

THE SOCIAL [Re]PRODUCTION OF ARCHITECTURE

**POLITICS,
VALUES AND
ACTIONS IN
CONTEMPORARY
PRACTICE**

Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal

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Sandra Bartoli is Visiting Professor at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Nuremberg, Germany. She was research associate (2009–2015) at the Technical University Berlin. Her office, Büro für Konstruktivismus, founded with Silvan Linden, is a practice of architecture and research. She is the author of the book *Tiergarten* (60pages, 2014) and is co-publisher and editor of *Architektur in Gebrauch* (Architecture in Use), an architectural magazine which explores the value of use in the production conditions of architecture. She co-authored the book *La Zona – Index* (ngbk, 2012). She conceived and co-organized the international symposium “Tiergarten, Landscape of Transgression” (TU Berlin) at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin in 2015; the book is forthcoming.

Ana Betancour is an architect and Rector of the UMA School of Architecture, Umeå, Sweden, where she is also a Professor in Architecture and Urban Design. She was previously Professor in Urban Design at Chalmers University of Technology and Director of the Master’s programme Architecture and Urban Design. She founded A + URL/Architecture + Urban Research Laboratory, and ran the architectural practice Urban + Architecture Agency, whose work includes numerous projects that range from architectural and urban design, academic research, multidisciplinary cultural and new media projects. Her work investigates alternative strategies and ways to operate and catalyze change within the global transformations affecting cities today. She is widely published, exhibited, and is a member of various international reference groups, networks and organizations, nationally and internationally.

Kathrin Böhm is an artist and founding member of the London-based art and architecture collective public works, and the pan-European artist initiative Myvillages, whose work is collaborative and focused towards an expansive and productive public realm. Current projects include ‘Company: Movement, Deals and Drinks’ in East London (2014, ongoing), the ‘International Village Show’ at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Leipzig (2015–2016) and the ongoing ‘Haystacks’ series.

Neil Brenner is Professor of Urban Theory at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, MA. His most recent book is *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*

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Ana Džokić and **Marc Neelen** (Belgrade/Rotterdam) are architects, who have been working since 2000 under the name **STEALTH.unlimited**. Their practice operates between the fields of urban research, spatial interventions and cultural activism, pointing to the responsibilities and capacities of architecture in contemporary societies and opening up space for citizens’ involvement in urban development. They are members of the Smarter Building initiative, Belgrade.

Katherine Gibson is an economic geographer with an international reputation for innovative research on economic transformation, and over 30 years’ experience of working with communities to build resilient economies. As J.K. Gibson-Graham, the collective authorial presence she shares with the late Julie Graham (Professor of Geography, University of Massachusetts Amherst), her books include *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (Blackwell, 1996) and *A Postcapitalist Politics* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006). Her most recent books are *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities*, co-authored with Jenny Cameron and Stephen Healy (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), *Making Other Worlds Possible: Performing Diverse Economies*, co-edited with Gerda Roelvink and Kevin St Martin (University of Minnesota Press, 2015) and *Manifesto for Living in the Anthropocene*, co-edited with Deborah Bird Rose and Ruth Fincher (Punctum Press, 2015).

Nasser Golzari and **Yara Sharif** are practising architects and academics. Both teach at Oxford Brookes University as well as the University of Westminster, London. Having lived and worked in conflict zones, they developed a special interest in the subject of cultural identity, politics and responsive architecture. They mainly look at design as a mean to facilitate and empower communities. Combining practice with research, they co-founded the Palestinian Regeneration

Team (PART), which aims to explore creative and responsive spatial practices that can heal the fractured landscape of Palestine. Their work has been published widely, Sharif has been granted the 2013 commendation award – RIBA's President Award for Research for Outstanding PhD Thesis. Their collaborative work with PART on the historic centre of Birzeit won the 2013 Aga Khan Award for Architecture, while the revitalization of the historic centre of Beit Iksa won the 2014 Holcim Award for Sustainable Construction.

Rainer Hehl is an architect/urban planner and is currently Professor for the Architecture and Urban Design Innovation Program at the Technische Universität Berlin. He directed the Master of Advanced Studies in Urban Design programme at the ETH Zurich, conducting research and design projects on urban developments in emerging territories, with a focus on informal settlements and mass housing in Brazil. In addition to having lectured widely on urban informality, popular architecture, and hybrid urbanities, he is founder of the Bureau for Architecture Urban Design and Collaborative Action (BAUCO). Rainer holds a PhD from the ETH, Zurich, on urbanization strategies for informal settlements, focusing on case studies in Rio de Janeiro.

