

FORM FOLLOWS...

# wh-at, -o, -y

## FUTURE ARCHITECTURE PLATFORM

291 ideas were submitted to the open call from the Future Architecture Platform that was asking young professionals in the field of architecture to share their visions on the future of architecture. From this swarm of ideas 9 practices were chosen for the "Form follows..." exhibition taking into consideration their engagement within societal and environmental questions as well as their ability to transform a critical position into design proposals.

## 9 PRACTICES 3 TOPICS

TOPIC: COMMON SPACE

Common space is one of the highest goods of society and at the same time one of its most fragile spaces. Being responsible for the production of space means being responsible for more than the interests of a particular client, but serving society in a broader sense, especially in times, when the public is being more and more pushed out, reduced and privatised. A strong lobby for public space is needed.

3 OPTIMISTIC PRACTICES ACTING IN COMMON SPACE:

They work on the production and activation of public spaces, using different means and ways of action and by that expand the classical field of action of the architectural profession.

**Guerilla Architects** are a young collective spread over Europe, active in appropriating space in unconventional ways.

**Plan Común** is an architectural practice from Santiago de Chile which develops speculative proposals to reclaim spaces in various urban constellations as public spaces and trying to find ways to realise these visions.

**Schwemmland** is an association, active in the industrial harbour area in Linz in order to reclaim space for the citizens in forgotten urban niches.

TOPIC: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing is one of the core challenges of architecture. Today and especially in times of increasing focus on economics and the victory of market value over use value for most parts of our lives, the question of affordable housing has become more and more crucial.

3 OPTIMISTIC PRACTICES WORKING ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

They are searching for affordable housing solutions in different cities, trying to reclaim territory from project developers, cost controllers, etc. They extend their work over the classical starting point of the architectural project by setting up projects themselves, or initiating them without waiting for a commission. Besides the fact that they produce meaningful spaces, this new field of action becomes an integral part of contemporary architecture production.

**Jack Self** is a young architect and writer in London, dealing with financing issues of housing. **Super Future Group** are an architectural office working in Graz on architectural visions to bring back nature into cities.

**urbz** is an interdisciplinary practice intensively engaged on various scales in Dharavi, Mumbai.

TOPIC: CHANGING LIFESTYLES

Urbanisation and urban issues have become increasingly important in the field of architecture and urbanism over the last years and nobody can escape them today. Linked to that urban growth we can observe a change in the way how people live, work and interact. These radical transformations have a profound impact on what spaces are needed today.

3 OPTIMISTIC PRACTICES DEALING WITH CHANGING LIFESTYLES:

They use personal experiences in space as method to address questions of changing lifestyles in times of globalised urbanisation.

**Jerome Becker, Florian Sammer & Lukas Vejnik** work in a project based collaboration in Vienna and question our habits of sleep and share a series of visions how we could change them.

**Lavinia Scaletti** is working in London and proposes a radical change in the perception of home and the way we inhabit urban space.

**Sara Neves & Filipe Estrela** are an architectural practice from Portugal, they see the urban challenge rooted in rural contexts where they are active in slow-speed hands-on projects.

## FORM FOLLOWS...

FORM MATTERS!

We all live in forms and deal with them in our everyday lives, but form is not neutral, it comes from somewhere and someone is responsible for shaping it. This process of giving form is an essential competence of the architect and always driven by the values, interests and convictions.

The "Form follows..." exhibition allows visitors to discover the intellectual and practical universes of 9 optimistic, young architectural practices that develop possible answers to relevant societal questions in order to get an insight about what drives them in their designs.

They were all asked to answer the following questions:  
- What inspires and drives you in your design?  
- What about your optimism?  
- Your Form follows ... what?  
- Explain your processes of work!  
... and to bring a physical installation to the exhibition to create an opportunity for visitors to interact with their works and the issues addressed in them.

Together they open up a space to experience ideas, questions and possible answers within the expanded field of architecture and urbanism.

## OPTIMISM

All 9 young architectural practices, featured in the exhibition, are filled with fresh optimism and the will to give form to their visions, by that they invite us to dream of possible futures.

They take position towards a possible future and are part of the ones who participate in actively designing it. In order to be able to do so they need to a clear idea of what they believe in.

Having a clear position on societal and environmental questions gives them guidance in a world where any kind of universal truth has become insignificant and is replaced by an anything-goes attitude following the logics of capitalist economy.

Facing this sometimes overwhelming reality with its incredible contradictory conditions and being able to act and to propose possible solutions and ways to tackle important questions is a key feature of all 9 optimistic practices.

Optimism is an attitude that allows us to stay capable of giving form to architectural ideas in a globalised world, where crisis has become a permanent socio-economic condition and describing the same a major academic occupation.

## IMPRESSUM

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urbz

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EXHIBITION

# FORM

# FOLLOWS...

OPTIMISM

ALLTAG

MONEY

ERROR

CONDITION

NATURE

NECESSITY

COMMON

BEHAVIOR

HABITS

ASPIRATIONS

EXPERIMENT

YOU

FINANCE

CRISIS

FUNCTION

FAILURE

CONTEXT

SOCIETY

ECONOMY

ECOLOGY

NEEDS

COLLABORATION

9 Optimistic Practices

Graz - AUSTRIA

**HDA**  
HAUS DER ARCHITEKTUR



# FORM FOLLOWS...

# EXHIBITION GUIDE

**Jack Self** invites you to get a deep insight to the financial logics of the London housing market that strongly drive urban development. The project "The Ingot" is based on this research and uses the profound understanding of these financial parameters with a shift of perspective in order to develop and propose a role model for social housing that is based and not opposed to the idea of finance. Opposite to classical buildings, the material value of "The Ingot" is not decreasing but starts growing after its construction completion.

**Super Future Group** invites you to not only see and understand the concept of their project Urban Super Forest but also experience it. This idea of a radical transformation of the cities upper level, applied to Vienna, but also possible in various other contexts, not only proposes a fresh perspective on what would be possible, but also questions the way we live together and what we aspire from our built environment. All these aspects are met in the design proposal for the project with the clear ambition to bring back nature to the city.

**Sara Neves & Filipe Estrela** invite you to discover their approach to tackle the global urban question at its origins and engage with communities in rural environments all over the world. By doing so, they cultivate a slow-speed attitude in order to create meaningful spaces for and with people. Their installations invites you to step in a new role and change perspective on the building process by experiencing the hands-on approach.

**Lavinia Scaletti** invites you to follow her on the derives of her self-experiments, that she uses as research tool to create knowledge for her design proposals such as the ZIP City. This project is radically re-thinking the ways of how we could inhabit our cities and proposes not only a new lifestyle, but also a new physical environment that fits them.

**urbz** invites you to discover the various projects that they have developed in their long term engagement in Dharavi, one of Mumbai's largest self-built neighbourhoods. Besides opening up an insight in the fascinating world of Dharavi and the multiple ways of how people use its spaces, you can follow the process of the construction and transformation of a house that urbz has initiated, planned, built and transformed in Dharavi.

**Jerome Becker, Florian Sammer & Lukas Vejnik** invites you to personally experience the multiple questions around sleep and its spatial consequences they are dealing with in their project "Bedroom Exodus". They open up a field of possible imaginations of how small changes in our daily life routines could transform not only our ways of living but also the ways of how we use, appropriate and co-inhabit spaces in completely new ways.

**Plan Común** invites you to find out more about their "speculative strategies" for new Common Places and to share your ideas where these visions could be implemented in Graz. Further they developed a new "speculative strategy" for Andreas Hofer Platz in Graz and thereby contribute to the public debate on the future development of that place and provoke the idea of possible appropriations of the plaza for and by the inhabitants of Graz.

**Other voices on optimism**

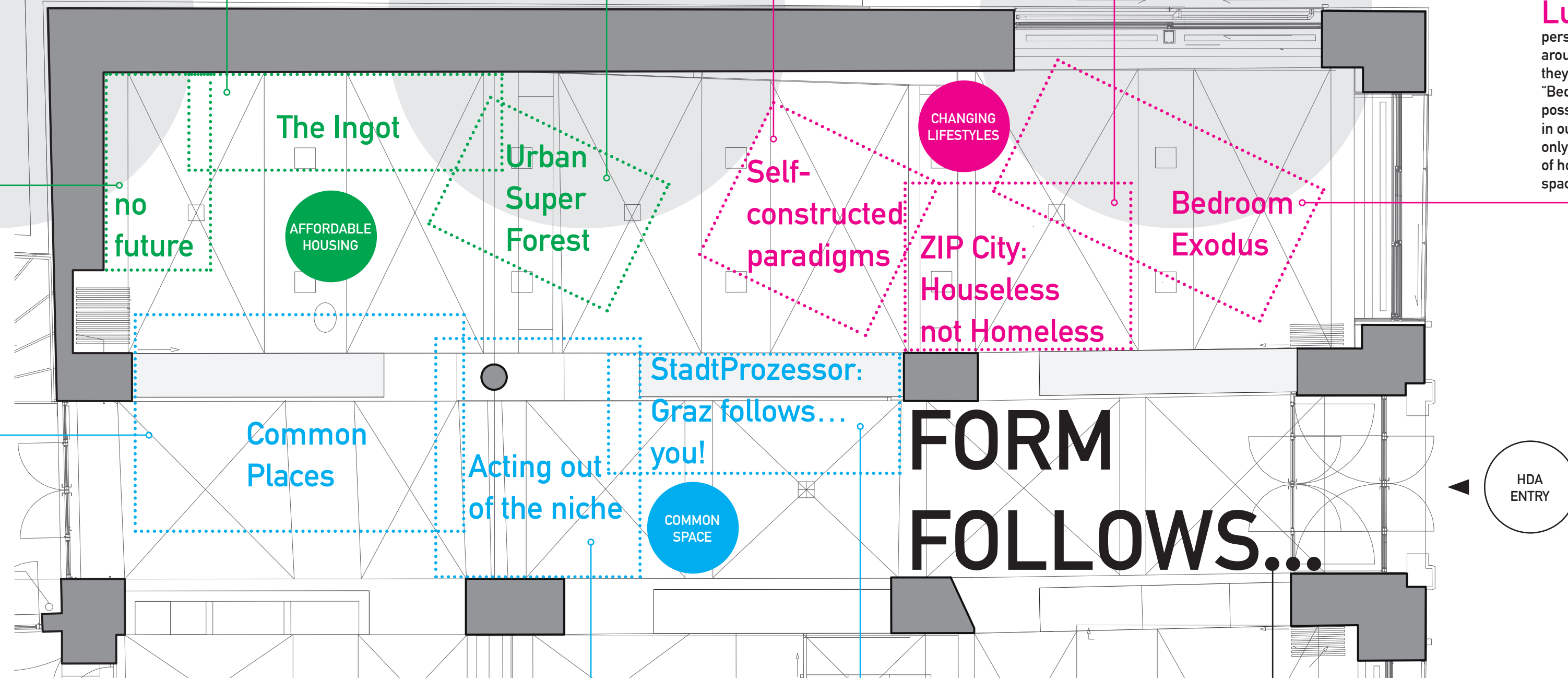
*"We can minimize the amount of money spent, by maximizing optimism and inventiveness and by making use of what already exists" - Jean-Philippe Vassal (The Future of Architecture, 2012)*

*"... architecture goes hand in hand with optimism and the expectancy of an advance of human dignity as a matter of principle." - Hermann Hertzberger (The Future of Architecture, 2012)*

**Schwemmland** invites you to explore the diversified variety of different intervention strategies that deals since several years with *rurban niches* in the industrial harbour area of Linz in order to open often forgotten places to the public and search for possibilities to reclaim them for and with the people who are potential users of these incredible places.

**Guerilla Architects** invite you to participate in their "computer supported collective action" through their living installation "StadtProzessor: Graz follows... you!" that is connected to the practice's mobile office "Bastian, der StadtSymbiont". This installation allows you to instruct the architectural collective to realize your utopia of Graz, get an insight to their virtual project cloud and exchange with them through regular Skype meetings.

**Ingrid Sabatier & Stephan Schwarz** invite you to discover the intellectual and practical universes of 9 optimistic practices in the present "Form follows..." exhibition through a series of physical installation by the practices, allowing you a personal experience with the topics Common Space, Affordable Housing and Changing Lifestyles, which these young architects are dealing with in their work. The "Form follows..." newspaper collects and documents the various inspirations what their forms follow, the practices' statements on optimism and their ways of working, and opens up a broad field of ideas and visions.

