PRACTICES OF URBAN INCLUSION

Exploring space and migration in four European cities

Edited by
Lucia Caistor-Arendar
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In recent years, migration policies at both national and global levels have led to the erosion of fundamental rights for migrating persons. Across Europe and globally, the contraction of asylum and citizenship rights is becoming more apparent as the pathways to safe havens, both geographically and legally, are gradually diminishing. Principles of protection and hospitality are not only being increasingly disregarded but are also considerably shrinking. Despite this noticeable decline, the claim for asylum remains significant.

Cities across Europe are essential sites for the experience of migration, serving as both safe havens and exclusionary places. In the most favourable cases, urban spaces have transformed into sanctuary sites and become platforms for political initiatives that challenge hostile national and global frameworks. They provide essential platforms for diasporic communities to voice their claims, with or without support from civil society organisations and government actors. Additionally, cities offer a mobile foundation for individuals to call home, providing infrastructure to escape policing operations and enabling forms of solidarity that push the boundaries of current understandings of citizenship. Given this context, it is vital for urban disciplines such as architecture, urban design, and planning to take a stance and support the creation of urban spaces and practices that promote mutual engagement and solidarity. Transforming these disciplinary fields is an important step towards advancing spatial justice and addressing the challenges to inclusion posed by hostile migration regimes.

With these concerns in mind, this book shares some of the lessons learned from an experimental learning programme in architecture, urban design and planning entitled Practices of Urban Inclusion (PoUI). PoUI emerged from two EU-funded collaborative projects: DESINC – Designing Inclusion (2016–2019) and DESINC Live – Designing and Learning in the Context of Migration (2019–2022). Both DESINC and DESINC Live were funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ programme, Key Action 2: Cooperation among organisations and institutions. This thread of the Erasmus+ programme aims to create innovation in education and training by supporting transnational partnerships, knowledge alliances and capacity-building initiatives involving different types of organisations, including higher education institutions, civil society groups and enterprises.

DESINC Live specifically explored the role of urban space and urban practice in creating conditions of exclusion or inclusion in cities. Set within the European context, the project was centred on migration as both a vital component of urbanisation and an important perspective for understanding how dynamics of power, oppression, and emancipation relate to city-making. Importantly, DESINC Live also emphasised the role of knowledge and learning in reproducing or disrupting these dynamics. It sought to examine what knowledge informs decision-making in urban policy, planning, and design; where and by whom this knowledge is produced; and how more diverse and horizontal networks

of knowledge production can facilitate more inclusive forms of city-making. To achieve these goals, we imagined and set up PoUI as a pan-European learning programme spanning across places and organisations. The aim was to co-produce a shared body of knowledge about the implications of observing, designing, planning, and transforming urban spaces through the lens of migration.

The book traces the motivations, methods, and key outcomes of the PoUI programme. The diversity of contributions it contains, including multiple perspectives, voices, languages, and writing styles, aims to reflect the collaborative, translocal, and multivocal nature of the PoUI programme itself. The involvement of academic and civil society partners, programme participants, colleagues, and collaborators in the writing process was a laborious and enriching experience that extended the collaborative journey set with the project.

The book is structured into three main parts.

Part 1 is titled "MAKING SPACE FOR DIVERSITY." It addresses the context of migration in Europe and includes an essay titled “Cities as Asylum”. The essay stems from an overview of the work of civil society organisations in the wake of the so-called 2015 “refugee crisis” and it explores how such practices have further evolved in recent years, in response to the progressive erosion of asylum unfolding in Europe. Following the essay, the section “Acting in Space” contains texts in multiple languages, interviews, and visual essays which illustrate how the PoUI programme was grounded in four urban contexts: Berlin, Milan, Brussels, and London. The description of each context is interwoven with insights from diasporic experiences and their connection to issues of exclusion and inclusion. Collaborative learning activities during the programme centred around Marzahn in Berlin and San Siro in Milan, and these two areas are explored in greater detail in the book. A third section, "Stories of Inclusion," collects examples of citizen-led solidarity that relate to the challenges that migrants experience along their journeys. These stories bear witness to the materialisation of new forms of inclusion in urban space achieved through the contribution of civil society.

Part 2 of the book is titled "UN/LEARNING TOGETHER." It draws from the experience of the PoUI programme and explores the role of learning and teaching in responding to and interacting with the dynamics and initiatives presented in Part 1. The section begins with an essay titled "Common Space for Urban Inclusion." This essay draws from debates on the commons and commoning to discuss the value of the Practices of Urban Inclusion programme as a space of encounter between academia and civil society, theory and practice, experience, and reflection. Following the essay is a section titled "Embracing Joy and Getting Lost in Translation." Here, a collection of texts and visual material provides a structured exploration of the interdisciplinary learning and teaching methods experimented during the programme. Each method is introduced with a brief text and a short collection of references that informed our approach, as well as practical examples illustrating how these methods were put into practice during the course. The section concludes with a series of "Stories of Learning" bringing together a variety of learning and teaching experiences that inspired or crossed paths with the development of the PoUI programme. These experiences include architectural, urban design, and planning initiatives held across and beyond Europe, each addressing the interface between cities, migration, inclusion, and urban practice in unique ways.

Part 3 of the book, "IMAGINING FUTURES”, aims to project these discussions and experiences forward. It opens with an essay on "Speculations on

Urban Practice," providing pointers towards new ways of thinking about urban practice at times of change. This part also includes a series of "Stories from the Future" shared with us by a network of friends, collaborators, and supporters of the course in Berlin, Milan, Brussels, and London. Each postcard offers a view into what a more inclusive and joyful future for urban practice might look like.

The languages used in the book are a direct result of our collaborative approach. Questions of vocabulary, communication, and translation were key issues during the course as the participants came from different geographical, cultural, social, and professional backgrounds and brought their embodied perspectives into play in the course. Therefore, whereas English remains the main language for the book as the main idiom facilitating our exchange, the volume is enriched by a variety of contributions in the languages used during our collaboration, including Arabic, Dutch, French, German, Greek, and Italian. Navigating through different languages and words involves thinking carefully about naming facts, situations, and places. We hope that experiencing this plurilingual volume might reflect our practice of language as both a barrier and a connector amongst diverse experiences, and our finding that when thinking about inclusion, particularly in the context of migration, there is much value in reflecting on how we might expand our capacities for mutual engagement and understanding.

In contrast to the city of segregation and extraction, our perspective of the city is rooted in a culture of recognition, mutual involvement, and negotiation that establishes connections across cultures, communities, languages, and spaces. Instead of dismissing dissensus or overly celebrating solidarity, we embark on a path that seeks to revise urban practice. This path celebrates the significant role of migration in shaping and constructing urban spaces, offering a hopeful trajectory to tackle present urban challenges.

MAKING SPACE FOR DIVERSITY

Cities as asylum: Apprehending urban practices between hostility and hospitality

Viviana d'Auria

Europe in borderland: A reprise

> *"I am pleased because a judge has sanctioned what I already knew: that the offence did not take place. Now there is someone who has put down in black and white that solidarity is not a crime (…) In these years it has been difficult knowing that I was under investigation despite being aware that I had done the right thing (…), I would do it all over again. We will continue to help people who are in need, like what is happening for the refugees from Ukraine."*
>
> Andrea Costa, 5th May 2022 (ANSA)[1]

Besides providing an embedded illustration of grassroots solidarity in Europe, the above testimony is also a poignant glimpse into the adversities that migration-related activism can entail. It represents the situated and embodied experience of one civil society organisation (CSO) and its frontrunner, but is far from being a singular account. It resonates with that of many activists who have made space for solidarity in their lives. Their stories form the main inspiration for this piece, which stems from an overview of CSO engagement in the wake of the so-called 2015 "refugee crisis". It will explore how such practices have further evolved in the light of our present condition of poli-crisis. In fact, as predicaments have precipitously cascaded, the activities of CSOs – and citizen solidarity at large – have had to continuously adapt to face what can hardly be viewed as anything other than a global phenomenon of migration deterrence, and an increasingly hard line vis-à-vis its governance. Within Europe, the context this book more closely examines, the relocation of border regulation, the subcontracting and delegation of migration control to non-member states and private stakeholders, are all part of a general attitude that shirks responsibilities vis-à-vis the protection of migrating persons (Migreurop, 2016).

In recent years, most media accounts concerning migration-related decisions at EU-level begin by recounting missed agreements on distribution quotas between member states, and then report yet another reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Taken together, they highlight what member states appear to agree upon fundamentally, namely the relentless erosion of the fundamental rights of migrating peoples by means of externalised migration policies. Alison Mountz's proposition that, as border deaths increase "while many mourn the loss of life, another death goes unnoticed: that of asylum itself" (2020: ix) is a poignant representation of our current condition. For Mountz, whose claim resonates with the multiple banners held up during protest marches and demonstrations by CSOs and citizen-led initiatives, what makes the death of asylum visible is the choice to invest in the gradual but constant closing of geographical and legal pathways to safe haven (Mountz 2020: xvi), rather than recognising protection and investing in hospitality.

While asylum's decease is underway, together with the intensification of offshore border enforcement by countries and regions which had once honoured their responsibilities concerning international protection (including Canada, Australia, the USA, and Europe), the claim to asylum is no less sizeable. The externalisation of borders and the rise of border deaths has neither stopped migration, nor has it reduced the emergence of a multiplicity of "borderlands" or "borderzones" that are *de facto* impeding migrating persons exercising their rights to seek protection. While this perspective may lead one to believe that migration is no longer a process impacting localities such as cities because of its emphasis on the nation-state and global regimes of migration management, this is hardly the case. Rather, cities remain one important site where relations concerning the borders of the nation-state are not only experienced, but also contested. Urban space is, by consequence, the primary terrain within which the implications of migration-related occurrences and processes take shape and unfold (Hatziprokopiou et al., 2016: 53).

This makes Jonathan Darling's suggestion to "see asylum like a city" (2021) particularly relevant, as it dovetails the otherwise separate perspectives that either foreground "the examination of refugee subjectivities and forms of agency, *or* examines urban forms of governance, policy and claims-making" (original emphasis, *idem*: 895). What is especially significant about the author's conceptualisation is that, in viewing the city as a political ontology, it becomes essential

to not only consider cities as compositional arrangements of multiple authorities of varying intensities, but also to scrutinise how such assemblages are embedded within, and enacted through, *"spatial relations"* (own emphasis, 2021: 900). However, while the "spatial turn" in the social sciences is auspicious, we concur with Beeckmans et al. that recognising an agentic quality to space itself is yet to complete this turn, which remains predominantly focused on "social space" rather than on "spatial space" (2022: 15)[2]. In our understanding of migration as a key player in urban settings – and by consequence also for urban practice – we therefore build upon and expand Darling's framework by understanding "space" as co-constituent of the migration procedures that are "constantly 'in formation' across a multiplicity of locations" (Coleman, 2011: 309, cited in Darling, 2021: 900).

Placing urban practice in solidarity

If migration processes and policies are visibly entangled with the "urban", cities can be considered to be the "epicentre of migration", despite the scales and scope of national frames and transnational fields (Hatziprokopiou et al., *ibid.*). Urban areas have indeed operated, in multiple ways, as the battlegrounds for precarious citizens and non-citizens (Swerts, 2014) to voice their claims, with or without supporting coalitions of CSOs and governmental assemblages. Cities have been turned into safe havens through the enactment of sanctuary sites. They have also catalysed political initiatives, from large demonstrations and protests to governance assemblages that have seen local governments and particular citizen-led initiatives find space to deviate, subvert and sometimes outwardly disobey overtly hostile national and global frameworks which have found local expression in police raids, detention, and deportation. Most importantly, they have become a mobile ground to call home while escaping and contesting persistent and pervasive policing operations, as well as experiencing forms of solidarity. For urban citizens, including migrating persons, the city is therefore where "homing" – the social process of constructing a home that is both a bounded place and involves a meaningful set of relationships (Boccagni, 2017a; 2017b) – also takes place (Low, 2016).

A significant share of this home-making process relies on the agency of migrating persons themselves, who are forced to navigate the complex machinery connected with asylum, even when they do not intend to – or cannot – claim it. Within the process, continuous and varied claims to citizenship are made despite the regulatory apparatus that there is little choice but to undergo. However, in the context of the complex compositional arrangements mentioned above, solidarity-driven CSOs appear to have played a significant role. As has been noted, a portion of the grassroots initiatives that formed in 2015 during the "long summer of migration", still provide support to migrating persons today. Their efficacy in modifying existing migration deference policies structurally has been nevertheless questioned by recent and current scholarship (e.g. Brun, 2016). By considering their action to be bounded by emergencies and humanitarianism, and as such falling short of linking present distress to long-standing inequalities, their actions have also been viewed as incapable of devising future-making strategies and, by extension, of being depoliticised (Vandevoort & Fleishmann, 2020).

From our CSO engagement mapping in the aftermath of the so-called refugee crisis, we took stock of the multiple postures by referring to how such engagements positioned themselves vis-à-vis the forced mobilities of migrating persons (d'Auria et al., 2018a). We focused on the types of support provided, and where these were located along an idealised journey of a migrating person. We alleged, in resonance with scholars such as Thomas Nail (2015), that such a journey would imply being condemned to circulate rather than smoothly transiting from departure to arrival. Relatedly, we considered that the dominant politics of deterrence meant that migrating persons were being made mobile, in the sense of also having to wait, or to remain stuck in uncertain conditions. They must spend time and effort circumnavigating such hostile conditions, and all this despite the openings procured by solidarity movements. This overview was devised as conveniently open-ended when delineating such movements to include various kinds of efforts, ranging from humanitarian interventions to alleviate the consequences of the "campization" of refugee accommodation (Kreichauf, 2018), to wide-ranging artistic and cultural initiatives focused on building entire ecosystems of hospitality.

In the ensuing phase, collaborative co-teaching with CSOs provided the partnership with a more profound understanding of the challenges experienced by grassroots movements in coping with several constraints, including limited resources (in terms of time, staff availability and financial means), especially when straddling the ambivalent space between emergency response and political activism directed towards structural change. During this time, the trajectories of the CSOs mapped in the 2016-18 period have evolved in an equally varied manner. While some initiatives were institutionalised by local governments and deemed as replicable models, others opted for ending their engagement as a form of adherence vis-à-vis the solidarity principles that had initially motivated them. This also meant consciously deciding to shut down infrastructures they had helped to establish while, in other cases, closing infrastructures was more a matter

of scarce funding than of political choice. These two reasons – pragmatic and political – have sometimes dovetailed, compelling CSOs to reinvent their procedures and revisit their alliances.

The global pandemic, which was a game-changer in terms of the cascading emergencies characterising current times, was also mobilised by institutions, citizens, and grassroots movements in contrasting ways. Important claims have been advanced by scholarship that "crises" are usually mobilised to pass more stringent regulations concerning migration. The health crisis inevitably also played an important role in the evolution of the solidarity initiatives we had the opportunity to follow. The independent, open, and solidarity-based refugee camp of Pipka, for example, located in Mytilene on the island of Lesvos in Greece, was evicted after eight years of operation in October 2020. Its residents were forcibly moved by police forces to the municipal camp of Kara Tepe, which would in turn be shut down in 2021. The end of 2020 also saw the termination of the Trampoline House in Copenhagen, which had been formed a decade earlier as a self-organized refugee justice community centre and, especially, as "an antidote to Denmark's asylum, refugee and immigration policies".[3] It did, however, re-open in January 2022 in collaboration with the Apostle Church in Vesterbro in a smaller form, moved by the same principles. Based on prior experiences of the Sharehaus Hermanus in South Africa, the Berlin-based version opened in the summer of 2015 as the Sharehaus Refugio. This community-based initiative aimed to build solidarity and social relations with newcomers and later evolved to become an exclusively Berlin City-led project that is still operational today.

In Milan, a temporary reception centre that had been transformed in 2016 into the Sammartini Hub for migrating persons, has changed again. The intense participation of the non-profit organisation Progetto Arca has helped rethink the Hub's configuration over time, morphing it from a place of fleeting passage into a place of fundamental accompaniment where asylum seekers can find support during the entirety of their trajectories. Building on this legacy, in November 2022 it shifted location to become a 336m^2 multi-purpose emergency response centre, the main reference point for Ukrainian citizens arriving in Milan. In "non-emergency phases" Hub 126, as it has been renamed, operates as a hook-up place for homeless people and provides a variety of services. As this case illustrates, the metamorphosis of specific infrastructures and their related services has seemingly been articulated along a dividing line between emergency and non-emergency phases. When this partition is transcended, CSOs become key players in building greater permanence around inclusive social infrastructures. In the case of Hub 126, the HEI Politecnico di Milano contributed to the design of the hub's redevelopment, while other partners include the national railway company (Grandi Stazioni) which has leased out its spaces for free to the municipal administration.

As an exemplary case in Brussels, the Plateforme Citoyenne de Soutien aux Refugiés (PCSR) also managed to consolidate its action, moving forward from the struggles experienced in the wake of the "Syrian wave" of asylum seekers to the capitals of Europe. It did so by expressing solidarity with a broader set of migrating persons as well as a broader public of citizens, media, and NGOs (Vandevoort & Fleischmann, 2020), and also by securing the support of local levels of government. Backing by both the City and the Region of Brussels enabled the establishment of a collective reception centre and of a Humanitarian Hub, co-managed by the PCSR with Médecins sans Frontières and Médecins du Monde. This centre, however, was again threatened with displacement in February 2022. While this is not the first time the PCSR and fellow CSOs have been confronted with having to move their sites of operation, the pending menace of having to constantly shift locations is one of the main challenges that we have found CSOs having to grapple with. We continue to believe that the mobilities at play are also the result of an "adaptive, innovative, collaborative, collective, agile, and smart network" (dos Santos, 2018, cited in d'Auria, 2020: 52). However, in the light of current practices of deterrence, they appear to be first and foremost directly linked with political representations of the migration-related grassroots, as short-lived reactions to passing emergencies.

In scrutinising the efforts of grassroots initiatives that support migrants, Vandevoort and Fleischmann (2020) have advocated for the need to add a temporal perspective to the debates around the political effectiveness of humanitarian action. We further supplement the call for a time-driven inquiry with an analysis that acknowledges the abovementioned "spatial space". As mentioned earlier, such a focus implies considering that urban spaces are layered sites and have agency. On more than one occasion we have noted how particular initiatives mobilise not just in *any* space, but rather take place within *tracés* (Bosmans et al., 2020). These are meaningful sites that are seemingly interstitial in nature, and which result from an accumulation of physical transformations and from the activities enacted within them.

Brussels continues to offer interesting ground in this regard. If one is to focus on the temporary occupations by migrating persons in their claim towards a more open definition of citizenship, we note how these have strategically concentrated on vacant buildings along the royal *tracés* crossing the city's core (d'Auria et al., 2023). Similarly, the ever-shifting fabric of the so-called North quarter, where the legacy of considerable demolitions fuelled by voracious urban

visions persists in the form of reclaimed vacancy and piecemeal development, continues to offer anchoring points for the enactment of solidarity (d'Auria, 2020). Indeed, as Kevin Bernard Moultrie Daye has eloquently exposed (2021), "space hides what time reveals. History is never monochrome, and current ethnic enclaves could also hold military histories, environmental extractions, unexpected moments of solidarity, as well as forgotten scenes of violence".[4]

If it becomes important to spatialise (and not just localise) the sites that grassroot initiatives supporting migrants have appropriated over time, it is also because this tracing process can make evident the struggle over space that CSOs are frequently challenged by. Indeed, when returning to our overview of CSO practices after the initial scrutiny, one common concern appeared. We noted that the movements shared vicissitudes in acquiring a safe and permanent place for hosting activities. In most cases, securing a protected base from which to work proved one of the most significant challenges shared across the various cities and diverse forms of solidarity enacted.

Clearly, in what emerges as a rather grotesque parallelism, the CSOs we had the chance to observe more closely faced the same challenges as the migrating persons they were involved in supporting. They were similarly constrained to experiencing the same precariousness when attempting to place themselves permanently in the urban landscape. Short-term contracts, terminating subsidies, recurring police incursions, expulsion threats and outright evictions reflected a general representation of their action as temporary, and tolerable only until the "crisis" was deemed to be over. Although some exceptions to this pattern exist, in most cases a lack of safe spaces meant that one of the prime activities for CSOs was dealing with their own displacement *and* displaceability. One telling case is that of Globe Aroma in Brussels. Its vicissitudes as an open arts house striving to remain rooted in a city centre undergoing rampant gentrification have been recounted in more detail elsewhere (Nagi et al., 2023). Well beyond the capitals of Europe, accounts of evictions have stimulated coalitions of activists and researchers to mobilise critical cartography as a tool to depict those processes of unremitting removal that hinder CSOs and migrating persons.[5]

These challenging conditions make obvious how the quest for securing space and making room for solidarity is a relentless and enduring proposition. They also reveal how the temporal and spatial dilemmas of grassroots movements supporting migrants become intertwined. Such movements commonly aspire to fundamentally change the future – for migrating persons in particular and for society at large – but are structurally bounded to present action to alleviate the impact of current deterrence policies (Vandevoort & Fleischmann, 2020). Space is a dimension that further complicates the ambition of evading a purely humanitarian logic and a focus on the present. CSOs must engage with additional challenges such as lobbying with local governments and/or private owners to protract their leases, securing new bases for themselves, confronting the logistics of moving in and moving out, and eventually repristinating alliances and social networks.

Re-designing the design disciplines

In our 2018 report we raised the question of whether the emergence of a myriad of citizen-led mobilisations and initiatives, of which several subsequently constituted themselves as legal entities and non-profit organisations, would end up being overruled by less innovative forms of "integration" policies, or whether they would be able to radically renew these by foregrounding solidarity (d'Auria et al., 2018b: 9). Providing an answer to this question in general terms remains unfeasible due to the sizeable variety of situations. However, the relationships established with CSO partners in the context of the second project phase are expressive of the challenges that are experienced, even when securing a safe space to operate from is not a major concern. The abovementioned spatial dilemma becomes one of transforming urban space through solidarity, which becomes linked to the possibility of leaning mostly towards the future, thereby somehow escaping the temporal dilemma described above. Having to deal with the city's own cycles of destitution and decay, as well as those of resurgence and regeneration, means taking a critical stance vis-à-vis forthcoming urban development. It implies an understanding of how sites came to be inhabited the way they are today, comprehending the materialities that certain social practices require to be enacted, gauging how prospective visions that may be underway withhold – or not – the physical traces and social networks that require protection.

It is in such contexts that urban planning and design, conventionally linked with the future because of its projective nature – oftentimes uncritically and apolitically so – can help surpass the spatial and temporal dilemmas mentioned above. In terms of design, this does not simply translate into conceiving infrastructures that meet physical comfort standards and as such may be labelled as "dignified". Rather, it means connecting the homing process of migrating persons with the agentic qualities of "spatial space". It moreover becomes important to reiterate that "acts of solidarity have a direct urban planning implication that is tied to the city, not only in its representations but also in its physicality" (d'Auria et al., 2018: 84).

In such circumstances it may become possible to think about the future in solidarity and reconfigure

the contours of present-day decision-making. We have seen this occur in a multitude of ways, not only practices of resistance to state-led decisions, but also fundamental endorsements of hospitality. By concurring that future-making is part and parcel of humanitarianism's political dimension (Vandevoort & Fleischmann, 2020: 198), we see ample room for the design disciplines to express solidarity and help imagine solidary urban environments.

Our engagement with migration as a topic of concern is enacted through the partial lenses of architecture and urban design; understood as fields in themselves that are in need of transformation. This change is especially needed when upholding spatial justice is a priority (Cuff, 2023). Apprehending the spatial relations mentioned above also entails understanding where the design disciplines are placed, and could ethically place themselves in the value chain, producing a less – or more – hospitable urban environment. It requires moving beyond the nonetheless crucial calls to prevent architects from participating in projects situated within the extensive detention and forceful deportation system and their connected institutions.[6] It points to the significance of renewing urban design and planning education, and therefore of expanding urban practice, by striking partnerships with grassroots movements supporting migrating persons. It entails the potential to fully apprehend and potentially resolve the temporal and spatial dilemmas that such movements are inevitably confronted with. It is to such possibilities that we turn in the next sections.

1 www.infomigrants.net/en/post/40301/baobab-chief-risked-18-years-for-helping-migrants-acquitted

2 The use of the pronoun 'we' is mobilised in this piece as a reflection of the collective discussions that took place within the research team. It does not intend to obscure a diversity of profiles and opinions that featured across the partnership over several years. Instead, it serves to indicate a consensual approach when apprehending the spatial relationships of asylum, and its implications for urban practice.

3 www.documenta-fifteen.de/en/lumbung-members-artists/trampoline-house/

4 www.thefunambulist.net/magazine/they-have-clocks-we-have-time/extraorthogaphics

5 See, for example Shi, Mary & the AEMP Collective, 'Migrations/ Relocations' in: Counterpoints: A San Francisco Bay Area Atlas of Displacement and Resistance, ed. by Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (Oakland: PM Press, 2021), pp. 287-324; Chiara Lucchetti and Enrico Perini, 'Appunti sull'accoglienza' in Un' immaginario di città ospitale, ed. by Laboratorio CIRCO (Roma: Bordeaux 2021) pp., 142-151.

6 See as one notable example: www.failedarchitecture.com/this-very-normal-dutch-architecture-firm-remains-responsible-for-designing-a-deportation-machine/

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Acting in Space

Debates on the inclusion of migrants in European urban environments are widespread. From the local to the national and supra-national scales, migration dynamics challenge entrenched beliefs on place and belonging, and question dominant understandings of citizenship and community. Today, there is an urgent need to rethink planning and design in ways that embrace these challenges and fosters deep inclusivity. This is crucial in a context where migrants are frequently overlooked or openly discriminated against, limiting their ability to meaningfully participate in urban life. The education and training of urban planners, architects, and social workers must take this into account to ensure that we create more inclusive cities in the future.

The Designing Inclusion project explored innovative teaching and learning approaches for producing inclusive urban spaces in European cities. The project experimented with situated learning and collective knowledge production, involving multiple perspectives in narrating and imagining more inclusive cities. This section of the book includes multi-lingual texts, conversations, and visual essays that illustrate how the project was grounded in four urban contexts: Berlin, Milan, Brussels, and London. Each context is described in terms of its interweaving with migration experiences and issues of exclusion and inclusion. Collaborative learning activities centered around Marzahn in Berlin and San Siro in Milan. The book explores these areas in greater detail, as they informed much of our collective thinking and doing, becoming catalysts for collaboration and situated learning. Brussels and London served as departure points for some course participants rather than places of collective inquiry. The two cities are explored briefly in the book through the eyes of participants and their experiences.

Large-scale housing blocks viewed from above
(Barbara Herschel, Felix Kuenkel, 2021)

Marzahn, Berlin



The neighbourhood of Marzahn is situated towards the East of the city of Berlin and is under the administration of the district of Marzahn-Hellersdorf. The neighbourhood, as it remains today, was built in the 1970s and was the biggest and most prestigious social housing complex of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), managed under its regime until 1989 (Rubin, 2011; 2016). Following World War II, the division of the city in 1949, and the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the socialist government responded to the enormous lack of housing. Marzahn became the biggest building site for fifteen years with 106,000 new flats constructed until 1968. After the reunification in 1990, the district underwent major building renovations. Rising unemployment rates combined with an increase in migrant flows (Berlin Brandenburg, 2021: 5) provided space for increasing xenophobia and political extremism (both left and right), which give the neighbourhood a bad reputation.

Today, the district of Marzahn-Hellersdorf is home to 273,731 inhabitants and has the highest growth rate of all Berlin's districts (Augustin, 2020a). Since 2015, this growth has been due the influx of persons with migration backgrounds[1] and in particular 'foreigners'. Around 60,000 persons living in the district have a migration background (22%), of which 35,000 are 'foreigners' (13%) and approximately 25,000 are Germans with migration background (9%). The district thus has the second lowest percentage of migrants of all districts of the city. However, the second highest percentage of refugee shelters (12.9%) are situated in Marzahn- Hellersdorf[2]. In 2020, approximately 3000 refugees lived in community shelters in the district. Furthermore, many refugees also live in shelters for homeless persons and privately rented flats. The most common origin of persons with migration backgrounds living in Marzahn today is the former Soviet Union (34%), in particular the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan; and most of these are Germans with migration backgrounds. The 'foreigners' in the district predominantly come from Vietnam, Syria, Poland and Romania (Augustin, 2020b). Unemployment is relatively low in Marzahn-Hellersdorf today, being the fourth lowest of districts in the city (Augustin, 2020a), however, unemployment amongst foreigners and young adults is higher by comparison, as is child poverty (ibid). Xenophobia is still a pressing issue in Marzahn-Hellersdorf. Especially in 2015/16, attacks on refugee shelters and migrants in the streets have been documented. Simultaneously, many projects and support groups have grown around such shelters, including Stadtwerke Marzahn (mrzn).

On a larger scale, Marzahn is a site where one can explore the periphery-centre relations. The district itself, as well as the Stadtwerke site, is quite central within the expanding city. The district of Marzahn-Hellersdorf could be understood as an intercity. On the one hand, it connects different urban contexts; on the other, it shows strong features and potentialities as a space of great transformation (Lorenzen, 2006).

Stadtwerke mrzn @ Otto-Rosenberg Platz

The Stadtwerke mrzn project is part of the city-wide initiative "Urbane Praxis Berlin"[3]. It has established itself as a model campus and pilot experience for which to explore the potentialities and struggles of engaging with marginalised contexts in the Berlin peri-urban territories (McGee, 2018). Stadtwerke mrzn is located within the parameters of an industrial site at Otto-Rosenberg-Platz, south of the residential area. The two contrasting sites are separated by the multi-lane *Märkische Allee*, which acts as a physical barrier. The Otto-Rosenberg-Square site is highly charged, having experienced geological transformations over time, and many (heavy) hi/stories.

In 1871, architect James Hobrecht was commissioned to come up with a sewerage system for the inner city, so as not to poison the inner-city waters. He developed a radial system through which sewage was directed onto the fields of Marzahn. The *Rieselfelder* (sewage farms) were only closed in 1985, and the neighbourhood still struggles with contaminated soil and unpleasant smells. The most difficult events on the site surrounding Otto-Rosenberg-Platz took place during World War II. For the Olympic Games in 1936, Sinti and Roma people were forcefully relocated to the contaminated fields, which was turned into a *Zwangslager* (forced camp). In 1938/39, deportations began to the concentration camps. Otto Rosenberg, after whom the square was named in 2007, was a Sinti and still a child during wartimes: he survived four concentration camps (Rosenberg, 2015). Rosenberg became active in commemorating the histories of the

Sinti and Roma in Marzahn, and initiated the *Zwangslager* memorial which is located at the square today.

In 2021, the Otto-Rosenberg-Platz became home to different marginalised groups: homeless persons, refugees, and young adults with difficulties integrating into society. The commercially run shelter for the homeless (Neustart) used to be home to trainees from the Berlin public transport services during GDR times. The former Telecom Building has been transformed into an emergency camp (Kreichauf, 2018) for refugees, which, in the course of 2016, turned into a community camp. With its 900-person capacity, the camp is one of the biggest in the district and the city. Some 450 persons lived in the camp in 2021, predominantly from Syria, Eritrea, and Albania, of which 180 are children. Located at the square is also the Don Bosco Centre for young adult education and the Circus Cabuwazi, a Berlin-wide acting circus association working predominantly with children from marginalised backgrounds.

The intention for the Stadtwerke mrzn project was to create an open, inclusive space for everyone who wanted to engage with it. Initially there were many children involved, and since the site was a work in progress, the kids referred to it as a "building site". Its informal reference thus became "the experimental building site": an unfinished site that everyone could appropriate by making interventions. For people coming from war torn countries, especially women, it was important to create a safe space, which they would otherwise not find in the city. Co-creating a site for one's own needs can be an act of empowerment, and a refugee women's group established a kitchen and herb garden as their regular meeting point.

The Stadtwerke mrzn team, composed of artists, social workers and invited guests including urban practitioners and students, took on the role of mediators in the process of developing ideas and became educators and supporters e.g. with physical constructions. Still, the idea was that everyone would learn while doing and thus become experts, continuously passing on skills and knowledge. The social workers also supported migrants with administrative work regarding their asylum status, housing issues, or networking with lawyers and other specialists. The combination of offering creative opportunities and simultaneously supporting migrants with everyday challenges has proven to be a success for the Stadtwerke mrzn project.

City spaces can provide sites to experiment with resilience, and the capacity to provide people with infrastructures capable of absorbing and mitigating the effects of local and global crises. This is critical, especially in the context of further crises – be they ecological, social or political – where resilience is increasingly demanded. Such places play a role where resilience can develop and manifest itself, and even more so for so-called "marginalised groups". Nevertheless, such projects also have limits and constraints; not all problems can be solved in such a setting. Fruitful work can be done to support people in re/establishing their agency, that is, in taking their lives back under their control and planning brighter futures for themselves and their families. Therefore, since the beginning, Stadtwerke mrzn intended to make room for social encounters and opportunities, and to set up a physical space where people could meet and create together. This would be achieved by mitigating language constraints through creative interaction and engaging in hands-on, small-scale constructions, performance-based activities, and fine arts. Stadtwerke mrzn aimed to rely on arts-based methods to explore how residents could act to transform both their livelihoods and the spaces they inhabit.

During the initial phases of the Covid-19 pandemic and throughout the subsequent lockdowns, the camps were largely cut-off from the city and became even more isolated. Social workers and operators were impeded from entering and having contact with inhabitants. This created obstacles to designing inclusive spaces and services for the migrant community. Therefore, it is critical that such spaces have the capacity to cope with uncertainty.

Can resilience emerge in the context of migration, marginality, and exclusion, even beyond the Covid-19 pandemic? As an individual feature, resilience can be defined as one's ability to 'bounce back' from stressful, negative, or traumatic situations. Looking at cities, spaces can be sites in which to experiment with resilience as the capacity to provide people with infrastructures capable of absorbing and mitigating the effects of local and global crises. Resilient spaces are even more important in the context of the global pandemic. They are critical to coping with further crises where resilience is demanded. Places play a role where resilience can develop and manifest itself, and all the more so for so-called "marginalised groups".

If we look at the immediate neighbourhood of the Stadtwerke project, its flora and fauna are a point of interest and provide a delicate balance between built space, natural environments, and non-human actors. This dimension was particularly critical during the lockdown, as natural spaces provided people with chill-out areas that lowered the tensions of forced cohabitation. As previously mentioned, Marzahn is also a good site from which to explore the periphery-centre, the district, as well as hosting the actual Stadtwerke site. It is quite central not only from a geographical point of view, but also in terms of potential niche social encounters.

1 In the population register statistics, persons with migration backgrounds are considered to be: 1. 'foreigners'; or 2. Germans with a migration background.

2 https://www.berlin.de/laf/wohnen/allgemeine-informationen/aktuelle-unterbringungszahlen/artikel.630901.php (Accessed 18 July 2023).

3 https://www.urbanepraxis.berlin/ (Accessed 23 July 2023).

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View from Alt-Marzhan, in the old neighborhood, of the large-scale housing blocks (Barbara Herschel, Felix Kuenkel, 2021)



Explorations of the abandoned area in Marzhan
(Barbara Herschel, Felix Kuenkel, 2021)



Railroad that divides parts of the neighbourhood
(Barbara Herschel, Felix Kuenkel, 2021)



Eastgate shopping mall: the main aggregation area in the neighbourhood (Barbara Herschel, Felix Kuenkel, 2021)



Raoul-Wallenberg-Straße train station, housing blocks and wild vegetation (Barbara Herschel, Felix Kuenkel, 2021)



Hochzeits Park vegetation, Marzhan
(Barbara Herschel, Felix Kuenkel, 2021)



View of large-scale housing blocks and surrounding spontaneous vegetation
(Barbara Herschel, Felix Kuenkel, 2021)



Pipelines surrounded by spontaneous vegetation, Marzhan (Barbara Herschel, Felix Kuenkel, 2021)

In conversation: Schlesische27

Rossella Asja Lucrezia Ferro,
in dialogue with Vera Fritsche and
Anna Piccoli (Schlesische27)

Rossella: Can you describe Schlesische27 - Art and Education (S27), starting from your personal point of view, and explain who you are as a group? What are the organisation's fields of work, and what is its relation with the city?

Vera: I have worked at S27 for six and a half years as the head of the social work department. I am the coordinator for different projects, and I managed the Marzahn project from the beginning till the end. I have a working background at the intersection between social work and urban development, questioning the design of free and public spaces: who is allowed to design them, why, and how. I am interested in exploring the perspective of marginalised groups and people and their visibility in the city.

S27 is a non-governmental association in the context of international youth work that has existed for 40 years. It was founded in 1982 by a collective of artists and began on the belief that kids and youngsters should have space to experiment with art outside of the institutional paths. In the last ten years, we slightly switched focus to young adults with a migration history and people who had to flee their homes. This shift happened starting from 2013, around the explosion of the war in Syria, and more noticeably from 2015, when many refugees arrived in Berlin from African countries. These people were often living in public spaces of the city, like the well-known camp of Oranienplatz in Kreuzberg,[1] in the city centre. The Municipality tolerated the camp for two years but then shut it down. The

refugees had to leave. During this period, S27 started to work with the people who lived in the Oranienplatz camp. S27, a house for art and culture, redefined its work as more political and experimental: a space to produce campaigns about socio-political issues. We observed the processes of arrival in Berlin, the distinct procedures of integration that the refugees must follow based on the origin country, the differences between newcomers and long-term migrants, the discrimination between who could be part of Berlin life, the labour market, the educational system, and others that were excluded. Our answer was to work towards projects, experiments, and spaces where these people could participate in daily activities through art and various urban development projects. We believe spaces make the difference: creating own spaces allows people to identify in a new city and experiment with activities and skills. It represents a way to get in contact with the new system and to be part of a community.

Anna: My perspective is much shorter because I have been working at S27 for two years. I started as a project assistant and later moved to manage projects in external locations. In the last years, the topic of urban practices is becoming more prominent for us: we aim to create free spaces in the city and foster the use of urban spaces for non-commercial purposes. Our idea is to contribute to city development from an artistic and cultural perspective, keeping the social perspective together in an interdisciplinary approach beyond architecture and urban design.

Rossella: In all these years of activities, you developed many forms of collaboration. What are your current networks and partners?

Vera: Of course, we are involved in broad networks in Berlin. For example, we cooperate with other professionals like social workers, therapists, and cultural mediators to carry on the operational work with the young refugees. We also participate in the initiative Urbane Praxis. It started around 2020, intending to affirm interdisciplinarity's importance in public or semi-public space projects. The participants of the network were initially twelve organisations aiming that were working with/in urban spaces. Now the initiative is spread all around the city and has become an association with about 80 members, both individuals and collectives. The problems that brought us together were the difficulties in obtaining proper recognition for our multifaceted work. We get support from specific programmes and gain sectorial grants, which is sometimes limiting our action's potentialities. Urbane Praxis claims more public funding and easier accessibility to available spots to create free spaces with this interdisciplinary approach. We are a resource in times of instability and crisis. These spaces can create connections between old Berliners and newcomers, encouraging inclusion through art and public spaces, but we need the right tools to act. Urbane Praxis shares obstacles and puts together forces to find solutions, such as more straightforward procedures or temporary contracts.

Other engaging networks concern international partners and exchanges. Recently we went to Palestine and Lebanon.[2] Many participants in our activities come from these contexts, so it was meaningful to see, understand and feel these places. It is the same reason that brought us to work in Marzahn. Many participants live in the outskirts or peripheral areas, and I think we should move more there to empathise with the experiences of others and create solidarity.

Anna: Only the S27 staff could participate in these exchanges because our participants are mostly not allowed to travel to other countries due to paper issues.

Rossella: I am curious about your relationship with public institutions and the administration. Can you describe how S27 relates to them?

Anna: There are, of course, cooperations with public institutions, with schools and universities, that are often related to a specific project. The relationship with schools, for example, could be seen as bidirectional: sometimes, S27 represents a good alternative to the traditional school form and a complementary offer; sometimes, we try to share our experimental models with them, which is difficult. Then there is the level of political networks and relations with the administrative level, which are also relevant to us. At the same time, we create political awareness but also connections with politics to open spaces of possibility and new experiences.

Vera: The Municipality of Berlin should invest more to foster the inclusive use of public spaces in the city; that is why we started the Urbane Praxis campaign. It is necessary, especially now, because every big city is dealing with rising rent prices. The city should keep spaces for cultural, social, artistic, and educational activities and stop selling out free spaces to the capitalist systems.

Rossella: Looking at your engagement and activities in Marzahn, when and how did your connection with the neighbourhood start, and what was the driver of this engagement?

Vera: Stadtwerk mrzn in Marzahn connects directly with a previous community project, the Coop Campus, that took place in a more central location, in the space of a former graveyard. The Coop Campus was a combination between art and social work, directed to the many inhabitants with a migratory history and in general to the inhabitants of Neukölln. After four years of the project, we had to leave the space. With this project, we learned how important it is for community and artistic work to have the availability of an open

field where people can connect super easily. It was a "winning corridor" that lowered the barriers and helped people connect with the artistic work of S27.

We started to look for similar spaces, realising that it is hard to get an open free space in the city centre with the gentrification hitting. On the other hand, most of our participants live in the city's periphery, which is changing fast. We started to look at the outskirts with the eyes of our participants, that consider places like Marzahn their centre, while for us, it was just the end of the city. So we arrived in Marzahn due to a mixture of gentrification processes and opportunities for projects that we envisioned: the challenge was to prove that a change is possible in these areas.

I was keen to work in a neighbourhood framed as the far-right wing district, which is a simplistic description. Somehow, there is more freedom of work in the outskirts. Also, there are already many promising projects in the city centre. It is more effective to work where few other opportunities exist and people desire to get involved! We chose the site in Marzahn near the collective centre for refugees and the homeless shelter. We had learned from past experiences that for refugees and migrants, it is an excellent opportunity to easily access projects where it is possible to gain more and different skills, such as our projects, and where it is possible to build direct relationships with the team members. It helps to find a more accessible corridor to the regular system. So, we started the project in Marzahn with the idea of helping young adults and people experiencing homelessness get into the labour system.

Rossella: Can you recall any key moment or situation that represents your work in this area well?

Vera: It is a difficult question. Every single interaction and individual work with the people gets you back something. Many participants considered Stadtwerk mrzn as their home and family. Maybe the only place where they were able to connect with German people. All the participants were really sad when we stopped the project.

On the other side, a connotative experience during the period in Marzahn was the conflict with some institutions around. Some social work organisations appear stuck in their systems and habits. Initially, we were perceived by some of them as arrogant, with our efforts to make little changes in the space and in the life of people. However, we did it. We proved that changes are possible in a really damaged area. That is something which made all of us proud: from plain garbage and parking spot to a little village where people feel at home and connected and they lived as a family, more or less. It was discouraging at the end when we tried to hand over the structures we built to the local institutions and to the administration, and no one took it.

Anna: I did not work directly in Marzahn with the S27 team, but I can say that when the project finished, the colleagues moved to another project location where I was involved. One of the things that stayed with me was that people from the community of Marzahn regularly came to that location, which is far, at least one hour by public transport. Nevertheless, they were still coming because of the difference the team made in Marzahn. Creating solid bonds is a motivation to become active and to be more part of the city.

Rossella: What happened when the project finished?