Gabu Heindl is an architect and urban researcher in Vienna. She is the director of GABU Heindl Architektur, a practice specializing in public interventions, cultural and social buildings, and urban research/planning. She is the curator of exhibitions, lectures and symposia on issues of politics in architecture and urban planning. Gabu currently teaches at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, having studied in Vienna, Tokyo and Princeton. She is the author of several publications in books and architectural journals (JAE, Umbau, GAM, dérive a.o.), editor of *Just Architecture* (ERA21, 2012), *Arbeit Zeit Raum. Bilder and Bauten der Arbeit im Postfordismus* (turia+kant, 2008) and co-editor of *position alltag – Architecture in the Context of Everyday life* (HDA Verlag, 2009). Since 2013, she has been Chairwoman of the Austrian Society for Architecture (www.gabuheindl.at).

Mathias Heyden is the co-founder of the Berlin community project, K 77, where he is engaged as a political activist and cultural worker, inhabitant and builder, craftsman and designer. With his office ISPARA, he co-produced, among other works, the event and book, *Under Construction: Strategies of Participative Architecture and Spatial Appropriation*, the exhibition and pamphlets, 'An architektur 19–21: community design. involvement and architecture in the US

since 1963', and the visual research project, 'Where if not us? Participatory design and its radical approaches'. Parallel to lecturing in Europe and the USA, he was guest professor at Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Nürnberg, and is research assistant at the Technische Universität Berlin.

Rory Hyde is the Curator of Contemporary Architecture and Urbanism at the V&A Museum, London, Adjunct Senior Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne, and author of *Future Practice: Conversations from the Edge of Architecture* (Routledge, 2012).

Elke Krasny is a curator, cultural theorist, urban researcher and writer. She is a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria. Elke's theoretical and curatorial work is firmly rooted in socially engaged art and spatial practices, urban epistemology, post-colonial theory, and feminist historiography. In her conceptually driven and research-based curatorial practice she works along the intersections of art, architecture, education, feminism, landscape, spatial politics, and urbanism. Recent curatorial works include *The Force Is in the Mind: The Making of Architecture*, including a publication of the same name (Birkhauser, 2008). *Women and the City: A Different Topography of Vienna* (2011), *Penser Tout Haut. Faire l'Architecture* (2011), *Hong Kong City Telling*, Hong Kong Community Museum Project, (2011); *Hands-on Urbanism 1850–2012*. Her *The Right to Green* was invited to the 2012 Venice Biennale. She has edited and authored a number of books on architecture, urbanism, and feminist historiography, and her writing has been published widely in edited volumes, exhibition catalogues and magazines.

Phil Langley is an architect and computational designer, based in London, and is also a PhD candidate at the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield. Phil has worked in practice for over ten years and specializes in the design of digital tools and hacks to modify and disrupt the existing, proprietary software platforms currently used in the industry. His research further explores other ways of engaging with digital technology for spatial design practice, with a particular focus on open source approaches to software and coding. He is also a founding member of OPENkhana, a collaborative group that works between architectural, computational and artistic practice.

Helge Mooshammer is the director of the international research projects, Relational Architecture and Other Markets (www.other-markets.org) at the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Vienna University of Technology, Austria. He is currently a Research Fellow in the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths College, University of London. His research is concerned with changing forms of urban sociality arising from the processes of transnationalization, capital movements, informal economies, and newly emerging regimes of governance.

Ruth Morrow is the curatorial advisor to PS² and Professor of Architecture at Queen's University Belfast. Ruth has a long-standing interest in people and place and believes that fundamentally architectural practice is pedagogical: the focus of her next project.

Peter Mörttenböck is Professor of Visual Culture at the Vienna University of Technology, and visiting researcher at Goldsmiths College, University of London, where he has initiated the Networked Cultures project (www.networkedcultures.org), a platform for global research on collaborative art and architecture practices. His current work explores the interaction of such practices with resource politics, global economies and urban transformation.

Mörttenböck and Mooshammer have published numerous articles on contemporary art, bottom-up urbanism and collaborative forms of spatial production, including in *Grey Room*, *Architectural Research Quarterly* and *Third Text*. Their recent books include *Visual Cultures as Opportunity* (2015), *Informal Market Worlds: The Architecture of Economic Pressure* (2015), *Space (Re)Solutions: Intervention and Research in Visual Culture* (2011), and *Networked Cultures: Parallel Architectures and the Politics of Space* (2008) (www.thinkarchitecture.net).

Peter Mutschler is an artist, curator and director of PS², Belfast. His curatorial focus is on projects which are artistically and socially relevant with the aim of re-connecting art with society. Besides the rotating programme in PS², he works on two long-term projects with artists and communities in the small village of Ballykinler and at an interface site in North Belfast.