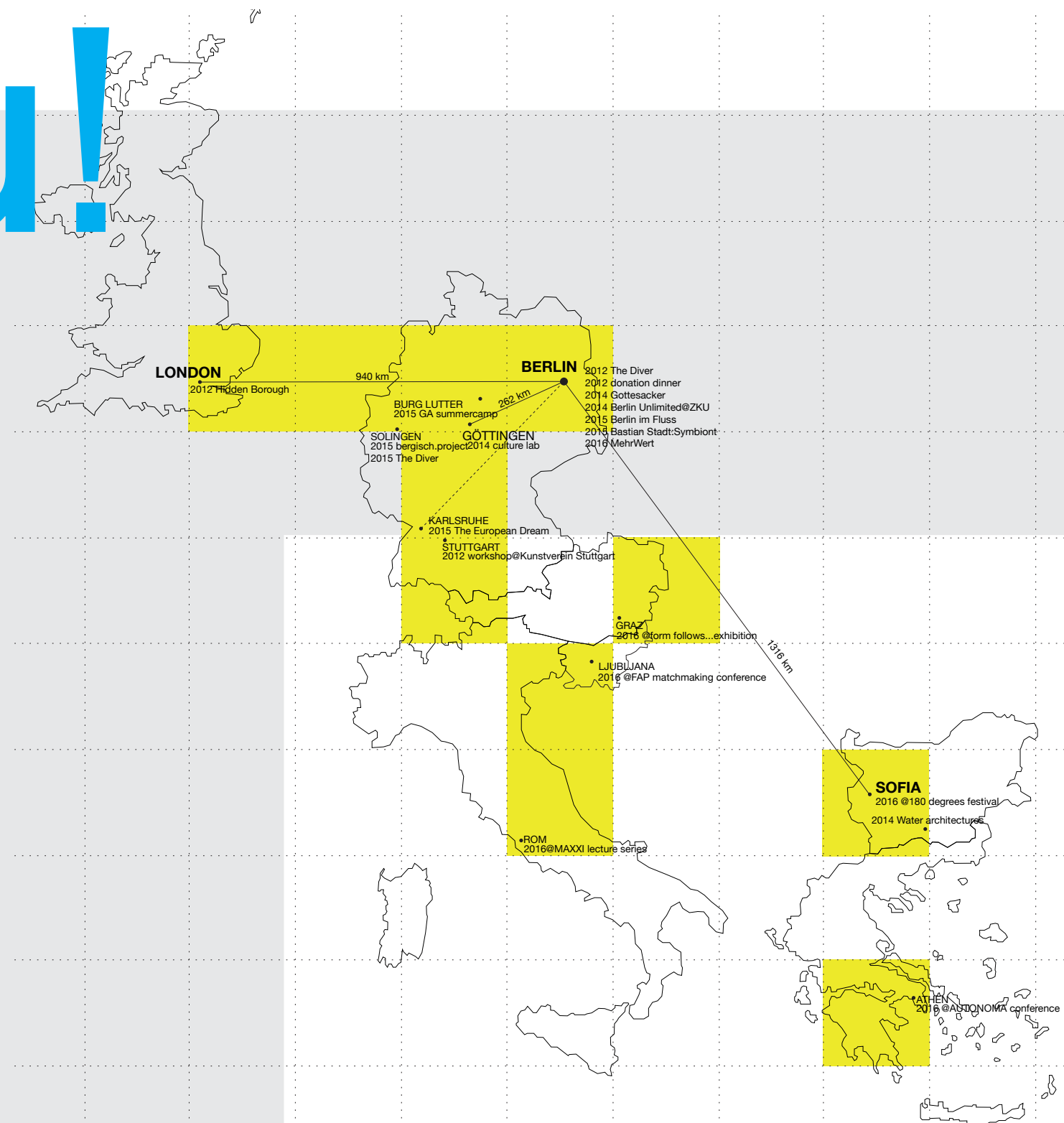


Form follows... exhibition at HDA Graz | Mariahilferstraße 2 | 8000 Graz | opening 9th of June 2016, 7pm | duration until 14th of August 2016 | Tue - Sun, 10am - 6pm | HDA im Palais Thunfeld - www.hda-graz.at | Future Architecture Platform - www.futurearchitectureplatform.org | ISSSresearch&architecture - www.issresearch.com



FORM FOLLOWS...

you!



OPTIMISTIC PRACTICE

Berlin, Göttingen, London,  
Sofia - EUROPE

GUERRILLA



ARCHITECTS

The established principle of "form follows function", coined in the time of the dawn of modernism, represents the determination of architects around 1896 to reinvent architecture – to define and establish new principles of shaping space.

Later on, during the 20th century, the architectural form followed many different paths – it was futuristic; it was totalitarian and monumental; it was organic; it was brutalist and postmodern; then deconstructive, and sometimes still tends towards the neoclassical. Today, we have all of these different layers of architecture and relate to their stories and presence – they are all valuable to us.

Back then architects struggled to emancipate themselves from the past and determined a form that was opposed to the form of the precedent. Nowadays architects are relieved to be compelled by this ideological struggle.

The manifestation of architecture should – more than ever – follow its context, not in the sense of copying the past, but to respect the existing structures and to develop its own identity. We don't have a choice, but to work with our built environment and therefore:

**form follows context.**

Since Louis Sullivan first coined the phrase "form follows function", the world population has increased enormously and the majority of built architecture is not designed by architects. Society develops faster than architecture and determines the forms or the formlessness of architecture in the urban fabric. In that sense:

**form follows necessity.**

Architects have the responsibility of designing not only space, but the impact of design on the emotional connections of the future occupants with space. It is not only a condition of practical functionalism, how we experience our environment, but a condition of the distinctive atmosphere, the «genius loci» and the economic-political setting. Therefore architecture should inspire, tell stories and engage the imagination to achieve more than just the superficial :

**form follows content.**

The city is the built reality of its society. The particular spatial situation shapes and is shaped by its citizens. Their needs, wishes and visions determine the physical form. Architecture should not be a weapon for controlling the masses, but a tool of shaping a better living environment.

**form follows society.**

The design of our living environment should not be a decision of a minority – it is in everyone's hands to participate in the future of architecture.

If it is deemed necessary to pursue the significance and impact of one of the most historical phrases of architecture, we prefer to reject the absolute determinism of each statement for a word pair with an overrated ideological program.

Therefore, architecture should not be determined by an abstract concept; instead it should be determined by precisely the thing that it is designed for:

**form follows us.**

It's not a given architectural parameter of style anymore, but a consequence of our actions. That doesn't mean that architecture is only defined by "us as architects", but most of all by you as participating citizens:

**form follows you!**

**BIO**

We are an international collective of architects and focus our work on the forgotten and unused resources of our cities.

Sharing a common squatting experience in London in 2012, the name „Guerrilla Architects“ evolved through the need to defend ourselves before court. The intense experiences in occupying the spaces in-between – in a political, legal or architectural way – as well as questioning the socio-economical structures of the cities, connects our group until today. Our name also reflects the discussion of our profession and its societal boundaries and constraints. At the same time we focus on unconventional and subversive transformations of public spaces.

We are a loose collective of thinkers, makers, theorists, planners, pedants and muddlers, who range in between the fields of urban planning, built and temporary architectures, art production, cultural history, theatre and art. We come from different parts of Germany, Italy and Bulgaria and are based in Berlin, Göttingen, Sofia and London. The work of every single member of the group enriches the evolving network and significantly defines its working and communication methods.

**OFFICE PROFILE**

Free resources, network, knowledge, motivation and "Bastian", the *StadtSymbiont*.

Human resources from Berlin (Anja Fritz, Henriette Lütcke, Lucie Waschke, Nike Kraft, Silvia Gioberti.), Göttingen (Tobias Hattendorff), London (Benedikt Stoll) and Sofia (Denica Indzhova, Emil Angelov)

**OPTIMISM**

It is not wrong to describe us as optimists, when all future prospects include some kind of catastrophic scenario for humanity. To study architecture and become an architect in a world where urban planning and building construction is often not a debate, but a matter of power and money, it is also optimistic.

As well as being concerned about society, who doesn't even care about itself and its future.

It is also optimistic to work for a social change, although change works only on the big scale, and the masses are often concerned only about their consumerism.

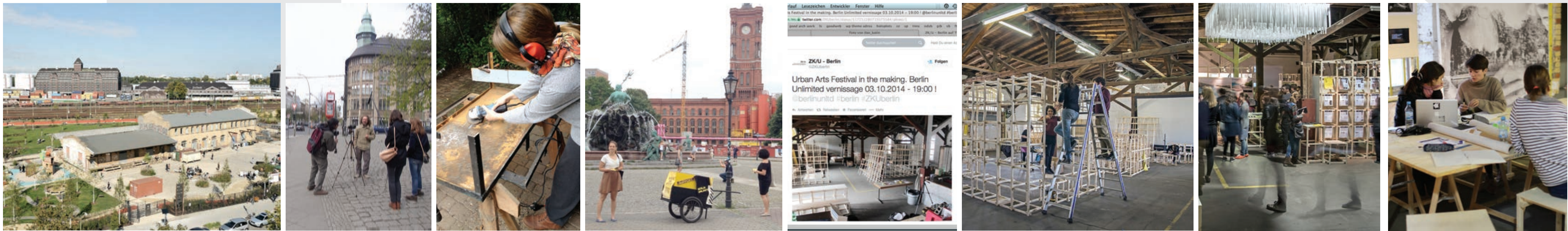
We prefer to be active, instead of only criticizing. We think in our role of architects it is not enough to build houses in this cluster of power and money, but to challenge the topics that shape the cities. Not only in its urban context, but also more in its social and interpersonal connections. The utopia that we experienced together in London, disconnecting ourselves from the logic of money, standardisation and regulations, proved us that a different world, one

that we can shape, is possible. We follow our motivation. Our optimism is connected to the inner drive to be active and work towards our beliefs: the only way we can think that far – to actually make a change in the system – is only as idealists. Or we can at least try it.

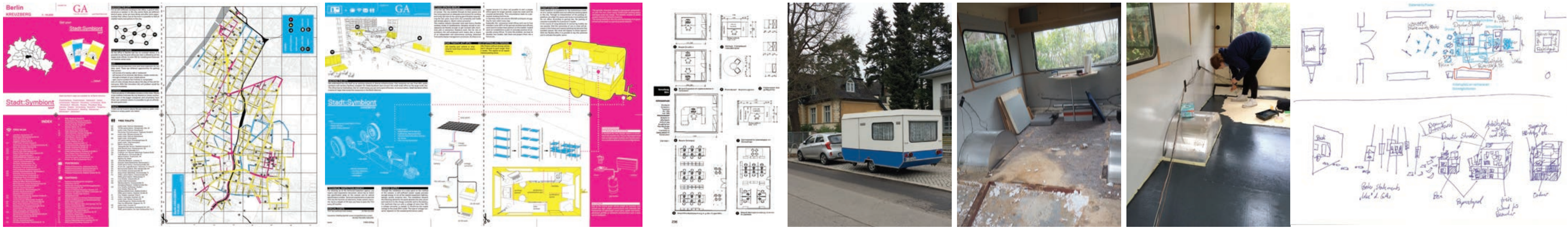




section 6 walking through London in Google street view  
**Hidden Borough** new definition of space  
 research on vacancies in all boroughs dumpster diving a network of free resources  
 “the door was open”  
 squatting an old victorian warehouse in the 55 Great Suffolk street  
 living an utopia of free and available resources changing identities from squatter to artists to defending ourselves before court  
**City-making** through performances Guerilla architects “we have the right to stay here”  
 temporary architectural projects building a float out of air mattresses  
 notification of court trial founding Guerilla Architets back to Berlin  
 research on vacancies, markets, regulations, resources  
 Hidden Borough performance Berlin workshop Stuttgart with Pablo Wendel preparation for London prints blue suits tool kits  
 arriving in London performances Hidden Borough preparation court hearing invading the Thames  
 12/04 12/05 12/05/18 12/06 12/06/13 12/06/18 12/06/22 12/06/23 12/06/26 12/06/27



finding a venue environment for interaction transdisciplinary festival live crowdfunding tote bags, post cards, good mood  
**exhibition space** diversity of content open call - arts theory research architecture urbanism building a guerilla wagon  
 contact to Urban Transcripts, Collage Lab finding a venue  
 research sponsors, lecturers developing exhibition design open call for artist, theorist, architects, creatives building a wagon  
 live crowdfunding promotion building flexible festival furniture workshop preparation organising opening  
 Vernissage Exhibition, Party Finissage Symposium workshop presentations exhibition dismantling  
 13/11 13/12 14/01 14/02 14/03 14/04 14/05 14/06 14/07 14/08 14/09 14/10 14/10/03-04 14/10/10



low-cost office new models part of the urban fabric designing a project studying technical specifications  
**research** on Berlin's free resources parking laws developing a series of maps a manual on hacking the city  
 research on free resources developing an idea of low-cost urban office office design, material research cost listing buying a caravan, vehicle registration, TÜV  
 relocation vehicle permit solar panels TÜV gas installation brake system electricity  
 building works developing StadtProzessor connected to StadtSymbiont preparation Exhibition “Form follows...Vernissage”  
 StadtSymbiont developing connecting to StadtProzessor  
 on the road to Graz Presentation StadtSymbiont in Berlin  
 16/01 16/02 16/03 16/04 16/05 16/06 16/06/07 16/06/10 16/06/24



FORM FOLLOWS...

# attitude

Form follows a critical position towards what is happening around us.

Form follows a rebel attitude towards status quo promoted by some mindsets, briefs and clients.

Form follows a concept understood as the synthesis of a vision engaged with common demands.

Form follows a clear strategy in maximising public or collective space, regardless scale or program.

Form follows a economy of means, a radical understanding of resources such as energy and time.

Form follows behaviour of both people and things, including buildings.

Form follows publicness as the celebration of the public realm.