Vera: The project lasted two and a half years until September 2022. Two former participants continue to hold workshops with their community in a self-organised tiny house on the site. They go there once or twice a week. One is working with an Arabic community of youngsters. They enjoy the afternoon together and learn how to sew with machines. The other woman is from the Afghan community, and they meet in a women's group just to have a little space, talk and connect between them. It is a little legacy of Stadtwerk mrzn, totally self-organised.

Rossella: Are you thinking of going back there with new projects?

Vera: The project was meant to be temporary from the beginning. We could imagine going back and forward for a specific project with the shelter, for example, but not permanently. It is not the core concept of our institution. We conceive ourselves as the initiator that points out a certain topic or perspective and builds campaigns and experiments. Also, the management of such a project is complex. The enormous work required to apply for grants, human resources, and money needed are consistently underestimated. The local administration could take on the responsibility of the project, but they avoided it. There is a lack of political will. We tried our best and reproved that a change is possible. Now the politicians and institutions must do something other than the artistic and cultural workers. I went there three weeks ago, caught up with people, and brought some books we made for the kids. We are still in contact with the community.

Rossella: Your art and social work is explicitly oriented to open processes of inclusion for people with a migratory experience. How did this dimension play a role and emerge in implementing your activities in Marzahn?

Vera: Our main target group is people with a history of fleeing and migration. During the last ten years, we learned that there is always a gap between the arrival in Berlin and the entry into the regular system, like the educational or the labour system. Our artistic and social work activates a parallel and safe path where

people can get the time and the skills they need to become part of the regular system. We build structures where migrants can empower themselves, learn about the new environment, and feel to belong to a group or family.

Stadtwerk mrzn addressed directly the barriers that migrants face upon their arrival: they are accommodated in peripheral locations, lacking essential services, where they do not feel really welcomed. In Marzahn, we wanted to build a cultural, educational centre with different campus sites and activities. The idea was to build an authentic little village. The management of the shelter of Marzahn, hosted in a former office building, was open to discussing the project. They were used to organisations proposing short-term projects for refugees and then going away. It took a while until they believed us, but when they realised that we were there to stay, they started getting involved as institution. The engagement with the shelter was strong since the beginning and also based on the long time we spent together.

The kids were the first people who literally ran over us. We did not plan to interact with the kids, but they just arrived, curious about what was happening. It was more challenging to involve the adults. The project concept targeted young refugee men because they are hanging around and cannot work, so we thought they were potentially interested in learning handcraft skills at our site. It did not work out at all. Instead, women were more interested in our presence. They are the people left behind by the system. When a family arrives, at first, the kids have to attend school; then, the man has to find a job. In the end, the women are already in Germany for two-three years, and they never took a German class because they always had to care about the other family members. So women were willing to learn the language; they claimed structures to meet without their men. They were not asking for information about work possibilities in Germany but seeking a safe community space. The women, especially the older ones, became the main participants, who were around 60 or 70 at the end. It was a surprising and unforeseen change! We did not really build up extra structures for the women, they were just showing up day after day, and we understood that was important to them. And sometimes the men arrived too.

> Rossella: How did the DESINC course fit in with your activities, and how did it relate to your approach to the territory?

Vera: When the students came, we deeply experienced the idea of Stadtwerk mrzn as an area of unplanned learning: a project space about exchanges. There were students from different backgrounds, countries, and universities. And there were our participants. The DESINC workshop fits our idea of having a space where everyone can bring different interests. For example, my interest is social work, and I usually work with students interested in the community and organisational dimensions. Other people, like artists, designers, and climate activists, come with their own perspectives. So we had all these different levels, from individual interests to institutional ones, from academic to non-academic. The project in Marzahn was an excellent object of observation for students, and in general, it was a great field of experimentation for us.

> Rossella: Something I remember clearly about those days of the workshop is the idea of a reverse perspective on hosting. German and international students were hosted in Marzahn, and the refugees were our hosts. The women living in the collective shelter managed the food preparation, and students could cook, meet and learn with them. I felt it was important for the women to have the responsibility to host and welcome the people from the DESINC course.

Vera: Yes, we enjoyed the DESINC course from an educational point of view. One of our project's goals was to learn from the field and support the academy in doing it as well. We learned from the context and from handling daily issues, problems, and conflicts. DESINC is promoting our same topics of learning from the fieldwork and transferring this perspective into projects of unplanned architecture. We also faced some differences, for example, the whole process of dealing with organising activities with a significant advance of time that the academy required. It was too distant from our usual work structure and planning time schedules.

> Rossella: Can you recall the outcomes of the workshop locally? How did it impact your project and activities in the short term and the organization in the medium-long term?

Vera: On the local and immediate level, we really got something done; the students built stuff we needed! That was super positive. We needed a table and a roof, we needed a stage, and they fast-forwarded the achievement of our necessities, so that was cool. On the middle-level outcomes, the workshop fostered our reflection on handling better the dynamics between the daily participants and the visitors. This is a general issue behind the DESINC workshop. Hosting a group of visitors imply an effort and complex dynamics. Quite often, there is a statement of expectations from the academic environment. For example, during the DESINC workshop, there was a demand to get in contact with the refugees. We had many discussions afterward: "Do we want to be responsible for that, or should the participants decide?" We cannot force or plan the interaction. Experimental learning and interpersonal exchanges do not come by plan. Getting into private

intimate relationships with people requires time and patience. It was a good outcome because we defined our positioning on this topic.
Anna: I would also add that the DESINC experience helped us focus and learn our strengths in such a project. We can be a good example for people to come and learn, to see and test on the ground, in an innovative learning perspective where we are able to give impulses and conduct experiments.
Vera: On the one hand, we learned that university structures are not as flexible as you may think before you work with them. On the other hand, the positive side is that, of course, you can learn again from others. The DESINC course was also a means to get inspiration about how other groups work and to reproduce activities and practices. Being in San Siro in Milan was super interesting, and we could compare the two projects, even if the running organisations are of a different nature.

> Rossella: What is the picture of the DESINC workshop in Marzahn that expresses the value of that experience?

Vera: I appreciate what happened on the worst day of the weather. There was a strong storm, but somehow that day made-up the group dynamics. Students realised that it was going to rain badly the whole day. We brought them some boots, raincoats, and covers, and they organised themselves to carry on the activities anyway. Everyone was proud, and we were all satisfied at the end of the day. That is a good picture of how much this kind of workshop and facing obstacles together can be significant to make cooperative dynamics emerge among people who did not know each other a few days before.

> Rossella: We already said something about the disappointment when the local administration did not take up the window of opportunity opened by the Stadwerk mrzn project. Reflecting on your work, what are the desired impacts you wish for the future?

Vera: It is relevant to show that it is possible to construct one's own life, no matter how complicated the situation is. I say that from a privileged position. But I guess we proved in Marzahn that things could change. Even if at the beginning you could not believe that it is always possible to build something that you never built before. Our role is to point out inequalities, problems, and power-related issues. I am not sad we left Marzahn, well, sometimes a little bit. But we move on, bringing the same idea to another place, and we are still connected with the people we meet.
Anna: My desires are opening new perspectives, not giving up when there is an obstacle, and finding creative solutions. Using the grey zones to change things is a valuable point that informs S27 activities. We have a few new external locations with many practical obstacles, like no infrastructure, energy power, and also social and political obstacles. We always try to find ways around these obstacles and see what comes from them.
Vera: Leaving the Marzahn area is also a way to say: "Hey, reclaim your space! You are as important as anyone else, so make your needs visible." The difference with the world of social work I come from is that urban practices are physical, so people can show up and participate. In social work, we talk and talk, but we are missing the physical side; that is the winning missing puzzle. Create visible places and then discuss them.

1 Vera explained the background history of the Oranienplatz refugee camp. "It was born from a refugees' movement to contest the federal law about migrants' distribution. Upon arrival in Germany, refugees were sent to towns and cities without the possibility of choosing their destination and were not allowed to leave the assigned area within 30 km. The destination areas were often remote places of the country, in the middle of nowhere. Life was tough there for migrants: they did not have opportunities to work or to attend school, and local people were frequently hostile. Many refugees and Germans considered the law restrictive of human rights, and the refugees self-organised two marches to Hamburg and Berlin to break the law and affirm their right to seek better life chances. In both cities were created camps".

2 Vera explained the content of these exchanges. "We took the concept of bildungsmanufaktur [educational production] in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. People there are put in a strong passive position, by law or by the conflict. For example, refugees can study law but not become doctors, and access to the educational and labour systems is limited. We conducted our classes inspired by the Bauhaus architectural classes: feel the material, learn about it, and experiment with it. After that, you can make something new and experience something you never did before. It is a simple concept, but it works, even in the most complex contexts".

Streetcar 16 on Via Dolci (Niside Panebianco, 2021)

San Siro, Milan



Francesca Cognetti and
Alice Ranzini

San Siro is one of the largest public housing estates in Milan, Italy. Despite its central location, it is also one of the most deprived areas of the city due to the precarious conditions of the buildings and the public spaces, and a very low-income, fragile population. It was built between 1935 and 1947 to host the workers from southern and eastern Italy employed in local factories. San Siro underwent an intense demographic change when foreign families arrived in the area; their presence has grown by 138.6% between 2001 and 2018[1]. According to the latest data, 48.6% of inhabitants have migrant backgrounds, more than the city average of 20.1%. Mainly, the migrants have arrived from Egypt (37.2%), Morocco (10.4%) and the Philippines (9.5%); 85 different nationalities are present.

International migrants have established themselves in San Siro at different time periods. The neighbourhood has also become very attractive to incoming populations for various reasons related to the public housing stock's ordinary management. Some people have found here the possibility of a stable life; others a 'landing' place to access informal networks of mutual help, labour and housing. Some families, i.e. from South America, Eritrea, and Morocco, began settling in the 1990s thanks to the allocation of state-owned apartments. Single people were followed by their partners and started families. Most are now well-rooted in the city. In some cases, especially until the 2008 economic crisis, they moved into the surroundings, bought apartments and started businesses. Their children were born in Italy; however, national law does not recognise them as Italian citizens.

More recent waves of migration have seen people gathering in poorer social conditions. They have suffered from progressive national restrictions on immigration and difficulties in accessing the labour market. Some, undocumented, migrants arrived during and after the Arab Springs; and some of these applied for political asylum. As these migrants arrived in Milan, they often found themselves living in very precarious situations, even after many years in Italy. In the last few years, other populations (e.g. Roma groups) continued to move to San Siro from foreign countries and other city districts.

Migratory processes are nowadays profoundly diversified (Castles, De Haas and Miller, 2020); so are the migration patterns across European cities. In places like San Siro, economic migrants, seasonal workers, reunited families, refugees, asylum seekers, undocumented migrants, and second-generation migrants coexist. Some settled down while maintaining connections with their country of origin. Others, such as many Egyptian families, spend several months of the year in their home country. Newcomers like the Roma families have tended to move fluidly between different places according to necessity. Such an articulated social panorama makes San Siro a *superdiverse* (Vertovec, 2007) territory, very mixed in terms of origins, social classes and even lifestyles (Tasan-Kok et al., 2017). Its features question the labels "migrant" and "foreigner" to better acknowledge the nuances and impacts of migration through time and space. From this perspective, looking at San Siro means examining the intertwining of different migratory phenomena, profiles of people and groups, and seasons of transnational exchanges. These dynamics are embedded in practices and policies that occur at different scales and leave traces in the urban context. In some ways they redefine the meaning of living, coexisting, learning, working and experiencing everyday life.

A condition of "permanent temporariness" (Landau, 2014) linked with multiple "mobility regimes" (Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2013) marks neighbourhoods in many Western countries. The inhabitants have different territorial affiliations, roots and expectations of stability. They rely on complementary networks of physical and virtual relations, as well as mobility networks that cross borders and provide them with information, resources, and identities (Tarrius, 1993). In this diasporic condition, the risk of invisibility occurs for people with migratory backgrounds, also leading to substitutive flat narratives. These dynamics contribute to diminishing people's agency by silencing their voices. Consequently, a relational and situated research approach, and an intersectional perspective on inequalities, are required for a more complex and inclusive handling of marginal multicultural contexts.

Situated and relational research can give marginalised subjects new cultural and political recognition, valuing their identities and capabilities within the neighbourhood. In this sense, it is interesting to look at how women of different nationalities use San Siro's public spaces (schools or local markets) to create relationships. In these places, people express and develop

agency thanks to wide access to resources and mutual recognition (Fincher et al., 2014), which provides an effective measure of the level of inclusiveness of a territory (Amin, 2002). Women's ordinary duties and needs create solidarity networks that support their social and territorial agency (Ranzini, 2023); however, these practices often remain untold both by public narratives and the women themselves. Women with migration backgrounds suffer from under-representation; they are often described as fragile, frightened and passive with respect to their life project. In contrast, these community-making practices shed light on intercultural relations (Wessendorf, 2014) and provide new insights on how to design inclusive, multicultural environments.

An intersectional approach is critical to highlight the intertwining between individual characteristics and structural processes of exclusion, which we risk neglecting. Besides being superdiverse, San Siro is also impoverished and marginalised. Moreover, women experience discrimination related to race, gender, and culture at the same time. The neighbourhood can thus limit their capabilities. Research on negative "neighbourhood effects" (Van Ham et al., 2012) highlighted the internal spirals of impoverishment and deviance occurring in these areas. Impoverishment and social segregation may be reinforced or attenuated by local regulations and policies, especially in the housing and labour markets. At the same time, individual characteristics and social capital may affect individual trajectories, depending on how specific identities are perceived in the arrival country, or enacted by people. Intersectionality reduces the risk of an ideological approach to poverty in marginal, superdiverse neighbourhoods. Through new narratives, we can question the entrenched idea that low-income, multicultural neighbourhoods are homogeneous places without resources and highlight forces and scales of exclusion and inclusion occurring in such highly diverse urban environments.

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1 Data taken from Milan's Municipal General Register.

Rossella Asja
Lucrezia Ferro and
Niside Panebianco

This visual essay tells the story of the San Siro neighbourhood in Milan. Statistical data describes conditions of material deprivation and extreme poverty and walking through the neighbourhood blocks, it is not difficult to see the signs that confirm this: decaying buildings, precarious businesses, and people struggling to get by. But as these photos reveal, there is more to San Siro than meets the eye.

Linee e forme delineano un quartiere fortemente riconoscibile dall'esterno, un blocco immutato nel tempo che persiste nel tessuto urbano che si muove. Tutte le statistiche descrivono condizioni di deprivazione materiale e povertà estrema in cui versano molti abitanti, e attraversando il quartiere non è difficile notare diversi segnali che lo confermano: edifici decadenti, commerci informali, persone che si arrangiano nella quotidianità. L'omogeneità percepita crolla ad uno sguardo più interno. Emergono i dettagli e gli usi degli spazi diversificati. San Siro quartiere della migrazione interna del secondo dopoguerra, San Siro delle famiglie numerose e dei ricongiungimenti familiari di lungo corso, San Siro quartiere d'approdo e delle case dormitorio. Una superdiversità che si manifesta nei colori e nelle fantasie dei panni stesi, nei profumi e nei suoni che provengono dalle finestre, nel vociare dei cortili. Persone e abitazioni spesso precarie, che cambiano velocemente. Un quartiere di giovani che diventeranno il futuro della città, crescendo tra contraddizioni, identità contese e molte difficoltà. Case minime che costituiscono un appiglio per la dignità delle persone che vi abitano, nonostante gli spazi angusti e la scarsa manutenzione degli edifici, spesso abbandonati dalla proprietà pubblica. Strade vissute e pulsanti, dove scoppiano conflitti e si manifestano espressioni del disagio, ma anche dove si incontrano le diversità e si articolano esperienze di mutualismo e cura.



Overlooking the courtyard
(Niside Panebianco, 2021)



The market on Via Paravia
(Niside Panebianco, 2021)



Returning from school along Via Abbiati
(Niside Panebianco, 2021)



Hidden balconies
(Niside Panebianco, 2021)

Balconies on Zamagna Street
(Niside Panebianco, 2021)



A gatehouse in Via Paravia
(Niside Panebianco, 2021)



Intercoms
(Niside Panebianco, 2021)

Votive wayside shrine
(Niside Panebianco, 2021)

Bad news?
(Niside Panebianco, 2021)

The intimate space of the house
(Niside Panebianco, 2021)

A lived-in landing
(Niside Panebianco, 2021)



The public space on Mar Jonio Street
(Niside Panebianco, 2021



A paved housing space on Mar Jonio Street (Niside Panebianco, 2021)
Strade vissute e pulsanti, dove scoppiano conflitti e si manifestano espressioni del disagio, ma anche dove si incontrano le diversità e si articolano esperienze di mutualismo e cura.

In conversation: Mapping San Siro

Beatrice De Carli and Maria Elena Ponno,
in dialogue with Francesca Cognetti,
Ida Castelnuovo and Paolo Grassi
(Politecnico di Milano, Mapping San Siro)

Interviewers: We would like to ask you to describe Mapping San Siro from the collective's point of view. Who are you as a group? What is your network, and with whom do you work? What are the collaborations that are most central to your work?

Mapping San Siro: This experience began in 2013 as a teaching workshop at Politecnico di Milano. Titled "Mapping San Siro," it focused on investigating ways of living within the neighbourhood. The workshop involved a group of urban planning and architecture students, and it was a pedagogical experience that led to further research in the neighbourhood. Shortly after, we opened a small office space in San Siro called 30metriquadri, which helped us understand many things about San Siro, the city of Milan and its urban policies.

Over the years, we involved many students, interns, and recent graduates in this experience, creating a learning ground where we could exchange ideas and teach while also learning ourselves. At the same time, our experience in San Siro opened up a new vision of research and teaching for Politecnico di Milano. Our work was recognised as a "collective project," which is difficult to build in an academic environment that often rewards individual trajectories.

The group's history can be identified in two major phases: the first one corresponds to the workshop and the opening of the space "30metriquadri." In 2019, we secured further funding from the university and moved to the "Off Campus" space, which we still occupy. This expansion corresponded to the inclusion of the work of Mapping San Siro inside the broader Polisocial program. The scale of the group's work changed, and the activity was recognised by Politecnico as a university-level initiative. The "Off Campus model" is now replicated in three other spaces in the city of Milan.

Interviewers: What does Off Campus consist of and what is the relationship between Mapping San Siro, Off Campus and Polisocial?

Mapping San Siro: During the same period that Mapping San Siro was being developed, the Polisocial programme was also established as a strategic project focused on social responsibility. These two initiatives provided us with platforms to experiment with the theme of university social responsibility. Francesca's role as the university's Delegate for Social Responsibility played a key institutional role in recognising our work in the San Siro neighbourhood and bringing some of our experimentation to a university level.

What started as an experience of a research group, however, fuelled a broader reflection within the Polisocial programme on the themes of the third mission and the social responsibility of the university. This unique situation allowed us to experiment with a high degree of freedom while working within the institutional framework of Politecnico's social responsibility program.

As a result, we were able to continue working at two very different levels: on the one hand, designing an institutional framework, which was important; and on the other, experimenting at the local level through our presence in the neighbourhood. This approach provided us with an important opportunity to explore and reflect on key themes related to social responsibility and university engagement.

Interviewers: When you talk about this space, you mention a relationship with the dynamics from below and local actors. Can you tell us who the main subjects are that you work with in San Siro?

Mapping San Siro: Over the years, Mapping San Siro has brought together a diverse network of local actors, mainly organised groups such as social cooperatives, committees, volunteer groups, and Italian schools for foreigners. For a certain period, the work of Mapping San Siro focussed on uniting and coordinating these different subjects into an informal network called the "San/Heroes Network." For a couple of years, our focus was on self-representation in a non-stereotypical narrative of the neighbourhood and the network itself.

As an institutional entity representing Politecnico, Mapping San Siro has been able to work more on a vertical level, connecting local actors with the institutional level within the city and beyond. This includes the City of Milan, public housing agency ALER, Lombardy Region (owner of the public apartments in the neighbourhood), other universities, and more. The focus has always been on conveying "bottom-up" needs that come from the local network and Mapping San Siro has perhaps helped to systematise, articulate, and amplify.

Interviewers: From the perspective of these actors, how do you feel the work you do is perceived? What kind of relationship do you have with city-wide institutions, for instance?

Mapping San Siro: The relationship between Mapping San Siro and institutions varies depending on the historical political moment. At times, the group has worked closely with ALER, at times with the municipality, and then again, at other times, the municipality has been more absent. This seesaw perception is due to the changing priorities of different institutions. The Politecnico and our department also have dialogues on multiple levels with these institutions.

When institutions need to understand more about the area, they often turn to Off Campus as we are recognised as bearers of local knowledge. However, this recognition almost never moves to a policy dimension, and we have struggled to impact policy-making in more substantial ways. There is also a risk of substitution of the local network, as it is easier for institutions to find and talk to us than it is to interface with a broad diverse network that has less capacity to engage.

As a group, we often ask ourselves how to cede this role of representation or mediator to other actors in the neighbourhood. There is no strong network, and particularly migrant communities have very few forms of representation and little capacity for self-representation. This is a controversial issue that requires further consideration.

Interviewers: Do you discuss your role of representation or mediation with other actors?

Mapping San Siro: We recognise a core network of stakeholders who have been with us for about ten years, and we have an established relationship with them based on mutual trust and recognition of what we can bring without taking away anyone else's role. However, the network of organisations that are active locally has expanded significantly in recent years, and many new people have started living and working in the neighbourhood. Managing the growth of this network requires a lot of relational, political, and intangible work that takes a lot of time and energy, which we don't always manage to do.

When the network is prompted to react in a situation, such as during Covid-19, it is very responsive due to the bond of trust that has been built over time. However, just as public institutions rely heavily on us when they need to access local knowledge, the network relies on us as a university on some issues. This is the reason why it is challenging to figure out how to pass on this role of conveners or mediators. Building other forms of representation is difficult because everyone has their point of view.

Interviewers: One of the questions you raised was central to the whole DESINC Live project: what role do aspects of migration and multiculturalism play? How does this theme intersect your work? What is the intersection between Mapping San Siro's work and dealing with migration? Who are the subjects you work with on this issue?

Mapping San Siro: The issue of migration intersects some of our research trajectories. Paolo, for instance, has been conducting anthropological research in San Siro for five years. Although his starting point was the neighbourhood's spatial unity, he has encountered issues and experiences related to migration constantly through his interlocutors.

When we were considering the role of the DESINC Live project in Mapping San Siro and the value it could add, one of the key benefits was opening a reflection on the issue of migration. In the neighbourhood, about half of the inhabitants are foreign nationals, more than twice the average in Milan. Many do not have citizenship, including those who have been in Italy since the 1990s. There are also recent flows of migration and second-generation children who were born in Italy but are foreign citizens. It's a patchwork of life trajectories that would be important to focus on.

Our colleagues Elena Maranghi and Alice Ranzini have partly explored this through a gender dimension, particularly on the topic of women with migrant backgrounds. Today, this is a core theme.

Not focusing solely on the figure of the 'migrant' can help to avoid stigmatising or biased representations and place the neighbourhood within broader dynamics. This prevents us from talking about San Siro only as a neighbourhood inhabited by foreigners experiencing problems related to migration, which is how the place has been often portrayed by the media. We must keep both sides of the coin together and view San Siro as a complex and diverse neighbourhood with unique challenges and opportunities.

On the other hand, San Siro is a neighbourhood where many people pass through, making it much more central within global dynamics than wealthier areas like City Life or any ordinary neighbourhood in Milan. It's essential to resume our focus on this unique aspect of San Siro.

We also discussed representations and the role of migrants within the neighbourhood. During a period of strong and violent media campaigns on the youth in the neighbourhood, we organised an interview with a journalist and the mothers of some of the young boys who were at the centre of the debate, with the help of a mediator. The three-way dialogue aimed to give voice to a point of view that was in danger of being completely omitted: that of the mothers of these boys, who grew up in the neighbourhood, all of whom are foreign nationals by law but all of whom were born in San Siro. It was an interesting episode on how to reconstruct

another kind of narrative in a political debate, starting with a dialogue with the people who live here.

Another work that Bocconi University has started to do in the Off Campus space is the legal clinic. They mainly manage an access-to-rights desk but also work on identifying leadership figures among the foreign communities who could be supported in a representative role, at least with respect to rights. They are also important mediators within the neighbourhood.

> Interviewers: Are there any organised entities in San Siro that you work with that address the issue of migration more directly, and have a representative role?

Mapping San Siro: The residents' committee has opened up and is now working with a group of foreign nationals, but the leadership is still with non-migrants. In addition, an Islamic culture centre opened right after the Covid-19 lockdowns.

Currently, the network is primarily focused on emergency support. For example, there are four schools of "Italian for foreigners" that not only teach the language but also do much work to raise residents' awareness of their rights. It's worth noting that there are no public language teaching centres for migrants in Italy, so local networks are stepping up to replace welfare policies for primary, fundamental things.

There is also a food parcel distribution activity that covers 300 families in the neighbourhood every week. This is a primary need, and local networks are taking responsibility for this emergency response. As a result, the network is crushed by having to focus almost entirely on emergency response, rather than on issues such as building political representation and improving living conditions.

> Interviewers: You mentioned the role that DESINC and the workshop played within your work. Could you discuss how you used the course as an entry point to explore some of these questions, or in general, its role with respect to your activities?

Mapping San Siro: The international network of participants was powerful in terms of cultural and language mediation with some populations in the neighbourhood. One participant from London, who was of Egyptian descent, opened up a communication channel with several Egyptian women when we visited some houses in the neighbourhood. Similarly, a Syrian participant from Berlin started to establish a dialogue in our courtyard, speaking Arabic with some boys who come and go and with whom we can't have relationships as they are very young and don't speak Italian.

Part of the workshop's output was to organise a backyard party where suddenly thirty youngsters came in and wanted to dance to Egyptian rap. They took over the space and the event that we were promoting in a way that we had never seen before. This was a success because of the ability and curiosity of these two workshop participants to build these kinds of relationships. If the activity had continued for a longer period, it would have opened up many more windows.

A participant of Romanian origin from Berlin started talking to a Romani girl who sells items found on the street in front of our space. Thanks to their shared language and cultural background, she could engage in conversation with this girl and hear about her entire migration experience. Similarly, other participants of South American origins started building relationships with Peruvian restaurants in the neighbourhood.

The care that the workshop participants demonstrated to building personal relationships based on their own language and cultural backgrounds opened up new networks and potential channels of research.

This also related very much to the theme of mutual aid. For instance, the work of one group of students was related to the fact that some commercial spaces in the neighbourhood have backyards where people engage in a range of mutual aid and relationship-building activities. Although these dynamics have many implications that are not always positive, there is also a subtle community dimension that we grasped thanks to the work of participants.

The events occurred in a short amount of time, and we could conduct a week-long workshop because of the long-term engagement and the groundwork laid before. The students were impressed by how many people they talked to and how much they were able to learn about the neighbourhood's dynamics in just five days. As a group, we have a strong focus on pedagogy. We wanted to ensure that despite the workshop's short and intensive nature, the students could delve deeply into the neighbourhood, rather than just skimming the surface. Overall, the workshop was successful in achieving this goal.

At the same time, the workshop's short format was only appropriate because of our long-term presence in the neighbourhood. It was part of a broader framework, which is what made it meaningful. It would not have made sense otherwise. This is something that all the project partners would agree on, as the DESINC Live project acknowledges the importance of time and care as important factors.

Thinking about time, the workshop's impact can also be seen in the students who continued working with Off Campus after the workshop. This is a common occurrence, as students often recognise the value of the knowledge and approach they gain during their interactions with the neighbourhood and with Off Campus, and look for ways to continue collaborating and staying around for longer. This attachment to Off Campus adds value to the students themselves.

Interviewers: I noticed that you have linked some of these opportunities to the participants' profiles. I am curious about whether the international students and participants who have come through DESINC Live have different profiles than the students you typically work with. Also, I am wondering if there is a significant number of international students at Politecnico in Milan who participate in these opportunities.

Mapping San Siro: At Politecnico, there tend to be more international students in the master's programmes. We mainly work with bachelor's students and the bachelor's programmes tend to have a predominantly Italian student body, with less cultural and linguistic diversity. On the other hand, international master's students typically spend only a year and a half here and often have little knowledge of the city and do not speak Italian. Compared to this, the participants who joined the workshop had more complex migration experiences and hybrid profiles, with dual or even triple citizenship, which is not as common among the local students.

Interviewers: What were the outcomes of the workshop and the overall DESINC experience? We are curious about the results for both Mapping activities and your team, as well as any local outcomes that may be challenging to measure in just one week.

Mapping San Siro: The workshop provided a glimpse into various themes and issues, but due to its brevity, we were unable to delve deeper. However, some outcomes included the continuation of certain paths by students who worked with us beyond the workshop. For example, some of the participants who attended the workshop as students are now collaborators. DESINC Live has played a significant role in building longer pathways of engagement.

By exploring new themes and reviewing them from an international perspective, we were able to place some phenomena in a comparative dimension. The use of terms was also a point of discussion during the workshop. For example, when we used the term 'illegality,' participants asked for clarification on its meaning and challenged us to use different categories. This highlighted the importance of language and how we name things. The issue of 'foreigners' and 'migrants' was another example of how terms do not allow us to grasp people's lived experiences. Vocabulary was an important takeaway for us.

In Italian universities, the relationship between students and educators is quite hierarchical. However, during the workshop, we established more horizontal relationships. This led us to focus on self-reflection and positioning more than we usually do, which is an approach we cultivated throughout the workshop and the longer course.

During the workshop, we also learned about critical positioning as a working method for both teachers and students, as a way of reflecting on the work and also on these learning relationships. For example, we provided our newest trainees with journals to track their experiences. Initially, this was symbolic, but it actually helped us shift our relationships and reflect together on our personal and shared learning. This is something we learned from DESINC Live.

Interviewers: A question about the future: what will happen now in relation to the course and these issues? Can you tell us about an activity or issue that is a priority right now?

Mapping San Siro: We are currently addressing the issue of competencies, which is one of our top priorities. We are actively exploring self-training models and collaborating with other organisations to develop competencies for both local networks and institutions. We believe this is a significant issue that requires engaging the community in developing our institutions. This is a complex matter that links to the question of local representation and is part of how we can envision an "exit strategy" for the university while ensuring continuity of support. We need to focus on institutional competencies because we often end up doing things that others should be doing. It would be great to support these institutions in their capacity to support the neighbourhood.

In addition, we are considering shifting our focus to a larger scale. In our research, we are not only looking at San Siro but also examining dynamics that are affecting the city of Milan as a whole and comparing them to other urban realities. We have established an observatory called the "Great Transformations Observatory" to facilitate this work. We have been working on this for several months and are committed to continuing this line of inquiry.

The Off Campus experience is currently going through a moment of revitalisation, especially after the recent internal reorganisation of our university with the new rector. This is a moment of high visibility, and we need to consolidate this locally-led experience while also ensuring that we take it back to the university to increase its impact.

Actual pathways during the asylum procedure
(Joëlle Spruytte, Sarah ten Berge, 2021)

Asylum City, Brussels

ACTUAL ARRIVAL TRAJECTORY

1. "First I tried legal way but I was rejected, so I chose the illegal way" (Haroun, February 25, 2022).

2. "Never stopped, always travelled, no sleep" (Ajub, February 22, 2022).

3. "Bosnië, daar is not good place"(Davud, March 3, 2022).

4. "Very danger, very danger, very danger!" (Ajub, February 22, 2022).

5. "Ongeveer 52 000 transmigranten probeerden in 2021 het VK te bereiken" (Belga, February 15, 2022).

6. "Vluchtelingen en migranten in Maximiliaanpark: toestand wordt kritiek" (R. Arnoudt, August 9, 2018).

7. Currently, single men are considered less vulnerable (G. Terras, November 19, 2021).

8. Sometimes we have 400 people at the door, we are in a crisis (M. Meirlaen, December 21, 2021).

9. "Meer dan 400 asielzoekers in wachtrij voor Klein Kasteeltje" (C. Deprez, November 11, 2021).

10. This week again 250 men on the street at Klein Kasteeltje (G. Terras, November 19, 2021).

City

KLEIN KASTEELTJE

11. "Ils étaient débordés, mais grâce à mes documents Ukrainiens ils m'ont laissée entrer" (Denise, May 1, 2022).

12. If there are no beds left in Klein Kasteeltje, some people are transferred to a shelter right away (M. Meirlaen, December 21, 2021).

13. Vulnerable profiles, such as the LGBT community, are immediately housed in a LOI after their registration (M. Meirlaen, December 21, 2021).

14. "Twee onthaalcentra voor LGBTQ+-asielzoekers geopend" (Belga, December 12, 2021).

15. There is a minors' section in Klein Kasteeltje due to the lack of places in the OOC's (M. Meirlaen, December 21, 2021).

16. "First stayed one night in house of a family with baby, before going to OOC" (Ajub, February 22, 2022).

17. "À cause de mon état, je suis allée tout de suite à Jette" (Camilla, May 1, 2022).

18. Sometimes an adult cousin, older brother or companion is hosted in the OOC as well (G. Terras, November 19, 2021).

19. In practice, the observation takes 4 to 8 weeks instead of a few weeks (G. Terras, November 19, 2021).

20. According to the observation, the minor is sent to the most suitable reception centre. In practice, they are transferred wherever there is a bed available (G. Terras, November 19, 2021).

21. 'Dispatching' is a horrible word (Z. Egglestan, November 10, 2021).

REGISTRATION & IDENTIFICATION

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

OBSERVATION & ORIENTATION CENTRE

RECEPTION CENTRE

22. In theory, we look which reception centre fits the profile. But in reality 'don't meet the match' (M. Meirlaen, December 21, 2022).

23. "J'ai demandé de changer de centre, tu peux faire ça qu'une fois" (Yousra, May 1, 2022).

24. The CGVS is very slow. The procedure used to take six months, now it takes two to three years (M. Meirlaen, December 21, 2021).

25. The duration of the procedure depends on the investigation (Z. Egglestan, November 10, 2021).

26. "Je suis ici depuis 2019, presque trois ans!" (Hadiya, February 25, 2022).

INVESTIGATION & INTERVIEWS

27. Many myths exist about the different reception centres (M. Meirlaen, December 21, 2021).

RECEPTION CENTRE

ASYLUM APPROVED

31. OCMW has insufficient time to help (E. Abdullah, November 3, 2022).

32. Finding an accommodation is very difficult (E. Abdullah, November 3, 2022).

OR INDEPENDENT SEARCH

ASYLUM DENIED

APPEAL

33. "Begijnhofkerk in Brussel bezet door sans papiers" (Kma, February 1, 2021).

28. We usually search via Immoweb, 2dehands, Facebook MarketPlace, but it is very difficult to find a home (E. Omokoko, December 23, 2021).

29. Clients with a social network in Belgium, like friends or family, are more likely to find a home than clients without a network (E. Omokoko, December 23, 2021).

30. When landlords or estate agents hear that they have someone from the OCMW on the phone, the accommodation is often 'already rented' (E. Omokoko, December 23, 2021).

Resident · Staff member · Press

Joëlle Spruytte,
Sarah ten Berge and
Viviana d'Auria

On 27 February 2023, Bib Sophia, a public library located in the Brussels' neighbourhood of Schaerbeek, broke the world record for multilingually reading aloud, with 65 languages reported. The achievement is far from surprising since 184 out of the globe's 200 nationalities are to be found in the capital city of Belgium. Considering these facts and figures, we are compelled to wonder what it means to study migration and apprehend inclusion in a super-diverse context such as Brussels, almost topping the world rankings as the city with the second-highest percentage of foreign-born residents (IOM, 2015). Does Brussels actually perform as the "lovely melting pot" it has oftentimes been associated with?[1] On the surface, these numbers reveal a seemingly cosmopolitan urban condition. As soon as the surface is scratched, however, the picture is far less likable: despite the fact that Belgium has become a permanent country of settlement for many different types of migrating persons. Migration, asylum, and so-called "integration" policies have largely been responsive in nature, reacting to circumstance, rather than pursuing a long-term vision (Petrovic, 2012). Recent events testify to such short-termism and Brussels, as the "gateway" to the asylum procedure, has seen its public spaces and buildings hosting support for encampments, temporary occupations, and protests by asylum seekers and solidary citizens. Taken together, they expose the untenable situation of asylum seekers having to insistently demand their rights to be granted rather than seeing them proactively fulfilled. Moreover, they illustrate the contiguities between migration policies and urban policies, treated separately rather than viewed as mutually impacting domains of intervention and possible synergies.

This dire condition inscribes itself within an urban field that does not evenly reflect super-diversity in its neighbourhood and municipal structure. Rather, discriminating processes have intersected old and new migration patterns, turning Brussels into a city marked by socio-spatial segregation. The physical divide is embodied by the only surviving water body in the urban landscape, the industrial canal, that intersects what has been termed as the "poor crescent", where high concentrations of residents of North African origin live today. They constitute the last "wave" of migrants solicited in through bilateral agreements, to provide a cheap labour force, and this before migration policy became restrictive from the mid-1970s onwards. In the landscape we see today that very few of the 19 municipalities composing the Brussels Capital Region actually feature the super-diversity that is associated with the city at large. Although the urban landscape is segregated, Brussels residents who are in housing need are increasing by the day and inevitably diversifying.

On such premises, and in the context of a poli-crisis, it appears important to understand how migrating persons are accommodated. This was one of the main topics explored by the Leuven-based learners after having experienced live workshops in San Siro, Milan and Marzahn, Berlin. Upon their return to Belgium, they extended their learning journeys by focusing on the lived experience of migrating persons, interrogating how Brussels welcomes its asylum seekers, bearing in mind that inclusion may differ across migrant groups and places (Kearns and Whitley, 2015). Indeed, more than two decades after the establishment of FEDASIL (the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers) in 2002, it seems important to assess how the coordination of asylum reception fares. This evaluation is significant not only in terms of the specialisation of such coordination, based on target groups (asylum-seeking families, unaccompanied minors, women, etc.), but also its *spatialisation*: what kind of architectural and urban artefacts host these groups, where are they located across the uneven urban landscape of Brussels, and what does it mean to inhabit them for what is usually a longer than expected period?

An answer was attempted by means of an inter-scalar reflection that began by comparing the formal reception procedure with the actual experience of it as reported by main media channels, institutional actors, and interviews with migrating persons inhabiting the reception centres investigated in the context of the research. This information was rearticulated in the light of accounting for the journeys that the interviewed reciprocators had been through before entering the various "phases" of their asylum-seeking procedure, corroborating scholarly work which has emphasised how "in many journeys of displacement, and especially those made by forced migrants, there is no direct route that can be traced from point A to B" (Awan, 2020). The variety of journeys illustrated how the road to Brussels was far from linear and ranged

from a single flight, to years-long trajectories across land and water. They provided depth and context for understanding the spectrum of experiences of migrating persons before starting "Phase 1" (arrival) and "Phase 2" (reception). These phases were explored through an investigation of the neighbourhoods, solidarity networks and architectural features of the arrival and reception centres for people seeking international protection in Brussels, excluding transit centres and mixed reception facilities.

At macro-scale level, the research aimed to understand if the attributions ascribed to social infrastructure by Klinenberg (2018) and other scholars were confirmed by the centres' inhabitants. This meant mapping their significance as "sites where strangers can meet and mix with others with whom they share their neighbourhoods and cities" and which, "more than fulfilling an instrumental need, are sites where cities can be experienced as inclusive and welcoming" (Latham and Layton, 2019: 2). Their presence was mapped according to the interviewees' appreciation, paying particular attention to three out of the six dimensions of social infrastructure proposed by Latham & Layton, namely those of abundance, diversity, and accessibility. The remaining three dimensions of responsiveness, maintenance, and democracy were investigated at the meso-scale by relying on the daily routines of the centres' inhabitants, which illustrated how they navigated the city based on their desires and support networks, which usually meant transcending the nearby social infrastructure, however abundant, diverse, and accessible it may be. The architecture of each centre was subsequently looked into on the basis of the life within it and of the buildings' own histories. The experiences of such environments, located at the intersection of disciplining regulations and material challenges, are recounted through the juxtaposition of quotes and perspectives exposing the hardship of sharing private rooms and collective spaces. Finally, the work concludes by speculatively mobilising the arrangements set up across the various centres to foster imagination on how, within the unquestionable limitations of the existing asylum system, a scaffolding could be provided for the enactment of meaningful instances of collectiveness.

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1 Brussels, a Lovely Melting Pot. A data visualization essay exploring Brussels and its people. Available at: https://brussels-diversity.jetpack.ai/

Joëlle Spruytte and
Sarah ten Berge

A visual essay about Brussels as an Asylum City, as experienced by the residents of the shelter system.

There is a profound mismatch between the hypothetical asylum procedure in Belgium and the trajectory actually experienced by migrating persons when navigating through it, as reported by mainstream media and interviews.

The official asylum system does not consider experiences that have preceded what is termed "Phase 1", namely those concerning the "arrival" to Belgium. Through conversations with migrating persons accommodated in the formal shelter system, the variety of experiences – mapped as individual journeys - becomes immediately clear. Such diversity can also be observed by juxtaposing singular trajectories on a conventional world map.

The locations of the formal shelters migrating persons are accommodated in, play an important role in homing practices. "Phase 2" of the formal procedure therefore, also features important differences based on the characteristics of each locale. Accommodation options are often hosted in buildings originally designed with different uses in mind, such as banks.

The homing of migrating persons is a relational practice that inevitably is confronted with the materiality of shelter typologies. In each location, the lived experiences of migrating persons illustrate the efforts made to transcend the constraints of a disciplining framework and inappropriate architecture. The transformations enacted by the residents of the shelter system can become the starting points for modifying the unsuitable environments in which they are forced to reside along spatial lines that are both material and political.


"POUR LA LANGUE"
BELGIUM
GERMANY
POLAND
CAR
WALK
BUS
TRAIN
FOYER
KNOWN ROUTE
UNKNOWN ROUTE
COUNTRY
SCHENGEN
EU
"ILS M'ONT À PEINE CONSIDÉRÉE"
POLSKA
ALL PASSPORTS
"ENFIN LES PAYS SE SONT RÉVEILLÉS"
4-5 hours
"NOUS PENSIONS QUE C'ÉTAIT COMME LE VENT, QUE ÇA ALLAIT PASSER"
UKRAINE
"J'AI JUSTE EU LE TEMPS DE PRENDRE MES DOCUMENTS ET MON DIPLÔME"



Denise's and Haroun's journeys to Belgium (Joëlle Spruytte, Sarah ten Berge, 2021)


5.6 KM
POELAERTPLEIN & NAAMSE POORT
1000 - SC. 1/12000
Yousra
"On va avec des copines à la belle vue à côté du palais de justice!
Et puis descendre dans les rues des Marolles." (Y, 2022).
4.4 KM
1.9 KM
ATOMIUM
1020 - SC. 1/3000
Denise
GROTE MARKT
1000 - SC. 1/4000
Yousra, Denise, Camilla
"Grand Place je connais bien." (D, 2022).
"J'aime aller au centre de Bruxelles. Plein de gens, plein de touristes,
plein de langues et de l'ambiance. Tout le monde est différent." (C, 2022).
NIEUWSTRAAT
1000 - SC. 1/8000
Yousra
"Pour le shopping" (Y, 2022).
3.9 KM
MATONGE
1050 - SC. 1/4000
Denise
"Et Matongé évidemment!" (D, 2022).
6.1 KM



Locations explored by the residents of the reception centre in Jette, including distance and scale. (Joëlle Spruytte, Sarah ten Berge, 2021)



Sketch of the shared bedroom in Jette
(Joëlle Spruytte, Sarah ten Berge, 2021)

"Côté hygiène très bien" (Denise, 2022).