Doina Petrescu is Professor of Architecture and Design Activism at the University of Sheffield. She is co-founder, together with Constantin Petcou, of atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa), a collective platform which conducts explorations, actions and research concerning participative architecture, resilience and cities co-produced transformation. Recent projects include Ecobox and Passage 56 in Paris and R-Urban, a participative strategy for local resilience in the Parisian Region. These projects have received international recognition and numerous awards across the years including the Zumtobel Award (2012), the Curry Stone Prize (2011), and the European Public Space Prize (2010). Her publications include *R-Urban Act: A Participative Strategy of Urban Resilience* (2015), *Trans-Local Act: Cultural Politics Within and Beyond* (2009), *Altering Practices: Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space* (2007), *Urban/ACT: A Handbook for Alternative Practice* (2007) and *Architecture and Participation* (2005).

PS² is a voluntary artist collective with studio space in the centre of Belfast. A project space is used for an experimental, fast-revolving series of art projects and cultural activities. Alongside the 'indoor' programme, PS² curates long-term 'outdoor' projects at 'critical' locations. The focus of these neighbourhood-centred projects is urban intervention and social interaction by artists, cultural practitioners, architects and multidisciplinary groups and theorists. On-going outdoor sites are in the village of Ballykinler and an interface area in North Belfast. The projects are initiated and organized by **Peter Mutschler**, PS² Director with **Ruth Morrow** (www.pssquared.org; www.temporaryplaces.org; www.villageworks.org.uk).

Gabriela Rendón is an architect, urban planner and co-founder of Cohabitation Strategies, a not-for-profit co-operative for socio-spatial research, design and development based in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, and New York City, USA. Her research areas of interest and expertise include neighborhood decline and restructuring processes, as well as collective and non-speculative housing models providing affordable housing and equitable development. Rendón is an Assistant Professor of Urban Planning at The New School, in New York City. She has also taught postgraduate urban studies at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, where she received a Masters in Urbanism and is currently following doctoral studies at the Chair of Spatial Planning and Strategy.

Miguel Robles-Durán is an urbanist, Assistant Professor of Urbanism at The New School/Parsons the New School for Design in New York City, and co-founder of the not-for-profit Cohabitation Strategies, a co-operative for socio-spatial research, design and development based in Rotterdam, The Netherlands and New York City, USA. His main research is centered on the strategic definition/coordination of trans-disciplinary urban projects, as well as on the development of tactical design strategies and civic engagement platforms that confront the contradictions of neoliberal urbanization, such as homelessness, housing crises, gentrification, the effects of financialization in the real-estate industry, inter-urban competition and urban social movements.

Meike Schalk is an architect based in Stockholm and in Berlin. She is Chair of the cross-disciplinary MSc programme, Sustainable Urban Planning and Design, at KTH School of Architecture and the Built Environment. Her research on architecture and urban questions combines critical inquiry into issues of sustainability and resilience, critical-creative participation in urban development processes, and practice-led research. Schalk is co-founder of the feminist architecture teaching and research group *FATALE* and an editor of *SITE* magazine. Since 2013, she has run the not-for-profit association Action Archive (Aktion Arkiv) together with Helena Mattsson and Sara Brolund de Carvalho.

Tatjana Schneider is a researcher, writer and educator based at the School of Architecture in Sheffield, UK. She is also co-founder of research centre 'Agency' and was a founder member of the workers cooperative G.L.A.S. (Glasgow Letters on Architecture and Space), which aimed to construct both a theoretical and practical critique of the capitalist production and use of the built environment. Her current work focuses on the changing role of architects and architecture in contemporary society, (architectural) pedagogy and spatial agency. She has an interest in employing and implementing theoretical, methodological and practical approaches that expand the scope of contemporary architectural debates and discourses by integrating political and economic frameworks that question normative ways of thinking, producing and consuming space. She is the co-author of *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (2011), *Flexible Housing* (2007), *A Right to Build* (2011), and co-editor of *Agency: Working with Uncertain Architectures* (2009) and the journal *glaspaper* (2001–2007).

studioBASAR was established in 2006 by **Alex Axinte** and **Cristi Borcan**, both as an architectural studio and as a team of urban observation and intervention. Preoccupied in the last few years with the dynamics of local urban culture and the disappearing importance of public spaces in transitional Bucharest, studioBASAR's projects range from public space interventions, art installations, urban research, educational workshops to competitions and different typologies of residential and public buildings. In 2010, studioBASAR published the book *Evicting the Ghost: Architectures of Survival*, which was awarded Best Book at the Bucharest Architectural Annual. In 2014, the project Public Bath was a finalist in the European Prize for Urban Public Space.

Apolonija Šušteršič is an architect and visual artist. Her work is interested in the critical analysis of space; usually focused on the processes and relationships between institutions, cultural politics, urban planning and architecture. Her broad-ranging interests start with a phenomenological study of space and continue their investigation into the social and political nature of our living environment. She usually undertakes extensive research into specific situations found on location, which she uses as a starting point of her projects. Apolonija has a PhD from the University of Lund, Malmö Art Academy, Sweden; and runs her own art/architecture studio practice in Lund, Sweden, and in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Recently she was appointed Professor in Visual Art at Oslo National Academy for the Arts, to build up the MA studies under title Art & Public Space.