## OPTIMISM

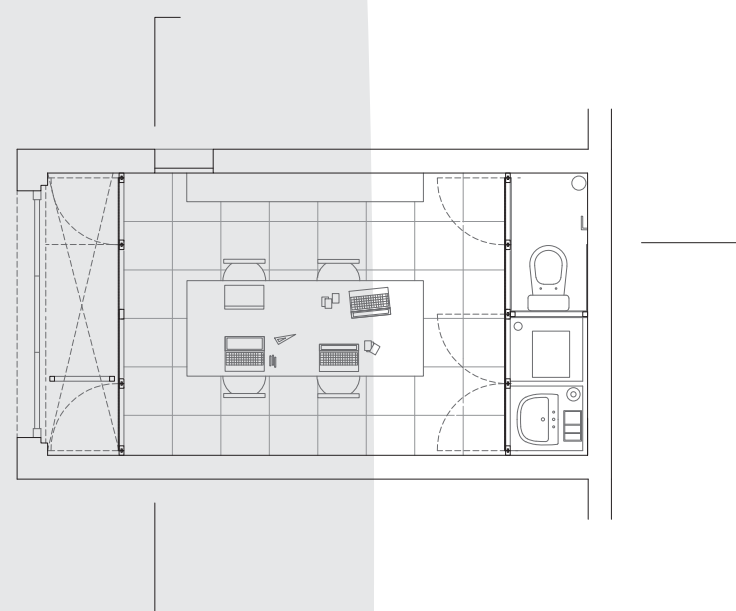
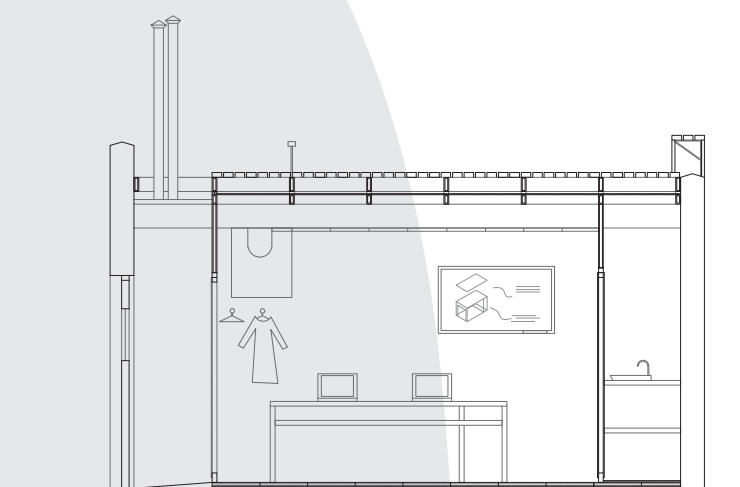
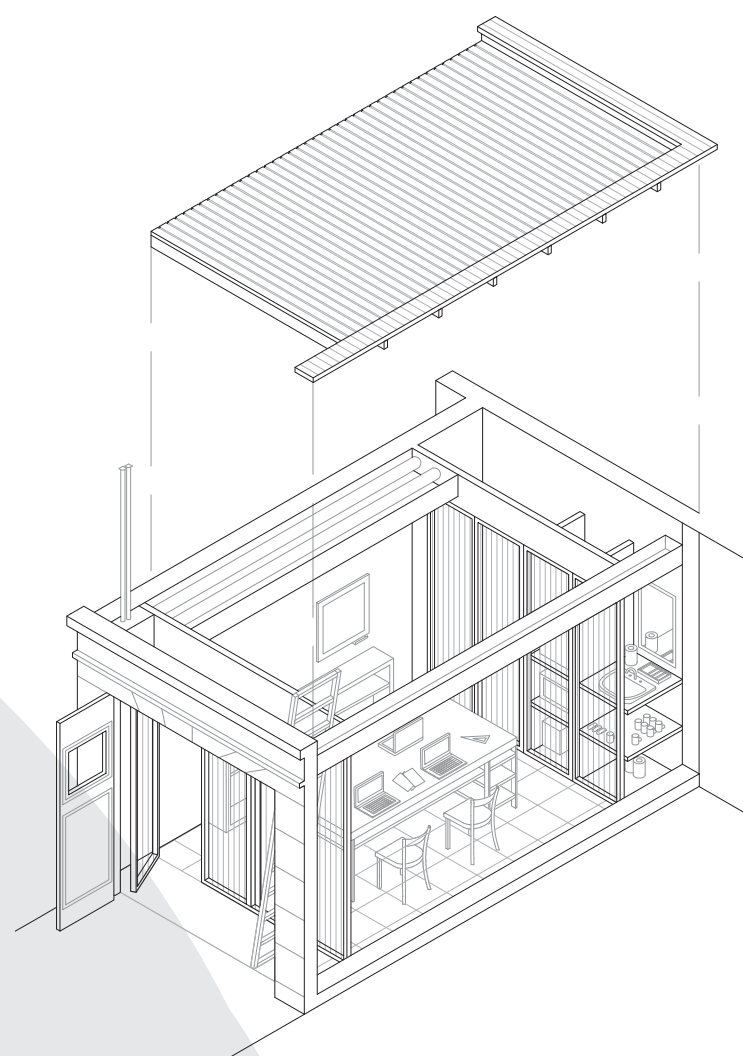
Although we are aware of neo-liberalism's strong capacity of transformation, re-articulation and appropriation of everything—including the production and/or attitude sustained by counter-hegemonic positions—, we have the feeling that something will happen within our society. In the last decades we got used to a constant state of crisis—either political, economical, social or climate-related—, a sign that the system does not seem to be sustainable anymore. Every day, we see how the crisis gets even more extreme by the very operation of the system itself.

That is why it is so urgent to radically correct the state of things. In order to counteract this oppressive context, we believe it is necessary to strengthen the public realm and to reinforce the collective consciousness against the many inconsistencies of global capital accumulation. On this regard, only a critical position can overcome the established limits defined by the few individuals controlling our environment and lifestyle.

What is at stake is culture and the way we live—including the backgrounds and values that define the model of any given society—. As many people

have already pointed out, we believe that the role of designers is crucial in framing this struggle; the designer as a public intellectual, not only by shaping something, but also by exposing a political position through projects and work ethics.

We are convinced that another world is possible, even though the current system of values constantly tries to underestimate this alternative. In that sense, we are optimistic about the possibility of a different future, one that should be less dependent on the market, more open in cultural terms and enjoyable by a majority.



OPTIMISTIC PRACTICE

# PLAN COMÚN



Santiago - CHILE

## BIO

Plan Común is an architecture office founded in 2012 by Felipe de Ferrari and Diego Grass, after 6 years of disciplinary debate, professional collaboration and editorial production with 0300TV and the audiovisual archive OnArchitecture. Since 2007, OnArchitecture has allowed us to be directly confronted with several works and architects around the world. Both our interviews and building portraits have been part of our learning process, regarding what we want to do as architects and how to define the goals of our own practice.

For instance, we have appropriated Lacaton & Vassal's concept of extra-space; we are quite interested in the legacy by Lina Bo Bardi and the rich mix of modernism, surrealism and popular culture within her work; we are also very much interested in the work by Pier Vittorio Aureli & Martino Tattara (DOGMA) which has also brought us close to autonomist theory—there's an emergent political party with this ideology in Chile which we support—. Same thing with Mendes da Rocha's militant attitude; the way in which Yoshiharu Tsukamoto understands Henry Lefebvre; Architecture Research Unit's concept of public space; the sharp attitude of Arno Brandhuber or the double-sided simplicity of Office KGDVS. In short, many ways to understand architecture, some of them even contradicting the others, as a network of references that coexists within our practice.

Plan Común is a consequence of this selective knowledge. We feel close to a certain genealogy of architects and we don't have any problem to recognise their influence; we believe that architecture is a common field of knowledge that exceeds individual agendas. At the same time, we are a team in which each member has different backgrounds that inform each project in specific ways. Plan Común proposes formal

strategies to maximise and strengthen the character of public or collective space—understood as a key aspect of architecture, regardless of its scale or program—. Until now, we have done around 35 projects. Our projects include the UC Teaching and Research Facilities (2nd Place, Public Competition), Hungarian Museums of Architecture & Photography (4th Place, Public Competition), Markets' Esplanade (3rd Place, Public Competition). At same time, we are leading two researches: 1) 'Common Places', a collaborative research on new alternatives of public space and 2) a research focused on Santiago's General Cemetery as a metropolitan public space.

Felipe De Ferrari (1983) Chilean Architect—Graduated from Universidad Católica de Chile (Hons) in 2010. Co-founder of 0300TV, OnArchitecture & Plan Común. Co-editor of books such as "ARQ Docs Pier Vittorio Aureli" (2014), "ARQ Docs Atelier Bow-Wow" (2015) and "Lugares Comunes: Recoleta e Independencia" (2015). He was guest lecturer at Barcelona Institute of Architecture (ES, 2009-2011), Centro de Cultura Contemporánea de Barcelona (ES, 2011), X Bienal de Sao Paulo (BR, 2012), Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio (CH, 2013), Harvard GSD (US, 2016) and Centro de Estudios Públicos (CL, 2016). He has been teaching at PUC Architecture School (CL) since 2014.

Diego Grass (1983) Chilean Architect—Graduated from Universidad Católica de Chile in 2010. Associate architect at Izquierdo Lehmann Arquitectos (CL, 2009–2011). Co-founder of 0300TV, OnArchitecture & Plan Común. Co-editor of books such as "ARQ Docs Atelier Bow-Wow" (2015) and "Lugares Comunes: Recoleta e Independencia" (2015). He was guest lecturer at Arsitek Muda Indonesia (2014), Yokohama Graduate School of Architecture (JP, 2014-2015)

and Universidad Nacional de Asunción (PY, 2016). He has been teaching at PUC Architecture School (CL) since 2014.

Kim Courrèges (1984) French Architect—Graduated from Ecole d'Architecture de la Ville et des Territoires Marne-la-Vallée (FR) in 2010, and holds a M.Sc in Mathematics and Computer Science from Université Paris 7—Denis Diderot (FR, 2005). She worked at Eric Lapierre Experience (FR, 2010-2011); Estudio America (BR, 2011); Pezo von Ellrichshausen (CL, 2012-2013); Roberto Gutiérrez Arquitectos (2013-2014), and as communication manager at Elemental (CL, 2014-2015). She started collaborating with Plan Común in 2013 and has been partner since 2015.

Thomas Batzenschlager (1987) French Architect—Graduated from Ecole d'Architecture de Nancy (FR, 2010) & M.Res. in Philosophy at Université Nancy 2 (FR, 2011). He worked at Spatial Practice (RPC, 2011), Open Architecture (RPC, 2012), Umwelt (CL, 2013) & Emilio Marín (CL, 2014). Author of "L'habitant temporaire" and co-editor "Lugares Comunes: Recoleta e Independencia" (2015). He has been working at Plan Común and teaching at PUC Architecture School (CL) since 2014.

Lucas Mateluna (1990) Chilean Architect—Graduated from Universidad Católica de Chile in 2015. He taught as assistant at PUC Architecture School (CL, 2014-2015).

## OFFICE PROFILE

Human Resources Felipe De Ferrari (CL), Diego Grass (CL), Kim Courrèges (FR), Thomas Batzenschlager (FR) Collaborators in the past Jose Lemaitre (CL), Lucas Mateluna (CL), Kotaro Shimada (JP), Costanza Zeni (IT), Jules Salmon (FR), Oliver

Burch (CH). Associated professionals Marcelo Cox (ex partner), Claudio Baladrón, Diego García, Jadue Livingstone, Osvaldo Larrain, Cristián Maze, Francisco Quintana, Kuehn Malvezzi Arquitectos, Mobil Arquitectos, Magdalena Besomi, Alfredo Thiermann, Umwelt, Amunategui Valdés, Christian Courrèges (artist), Javier Toro (artist).

Audiovisual Archive of Architecture Since 2007, founders of Plan Común have been working on an audiovisual archive of architecture called OnArchitecture (www.onarchitecture.com) This original content include conversations with more than 150 interviews—with architects, artists and editors—and more than 200 buildings portraits in different cities all over the world. This is just the tip of the iceberg of a research on modern and contemporary architecture that have been very relevant in the position, strategies and work systems pushing forward by Plan Común.

Plan Común office (Biarritz 1963, Providencia) Since March 2016, our office is based in an 18 sqm garage that we transformed into our working space. The main objective of the intervention was to maximise the potential use of an extremely small and dark room. Having this in mind, we performed two main strategies: 1) to integrate a new poly-carbonate envelope in both facade and ceiling—increasing natural light—and 2) to replace the roof structure by a wood deck, creating a new space for breaks and informal debate, right above our office space and below a very big and old oak tree—that also enables us to have a new horizon towards the surroundings—. This small project is an example of the attitude we have to respond to different briefs—regardless its scale, program or conditions—to offer an extra space—most of the times unsolicited or unexpected, for a limited budget—that promotes collective encounters.





## COMMON PLACES / RESEARCH

As architects, designers, authorities and citizens, we must choose the right to the city in favor of public realm. The city -the war cry of modern architecture, is now controlled by the ups and downs of market economy. We believe our discipline could counteract this process by creating useless value through collective public spaces – sometimes in detriment of private or individual interests-, making use of the strategic approach of architecture, producing new ways to inhabit the world.

We aim at producing alternatives which re-validate the public value of architecture as the way of thinking and building our cities. There are all kinds of themes or subjects of interest, from big scale to intimate spaces. The potential of architecture in this reproduction is based on disciplinary tools such as text and neutral drawings dealing with canonical architectural elements.

Common Places is a collaborative research promoted by Plan Común since 2012. This starts from a concern on questioning the validity of current operative models -whether they are ideological, economical, cultural or normative- in order to produce new and fertile public spaces with our own design skills and architectural tools.

For more information please visit [www.plancomun.com](http://www.plancomun.com)



FORM FOLLOWS...

# acting out of the niche

## WORLD IN TRANSITION

The world is changing. But how to change with the world? Can we change the world totally alone? But it is possible to set the goal of making a positive change in your own immediate surroundings. In the classical field of architecture, many do not find happiness, incorporate their own interests or their creativity. The daily routine work, the running in a hamster wheel of requirements and official rules often leaves one with no time or energy with which to change the world. Often one feels hopeless in executing change. It raises the question of how what happens next: for the machine to wither or to glow for a better environment?