"Une chambre très étroite, des lits en étages.
Ça fait lontemps qu'on n'a plus vécu ça, moi en tout cas" (Denise, 2022).

"Y'en a qui laissent le bordel dans la salle de bain" (Yousra, 2022).

"Les casiers sont beaucoup trop étroits.
Tout le monde pend ses vêtements aux trucs des lits" (Denise, 2022).



"Moi je suis venue avec un vêtement,
mais quand il y en a qui arriveront,
je commencerai à avoir des problèmes.
Car la chambre et le casier sont très étroits,
il n'y a vraiment pas d'espace" (Denise, 2022).



"Pas de décoration, mais beaucoup de bagages!
Moi j'ai acheté des valises pour stocker mes vêtements d'été ou d'hiver" (Yousra, 2022).

Interview excerpts about daily inhabitation
(Joëlle Spruytte, Sarah ten Berge, 2021)

Existing garden in the Jette reception centre
(Joëlle Spruytte, Sarah ten Berge, 2021)

Projection of a soup kitchen and garden in the Jette reception centre
(Joëlle Spruytte, Sarah ten Berge, 2021)

Brixton, London

Brixton Market on Electric Avenue
(Agnes Fouda, 2021)

Why Brixton?

In this essay, we focus on the rituals of inclusion and embeddedness in London, through a personal lens that reflects a familial experience of migration to this city. There are four people who would not trade their childhood ritual for anything else in the world, this is the African dinner at their Mom's during the weekend. There will be avocado salad, fufu, ndole, miondo, suya, roasted fish, fried plantain, top grenadine and bissap. There will be a variety of music blasting out the speakers, and guests dancing around the house.

This ritual was established decades ago and is engrained in the habits of my children and I. Any city that we have lived in, I have pledged to provide them with a proper, African dinner at the weekends. A quicker, less elaborate feeding—involving eating at restaurants—is excusable during the weekdays, given a frenzied schedule; but come Saturday, all spices have to break loose. In London, there is no avoiding this habit that I relish and to which I look forward to as days pass, and as more births come to expand my offspring.

At the start of my stay in the English metropole, the challenge was to find a place, THE place to fill my basket and fulfil my cooking commitment. That is when I discovered Brixton, which obsessed me even before I understood its significance to another topic dear to me, namely the matter of migrant housing.

As a bubbling, busy place with scores of sellers, Brixton market offers goods of unbelievable shapes, textures, colours, aromas. Noticeably, the Jamaican flag through the maze of multiple alleys reminds one that the location is still the stronghold of that community. The visitor certainly wonders what began the obvious presence of Caribbeans in that specific part of London.

I had the opportunity to learn more about it during the workshop stage of the DESINC Live programme. My keen interest in migration, and subsequently in migrants' housing, led me to explore the narrative of the so-called 'Windrush generation' who were the migrants that disembarked at Tilbury docks, Essex, on 22 June 1948. They had spent weeks on board the HMT Windrush, a formidable British troopship that was gifted by Germany to the UK as a war reparation in 1945. The National Archives indicate the number of passengers as 1027; among them, 802 identified as Caribbean, the majority from Jamaica and Bermuda, with the remainder being Polish, British, Burmese. These communities are now dispersed around the capital, forming strong pockets of cultural and social individualities. In Streatham, for instance, the Polish presence is clearly established, with businesses and residents speaking the language; while the Latin American immigration is felt more strongly around Elephant and Castle.

My research led me to the Deep Level Shelter at Clapham South. Built during WWII to shield London's population from bombings. The drum-shaped bunker is one of eight similar structures across London. It is now part of the TFL Museum underground tour, which was inaccessible at the time of my visit due to the Covid pandemic.

I set forth to the Black Archive, located in 'Rush' Common in Brixton, expecting to find more sources; there, a providential encounter with Ms. Assata Nzingha yielded information galore. A direct descendant of a 'Windrush migrant', her testimony proved invaluable. According to her, the Caribbean from the Windrush were discriminated against, despite having come at the behest of the UK government. Unacceptance from private housing landlords prompted the authorities to house the newcomers in the Deep Level Shelter at Clapham. From there, they were able to look for work and plan for a future.

So why Brixton? I inquired

According to Ms. Assata Nzingha, Brixton was chosen as an appropriate place because the neighborhood, derelict and inhospitable at the time, allowed migrants to occupy without troubling the conscience of the British Caucasians.

Through hard work, resilience and solidarity, the Caribbean population was able to flourish, integrate and transform London's social and cultural fabric. Some examples that can be referred to in this instance are Sam King, MBE, elected mayor of Southwark in 1983/84, who established the Windrush Foundation in 1995 with Arthur Torrington; the world-renowned Notting Hill Carnival; and Sonia Boyce, the first Black British woman to represent the country at the Venice Biennale.

Yet the Windrush migrants have faced another, stunning hurdle on their path to inclusion. In 2018, the Home Office decided to strip them of their right of abode and deport them from the United Kingdom. Hence, there were thousands of people who were born, raised, worked, paid taxes, founded families in the UK, at risk of being forever excluded from the only society that they knew. Almost 1000 individuals were deported in effect. The scandalous policy rocked the country, and the Home Office was compelled to backpedal.

However, in Brixton, it seems that the incident has taken a toll. Every time I visit, there is a feeling that the Caribbean community is dwindling, yielding to others more and more. The sellers are visibly from backgrounds as diverse as the merchandises they carry out, or the language they speak. Here at the fishmonger, Somali and Persians collaborate in peace; further down, a Chinese man stands at the cashier of an Asian store, Ethiopians manage one of the biggest shops, while Nigerians in an alley exhibit colourful, stunning attires. Colombian, Pakistani, Turkish, Italian and French foods trigger my taste buds as I walk by. The irony of a community that is so welcoming despite having been through countless instances of exclusion.

Many questions remain unanswered, particularly regarding the new generation and their stance with regards to this iconic place. The research must go on. For now, Brixton is first and foremost the place where I can find ingredients of my own culture. The market that helps me segue with the ritual of African feast on the weekends, the station from where the train quickly brings me to the City. I have yet to explore all of its richness, but Brixton is the realm that make me believe that I too, belong in London.



This archival photograph is of the ex-troopship Empire Windrush docking at Tilbury Docks, Essex on 22 June 1948, carrying 482 Jamaicans (Daily Herald Archive, 1948. Courtesy of Getty Images)



Black Cultural Archives in Brixton (Agnes Fouda, 2021)



Here I am on the left interviewing Ms Assata Nzigha at the Black Cultural Archives in Brixton (Santiago Peluffo Soneyra, 2021)

Kenneth Murray, Eric Dryndale and Aston Robinson seen in 1948 settling into their temporary accommodation in a former air raid shelter in Clapham (Chris Ware/Keystone Features/Hulton Archive, 1948. Courtesy of Getty Images)



Clapham South Subterranean Shelter (Agnes Fouda, 2021)





This photograph shows that before the passing of the Race Relations Act 1968 in Britain, this notice and discrimination in the open were legal (Race Relations Board, 1969 Courtesy of BFI Player).



This is an archival photograph of a discriminatory notice from 1960s Britain, before the passing of the Race Relations Act in 1968 (Race Relations Board, 1969. Courtesy of BFI Player)

Stories of Inclusion

Citizen-led initiatives, whether institutionalised or not, often relate to the challenges that migrating persons experience along their journeys. The fundamental role played by civil society in ensuring access to protection, rights and services has been widely acknowledged, as well as the central role played by civil society organisations (CSOs) in guaranteeing the chain of humanitarian assistance, solidarity, and inclusion. The essential position occupied by CSOs however, does not imply a smooth enactment of their practices of solidarity, but a complicated navigation of renewed political constrictions and institutional deterrence. Since the (re)emergence of a richly varied spectrum of citizen-led initiatives in 2015, the practices resting on migration as a key paradigm for city-making have expanded their focus, broadened their audience and expressed solidarity with a growing number of vulnerable persons. Such enactments of solidarity, based on participation through presence, have helped disrupt conventional narratives of "integration", redefining what inclusion can mean at each singular step of a migrating person's journey.

When liaising with the design disciplines, the spatial and temporal dilemmas that CSOs must face become entwined with some of the design decisions taken by architects and urban planners. By touching base with cornerstone CSO-led initiatives that have faced complicated challenges since their emergence in 2015, we gain insights into how inclusion might be secured contextually, even if in the form of short-lived instances. We likewise gain discernment into the numerous obstacles that the same CSOs have been able to surmount – or not – and what partnerships have enabled them to defy the overall unhospitable regimes they must operate under.

La Promesse de l'Aube

Min Tang and
Cyrille Hanappe

As an "emergency shelter" (Centre d'Hébergement d'Urgence - CHU), this project's construction suffered from two arson attacks and strong opposition in 2016. The conservative mayor of Paris' "wealthy" 16th district mobilised 40,000 signatures for a negative petition, and 900 attended the hearing. However, the hostile climate has altered since the CHU's opening. Neighbours donated, volunteered, and considered the design of the buildings to be "highly aesthetic" (Interview, March 2022). The centre's 200 beds housed 600 homeless and migrants (of which 200 children) from at least 13 nationalities (Aurore, 2021).

The project hybridises short- and long-term socio-spatial features. The emergency shelter provides temporary refuge and social care to vulnerable populations; however, its temporariness is dependent on their statute. Several inhabitants have remained since the opening day; 65 children are enrolled in school. The experimental, prefabricated modular construction was designed to be dismantled. It copes with the site's three-year construction permit, which has been extended twice and is valid until 2025. Architects argued for having shared spaces instead of just rooms, but the building is strictly fenced due to the hostile climate. Homemaking practices appeared, including personalising a room's window, appropriating staircases, and creating an adjacent garden.

The crisis continues but has been invisibilsed in Paris. The saturation of "emergency shelters" and long-term "housing", and the absence of accessible pathways to each system, is a challenge for those applying for asylum, making their numbers appear as "high" (131,000 in 2022). Since November 2020, the evacuation of encampments by the police – without offering shelters to all – have triggered frontline monthly protests by CSOs. Evacuated migrants stayed in gyms and kept being thrown back onto the streets. Those stuck in the emergency shelter system are either ineligible for or are waiting to access long-term housing options. For migrants' long and mobile journeys, La Promesse de l'Aube demonstrates how design can improve the value of emergency shelters by casting a moment of stillness in a socially diverse environment. It prompts CSOs to rethink the meaning of housing and the hybridity of time in both systems: how can "housing first" and "post-housing" trajectories be intersected, engage multiple actors, and connect short-term projects to longer-term inclusion?

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Figure 1: Resident appropriation (Min Tang, 2023)

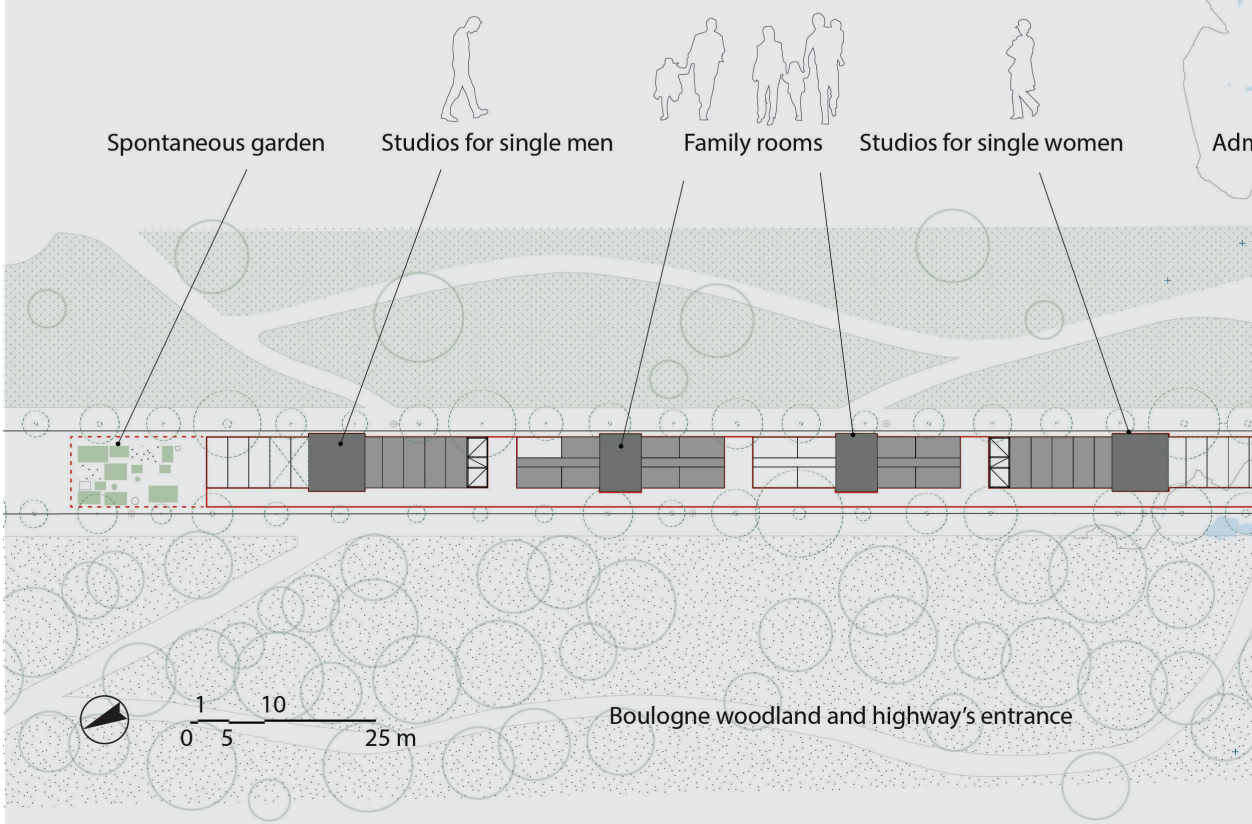


Figure 2: Resident appropriation (Min Tang, 2023)



La Promesse de l'Aube, built on the public land and issued with temporary construction permit.

Wealthy ne





Capacity between 0-50
Capacity between 51-100
Capacity above 100
0
5km

93: Seine-Saint-Denis

eighborhoods

Paris
16th district

ninistration

92: Val-de-Marne

94: Val-de-Marne

Project location. Multi-media composition based on photo by Min Tang (January 2023); site plan by Moon architectures and Air architectures (2015); map of Paris redrawn from report by Apur (2021)

Baobab Experience

Viviana d'Auria

This text recounts Baobab Experience's vicissitudes in pursuing its supporting activities for migrants in Rome. Despite more than 40 evictions and the legal prosecution of key members, the CSO has maintained its role as a reference point for migrating persons, succeeding in diversifying its propositions from humanitarian action to cultural activities and longer-term housing services.

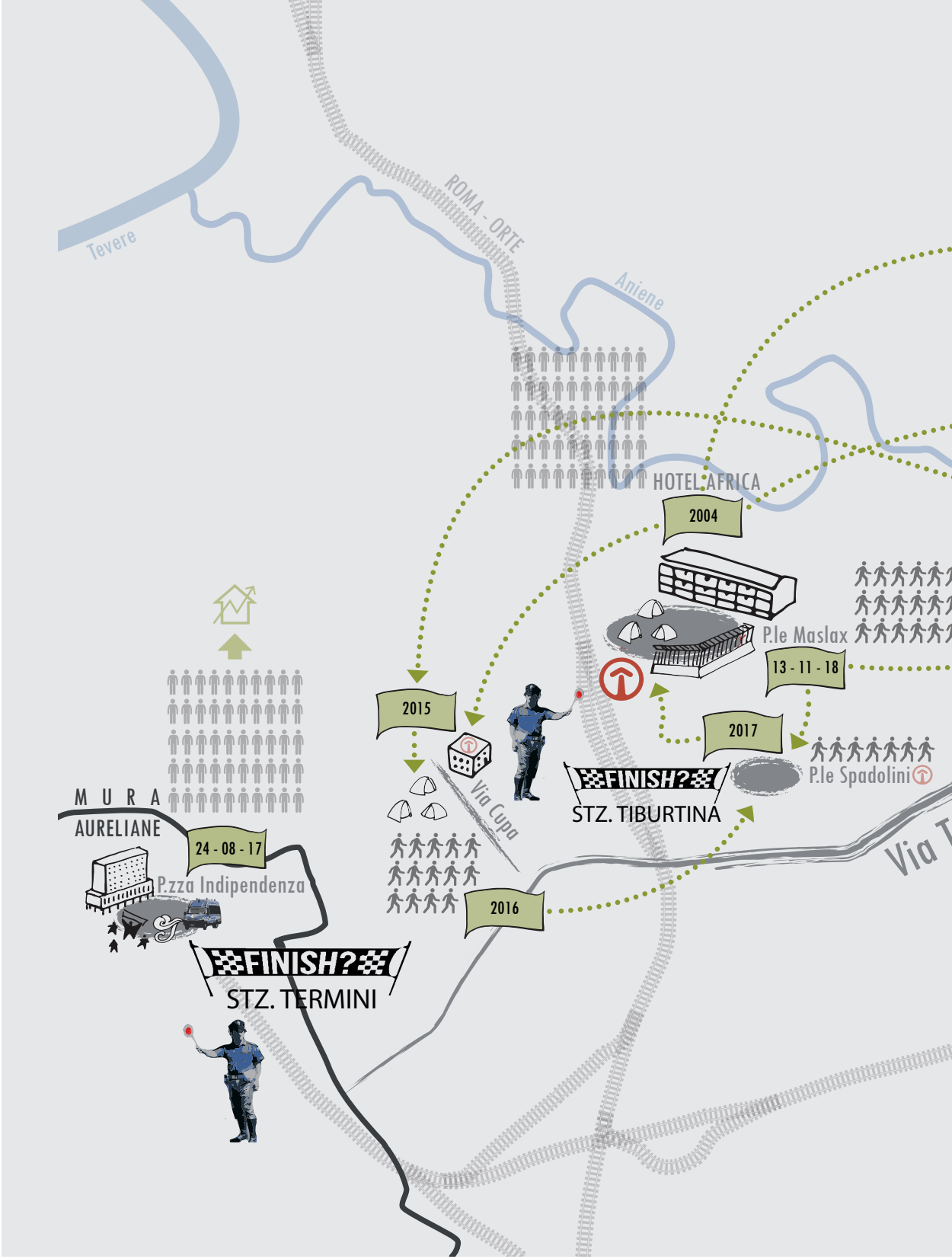
Baobab Experience si attiva nel 2015 per tentare di colmare, in solidarietà con altre associazioni, il vuoto istituzionale sorto in merito alla tutela delle persone migranti a Roma. Nasce dallo sgombero del Centro Baobab sorto a via Cupa, una realtà autogestita di co-housing, servizi e attività culturali. In risposta allo sgombero, un richiamo solidale spontaneo allestisce un campo informale operativo sia come info-point che come hub di prima accoglienza. Sarà il primo di molti altri presidi. Dal momento in cui Baobab si è attivato fino ad oggi non vengono riscontrati significativi progressi nella tutela delle persone migranti in ambito capitolino. Piuttosto, l'associazione è stata sgomberata più di 40 volte, con relative perquisizioni e identificazioni, e perdite di beni di prima necessità. Inoltre, nel clima ostile che si acuisce nel 2016 e che porterà allo sterminio di casi esemplari di accoglienza in Italia come dimostrato dall'annichilimento di Riace, il Presidente di Baobab Experience viene accusato del reato di favoreggiamento di immigrazione clandestina, che decadrà in seguito. Malgrado i numerosi sgomberi, l'associazione perdura come punto di ritrovo per i molti migranti esclusi dal circuito istituzionale dell'accoglienza attraverso il sostegno quotidiano di volontari in ambito assistenziale, legale, abitativo, lavorativo, formativo e medico-sanitario. Si stima che ad oggi più di 90,000 persone abbiano potuto beneficiare di tale supporto. L'associazione nel tempo è riuscita ad articolare ulteriormente i propri servizi, aggiungendo ai tipi di supporto sopramenzionati anche attività culturali, sportive e ludiche oltre a provvedere ad alloggi nell'ambito del progetto BAOHAUS (alloggio e inserimento sociale).

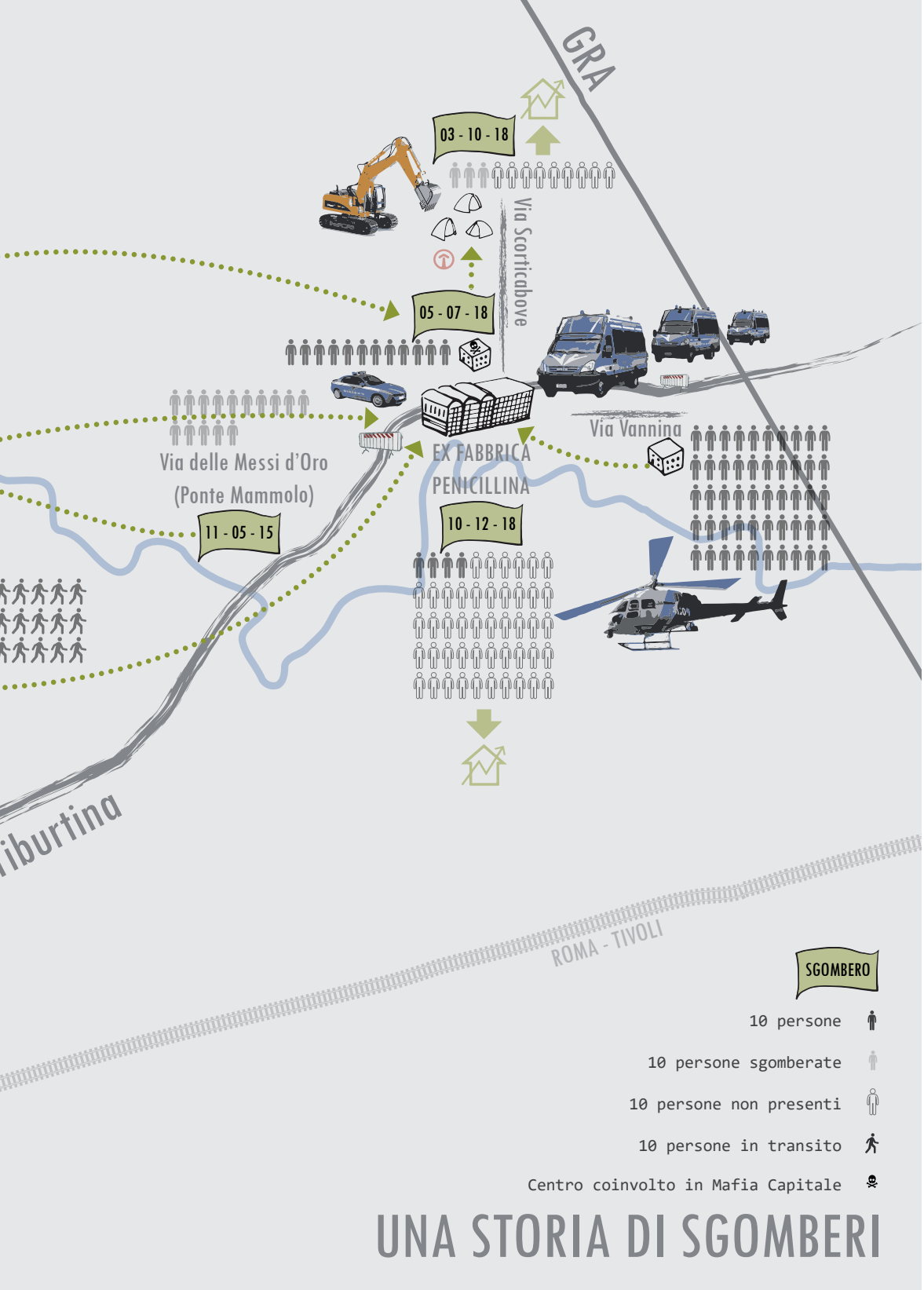


Collaboration with high school students in Rome
(Baobab Experience, 2021)



Amal in Piazza Vittorio, Rome
(Baobab Experience, 2021)


Tevere
ROMA - ORTE
Aniene
HOTEL AFRICA
2004
P.le Maslax
13 - 11 - 18
2015
2017
P.le Spadolini
FINISH?
STZ. TIBURTINA
Via Cupa
MURA
AURELIANE
24 - 08 - 17
P.zza Indipendenza
2016
FINISH?
STZ. TERMINI



UNA STORIA DI SGOMBERI

Stories of evictions
(Chiara Lucchetti, Enrico Perini di Laboratorio CIRCO, 2018)

Plateforme Citoyenne de Soutien aux Réfugiés

Marie Trossat

In this piece, the trajectory of the 2015-born Plateforme Citoyenne de Soutien aux Réfugiés is described by focusing on the reorientation of its solidarity initiatives. Most importantly, the authors emphasise how, despite the centrality of its action in Brussels today, the CSO's spatial embeddedness remains weak, and its institutionalisation ambivalent.

La Plateforme Citoyenne de Soutien aux Réfugiés est née en 2015 dans le parc Maximilien, le parc faisant face au bureau d'enregistrement de l'asile et transformé en camp par l'arrivée importante de Syriens non pris en charge par les politiques. L'engagement citoyen spontané s'organise et apporte quotidiennement nourriture et vêtements, met en place une école et des activités, services juridiques et médicaux. A la fermeture du camp, la Plateforme demeure active notamment par le maintien d'un « hub » humanitaire, en lien avec les NGOs présentes sur place. En 2017, l'arrivée de migrants « en transit » venus à Bruxelles dans le but de rejoindre le Royaume-Uni recrée un camp au Parc Maximilien. La Plateforme alors réoriente sa mission: l'État déclinant toute responsabilité vis-à-vis de ce public, l'hébergement citoyen à domicile à grande échelle est organisé. On estime environ à 8 000 les familles ayant accueilli via la Plateforme. En 2018, la Plateforme obtient son premier financement public et ouvre la Porte d'Ulysse, un centre d'hébergement pour 350 hommes. Une partie des bénévoles est salariée, puis l'organisation reçoit davantage de financements et les activités d'hébergements collectifs se développent. Si elle est aujourd'hui un acteur central à Bruxelles, son ancrage spatial demeure fragile : son institutionnalisation est relative à une politique d'urgence, de financements de courtes durée peu à peu renouvelés et de locaux prêtés, toujours temporaires. La question de cette structuration est aussi en interne: qu'est devenue l'action citoyenne spontanée, organique et pluriforme ? Comment s'est orienté le dessein politique de ce premier mouvement?





Porte d'Ulysse, May 2019
(Marie Trossat, 2019).



LOCATIONS RUN BY CITZEN'S S PLATFORM
1. Maximilian Park
2. Fomer Humanitarian Hub at North Station
3. Porte D'Ulysse
4. New Humanitarian Hub near Tour et Taxis
5. Plateforme Citoyenne's HQ

NIGHT AND DAY SHELTERS
6. Le Petit Chateau (Fedasil)
7. Samusocial
8. SOS Jeunes - Quartier Libre
9. Chauffoir CPAS Schaerbeek
10. Chauffoir de Schaerbeek

MEDICAL SERVICES
11. Clinique St Jean
12. Centre Athena Centrum
13. CHU St Pierre &
FARES Nurse Association

OTHER SERVICES
14. Douche Flux
15. Hadja Meriam's Catering Kitchen

CITIZE
DROP
A. Pia
B. Gar
C. L'A
D. Atte
E. Mu



LOCATIONS RUN BY PLATEFFORME CITOYENNE

- Maximilian Park
- Former Humanitarian Hub at North Station
- New Humanitarian Hub near Tour et Taxis
- Porte d'Ulysse Night Shelter
- Plateforme Citoyenne's HQ

SHELTERS

- Night Shelter
- <18 Night Shelter for Minors
- Day Shelter

MEDICAL SERVICES

- Medical and Psychological Care
- Medical Emergencies
- Dental Emergencies

OTHER SERVICES

- Legal Services
- Catering Kitchen
- Food Distribution
- Wifi, Phone Charging & Phone Calls
- Showers
- Clothing Distribution

FOR INVOLVED CITIZENS

- Dispatch for Citizen Hosting
- Donations Drop-off

EN DONATION
/OFF POINTS
nofabriek
rage-à-Manger
mere à Boire Uccle
elier 210
ndpunt Grand Café

F. Boentje Café
G. Le Rayon Vert
H. Aboriginal Signature
J. Théatre Marni

PUBLIC TRANSIT IMPORTANT STOPS
a. North Station
b. Bordet
c. Midi Station
d. Porte de Hal
e. Parc

M Metro
T Tram
B Bus

Network mapping of the PCSR in 2019. Drawing by Vincent P. Alexis, Racha Daher & Marie Trossat (Action-Research Collective for Hospitality, 2020)

Magdas Hotel

Layla Zibar

The story of the Magdas Hotel that is narrated in this contribution illustrates how the internationally renowned social enterprise in Vienna shifted venue and re-organised its business model without dismissing its attention for solidarity.The business' expansion remains rooted in a mindset that acknowledges the potential of forgotten and dismissed resources, from marginalised individuals to decaying urban spaces.

فندق ماجداس **(Magdas)** مشروع نموذجي يقع ضمن نطاق الاعمال الاجتماعية **(Social Businesses)** في النمسا.
تم تأسيس الفندق عام ٢٠١٥ بدعم من كاريتاس للاعمال الاجتماعية **(Caritas Social Business)**، وهي الشركة التابعة للفرع النمساوي لمنظمة كاريتاس **(Caritas)**. و حاز المشروع بنتائجه على الاعتراف الدولي بالابتكار والأفكار الخلاقة تبعا لنهجه المميز في إيجاد طرق حقيقية لدمج بعض من الفئات المهمشة في المجتمع، بما في ذلك اللاجئين، في الانخراط في سوق العمل والمجتمع ككل.
تزامن تأسيس الفندق في عام ٢٠١٥ مع تدفق موجات اللاجئين إلى الدول الاوربية ومن ضمنها النمسا. خلقت هذه الموجات فرصة ذهبية لانتشار الأعمال الاجتماعية بشكل واسع، كنهج مبتكر في تمكين القادمين الجدد وإعادة تضمنيهم في الحياة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية بأسلوب هادف وفعال .
بيوت المسنين المهجورة من السبعينات من القرن الماضي كانت من بين المواقع التي تراكمت فيها جهود الدعم والتمويل المشترك بين التبرعات المادية والتدخلات المعمارية.
التجربة الأولى في ٢٠١٥ اعتمدت على إعادة تدوير أحد هذه المباني المهجورة وتحويله إلى فندق ذو طراز عتيق جذاب **(antique-style)** يحمل لمسة الماضي ويقدم خدماته المتزامنة مع عصرنا الحالي.
على الرغم من التأثير السلبي والتحديات الإضافية التي سببتها جائحة كوفيد Covid-١٩ من مطلع عام ٢٠١٩، واظب الفندق بعد فترات من الانقطاع انشطته وأهدافه الاجتماعية في تمكين الفئات المهمشة. كرر فندق ماجداس **(Magdas)** فكره إعادة تدوير المباني، هذه المرة بترميم دار رعاية مهجور ليصبح مقره الحالي، والذي تم افتتاحه في عام ٢٠٢٢ متضمنا ٨٥ غرفة. في تجربته الجديده، تبنى فريق ماجداس **(Magdas)** الإداري نهج المسؤولية المجتمعية **(corporate social responsibility approach)** للشركات مضيفا هذه المرة محتوى مراعيا للبيئة، عن طريق دمج التدفئة الجيوثيرمالية **(geothermal heating)** ولوحات الطاقة الشمسية الفوتوفولتية **(photovoltaic solar panels)**. تمكن فريق الإدارة من جمع النهج البيئي مع النهج الاجتماعي من التجربة السابقة، فأصبحت ورش الإصلاح مكاناً يلتقي فيه متطوعون من فئات اجتماعية من أصول مختلفة وأفرادا من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة لممارسة أعمال ترميم مختلفة لإصلاح بعض العناصر الإضافية مثل أغطية المصابيح والكراسي ليتم استخدامها في الفندق نفسه.
تواجد الفئات المجتمعية من ثقافات، لغات وفئات مختلفة أغنت تجربة زيارة فندق ماجداس **(Magdas)** حيث سمحت باحترام ومراعاة الأعراف والعادات الاجتماعية المختلفة للنزلاء والزائرين والاستجابة لها، وهو من أحد أسس السياحة المستدامة. توسعت الأعمال الاجتماعية لـ ماجداس اليوم، لتشمل مطبخًا تجاريًا مستدامًا وورشات إعادة تدوير الهواتف المحمولة القديمة وخدمات التنظيف والصيانة. تؤكد المديرة التنفيذية لـ ماجداس **(Magdas)**، السيدة غابرييلا سونليتنر **(Gabriella Sonnleitner)** على أهمية هذه الأنشطة بيئيا واجتماعيا في توفير فرص العمل، مع إعادة تدوير أكثر من ٤٠٠،٠٠٠ هاتف سنويًا، وتنظيف ٩٠،٠٠٠ متر مربع يوميًا، وحجز أكثر من ١٩٠،٠٠٠ ليلة في الفندق.
تعتبر توسعة فندق ماجداس **(Magdas)** وأنشطته المختلفة أمثله نموذجية لنهج يسلط الضوء على الطاقات الكامنة التي تحيط بنا، ممتدة من الإمكانيات البشرية المغفلة عنها من الفئات المجتمعية المهمشة إلى الأماكن الحضرية المهجورة والمنسية.

Renovating old furniture found on site for reuse in the hotel (Alexandra Pawloff, 2021)
الصورة ٣: تجديد الأثاث القديم الموجود في الموقع لإعادة استخدامه في الفندق © Alexandra Pawloff، ٢٠٢١

Magdas Hotel opened in October 2022 in Vienna's third district (Marclins, 2022)
صورة ١: افتتاح فندق ماجداس في أكتوبر ٢٠٢٢ بالقطاع السكني الثالث © Marclins، ٢٠٢٢

Restored and reused vintage furniture in one of the hotel rooms (Marclins, 2022)
الصورة ٢: الأثاث الذي تم تجديده وإعادة استخدامه على الطراز القديم في إحدى غرف الفندق ماجداس © Marclins، ٢٠٢٢

Startblok

Alice Pittini,
Abderrahim Khairi and
Arnold Hooiveld

Startblok is an estate rooted in the partnership between a social enterprise, a housing organisation and the Municipality of Amsterdam. The piece describes the initiative's main features based on the principles of "magic mix", self-management, the temporary lease of urban land, and the model's replicability grounded in an ever-improving implementation process.

De erkenning door Nederlandse woningcorporaties dat de sterke toename van asielzoekers zou drukken op het toch al gespannen woningtoewijzingssysteem was een belangrijke stap voor de oprichting van Startblok in 2016. Als reactie op deze roep om overheidssteun werden financiële en wettelijke maatregelen genomen om vluchtelingen toegang te geven tot gedeelde wooneenheden met tijdelijke huurcontracten. Deze veranderingen vonden plaats in de context van politieke vertogen die pleitten voor een verschuiving van een op welzijn gebaseerde naar een op participatie gebaseerde samenleving om de mogelijkheden voor zelfbeschikking uit te breiden. Op Startblok Riekerhaven werden 565 bewoners jongeren gehuisvest volgens de formule van de 'magic mix': 50% jongeren en 50% jonge statushouders. Het project was een creatief voorstel voor de behoefte aan betaalbare huisvesting van jongeren in Amsterdam en groeiende aantallen statushouders. Daarnaast kwamen er nog drie ontwikkelingen samen waardoor dit project kon worden gerealiseerd. De gemeente Amsterdam zocht een tijdelijke invulling voor een gebied van voormalige sportvelden waarop de eerste tien jaar geen permanente bouw zou plaatsvinden. Woningcorporatie Lieven de Key zocht een nieuwe bestemming voor modulaire woonblokken- waarin studenten werden gehuisvest- die weg moesten van de toenmalige locatie. Daarnaast ontstond in de Nederlandse wetgeving de mogelijkheid om specifieke doelgroepen te huisvesten op een sociaal huurcontract voor een periode van maximaal 5 jaar (in plaats van de gebruikelijke onbepaalde tijd). Dit maakte het mogelijk jongeren tussen 18 en 28 jaar te huisvesten op een tijdelijke locatie. Sinds 2016 wonen bewoners samen volgens een principe van zelfbeheer. Het project faciliteert ontmoeting tussen bewoners en stimuleert bewoners actief onderdeel te zijn van de community. Bewoners leveren een bijdrage aan hun directe woonomgeving en dit heeft een positief effect op de leefbaarheid, veiligheidsgevoel en de sociale cohesie binnen de community. Het concept Startblok is de afgelopen jaren geëvolueerd en de 'lessons learned' zijn inmiddels toegepast in tientallen gemengde wooncomplexen in binnen en buitenland, inclusief Elzenhagen en Zeeburg.



Startblok Riekerhaven (Rufus de Vries/MUST stedenbouw, 2018)



Startblok Elzenhagen (MUST stedenbouw, 2020)

City Plaza

Heleen Verheyden
and Tasneem Nagi

In this contribution, the closure of the iconic Athens-based City Plaza hotel is described as the outcome of a well-considered choice. The decision was executed to avoid undermining its values in the wake of unprecedented governmental antagonism towards citizen-led solidarity initiatives and temporary occupations.

Η κατάληψη του ξενοδοχείου City Plaza στην Αθήνα αποτελεί ένα εμβληματικό ευρωπαϊκό παράδειγμα προσφυγικής αλληλεγγύης και αγώνα για αξιοπρεπή στέγαση. Όταν η λειτουργία του έριξε αυλαία το 2019, πολλοί έμειναν σαστισμένοι με την απόφαση, η οποία όμως ήταν το επίπονο αποτέλεσμα μιας μακράς συζήτησης – για το πώς θα προστατευθεί η κοινότητα του Plaza και οι αξίες της – που ξεκίνησε το 2018 με την άνοδο της δεξιάς στη Ελλάδα και την αυξημένη εχθρότητα έναντι των μεταναστών και των καταλήψεων. Η νομιμοποίηση της κατάληψης θα ήταν αντίθετη προς τις αρχές της αυτοοργάνωσης κατά της ΜΚΟποίησης των διαδικασιών αλληλεγγύης, ενώ η αναμενόμενη εκκένωση αποτελούσε άμεση απειλή για πολλούς κατοίκους. Επιπλέον, παρά την καθ'όλα αποτελεσματική – σε σχέση με τα επίσημα camps – διαχείριση πόρων και παρά την (διεθνή) αλληλεγγύη, η έλλειψη υλικών αλλά και ανθρώπινων μέσων, απαραίτητων για τη διατήρηση της καθημερινής ζωής του Plaza, ήταν αναπόφευκτη. Η επανεγκατάσταση των κατοίκων, απόρροια των προαναφερθέντων παραγόντων, ήταν μια μακρά διαδικασία που έπρεπε να αντιμετωπίσει όχι μόνο τις προκαταλήψεις της κτηματομεσιτικής αγοράς αλλά και το συρρικνούμενο απόθεμα προσιτών ή συλλογικών χώρων που θα μπορούσαν να φιλοξενήσουν μετανάστες, ανεξαρτήτως νομικής κατάστασης. Όπως αναφέρει η καταληκτική ανακοίνωση της κατάληψης, "το City Plaza αποτελεί έναν κρίκο σε μια αλυσίδα αγώνων". Σημαντικά ερωτήματα εγείρονται μετά το κλείσιμο του, σχετικά με το πώς προσωρινές ομάδες της πόλης μπορούν να διεκδικήσουν μόνιμα ασφαλείς και οικονομικά προσιτούς χώρους και τι υλικοί πόροι είναι απαραίτητοι για τη διατήρηση ενός εγχειρήματος τέτοιας κλίμακας. Πέραν αυτών, το κλείσιμο του Plaza μας καλεί να τοποθετήσουμε μεμονωμένες απόπειρες μέσα σε ένα ευρύτερο πολιτικό εγχείρημα που θα θέσει υπό αμφισβήτηση διαδικασίες συνοριοποίησης στην πόλη, ως μέρος μιας ευρύτερης πάλης που ίσως να επαναπραγματεύεται τακτικές και χωρικότητες, αλλά συνεχίζει να επιβιώνει.

Celebrating Easter with the neighbours on Katrivanou Street, outside City Plaza (Olga Lafazani, 2018)

Mural and French poem on the facade of the City Plaza hotel after its closure on 8 September 2022. It reads, "In this 'street' / there is no such thing like "justice" / only, the time / is real. All the others / just dreamed a dream." (Heleen Verheyden, 2022)

KUNSTASYL

Sebastian Oviedo,
Camille Hendlisz and
barbara caveng

This contribution depicts how the participatory art and research initiative in Berlin called KUNSTASYL, moved forward from the initial 2015-18 period, exploring further issues of gender, environmental crisis and colonial relations, particularly in the textile industry. Foregrounding social ideals beyond capitalism remains a key priority under a renewed leadership.

Seit 2015 fokussiert KUNSTASYL auf partizipative Kunst und Forschung. Zu Beginn brachte das ursprünglich in Berlin-Spandau ansässige Projekt zunächst 120 Menschen aus 21 Herkunftsländern zusammen, darunter Ortsansässige und Menschen, die fliehen mussten. Dieser zweijährige Mitgestaltungsprozess vor Ort führte zu vielfältigen künstlerischen Ausdrucksformen und Kooperationen mit lokalen, nationalen und internationalen Institutionen und Initiativen wie dem Ausstellungsprojekt, daHeim: Einsichten in flüchtige Leben' in Kooperation mit dem MEK, Museum Europäischer Kulturen, Berlin und dem Performance-Projekt DIE KÖNIGE.

Laut Gründerin barbara caveng, gab es in dieser Zeit Momente, in denen sich die KUNSTASYL-Mitglieder „als Teil eines Körpers" wahrnahmen.

Im Jahr 2016 wandelte sich KUNSTASYL zum gemeinnützigen Verein. Die Projekte „Die Kompanie" (2017-2021) und „STREETWARE saved item" (2020) ermöglichten es, Fragen zu Gender, Umwelt und kolonialen Verhältnissen, insbesondere in der Textilindustrie, zu erforschen. In Zusammenarbeit mit ugandischen Künstler:innen erarbeitet STREETWARE Performances und Installationen, die eine normative Ästhetik, die sozialen und ökologischen Auswirkungen der Fast-Fashion-Industrie, Konsumverhalten und globale Machtstrukturen kritisieren.

Seit 2020 hat KUNSTASYL eine sechsstellige Summe eingeworben, ganz im Gegensatz zu den Jahren 2015-17, politisch gelabelt als„Flüchtlingskrise", die zur kompletten „Erschöpfung" der Mitglieder von KUNSTASYL geführt hatten.

Im Januar 2023 wurde der Vorstand von KUNSTASYL neu besetzt, was die ursprüngliche Leitung als Chance für eine Weiterentwicklung durch eine neue Generation versteht. Die neuen Mitglieder des divers-besetzten Vorstands sind seit langem mit KUNSTASYL verbunden. In dieser neuen Phase hofft die Organisation, weiterhin an der Inklusion zu arbeiten, sowohl durch den kritischen Inhalt ihrer Arbeit als auch durch den Versuch verschiedener Kooperationen, insbesondere mit marginalisierten Menschen und Initiativen oder Gruppen, die an sozialen Ideen jenseits des Kapitalismus arbeiten.

