leipzig. She has made barter trades with farmers and with corporate consultants.

In 2003 she co-founded the international artist initiative Myvillages that focuses on rural space – as a place for cultural production. Currently they bring together ten villages from around Europe, Ghana, China and the US for the International Village Show, a two-year-programmes in the Gallery for Contemporary Art (GfZK) in Leipzig.

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

www.antjeschiffers.de

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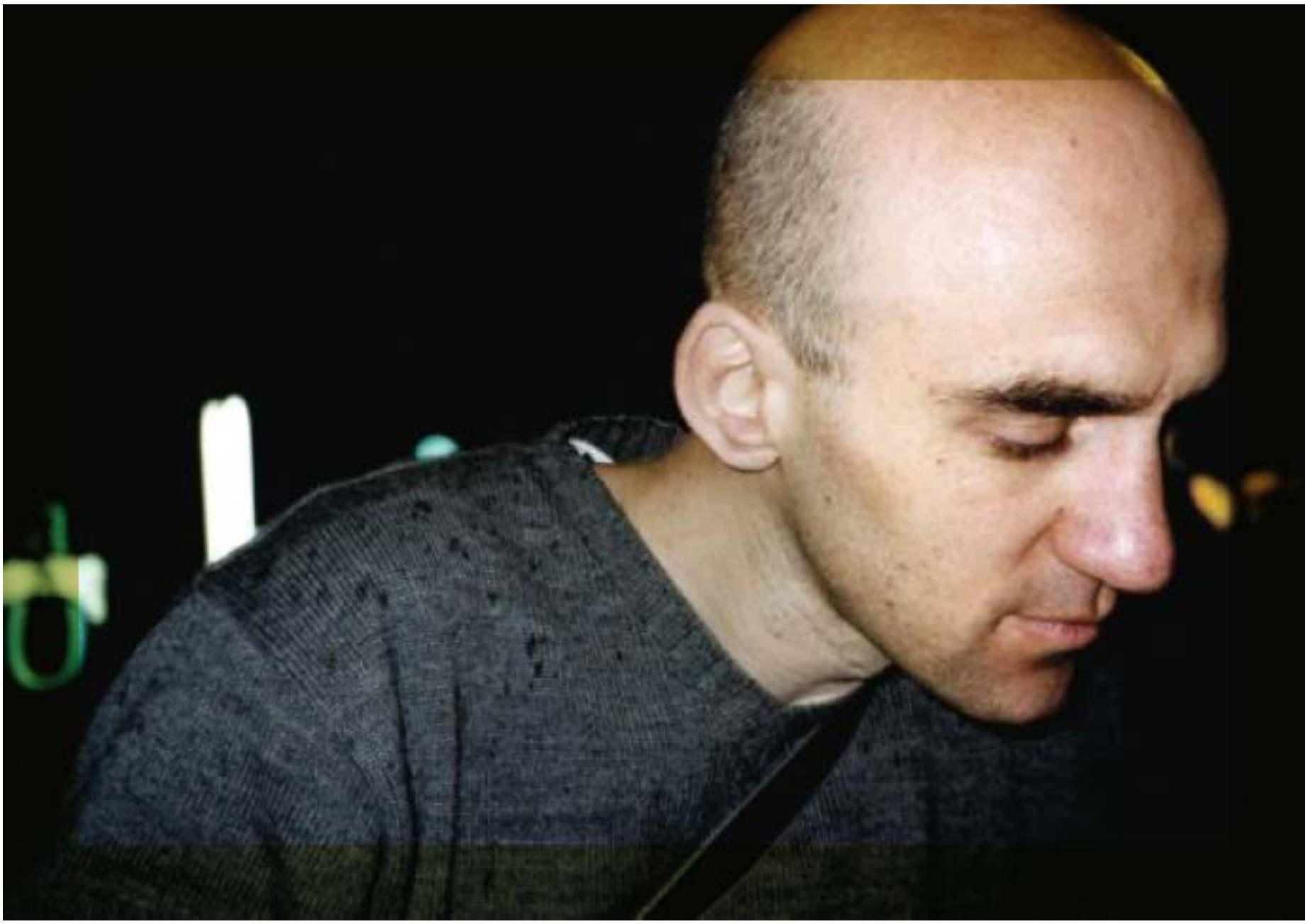

Armin Linke (Milan, Italy / Berlin, Germany)

Armin Linke (1966), is a photographer and filmmaker, and was born in Milano. He combines a range of contemporary image-processing technologies to blur the border between fiction and reality. His artistic practice is concerned with different possibilities of dealing with photographic archives and their respective manifestations, as well as the interrelations and transformative forces between urban, architectural or spatial functions and the human being interacting with these environments. Linke calls into question the conventions of photographic practice due to his increasing consideration of the installation, display and social usage of photography.