«We're already starting» Christa Müller

## CHANGE YOUR OWN LIFE!

What can you accomplish here as an architect by acting positively in your own environment? What tools do we have to hand? What are your own abilities and what are their boundaries? How do you explore new fields and find other spaces, those that are left as the Other. How do you change from the dark side to one which meets your core values? How do you keep something available for the next generation, letting diversity

and the edge effect endure? How do demand the «right to the city»<sup>1</sup> in a place and time where many see no city?

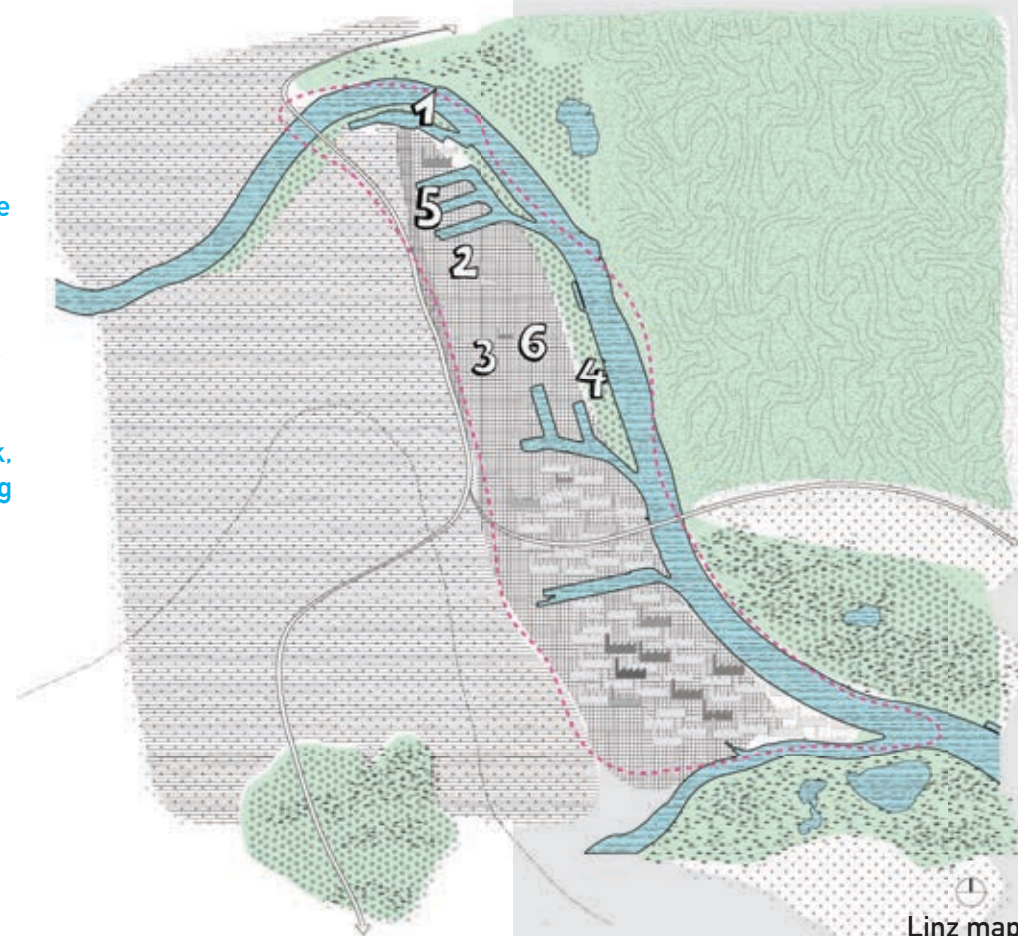
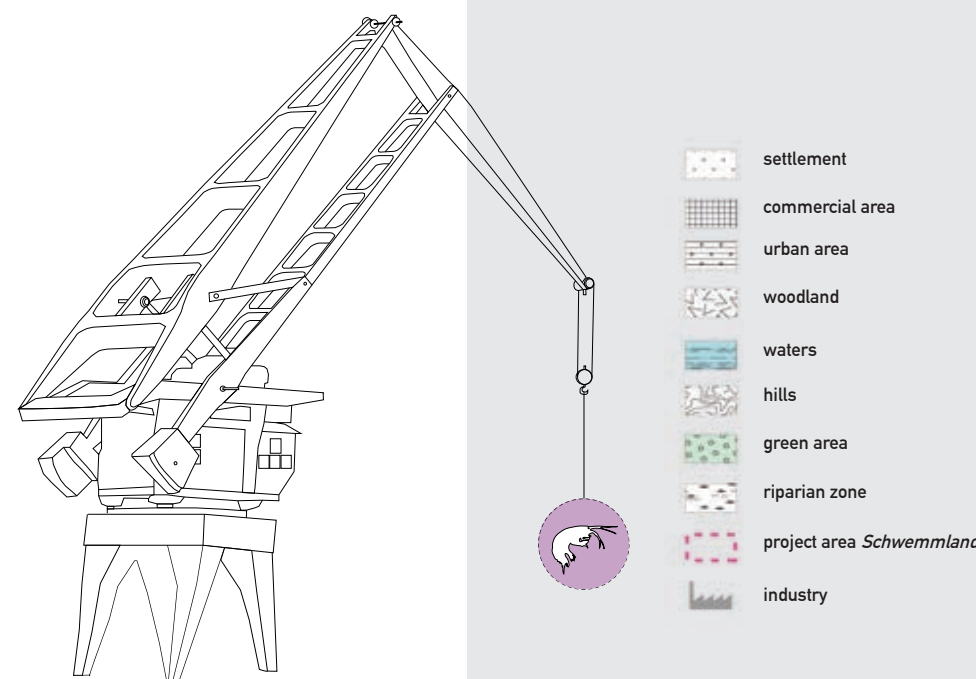
«For me there is no other place like this, which so intensely moves me, challenges me again and lets me discover, impresses me, torments me, fascinates me and it lets all the answers out. It is my home, which flows through my body and is all over me.»

C. Wiesmayr

## Getting involved with AREA, the SITE.

Stay in the familiar environment where one lives, works, lives, love and get involved, engage! Be an active citizen<sup>2</sup> and live the CHANGE! Actively work on it and think about it in new ways. Bicycle to work, even if there are no bike paths leading to the industrial area. Apply New Work, New Culture «NWNK»<sup>3</sup> as a motivating working model and pursue what you really really want! Self connecting with allies<sup>4</sup>, sharing the office with peers and get involved the collective affordable vacancy. Look for local conversations, even with those who do not speak the same (professional) language and try to see things differently. Make the space stronger where there is no one, and discover and grab hold of what is interesting.

1 Henri Lefebvre  
2 smart citizen, a „manifesto“ for smart citizens, based on Dan Hill's essay, WAAG Society  
3 New Work new Culture; by Frithjof Bergmann  
4 Engagez-vous!, Stephane Hessel



Linz map

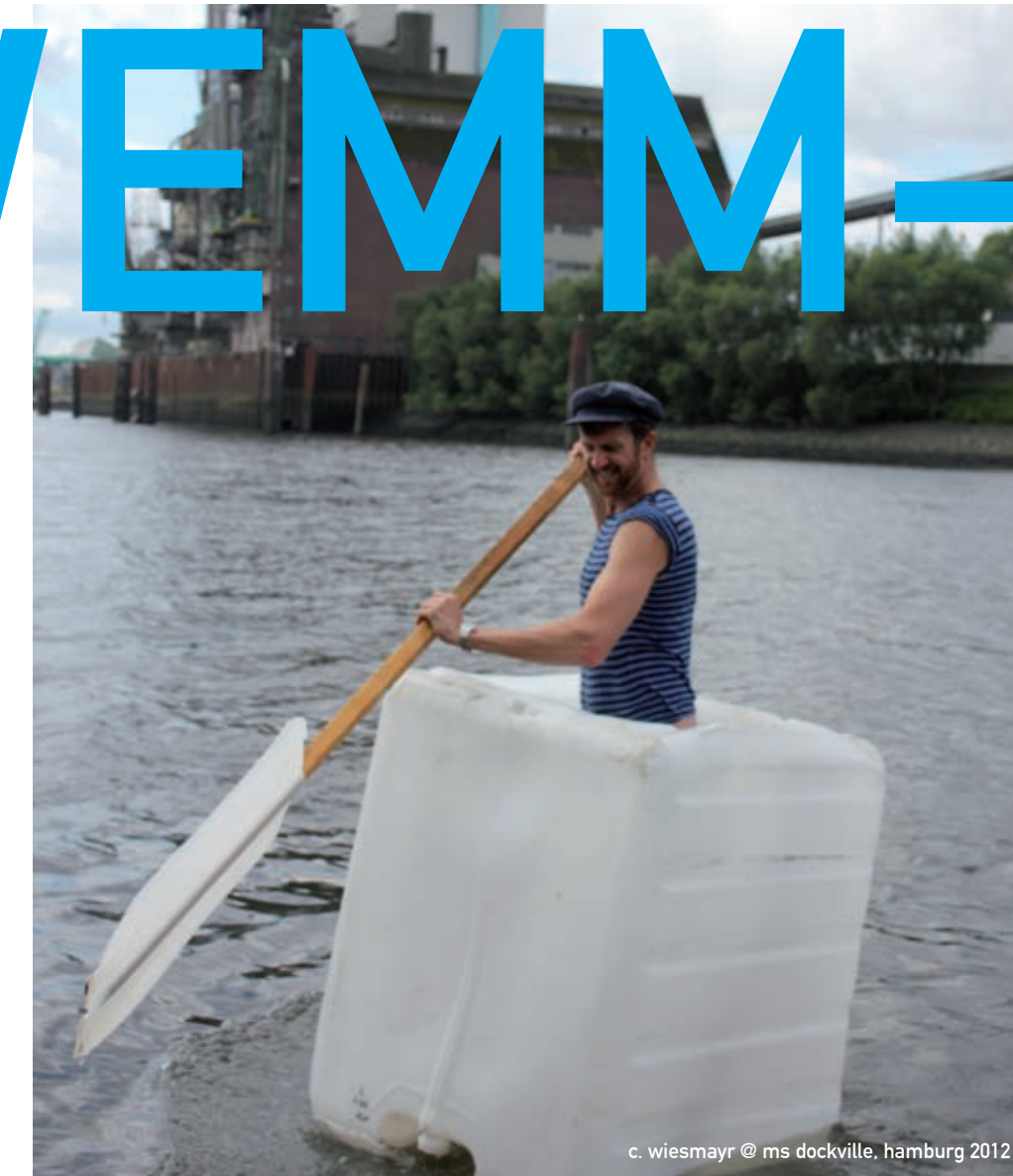
# SCHWEMMLAND

OPTIMISTIC PRACTICE

Linz - AUSTRIA

# SCHWEMM-

# LAND



c. wiesmayr @ ms dockville, hamburg 2012

## BIO

Schwemmland is part of a longer term and process-based examination of the eastern part of Linz. The nature of this heterogeneous urban space is currently part of international discussions about Zwischenstadt (In-Between Cities), and Metrozones. The area is characterised by constant change and transitory events. However, it is now clear that structural limits have been reached. There are hardly any empty spaces. This is why Schwemmland (former: bottomland) draws attention to the phenomenon of sensitive space frameworks, the *rurban niches*.

The *Rurban Niche* includes rural and urban influences. These are often residual spaces, gaps, space pods, wormholes, fallows which for certain reasons, in the short or long term have escaped mundane industrial uses and thus fallen through the gaps of the active capitalist system. Six out of seventeen analysed *rurban niches* were selected from Bernhard Gilli and Christoph Wiesmayr's master thesis, and presented publicly. These six special places were examined and interpreted in cooperation with local stakeholders and international guests in various ways (e.g. tours, discussions, texts, artistic interventions, actions, participative events).

Christoph Wiesmayr (1977): Linz, Austria), Rurbanist. Studied urban architecture in Graz. In 2012 he founded the association Schwemmland with Bernhard Gilli in the Linz Harbour district. In 2013 he founded and has published *Treib.Gut*,

an independent harbour journal. Since May 2013, he has been coordinator of "urban gardening" for the Soil Alliance Upper Austria.

„Here you were born, here is the brain of the monster, here you must fight.“

Che Guevara to Ziegler, Geneva 1964, first World Sugar Conference of the UNO.

Wiesmayr grew up in the Linz harbour and industrial area, on the farm of the last professional Danube fishing family. He continues to fight there like a post-modern Don Quixote against powerful monsters in an area apparently abandoned by God. His struggle is for a social and more liveable environment. As a Rurbanist Wiesmayr teaches and researches with his association Schwemmland between the rural and urban phenomena of this neo-liberal dominated landscape.

## OFFICE PROFILE

SCHWEMMLAND CLOUD  
transparadiso, urban-permaculture, slowfood, derivè-vienna, right to the city, gängeviertel hamburg, habitat-linz, new work new culture - frithjof bergmann, allmende kontor - berlin, klappakademie-peter artl, urban issues-vienna, afo, otelo, urban gardening, hands-on, performance laboratorim, urban-farm leonding, radio fro, kunstuniversität linz, kf-universität, prof. johanna rholshoven graz, justin winkler, esc-labor graz, die fabrikanten linz, tabakfabrik linz, isss-berlin, anstiftung erotomis -christa müller, zwischenstadt thomas sieverts & susanne hauser, something & son-london, donautics-linz, soilalliance, klimabündnis, keplersalon linz.