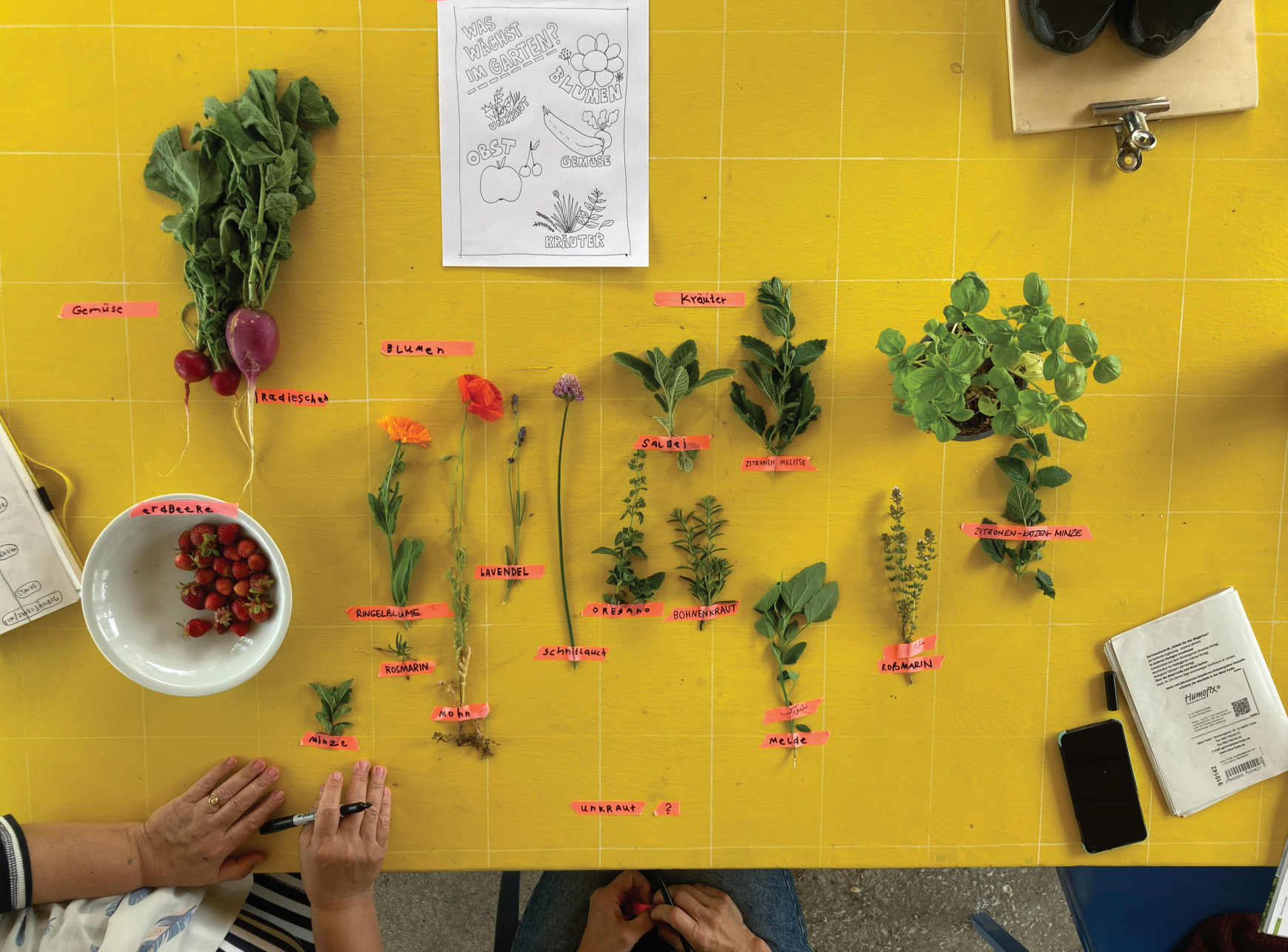


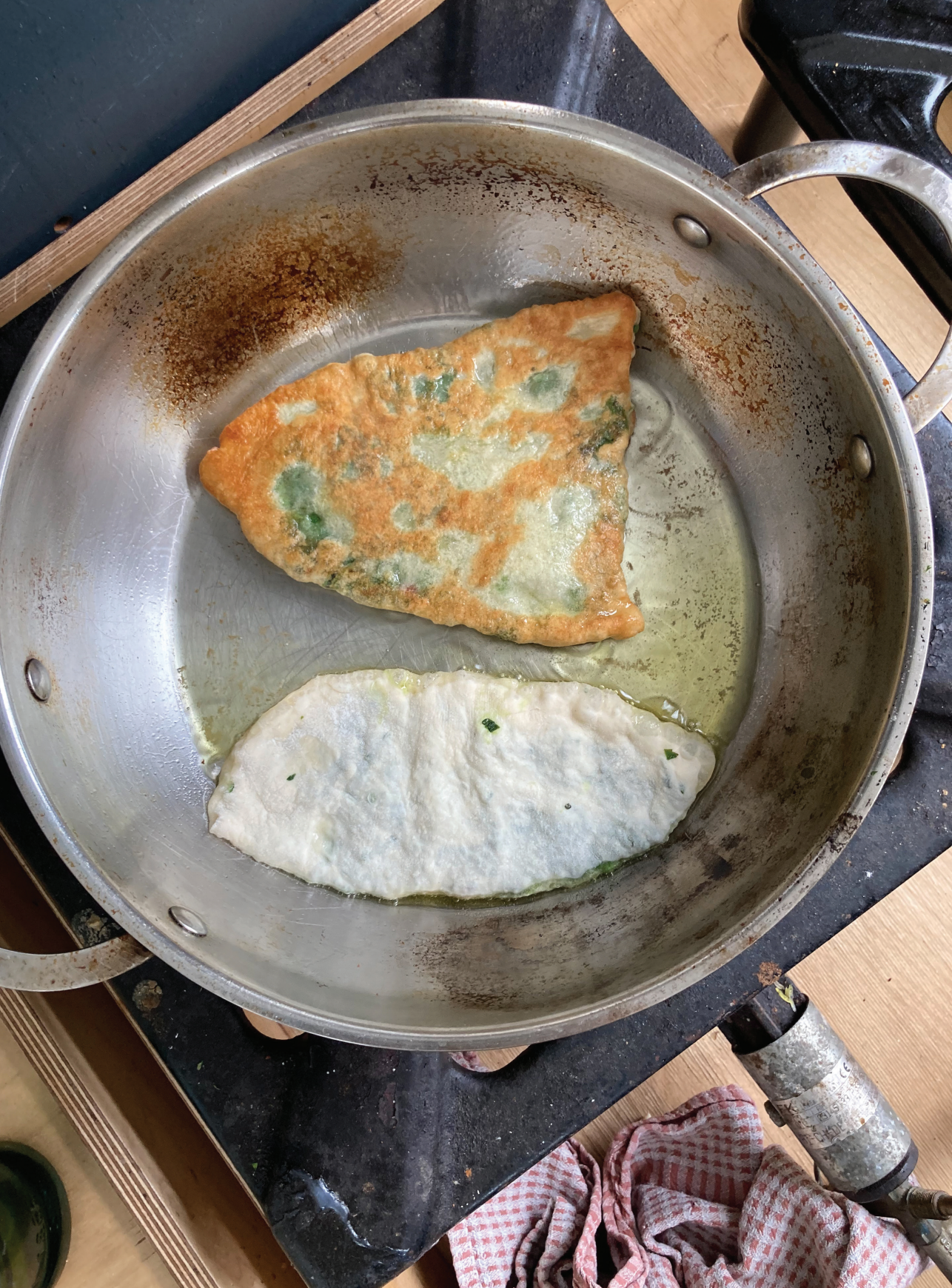
The Power of Peppa: Justice. Video performance at the Workshop of Ruth Faith Nalule in Kampala (Jim Joel Nyakaana, 2022)



Performance as part of the congress on the clothes heap: fastfashion second hand Africa (Beatrice Lamwaka, Kisitu Aloysious Musanyusa, Ruth Faith Nalule, barbara caveng, Alice Fassina, Aïcha Abbadi, KDindie, Lotti Seebeck, Leo Naomi Baur), (Jim Joel Nyakaana, 2021)




WAS WÄCHST IM GARTEN?
BLUMEN
UNKRAUT
OBST
GEMÜSE
KRÄUTER
Gemüse
Radieschen
Blumen
Kräuter
SALBEI
ZITRONEN MELISSE
ZITRONEN-KATZEN-MINZE
ERDBEERE
LAVENDEL
RINGELBLUME
ROSMARIN
Mohn
Schnittlauch
OREGANO
BOHNENKRAUT
ROßMARIN
Minze
Melde
UNKRAUT
?



NIROSTA

UN/LEARNING TOGETHER

Common space for urban inclusion: Practicing critical urban learning [1]

Francesca Cognetti and
Beatrice De Carli

Practices of urban inclusion

Practices of Urban Inclusion was a collaborative, experimental learning programme that ran from 2020 to 2021. This essay reflects on this experience by retracing the programme's design, development, and outcomes. Specifically, we want to explore the value of this initiative as a 'threshold space' between academia and civil society, theory and practice, experience, and reflection. In the urban commons literature, the idea of threshold space was established by Stavros Stavrides to describe the spatio-temporal qualities of "passages that connect while separating and separate while connecting" (Stavrides, 2016: 5). By centering the threshold, "one is encouraged to cross boundaries, invent … spaces of encounter, and appreciate situated identities as open and developing" (Stavrides 2016: 72).

Drawing from Stavrides, we use this concept to analyse the potential of this and other learning collaborations between academic and civil society partners as a means to support processes of urban commoning. Our aim is to identify if and how collaborative learning programmes can enable new forms of life in-common and cultures of sharing to be collectively imagined, practised, and theorised.

As discussed earlier in the book, Practices of Urban Inclusion emerged from two EU-funded collaborative projects: DESINC – Designing Inclusion (2016–2019) and DESINC Live – Designing and learning in the context of migration (2019–2022). DESINC Live specifically explored the role of urban space and urban practice in creating conditions of exclusion or inclusion in cities. The project was set within the European context and centred on migration as both a vital component of urbanisation and as an important perspective for understanding how dynamics of power, oppression, and emancipation relate to city-making. Importantly, DESINC Live also emphasised the role of knowledge and learning in reproducing or disrupting these dynamics. It sought to examine what knowledge informs decision-making in urban policy, planning, and design; where and by whom this knowledge is produced; and how more diverse and horizontal networks of knowledge production can facilitate more inclusive forms of city-making.

To achieve these goals, we imagined and set up Practices of Urban Inclusion as a pan-European learning programme spanning across places and organisations.. Through this programme, the aim was to co-produce a shared body of knowledge about the implications of observing, designing, planning, and transforming urban spaces through the lens of movement and migration.

This learning initiative stemmed from the position that in a world full of differences, new forms of commonality, and cultures of sharing, must be supported through urban practices that are rooted in diversity. We term these 'practices of urban inclusion,' and connect them to a larger debate on spatial agency (Awan et al., 2011), feminist spatial practice (Schalk et al., 2017), grounded urban practices (CLUSTER and Nonfiction, 2019), and urban practice (Aßmann et al., 2017). This debate spans various fields, including architecture, urban planning, activism, art practice, and social development. Developing and implementing such practices is a creative and political act that requires actors from academia, professions, and civil society to unlearn and relearn their own roles, ways of working, and relationships.

Pedagogies of urban inclusion

Our approach to knowledge is informed by a history of initiatives that have explored how learning occurs in and through the city. Some of these are described by architectural educators Sam Vardy and Julia Udall (2018), who emphasise learning as a means of cultivating "response-ability" among spatial practitioners: the capacity to respond in situated ways, taking responsibility for one's entangled relations with the world (Haraway, 2016). This connects to interdisciplinary debates on critical urban learning, as explored by geographer Colin McFarlane.

Critical urban learning views the city as a learning infrastructure where knowledge is produced, contested, and transformed through social practices and interactions (McFarlane, 2011). It regards knowledge as a relational process and, to effect change, emphasises the potential for collective knowledge exchanges rooted in local practices (Facer and Buchczyk, 2019). Critical urban learning also highlights the importance of engaging with multi-stakeholder networks and power structures (Allen et al., 2018). By centring multiplicity, this approach challenges naturalised

hierarchies of knowledge and power, as suggested by Robin et al. (2019).

Ortiz and Millan (2022) define critical urban learning as being both cognitive and affective, rooted in everyday experiences of place, body, and memory. This approach emphasises the importance of being aware of one's embodied position and perspective in relation to the social context and is locally grounded and situated (Haraway, 1988).

Rather than accumulating information in isolation, critical urban learning involves deepening the relationship with one's surroundings. Anthropologist Tim Ingold proposes a similar approach to knowledge and learning: "correspondence." Correspondence involves habit, improvisation, and agencing, rather than volition and agency. It highlights a relational and generative orientation, immersing oneself in the city with care, longing, and imagination (Ingold, 2017; 2020).

Informed by this debate, the Practices of Urban Inclusion learning programme was conceived to facilitate the co-production of knowledge about the intersections of migration, social inclusion, and urban practice. It involved discussing the meaning of urban practice in the context of migration, and exploring how urban practice can foster new social relations in European cities. To enable this, we devised a programme that functioned as a threshold space: a connector of different people, institutions, and ways of knowing and doing; and a prefiguration of more inclusive and emancipatory forms of urban practice and knowledge exchange. Three critical intents made this possible: prioritising experiential knowledge, cultivating collaborative learning, and connecting temporalities, which we discuss below.

Learning from experience

The Practices of Urban Inclusion programme adopted a situated approach to learning, rooted in Donna Haraway's concept of "situated knowledges" (1988), which recognises that knowledge is always situated in time and space, and therefore celebrates partiality. It requires an awareness of one's own subjectivity while attending to the subjectivity of others, and demands careful positioning, attending to power relations, and centring lived experiences and seldom-heard voices. It is grounded in a feminist ethics of care that emphasises connectedness, commitment, and responsibility, as highlighted by Doucet and Frichot (2018).

The idea connects to Stavrides' notion of "comparability", which involves challenging existing hierarchies and establishing the basis of comparisons "between different subjects of action and … different practices" (Stavrides, 2015: 14). Comparability involves recognising the importance of, and valuing as comparable, the diverse perspectives and experiences of all those involved in common spaces and commoning practices. At stake is the recognition of the commoning process as being based on multiplicity, rather than homogenisation (Hardt and Negri, 2005: 348–349, in Stavrides, 2016: 41).

The programme aimed to challenge knowledge hierarchies by deeply questioning the differentiation between tacit and codified knowledge, observers and observed, learners and teachers. Activities emphasised the significance of learning from everyday acts of sharing and through mundane commoning experiences. By acting as an open meeting ground, the programme brought together diverse intersectional identities, cultures, and ways of knowing, to facilitate connections.

Collaborative learning

Practices of Urban Inclusion had a second objective: to establish a learning community that could act as a distributed, yet entwined, learning and knowing subject. By bringing together participants and educators with diverse cultural, geographic and disciplinary backgrounds, the ambition was to establish links between the knowledge arising from various places, fields, institutions, and perspectives. We sought to share understanding through a collaborative process of mutual approximation, linking to the idea that "the common is always organised in translation" (Roggero, 2010: 368).

Stavrides stresses that creating open and expanding commons relies on "opportunities as well as tools for translating differences between views, between actions, and between subjectivities" (Stavrides, 2015: 15). Such emphasis on the processes of translation highlights the acts of care, negotiation and adaptation required to make and manage resources in common, among diverse and expanding communities.

The programme brought together academic and civil society partners, students, practitioners, and residents from different urban contexts to contribute their unique perspectives to shared questions. Creating opportunities for exchange and shared experience generated "emancipatory circuits of knowledge" as defined by Butcher et al. (2022). These circuits democratise the channels through which knowledge is produced, disseminated, and actioned; allowing knowledge to be produced by more people, and challenging dominant narratives. The programme emphasised learning from one another as an act of commoning in itself, producing knowledge through distributed means.

Connecting temporalities

Practices of Urban Inclusion explored the importance of time in the collaborative learning process. Mason (2021) stresses the significance of long-term engagement in socially engaged scholarship, linking

collaborative research to the idea of "staying", and to ethical commitments of reciprocity and care. Doucet and Frichot (2018) argue that "once the researcher lives within the world he or she observes, they cannot help but also care for that world." We agree, and believe that focussing on time is crucial for collaborative learning practices that are sensitive towards the lives of the people and places concerned. The programme emphasised supporting long-term involvement with multiple personal and institutional lives, and trajectories of change.

Thinking about time also attends to Stavrides' (2016) prefigurative nature of "common space". Prefiguration refers to the idea of building alternative futures in the present, creating and enacting the society or political system that one hopes to achieve (Fians, 2022). Stavrides, with others, regards commoning practices as prefigurative acts that demonstrate the potentiality of sharing by anticipating a society based on solidarity and mutual aid (2016).

The programme was viewed as intersecting multiple personal and institutional timelines, as well as anticipating future practice. By acknowledging the importance of time and prefiguration, it aimed to take responsibility for its outcomes, impact, and limitations beyond its operational duration.

Finding common ground

In his book Common Space, architect and activist Stavros Stavrides engages explicitly with the idea of the city–as–commons, and the spatial dimension of commoning (Stavrides, 2016). He emphasises a form of common space that is open to new commoners, transcending enclosures and concentrations of power (2016: 5). Here, common space is "produced by people in their effort to establish a common world that houses, supports and expresses the community that they participate in" (2016: 54). This world could be as stable and well-defined as a gated community, or "a porous world, always-in-the-making" (2016: 54). This distinction is important, because it highlights that commons can operate in exclusionary ways. Stavrides advocates for creating open commons, shaped by the networking practices of a diverse and ever-emerging community. He argues that common space does not have to be stable, but can instead be a meeting ground, or a provisional space, for diverse identities and experiences to come together (2016: 55).

In this context, the definition of common space as "threshold space" becomes central. The metaphor of the threshold offers "a counterexample to the dominant enclave city". Thresholds are areas of crossing and connecting, and as such they symbolise "the potentiality of sharing" (2016: 56). Threshold spaces act both as connectors and prefigurations. They connect across differences and facilitate the creation of worlds in-common. The also serve as models for alternative futures by embodying acts of commoning in the present. Stavrides associates the spatio-temporal quality of common spaces with concepts of "liminality", "transition" and "initiation" (2016: 56–58).

Understanding pedagogical initiatives as threshold spaces helps explain the contribution of academic institutions to processes of urban commoning, which are seen as pathways for advancing the right to the city. Threshold spaces contribute to actualising the right to the city because they enact more emancipatory relations and forms of city-making. "Through acts of establishing common spaces, the discrimination and barriers that characterise enclave urbanity may be countered" (Stavrides, 2015:11).

This section discusses the main commoning outcomes of this experience. It interrogates if and how the programme supported the emergence of a collective threshold subject, and the extent to which threshold subjectivity in-the-making allowed for redistributing knowledge and power amongst and beyond participants.

Creating a collective threshold subject

The idea of community is essential to discussions about commons. As Mies (2014) explains, a community is necessary for the existence of commons; whereas the production and reproduction of commons rely on the formation of networks united by shared responsibilities towards the common good and each other. Such networks are shaped by institutionalised codes and protocols of sharing (Ostrom, 1990), as well as by relationships of care and solidarity (Federici, 2018).

Stavrides suggests that people who are "on the threshold" even temporarily, have the potential to experience a unique sense of community, which he calls "communitas". "Social differentiation may appear quite arbitrary during such an experience. A kind of equalising potentiality seems to dwell on thresholds. Liminality … gives people the opportunity to share a common world-in-the-making, in which differences appear as pre-social or even anti-social" (Stavrides, 2015: 12). During the programme, we observed this "equalising potentiality" in various ways. It affected relationships between project partners, programme participants, and local residents and organisations.

The project partners formed a horizontal, self-managing learning network, involving people and institutions exchanging knowledge and making decisions collaboratively. We negotiated and co-designed rules and systems for collaboration, expanding to involve others as we went along. Originally, this network consisted of representatives from the four universities and three civil society organisations that initiated the project. It then expanded to include local actors in each city as the project progressed.

Power relations are inherent in collaborative initiatives, and our translocal and intersectoral network was no exception. Despite our efforts to share power, it was not always seamless, and tensions were evident throughout the programme and during the final evaluation. For example, one CSO tutor expressed concern that inclusion was not always prioritised well-enough in our work, including in how we related to each other, taught, and used certain terms. To address these tensions, we devoted significant time to evaluating the quality of our partnership. We constantly strove to self-regulate and resist traditional power concentrations, particularly those related to knowledge hierarchies, which tend to privilege codified over tacit knowledge. We also counteracted structural power imbalances, such as those embedded in the funding structure itself, which valued the contribution of academic and non-academic partners differently.

The programme highlighted the importance of relational qualities such as active listening, empathy, critical thinking, mediation, and communication. Civil society and university participants found the programme stimulating because it placed them in situations where these qualities were essential to connecting meaningfully, navigating challenges in partnership, and reflecting on the political implications of their experience. Strongly emphasised was the value of placing oneself in a position of mutual engagement and vulnerability, connecting to Butler's concept of "bounded selves" (2005).

Velicu and García-López (2018) highlight that recognising interdependencies and mutual vulnerabilities is the basis for learning to live in-common across differences. In practice, the programme's workshops enabled all involved to value and mobilise their own biographies as intersectional subjects who are simultaneously professionals and migrants, teachers and learners, who speak multiple languages and move across multiple cultures daily. This reliance on personal experiences and life trajectories played a crucial role in establishing common ground, and connecting across pre-defined social roles and positionings.

Stavrides (2015) cites Uruguayan activist Raúl Zibechi's assertion that "community does not merely exist, it is made. It is not an institution … but a way to make links between people" (Zibechi, 2010). This position aligns with Isabel Stengers' concept of an "ecology of practice" (2005), that bonds of interconnectedness are adaptable and evolving. Writing about feminist spatial practice, Hélène Frichot mobilises this idea to assert that "it is not that we can refer to a 'we' as in 'we architects' or 'we creative practitioners', in advance of our practice; instead it is through the practice … that this 'we' will emerge" (2016: 74). An ecology of practice "always operates in action, on the go, testing, venturing" (ibid. 2016: 21).

The everyday creation of connections, negotiation of relationships, and translation of knowledge were essential in forming a collective threshold subject during the programme. These processes were ongoing and dynamic, and required significant care. It was through these laborious and contingent processes that a temporary collective subject emerged.

Sharing power/knowledge

The collective subject that emerged catalysed around producing common knowledge about the idea of an urban practice of inclusion. The programme linked professional and experiential knowledge, artistic practice and urban policy, theory and action to temporarily link and learn from practices grounded in different localities. This revealed the power imbalances involved in knowledge production. Foucault famously argued that the production of knowledge is intrinsically power-laden. From the perspective of commoning, the challenge for heterogeneous networks such as the one underpinning Practices of Urban Inclusion, is not to create conditions to erase such power imbalances, particularly between academic and non-academic partners or between teachers and students, but rather to make them visible and therefore, contestable (Haraway, 1988), specifically through acts of comparison.

Embracing the translocal dimension of the initiative was crucial in facilitating the sharing of knowledge and power among partners and participants. Connecting spaces and experiences across different local settings made it possible to generate something new on an urban and international scale that exceeded the scope of what could be known and learnt by any individual in a single place.

Recognising the value of civil society organisations' and academic partners' differing approaches to making and circulating knowledge was equally important. Many participants experienced this as a starting point for sharing their own perspectives, one noted: "I felt a truly genuine will to share opinion and knowledge among the learners, teachers, and practitioners, in the spirit of creating something new, a common ground".[2]

Numerous uncomfortable, but necessary, acts of revealing imbalances of knowledge and power were required. Often, participants took the lead in this process by drawing attention to who had the authority to choose the terminology used when discussing a shared question. An evaluative focus group discussion validated that defining key terms collaboratively was crucial for the future of the programme if it aimed to hold inclusiveness and reciprocity as core values (d'Auria et al., 2022: 49).

Individual participants were also affected by power imbalances, which were discussed throughout the evaluative process. Many emphasised that there

was often a dominant discipline (architecture) and language (English). We recognised that counterbalancing this was complex, partly because this difference was embedded in the institutional and financial structure of the partnership itself which, for instance, enabled the participation of a greater number of university students compared to non-academic learners.

At a subjective level, the programme addressed variations in motivations, existing skills, capacities, and learning opportunities among a diverse cohort of learners. For participants who were asylum seekers or refugees in particular, there were fundamental barriers that prevented them from fully participating. The evaluative process highlighted that some participants were "intersectionally disadvantaged" owing to a combination of factors. These included a lack of knowledge of the programme's dominant languages; inability to travel due to citizenship and visa status; backgrounds from a lesser-represented discipline; or lack of familiarity with group work (d'Auria et al., 2022: 49). The experience provided valuable lessons for learning initiatives that aim to stay 'on the threshold'. It is crucial to co-create tools for removing these barriers in order to realise a radically open space and learning experience. Otherwise, as stated by Stavrides, commons can be (or become) exclusionary.

For academic partners and students specifically, the intentional linking and commoning of different knowledge forms can instigate the deconstructing of the privileged perspective of academia as a centre of knowledge and power, and recontextualize codified knowledge production as one among many different and equally valuable processes of learning, sense-making, and knowing.

For civil society networks, and particularly for local residents and their organisations, the process contributes to recognising and articulating tacit and experiential knowledge as equally valuable and worthy of being amplified. However, this process of knowledge-commoning is complex, and not immune to the risk of marginalising minority voices and co-opting the knowledge created by non-academic communities. The creation of clearer institutions and protocols for knowledge sharing is an issue that this, and similar initiatives, should address in more explicit ways.

What critical learning spaces?

We utilised Stavrides' concept of "threshold spaces' to explore how urban learning initiatives can counter enclave urbanity. We posited that such initiatives act as thresholds themselves, connecting people, institutions, and knowledge; and prefiguring more inclusive and emancipatory forms of urban practice and knowledge exchange. The programme was an experiment and a prefiguration of possible ways of approaching knowledge and learning on the threshold. Looking through the lens of commoning and threshold spatiality allowed us to explore the potentiality of similar initiatives to act as connectors and forms of prefiguration, as well as to make more visible the power imbalances involved in co-productive initiatives.

The choices of foregrounding experiential knowledge, fostering collaborative learning, and connecting temporalities shaped the threshold in specific ways.

The programme enabled the emergence of a learning community open to valuing ever-new forms of urban knowledge and knowledge bearers, establishing links across and beyond partner institutions. The process questioned and renegotiated the divides between academia and civil society, tutors and participants, and participants and residents. These crossings went beyond formal policies and codes of collaboration between institutions. They played a key part in weaving together a collective subject that could share knowledge, learn collaboratively, and reach out to others beyond its own boundaries.

Collaborative learning was possible within the framework of pre-existing institutional partnerships and relational networks. The short duration of the programme limited the scope for meaningful interactions with newcomers to these networks; nonetheless, the programme generated important meeting grounds and opened up new opportunities for further connections and collaborations with less-heard voices. This in turn highlighted the importance of time, and understanding the prefigurative potentiality of temporary commoning moments.

The experience prompted participants and tutors from both academia and civil society to question their professional roles, conceptual tools, and subjectivities. It demonstrated how tackling inequality and exclusion requires a collective and multi-pronged approach. This led to challenging ideas of expertise and experimenting with transversal forms of practice. It also triggered reflections on disciplinarity and the position of both the urban practitioner and the university.

During the programme, discussions frequently returned to the question of what urban planning and architecture entail beyond the production and management of built objects. The focus shifted to the architecture of social encounters and the making of networks and common spaces, which was a new perspective for many. This involved a process of learning as much as unlearning and deconstruction, challenging and dismantling preconceived beliefs. For universities, questioning their inherent positions as knowledge holders involves a constant act of reframing, and deliberate engagement with a larger field of subjects also involved in making and circulating knowledge about the city.

Finally, our reflection on the programme highlighted that an emphasis on learners' own intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1991) is an essential step

in building bonds across differences. However, the experience also revealed the difficulty of deconstructing and subverting entrenched power/knowledge imbalances, and of meaningfully resisting power/knowledge concentrations. Notwithstanding these imbalances, alongside the Urban Commons Research Collective, we find that "connecting knowledge across places, positions, and disciplinary boundaries works to enhance what some would call epistemic permeability" (Urban Commons Research Collective, 2022). As a result, we find that collaborative urban learning initiatives that aim to resist enclave urbanity and foster the right to the city must create new codes and protocols of knowledge-sharing that embrace and, perhaps, subvert these risks.

In contrast to the city of separation and extraction, a view of the city as a commons must be grounded in a culture of recognition, mutual involvement, and negotiation that draws links across spaces, cultures, and communities. In this view, a focus on threshold spaces that "connect while separating and separate while connecting" (Stavrides, 2016: 5) is important for fostering social relations based on sharing, cooperation and solidarity. This will open up more radical spaces of critical learning and knowledge exchange on the threshold and will challenge knowledge injustice by acknowledging the variety of existing knowledges, positions, and perspectives.

1 A longer version of this essay was originally published as a journal article in Planning Theory: Francesca Cognetti and Beatrice De Carli. 'Finding Common Ground on the Threshold: An Experiment in Critical Urban Learning', Planning Theory, 23.4 (2024), pp. 400–422.

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Designing a learning journey

Lucia Caistor-Arendar and
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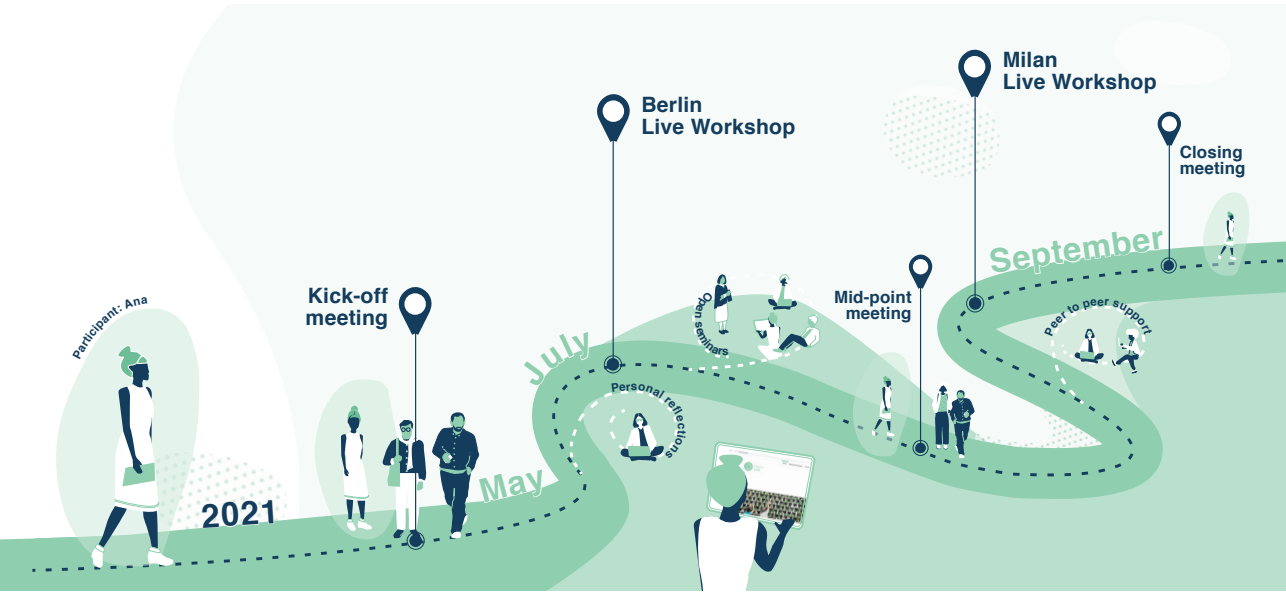

Learning Journey
(Lucia Caistor-Arendar, 2021)

The Practices of Urban Inclusion programme lasted six months and offered a blended learning experience that combined online and offline activities. Two live workshops were held in Berlin and Milan, focusing on hands-on making and storytelling, respectively. Additionally, there were three whole-group online meetings, a series of online seminars and public lectures, regular small-group cluster meetings in each of the four countries (Italy, Germany, Belgium, UK), and personal tutorials. An online open knowledge platform, the Collective Archive, supported both the training and theoretical aspects of the programme.

The Learning Journey map summarises the plan for the Practices of Urban Inclusion programme experience from the perspective of a learner. This map was created to ensure that the learners' experience and their learning trajectory were at the heart of the design process. In structuring the programme, we tried to think about the range of learners we might have, focusing on their life histories and different points of departure, their experience during the programme, and their desired trajectory afterwards.

'Access' was a driving principle in our design process, intending to create opportunities for each individual learner to reach the resources and relations that they might need to move forward on their learning journey. To achieve this, an infrastructure of support was provided for the learners including opportunities for individual self-reflection, one-to-one tutorials, peer-to-peer support, local cluster meetings at the city level, and group activities as a whole cohort connected across Europe.

Embracing Joy and Getting Lost in Translation

The Practices of Urban Inclusion programme was developed through collaboration between civic, arts, and academic institutions. This programme provided an opportunity to experiment with different methodological approaches to engaging with, understanding, and transforming urban space. It explored joyful and creative methods for engaging in fragile settings and encouraged participants to test performative, narrative, and visual approaches to immersing in, studying, and representing space. Through both online and live interactions with a diverse community of learners, participants created collaborative modes of action at the intersection of art, architecture, urban planning, and social development, translating across languages, disciplines, and personal interpretations. They also developed tools of reflection aimed at acknowledging their own position as practitioners and assessing the impact of their choices and actions on others.

Our suggested learning methods draw from our experiences as teachers and learners. They start with situating oneself within a context, move on to exploring different ways of engaging with a specific situation and group of people, and then onto mapping out the issues at stake, making objects in space, envisioning future possibilities, communicating the outcomes of the process to a wider audience, and collaboratively reflecting on the value of the work produced. This section of the book explores these learning methods in detail, opening them up for further translations and re-appropriations. For each method, we provide a definition, a set of three references, and a visual essay exemplifying how they were tested in the context of the Practices of Urban Inclusion programme.

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Participant exhibition at DESONC Live Multiplier Event in London (Ian Bugarin, 2022)



Francesca Cognetti and
Beatrice De Carli

The concept of 'situating' prompts us to reflect on how we position ourselves in relation to places and people. Taking a situated approach to urban practice means to analyse and understand how social, cultural, historical, and political contexts shape the urban experiences of individuals and groups, particularly regarding gender, race, and other intersecting identities. Donna Haraway's notion of 'situated knowledges' has played a key role in shaping this concept.

A focus on 'situated knowledges' highlights that all knowledge is contingent, partial, and constructed through social interaction. Situated approaches require a practice of positioning that involves carefully attending to the power relations at play in the processes of making knowledge. This perspective challenges inherited hierarchies and embraces all forms of experiences and understanding as equally valid and worthy of consideration.

In the context of migration, this stance involves continuously questioning how we engage with each other, attend to other people's life histories, and value differences. Adopting a situated approach in critical urban practice means seeking specificity over generality. It entails approaching urban sites and people through careful listening, observation and collaboration while acknowledging that our personal identity and position are also fragmentary, and inevitably influence our understanding of the world around us.

Situating is also an approach to gathering information and materials for a design or planning process. It enables us to critically examine a context from an embedded and embodied perspective that is open to new interpretations and meanings. Situated approaches help build more reliable knowledge of places by valuing and connecting multiple partial positions and views.

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Unterwegs Sein

Kathrin Wildner and
Katharina Rohde

This visual essay explores the idea of walking as an everyday practice and methodological approach for doing research. Choreographed as an 'explorative walking exercise' during the Berlin multiplier event, the text sums up the experiences of the participants walking together, in pairs, and alone while collectively creating knowledge about the specific site of Stadtwerke mrzn and its immediate surroundings.

Spätestens seit den 1980er ist das Gehen als eine methodische Praxis der kritischen Stadtforschung anerkannt. Das Gehen wird als Werkzeug genutzt, um die Verflochtenheit von Stadt und vielfältigen Perspektiven ihrer Akteur*innen zu verstehen. Das Gehen ist eine Möglichkeit, Raum anzueignen und folglich, aktiv und selbstermächtigt, und wortwörtlich, einen Fussabdruck im lokalen urbanen Kontext zu hinterlassen.

Im Rahmen der Fun Fair Marzahn: Ein Experimentellen Symposiums (Multiplier Event Berlin) waren teilnehmende Gäste eingeladen, die unmittelbare Umgebung der Stadtwerke MRZN mittels einer explorativen "Übung zum Gehen" zu entdecken.

Ein „Handbuch" (Anregungen zum Gehen) führte durch das Experiment: in der Gruppe gehen, zu zweit oder allein; Erkundung von Gebäuden, Objekten, Materialien, Grenzen, nicht/menschlichen Akteur*-innen, Spuren von Nutzungen und Aneignungen; Reflexionen über Geräusche und Gerüche, Überbleibsel der Vergangenheit und Zukunftsideen....

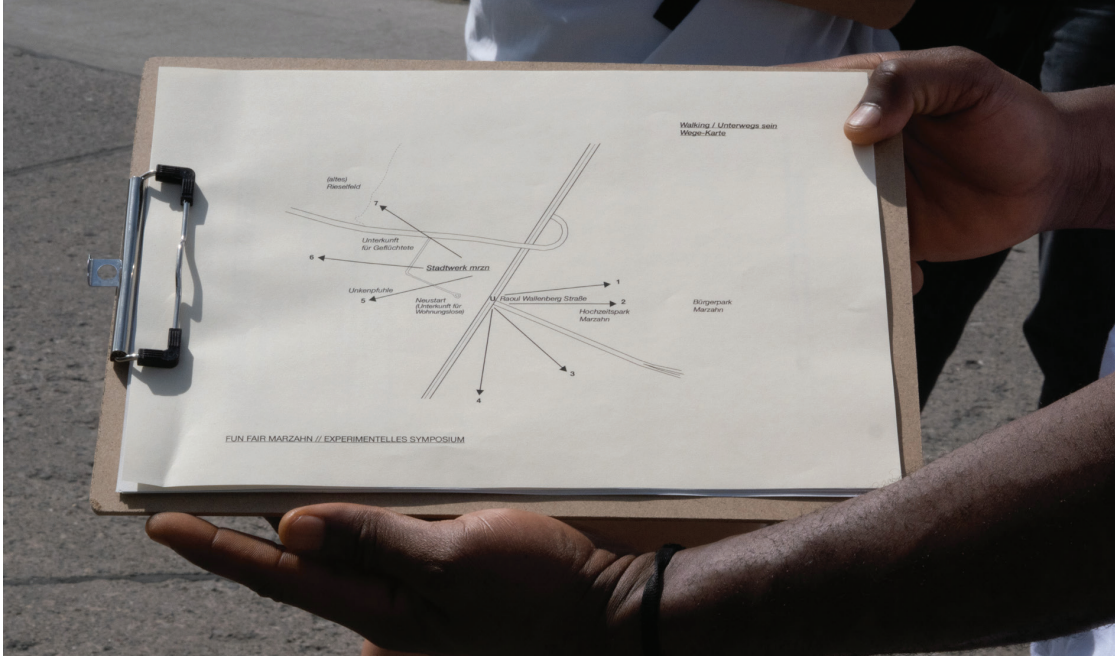
Gemeinsamen zu gehen bewirkt eine Regung im Außen; als Gruppe sind wir für andere sichtbar und werden fragend beobachtet. Auch unsere Intention ist es, wahrzunehmen, was um uns herum passiert und mittels des Gehens als Methode des Ver/Lernens das Gesehene, Gefühlte und Gehörte zu reflektieren. Unsere Körper werden im kollaborativen Gehen in der Gruppe zu einem gemeinsamen Wissenskorpus.

Zu zweit oder dritt durchstreifen wir eine Weile das Gelände und machen uns Notizen, zeichnen Skizzen und Karten und sammeln Gegenstände. Wir gehen mit einer uns unbekannten Person; das gemeinsame Gehen und Erkunden einer uns fremden Umgebung hilft, dass wir uns schnell kennenlernen und aufeinander einlassen.

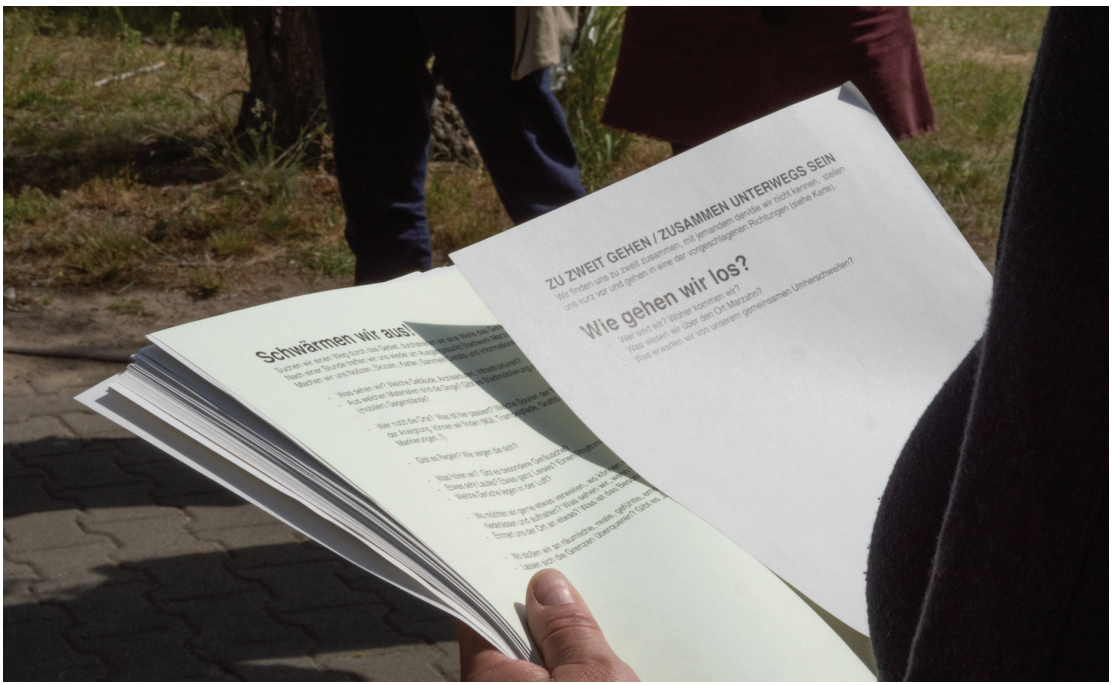
Das Gehen ist eine individuell unterschiedliche, körperliche Erfahrung im Raum. Ähnlich den Experimenten der situationistischen Psychogeographie (u.a. Debord 1990), treten wir durch unseren Körper in den Kontakt mit unserem räumlichen Umfeld. Vielleicht erinnern wir uns zurück an ähnliche Erfahrungen an anderen Orten und in anderen Kontexten... und vernehmen im Moment, neue Einschreibungen in Körper und Raum.

Beim Gehen finden wir „Fundstücke" aller Art: Kräuter und (essbare) Pflanzen... Steine, verschiedenfarbige Sande, Reste von Baumaterialien wie Ziegelbruchstücke oder zerbrochene Fliesen. Diese Überbleibsel ermöglichen, uns ein Bild davon zu machen, was hier einmal gewesen ist, und regen uns zu Gedanken über Zukunftsvisionen an. Die essbaren Pflanzen nehmen wir mit und fügen sie dem leckeren Essen hinzu, das auf dem Gelände der Stadtwerke mrzn zubereitet wird, während wir unterwegs sind.