He was Research Affiliate at MIT Visual Arts Programme Cambridge, guest professor at the IUAV Arts and Design University in Venice and is currently professor at the HfG Karlsruhe.

During 2013 and 2014, Armin, together with Territorial Agency and Anselm Franke, executed the ›Anthropocene Observatory‹ video series at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. His was recently awarded a prize at 9. Biennale di Architettura, Venezia + Graz Architecture Film Festival.

www.arminlinke.com

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Athi-Patra Ruga (Johannesburg / CaTown, South Africa)

Born in Umtata in South Africa, 1984, Athi-Patra Ruga explores the border-zones between fashion, performance and contemporary art, making work that exposes and subverts the body in relation to structure, ideology and politics.

Bursting with eclectic multicultural references, carnal sensuality and a dislocated undercurrent of humour, his performances, videos, costumes and photographic images create a world where cultural identity is no longer determined by geographical origins, ancestry or biological disposition, but is increasingly becoming a hybrid construct. A Utopian counter-proposal to the sad dogma of the division between mind and body, sensuality and intelligence, pop culture, craft and fine art, his works expresses the eroticism of knowledge and reconciles the dream with experience.

Recent exhibitions include: ›The Future White Women of Azania Saga‹ Whatiftheworld Gallery, Cape Town 2014. ›Public Intimacy: Art and Other Ordinary Acts‹, SFMOMA and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco CA, 2014; ›Ilulwane‹, solo presentation at Long Street Baths, Cape Town, 2012 ›A Shot In The Arse‹, The Michaelis Gallery, Cape Town, 2012.

www.athipatraruga.blogspot.de

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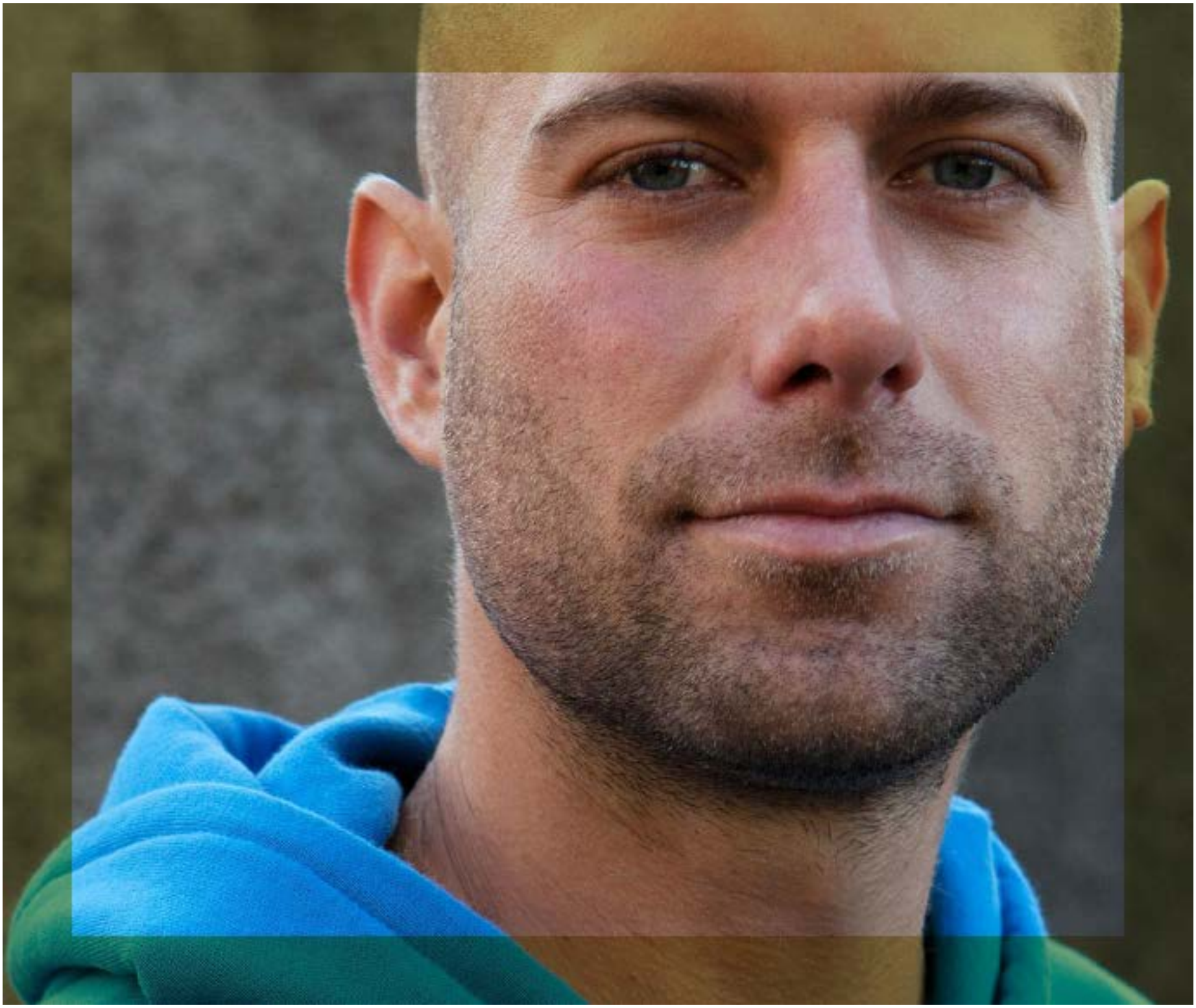