PROJECTS OF SCHWEMMLAND  
Connecting the InnerCity with the Outskirts

As a cultural producer Schwemmland operates locally over a longer time frame - Founding community gardens, Rurban Upcycling „Yellow House“, use of vacant properties, spatial interventions. In other ways, the organisation points out the qualities of the city outskirts through different activities: e.g. various exhibitions, interdisciplinary discourses, with guided herbal- and site-walks, bicycle tours or the magazine *Treib.Gut*.

*Treib.Gut*- The harbour magazine *Treib.Gut* serves as a medium for urban research and acts primarily as a subversive urban development tool. *Treib.Gut* is a mouthpiece for the edges towards the city and beyond. *Treib.Gut* documents micropotentials<sup>5</sup> in *Rurban Niches*. *Treib.Gut* forces communication with politics and commercial interests. The magazine tackles the territory, which is not picked up by daily media; especially deeper analysis and longer-term observations. *Treib.Gut* documents developments in the area and works on the modern history of the site.

The *Green Convoy mobile garden beds* At LinzFest 2013 under the topic „Courage!“ Schwemmland organised a bicycle ride bringing "mobile vegetable-beds" to new community

gardens in the East of Linz. These community gardens, "Hafengarten" and "Wachstumsphase" at the Tobacco Factory, were co-founded by Schwemmland.

Schwemmland used the "mobile beds" to connect the Inner City with its outskirts. Up to 1950, farmers of the eastern outskirts supplied the Inner City with fresh vegetables. By using their own strength or that of livestock, they transported the products to farmers markets, such as Linz Südbahnhofmarkt.

## ABOUT THE METHOD:

Schwemmland's long-term strategy applies "1000 small pinpricks" to its patient: the segregated urban landscape. They search for opportunities to observe these slumbering *Rurban Niches* and then „to pierce“ them, unlocking their hidden qualities and energies and astonishing the beholder. Particular attention is paid to work from the inside rather than from the top down. A chain reaction is started with often unimagined output across the inner and outer urban fabric. Occasionally the patient begins to wriggle like Frankenstein's monster. Often, however, it results in a failed „burb“ in the slow cogs of the city administration. But some reactions are always to be expected.

## OPTIMISM



Form follows ... exhibition at HDA Graz | Mariahilferstraße 2 | 8020 Graz | opening 9th of June 2016, 7pm | duration until 14th of August 2016 | Tue - Sun, 10am - 6pm | HDA im Palais Thunfeld - www.hda-graz.at | Future Architecture Platform - www.futurarch.com | www.issresearch.com





PERFORMANCE BY MICHELLE BROWN (IRL), PHOTO: WIESMAYR

### TENNIS COURT AT THE WINTER HARBOUR

The tennis court at the winter harbour, which has been occupied by pioneer plants for years, offers a special atmosphere. Schwemmland opened it temporarily and made it accessible to the public for situational discussions and performances.

#### »PRETTY-MESSY«, 2 May 2011

In cooperation with the Kepler Salon; Guest: Manfred Omahna, "othering" method. The art of learning to see and understand the "other"... Anchor: Sabine Keller/Kepler Salon

#### »SURROUNDED BY FIELDS, AT THE WATERFRONT«, 2011

Performance Laboratorium, Performance Festival; 10 Sept. 2011 Performance with international artists Organised by: Sibylle Ettengruber, Amel Andessner, Elisa Andessner



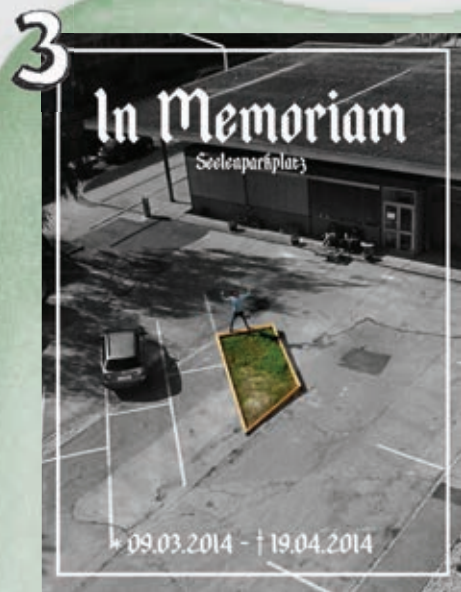
FAB ROOFTOP OPENING, PHOTO: STADLBAUER

### ON INDUSTRIAL ROOFS

In urban areas even a few hectares of open space on industrial roofs hold untapped potential. An interdisciplinary expert audience discussed possible future scenarios on sight.

#### »A LOT GOING ON UP THERE«, 8 August 2011

In cooperation with „Kepler Salon“;

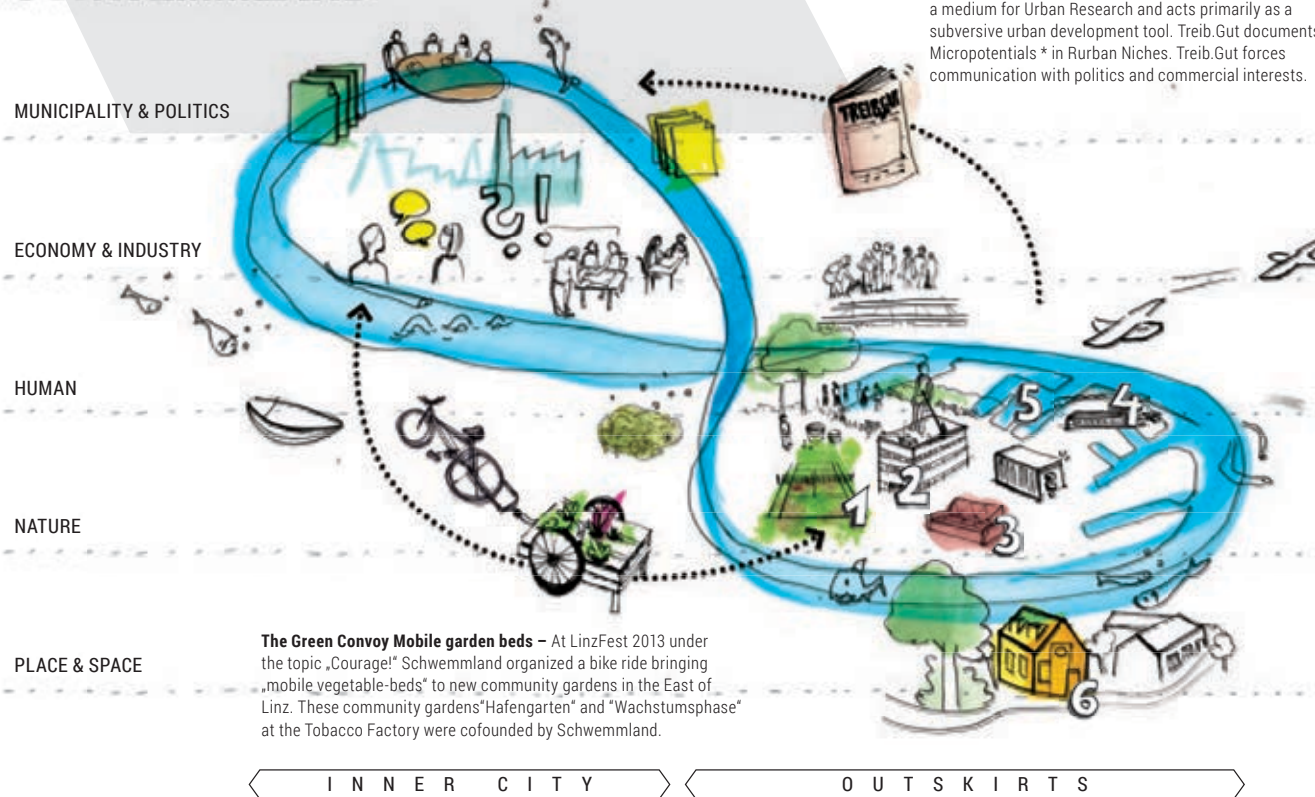


SOUL-PARKING, 2014, PHOTO: WIESMAYR

### SADNESS AND BEAUTY IN PARKING-LOTS

After 6pm and on weekends parking in the industrial area gradually deflates. Swept empty asphalt surfaces become barren and spooky. A few transform to flea market bazaars or test tracks for model car enthusiasts. Schwemmland tried to make these spaces available to the public through small interventions, and to address the right to public space in various ways.

## SCHWEMMLAND connecting INNERCITY : OUTSKIRTS



\*THE RURBAN PAPERGANG\* 2015, PERFORMANCE BY WIESMAYR, VIDEOSTILL: PUSCH



\*RED RAG\* 2015, PERFORMANCE BY TANJA BRANDMAYR, PHOTO: WINKLER

### ON THE GLIDER AIRFIELD

The glider airfield on the eastern outskirts of Linz offers on an area with 30ha a unique setting. The diverse brown-field site, the succession species on the periphery and the industrial silhouette in the background offer an open space for special encounters. City and nature are daily in dispute.

#### »45 MINUTES INDUSTRIAL ZONE«, GLIDER AIRFIELD, 2011

7 texts approaching space and staging. Text fragments in „facets“ and „Treib Gut“, published in 2012. Written and read by: Tanja Brandmayr

#### »ÜBERFLIEGER« 2015-2016

There are individuals or groups invited to produce interstitial confrontation, random events, alternative object orientation and its own performative representation. Target are local actions (Glider field area) that explore knowledge, conditions and city planning-oriented artistic potentials. „Überflieger“ is promoted by Linz Culture. „Überflieger“ is part of the „Non-Festival, collaboration with and by: Tanja Brandmayr, ESC Lab Graz, Melanie Pointner, Simone Schwaiger, Christoph Wiesmayr, and the airgilding-clubs of Linz.



DEAD MAN, DEAD WOMAN, 2011, „KLAPPKADÉMIE“ PETER ARLT

### HARBOUR LINZ

... already part of a global phenomenon of gentrification?

Amongst the international trend driving attractive waterfront housing, in recent years six hectares of water of the Linz harbour were filled in. The current „HafenCity“ Master Plan of the Linz AG was developed with no involvement of local interests. According to former LinzAG-Planner employees „The area is to be gradually adjusted“. „Smart City“ concepts are on the march and the area will continue to be gentrified by an encroaching event and property market. It is only a matter of time until the authentic small structures on the outskirts, are taken over by Starbucks and Co.

#### »HARBOUR MANIFESTO«, public city letter, 2011

Together with different local activists criticized the „filling up“ of the docks. The harbour manifesto was published in the magazine „Die Versorgerin“ 2011.

#### »DEAD MAN, DEAD WOMAN«, 2012-...

The silting up of the docks of Linz sparked a critical debate among various activists. In cooperation with „Klappakademie“ Peter Arlt; 6 August 2011 Film documentation: Georg Ritter, dorftv

»STAGING: KIOSQUE«, 10 Sept. 2011  
Christoph Weidinger, Clemens Bauder, Gregor Graf  
Film documentation: Jakob Kaiser + Magnus Hofmüller

#### »SOUL-PARKING«, 2014

During the week parking in the industrial area is so much sought after that rent for parking spaces is required. There is thus little or no public attractive zones where workers or service employees may stay undisturbed in breaks without having to consume something. Between 2011-2014 Schwemmland rented its own parking space in the former „Quelle Versand“ Building. This tarmac was most of the time unused, in preference for cycle transport. Suddenly Schwemmland got the idea to make the car park available to the public and without further do set up a raised bed with seating. This gift to the environment brought unfortunately only incomprehension and irritation by the landlord and was removed weeks later due to a car park renovation. Any construction requests to the landlord would have fallen on deaf ears.

#### »THE MOBILE COUCH«, 2012-2014

The mobile couch is provided depending on the user to different locations on the empty parking lot and used by neighbours

#### »PICNIC AND HAPPENINGS«, 2012-2014

On weekends and summer evenings the empty parking fortress was converted.



PICNIC, PHOTO: PIXELKINDER



DEAD MAN, DEAD WOMAN, 2012

#### »HARBOUR - HIKES«, since 2010

Guided by Christoph Wiesmayr for the Creative Region Upper Austria in autumn 2013. City researcher Charles Landry (GB) considers the harbour to still be an exciting zone, „For me the area is interesting because it is unfinished“, says Landry. This statement could be misinterpreted. For Landry sees this „Unfinished“ very well as a quality that has been untraceable in many European cities, or „adjusted“. The question arises amongst many, how will this rawness be maintained in the future?



EXPEDITION 2013, PHOTO: SCHWEMMLAND

#### »URBAN DESIGN LAB«, June 6th-8th., 2013

Expedition and co-supervision of workshops with „Ecosistema Urbano“ (Esp) for an alternative urban development at the port. Organized by Creative Region Upper Austria, directed by: Roland Krebs (Urban Issues, Vienna). The goal was the broadest possible participation of different groups with a multifaceted output. The developed projects were documented in the first issue of the „Treib Gut“ magazine.



HOLLABERERFARM – HARBOUR LINZ, PHOTO: URMANN, 2009

### AT THE HOLLABERERFARM

In the heart of the industrial zone a relic of the former low-lands survived. First mentioned in 1491, in summer the farm of the last professional fishing family of Linz offers traditional smoked fish out of the Danube. Christoph Wiesmayr, chairman of Schwemmland supports his family with various interventions on site.

#### »IS THIS THE LAST CHANCE?« 10 Sept. 2011

Tour, keynote speeches and discussion on the „rurban niches“ phenomenon with international guests in the Eastern part of Linz. An event of the Schwemmland initiative and the „afo“ Architecture Forum Upper Austria.