Die Übung zum Gehen ist nach etwa einer Stunde beendet. Wir treffen uns vor Ort, um unsere Erfahrungen auszutauschen, und sind überrascht, wie viele Informationen wir in kurzer Zeit gesammelt haben: Es gibt einen versteckten Friedhof in der Nähe, ein Kleinod der Natur, überall singen Vögel. Die Natur spielt eine große Rolle in diesem Gebiet - sie schleicht sich zwischen die Ritzen und Nischen der dominierenden Plattenbauarchitektur und könnte zu einem Motor für künftige Entwicklungen werden; indem sie das Gelände des Industriestandorts mit dem Wohngebiet und damit den verschiedenen nicht-menschlichen Akteur*innen und Kulturen, denen wir begegnet sind, verbindet.



Orientierungskarte (Luis Krummenacher, 2021)



Handbuch: Anregungen zum Gehen (Luis Krummenacher, 2021)



Gemeinsam Gehen (Luis Krummenacher, 2021)



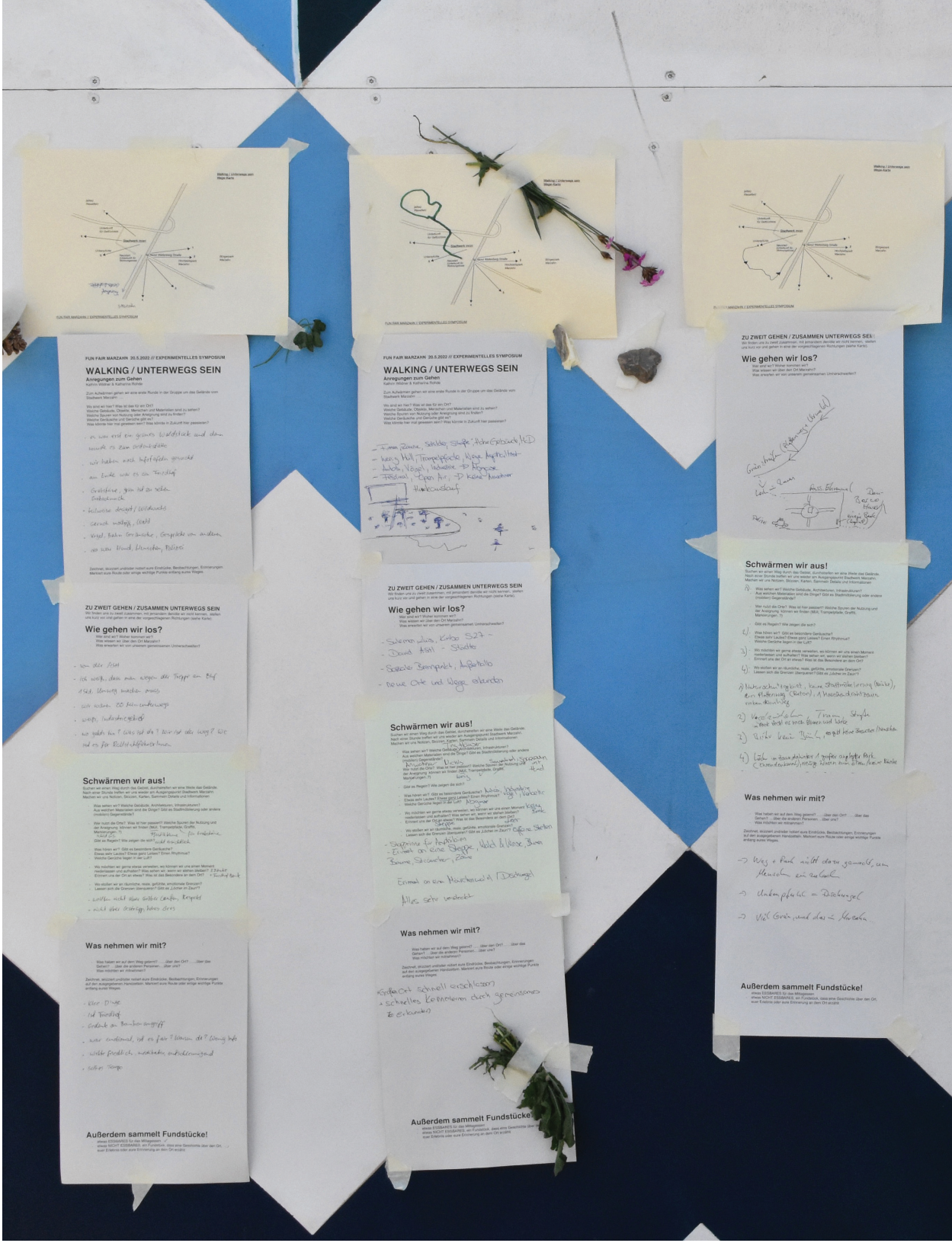
Zusammen gehen (Luis Krummenacher, 2021)

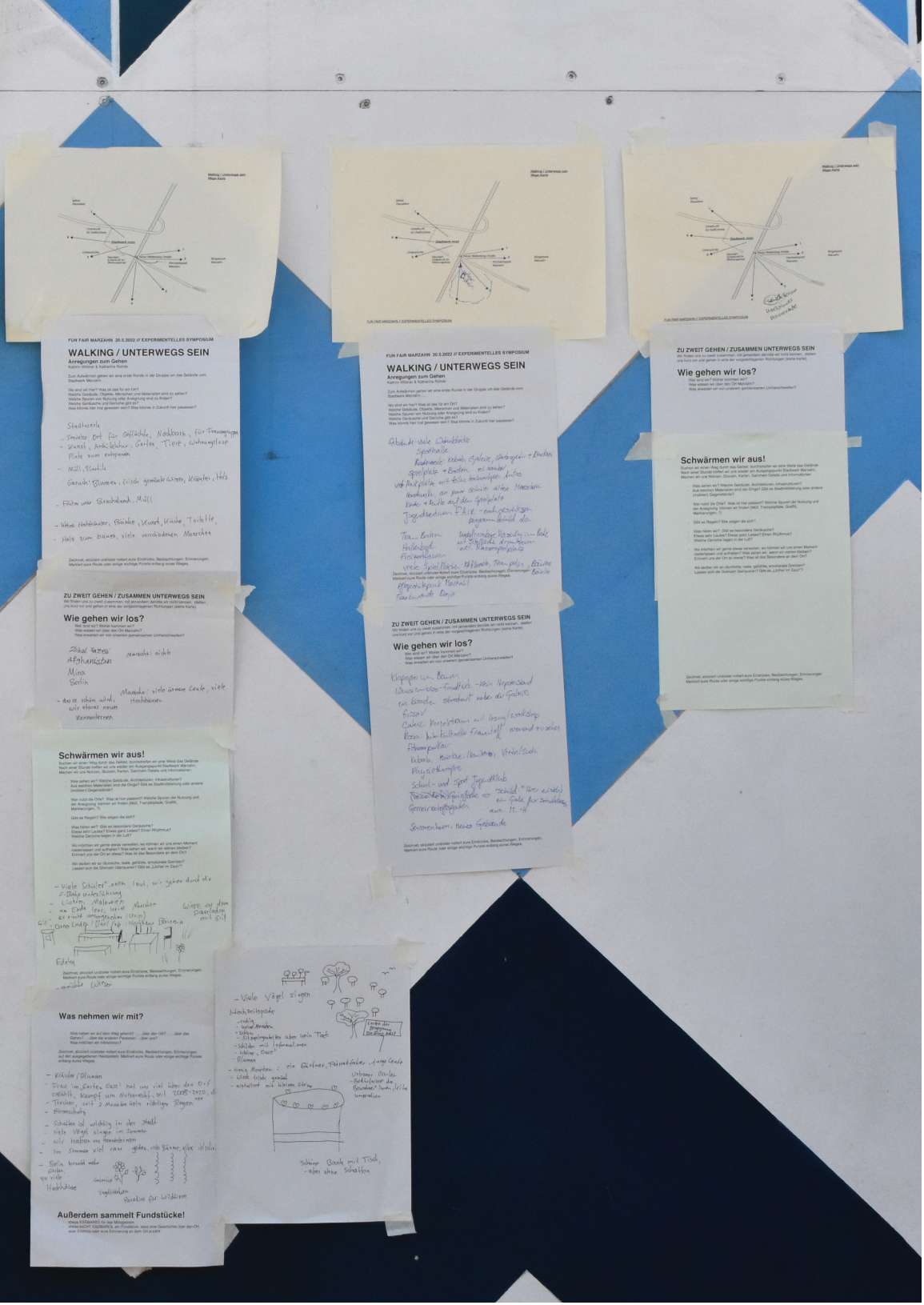


Alleine gehen (Luis Krummenacher, 2021)



Fundstücke (Luis Krummenacher, 2021)


FUN FAIR MARZAHN 20.5.2022 // EXPERIMENTELLES SYMPOSIUM
WALKING / UNTERWEGS SEIN
Anregungen zum Gehen
Kathrin Wildner & Katharina Rohde
Zum Aufwärmen gehen wir eine erste Runde in der Gruppe um das Gelände vom Stadtwerk Marzahn.
Wo sind wir hier? Was ist das für ein Ort?
Welche Gebäude, Objekte, Menschen und Materialien sind zu sehen?
Welche Spuren sind Nutzung oder Aneignung und zu finden?
Welche Geräusche und Gerüche gibt es?
Was könnte hier mal gewesen sein? Was könnte in Zukunft hier passieren?
ZU ZWEIT GEHEN / ZUSAMMEN UNTERWEGS SEIN
Wir finden uns zu zweit zusammen, mit jemandem den/die wir nicht kennen, stellen uns kurz vor und gehen in eine der vorgeschlagenen Richtungen (siehe Karte).
Wie gehen wir los?
Wer sind wir? Woher kommen wir?
Was wissen wir über den Ort Marzahn?
Was erwarten wir von unserem gemeinsamen Unterwegssein?
Schwärmen wir aus!
Was nehmen wir mit?
Was haben wir auf dem Weg gesehen? ... über den Ort? ... über das Gehen? ... über die anderen Personen ... über uns?
Was möchten wir mitnehmen?
Außerdem sammelt Fundstücke!



Feldnotizen (Kaspar Jamme, 2021)

A moment of exchange with local associations at the Milan workshop (Niside Panebianco, 2021)

Engaging



Francesca Cognetti and
Stefano Pontiggia

‘Engaging’ is an approach that focuses on engagement as a method for urban practice that encourages us to interact with specific sites in collaboration with others. This approach allows for the emergence of questions and forms of action through embodied interactions in specific places and at particular times. Engagement entails expanding and deepening relationships, working together with others to examine current situations and possibilities for change.

In critical urban practice, an engaged approach challenges traditional hierarchies between researchers and those being researched, designers and users. It brings together the knowledge and abilities of different individuals and groups to facilitate joint action. Engaged practice recognises that those who have been marginalised possess unique wisdom about exclusion and its consequences. It prioritises collectively generated processes of change, acknowledging that everyone is an expert in the issues that most affect them.

Meaningful engagement with an urban area can result in the co-creation of interventions that reflect the collective needs and aspirations of its inhabitants, expanding their influence in shaping their surroundings. The process of engagement and co-creation can take various forms, such as building and sharing knowledge about people and places, or co-designing and envisioning the future, collectively exploring significant issues, and reimagining potential scenarios and actions. It can also focus on decision-making, promoting deeper democracy, and enhancing collective decision-making regarding urban development.

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Sharing Stories, Meeting the Other

Lucia Ludovici,
Sebastián Oviedo and
Maria Elena Ponno

Gathering personal stories can be a powerful tool for changing the simplistic narratives surrounding marginalised communities and neighbourhoods. Through engaging with local residents and carefully listening to their experiences, we can co-create narratives that more accurately reflect their perspectives and shed light on untold stories and resources.

In our recent workshop held in Milan, our group focussed on the connection between job opportunities, working conditions, and migration experiences in the lives of San Siro residents. We directly engaged with locals to gain insight into their lives and uncover the structural obstacles affecting migrant people in the neighbourhood.

Our approach involved sharing thoughts, stories, and food with community members. Through unravelling and piecing together the life paths of a small restaurant owner, a street vendor, and a doorman, we were able to tell the story of life in the neighbourhood from their unique perspectives. We established different levels of involvement with each person and acknowledged that our research output represented only a partial and incomplete view of the complexity and diversity of lived experiences, work situations, and personal trajectories in San Siro.

Our goal was to help reshape the narrative of a context that is often labelled with negative stereotypes and misrepresented as a monolithic problem. By building a more engaged narrative of San Siro, we aimed to contribute to creating a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the area and its inhabitants.



Baker in the San Siro district (Lucia Ludovici, 2021)



Staff working at a Peruvian restaurant in San Siro (Sebastian Oviedo, 2021)



Groupwork during the Milan workshop
(Sebastian Oviedo, 2021)



Exhibition during the Milan workshop
(Sebastian Oviedo, 2021)

1

Detachment

The trajectory of Giomar to San Siro begins with a migration from Lima, Perú in 2018. He arrives directly to Milan, without knowing anyone.

Despite having completed professional studies in Journalism and Psychology, neither one of his titles is recognized by the Italian authorities.

The process of revalidating his degrees is expensive and long: required payments and mandatory attendance to two years of university courses mean that he is excluded from the possibility to exercise his profession.



IV
Finding Resources

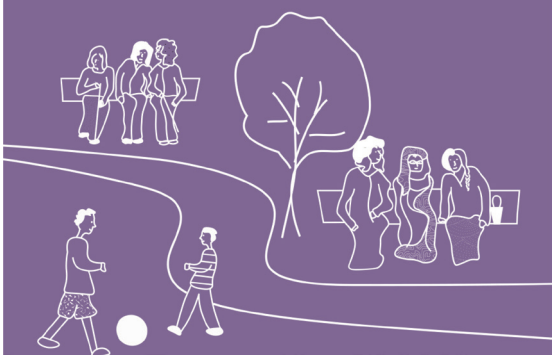
Every day she wakes up at 2 am and strolls through the city, searching in the dumpster for valuable objects that she could sell, sometimes the residents give her directly things they don't use. This way objects are introduced in a circular economy: recycled, resold, reused.
Both the inhabitants of the neighbourhood and the collectors benefit. However, work situation is very precarious



3

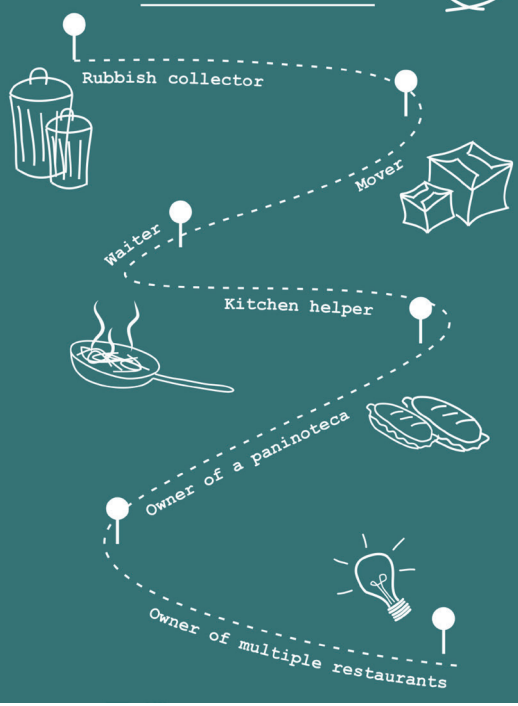
New daily life

When he secured a job as a doorman in one of the buildings in San Siro, he moved here with his family. He works and lives in the same place, so when he's free he goes around with the bike in parks with friends or his family. Due to his job he is an important person who people from different cultures constantly rely on.



Re - Start

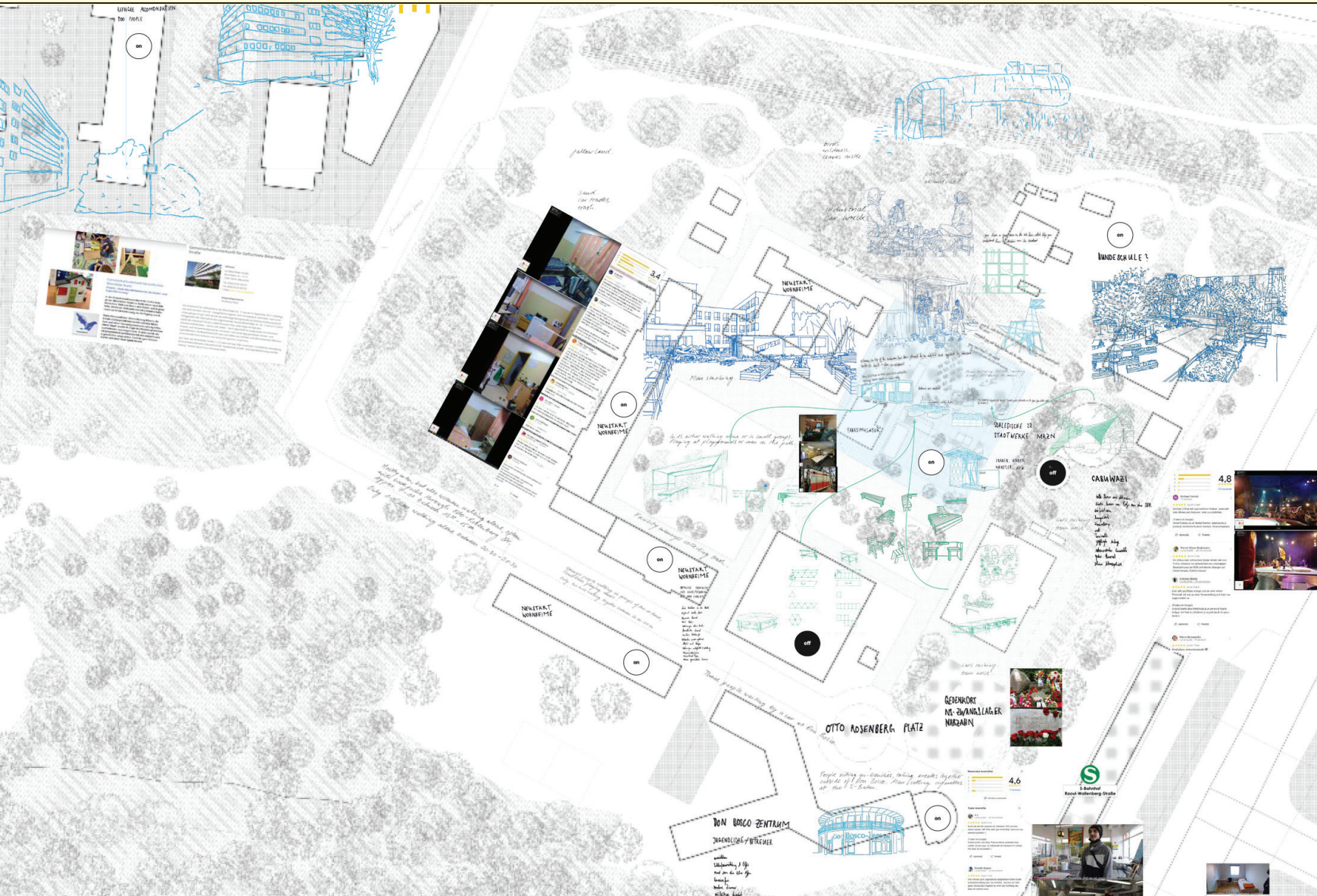
2



Cards telling personal stories of inhabitants
(Maria Elena Ponno, Lucia Ludovici, Sebastian Oviedo, Ana Maria Chiriac, Ian Davide Bugarin, 2021)

Berlin workshop: Micro-scale collective mapping (Universität der Künste, 2021)

Mapping



Nishat Awan and
Beatrice De Carli

Maps present a particular perspective of a place. The decisions made about what and how to map are crucial because they shape the story that is told. In critical urban practice, mapping is a powerful tool that allows inhabitants to share their own personal experiences and insights, giving them the power to tell their story the way they want it to be told.

Traditionally, maps are seen as a source of information that represents the world as it is known to the map-maker in a way that is easily understood by others. However, maps are edited documents that prioritise certain information over others, visually depicting a specific interpretation of reality. Therefore, maps are inherently political and should be interpreted as such, considering the conditions under which they were made.

Regardless of their claims to authority, all maps present a particular perspective and are inherently partial. When creating a map, it is essential to consider what to map and how to map it. Everyday maps used for navigation, for example, do not capture the experience of a place, including scale, temporality, touch, memory, relations, stories, and narratives.

Creating a route map is not as straightforward as it may seem. A migrant's clandestine journey across borders requires a different scale based on the difficulty of each part of the journey. Their legend might omit main roads but include hidden places of refuge or unnamed river crossings.

When creating a map, it is crucial to consider its purpose and intended audience. Critical maps propose versions of the world, making explicit how knowledge is produced and situated, rather than making absolute truth claims.

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Mappature incrementali

Maria Elena Ponno

In the Berlin and Milan workshops, we aimed to create shared knowledge through exploring, reading, and interpreting local areas. The focus was on constructing collective, multidimensional and multiscalar lenses through which to read the city, including both material and immaterial dimensions. The resulting mappings tell complex and layered stories, opening reflections on future visions for more welcoming and inclusive cities.

I processi di lettura e interpretazione del territorio sono stati gli strumenti principali per costruire forme di conoscenza condivisa durante i workshop di Berlino e Milano. L'attenzione si è focalizzata su come costruire delle chiavi di lettura della città multidimensionali e multiscalari, in grado di raccontare sia aspetti materiali come la qualità e le dotazioni degli spazi pubblici, sia aspetti immateriali come percezioni, pratiche e relazioni.

Per riuscire a rappresentare questa molteplicità di dimensioni, durante il workshop di Berlino l'azione di mappatura è stata svolta individuando alcuni nodi cruciali – d'incontro, conflitto, separazione – del quartiere di Marzhan. Questi spazi sono stati attivati dagli studenti attraverso pratiche performative, con l'obiettivo di avvicinare le comunità residenti e interrogarle sulle possibili interpretazioni dei loro spazi della vita quotidiana. Questi 'incontri inaspettati' hanno facilitato l'attivazione di un dialogo e di una riflessione comune su temi, relazioni e immaginari futuri. Questo processo, che abbraccia l'utilizzo di diversi strumenti di indagine – lo scambio informale, l'esperienza corporea nello spazio, l'osservazione paziente, il disegno collettivo – è fatto di continui andirivieni, ed è costruito in maniera incrementale.

Lo stesso approccio tentativo e incrementale è stato utilizzato durante il workshop di Milano. In questo caso, alcuni gruppi si sono concentrati nel tentativo di rappresentare 'traiettorie di vita' all'interno del quartiere di San Siro. Il punto di innesco delle riflessioni è stata l'esperienza corporea dello stare nel quartiere e del costruire un dialogo con le persone che lo abitano. Attraverso semplici azioni quotidiane del pranzare nei ristoranti del quartiere, comprare della frutta nel negozio locale, sono state intessute relazioni con alcuni abitanti, e con loro si è provato, insieme, a costruire delle mappe (da loro raccontate, da noi disegnate) di traiettorie di vita.

In queste mappature, diverse dimensioni si mescolano: gli aspetti sociali, economici, culturali e le sfide personali raccontano di territori complessi e stratificati, aprendo riflessioni di ampio respiro su quali siano le visioni future che noi come progettisti, cittadini e abitanti immaginiamo nel progetto di città giuste, accoglienti e inclusive.



Berlin workshop: Macro-scale collective mapping (Luisa Dürrer, 2021)



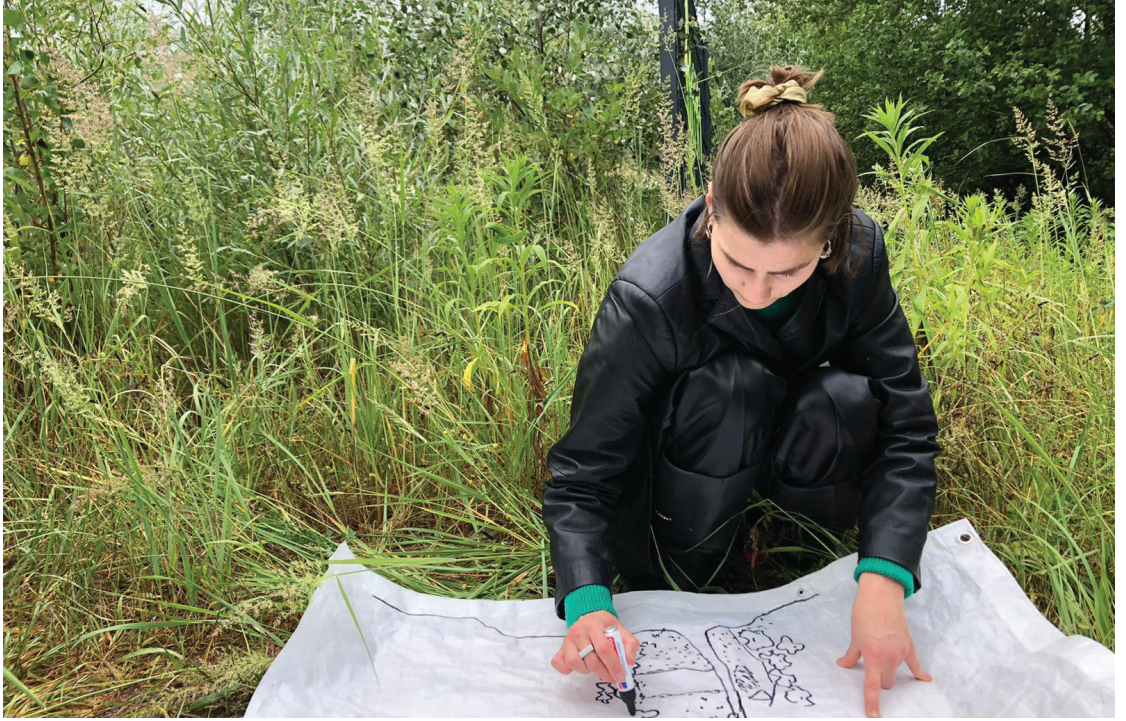
Berlin workshop: Meso-scale mapping of Marzahn (Klara Andersson, Ana Maria Chiriac, Eda Akartuna, Justus Barteleit, Luisa Pohlmann, 2021)



Milan live workshop: Mapping commercial activities in San Siro neighborhood through informal exchanges with inhabitants (Niside Panebianco, 2021)



Group work in San Siro (Niside Panebianco, 2021)



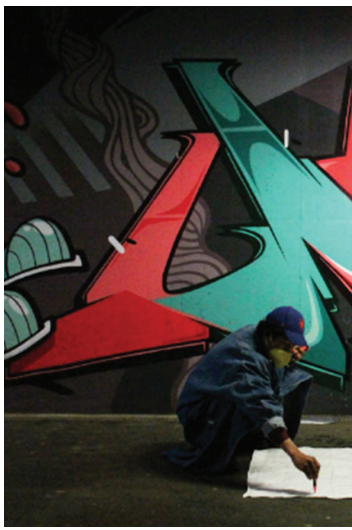
Berlin workshop: Mapping uses, practices and quality of space of an abandoned field in Marzahn (Maria Elena Ponno, 2021)



Berlin workshop: Participatory mapping activity in Marzahn (Maria Elena Ponno, 2021)



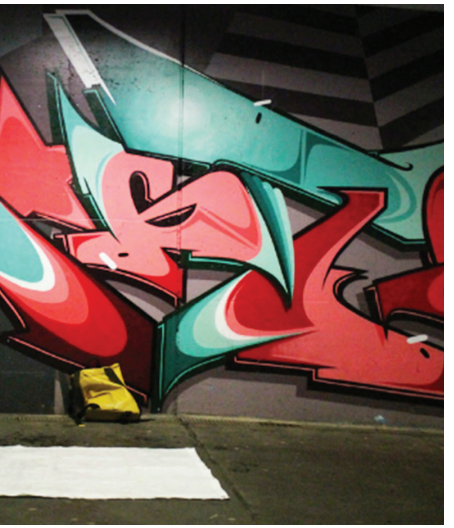


Berlin workshop: Mapping by experiencing, final exhibition (Nisiide Panebianco, 2021)








Collecting materials for making
(Ludwig Schaible, 2021)



Stefano Pontiggia and
Katharina Rohde

In critical urban practice, 'making' is more than just engaging with space and its materiality. It is a collaborative process of 'doing together' in space that encompasses a variety of activities such as building, cooking, thinking, sharing, exchanging, caring, or celebrating. This process is rooted in both the physical and social realities of a context and aims to modify and improve places and conditions.

Making is a critical component of co-production. By working together, inhabitants, practitioners and students can engage with a specific socio-spatial situation, identify emerging issues, produce in-depth analysis, and collectively make and do. Through this hands-on process, making helps to understand different desires, needs, views, or wishes for the future of the specific context.

Making is particularly important when collaborating with people and places that have been silenced or marginalised, as it is a way of prefiguring more emancipatory futures. The act of making can be a playful means to test potential changes through performative actions or temporary interventions. It is a way of amplifying people's agency, which is the power to actively decide and design one's own future.

In the context of migration, hands-on making activities can allow activists and practitioners alike to connect to the many ways in which diverse communities participate in the production of a diverse and more just urban space.

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Making as caring

Katharina Rohde

This visual essay positions Stadtwerke mrzn as experimental building sites. It reflects upon the engagement with students as a continuous experimental process of learning and mutually exchanging knowledge while 'making' and 'caring'.

Das Gelände der Stadtwerke mrzn entwickelte sich als „experimentelle Baustelle" beständig weiter. Als das Team von S27 im Frühjahr 2021 anfing, sich hier zu engagieren, nannten vor allem die Kinder aus der naheliegenden Gemeinschaftsunterkunft den Ort „Baustelle", da sich alles noch im Prozess befand, und so blieb die Bezeichnung informell bestehen.

Die Zusammenarbeit mit den lokalen und internationalen Studierenden auf dem Geländer der Stadtwerke mrzn war ebenso ein „work in progress": von der Konstruktion der verschiedenen Interventionen und Objekte, bis zu den gemeinsamen Mahlzeiten und Begegnungen.

Um gemeinsam etwas „zu machen", ist es eine gute Idee, mit einem einfachen und alltäglichen Gegenstand zu beginnen. Während der Fun Fair Marzahn (Multipler Event Berlin) war ein solcher Gegenstand der Einkaufswagen, im Deutschen auch als "Hackenporsche" oder als „Karachi" in Farsi bekannt.

Für den Anfang bietet es sich an, eine Art „Anleitung" oder Bauplan zu entwickeln, der auch als Open Source zur Verfügung gestellt werden kann.

Während des „Making Karachi"-Prozesses experimentierten die Teilnehmer*innen mit verschiedenen Arten des Bauens und der Verwendung von Werkzeugen sowie der Gestaltung der Taschen, die vor Ort zusammengenäht und bemalt wurden.

Gemeinsam etwas zusammen "zu machen" bietet die Möglichkeit, voneinander zu lernen und Wissen auf verschiedenen Ebenen auszutauschen: von Sprache und Kommunikation bis hin zur Verwendung von Werkzeugen und Materialien.

Beim "gemeinsam-machen" kann darüber nachgedacht werden, wie Lernen entsteht: Was ist eine „gute" Lernumgebung? Was ist wichtig, um lernen zu können, und wie hängt die Möglichkeit des gegenseitigen Wissensaustauschs mit der Frage der Solidarität, der Resilienz, der individuellen Verortung und der Verbindung zusammen?

Kochen ist eine weitere Möglichkeit, etwas gemeinsam zu machen und voneinander zu lernen. Während des Multiplier Event in Berlin wurde in Zusammenarbeit mit einer Gruppe afghanischer und moldawischer Frauen, die in der Nähe wohnten, ein gemeinsamer Kochworkshop organisiert. Die Rezepte wurden von ihnen zur Verfügung gestellt und der Prozess der Zubereitung von den Workshop-Teilnehmer*innen angeeignet. Sie legten fest, auf welche Weise die Zutaten zubereitet werden sollten, besprachen die einzelnen Kochschritte und teilten die Aufgaben untereinander auf. Sie zerkleinerten und schnitten, brieten und backten und versorgten somit die Teilnehmer*innen der Veranstaltung in einem Akt der Fürsorge.





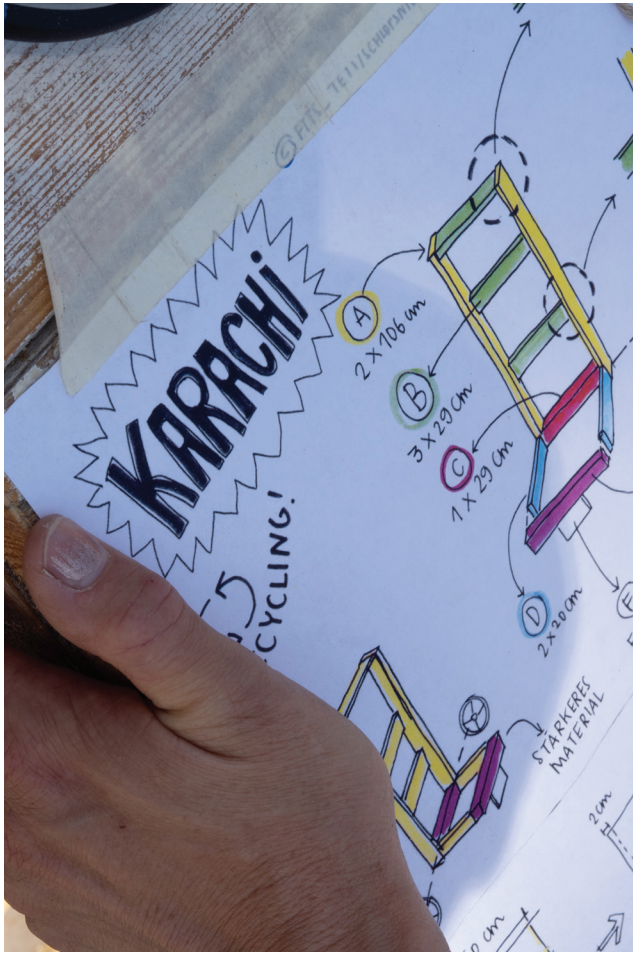
Experimental Building Site Marzahn (Luisa Dürrer, 2021)





Embracing Joy





Making Karachi (Kaspar Jamme / Luis Krummenacher, 2021)





Exchange of knowledge
(Luis Krummenacher / Luisa Dürrer, 2021)

Cooking together (Luis Krummenacher, 2021)
Cooking together (Luisa Dürrer, 2021)



Fostering imagination during the Berlin workshop (Luisa Durrer, 2021)

'Envisioning' begins by recognising that the urban condition is complex and uncertain. No fixed future can consequently exist or, for that matter, be forecasted. Predicting an end state, therefore, becomes an unwarranted objective; rather, a focus on process embraces open-endedness and calls for projective tools that can encourage the coexistence of multiple perspectives. Envisioning is therefore a method for creatively and collaboratively connecting a dynamic, unforecastable, and complex future with a range of strategies and desirable outcomes. It implies an intentional and collective process of engagement with the future.

This process enables a shared vision of the future to emerge through creative acts, especially by means of imaging and discerning. Discerning is linked to deep and non-judgemental listening to the many perspectives that partake in an envisioning process. It helps identify crucial concerns which may not result in a consensus, but can be overlaid with one another. Imaging, on the other hand, refers to the generation of images of a desirable future. Since the future does not exist out there objectively, it can be mobilised to foster creative imagining. Images such as visions or scenarios offer participants a concrete medium to apprehend which actions in the present can engender the future that is being imagined.

For migrating persons, future-making processes such as envisioning can be challenging because of how migration policies create temporal uncertainty over the future. On the other hand, envisioning also has the potential to reconnect participants with their future selves and their driving aspirations. Likewise, building visions or scenarios collaboratively can sustain solidarity movements that support migrants to escape the focus on the present and stop putting their imagined futures on hold.

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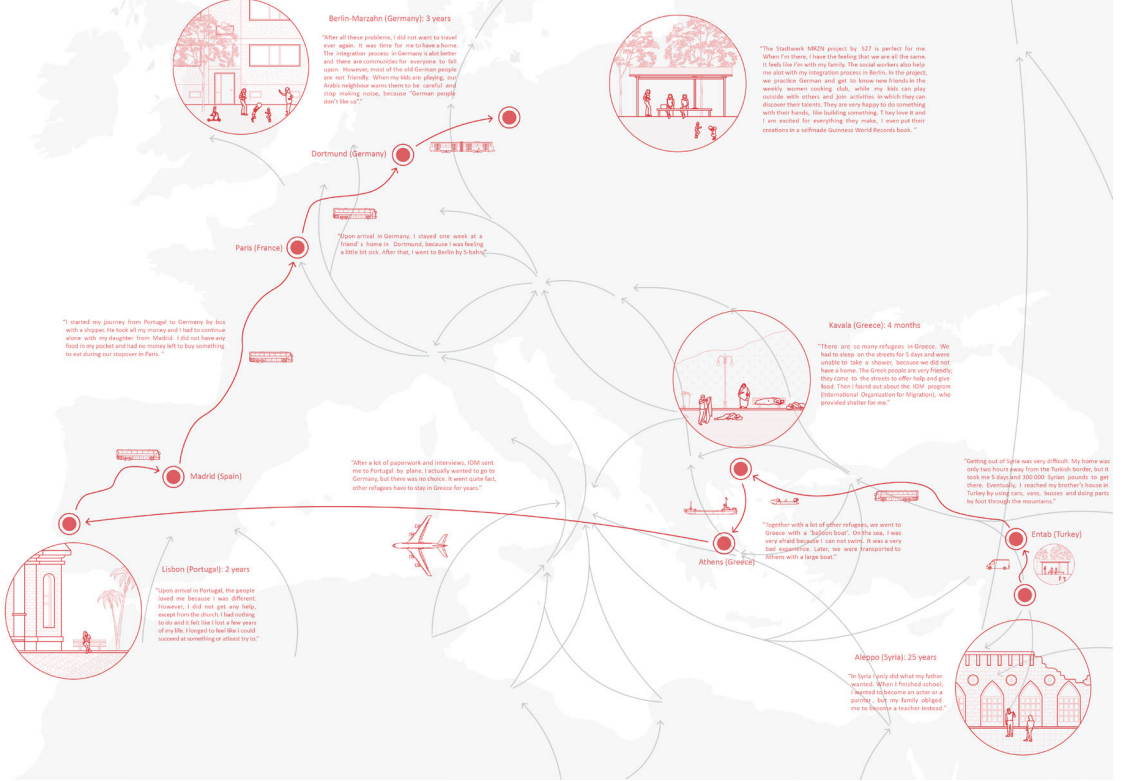
Future-making

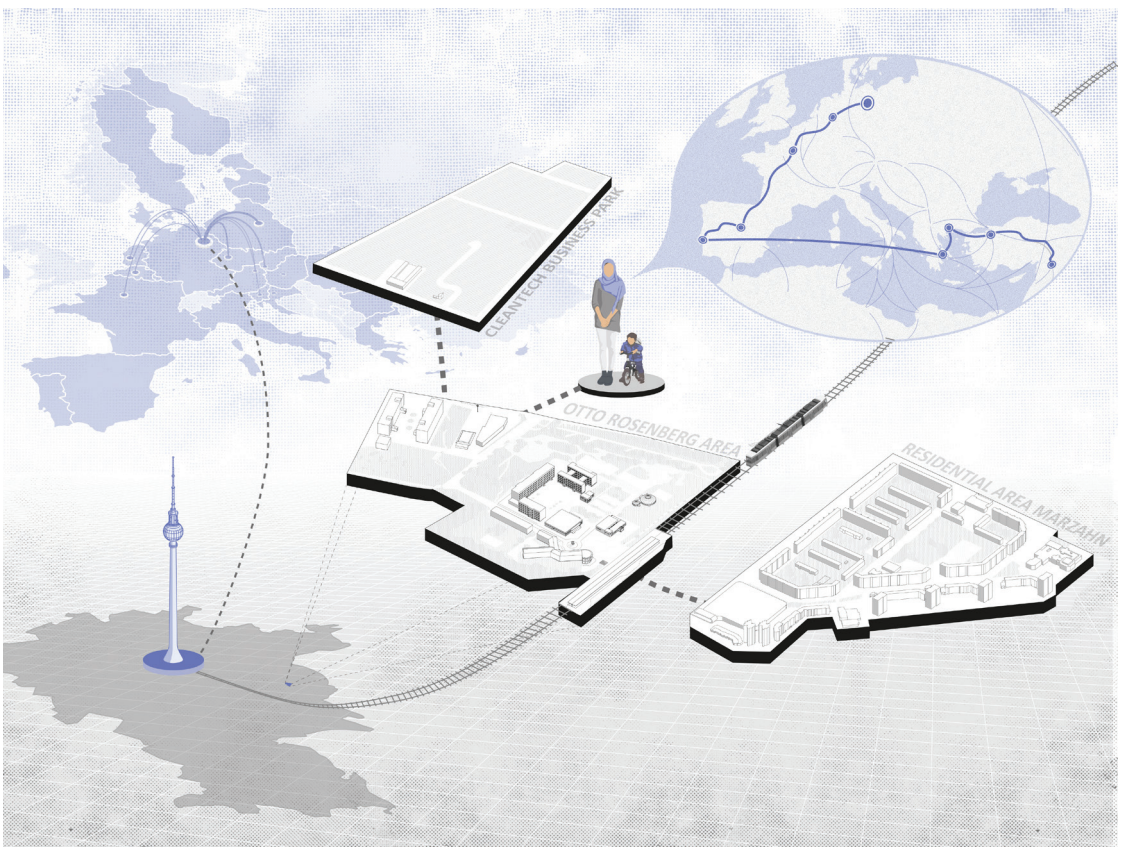
Arthur van Lint and
Brian Van der Zande

Visualising city-making processes helps engage with the future, even when thinking about social, political, cultural and spatial change may seem challenging. When urban projects are constructed collaboratively, displaying the incremental transformation of a site visually opens avenues for thinking about the future not as being out of reach, but as a temporal horizon that can be gradually attained.