Pelin Tan, sociologist and art historian, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Architecture at Mardin Artuklu University and Research Professor at Hong Kong Polytechnic, Design Strategies (Spring, 2016). She completed her PhD on locality in urban art project at ITU, her postdoctoral study on artistic research methodology at MIT, Cambridge, MA. Her publications on architecture, urbanism and art include 'Transversal Materialism' featured in *2000+: Urgencies of Architectural Theories* (GSAPP, 2015), chapters in *Becoming Istanbul: An Encyclopedia* (2008); *When Things Cast No Shadow* (5th Berlin Biennale, 2008); *Megastructure Reloaded* (2008); *Contemporary Art in Turkey: 1986–2006* (2007) and *With/Without Spatial Politics in the Middle East* (2007), *Recht-auf-Stadt* (2011). edited with A. Çavdar, *Istanbul'un Neoliberal Kentsel Dönüşümü* (Neoliberal Urban Transformation of Istanbul, Sel Pub. 2013). Tan is a lead author of the international panel on Social Progress (IPSP), and

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Kim Trogal is a Postdoctoral Researcher at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. She completed her architectural studies at the University of Sheffield, including a PhD in Architecture (2012) for which she was awarded the RIBA LKE Ozolins Studentship. Kim was research assistant to Professor Irena Bauman at the University of Sheffield (2012–2015), exploring issues of local social and ecological resilience. Kim's research examines the intersections of ethics and economies in spatial practice from feminist perspectives.

Jeanne van Heeswijk is a visual artist who facilitates the creation of dynamic and diversified public spaces in order to 'radicalize the local'. Van Heeswijk embeds herself as an active citizen in communities, often working there for years at a time. These long-term projects, which have occurred in many different countries, transcend the traditional boundaries of art in duration, space and media and questions art's autonomy by combining performative actions, meetings, discussions, seminars and other forms of organizing and pedagogy. Inspired by a particular current event, cultural context or intractable social problem, she dynamically involves community members in the planning and realization of a given project. As an 'urban curator', van Heeswijk's work often unravels invisible legislation, governmental codes and social institutions, in order to enable communities to take control over their own futures. Her work has also been featured in numerous books and publications worldwide, as well as in internationally renowned biennials such as those of Liverpool, Busan, Taipei, Shanghai, and Venice. She is currently Keith Haring Fellow in Art and Activism at Bard College and has received the 2012 Curry Stone Prize for Social Design Pioneers, and in 2011, the Leonore Annenberg Prize for Art and Social Change.

Ana Vilenica is a researcher, theoretician and activist, based in Serbia. She holds a PhD in Theory of Art and Media from the University of Art in Belgrade. She is co-editor of the book, *On the Ruins of the Creative City*, and editor of the journal for art, theory, politics and activism *uz)bu))na)))*. She is a member of the Smarter Building initiative, Belgrade.

Supreeya Wungpatcharapon is a full-time lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture, Kasetsart University in Bangkok, Thailand. Her main research interests are a participatory approach in building and urban design, low-income housing, empowerment, and sustainable community development. She has also been involved in the development of the Community Architects Network (CAN), in association with the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), to support community-driven projects in Asia and Thailand.

23 – THE HUSTADT STORY – SO FAR

Apolonija Šušteršič

I'm back in Hustadt. This time I'm just a visitor. Matthias is very proudly showing me his café, 'HuKultur', which he is running now with volunteers and the Förderverein, Hustadt's oldest neighbourhood association. It's still in the colours as we designed it, together with Mari Rantanen, back in 2010. However, it's now furnished with new/old furniture that Meike Schalk and I donated to HuKultur just recently.¹

Faruk is here as well, sitting in front of the café and really happy to see me. I'm equally delighted to see him. Faiza is in the kitchen screaming 'Hallo' – I enter to give her a hand. 'Long time no see!' I love the place. It smells of fresh baklawas – walnuts and honey. Professor Uhlig comes by and sits with us. He is a bit tired but obviously happy that his long-term project – the Förderverein – has started to 'fly again'. It seems that what we dreamt about so many years ago, when I moved to Hustadt to work on the project, is slowly becoming a reality. But it is not without its problems and not without struggle.

We are all sitting in front of the café looking at the Community Pavilion on the edge of the Brunnenplatz. There is canvas stretched over the front frame, facing the square. It has the printed title 'Ideen machten sich bezahlt!' (Ideas that pay!) ... It seems the Pavilion was used as a site for another art project? But what a strange and enigmatic title, which sounds cynical or even slightly arrogant in this context. I got a bit worried.