- TOUR through the area. Situational tour through the Eastern part of Linz with numerous guests; Barbara Holub (transparadiso-Vienna), Thomas Schneider (NWNK-Vienna), Christoph Laimer (derivè-Vienna), Friedrich Schwarz (botanicalgarden-Linz) and many on-site protagonists  
- KEYNOTE SPEECHES: Prof. Susanne Hauser (GER) + Prof. Thomas Sieverts (GER) „The Paradoxes and the Fall of Man“

#### »RESILIENCE & AQUAPONICS« since 2011

Together with his brother Franz (cook and last professional fisherman in Linz) Christoph Wiesmayr experimented on aquaponic systems with local perch and crayfish. There followed various aquaponic installations at various cultural events.

#### »RURBAN UPCYCLING - THE YELLOW HOUSE« since 2013

Schwemmland upcycled the attic of „Bellevue“. The former EU-Cultural-Capital project of Fattinger-Rieper-Orso Architects provided Franz Wiesmayr with a new opportunity. Using components from the local surroundings Bellevue became The Yellow House, used both as a tavern and for agricultural use. Since 2013 it has been continually adapted.

#### »COMMUNITYGARDEN: HAFENGARTEN« 2012-2015

The first Community Garden in Linz was founded here on a 2000m2 field. On 1 May 2012 the „Hafengarten“ started with about 30 participants and was organized by the association Schwemmland. This community-garden was a role model for other young community garden initiatives in Linz and Upper Austria. Schwemmland is looking out for a new area in the harbour.

#### »WILD-HERBS and NEIGHBOURHOOD TOURS« since 2012

Schwemmland organized many WILD-TOURS through the eastern part of Linz with different professionals.

#### »BEE-KEEPING & HONEY-TASTING« since 2014

The club „LinzBiene“ operates city beekeeping hives on special sites such as the Town Hall, the Cathedral, ... or here at the Hollabrerfarm. By „Honey Tasting“ your own taste gets sharpened as you discover the city in a new way.



SMOKED DANUBE-FISH, PHOTO: CHMARA



URBAN UPCYCLING „THE YELLOW HOUSE“



IN BEYOND, PHOTO: WIESMAYR



HAFENGARTEN – HARVEST, PHOTO: WIESMAYR



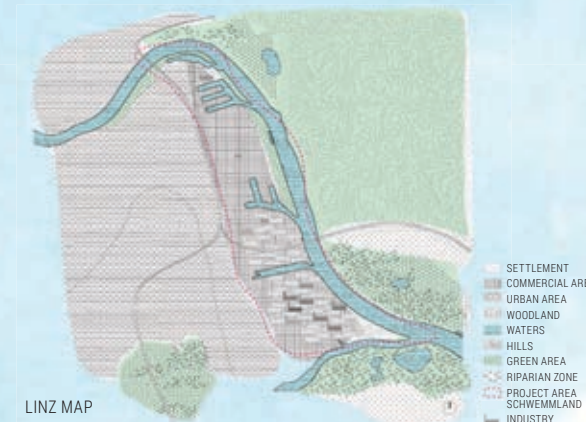
HONEY TASTING, PHOTO: MESIC



# SCHWEMMLAND

SCHWEMMLAND is a globally oriented and regionally active association. Its goal is to protect undeveloped rurban land, remaining areas, „rurban niches“ in the east of Linz from a global sellout in order to resist commercial pressure on these areas. In turn, by preserving them they are opened to the urban population as a field of possibilities and living space that creates identity.

www.schwemmland.net



LINZ MAP



FORM FOLLOWS...

# finance

Form follows finance: the vocabulary of contemporary design has become a linguistic minefield: computational, digital, algorithmic and parametric design are all used fairly interchangeably, even though they have extremely specific distinctions. Computational design, for example, is now a redundant description. I learnt to draw using the Rotring Isograph, a finicky pen requiring perfect verticality, the steady hand of a neurosurgeon and the patience of a particularly tolerant and good humoured saint. I don't know anyone under 40 who habitually draws this way — and why would you? I'm not nostalgic, the computer is progress.

It is, however, important to be precise when talking about design that is algorithmic or parametric (not to be confused with parametricism, which only refers to Schumacher's movement). The difference is spatial versus non-spatial design: computational parameters are most

often used to control complex or contingent forms, which might be as sophisticated as the engineering logic underpinning a stadium roof, or as banal as the regulatory dimensions of fire stairs. Parametric design is about accelerating and simplifying the design process.

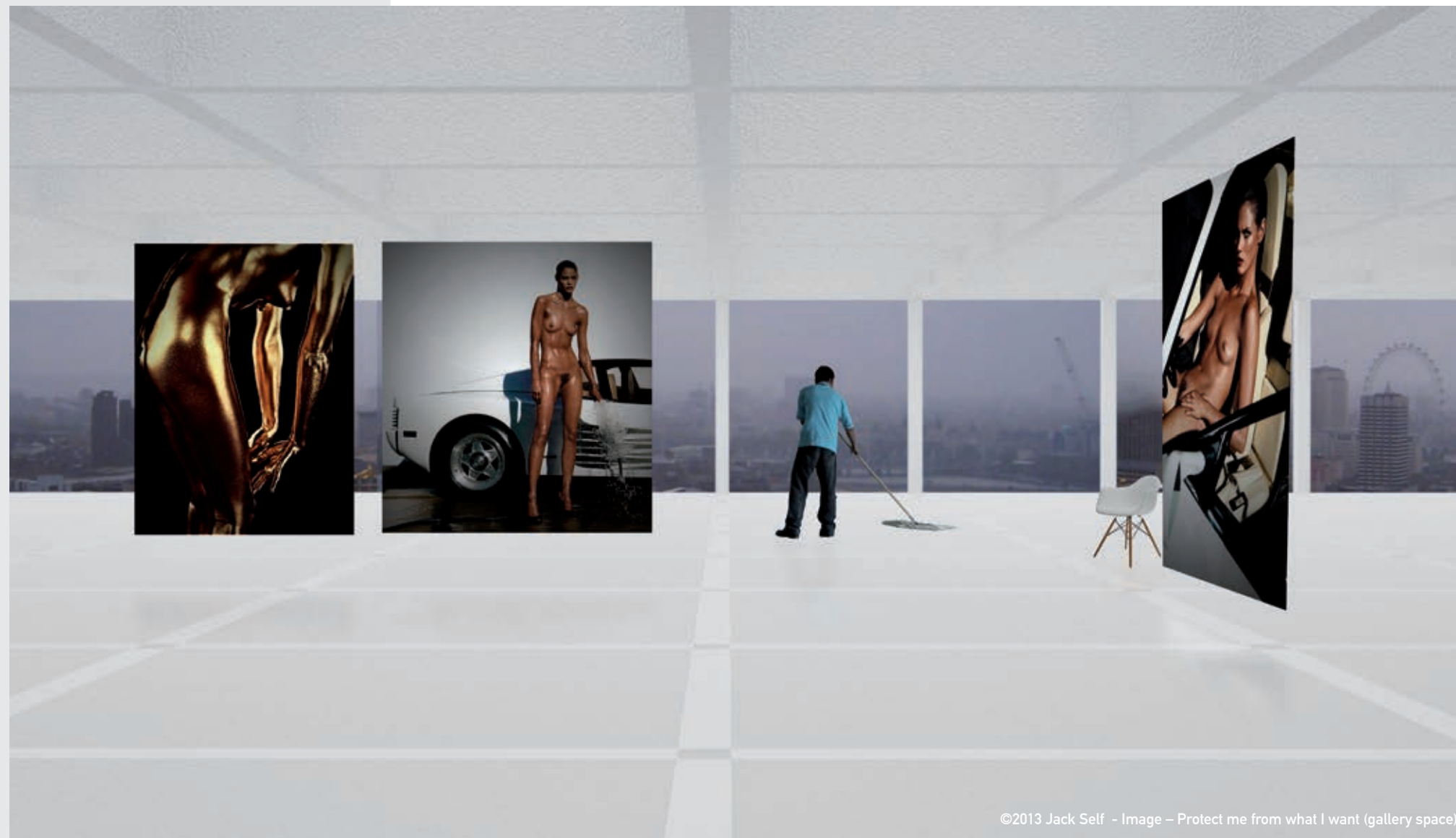
By contrast, algorithms are functional expressions (in the mathematical sense) and describe interrelations that have an abstract form. The most common error of those using algorithms in architectural design is to think, à la Frei Otto, that their most useful applications are stylistic, structural or aesthetic. In fact, as developers well know, the true value of the algorithm concerns financial efficiency. And it is important to remember that fiscal interrelationships — of debt, capital, returns and appreciation — are always political assertions. Everyone with a mortgage (literally, a "death grip") knows that the terms of how we fund

architecture are designed to enforce hegemonic social power relations. Neoliberalism, currently,

The Ingot, which formed the project at the core of *Real Estates: Life Without Debt* (Bedford Press, 2014) presents an extension to the field of architecture. It took large volumes of data concerning the space, time and cost of housing and rearranged them into an algebra of functional values. It's main ambition was to explore how changing the period of time we use to finance architecture can change its conditions of occupancy and material form. It showed that a property bond lasting 50 years could provide a high rate of interest to investors, an extremely high quality build (over a half century any maintenance costs come out of your profit, so environmental sustainability is extremely important) and a very low rent level: just 46% of the London City rate. The tower was gold-plated because the fluctuating (but historically increasing) price of

gold is itself a source of profit over 50 years. Gold also happens to be one of the most sustainable materials available, as it is a noble metal: it doesn't corrode.

What this demonstrates is that the design of financial parameters is a fundamentally political project, and one therefore that should be integral to architecture. This is not the architect-as-developer, which by and large is just a figure enforcing the status quo, but rather the architect-as-financier, which frames the architect as the designer of economic ideologies and forms of life.



©2013 Jack Self - Image - Protect me from what I want (gallery space)

OPTIMISTIC PRACTICE

# JACK

# SELF

London - GREAT BRITAIN



## BIO

Jack Self (1987) is an architect and writer based in London. He is director of the REAL foundation and curator of the 2016 British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. His writing has appeared in *Architectural Design*, *The Guardian*, *New Philosopher*, *O32c* and *Dezeen*, as well as elsewhere. Jack's first book was *Real Estates: Life Without Debt* (Bedford Press 2014), now in its second printing. He is contributing editor for the *Architectural Review*, where he has worked in a number of capacities since 2009. As an editor for *Strelka Press* (2011-13), he developed the first print-on-demand books on architecture. Jack founded *Fulcrum*, a free weekly "pursuing architecture and the third millennium." *Fulcrum* remains the world's most read student publication about architecture and has been widely exhibited - most notably at the 2012 Venice Biennale. Jack holds a Bachelors of Architecture from the University of New South Wales (Sydney 2007), a Diploma of Architecture from the Architectural Association (2014) and a Master's in Philosophy from the University of London (2012). His MA dissertation examined the morality of neoliberal economic theory. As a designer, he has worked for several international firms, amongst them *Ateliers Jean Nouvel* in Paris and London (2007-09). His clients and partners include developers, housing trusts and public institutions (most recently the British Council and the Victoria & Albert Museum).

## OFFICE PROFILE

I founded the Real Estate Architecture Laboratory (REAL) in 2015 as an architectural foundation with a double mission of critical inquiry and cultural production. We conduct original research to promote innovation in the built environment, and the methodology uses analysis and critique to present bold propositions and credible alternatives to conventional practice. I would like to use my work with REAL to influence how and where we live, and the conditions of that life.

Real estate describes our political and economic bond to property. This is a relationship determined by categories of ownership, different forms of labour, and the complex power structures that make up society. The focus of my work, and REAL, is the pragmatics of higher quality, more affordable and better-managed cities. My dedication to spatial equality encompasses the financing and construction of architecture, its terms of ownership and its contribution to standards of living. My work bridges diverse fields, from architecture, development, urbanism and industry, to art, design, economics and politics.

REAL's public programme includes cultural events, exhibitions and the publishing of original and historical texts about architecture and real estate. Our flagship magazine "The Real Review" presents independent architectural editorial to a general readership. REAL is a collaborative organisation, with light bureaucracy and minimal overheads. Wherever possible it seeks to utilise the existing structures of its partner institutions, to foster inclusivity, non-competition and collective enquiry. It is above all dedicated to the highest quality of intellectual and creative output.