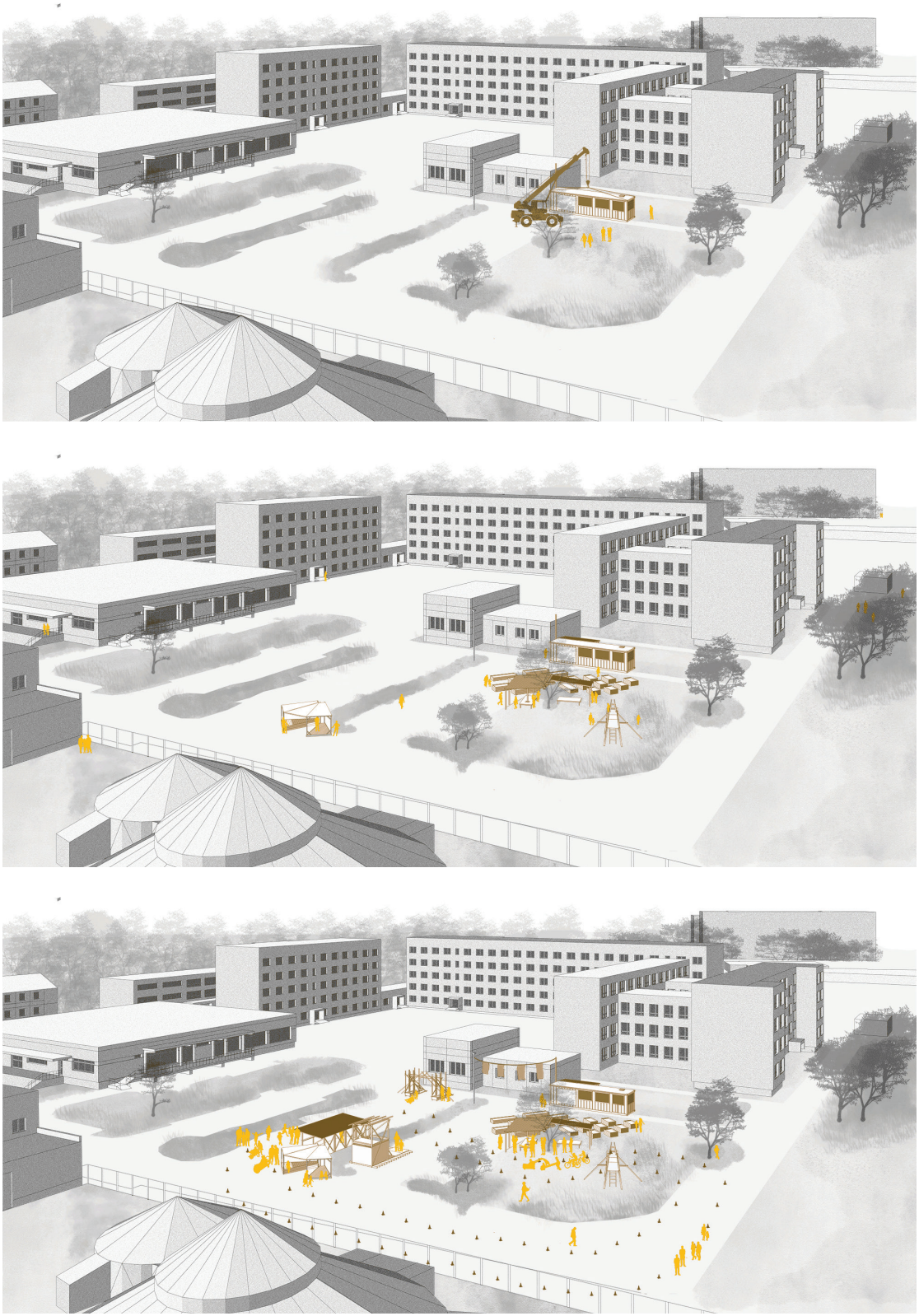
Future-making implies working with time, and for the inhabitants of marginalised neighbourhoods, including migrating persons, this may be complex to do. It is critical to apprehend the time it has taken residents to reach Marzahn, and the requirement to move beyond this urban margin. Taking time into account can support future-making as it connects the past with the effort of participating in the reconfiguration of the time ahead, enacting alternative visions of social rights, belonging and the redistribution of resources.

Scenarios can be mobilised to visualise spatially just futures and show how a site would look like if key questions around inclusion would be prompted. What if the notion of Marzahn as a construction site extends from temporally transforming the residual open space to the surrounding buildings, re-configuring them into social infrastructures of consequence by 2030? What if the lively infrastructure featured in Stadtwerk Marzahn is re-scaled to adapt the existing Plattenbau typology to modify its purely residential nature and accommodate a diversity of residents? What if the discomforting testimonies of current residents are mobilised to dismantle the hostile environment of the homeless accommodation centre and articulate its future transformation, triggering hopeful stories of inhabitation?





Apprehending time
(Arthur van Lint & Brian Van der Zande, 2021)

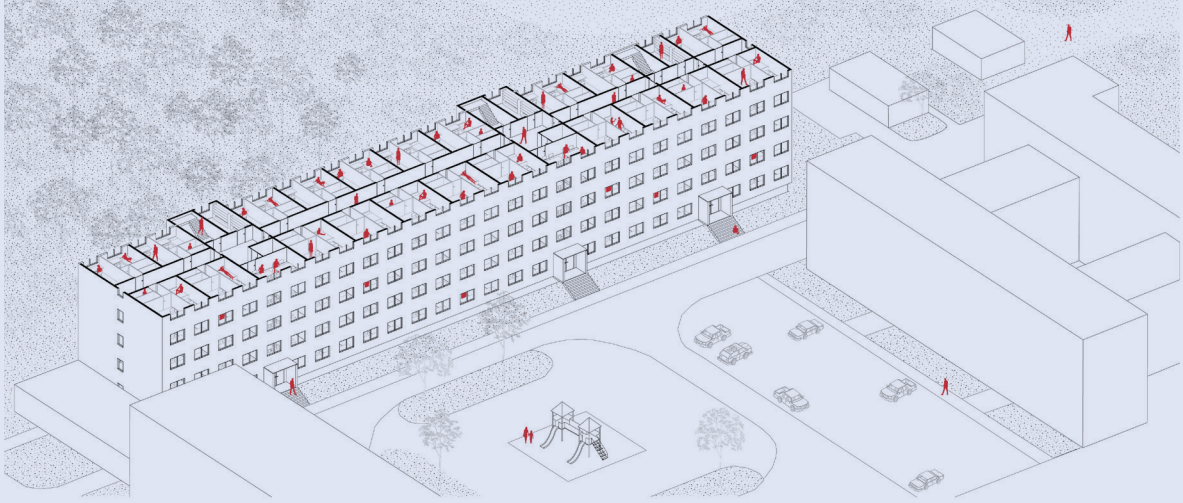


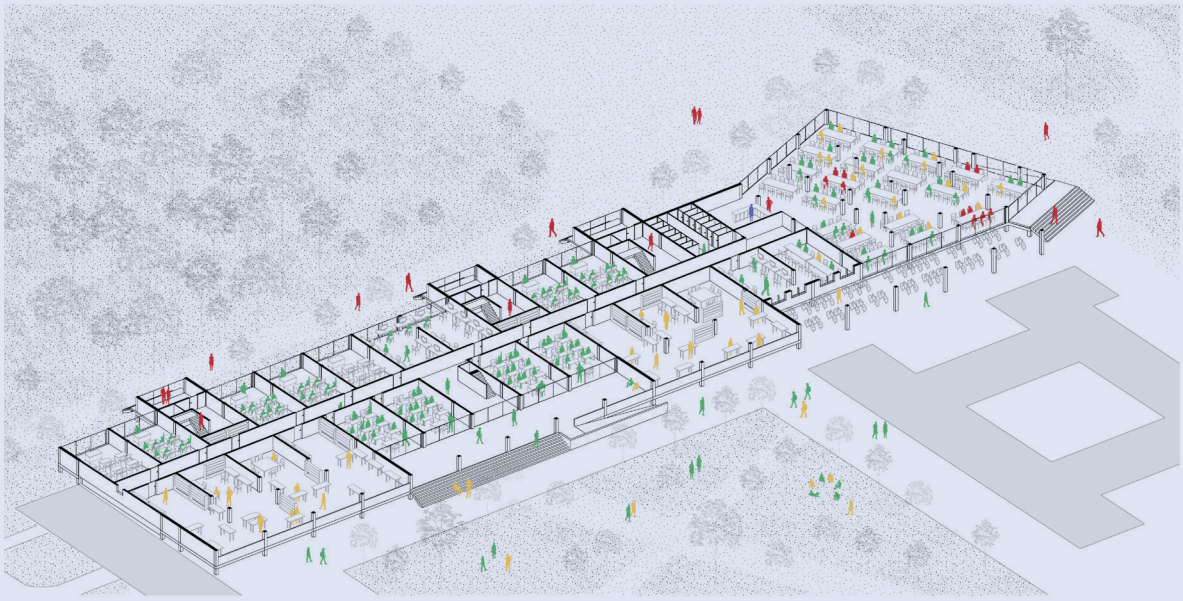
Marzahn as a construction site
(Arthur van Lint & Brian Van der Zande, 2021)

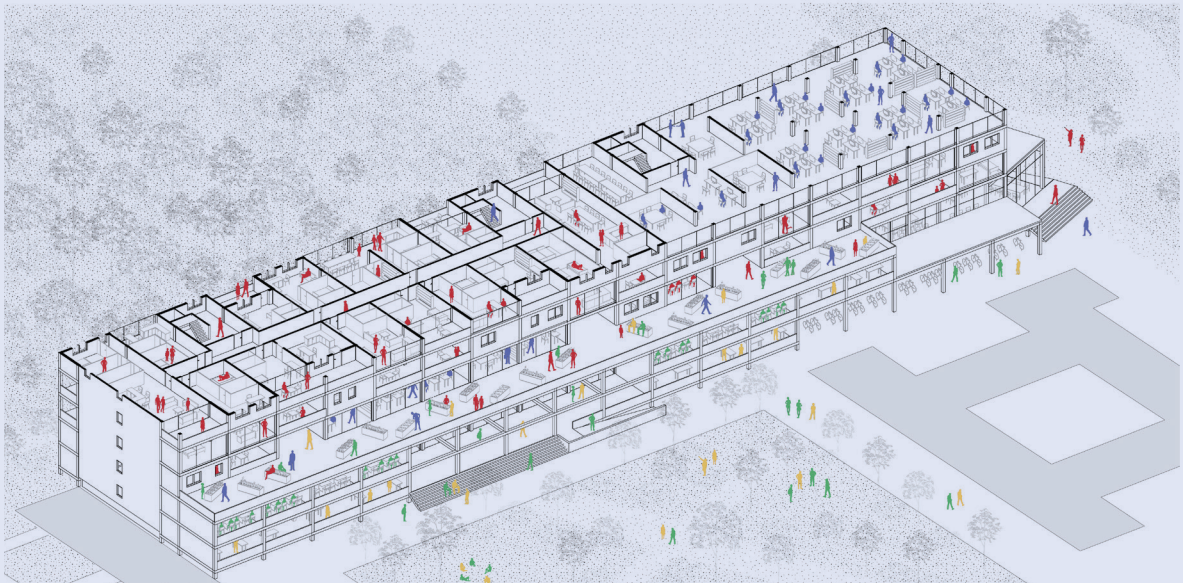




One more step in the incremental transformation
(Arthur van Lint & Brian Van der Zande, 2021)







2020



"It has been three years since I found shelter in this small two bedroom-apartment. I have had mutliple housemates throughout the years, as they always leave as soon as they have enough money to move. I also hope to move one day. The rooms are so small and there is no privacy. Because of the current covid-pandemic, we feel even more packed here."

Arnold (40, Germany)



"When I first arrived here, I was glad to have a roof over my head again. However, this place got boring quickly. Each floor, each corridor, each room looks exactly the same. As someone who loves to express my personality, this place sometimes makes me feel like I'm locked up."

Erika (27, Germany)



"I live in the nearby refugee accommodation and always pass by this building on my way to the weekly cooking workshop with S27. There are always people staring out of their windows and looking at me disapprovingly here. They act as if they have never seen someone with a headscarf before."

Amira (35, Syria)

2025



"I've lived in Marzahn all my life together with my parents and my two older sisters. Because there are so few Gymnasiums nearby, my sisters have to commute to the center of Berlin every day. I am glad that I can just go to school by bike everyday thanks to the opening of this new Gymnasium, that is part of a mixed education system. In the shared playground and in the refectory I get to know people that I probably would have never met otherwise."

Philipp (12, Germany)



"I recently started taking German classes and woodwork workshops with S27 every day to get ready to start working here in Germany in a few years. During the German classes I get to know many other refugees, with whom we exchange our experiences in this new country. In addition, I am happy to finally make some German friends on the playground and in the refectory. They also help me to improve my German even faster!"

Hassan (16, Afghanistan)



"Since the arrival of the new refectory, I eat my lunch there every day. They provide cheap meals for the less fortunate and I finally get to see some different people than my roommate there. After school hours, the playground is available for us as a collective garden, in which I often play a game of football together with others local residents."

Arnold (50, Germany)

2030



"With the placement of the new annexes against the building, I was allowed to choose whether I would prefer a larger flat or a private outdoor space. I also had a say in the layout of the apartment. It is great to be able to set up my own place. Finally, I can really feel at home here. I also think it is very good for my child to grow up in such a multicultural atmosphere."

Erika (42, Germany)



"I recently started my first office job here and couldn't have wished for a more interesting environment. From my desk I have a view of the beautiful nature of the Unkenpfuhle and the surroundings are bustling with life. This building is used by a wide variety of people and I find it very interesting to get to know them in the shared refectory or in the collective vegetable garden."

Lena (24, Poland)



"This is my first home in Germany that I can pay fully by myself. The price was low because I chose to fill in this unit with inexpensive materials and reuse some infill of the previous inhabitant. It is nice to live in an environment with many other migrants, without beign cut off from local society. Someone told me that this area used to be completely excluded a few years ago, which I find hard to believe. People from all over Marzahn come here for the swimming pond, watch tower, educational facilities etc."

Yasmin (29, Iraq)

Scenarios
(Arthur van Lint & Brian Van der Zande, 2021)



Taking a rest during the Berlin workshop
(Niside Panebianco, 2021)

Lucia Caistor-Arendar and Beatrice De Carli

Communication is a relational activity that involves sharing knowledge and information to create a common ground of understanding. It involves being receptive to ideas from others and sensitive to the way that different people might receive information.

Effective communication is crucial for promoting inclusive urban practice. It can amplify the voice of people who would otherwise remain unheard, supporting individuals and communities in expressing their ideas and maintaining control over their narratives. It can also foster dialogue between different groups and institutions, across cultural and other differences.

It is important to acknowledge that communication holds power. Designers must be aware that controlling how stories are told, places are represented, or ideas are expressed, can inadvertently disempower others. Jargon, codified visuals, formal settings, complex models, and apps can become means of exclusion.

In order to broaden participation in city-making, practitioners should think creatively about how they can incorporate ideas from others and create a space for dialogue. This involves providing a range of ways in which individuals can engage with information that is tailored to their unique situations, needs, and aspirations. For instance, combining formal meetings in official buildings with informal meals in community spaces can be a means of fostering inclusion. In addition, communication should evolve based on context and timing. In tense community situations, smaller conversations may be more appropriate than large group discussions to prevent conflicts from escalating or silencing individuals.

Building cooperation is a complex skill that needs to be carefully crafted, but can be achieved through simple embodied rituals that help us to bond, like having a chat and looking one another in the eye. When communication is reframed as a mode of cooperation, it can create space for mutual understanding, curiosity, new imaginations, and productive disagreement.

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Narratives of food and home

Santiago Peluffo Soneyra

The Argentinian author Santiago Peluffo Soneyra collected these stories as part of a campaign documenting the lives of the displaced Latin American community in Elephant and Castle, London. He participated in Practices of Urban Inclusion as a l earner, using his time on the course to reflect on his ongoing work as a journalist and community organiser.

Home

It took me a while to find myself at 'home' in London. Nearly a decade after arriving in the UK, I'm still not sure I would call this city 'home'. But I would say that the first time I was able to share a good round of mate with friends, London started to taste differently.

In the diaspora, this traditional South American-infused drink works as a remedy for nostalgia; mate actually takes a more prominent place in the suitcase than your underwear.

Even though very distant from my hometown, London can feel closer somehow. I reflected on sharing mate with my friend Pilar, who also migrated from Argentina over ten years ago.

During crisp mornings or chilly evenings, we sit in a circle sharing a pumpkin gourd from which we drink some herbs through a metal straw, attracting occasional weird looks from people at the park. For us, sharing these bitter, warm sips means embarking on the most trivial and substantial conversations. "Shall we have some mate?" is a subtle way of saying "Let's spend some time together", or even "I have something to tell you", in a conversation that can last for hours.

One of the legends I like about mate says that, back in the 18th century, indigenous Guaraníes (in nowadays Paraguay) planted yerba mate in the same place where they buried their late relatives. Later, they would harvest the plant and drink mate, passing hands in a circle, so that the spirit of those loved ones passed through to their bodies with the mate leaves.

So, isn't that what we do nowadays in London, 7,000 miles away from our countries of birth? We drink and pass around the mate so that our family and friends are somehow present here with us… at 'home'.

How to drink mate:

* Step 1: Get together with friends/family (acquaintances or even strangers)
* Step 2: Sit down in a circle
* Step 3: Assign one person as the 'cebador/a' (the one who pours the water)
* Step 4: Drink (until you hear the vitally important SLURP sound), then return to the cebador/a -they'll pass it round
* Step 5: Discuss the most trivial or crucial things in life
* Perform steps 4 & 5 simultaneously until you run out of hot water or until it gets too dark.

Aquí estamos

Qué plenitud este ejercicio de caminar, reflexionar y compartir con extraños el barrio (Elephant, cuál otro). Extraños que también extrañan, que no son ajenos ni desconocidos sino que conocen muy bien la historia. Historia de un Elefante viejo y machucado, pero que -como buen elefante- tiene excelente memoria. Memoria que los hombres blancos de traje negro intentan borrar y que algunxs migrantes entusiastas, de varios colores, geografías y religiones nunca van a olvidar. Para no caer en el olvido ni en la invisibilidad, junto con este grupo de extraños -que en dos horas se vuelven comunidad- caminamos y pensamos. Qué había antes aquí; qué hay ahora; qué habrá mañana...

Por qué nos hicieron creer que se habían ido de acá; por qué me vengo a enterar que casi todos siguen por acá cerquita: ahí al frente, mismito saliendo de la estación. Si, mijo, claro que las mejores arepas venezolanas están ahí a la vuelta; ¿Cómo así que usted hace 20 años que vive en el área y apenas cae en la cuenta de que si América latina es un continente, Elephant & Castle sigue siendo su capital en el mundo?

¿Y el Castillo? Al Castillo lo tumbaron, pero... "Aquí estamos, siempre estamos / No nos fuimos, no nos vamos / Aquí estamos.. pa' que te recuerde".



At home (Santiago Peluffo Soneyra, 2021)



Empanadas si, hipsters no! (Santiago Peluffo Soneyra, 2021)

Reflecting



Collective reflection during the Berlin workshop
(Luisa Durrer, 2021)

Beatrice De Carli and Stefano Pontiggia

Reflective practice is the art of examining our actions to learn from past experiences and inform future decisions. This collaborative and circular process recognises that our positions and actions are constantly evolving, rather than aiming for fixed outcomes. It requires openness to new ideas, creativity, and a double-layered approach to reflection: on-action and in-action. According to Donald Schön's work on reflective practice, reflection in-action involves analysing experiences in real-time; while reflection on-action emphasises reflecting on past experiences.

In critical urban practice, this type of reflection is essential throughout the engagement process, whether it is with a site, issue, group of residents, or network of practitioners, to continually examine how we position ourselves and assess the ethics, relevance and effectiveness of our interactions with others.

In the context of migration, adopting a reflective stance involves acknowledging one's own position and the positions of others within the larger societal context. This requires both practitioners and scholars to engage in meaningful conversations about privilege and discrimination, as well as explore individual biases, assumptions, and generalisations. It serves as a reminder to prioritise the voices of those who have direct experience with migration, actively listening to personal stories and, among others, asking questions about how each person understands their own position and identifies in terms of ethnicity and race, gender, class, and other aspects of their identity.

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Ways of seeing together

Lucia Caistor-Arendar

In his seminal text, Ways of Seeing (2008) John Berger writes: “To touch something is to situate oneself in relation to it”. Reflection allows us to be in touch with our thoughts and actions, and helps us recognise how our experiences, backgrounds and ideas shape the way we perceive and interact with the world around us.

Throughout the Practices of Urban Inclusion programme, reflection was a fundamental component explored in various formats. Some learners used learning journals as a space for individual reflection.

During live workshops, it was emphasised that reflection - with a site, issue, group of residents, or network of practitioners - is crucial throughout the engagement process, to continually question our positions and assess the relevance of our interactions with others.

For the Milan workshop, groups used a ‘research wall’ as a framework for collecting data, fostering critical thinking, and independent judgement. In Berlin, making and eating food became an important way to rest and reflect with community members in a more informal setting.

In the context of place, reflection can be seen as a process of creative destruction, where mistakes, assumptions, and discomforts are embraced to challenge our existing understanding of a place. This crisis can lead to new ways of seeing and imagining alternative futures.

As one of the learners wrote when reflecting on the course, “I felt a truly genuine will to share opinions and knowledge among the learners, teachers, practitioners, in the spirit of creating something new, a common ground.” (Participant reflection from PoUI participant survey, 2021)



Milan workshop (Niside Panebianco, 2021)



Reflection during the Milan workshop (Niside Panebianco, 2021)



The research wall at Off Campus (Nisida Panebianco, 2021)



Stadtwerk cooking (Luisa Durrer, 2021)

Stories of Learning

As discussed in the opening essay of this book section, our pedagogical approach is inherently relational and informed by various programmes and projects that explore how critical learning occurs in and through the city. This section presents a collection of stories from teaching and learning initiatives that inspired us as we developed the Practices of Urban Inclusion programme. Each initiative is different in nature and location, yet focuses on mobility and migration as a generative viewpoint for engaging with the city and its inhabitants in innovative ways. They do so from a situated and ethically grounded perspective, while developing in partnership with academic and non-academic organisations and incorporating creative, critical, and reflective elements into the curriculum.

Examples include the work of Architecture Sans Frontières UK and the Office of Displaced Designers, as well as university-based explorations in Delft, London, Milan, and Petra. The migration experiences covered in these examples are broad, ranging from the history of the African-Caribbean diaspora in the UK to contemporary migration routes weaving together Pakistan, Turkey, and Central Europe. The examples provided are not exhaustive but rather reflect our position and the networks of dialogue and collaboration that have nurtured this book.

Change by Design Johannesburg

Beatrice De Carli

Change by Design Johannesburg is an action-learning programme that aims to contribute to advancing the right to adequate housing in Johannesburg. It was created through a partnership between not-for-profit design organisations Architecture Sans Frontières UK (ASF-UK) and 1to1 Agency of Engagement, along with other stakeholders both in South Africa and the UK. The programme specifically works with residents of informally occupied buildings and informal settlements in inner city Johannesburg to document housing deprivations and amplify their housing claims.

The programme began in 2023 with a one-week workshop that focused on places dealing with inadequate housing conditions and the risk of displacement. The aim was to support local residents and their organisations in creating fairer living conditions in the inner city, exploring how community-led design and planning can help advance residents' right to adequate housing. The workshop was based on ASF-UK's community-led design and planning methodology, Change by Design, which has four stages: diagnosis, dreaming, developing, and defining. These stages facilitate co-design activities at three scales: micro (home), meso (neighbourhood), and macro (city).

The workshop engaged closely with two inner city sites: a group of informally occupied buildings called Bertrams, and an informal settlement named Jumper. Through walks, conversations, and mapping and design exercises, the workshop documented the diverse experiences of residents living in these areas, including South African citizens as well as many 'foreign nationals'. The workshop highlighted how exclusion from the right to housing plays out for residents of different nationalities, languages, ethnicities, abilities, support networks, and entitlements in law and policy. It was an important reminder of how migration intersects with other social identities, and the challenge of fostering deep inclusiveness in community-led planning initiatives.

Credits

An initiative by: Architecture Sans Frontières UK (ASF-UK) and 1 to1 – Agency of Engagement

Supported by: International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

In collaboration with: Asivikelane Network, Inner city Resource Centre (ICRC), Oskhotheni Network, Planact, Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI)



Transect walk with grassroots organisers in Bertrams (ASF-UK, 2023)

JEANLAW COURT



Documenting life in informally occupied buildings (Clare Chappel for ASF-UK, 2024)

Office of Displaced Designers

Shareen Elnaschie
(translation by Aikaterini Anastasiou)

The Office of Displaced Designers (ODD) is a creative organisation that uses design to bring diverse people together to share skills. We undertake research and co-design that focuses primarily on the built environment, protection issues, and cultural expression. ODD was established in 2016, emerging from the context of the so-called 'European refugee crisis' on the Greek island of Lesvos; a beautiful landmass close to Türkiye and a key crossing point for many individuals seeking safety.

Our methodology is largely project-based, allowing us to be adaptive to needs and priorities as they shift. We are also highly collaborative and undertake projects with support from diverse partners, including INGOs, private foundations, educational institutions, and individuals.

From our previous design studio in Mytilene, the capital of Lesvos, we hosted a variety of workshops, including documentary filmmaking (with Oxfam Novib) and sound mapping and cyanotype photography (with MetaLab(at)Harvard). We undertook creative research, ran a creative mentoring programme, and supported artist residencies. In collaboration with the Danish Red Cross, we also designed and led a community-based construction skills training programme to deliver an outdoor cinema and shared social spaces adjacent to the infamous Moria Camp. Since the pandemic, our work has expanded to include digital research, formal education, and design-build workshops both online and in Türkiye that include a range of partners, including Umeå University and Tiafi Community Centre in Izmir.

Through our work, we aim to challenge common misconceptions of people who have been 'displaced' or 'marginalised', foster inclusion of displaced and marginalised designers in the industry, and champion trauma-informed design practices to promote wellbeing and healing.



Live build workshop for Tiafi Rooftop project with Tiafi Community Centre, Umeå University, and British Academy (Office of Displaced Designers, 2017).



Outdoor cinema seating in Olive Grove Recreation Space with Danish Red Cross (Office of Displaced Designers, 2017).

Crossing Cultures

Rita Adamo, Sandra Denicke-Polcher,
Jane McAllister

Since 2016, La Rivoluzione delle Seppie collective has been facilitating a cultural exchange project between UK university students and residents of Belmonte Calabro in Italy. The project aims to promote dialogue and discussion on migration while providing opportunities for skill development, job opportunities, and rooting in the territory.

Dal 2016 il collettivo La Rivoluzione delle Seppie porta avanti un progetto di mobilità e scambio culturale tra studenti provenienti da alcune università londinesi e gli abitanti del piccolo comune di Belmonte Calabro. L'obiettivo è di attivare occasioni di dialogo e confronto sui temi della migrazione, promuovendo al contempo lo sviluppo di nuove competenze, opportunità lavorative e occasioni di radicamento al territorio. Il progetto, che prevede delle residenze note come «Studio South» dedicate a studenti di architettura, è stato parte dell›iniziativa di ricerca «Crossing Cultures» della London Metropolitan University. Attraverso eventi di architettura partecipata, sopralluoghi e attività di apprendimento sul campo, Studio South ha lavorato con alcuni rifugiati e con la popolazione locale per sensibilizzare e re-immaginare i loro ambienti di vita, da un punto di vista spaziale e materico.

La Calabria è conosciuta come un›area di forte immigrazione e spopolamento rurale, che necessita un ripensamento di strategie e metodi per la riattivazione dei luoghi. Il ruolo di Studio South è stato dunque quello di costruire, attraverso una serie sopralluoghi e attività esplorative, un rapporto di fiducia con la popolazione locale, suggerendo nuove possibilità spaziali e materiche e aprendo una riflessione sui temi legati al territorio calabrese. Durante questa esperienza, gli studenti di architettura hanno avuto l'occasione di crescere da un punto di vista professionale e personale, e di sperimentare nuovi metodi per praticare l›architettura.

Con il supporto di La Rivoluzione delle Seppie e dei tutor della London Metropolitan University, nel 2020 dieci studenti hanno attivato per tre mesi una residenza nel piccolo comune, durante il lockdown della pandemia di Covid-19. Questa esperienza ha fatto emergere l'importanza del comprendere i valori culturali, sociali e materiali di un territorio e di creare relazioni di fiducia con i suoi abitanti, per esplorare nuovi strumenti progettuali e attivare il cambiamento. Nel 2022, questo progetto è diventato un›offerta formativa innovativa e finanziata, che offre agli studenti l›opportunità di risiedere nel piccolo comune di Belmonte Calabro sviluppando i loro progetti come membri integranti della comunità locale.



Sketching at the Casa (Sandra Deniche-Polcker, 2019)



Casa celebrations (London Metropolitan University, unknown date)

Post-anthropocenic landscapes in Gwadar

Nishat Awan

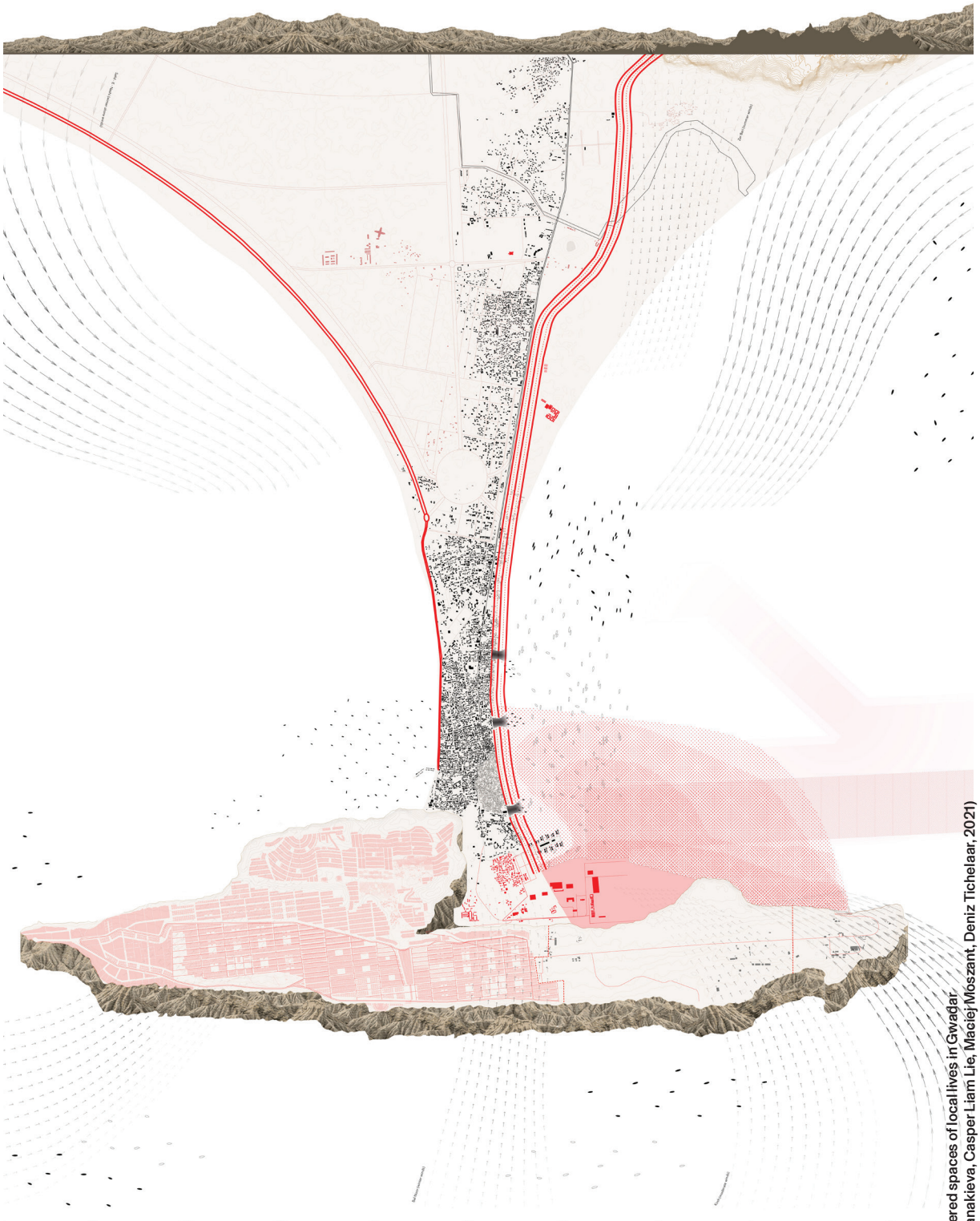
The studio sought to address the relationship between architecture and displacement as a series of complex entanglements that produced particular spatial and social conditions. Rather than addressing the aftermath of migration, by focusing on refugee camps or migrant communities in urban centres, we were interested in displacement and unsettlement as an ongoing persistent circulation of people, things, ecologies, relations, and so on. During the forced immobility of the Covid-19 pandemic, we addressed these issues at the Pakistan-Iran border, focusing on the city of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea coast. Since it is not possible for students from a European university to travel here, we took this remote condition as an opportunity to work with a place we would not normally have been able to.

The students worked with material I had gathered through my extensive field visits in the area, which included interviews, informal meetings, mappings made with local people, and information on development plans. The group work consisted of producing two large scale maps (1.8m x 1.8m) that synthesised aspects of displacement. The first showed the infrastructural and extractive territories produced through the movements and flows across borders. It addressed the way the land and sea were coming to be viewed as repositories of resources to be extracted, or spaces only for the facilitation of exchange and trade. These were overlaid on the top-down, Chinese-led development in the area that has cordoned off land, restricted access to the sea, and disrupted local livelihoods. A second map zoomed into the area around Gwadar town, which is situated on the thin arm of a hammerhead peninsula. This map shows in detail how the planned and already built developments were producing bordered spaces and disrupting local lives. Together, the maps revealed the entanglements of logistics, infrastructural development, extractive landscapes, toxic flows, local paths, fishing routes, informal trade and older connections across the Indian Ocean. These served as a basis for individual projects that imagined architectural interventions that responded to conflictual and often highly unequal relationships, imagining projects that might support local lives, such as a hub for the fishing community, or a utopian, semi-autonomous community of oil traders along the border.

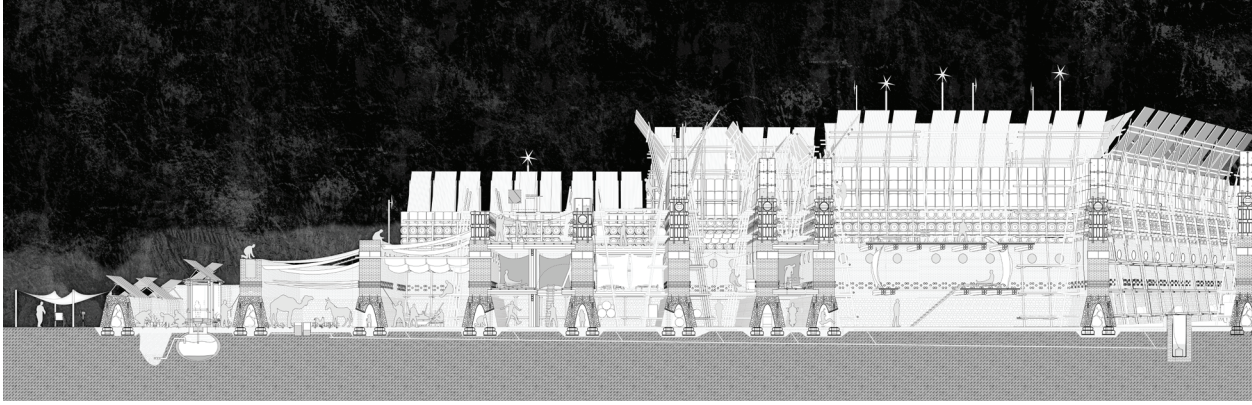
Credits

Studio led by Nishat Awan

Part of the Graduation studio of the Borders & Territories group: Border conditions along the New Silk Road; Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft



The bordered spaces of local lives in Gwadar
(Kalina Yanakieva, Casper Liam Lie, Maciej Mòszant, Deniz Tichelaar, 2021)




محمد خان چاچا پیٹرولیم سروس
ماشاءاللہ
اللہ
محمد
واللہ خیر الرازقین

Section through the self-organised border community (Maciej Moszant, 2021)

Oil trading at the border (Maciej Moszant, 2021)

Mutually useful pedagogies

Aya Musmar

A workshop in Al-Mafraq, Jordan developed design interventions for Covid-19's impact on the city, home to many Syrian refugees. Participants included architecture students and Syrian and Jordanian participatory action researchers. The workshop promoted collaboration and joint consideration of the interventions' timelines, highlighting the interconnectedness of knowledge between different groups.

جمعت ورشة العمل هذه طلاب الهندسة المعمارية الجامعيين وباحثين سوريين وأردنيين في العمل التشاركي (PARs) للمشاركة في تطوير أساليب التصميم التي يمكن أن تعالج آثار كوفيد-١٩ على مدينة المفرق في الأردن. تقع مدينة المفرق بالقرب من الحدود الشمالية للأردن وتستضيف عددًا كبيرًا من اللاجئين السوريين الذين يعيشون في المدينة منذ أكثر من عشر سنوات. نتيجة لهذا النزوح بطرق متعددة، تعطلت بشكل كبير سبل عيش كل من المجتمع المضيف الأردني واللاجئين السوريين بسبب الوباء. تم تنظيم الورشة في الجامعة وتناولت عدة أسئلة مثل «ما الذي لا نعرفه عن المفرق؟ ماذا نستطيع ان نفعل؟ وكيف يمكن جعل التدخلات الحضرية مفيدة؟»

تم التخطيط لورشة العمل بحيث تجتاز المسارات التي خاضوها الطلاب والباحثين في العمل التشاركي (الPARs) خلال أبحاثهم الفردية. إنها تهتم بأخلاقيات الرعاية النسوية، وبالتالي تحشد المعرفة الموجودة لكل مجموعة وتعترف بالترابط المعرفي القائم بينها. وفي وقت انعقاد ورشة العمل، كان الطلاب والPARs يعملون وفقًا لجداول زمنية مختلفة، وكانوا يجمعون البيانات على فترات زمنية مختلفة. تعامل الطلاب مع مدينة المفرق كنموذج تساؤل للوحدة الجامعية «التخطيط والتصميم الحضري» وكان من المتوقع منهم تقديم مقترح تصميم يتناول منطقة مختارة في المدينة. تم تدريب الـ PARs على أساليب البحث الاجتماعي وأخلاقياته، وكان من المتوقع منهم تصميم مداخلة ضغيرة الحجم, تدعم سبل عيش الناس في المدينة.

كان هدف ورشة العمل هو تجميع وتقاطع الأفكار حول المداخلتين وتسهيل الوسائل البحثية التي تعتبر هذه التقاطعات. ومع ذلك، فإن هذا التقاطع يمثل تحديًا. في حين كان يُنظر الـPARs إلى المداخلة على أنه «إجراء» تجريبي قصير المدى؛ في التصميم الحضري، غالبا ما يتم اقتراحه كمشروع طويل الأجل. ولكن من الناحية المعرفية، كان هذا لصالح هدف ورشة العمل. لا تغير ورشة العمل الالتزامات الادبية التي يحملها كل من المجموعة في أبحاثهم، وانما بعد ورشة العمل، استأنفت كل مجموعة مساراتها المنفردة. اعتمدت قيمة ورشة العمل على كيفية استضافتها لمحادثة دعت إلى التفكير المشترك حول التوقيتات المحتملة للمداخلات.

Workshop participants (Aya Musmar, 2021)

Mapping activities (Aya Musmar, 2021)

Sheffield Otherwise

Catalina Ortiz

Official heritage sites, narratives and archives often reproduce and reinforce heteropatriarchal and racist assumptions. To contest these oppressions, the collaborative project Sheffield Otherwise explored the legacies and stories of diaspora and queer communities as part of Sheffield's living heritage. The MSc Building and Urban Design in Development of University College London partnered with Resolve Collective, an interdisciplinary design collective, and two local community organisations in Sheffield: SADACCA, a historical African-Caribbean community centre; and Gut Level, a queer-led DIY collective that focuses on dance music, club culture and the surrounding communities. Through a learning alliance, we engaged in a research-based design project focusing on communities that have been left out of official narratives, urban policies, and public space representation.

We traced the continuities of Caribbean diasporic practices of care and memory, and of queer do-it-yourself spaces around joy and sound. We used counter-archiving and counter-mapping methodologies to co-create urban design strategies with our partners. By documenting and disseminating their living heritage, we revealed our partners' connections with places and their roles as drivers, rather than objects, of urban interventions. Strategies for the enhancement of SADDACA's infrastructure built on their practice of care through food, storytelling, and memory keeping by adapting the Wicker Building as the living archive of the Caribbean diaspora legacy in Sheffield. Strategies for Gut Level focused on linking the collective's experience of place with digital spaces to expand the do-it-yourself culture around queer joy and to strengthen their livelihoods. Overall, Sheffield Otherwise furthered design as a platform to creatively strategise urban transformations that engage explicitly with the struggles and debates around decolonial design and racial justice.

Credits

Project Coordinators: Dr Catalina Ortiz, Dr Natalia Villamizar, Dr Giorgio Talocci (Module Leaders) with Laia Garcia Fernandez, Nihal Hafez, Jhono Bennett (Teaching Assistants)

Project Partners: Katie Matthews (Gut Level), Rob Cotterell and Ella Barrett (SADACCA), Akil Scafe-Smith and Seth Scafe-Smith (Resolve Collective)

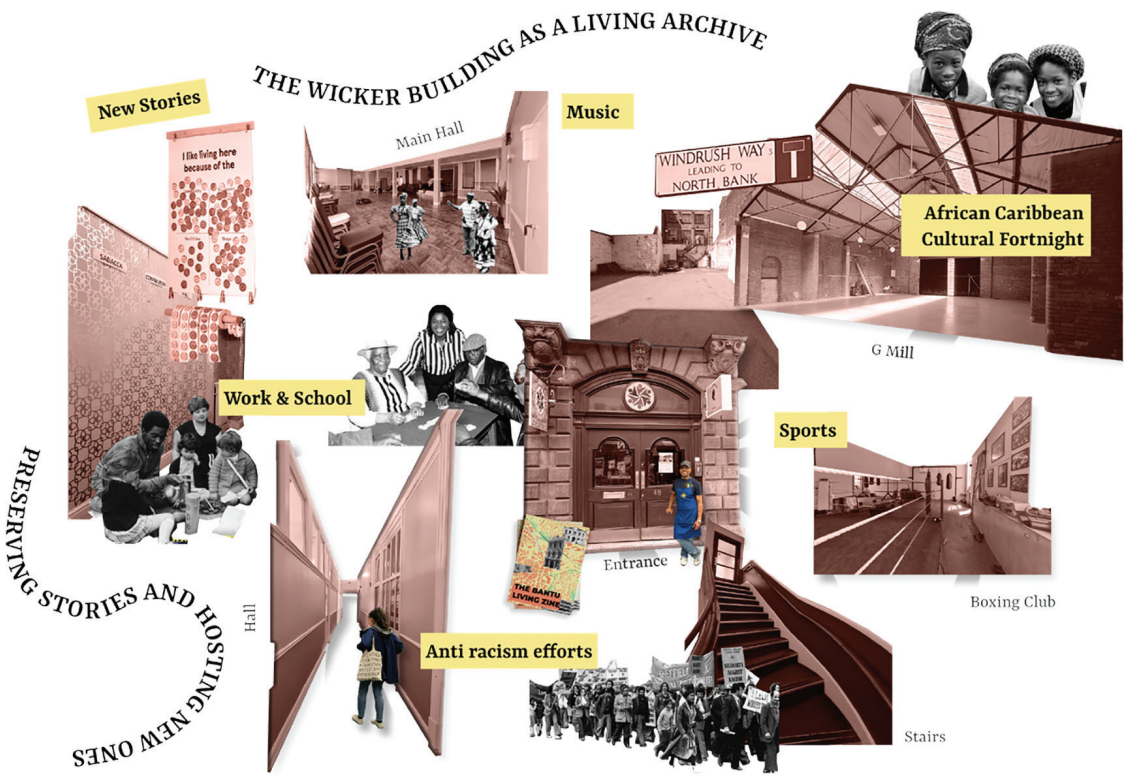
Collaborators: ARCSheffield project team

Funders: University College London, The Bartlett Development Planning Unit and Centre for Critical Heritage Studies





Sheffield Otherwise in action (University College London, 2022)



Representing SADACCA (University College London, 2022)

89 Luoghi

Francesca Piredda

In 2017, Politecnico di Milano partnered with non-profit organisations Nuovo Armenia and Asnada to co-host the workshop series: 100 Places. Participants explored questions related to living, disorientation, migration, and rooting. They also created miniatures made from waste materials, each representing important places from their past and present.