The economic imperative forces itself on everything today, everything always seems to revolve around 'the money economy' and is NOT concerned with creating change for a better future. Even when we talk about ideas or new concepts, such ideas should apparently pay for themselves. They must be visible, they must not stay immaterial so that they can be measured and evaluated. They must produce some kind of material evidence and give a visual answer that justifies the investment. It seems to be extremely difficult to accept in the framework of capitalism we experience today, and difficult to imagine an alternative to the market economy. An alternative to a situation where the investment needs to produce a surplus value, and eventually produce bigger and bigger profits for those who invest. It

1 We made this furniture during the project KAFİŞfor GfZK (Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst) in Leipzig. It needs some repair and it can be used again here in Hu_ Café for some years. We are planning a new action in the near future!

looks like no-one is happy to invest in creating better futures, better relations, better communities, better places, without thinking that this will contribute to the production of increased rents and property value that only a few benefit from. Not only that, investment must turn around quickly – money has no time to wait! This ‘economy of time’ is a serious issue we face today, where everything must produce fast effects and fast profits. This is in contrast to the ‘democracy project’ as we know it, where decision-making processes take time; time which is ‘lost’ in discussions that aim to give everyone a voice and the right to speak. At the same time, the bureaucracy in place works according to global laws and isn’t able to act in favour of local situations, the places where many initiatives originate. The questions that arise from such paradoxes are directed to the critique of capitalism and the market economy, and importantly, the opening up of other solutions and proposals. What would happen if we tried to ignore the time estimated that a specific investment needed to become profitable? What if we tried instead to *create a faithful process of democratic place-making, engaging the local population who are using the place daily*? What if we paid more attention to creating better relations between local populations and the place, rather than providing just another urban design, refurbished? The account that follows is a personal reflection of a project, which aimed to do just that.

THE CASE STUDY: THE HUSTADT PROJECT

The *Hustadt Project* emerged from an ordinary invitation from the city of Bochum in Germany. The commission was for a public art project in the central marketplace, Brunnenplatz, in the multicultural suburban neighbourhood called Hustadt. The art project was part of a larger urban regeneration programme in Hustadt, set up by the city. In this commission, a gap existed between the expectations of the commissioners and my own, participative approach to projects, an approach I bring to all my work. But this lack of knowledge and understanding of what the implications of a genuinely participative approach are, actually gave me the chance to work in Hustadt.

My reasons for accepting this invitation concern the challenges of the place itself, as well as a concern to provoke certain clichés within

the art world² and to explore the hidden agendas behind this official invitation. The art world of today would view this invitation as very uninteresting, problematic or even wrong. It would be seen as the kind of invitation that could jeopardize an artist’s integrity and lead to the instrumentalization of their work (and potentially, themselves). However, this is the very difficulty that makes me curious and it presents a real challenge. I had the idea of setting my own position as an artist working seriously in relation to a specific place. I decided I would *place my activity as a quotidian activity*, creating a new position, compared to other professionals dealing with the same questions. It was exciting to look into the process from the inside, as a *resident* and effect change on the way. However, the questions I asked myself from the beginning related to my own position within such a sensitive process of urban change. Would I be able to maintain a critical position, defend my own ideas (and not the ones of the public, or the politicians!) and yet still co-operate and discuss the process with both of them? I wanted to see how much ‘space for resistance’ an artist is allowed to use within the process of development. As an artist, I would be the only one who would represent an independent, and therefore possibly critical position. So I myself became part of an experiment!

The invitation from the city was clearly hoping that art would solve all those unnamed problems that the city itself, the social organization in place, or even the urban planners and architects were not able to resolve.

When I began to investigate the conditions of the area, and the conditions of invitation, I learnt of a number of interesting issues and formed the project around them. The biggest issues were those related to the inequitable distribution of socio-political work in public space.³ Thus, the project circulates around questions of publicity and the public realm. It focuses on and discusses distributions of power in public space, the role of the artist (architect) within urban regeneration projects, the issue of ‘spatial justice’, and the appropriation of public space as understood by different actors. The project also includes and examines several aspects of my own practice: action

2 Here I’m referring to the position of the artist as an independent agent. Within art contexts and discussions there is a lot of speculation about the artist being instrumentalized by political, or other institutional, powers particularly when working within the domain of public art. I am interested in the mechanisms of instrumentalization and whether or not as an artist I could defend an autonomous position.

3 For example, who decides on the future of the place? There are politicians and planners who are not at all associated with or connected to the place, where the financial institutions who provide the funding are also distant. Within the process, there is no presence of the immediate public, who use this public space.

research; urban contexts as material to develop a project; process as product; and public participation as a vehicle to 'generate' community.

As an artist-researcher, I immersed myself in the life of the place. I shared the everyday situation with people living in Hustadt and, together with them, created a platform for a participatory process. In this case, I wasn't interested in a virtual interaction that is used as a strategy to provide or improve participation for direct democracy. Not only is the new technology not developed enough, it isn't widely available and access to it is usually limited to a specific social class. At the same time, I wanted to defend a direct relationship to space and to people; I wanted to confirm the importance of creating stimulating social situations within physical space.