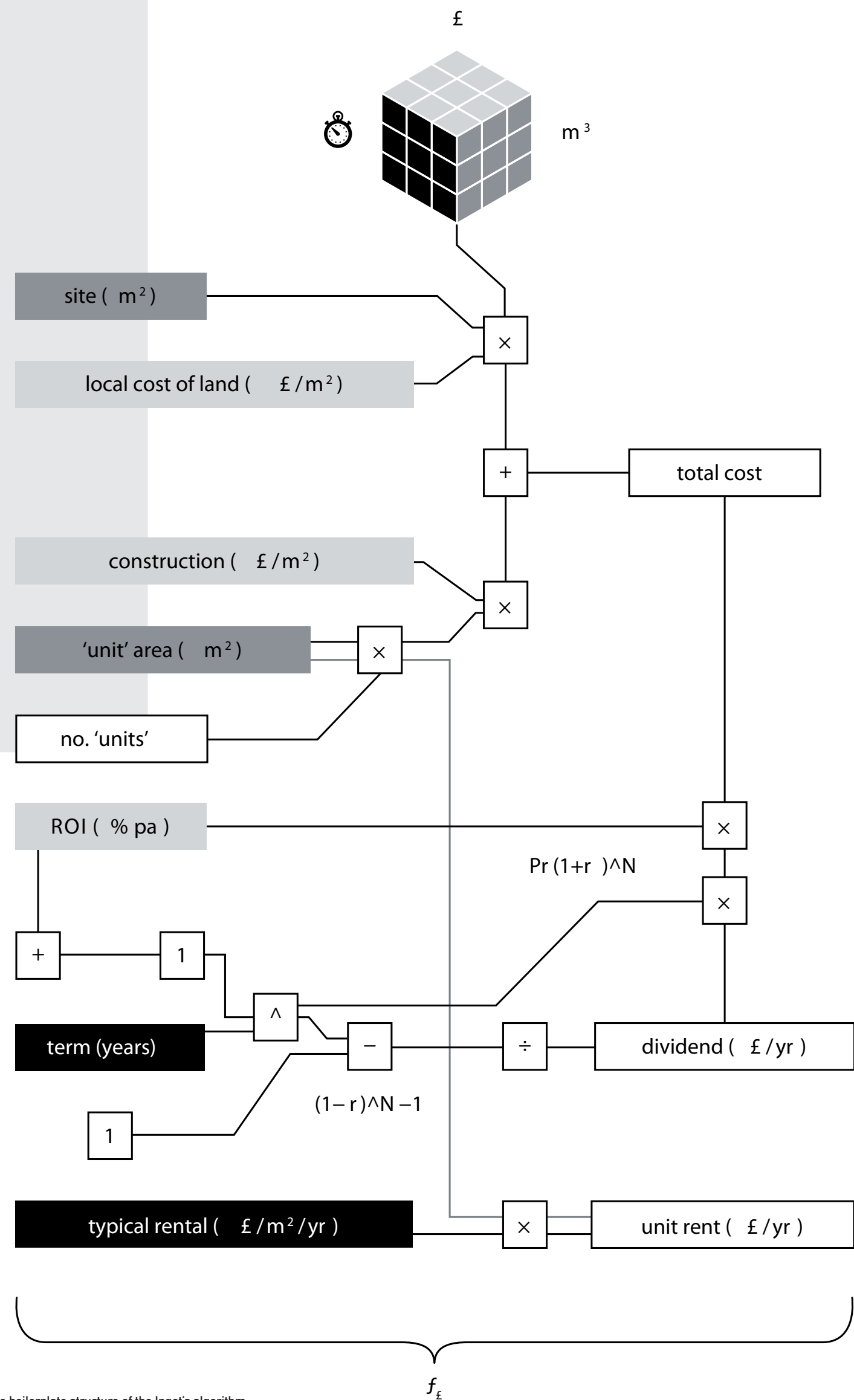
## OPTIMISM

Albert Camus, in the opening chapter of *The Rebel* muses on the essence of the human condition. He says what makes humanity different from every other animal is that it rejects its own nature. No fox wakes up in the morning and asks what it means to be a fox, or whether it is possible to be a better fox - it simply gets on with its foxy behaviour. This is true of all other animals: they don't reflect or auto-critique. By contrast, humans reject what it means to be human: we are all rebels.

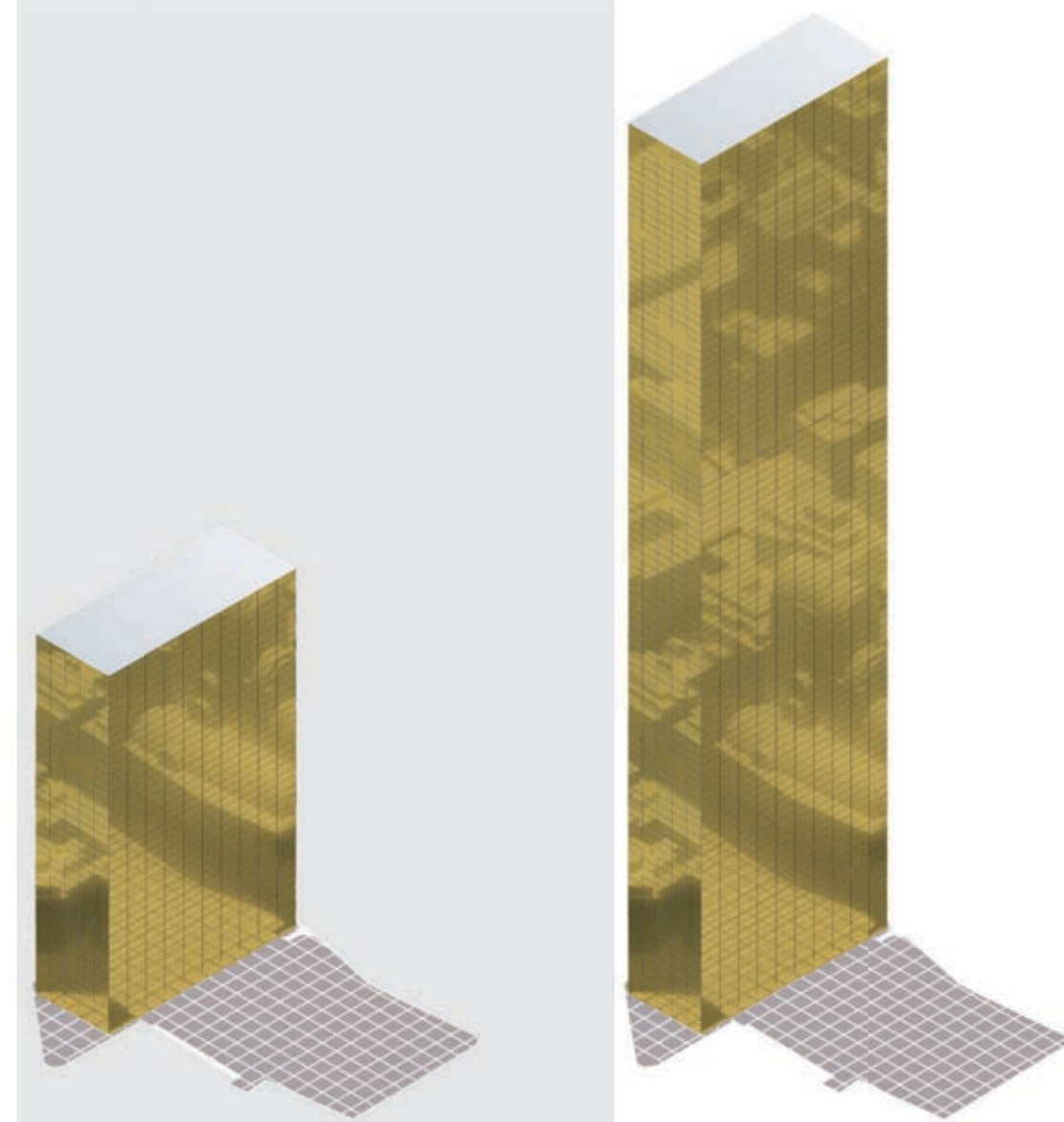
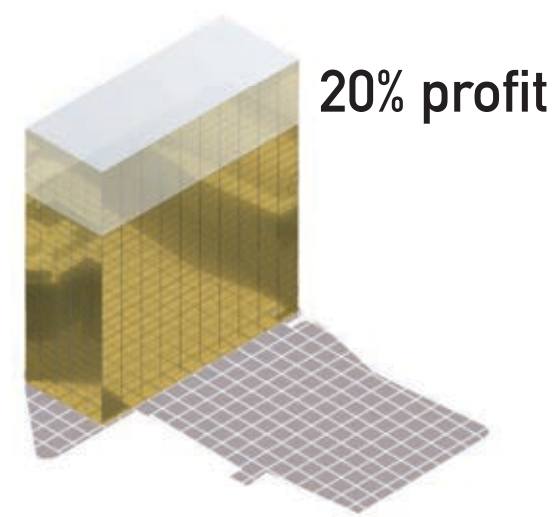
As the twentieth century's world order slowly tears itself apart, we are entering into a new paradigm defined by zero-growth, fundamentalisms of every kind, widespread civil wars (often cold war proxies), environmental degradation, global warming, mass migration and staggering wealth inequality. It can be easy to get depressed, or feel the weight of humanity's desperation.

I am optimistic because there is no alternative: to reject the condition we find ourselves subjected to and believe that the world could be better is integral to my understanding of my own humanity. What becomes important then is how I propose to change the world, and how I imagine the efficacy of my own agency.





©2013 Jack Self - Diagram showing the boilerplate structure of the Ingot's algorithm



©2013 Jack Self - Diagram showing the influence of the algorithm on form

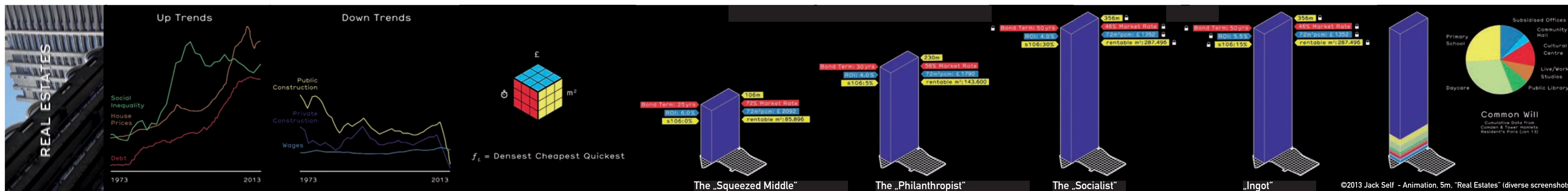
**Developer's Model**  
 Height: 90m  
 100% Market Rate  
 Cost: £182.219m  
 Value: £218.662m

**Affordable Model**  
 Height: 106m  
 Bond Term: 25yrs  
 ROI: 6%  
 s106: 0%  
 72% Market Rate  
 72m2pcm: £2092  
 rentable m2: 85,896

**The Ingot Model**  
 Height: 356m  
 Bond Term: 50yrs  
 ROI: 5.5%  
 s106: 15%  
 46% Market Rate  
 72m2pcm: £1352  
 rentable m2: 287,496



©2013 Jack Self - Image - Image - Western elevation



\*Relatively Adjusted

©2013 Jack Self - Animation, 5m. "Real Estates" (diverse screenshots)



FORM FOLLOWS...

# urbi-nature

Cities were and remain the centre of innovation, exchange, interests, culture and art. Increasing urbanisation is taking place all over the world. In highly urbanised areas the understanding of landscape changes. Landscape is not an untouched natural area on the outskirts of cities anymore, it is more an important part of the city, which contributes to a high quality of life and a better urban climate. But above all people change the relationship and awareness to their cities. Even if we are aware of the positive effects which nature is able to provide in cities, we pay almost no attention to the complex and subtle ways in which architecture and nature can relate to each other. History showed us extraordinary examples of visionary projects which explore new models of coexistence between buildings and nature. Lots of those concepts seem to be forgotten.

The mixed use building complex "Cit  des  toiles" in Ivry sur Seine, Paris 1970-1975 manifests Jean Renaudie's antithesis to functionalism. He converted the understanding of a city into a living organism of diversity, whose parts are closely related. He

claimed vegetation as a necessary condition in living environments and believed in the right to enjoy a portion of natural space, not just a balcony but a real terrace where trees could grow.

As a contemporary position, Sou Fujimoto envisions in his Energy Forest project a proposal for the 21st Century Energy Station. A large scale structure as place where light, wind, and rich vegetation mixes with the activity of people, vehicles, insects and animals. He transforms the energy station of the 20th Century, formed as a place of efficiency and transit, into a place of complexity combining qualities of road and square. Located in the centre of cities like Tokyo and Rome Fujimoto's imaginary Energy Forest opens a door to new programs and typologies of activity and communication for highly urbanised areas.