Dan Halter (Cape Town, South Africa)

The experience of migration is at the centre of the work of Dan Halter (1977), a Zimbabwean citizen. His work, which comprises a mix of contextual installations and works made for gallery walls, mixes together mundane, everyday objects with themes of migration. The outcomes are often both disturbing and humorous in their evocation of a detached, non-local grounded identity.

Dan Halter completed his BFA at the Michaelis School of Fine Art in 2001. In addition to five solo exhibitions Halter has participated in numerous group shows, including US at theIziko: South African National Gallery, ›Zeitgenössische Kunst aus Südafrika‹ at the Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (NBK), VideoBrasil in São Paulo and the 2009 Havana Biennale. He has completed residencies in Zürich, Rio de Janeiro and Scotland. Recent exhibitions include the 7th Triennial of Contemporary Textile Arts in Tournai, Belgium and ›Dan Halter / Mappa Del Mondo‹ at the Nassauischer Kunstverein in Wiesbaden Germany.

www.danhalter.com Go to article

doung Jahangeer (Durban, South Africa)

doung jahangeer (1970) is a Kreole-Mauritian. He is an architect. He is not an architect. His experience of the ›profession‹ led him to broaden his definition of architecture focusing on space – an architecturewithoutwalls.

In 2000, doung conceptualised and implemented the ›CityWalk‹ initiative as a way of directly engaging and observing the flux and mutability of his adopted city. It now includes 13 major cities internationally. His work is multimedia – including live performance, film/ video, sculpture, installation and architecture.

He has instigated projects with organisations and artists locally and internationally of diverse nature including site responsive architectural installations that engages the urban fabric often in an openly critical and sometimes provocative manner.

In 2008 he co-founded dala, an NPO which engages artarchitecture for social justice. He recently published in *Urban Future MANIFESTOS* (Hatje Cantz 2010) along with Saskia Sassen, Edward Soja, AbdouMaliq Simone, Michael Sorkin and Lebbeus Woods, amongst others.

www.dala.org.za

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Marjetica Potrč (Ljubljana, Slovenia / Berlin, Germany)

Marjetica Potrč (1953), is an artist and architect. Her artworks have been exhibited extensively throughout Europe and the Americas, including at the Venice Biennial (1993, 2003, 2009) and the São Paulo Biennial (1996, 2006), and are shown regularly at the Galerie Nordenhake in Berlin. Her many community-based on-site projects include ›Dry Toilet‹ (Caracas, 2003) and ›The Cook, the Farmer, his Wife and Their Neighbour‹ (Stedelijk Goes West, Amsterdam, 2009.

Since 2011 she has been professor at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg where she runs the course, *Design for the Living World* within the Design Department. It is a research-based, cross-disciplinary course focused on participatory design projects where students collaborate with local residents in the tradition of learning by doing. In Potrč's view, the sustainable solutions that are implemented and disseminated by communities serve to empower these communities and help create a democracy built from below.