Nel 2015 le associazioni Nuovo Armenia e Asnada vincono un bando del Comune di Milano per riqualificare una cascina nella periferia nord-est di Milano. Il campus Bovisa del Politecnico di Milano si trova nelle vicinanze. Nel 2017 ImagisLab (Dipartimento di Design, Politecnico di Milano) vince il Bando Territoriale Fondazione Cariplo con il progetto Cascina 9 (cascina9.polimi.it), in partenariato con Nuovo Armenia e Asnada. L'obiettivo è di innescare sinergie virtuose tra attori del territorio con competenze eterogenee. I beneficiari identificati dal progetto includino rifugiati studenti di italiano (Asnada), studenti di design (Scuola del Design, Politecnico di Milano), operatori culturali, abitanti del territorio.

Fra le attività di progetto, il "Laboratorio 100 Luoghi": otto incontri (Marzo-Maggio 2019, presso il Campus Bovisa del Politecnico di Milano) hanno posto ai partecipanti domande su abitare e spaesamento, essenziale e superfluo, migrazione e radicamento quali necessità e desideri di ogni essere umano. I partecipanti sono trentasei persone nate in dodici paesi diversi (quindici studenti e quattro insegnanti della scuola di italiano Asnada con quindici studenti della Scuola del Design e due ricercatrici del Dipartimento di Design, un architetto professionista). Il risultato include miniature realizzate con materiali di scarto, relative a luoghi importanti del proprio passato e presente e incisioni, relative a una tappa intermedia (il viaggio, un momento di passaggio e trasformazione).

In Maggio 2019, la mostra "89 Luoghi," curata da Giacomo Borella, ha costruito una geografia affettiva: una mappa del mondo e una mappa di Milano collettori delle miniature mostravano singoli percorsi e loro intrecci. Insieme formavano un'unica grande installazione-paesaggio comune, ma anche una riflessione sull'errare, sui modi e i tempi in cui viviamo.





Workshop series: "100 Places": Miniature of a place from the past (Matteo D'Antonio, 2019)





Exhibition "89 places" (Matteo D'Antonio, 2019)


20 MAY
Desinc
DESIGN & INCLUSIONE
FUN FAIR
SYMPOSIUM
COMMUNITY COOKING
REBECCA WALL
CARLA SCHWARZ
ANNA PICCOLI
MAKING HACKENPORSCHE
TODOSCH SCHLOPSNIES
KATJA SCHMIDT
WALKING
KATHRIN WILDNER
KATHARINA ROHDE
GRAPHIC-RECORDING
FEDERICA TETI
MÄRZ
STADTWERK
WELCOME.
COME IN
NAVIGATION
DIVERSITY
IMAGINATION
COOPERATION
ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL
FUTURE
WIE SIEHT ES AUS?
WIE KANN EINE INSTITUTION GASTGEBERIN FÜR DIVERSITÄT WERDEN?
SPACE FOR LEARNING
GOING OUT
MARZAHN
BERLIN
STADTWERK
S27
KOOPERATION
NGO
UNI
ZUSAMMEN KOMMEN!
LEARNING BY DOING TOGETHER!
BAUSTELLE
SPACE EXPERIMENT
COMMUNITY
COMMUNI
WAS LERNE
FREEKEH
MAKIN
HACKEN
WAS NEHME
WORKSHOPS = EXPERIMENTING
OUTDOOR WORKSHOP
SEMINARE
GEHEN
WALKING
UNTERWEGS SEIN
A
B
WAS PASSIERT ZWISCHEN A & B?
HABE ICH DIE RICHTIGE SCHUHE AN?
DEMO
WER LEBT HIER?
WHO LIVES HERE?
HOW MANY PEOPLE LIVE HERE?
SHELTER
SPACE OF ENCOUNTER ???
PUBLIC SPACE?
Bei MC DONALD'S ???
AN DEN UNTERKUNFT VORBEI
LIKE THIS?
STROLLING
FLANIEREN
Dérive
Dada
CULTURAL PRACTICE
WALKING AS RESISTENCE
TRAMPELPFAD
WONACH RIECHT ES?
SMELL
WHAT IS "Unke"?
MAP
WOHIN?
TRANSIT
WER IST UNS ENTGEGEN GEKOMMEN?
S-BAHN
ZAUN
NOISE
MEMORIAL
City
WAS NEHMEN WIR MIT?
SAMMELT FUNDSTÜCKE!
SUGGESTIONS
WHAT DO YOU
172


TY COOKING
N WIR BEIM KOCHEN
MÖHRE
Too BIG
zu groß für den Grill
"SINCE THE CAFETERIA CLOSED"
SCHLECHTE LAUNE
MANCHMAL UNTERZUCKERT
MAYBE A FOOD TRUCK
„ICH ESSE TOTAL GERNE"
ONIONS
INFORNARE
BABAGANOUSH
DAS FEUER AUF DER LINKE SEITE
SPANNEND
DA HATTEN WIR EIN...
DECKEL DRAUF!
PIZZA SCHIEBER
e in italiano?
SICH VOM OFEN ENTFERNEN
AKKU
KARACHI
SALSA
SOSSE
SUGO
SPRICHST DU ENGLISCH?
DAS IST SUPER!
NEIN, PERSISCH!
IPORSCHE
N WIR MIT?
A 2 x 106 cm
B 3 x 29 cm
C 1 x 29 cm
D
E
F
DO IT TOGETHER
SCHNIPPELN
STADTPLANUNG
KUNST
DAS BESTE IST
PROJECT
IT'S BURNING YOU
COOL
GOOD JOB
VERBRANNT?
VERBRANDT ENBURG
ZITRONE DRAUF!
ROSMARIN
THYMIAN
from our garden
ZU SALZIG
GRILL
ist es so ok?
A LITTLE BIT.
FEST!
IS IT FITTING?
ES IST ZU FEST
EIN MINI BISSCHEN
SPACE FOR DISCUSSIONS
NOCH EINE REIN!
NICHT GANZ GERADE
REIN? RAUS?
RECYCLING
KLEMME
BAG
HIER
HIER
das ist LEINWAND!
MIT DER HAND
SHADOW
FOOD IS READY!
WHAT IS THIS?
AMAZING
VEGETARIAN
MORE PLS!
WOW
173

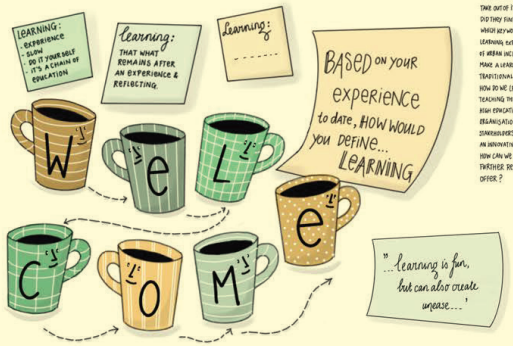
PRACTICES URBAN INCLUSION

AN EXPERIENCE IN INNOVATIVE TEACHING

DESINC LIVE

DESIGNING & LEARNING IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION

MULTIPLIER EVENT 05·04·22 MILANO



DEFINING LEARNING: A FIRST CONCEPTUALISATION

Paola Corti, Alessandra Tomasini – METID - Politecnico di Milano

GOALS OF THE EVENT...

HOW DID LEARNERS EXPERIENCE THE COURSE. PROFESSOR AMONG THE PROJECT ? WHAT DID THEY TAKE OUT OF IT, WHAT INNOVATIVE FEATURES DID THEY FIND IN IT?

WHICH KEYWORDS BEST DESCRIBE (AGAINST) LEARNING EXPERIENCES SUCH AS THE PRACTICES OF URBAN INCLUSION COURSE ? WHAT FEATURES MAKE A LEARNING EXPERIENCE DIFFERENT FROM TRADITIONAL, ACADEMIC TEACHING FORMATS?

HOW DO WE (RE)THINK THE EVOLUTION OF TEACHING THROUGH THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN HIGH EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS & CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS? HOW TO BEST ENGAGE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS IN THEIR ROLE AS CO-AUTHORS IN AN INNOVATIVE LEARNING PATH?

HOW CAN WE CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR FURTHER REPLICATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL OFFER ?

1. CIAO





learning "Reflecting Together"



MANIFESTO

- LEARNING TOGETHER
- UN-LEARNING
- IMAGINING POSSIBLE FUTURES
- ACTING IN SPACE
- UNSETTLING HIERARCHIES
- EMBRACING JOY
- EMBRACING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS
- MAKING SPACE FOR DIVERSITY

AWARENE

THE ROO

DESINC LIVE

3. LEARNERS SHARE

with Lucia Ludovici and Maria Elena Ponno, DESINC LIVE learners – Politecnico di Milano

- WHAT'S OUR ROLE ? ...IN SHAPING INCLUSIVE URBAN PRACTICES. DESIGNING MORE EQUITABLE CITIES...
- HOW TO become A PROFESSIONAL WHO'S REALLY AWARE ?

NEW SKILLS

LEARNING PROCESS

- COURSE FREE RYTHM
- MULTIDISCIPLINARITY & INTERDISCIPLINARITY value of each different... & BACKGROUND
- HORIZONTALITY SHARE & SELFMANAGEMENT
- VARIETY CONTENTS WORKSHOPS ON/OFF LINE REFLECTIONS & PROVOCATIONS



OUTPUT



- Free Style Reflection on inclusion, our learning process sharing together...

TOOLKIT

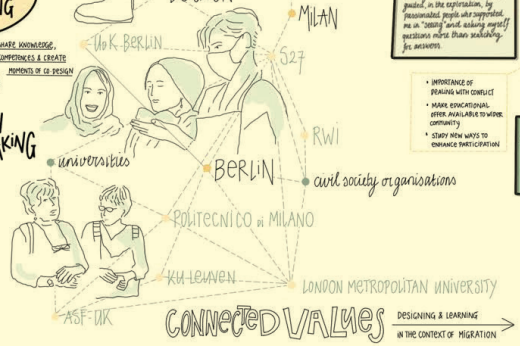
NEW SPACES & FORMS OF JOINT INTERVENTIONS IN PUBLIC SPACES



- PARTICIPATION IN MAKING & Re-Tell the STORY

LESSONS LEARNED

- Do it TOGETHER WITH INHABITANTS
- Real Life experience

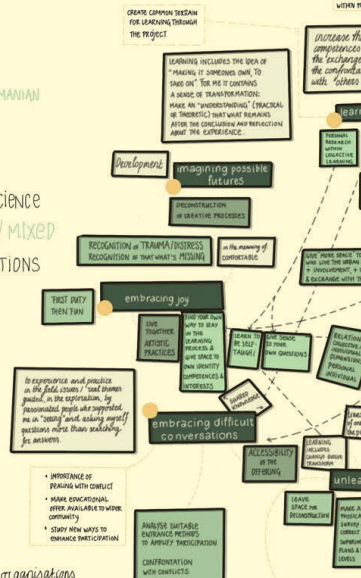


4. BRAIN STORM SE

DEFINING THE MAP

LEARNING AND INNOVATIVE TE

Paola Corti, Alessandra Tomasini – METID





- POLITECNICO MILANO
- LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
- KU LEUVEN
- UdK City BERLIN
- ARCHITECTURE SANS FRONTIÈRES
- Refugees WELCOME ITALIA
- S27 KUNST UND BILDUNG

DESINC L

CO-FUNDED BY THE ERAS PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



TRAINING A GENERATION OF FUTURE PLANNERS MORE SENSITE TO OPEN THE CITY MORE MIGRATION
2. DESINC LIVE
COURSE PRESENTATION
Francesca Cognetti – DASTU - Politecnico di Milano
Giorgio Baracco - Refugees Welcome Italia
START by ERASMUS+ KA 203
LEARNING AIMS
HOW CAN WE PLAN BUILD & PUT INTO PRACTICE CITIES THAT PROMOTE...
INCLUSION
WORKSHOP BERLIN
SANSIRO MILAN
Topics
4. learning AXES
1. LEARNERS·EDUCATORS
2. OUR LENS(es)
3. LEARNING JOURNEY
4. LEARNING METHODS
METHODS: BE "INSIDE" THE CONTENT
CONFRONT PRESSING
SOCIAL
POLITICAL
ETHICAL
MOVEMENT
MIGRATION
fundamental constituent of CITY MAKING
also as STUDENTS & TEACHERS HAD OFTEN THEMSELVES SIGNIFICANT
MIGRATION EXPERIENCE
SELF REFLECTION
LEARNING PATH
6 MONTHS · 4 UNIVERSITIES · 3 CHARITIES · 29 LEARNERS · 4 COUNTRIES · 2 LIVE WORKSHOPS
WILL BE CONTINUED?
ASK OURSELVES "WHY"?
LEARNING COMMUNITY
COLLABORATION & RESULTS ARE IN THE... "WHY"
5. REFLECTIONS
CONCLUSION: A NEW IDEA OF LEARNING & POSSIBILITIES FOR REPLICATION
Paola Corti, Alessandra Tomasini – METID
THE LEARNING MANIFESTO...
"Remember there is also another story...
CONFLICTS
TENSIONS
TRAUMA'S
& DISILLUSIONS"...
RE-THINK URBAN INCLUSION!
"IT WAS SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO FIND PEOPLE INSIDE THE UNIVERSITY WITH IN-DEPTH EXPERIENCE TO TEACH ABOUT URBAN MIGRATION"
"TO LEARN & TEACH IN AREAS OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS WITH A LONG RELATION WITHIN THE TERRITORY AND TO INSERT A LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN THIS CONTEXT... SO USEFULL & UNIQUE (or repeatable?)"
ENGAGING
OVERTIME
SHORT vs LONG DURANCE
EXPECTATIONS vs REALTY
CONTINUITY
GROUNDING
DEVELOPMENT
CRITICAL THINKING
Nature of Partnership
ACTORS · RELATIONS · GOALS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
INTEGRATION WITH RESEARCH PROJECTS
New Technologies
Question: how many habitants were involved in the workshop activities? (result of participation)
NETWORKING: who's teaching who?
EXPERIENCE & ELABORATION
let's share
THE WILL AND AVAILABILITY TO DEVELOP THE COURSE FURTHER >>

PRACTICES of URBAN INCLUSION

mapping

CAN we DESIGN INCLUSION?

LEARNING JOURNEY

- ACROSS EUROPE
- HEI-CSO ALLIANCES

INTENSE MOMENTS of LEARNING

MAIN ISSUES:

- LANGUAGE
- TIMEFRAMES
- LEGACIES

DESINC LIVE

1 LOCKER, 1 BED... NOTHING IS THEIR OWN...

HAVING A KEY, MAKES A WHOLE DIFFERENCE...

IMPROVING THE INFRASTRUCTURE

- FORMAL
- INFORMAL

NY-CITY: SHELTER FIRST

HOTEL ROOMS

TEMPORARY...

including all ACTORS

A SPACE in THE WORLD

SHELTER & ASYLUM

WHAT is THE ROLE OF THE ARCHITECT?

CAN WE QUESTION...

DESIGNING CONTROL & OPPRESSION

ARE WE COMPLICIT?

MAKE TRANSMIGRANTS FEEL WELCOM

HEI-CSO PARTNERSHIPS

linking MIGRATION DESIGN INCLUSION

SPACE for REST & RECHARGE !!

Zzzz

VALUES

ADJ

A PLACE OF OUR OWN

VERYBODY EEDS A RIVATE SPACE

WOMEN & KIDS

SOME MIGRANTS PREFER to STAY iN SQUATS than SHELTERS...

ACCÈS aux MARCHÉ du TRAVAIL

RÉGULARISATION

SANS PAPIER

7 OCCUPATIONS en BELGIQUE

- ETRE VISIBLE pour le QUARTIER
- S'ORGANISER entre NOUS
- BATTRE la MISÈRE

MORE than 1000 EMPTY BUILDINGS

CITIES should foresee PERMANENT HOSPITALITY!

UDGET?

SAFE!

GROUPED FUNCTIONS

ME

CLAIMING PLACE

OCCUPATIONS

Les ARCHITECTES on un RÔLE a JOUER...

OPEN CENTERS...

ESPACES ou PRISON...?

tous CHANGE these SPACES

PLACE-BASED solidarity

VISUALS by MARA for @VISUALITYEU

Common Ground for Ur

A session hosted by London Metropolitan University &



LUCIA CAISTOR-ARENDAR

Research fellow @ London Met
Senior Associate @ Social Life
Associate @ Architecture sans Frontières



TAHMINEH HOOSHYAR EMAMI

Architect @ AHMM
Lecturer, Architectural Design at the Bartlett School of Architecture
Associate @ Architecture sans Frontières



ROWAN MACKAY

Snr. Advisor @ Comunity led Housing-London
Managing Associate @ Architecture sans Frontières



BEATRICE DE CARLI

Reader in Urbanism
Dept. Director @ Centre for Urban & Built Ecologies
Managing Associate, Architecture sans Frontières

DEVELOPING CONCEPTUAL & PRACTICAL TOOLS

EXPAND THE CONVERSATION TO A NEW NETWORK TO WORK TOGETHER

MANIFESTO:
- Unlearning
- Embracing joy
- Acting in space
- Unsettling hierarchies
- Imagining possible futures

BREAKDOWN THE BOUNDRIES & SHARE WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

EDUCATION CAN BEST SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF PRACTITIONERS

WHY: Practice Urban Inclusion?

THE REFUGEE "CRISIS" FRAMED THE STARTING POINT OF THIS JOURNEY

DEFINING INCLUSION:
- Empowerment
- Space
- Pluralism
- Access
- Agency
- Reciprocity
- Belonging

CREATING CONDITIONS OF INCLUSION & CITYMAKING

THE

CHANGE COMES FROM WITHIN

INVITE PAR ADDRESS & POL

F E

FROM OUR SPACE

ILLUSTRATED BY

Paraphrase.studio

& AYSHA AKTAR

rban Inclusion

& Architecture sans Frontières UK



HEALTH

URBAN HOUSING

DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

CURRENTLY NO PLANNING REGULATIONS TO ENFORCE FOR PUBLIC GOOD

FRESH AIR

SHIFTING CULTURAL & PUBLIC PRACTICES...

How do we SHARE INDIVIDUAL LEARNINGS?

...are hard to MEASURE!

MIGRATION



Pooja Agrawal

Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer of Public Practice

DESIGN LEARNING JOURNEY

THE FISH
THE LAKE
THE GROUND-WATER!

SAVE ALL THE FISH...
...NOT JUST ONE!

EXILE

civil society & Design Education

SOCIAL·RACIAL·PUBLIC HEALTH

34% OF PARTICIPENTS CRITICALLY ILL WITH COVID WERE FROM MINORITY BACKGROUNDS

Gentrification!

203 PLACEMENTS ACCROSS 53 AUTHORITIES IN LONDON & THE SOUTH EAST

RTICIPANTS TO
S PRESSING SOCIAL
ITCAL ISSUES

DISPLACEMENT

WHO IS MISSING FROM THE CONVERSATION?

ADDRESS RACIAL INEQUALITY!

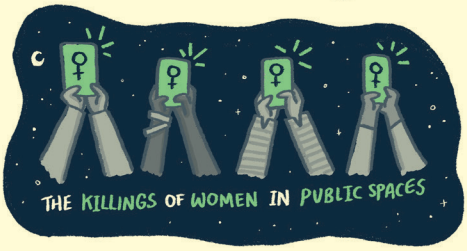
EDBACK

COHORTS HELPS CREATE A
FOR PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT

SOLIDARITY & MIGRATION

ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

CLIMATE CRISIS



architecture sans frontières UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Desinc Live

Erasmus+

IMAGINING FUTURES

Speculations on urban practice [1]

Markus Bader

The term and concept of Urbane Praxis[2] (Urban Practice) are not new and can be described as a practice that integrates architecture, urbanism, art, and activism, with a strong commitment to creating just urban environments. Recently, it has become part of discussions in Berlin, where an initiative called Urbane Praxis formed between artists, activists, and city-makers from various backgrounds argues that this interdisciplinary praxis exists in the city. They believe that the term is an important lens for discussing city-making more inclusively. Although many people in Berlin already work in this particular way, decision-makers and politicians may not be aware of it yet.

What is interesting about «urban practice» is that it could also apply to rural environments. It refers to the quality of the urban environment that can exist in a rural setting. Therefore, it is not about the city versus the countryside as sites where activities can or cannot happen. Rather, the term is used to discuss and describe the quality of activities. «Practice» shifts the focus away from making projects in the sense of «solutionism» or result-oriented work that promises fixed outputs. Instead, it emphasises doing things together and questioning how.

The idea that the city is a complex entity, which can be planned and projected into the future, is somehow the paradigm of architecture and urbanism. In such a scenario, the different forces at play, including civil society, the market, and the state, would be in an interesting and constructive tension. The result would be that through a societal effort to produce space, the city would serve as an environment that supports a good life for humans with different backgrounds, economic statuses, and lifestyles.

The architect and urbanist Keller Easterling[3] refers to the term "urban practice» in both its active form and object form and argues that we can look at our spatial activities from these two perspectives. The collective raumlabor started to use the term urban practice a little bit more broadly in the context of an urban school that was part of a fictional environment called «raumlabor Open University». It is this kind of experimental, ever-evolving, changing environment that urban practice uses to develop other forms of discussing knowledge, passing on knowledge, and so on. One example is the Floating University[4]. It is a group of approximately 20-30 people, always depending on the situation, working across disciplines since inception in 2018. At the core of the group are nine people who are permanent members who share a common interest regarding the idea of agency, which translates in German as Handlung. It describes things we can achieve when we, through our actions or objects, change our environment.

It was the American political scientist Elinor Ostrom[5], the winner of the Nobel Prize in 2009, who showed the world what is possible – that we can change the world. According to her, successful projects are based on the idea of the commons, which she defines as a limited group of people sharing limited resources that define all the decisions about the rules of the group and what to do with the resources. This was a result of her global research that the commons is a practice of living together and sharing resources that are not based on depletion, that are not oriented towards using up or extracting resources from a system and completely exploiting it. But that is more based on cohabitation with the resource.

A good example from practice for Ostrom›s theory is the conversion of a car park into a collectively designed, run, and maintained public park by citizens of Athens living in the area. The Italian anthropologist Anna Giulia Della Puppa[6] argues that the way this park works is that it›s not maintained by the city but by the citizens, and it›s not maintained by a sort of division of responsibility and taking on different roles, but that everybody supports the existence and maintenance in any way they like. There is an assembly where everybody meets and can discuss and make decisions together in the way described by Elinor Ostrom.

At the core of such engagements lies relational work. This is not so much about designing objects but about working with relationships between people, between people and dreams, between people and places, between people and many futures.

With the initiative «urban practice» in Berlin, it was important to try and make discussable with others what this urban practice could be. We proposed five qualities that we apply as a common reference point.

First is the «quality of form». It is important that in urban practice we do have a sort of design quality, a sort of an empathic way of treating spatial appearance. Second is the «quality of transdisciplinarity» or non-disciplinarity, as a way to question our speciali-

sations. The latter has made it very difficult for us humans to tackle the extremely complex problems that we›re facing today. It is a problem at the city level, but it›s also a problem on a societal level or even at a planetary scale. So in a way, urban practice is interested in transgressing these boundaries set by disciplines.

The third quality is the «quality of interaction». It›s a quality of doing things together that allows for different levels of engagement. It is where the idea of «agency» comes into play, that is the understanding that people can act together and have the power to change something. The fourth quality is the «quality of inclusion». It is an important quality for projects or environments and the idea of practice as a whole, that it›s not exclusive or made for a specific user group or a group with specific expertise. It is a precondition that practitioners are aware of, namely that inclusion is an important goal and that they are working towards it, at least as an ambition, knowing that there are always limitations, e.g., in terms of funds and various priorities. The fifth quality is the «quality of imagination». If we want to move collectively towards what›s so far an unknown future but that is different and potentially better, training our imagination is very important. And to imagine things being different from what they are today is the basis for any kind of potential transformation.

After introducing these five qualities, I will introduce some examples and use the five qualities as a framework to look back at these examples. The first one is the infamous Floating University. To contextualise it a bit in the city, I will briefly introduce its site, and the way we as the raumlabor collective interacted with it. The Floating University is located next to the Tempelhof Airfield, the first civic airport in Berlin. They say in 1926 the world flew from Berlin. During Nazi Germany, there was a huge plan to rebuild the city into something very megalomaniac, and this huge Nazi airport was part of the city›s restructuring. Everybody knows what an airport is. It›s a place with a fence around it so that you can›t walk in it with your feet, but you need a ticket to board an aeroplane. And then you follow this sort of behavioural protocol: you check in, go to the plane, sit down, and so forth. In 2008, there was a plan to close the airport, opening up a big question: what do we do with the airport? There was a master plan drafted in the 1990s by the city of Berlin, and it was already agreed that there would be a large central lawn, some housing and commercial structures around it. But in 2008, just before the financial crisis, Berlin had a so-called relaxed market, so nobody wanted to invest in it. Plus, the ideas behind this master plan felt very abstract.

As raumlabor collective[7], we identified this transition as an interesting time gap. The question of how to create, how to design a transition from a very defined place such as an airport, to another, also very defined, and develop a future vision of the place, surrounded by housing and with a lawn in the centre? How do you do this, especially if the situation is permanently changing? Raumlabor proposed the tool of the 'dynamic master plan', inspired by the approach of Amsterdam developer Yaron Sarris in the context of the Venetian Bridge. He suggests an urbanism that finds ideas through active use, through the involvement of people. Over five years, Sarris invited people to find programs for the Venetian Bridge, to support diversity, to act temporarily, to test out things, to be very open and not determine the future of the site. We did the same with the Airfield and proposed a lot of timelines of how over time the site could be appropriated, used, and ultimately how these ideas could be developed.

Only after this testing phase is it possible to define and make plans for long-term investments. This is a form of city development that includes many more minds, ideas and imaginaries than a top-down planning process. As soon as the site was opened in 2010, it immediately started to host an outburst of activities of imaginaries. The Allmende Kontor collective[8], for instance, is a garden colony settled on the north side of the airport, a kind of crazy construction, a non-standard space. It›s also an expression of how people act out their right to the city very literally and how they found a way to co-create their own spaces and spatialise activities in their own way.

From 2010 onwards, with the opening of the field, it became tangible that rents in the neighbourhoods bordering the airfield would be rising dramatically. Over the last ten years, it›s been over 100% on average. So people felt economic pressure on something that everybody needs, which is a place to live. The official master plan proposed that big parts of the airport would be built upon. It was clear that we were talking here about higher-income housing and people started to organize an opposition against that – and eventually were successful with the referendum – that nothing should be built on airport land. It was an expression of fear that urban development at large and the development of the Tempelhof site itself would not be for the people but for others with a bigger financial capacity.

So we had pioneer users on the field such as the abovementioned Allmende Kontor so there were already civic activities happening on the airfield in designated areas. We had a referendum that stopped the master plan and a super frustrated city government or city administration that felt all their plans were not valued by citizens. In 2015-16 when a higher number of refugees arrived in Berlin, the airport buildings were used as temporary shelter in a kind of very dramatic and rational and also spatially very sad way.

The Floating University sits right in the middle of all this: between the airfield and a cemetery, and allotment gardens on the other side. It is a rainwater retention pool, a technical infrastructure collecting

water from the airfield and dispersing it slowly into the canals of the city. It›s completely hidden inside the allotment gardens, and this hidden paradise looks like some kind of ecotopia from elsewhere. It was discovered by my colleagues from raumlabor who envisioned an ‹aquatopia›, an idea of a collective place for imagining, working and learning from each other. Eventually implemented in 2018, the Floating University is a place to explore questions of a contaminated nature, and new ways of cohabitation between humans and nature, a place with very open boundaries.

Groups from various places continuously join the activities at the Floating University for a limited period. Additionally, events are held to connect the site with the rest of society through an open week that acts as a sort of programmatic offer. Performances, discussions, and different activities come together to make up a programmed site. Production is abundant here, ranging from discussions, cooking, building, and working with models, to trying out physical activities. The parallels and overlaps that exist between these activities are fascinating: architectural, artistic, scientific, and everyday conversations take place simultaneously. These activities influence and shape each other due to the open structure. If one goes there with a plan of doing something, they will always exchange more with the place than initially imagined.

The Floating University doesn›t float; however, it gets flooded now and then. But it might be that this university somehow drowns. It›s very interesting to be confronted with the natural elements and multiple species (wind, rain, ducks, frogs, water) in a more immediate way than we are used to in our strictly built environments. There are also a lot of rubber boots that seem to be one of the most important tools to explore this landscape. So all the structures built on-site could be seen as a trick to invite people to put on rubber boots and explore the water, which is not very deep. It›s a way to start shifting one›s perspective from going around streets, taking underground trains, relying on an outdated system of infrastructures and behaviours, and engaging or experimenting with the environment in a different way.

Returning to the qualities mentioned earlier, let›s consider the quality of form. The architecture of the Floating University has been carefully designed to create a space where people can be in the auditorium while others are in the kitchen. These different places are so close to each other that one can always feel the presence of others without seriously disturbing them. It›s a beautiful way of bringing people together and allows one to follow their activity while blending with other activities at the same time. This approach is different from institutionalised universities like the University of the Arts in Berlin, which was built as a 19th-century building with a defined and confined classroom space. When the doors are closed, one has no idea what›s going on behind the walls or what people are thinking or doing. One has to make an effort to open the doors and transgress boundaries. The Floating University embodies the «quality of form». It was cheaply built with limited resources, but it was carefully designed. It also encompasses the «quality of transdisciplinarity» since scientists and locals curated architecture, art, performance, theatre events, or just coincidental programs, making it a transdisciplinary place.

Then there is the «quality of interaction», which relates to a wide range of different activities, from cooking to building together. And what about the «quality of inclusion»? That›s an interesting question because the site is quite cut off from the rest of reality. It needs an invitation to come in and discover it, requiring a little bit of courage too. Once you›re in, it›s charming and not too threatening. But of course, there is quite a threshold. With the evolving diversity of programs, there is an idea to make this site open to increasingly diverse people.

Finally, there is the «quality of imagination», which is floating in itself. The Floating University tries to inhabit a place that has already been fully defined as a rainwater retention pool and adds a layer of completely new functionality, opening up and transforming the way it has been previously defined. It is an invitation to imagine. There is a strong presence of parallel activities that would not be planned but would always somehow irritate one another, opening up a lot of potential imaginaries.

The next example takes us to Haus der Statistik[9] in the middle of Berlin, which is a process of «transforming a ruin», a process of developing a site as a civic initiative. The Haus der Statistik is a beautiful ruin, a former office complex from the 1960s used as an administrative building and ministry that housed the Socialist government of the GDR. Through statistics, they attempted to understand how the economy and society worked and intended to shape the economy for the next five years by predicting future needs, the idea of German Planwirtschaft (Centrally Planned Economy). Since 2008, this building has been empty and planned to be demolished and rebuilt according to a master plan of the 1990s as a site for skyscrapers under state ownership. However, through an initiative launched by artists and other participants from the creative world, a big poster was installed on the building›s facade in 2015 claiming that this would be a space for culture, education, and social activities. The intent was to emphasise that this building should not be used for maximum profit but for the public good – for all kinds of uses that contribute to the quality of the city.

Currently, the Haus der Statistik is undergoing a transition. There are pioneer uses on the ground floor, and a planning process is being carried out through a

cooperative system involving the district, the Senate, a housing company, and a real estate company. This collaboration between public and civic bodies in planning the future of the site has been a great success for the campaign. However, it requires continuous effort and nurturing for the process to unfold smoothly. An interesting aspect is the agreement on a master plan for site development and the idea of running the place in a civic manner to safeguard it from exploitation.

The little pavilion next to the Haus der Statistik is worth noting as it serves as a coordination hub for all the activities. It serves as evidence of the success of the «pioneer use» concept. Pioneers from various fields such as fashion, culture, education, and social sciences have organized themselves into thematic clusters. For example, there is a cluster focused on fair food production and distribution, which brings together individuals interested in exploring alternative approaches to food. This cluster-building approach allows for interactions and access to different activities and ideas. Another quickly formed cluster is the House of Materialisation, which explores sustainable resource management in the city.

The transformation happening at the Haus der Statistik involves organisations coming in and becoming part of thematic clusters, which is a way of opening up and initiating a transfer of imagination towards transforming the site. It›s a mix of artistic, social, and activist positions that cannot be planned in a traditional competitive bidding process. This is where the "urban practice" approach becomes most interesting, as it embraces openness towards activities and the inhabitation of space, ultimately leading to the potential for transforming places. The Haus der Statistik exemplifies how urban practice can challenge conventional city-making approaches and bring together diverse perspectives that inform each other.

Although the future of the Haus der Statistik is still uncertain, it is evident that efforts have been made to make the space inhabitable and shareable through interventions such as cinema screenings and theatre performances. The overarching question revolves around creating a space for people to come together. How should it be designed, governed, taken care of, and enjoyed? These are important and wide-ranging questions that need to be addressed.

1 This text is based on the lecture by Markus Bader on 25 April 2021 and has been co-edited by Katharina Rohde, Viviana d'Auria and Beatrice De Carli. The lecture was part of an open sessions series which took place as part of the design studio "Spaces of Resilience" held at the Universität der Kunste, Berlin and curated by Markus Bader and Katharina Rohde in 2021.
2 www.urbanepraxis.berlin/?lang=en
3 www.failedarchitecture.com/a-conversation-with-keller-easterling/
4 https://floating-berlin.org/
5 Working Together: Collective Action, the Commons, and Multiple Methods in Practice, 2010.
6 www.roots-routes.org/una-controstoria-di-atene-frammenti-di-spazialita-collettivizzazione-e-politiche-della-cura-di-anna-giulia-della-puppa-e-letizia-bonanno/
7 www.raumlabor.net
8 www.allmende-kontor.de
9 www.hausderstatistik.org

Matrix of Capacities (Katharina Rohde, 2021)

Elements of urban practice

urban solidarity

starting point

challenging the profession

strategies

projects

tools

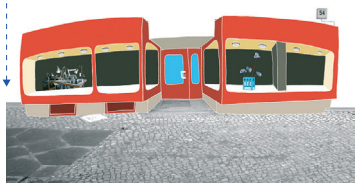
living lab

presence on site

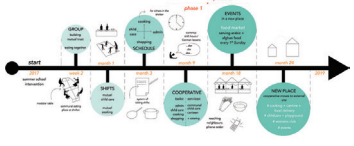
reversed participation

value what there is

eye-level cooperation



scenarios



making visible

wallpaper





shifting the context

expert talks

public presentations

interactive installations



connecting

mediating

exhibitions

mini-festival

testing (1:1)

envisioning



super-sized models

urban studios

role/s

learner

educator

researcher

activist

developer

manager

scavenger hunt



informal conversations

semi-structured interviews



mapping



urban gear





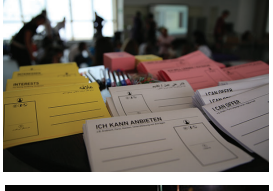


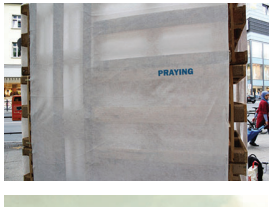
networker

workshops

searching for talents

moderator





urban interventions

prototype

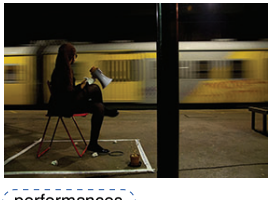
mediator

site visits

commissioner

urban walks

curator





performances

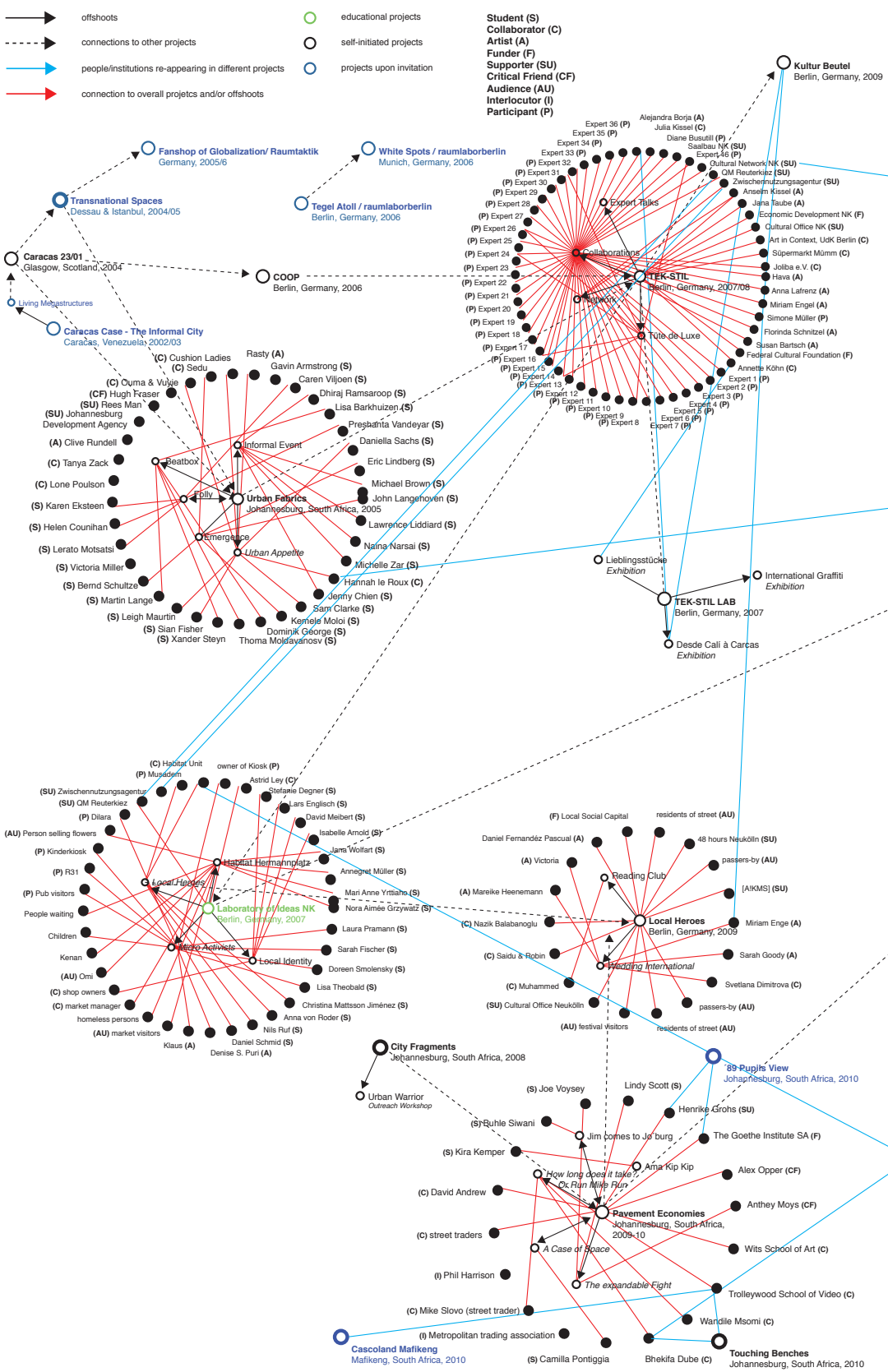
This contribution visually reflects an urban practice established in 2005 at the interface of architecture, urbanism and art, with a strong interest in social justice and activism. Interrogating one's work is inherently related to a critical posture. The drawing compiles existing and novel tools to perform such an interrogation. It contains three layers: reflection on; reflection in; and reflecting-on-reflection.

Projects in Berlin and Johannesburg are compiled through collage to depict their various dimensions: the motivations behind the project's emergence, the strategies and tools applied, the different roles taken up as an urban practitioner and the outcome of each initiative.

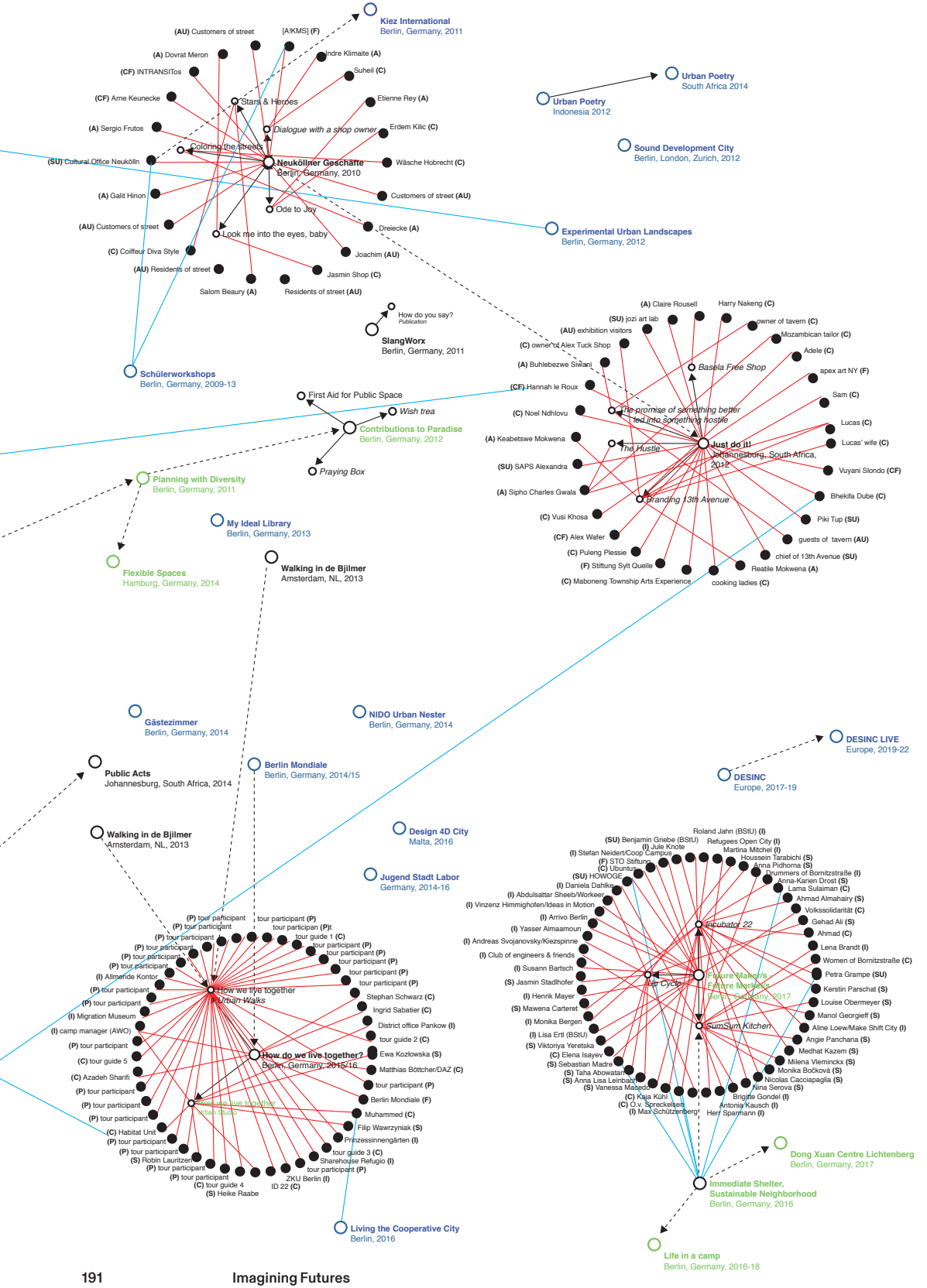
The Matrix of Capacities brings together a series of projects the practice realised in 2005–2021. The aim was to visualise the range of contributors to each project through their capacity in wom/en power, (embodied) knowledge, creativity, ideas, material or financial support. Contributors include artists, students, critical friends, audiences and participants. The matrix makes tangible the many capacities brought together in relational urban practice.