CONTEXT: HUSTADT

Hustadt is a suburban neighbourhood on the south-eastern edge of the city of Bochum, Germany. It is surrounded by woods and fields on one side, with offshoots of the enormous campus of the Ruhr University Bochum, and on the other side, further housing areas.. Hustadt was conceptualized in the frame of development of the Ruhr University area in South Bochum. The winning project by Professor Hanns Dustmann for this part of the city (Querenburg) proposed situating 6,500 housing units for about 25,000 people on 418 ha of land, of this, Hustadt would house 6,000 inhabitants.

The building process in Hustadt started in 1965, taking a few years to complete. The initial 500 apartments were finished by 1968 when the first young families moved in. This is also the time when the first Hustadt citizens' initiative – *Aktion bessere Hustadt*,⁴ started to organize itself in order to deal with everyday life situations related to, for example, organized childcare and general communal living, which had only just begun.⁵

The place was meant to be what is called *Universitätsrahmenstadt* – a dwelling area to frame the university campus and the *Opel Werke, Bochum* – the Opel car factory situated on the other side of the Learholds Woods. It was intended to offer professors, students, academics, and public employees nearby living possibilities.

Along the way Hustadt has met several changes as a result of different social, economic, and political developments related to

⁴ Aktion bessere Hustadt is the forerunner of the Förderverein that remains active today.

⁵ Haarmann, *Kleine Geschichte der Hustadt*.

today's changing global situation. Now the population has changed dramatically. The people living in Hustadt today come from all parts of the world, which makes Hustadt much more metropolitan than the main centre of Bochum itself. Today, there are approximately 56 different nationalities living in the neighbourhood. Many different cultures, lifestyles, and living habits are performed every day, in close proximity to one another, creating a microcosm of the world for good and for bad.

There is no need to say that outside of the neighbourhood itself, Hustadt has a reputation as a ghetto. It has acquired a very bad name, which has stigmatized the area for some time. High unemployment, lengthy integration processes and a constantly changing community limit the possibility for people to begin to relate to the place as their home. In Hustadt, 16 per cent of the population changes every year, with people constantly moving in and out. This means that it is not only difficult to build a relationship with the place as home, but it is also difficult to form a stable social environment and neighbourhood community. Consequently, the area is not able to create a sustainable community that manages itself and its everyday life to build a better place and a better reputation, where children are not ashamed to say that they come from Hustadt.⁶

PROCESS: AKTIONSTEAM

With the *Hustadt Project* I was aiming to produce change but I did not know what kind of change would be possible when I started. I was very aware of my own position as an artist, invited into a regeneration project in a place I did not know. It seemed all wrong, and so I decided to move to Hustadt to observe and learn from people living in the place and to learn from the situation as I experienced it. For the first few months I observed, listened, participated in public events in Hustadt and discussed with the people I met in Hustadt in my everyday life there.

My commissioner, the city of Bochum, had expectations and projected them onto the work, however, my contract was open and my task was very much undefined, or non-prescribed. While they expected,

⁶ Namely, there was a case when the high schools in Bochum didn't want to accept students who had finished elementary school in Hustadt (Querenburg), acting on the rule of the school vicinity. Tom Thelen, 'Ablehnung von Grundschulern am NGB sorgt für Empörung in Bochum-Querenburg', *WAZ*, 2 March 2011, available at: www.derwesten.de/staedte/bochum/ablehnung-von-grundschulern-am-ngb-sorgt-fuer-empoeerung-in-bochum-querenburg-id4355167.html, Hustadt Episodaire, p. 2 (accessed 4 October 2011).

or hoped, I would produce a sculpture (a replaceable, non-contextual object) and some neighbourhood kids would help me make it, I was pushing for more. I organized a local team of activists and people from the neighbourhood (which we called AKTIONSTEAM) to work with me on conceptualizing the project and carry out the regeneration project directly. We worked together for a year on various spatial actions that were performed in the main square, the Brunnenplatz, where most of the neighbourhood would meet. Those actions became our tool for testing situations in space and time, and helped create arguments for public discussions with local politicians who were making decisions about the process and direction of the regeneration project.⁷

With our actions we performed everyday life activities in public space, which activated the public and the space. We danced, read in public, cooked, repaired bicycles, gardened, constructed a building, told stories, played music, and so on (Figure 23.1). We performed activities that would communicate with the public on several levels: bodily, culturally and socially. The language of our actions was known to the public and therefore easy to adopt and participate in. Through the actions, we managed to activate the place and define it as space; it became visible and present in the life of the neighbourhood. Following Michael de Certeau, who argues that, 'a space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables' (1984: 117), we managed to place Brunnenplatz on the map of the city space. We managed to unfold a space that is composed of interactions of mobile elements, a space that is actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it, a space that occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programmes or contractual proximities. We managed to transform the space into a practised place (*ibid.*).