She has also been a visiting professor at a number of other institutions, including the MIT (2005) and IUAV in Venice (2008, 2010). Potrč has received numerous prestigious awards, including the Vera List Center for Arts and Politics Fellowship at The New School in New York (2007).

www.potrc.org
www.designforthelivingworld.com Go to article

Taswald Pillay (Johannesburg, South Africa)

Having graduated from the University of Johannesburg, Taswald Pillay (1983) is now a candidate architect currently participating in a multi-disciplinary design team of a corporate company based in Johannesburg.

His interests stretch across theoretical and applied concerns regarding localities of informal settlement. This has led to his involvement in a combination of projects ranging from informal settlement upgrading initiatives to various architectural workshops and area mapping exercises. Consequently, he has become deeply fascinated by the tough realities of ›informal‹ and/or township contexts, as well as the vast opportunities they afford in the way of blurring commonly accepted notions of both visual and spatial registers.

His thesis, entitled ›Bridging the divide: an alternate method of learning‹, has therefore served as his entry point into a search for the role of architecture in mediating and fostering a re-familiarisation with discourses on African cityness.

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Terry Kurgan (Johannesburg, South Africa)

Terry Kurgan (1958), is an artist, writer and curator based in Johannesburg. Her artistic interest is in photography, and in the complex and paradoxical nature of all photographic transactions. She explores this through a diverse body of artwork that foregrounds notions of intimacy, pushing at the boundaries between ›the private‹ and ›the public‹ in the South African public domain.

Her projects have been sited in spaces as varied as a maternity hospital, a public library, an inner city park and a prison. She's been awarded many prizes and grants, and has exhibited and published broadly in South Africa and internationally. Her book *Hotel Yeoville* was published by Fourthwall Books, Johannesburg in 2013, and recent exhibitions include: >Public Intimacy: Art And Other: Ordinary Acts In South Africa, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) with Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA), 2014; ›Sharp, Sharp Johannesburg‹, La Gaite Lyrique, Paris (2013) and ›Public Art/Private Lives‹, Gallery AOP, Johannesburg (2013).

She is currently Artist in Residence at WiSER, Wits University – where she is producing a literary work, an artist's book comprising a series of linked, narrative non-fiction essays that develop in relation to the evocative power of photographs as objects.

www.terrykurgan.com

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Rangoato Hlasane (Johannesburg, South Africa)

Rangoato Hlasane (1981), is a pan-Africanist artist, cultural worker, writer, DJ and also the co-founder of Keleketla! Library which empowers inner-city youth and emerging creatives through art, culture and heritage programmes.

He is a member of the faculty staff of the Wits School of Arts, and an educationalist, artist, and cultural worker, His design and illustration work includes the public campaign for the one-day only newspaper titled T*he Chronic* (2011) by the Cape Town-based pan-African journal, *Chimurenga.* His independent publication, ›CCTV surveys current practice in Johannesburg and elsewhere‹, borrowing from the Medu Art Ensemble Newsletters (1979-1984) ethos and aesthetics. Rangoato was invited together with Keleketla! Library co-founder Malose Malahlela to guest author a Goethe Institut-commissioned report on art/s education in Africa entitled ›Creating Spaces‹.

As Mma Tseleng, he DJ's to expand his research into the social, political and economic significance of South African music, with Kwaito at the centre of this lifelong engagement. His research and writing into South African music histories is published in two books: *Not No Place* by Dorothee Kreutzfeldt and Bettina Malcomess and the bilingual *Space Between Us* edited by Marie-Hélène Gutberlet (2013).

www.curatorialtalks.wordpress.com/2013/07/15/rangoato-hlasane-2/

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Stefan Horn (Berlin, Germany)

Stefan Horn works internationally as a free-lance curator, project manager, set and exhibition designer and in the field of visual communications.

His background and training are in drama and philosophy, sociology and political science, which he studied at the University of Vienna and the Free University of Berlin.

Since 2000 he has been the artistic director of the Berlin-based art association urban dialogues, which engages with all manner of change and flux in relation to urban issues through site-specific and community-based art projects and urban interventions. Stefan‘s latest commissions have been from the German National Theatre in Weimar, National Gallery – Baden-Baden, Academy of Arts – Berlin, House of World Cultures – Berlin and Sparda-Bank Art Foundation in Stuttgart.

He has gathered years of experience in the conceptualisation, design, financial management, direction and production of artistic and cultural projects on a local, European and international level.
He has initiated and directed projects that have been partnered and supported by the European Union within the Culture Programme, the Lifelong Learning Programme and the Europe Aid Programme, the Federal Cultural Foundation in Germany and British Council amongst others.

www.urbandialogues.de

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