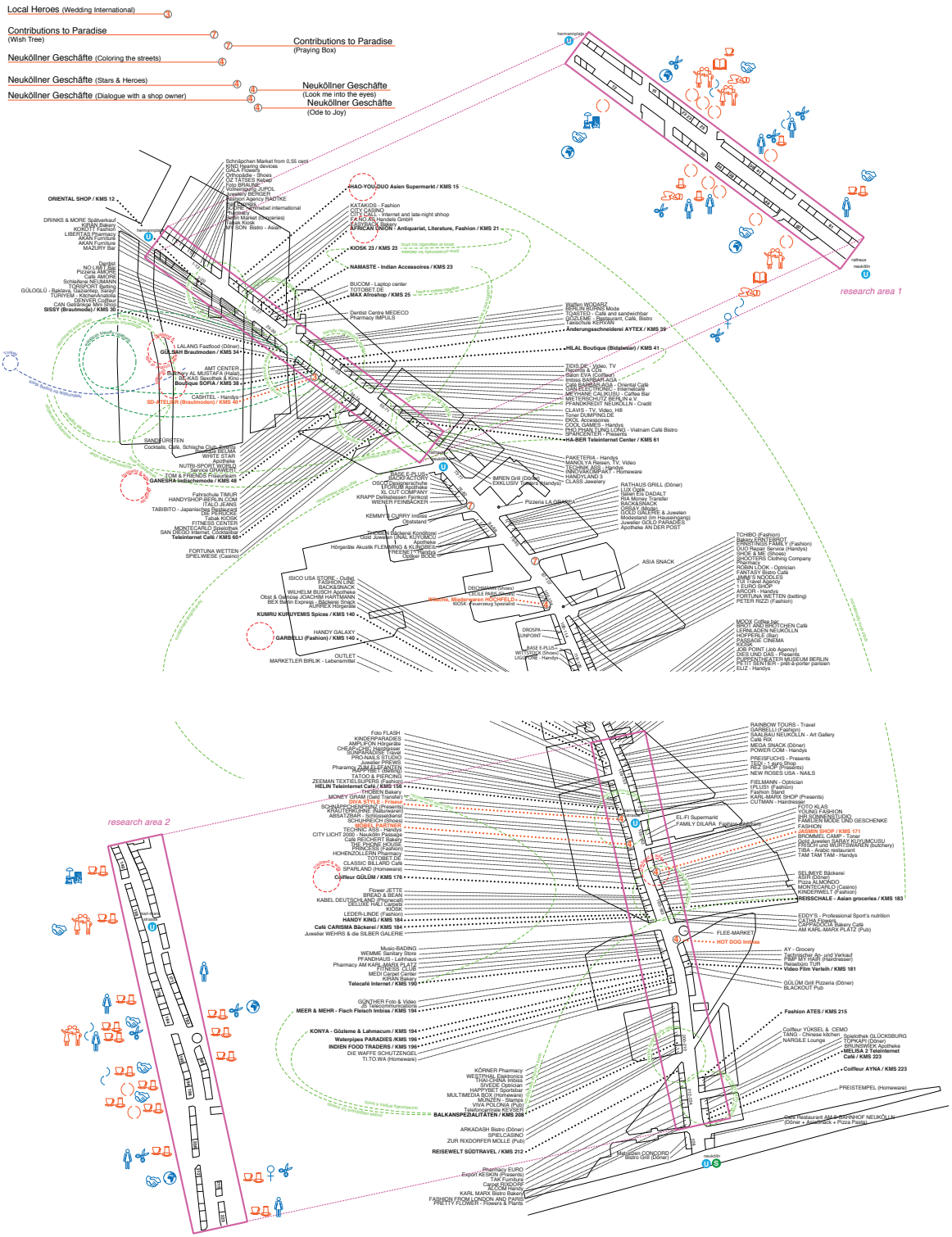
The positive representation of migration for city-branding often ignores migrants' skills and the impact of regeneration on their enterprises. In 2008 the Karl-Marx-Straße, one of Berlin's main shopping streets, was targeted for upgrading. As part of the Local Heroes project, a total of 362 ground-floor shops were counted, of which 350 were migrant-run. Amongst these, the building of portraits visualised migrants' invisibilised skills. These, in turn, informed temporary interventions and performances.

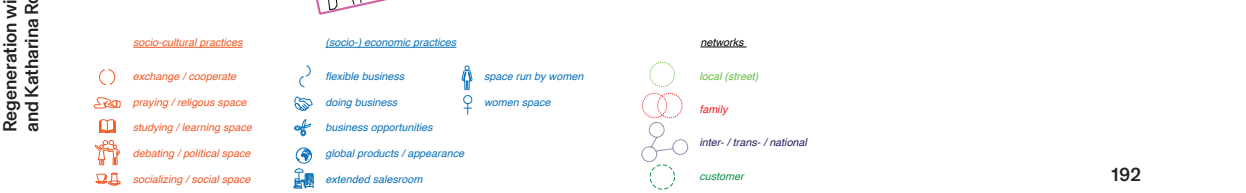
The campization of migrant accommodation since 2015 has meant that the practice's projects shifted from established migrant districts to emerging ones. In 2015 the Refugium-Buch was one of Berlin's biggest container camps, warehousing 550 people in 234 containers. An inventory of the camp disclosed how camp residents transformed their living environment, whereas urban walks guided by urban practitioners helped heal the mismatch between living in a camp and being part of the city.


offshoots
connections to other projects
people/institutions re-appearing in different projects
connection to overall projetcs and/or offshoots
educational projects
self-initiated projects
projects upon invitation
Student (S)
Collaborator (C)
Artist (A)
Funder (F)
Supporter (SU)
Critical Friend (CF)
Audience (AU)
Interlocutor (I)
Participant (P)
Kultur Beutel
Berlin, Germany, 2009
Fanshop of Globalization/ Raumtaktik
Germany, 2005/6
White Spots / raumlaborberlin
Munich, Germany, 2006
Transnational Spaces
Dessau & Istanbul, 2004/05
Tegel Atoll / raumlaborberlin
Berlin, Germany, 2006
Caracas 23/01
Glasgow, Scotland, 2004
COOP
Berlin, Germany, 2006
Living Megastructures
Caracas Case - The Informal City
Caracas, Venezuela, 2002/03
Expert Talks
Collaborations
Network
Tute de Luxe
TEK-STIL
Berlin, Germany, 2007/08
Cultural Network NK (SU)
QM Reuterkiez (SU)
Zwischennutzungsagentur (SU)
Anselm Kissel (A)
Jana Taube (A)
Economic Development NK (F)
Cultural Office NK (SU)
Art in Context, UdK Berlin (C)
Supermarkt Mümm (C)
Joliba e.V. (C)
Hava (A)
Anna Lafrenz (A)
Miriam Engel (A)
Simone Müller (P)
Florinda Schnitzel (A)
Susan Bartsch (A)
Federal Cultural Foundation (F)
Annette Köhn (C)
Informal Event
Urban Fabrics
Johannesburg, South Africa, 2005
Beatbox
Folly
Emergence
Urban Appetite
Lieblingsstücke
Exhibition
International Graffiti
Exhibition
TEK-STIL LAB
Berlin, Germany, 2007
Desde Cali à Carcas
Exhibition
Habitat Hermannplatz
Local Heroes
Laboratory of Ideas NK
Berlin, Germany, 2007
Micro Activists
Local Identity
Local Heroes
Berlin, Germany, 2009
Wedding International
City Fragments
Johannesburg, South Africa, 2008
Urban Warrior
Outreach Workshop
89 Pupils View
Johannesburg, South Africa, 2010
Jim comes to Jo'burg
How long does it take? Ok Run Mike Run
A Case of Space
The expandable Fight
Pavement Economies
Johannesburg, South Africa, 2009-10
Cascoland Mafikeng
Mafikeng, South Africa, 2010
Touching Benches
Johannesburg, South Africa, 2010

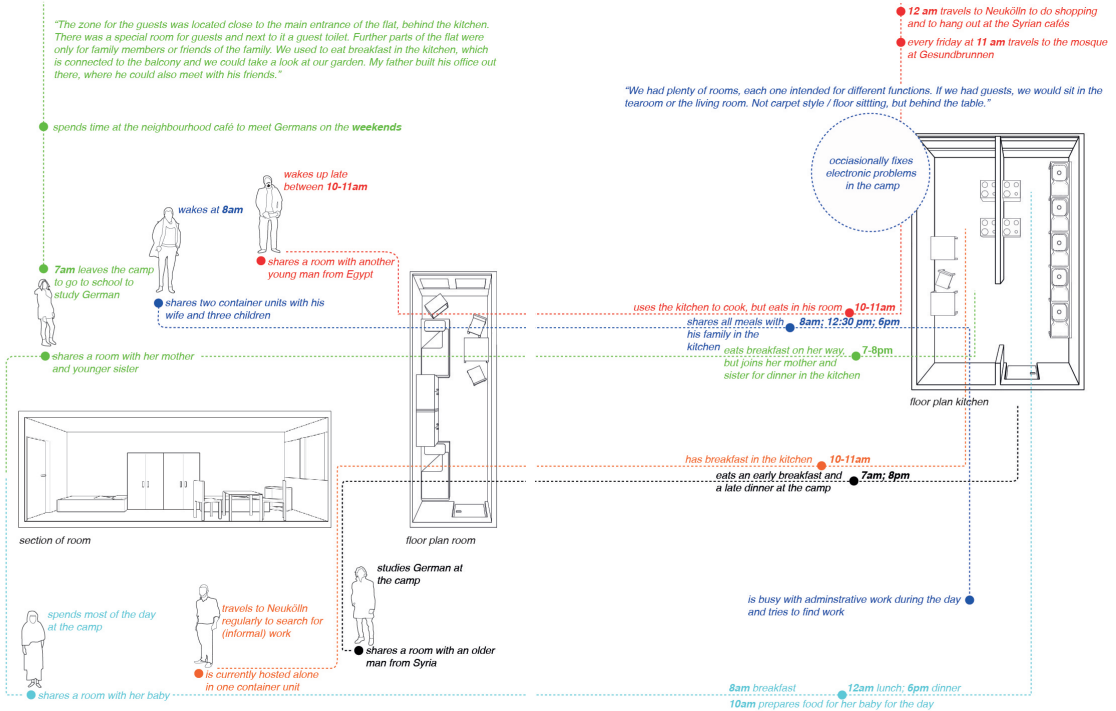
Elements


Kiez International
Berlin, Germany, 2011
(AU) Customers of street
[AIKMS] (F)
(A) Dovrat Meron
Indre Klimaite (A)
(CF) INTRANSITos
Suheil (C)
(CF) Arne Keunecke
Stars & Heroes
Etienne Rey (A)
(A) Sergio Frutos
Dialogue with a shop owner
Erdem Kilic (C)
Coloring the streets
(SU) Cultural Office Neukölln
Neuköllner Geschäfte
Berlin, Germany, 2010
Wäsche Hobrecht (C)
(A) Galit Hinon
Customers of street (AU)
Ode to Joy
(AU) Customers of street
Look me into the eyes, baby
Dreiecke (A)
(C) Coiffeur Diva Style
Joachim (AU)
(AU) Residents of street
Jasmin Shop (C)
Salom Beaury (A)
Residents of street (AU)
Urban Poetry
South Africa 2014
Urban Poetry
Indonesia 2012
Sound Development City
Berlin, London, Zurich, 2012
Experimental Urban Landscapes
Berlin, Germany, 2012
How do you say?
Publication
SlangWorx
Berlin, Germany, 2011
Schülerworkshops
Berlin, Germany, 2009-13
First Aid for Public Space
Wish trea
Contributions to Paradise
Berlin, Germany, 2012
Praying Box
Planning with Diversity
Berlin, Germany, 2011
My Ideal Library
Berlin, Germany, 2013
Flexible Spaces
Hamburg, Germany, 2014
Walking in de Bijlmer
Amsterdam, NL, 2013
(A) Claire Rousell
Harry Nakeng (C)
(SU) jozi art lab
owner of tavern (C)
(AU) exhibition visitors
Mozambican tailor (C)
(C) owner of Alex Tuck Shop
Adele (C)
(A) Buhlebezwe Siwani
Basela Free Shop
apex art NY (F)
(CF) Hannah le Roux
Sam (C)
(C) Noel Ndhlovu
The promise of something better led into something hostile
Lucas (C)
(A) Keabetswe Mokwena
The Hustle
Lucas' wife (C)
Just do it!
Johannesburg, South Africa, 2012
(SU) SAPS Alexandra
Vuyani Slondo (CF)
(A) Sipho Charles Gwala
Branding 13th Avenue
Bhekifa Dube (C)
(C) Vusi Khosa
Piki Tup (SU)
(CF) Alex Wafer
guests of tavern (AU)
(C) Puleng Plessie
chief of 13th Avenue (SU)
(F) Stiftung Sylt Quelle
Reatile Mokwena (A)
(C) Maboneng Township Arts Experience
cooking ladies (C)
Gästezimmer
Berlin, Germany, 2014
NIDO Urban Nester
Berlin, Germany, 2014
DESINC LIVE
Europe, 2019-22
DESINC
Europe, 2017-19
Public Acts
Johannesburg, South Africa, 2014
Berlin Mondiale
Berlin, Germany, 2014/15
Walking in de Bijlmer
Amsterdam, NL, 2013
Design 4D City
Malta, 2016
Jugend Stadt Labor
Germany, 2014-16
(P) tour participant
tour participant (P)
tour guide 1 (C)
How we live together
Urban Walks
Stephan Schwarz (C)
Ingrid Sabatier (C)
(I) Allmende Kontor
(I) Migration Museum
District office Pankow (I)
(I) camp manager (AWO)
tour guide 2 (C)
(C) tour guide 5
Ewa Kozlowska (S)
(C) Azadeh Sharifi
How do we live together?
Berlin, Germany, 2015/16
Matthias Böttcher/DAZ (C)
tour participant (P)
Berlin Mondiale (F)
Muhammed (C)
(C) Habitat Unit
Filip Wawrzyniak (S)
Prinzessinnengärten (I)
(S) Robin Lauritzen
tour guide 3 (C)
Shareholuse Refugio (I)
tour participant (P)
ZKU Berlin (I)
ID 22 (C)
(C) tour guide 4
(S) Heike Raabe
Living the Cooperative City
Berlin, 2016
Roland Jahn (BStU) (I)
(SU) Benjamin Griebe (BStU)
Refugees Open City (I)
(I) Julie Knote
Martina Mitchel (I)
(I) Stefan Neidert/Coop Campus
Houssein Tarabichi (S)
(F) STO Stiftung
Anna Pidhorna (S)
(C) Ubuntium
Drummers of Bornitzstraße (I)
(SU) HOWOGE
Anna-Karien Drost (S)
(I) Daniela Dahlke
Lama Sulaiman (C)
(I) Abdulsattar Sheeb/Workeer
Ahmad Almahairy (S)
(I) Vinzenz Himmighofen/Ideas in Motion
Volkssolidarität (C)
(I) Arrivo Berlin
Gehad Ali (S)
Inkubator 22
(I) Yasser Almaamoun
Ahmad (C)
(I) Andreas Svojanovsky/Kiezspinne
Lena Brandt (I)
(I) Club of engineers & friends
Women of Bornitzstraße (C)
(I) Susann Bartsch
Petra Grampe (SU)
(S) Jasmin Stadlhofer
Future Makers
Life Cycle
Future Markets
Berlin, Germany, 2017
Kerstin Parschat (S)
(I) Henrik Mayer
Louise Obermeyer (S)
(S) Mawena Carteret
Manol Georgieff (S)
(I) Monika Bergen
SumSum Kitchen
Aline Loew/Make Shift City (I)
District office Pankow (I)
(I) Lisa Ertl (BStU)
Angie Panchana (S)
(S) Viktoriya Yeretska
Medhat Kazem (S)
(C) Elena Isayev
Milena Vlemincky (S)
(S) Sebastian Madre
Monika Bočková (S)
(S) Taha Abowatar
Nicolas Cacciapaglia (S)
(S) Anna Lisa Leinbach
Nina Serova (S)
(S) Vanessa Mabedo
Brigitte Gondel (I)
(C) Kaja Kühl
Antonia Kausch (I)
(C) O.v. Spreckelsen
Herr Spamann (I)
(I) Max Schützenberg
Dong Xuan Centre Lichtenberg
Berlin, Germany, 2017
Immediate Shelter, Sustainable Neighborhood
Berlin, Germany, 2016
Life in a camp
Berlin, Germany, 2016-18





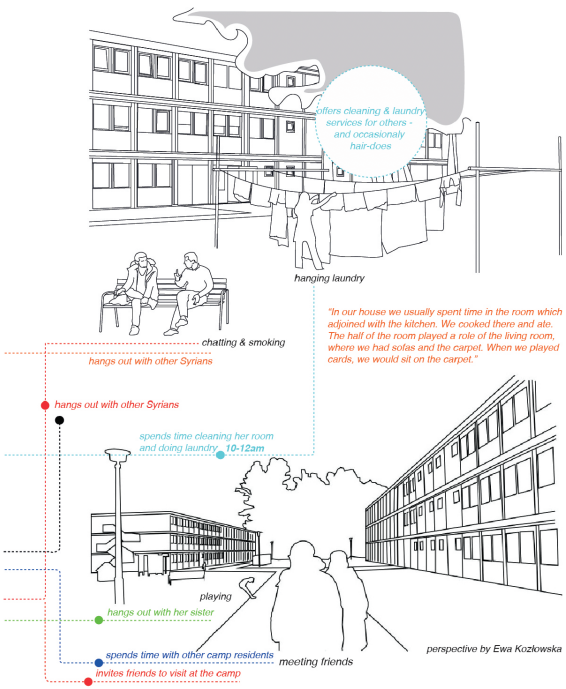
Regeneration without gentrification? (drawing by Daniel Fernandes Pascual and Katharina Rohde, 2008, reworked by Katharina Rohde in 2021)



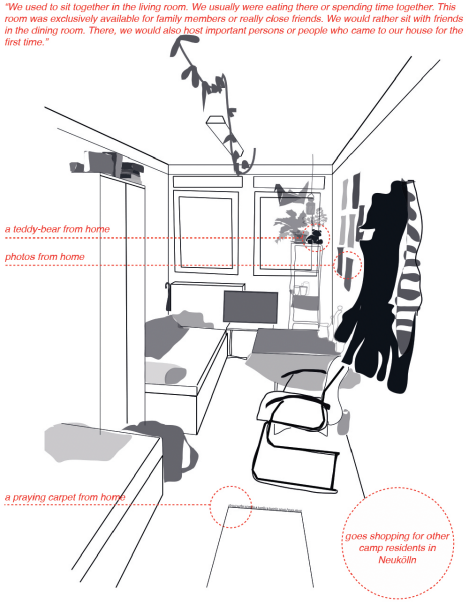
The rooms have an approximate surface of 17,5m2 (2,35m x 7,40m) and accommodate two persons. Families with children share two adjacent rooms (container units). The standard furnishing of a room is composed of two beds, two waredrobes, one table and two chairs.

The kitchen facilities are shared by the camp residents per floor. Each kitchen is equipped with one oven, four stoves, two tables, and some chairs. Ten adults share the kitchen on average. The residents set up a kitchen plan - but it doesn't always work according to plan.

How (do) we live together? (drawings by Ewa Kozlowska, Robin Lauritzen and Katharina Rohde in 2015-16, reworked by Katharina Rohde in 2021)



Camp residents spend a lot of time in the courtyard to chat, to smoke, to meet other residents or with friends, it is a way of wasting time or waiting.



Camp residents decorate their rooms and try to create a more personal and intimate living space in the context of a rather practical set up of the container units. Often, residents have brought personal items from home, such as photographs of their families, but also praying carpets or tableware for halal cooking.

Stories from the Future

In this book's previous sections, we explored how migration is key to understanding the construction of cities through processes of exclusion and expulsion, inclusion and solidarity. We also examined how urban environments across Europe have been shaped to become increasingly hostile and uninhabitable. As philosopher Thomas Nail points out, the movement that migrants can or cannot undertake is a fundamental condition for understanding society as a whole. This makes migration an unavoidable concern for urban practice, particularly with regards to how bodies are gendered, racialised, and classified in urban space.

Forms of solidarity centred around the experience of migration and diaspora are an important source of inspiration and learning for urban practitioners, offering insight into how space can be mobilised as a tool for collective agency and as a means to build bonds of mutual support. Having observed the struggle between the production of hostility and the generation of hospitality in cities, we feel compelled to ask: How can urban spaces and practices become more inclusive and nurturing? What changes are necessary in urban practice to achieve cities of solidarity in our present time? We posed these questions to artists, scholars, and activists working in Berlin, Brussels, London, and Milan.

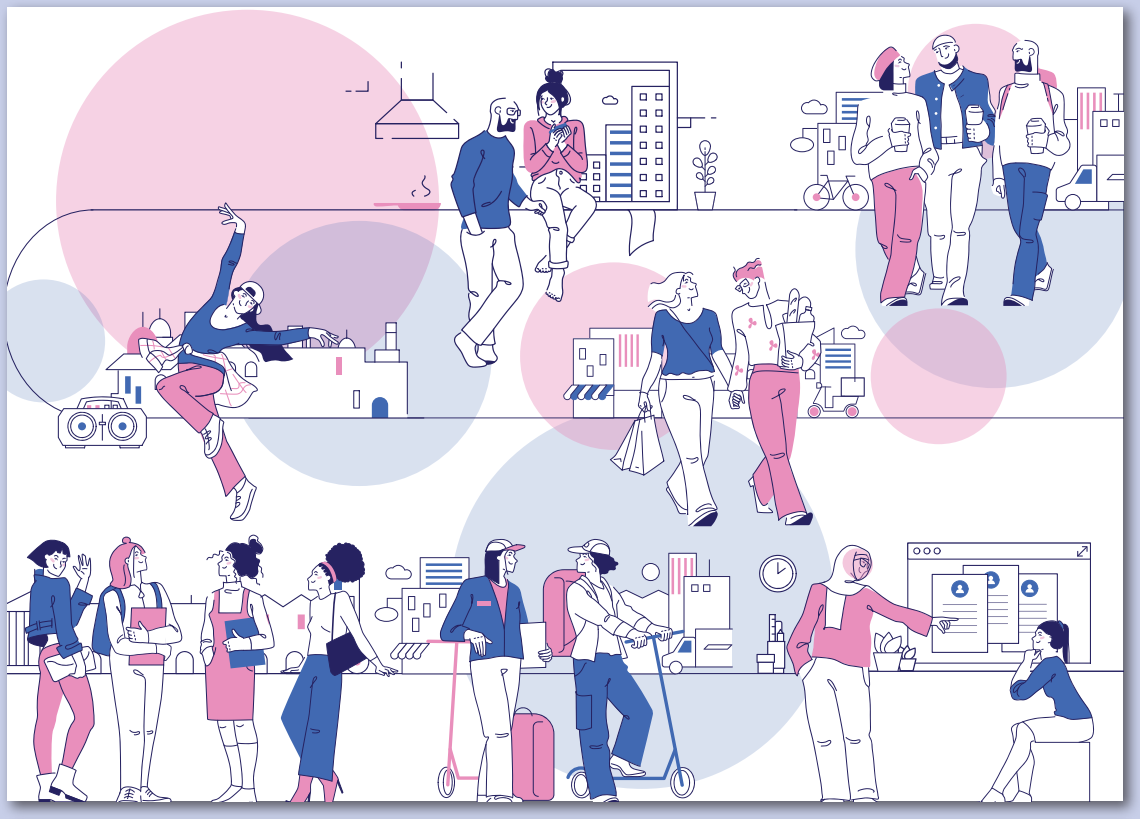
One of the main goals of the Practices of Urban Inclusion programme was to celebrate urban practice as a form of critical and creative engagement with the city. The practitioners whose responses we sought embraced the challenging task of envisioning the future rather than merely "future-proofing" it. In closing, we present their diverse yet equally generous visions for a form of urban practice that promotes inclusion.



Alfabeti, Milan

A joyful and fair city of the future should create within it many squares like the one in the photo; lively, cheerful, populated places where people can express themselves, in which differences come together, producing cultural richness and sociability; places where people can meet, talk, come out of loneliness and individualism, create community.

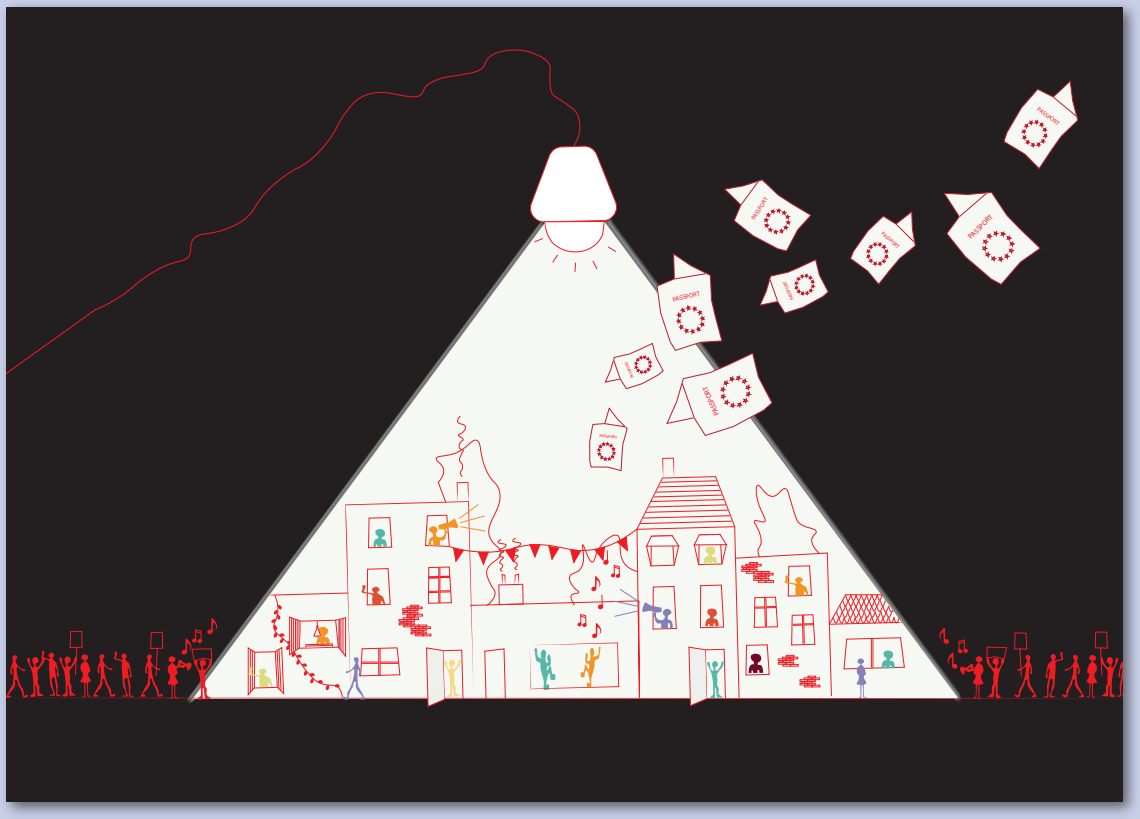
Jamaa El Fna, Marrakesh, Morocco (Calin Stan, 2023)



Refugees Welcome Italia, Milan

A fair, joyful and compassionate city is one filled with diverse people from different places and all walks of life, living together in unison and harmony, with a strong foundation based on mutual respect, tolerance and consideration for each other. Shared spaces in such settings, should be available and accessible to all, with constant control and policing to maintain security and respect for the rules and regulations. Sense of belonging is always rooted in collectivity, therefore, standing together as one people, with one goal, and moving forward as one force, is the way forward to establishing an inclusive city.

Refugees Welcome Italia, 2023



Collectif Zone Neutre, Brussels

We, sans-papiers, dream of a city without the shadows of oppression and discrimination we are daily pushed into. A place where we live in a permanent, warm home relieved from the never-ending spiral of displacement, constantly on the move from one vacant building to another. A city without constant fear: the fear of getting evicted from our home, the fear of losing our job, the fear of detention and expulsion when we use public transport or are walking through the streets of Brussels. Ultimately, a city where we, sans-papiers do not exist, as everyone is a citizen with equal rights. It is our dream to have a pleasant life and not have to survive daily.

Collectif Zone Neutre with Charlotte van Rhijn, 2023



Ruimteveldwerk, Brussels

With the support of solidarity networks, "places of solidarity" emerge through encounter and exchange. These are points of departure for rethinking collective infrastructures and their emancipatory potential. "Places of solidarity" foreground shared needs and concerns, beyond the thrown-togetherness of cities. These can be places where dynamic presence leads to durable infrastructures of support, or where a diverse range of programmes is offered for maximum expression - but also rest and respite. Permanently inclusive spaces, however, do not exist. Apprehending this dynamism sustains the crafting of places that accommodate a broad array of plural profiles through time and space, in order to prefigure alternative urban imaginaries rooted in joy and fairness.

Ruimteveldwerk, 2023



Women Life Freedom (The Bartlett UCL), London

The Woman, Life, Freedom group was formed in the hope of collective solidarity with the women-led uprising in Iran following the death of Mahsa Jina Amini in 2022. The group aims to amplify the voices of dissident artists and activists in Iran.

Through acts of spatial occupation, the group archives and re-tells individual and collective memories, claiming space for shared and personal expressions of solidarity. It is through the (re) imagination of personal histories, (re)told by diasporic identities, that our collective fictional futures of a heterotopic vision of the city have formed. In this city, beyond its casual dwellers, there exist the oppressed, and those who claim space for underrepresented bodies which the city itself helped veil.

In the movement, the feminine rage that exposes the female figure as a central actor in the city represents the oppressed dwellers and the spatial act marks their symbolism in the city.

Women Life Freedom (The Bartlett UCL), 2023



RESOLVE Collective, London

To uproot the extractive, violent, exclusive value systems that define our urban spaces is no small feat and is too often a burden thrust upon those who benefit the least from these oppressive systems. Here, we are turning our backs on a contemporary version of solutionism and allowing ourselves to remain propositional. To practise joy in our cities, we must first rehearse and test our ideas with the communities we support, and reveal our conflicts and strategies in our failures. Space to test is both radical and urgent because whilst we deliberate over the perfect solution for inherited problems, current practice continues to fail upwards in a lab of its own making.

RESOLVE Collective, 2023

EDITORS

Lucia Caistor-Arendar is an interdisciplinary urban practitioner with expertise in social research, design thinking and learning. Lucia has dedicated the past fifteen years to exploring the impact of neighbourhood change on communities and empowering individuals to drive change themselves, both in the UK and internationally. Lucia is the founder of Sopa - a collaborative design studio that uses principles of collaboration, creativity and care to promote more inclusive and equitable cities. She is a Senior Associate at Social Life and Architecture Sans Frontières UK and has held teaching and research positions at the University of Lisbon, University of Sheffield, and London Metropolitan University.
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Viviana d'Auria is Professor of International Urbanism at the Department of Architecture, KU Leuven. Exploring 'lived-in' architecture is integral to her research within a broader interest in the trans-disciplinary construction of contested urban spaces and the home-making practices of newcomers. To tackle questions of spatial justice collaboratively and intersectionally, she relies on action research and design-led explorations.
Beatrice De Carli is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Sheffield. She previously held positions at Politecnico di Milano and London Metropolitan University. In addition to her academic roles, Beatrice serves as a Managing Associate for Architecture Sans Frontières UK, a non-profit organisation specialising in community-led design and planning. Her work employs a collaborative, design-based approach to tackle issues of social and environmental justice in city-making, with a focus on contested and fragile urban contexts.
Stefano Pontiggia is a political anthropologist currently working at Politecnico di Milano. He teaches courses on development, culture, and methodology. He has conducted research in Italy and North Africa, exploring issues of memory, inequality, and marginalisation. Recently, his work has focused on the Italian migration apparatus and how Italian institutions interact with migrating persons.
Katharina Rohde s an urban practitioner working internationally. She specialises in participatory design in spatial planning with a focus on vulnerable groups. From 2015 to 2023 she was active in academia and served as a Guest Professor in Urban Design at the Jade University in Oldenburg, Germany (2021-23). Since 2024 she is back to practice, facilitating design processes for just urban spaces while remaining involved in teaching occasionally.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Alfabeti is a voluntary organisation founded in Milan in 1999 to promote the integration of people migrating to Italy by disseminating knowledge of the Italian language and culture. Over the years, the organisation has expanded its programmes to include courses for women, afternoon workshops for the study and review of school topics, and recreational activities for young people.
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barbara caveng is an interdisciplinary working artist who initiated the participatory art project KUNSTASYL in 2015. Through co-creation with forcibly displaced individuals, she navigated the complex endeavour of building a home far from home. For the last twenty years, she has been committed to collaborative artistic work as a means to move beyond capitalism.
Collectif Zone Neutre is a Brussels-based collective of undocumented migrants. During the making of their postcard for this book, they were evicted three times from the vacant buildings they had occupied and used as a home. Collectif Zone Neutre rallies for regularisation campaigns and insists on the right to work, housing and health care for all migrating persons as the first steps towards building a more hospitable world.
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Vera Fritsche served as the project manager of the pilot project Stadtwerk mrzn (S27 – Art and Education). She holds the belief that social work holds equal importance as art, architecture, design, and urban development in shaping society. According to her, only through cross-sectoral work can we pave the way towards a promising social future.
ftts is a collaborative duo consisting of Federica Teti, an architect and graphic designer, and Todosch Schlopsnies, a sculptor and performer. From 2015 to 2022, ftts ran a series of workshops with children, young people, and adults, often with migratory backgrounds. Participants collaborated in building, gardening, inventing, and playing, aiming to experiment with collective creation beyond individual capabilities. From 2020 to 2022, ftts took on the role of artistic director for the pilot project Stadtwerk mrzn (S27 – Art and Education).

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Jane McAllister is an academic and architect. Currently, she serves as the BA Course Leader for the School of Art, Architecture, and Design of London Metropolitan University. In addition to her academic role, Jane works on a variety of live community projects both locally and internationally, collaborating with other universities and civil society organisations. Her design-based PhD explores the socio-spatial practices of city farms, highlighting their role in promoting well-being and nurturing the collective good.

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Tasneem Nagi is a PhD researcher at the Department of Architecture, KU Leuven, where she focuses on forced displacement and housing. With a background in civil society, humanitarian, and development sectors, Tasneem examines the interplay between the multiscalar politics of bordering and everyday homing strategies of displaced populations and their collectives.

Catalina Ortiz is a Colombian urbanist and educator passionate about spatial justice. She obtained her PhD in Urban Planning and Policy from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She joined The Bartlett Development Planning Unit at UCL in 2015 and in 2024 she became the Director of the UCL Urban Lab. Through her research, Catalina employs decolonial and critical urban theory, as well as knowledge co-production methodologies, to examine the politics of space production.

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Francesca Piredda is a researcher at Politecnico di Milano's Department of Design, where she coordinates the Imagis Lab research laboratory and collaborates with the DESIS International Network. Her research and teaching activities focus on communication design, audiovisual language, participatory video, digital media, and narratives. Francesca leads research and educational activities in community TV, social media, world-building, and storytelling techniques for social inclusion.

Alice Pittini serves as the Research Director of Housing Europe, the European Federation of Public, Cooperative, and Social Housing. In her role, Alice oversees the daily operations of the European Social Housing Observatory, where she coordinates comparative studies, thematic briefings, and articles. Her responsibilities also include contributing to the development of the OECD Affordable Housing Database and promoting innovative approaches among housing providers to enhance economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

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Refugees Welcome Italia is an independent organisation that promotes the mobilisation of citizens to foster the social inclusion of refugees and migrants. RWI is a group of people animated by the desire to strengthen social cohesion in communities through the creation of relationships between people who would hardly meet on their own. RWI supports and promotes

family hosting, mentoring and activism alongside refugee and migrating individuals.
RESOLVE Collective, led by Akil Scafe-Smith, Seth Scafe-Smith, and Melissa Haniff, is a London-based, interdisciplinary design collective that addresses social challenges by combining architecture, engineering, technology, and art. Their projects aim to realise equitable visions of change in the built environment and involve designing with and for young people and underrepresented groups. Their portfolio includes a range of activities, from architecture and urban design to community support work, artist installations, and research.
Ruimteveldwerk (RVW) is an interdisciplinary collective based in Brussels that collaboratively explores the intersections between architecture, urbanism, sociology, history, art, and activism. By addressing issues of access to public spaces, RVW aims to expand the boundaries of the architectural discipline and redefine the role of architects. RVW's working methods involve implementing architectural initiatives to enhance social networks and create negotiable socio-spatial frameworks.
Ludwig Schaible is a social worker at S27 – Art and Education and was involved in the Stadtwerk mrzn project as such. He believes that operating at the intersection of social work and artistic and cultural endeavours allows for the creation of multifaceted perspectives on both oneself and society.
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Santiago Peluffo Soneyra is a Latin American journalist, writer, and activist. He is the co-director of the charity Latin Elephant in London. He has been researching and liaising with various BAME communities in different areas of London for the past several years. He is passionate about equality, migration and identity, political analysis, campaigning and social media. Santiago was a participant in the Practices of Urban Inclusion programme.
Joëlle Spruytte works as an architect in Brussels. Together with Sarah ten Berge, she co-authored a thesis on the spatial analysis of Brussels' reception centres through the lived experiences of their residents (Department of Architecture, KU Leuven). The thesis employed methods experienced during the Practices of Urban Inclusion course and earned second prize at the Brussels Studies Institute thesis awards in 2023.
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Sarah ten Berge graduated from KU Leuven as an engineer-architect in 2022. Together with Joëlle Spruytte, she co-authored a thesis on the spatial analysis of Brussels' reception centres through the lived experiences of their residents (Department of Architecture, KU Leuven). The thesis employed methods experienced during the Practices of Urban Inclusion course and earned second prize at the Brussels Studies Institute thesis awards in 2023.
Marie Trossat is an architect and sociologist based between Brussels and Lausanne. Through multiple tools, she explores the question of (un)inhabitability. Her recently defended PhD (LASUR, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne / Metrolab, UCLouvain) explored the urbanity, spatiality and materiality of (in) hospitality, and this through the policies targeting newcomers in a situation of precariousness in Brussels.
Brian Van der Zande graduated from KU Leuven as an engineer-architect in 2022. Together with Arthur van Lint, he took part in the Stadtwerk mrzn workshop in 2020, which served as the basis for their thesis, which also explored low-emission incremental infrastructures. He currently works in the coordination of timber construction cycles to pursue the reduction of CO2 emissions.
Arthur van Lint researched urban inclusion in Marzahn, Berlin. He participated in the Stadtwerk mrzn workshop in 2020, which formed the foundation for his thesis with Brian Van der Zande. Arthur graduated from KU Leuven in 2021 with a Master's degree in Engineering and Architecture, followed by a Master's in Human Settlements in 2022. Currently, he is employed as an urban designer at BRUT Architecture and Urban Design in Brussels.
Charlotte van Rhijn graduated in 2023 as an engineer-architect with a thesis exploring how undocumented migrants claim and occupy space in Brussels (Department of Architecture, KU Leuven). She is now enrolled in the Master in Critical Urbanisms at the University of Basel to take this work further.
Heleen Verheyden is a PhD researcher at the Department of Architecture, KU Leuven. Her work is situated at the intersection of housing, architecture, and displacement. She studies design methods for transcending the shelter paradigm and enhancing civic imagination.
Rebecca Wall is on fire for improvised grills, permanent ovens, and ephemeral cookers. She sees cooking on these fires as a practice of solidarity, where knowledge is shared without words, and mess is transformed into pleasure. Rebecca participated in the closing event of Practices of Urban Inclusion, the Experimental Symposium at Stadtwerk mrzn, where she conducted a cooking workshop with migrant women alongside Carla Schwarz and Anna Piccoli.
Kathrin Wildner is an urban anthropologist, conducting fieldwork in New York City, Mexico City, Istanbul, Bogotá and other cities. Her research focuses on public space and urban citizenship, utilising art-based methods such as sound, mapping, and walking. She is a founding member of metroZones – Center for Urban Affairs and participates in transdisciplinary projects, publications, and performative mediation formats.
Layla Zibar is a post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Architecture, KU Leuven. Her doctoral research focused on forced displacement in chronic conflict zones, specifically examining refugee camps in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Building on this research, Layla is dedicated to exploring the interrelations between crises, involuntary displacements, urbanisation processes, homing practices, and lived experiences.

We thank the translators who enabled the book to travel across linguistic borders: Aikaterini Anastasiou, Khalda El Jack, Katja Roslevitch and Aliki Tzouvara.

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This book captures elements of a six-year-long journey through learning, teaching and research, revolving around two main projects called DESINC and DESINC Live.
DESINC – Designing Inclusion (2016–2019) was led by the University of Sheffield with Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Politecnico di Milano, Housing Europe and Architecture Sans Frontières International.
DESINC Live – Designing and Learning in the Context of Migration (2019–2022) was led by Politecnico di Milano with Refugees Welcome Italia, Universitat der Kunste Berlin, S27 – Art and Education, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, University of Sheffield (2019–2020), London Metropolitan University (2020–2022), and Architecture Sans Frontières UK.

These projects were made possible by two consecutive European Union Erasmus+ grants, and we are deeply appreciative of the support we have received from the European Union over the years.

As part of DESINC Live, the experimental learning programme Practices of Urban Inclusion was co-created by a team of dedicated individuals, including Markus Bader, Giorgio Baracco, Martin Broz, Lucia Caistor-Arendar, Ida Castelnuovo, Francesca Cognetti, Viviana d'Auria, Beatrice De Carli, Vera Fritsche, Tahmineh Hooshyar Emami, Rowan Mackay, Lucia Oggioni, Anna Piccoli, Stefano Pontiggia, Katharina Rohde, Anton Schünermann, Angelica Villa and Layla Zibar.

Alongside the co-creators, the programme was made possible thanks to the contributions of numerous individuals and organisations who engaged with us in Berlin, Milan, Brussels and London.

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In all project activities, migrating persons and their hardships have been especially on our minds. While this volume celebrates hope and future-making, this is not to be understood as dismissive of current bordering processes and their impact on migrating persons' lives.

We additionally would like to remember Todosch Schlopsnies, who passed away while this book was being redacted. His longstanding engagement and enthusiastic commitment to crafting inclusion through spatial practice are profoundly interwoven with DESINC Live's core values.

COLOPHON

Practices of Urban Inclusion:
Exploring Space and Migration
in Four European Cities

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In recent years, migration policies have led to the erosion of fundamental rights for migrating persons in urban areas, with pathways to safe havens, both geographically and legally, gradually diminishing. This book explores the role of urban space and urban practice in creating conditions of exclusion and inclusion in European cities, especially in Berlin, Brussels, Milan and London. Building on collaborative partnerships between civil society organisations and universities, it shares some of the lessons learned and concerns raised by an experimental learning programme situated at the intersection of architecture, urbanism and migration. The volume presents a collection of texts in multiple languages, interviews, visual essays and situated examples from citizen-led solidarity initiatives, pedagogical experiences and spatial practitioners. Taken together, this assemblage of materials seeks to revise urban practice and acknowledges the fundamental role of migration for critically understanding what cities are today and re-thinking what they could become in the future.

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