⁷ The whole process is described in my doctoral dissertation, completed in November 2013 at Lund University, Malmö Art Academy, www.lunduniversity.lu.se/lup/publication/4144448, pp. 27–80.



Figure 23.1 Actions, Hustadt Project, Actions, 2008–2011, Bochum, Germany

Those everyday life activities communicated our future project, the Community Pavilion – a meeting place in Brunnenplatz (Figure 23.2). Our actions had a direction. The actions that we performed, the everyday life activities were known to the public, yet were unusual at the same time as they were somehow 'out of place' or 'unexpected'. They just popped-up without any extra official consent. We didn't ask the city for permission, except when it was really necessary. For example, when building the temporary pavilion (Figure 23.3), we just informed the city authorities via email about our action and we never received any official building permission for it. At one point in the process, things were developing so fast that we didn't have time to be engaged with bureaucracy. We just did it.

The spontaneity of our actions was beyond any official control, it was beyond expectations of how the project should develop and what could be expected at the end. It was an organic process that was built by reacting to previous events without much advance planning.



Figure 23.2 Brunnenplatz, Hustadt Project, Actions, 2008–2011, Bochum, Germany

PARTICIPATION: COMMUNITY PAVILION BRUNNENPLATZ 1

The *Community Pavilion* was not planned. It was never planned within the official budget of the 13 million euros that Hustadt had received for regeneration. While the budget did include finances for an art project, it did not include money to build the *Community Pavilion*; the budget was only to create an art work!⁸

The expectations of the commissioner towards the artist were different from how the project was actually developing. As an artist, I took freedom in experimenting and negotiating along the way.

⁸ However, the city built the basic structure of the pavilion with the money allocated to the art project from the outset. It was impossible to expect that the original financial plan for the regeneration process in Hustadt would extend (to 13 million) in favour of an art project. In order to finish the *Community Pavilion* as we imagined, I needed to do extensive fundraising. At the same time, nobody questioned the costs of the urban design project that was running in parallel and included a fountain that cost as much as the whole pavilion.



Figure 23.3 Temporary pavilion in progress, Hustadt Project, Actions, 2008–2011, Bochum, Germany

It seems the process of regeneration, as imagined by the authorities and official politics, didn't include the unpredictability of an art project, where the main focus was a participatory processes itself; a process where you work with people, who are not professionals in the field of art, architecture or urban development. They are just people with different motivations, who came together to work on the *Hustadt Project*. This creates a situation that is very difficult to predict and control. However, control and predictability are of course at the core of the conventional (urban) planning and in contrast to processes that develop gradually and involve people's participation. With our project – the *Hustadt Project* – we ignored those aspects and reacted according to the development of the art process.

Setting up a participatory process within an art project was meant to test limits and question participation itself. When we analyze such processes, we realize that there is a lot of unpredictability and improvisation involved. We need to be aware of the fact that perhaps people who would participate in the process might participate not only to agree but also to disagree and demand, to have questions and want to get answers, and to even change the proposed plan of the regeneration. The art project therefore became a disturbance in

the larger regeneration process, a kind of trouble that it was necessary to deal with.

It became very clear that the participatory process, as a form of direct democracy, contradicts the general process of development within capitalist societies, which is directed to fast results and a predictable (planned) future. There is very little space for improvisation and uncertainty, which reveal the system itself to be inflexible and rigid, not corresponding to or even being able to correspond to human needs.

That's not news – democracy is in contradiction to capitalism! Capitalism and democracy have been locked in a contradictory yet interdependent relationship throughout their history. Despite popular conceptions, liberal democracy has emerged as a mechanism, which has in effect limited popular participation, and operated as a legitimating device to protect capitalism from more direct forms of democracy (Fisher, 1996). The *Hustadt Project* set up a platform for direct democracy and managed to create a situation that was not expected and beyond official control. Suddenly the Aktionsteam became the main negotiation partner with the city officials, regarding the regeneration process in Hustadt.

Our arguments for the *Community Pavilion* were very clear from the beginning: Hustadt has no place to house public meetings, it has no sheltered place to meet and discuss everyday life problems. There are spaces with religious designation, but these are not suitable to host the mixed public living in Hustadt.

The *Community Pavilion* was conceptualized to become a place for all the kinds of neighbourhood activities that were performed previously through our actions. It became a place for meetings, parties, a cinema, public readings and story telling, music and theatre performances, lectures, a place for children to play, to garden, draw and perform parts of the education programme. It is a simple structure with a roof, seating places, tables and benches, a small enclosed space, a poster board and a blackboard, a little herb garden, and anything more depends on the users' imaginations (Figure 23.4).

However, the *Community Pavilion* is not just a building, which resulted from an art project, it is much more: it has connected the loose strings of local activism that needed a platform for their activities; it has empowered those who wanted to be empowered in order to get on with their struggle, to keep the place alive in its everyday reality; discovering the potential that exists within its inhabitants at this moment, and through that, opposing the powers of gentrification.



Figure 23.4 Community Pavilion in progress, Hustadt Project, Actions, 2008–2011, Bochum, Germany

The process of the art project itself generated other self-organized projects and created other opportunities like the HU_kultur Café, the Hustadt Cinema Workshop, it activated existing NGOs such as UMQ (University meets Querenburg) and the Förderverein, who became keepers of the pavilion and who continue to work with strong links to the present local population.

The outcome of this participatory art project has resulted in numerous encounters, connections and networks of relationships that enable people to understand what their own personal potential is, and how it would be possible to realize it. The art project made people believe in their own power. The inter-subjective situation created through the process of the *Hustadt Project* produced participants' awareness, which led to action. And this action is a continuous action that didn't stop when I left the project – it is still going on.

I started the project because of an official invitation by the city of Bochum as part of the institutionalized process, but ended up in a self-organized and independent formation. There has been a certain transformation within the process of developing the project that has by its actions produced a critique of the official system. I can confirm Chantal Mouffe's suggestion that it is possible to act politically within

the existing system and affect its direction of change: as 'to believe that existing institutions cannot become the terrain of contestation is to ignore the tensions that always exist within a given configuration of forces and the possibility of acting in a way that subverts their form of articulation' (Mouffe, 2013: 100).

THE IMMATERIAL, THE RELATIONAL, AND THE PROCESSUAL

At the same time, I look at visual art and its relation to society today, particularly when it seems to be developing an interesting critique of capitalism but hasn't yet managed to distance itself from it. The 'dematerialization of the art object' (Lippard, 1997)⁹ has turned itself into a 'production of value'¹⁰ that feeds the art market continuously, even if the art object has disappeared. On the other hand, art that is produced 'outside' of the art institution (and art market) contributes to the production of space and potentially changes its value as well. In this case I believe that by acting ethically, we can stir the process against the accumulation of capital exclusively producing the social value of space. Working within the urban context (as an artist or architect), one needs to be aware of who will benefit from the change, in order to be able to shift the spatial development processes against gentrification and other socially negative processes.

Within the production of space, through experience and awareness, I focus on analyzing the relationships, or the relational as Bourriaud (2002) put it. This approach creates an interaction with space that can lead to further participation and action. This finding is not a new one, but it connects loose strings and presents the subject in another light. The argument is a result of my long-term practice, and therefore brings some new suggestions to the subject of participation,

9 Lucy R. Lippard's book, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, is a cross-referenced book of information on some aesthetic boundaries: consisting of a bibliography into which are inserted fragmented text, art works, documents, interviews, and symposia, arranged chronologically and focused on what are called conceptual or information or idea art, with mentions of such vaguely designated areas as minimal, anti-form, systems, earth, or process art, occurring now in the Americas, Europe, England, Australia, and Asia (with occasional political overtones).

10 I'm referring here to the increasing value that is applied to art objects and art concepts produced for the art market, which transforms the value from the symbolic value of the artwork into the monetary value. Dematerialization, as a concept critical of material society and the greed of market capitalism, is an interesting idea. Yet as bodies we are still not dematerialized, even if the developments within technology nowadays suggest virtualization of the parts of our being (such as emotions or feelings), the physicality of our body remains. Therefore, we simply need physical space, and objects to relate to. The more urgent problem that I consider needs attention today is the production of value within the contemporary art context. That serves very well to feed the flow and supports the philosophy of the market-focused capitalist system.

particularly on the inter-subjective relations in the process and the creation of informal situations for encounter. The key issue in creating participatory processes is participant motivation and desire. In my opinion, motivation and the desire¹¹ to participate are part of the subjective state of mind: experience and awareness. I unfold and analyze this statement within the specific context of the *Hustadt Project*.

In the *Hustadt Project*, as in my practice in general, I focus on a result that is not necessarily an object (that is, an architectural or art object that provides a physical presence within our living environment). Instead, I am interested in the process itself. Rather than a physical object, I'm interested in the process of communicative exchange. I'm interested in changing and affecting the established systems through their own production and development in order to provide a change.

However, it is important to understand the situation, the place where I work and who are the people living-making this space I'm engaged with. Therefore, I aim to embrace what Doreen Massey proposed to understand when working with-in space:

First, that we recognise the space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny. Second, that we understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity. Without space no multiplicity; without multiplicity no space. If space is indeed the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon the existence of plurality. Multiplicity and space as co-constitutive. Third, that we recognise space as always under construction [as a process]. Precisely because space on this reading is a product of relations-between, relations, which are necessarily embedded material practices, which have to be carried out, it is always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed. Perhaps we could imagine space as the simultaneity of stories – so far. (Massey, 2005: 9)

11 I am following here Doina Petrescu's reading of desire and participation in Deleuzian terms (Petrescu, 2005).

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