As initial project of our practice, we developed an "Urban Super Forest" contributing to such understanding of city. The fact that growth of cities all over the world is connected with extending into "green land", we decided to flip this reality by converting

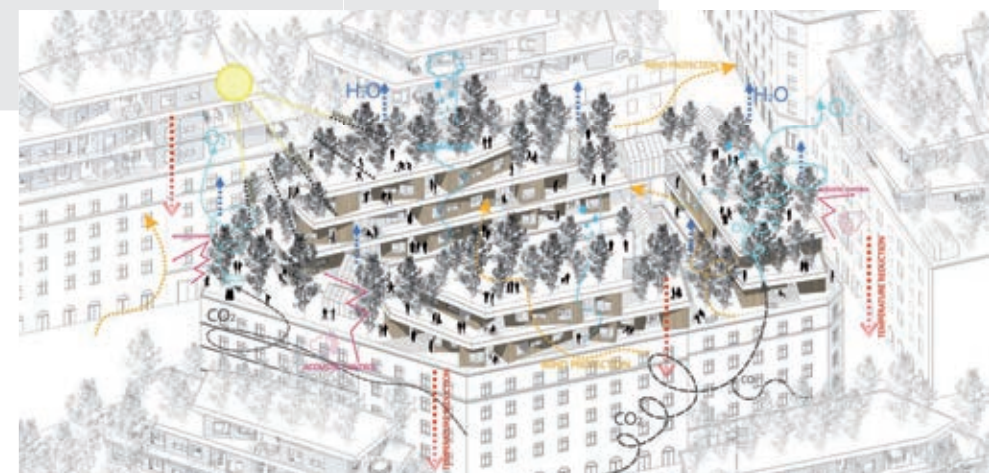
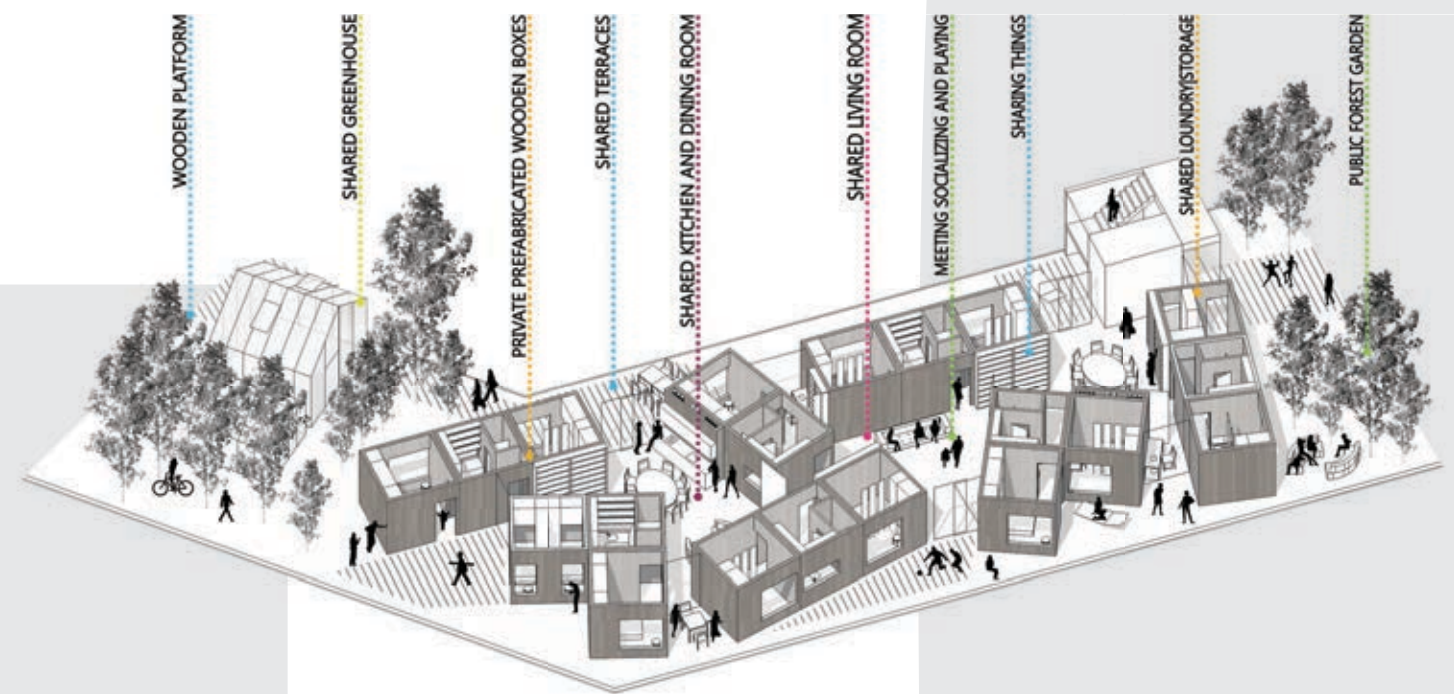
the existing city to an invisible city, combining urban and nature and giving back green land.

The idea is to change the "Google Earth" view of Vienna radically by adding a layer based on a new housing typology,

while keeping the existing "charm" of urban life on the streets of Vienna. Combining the idea of a big scale transformation of the roof-level into an urban forest in accordance to human scale and how inhabitants would live in this new environment. We analysed the status quo of the current housing

production and it turned out that very few newly built housing estates take into consideration our changing society. For younger generations the idea of profit is becoming more important than living in properties and sharing is only seen as a pragmatic way to reduce expenses. We designed a new housing typology of sharing communities, which condensed qualities of single family houses with urban lifestyle in an open structure. This approach provides a flexible way to customise a mobile lifestyle.

The presence of nature in an artificial organism filled with program evolves a next evolutionary step of urbanism. Understanding the city as a field of possibilities and opportunities, saturated with program and nature, opens a wide area for new typologies. Any urban program interacting with nature in a symbiotic way, creates unknown hybrid forms and reacts to basic human needs. Exploring, inventing and thinking this superposition of URBI and NATURE opens unexpected ways of creating future cities as place for people to live, work, socialise and exist.



OPTIMISTIC PRACTICE

# SUPER FUTURE GROUP



© Simon Wehler

## BIO

Super Future Group is an architectural office based on the international experience of the co-founders Ania Jurkiewicz and Robert Lamprecht. Focused on improving living conditions and thinking about future developments of cities, their mission is to explore new ways of responding to a changing world. Open to new unexpected ideas, entirely dedicated to architecture and urbanism. Super Future Group is entering unknown terrain in architectural production. Their initial project "Urban Super Forest" is a statement for a future of sustainable and ecological change to transform our cities into green oases of urban life. Urban Super Forest is recently shown in several exhibitions like Architecture of Necessity Exhibition 2016 at Virserum Art Museum / Sweden, Treehousing Competition Exhibition at the FAO United Nations Headquarter in Rome and Form Follows... Exhibition at House of Architecture Graz.

**SUPER FUTURE GROUP ...**  
 ... BRINGS NATURE BACK TO THE CITY  
 ... CONNECTS URBAN AND NATURE  
 ... INVENTS NEW TYPOLOGIES  
 ... LISTENS TO PEOPLE  
 ... INCREASES LIVING QUALITIES  
 ... CREATES SPACES TO SOCIALISE  
 ... IS ANTI DOGMATIC  
 ... RESPONDES TO A CHANGING WORLD  
 ... EXPLORES LOCAL NEEDS  
 ... CREATES SPACES FOR PEOPLE  
 ... BELIEVES IN A SUPER FUTURE

## BIO

**MSC ARCH. ANNA JURKIEWICZ**  
 Born in Poland. Graduated at the Architecture and Urban Planning Faculty at the Silesian University of Technology in Poland. As a freelancer she was working with several foundations and architects, she was also involved in organization exhibitions and architectural workshops aimed at improving of the public space and promoting Polish architecture. She participated in many competitions and workshops at the local and international level. Finalist and winner of the International People's Choice Award in the 5th Advanced Architecture Contest, IaaC. Member of the EASA- European Architecture Students Assembly in 2011-2014. She gained valuable practical experience in Poland, Turkey and Austria.

**ARCH. DI ROBERT LAMPRECHT**  
 Born in Austria. Graduated at the Graz University of Technology. His master-thesis "Theatre on T tenhengst" was winner of GAD-Awards 07/08. He was working on several winning competitions for GS-architects and Atelier Thomas Pucher as Sinfonia Varsovia, LWL Rehabilitation Clinic Dortmund, MP09 Headquarters Pachtleitner Graz. As leading architect of execution department and project manager at Atelier Thomas Pucher for LWL Rehabilitation Clinic Dortmund and Residential Towers Viertel Zwei Plus Rondo Vienna he gained fundamental experience in construction processes. State-approved civil engineer and member of the architects chamber for Styria and Carinthia since February 2016.

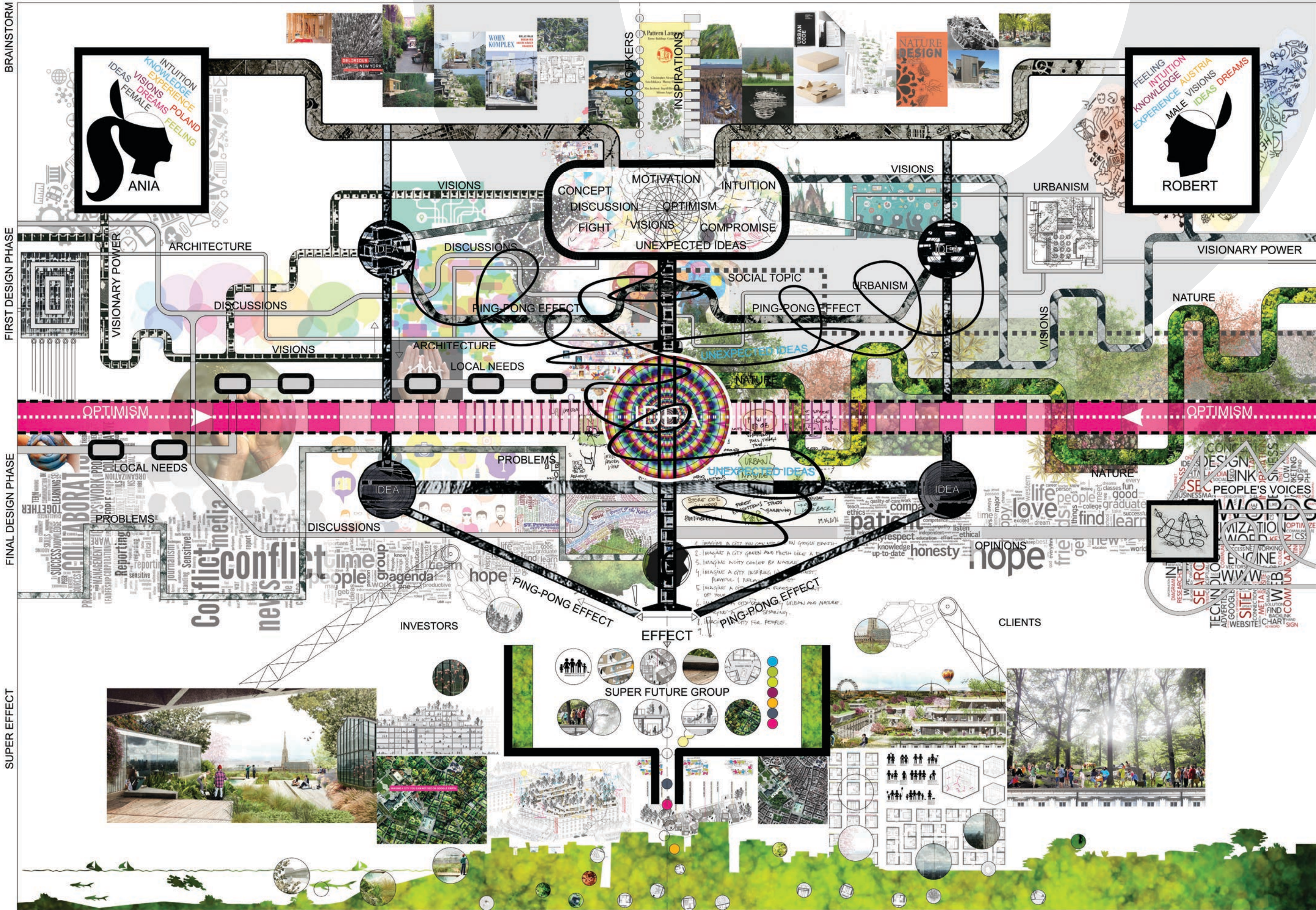
## OFFICE PROFILE

- 2 co-founders
- 1 basecamp (A)
- 1 escape-shelter (PL)
- 1 webpage
- 1049 facebook friends
- 25 pinterest followers
- 1 EASA - European Architecture Student Assembly - network
- 1 table (100 x 326cm)
- 6 chairs
- 1 arm chair
- 1 sideboard
- 1 container
- 1 couch
- 35 lfm shelf system - prototype (design by superfuture group)
- 215 books (109-DE / 77-PO / 59-EN)
- 417 magazines
- 2,5 plants
- 1 picture - archigram instant city
- 4 pictures - nude drawings
- 2 stamps (civil engineer / office)
- 1 house sculpture
- 1 table lamp
- 2 coffee machines
- 1 workstation iMac
- 1 workstation Toshiba
- 1 laptop
- 1 iPad Pro & iPencil
- 1 Synology NAS 6TB - Datenspeicher
- 5 USB sticks
- 1 inkjet printer A4/A3
- 1 inkjet printer A2
- 1 styrocutter
- 1 drilling machine
- 1 tool box
- 2 smartphones A / 1 smartphone PL
- 1 office credit-card
- 1 office bank-card
- 3 bicycles (city / mountain / mountain)
- 1 car (A) / 1 backup car (PL)

## OPTIMISM

What about our optimism? In times of crises it's fundamental to understand the power of optimism. Crises refine life and make people discover what they are. Recognising a changing world as an opportunity to create a livable future is fundamental for our collaboration. Driven by positive response of an optimistic approach, motivation is generated automatically. All effort and energy is focused on finding solutions, answering questions, and creating statements in an inspiring way. With optimism you get control about your destiny. Choosing an optimistic point of view, we are able to change our life and world in the way we want it to be. Being aware of having choices, we are highly motivated to work creatively on what we want in life. Challenging a complex world, our optimism is not blind. We are realistic in what we are doing and unrealistic in what we are dreaming. Thinking and collaborating on a future we believe in, is keeping us on track in our daily work. The answer for difficulties is facing them and finding a positive perspective. The secret key of change is to act. Thinking and talking is not enough. Our optimism is believing in positive change. We believe in our visions. We believe in a better future. We believe in a SUPER FUTURE.







FORM FOLLOWS...

# recognition

We work in neighbourhoods that urbanists call 'informal'. However, we never quite understood what the term was supposed to mean, when it is affixed to settlements that are incredibly complex and diverse.

Etymologically speaking, formal entities follow the rules of logic. When prefixed with 'in', the meaning is inverted, and by extension what is informal defies logic. It implies that something is irrational, unpredictable, and thus potentially dangerous. At the extreme, the informal denotes the uncivilised. Phantasmagorical informal settlements are the anti-city – a contemporary avatar of the wild forests of the middle ages.

The myths and fantasies surrounding the notion of the informal and the moral justification for intervention are reminiscent of the colonial enterprise that justified itself as a civilisational mission.

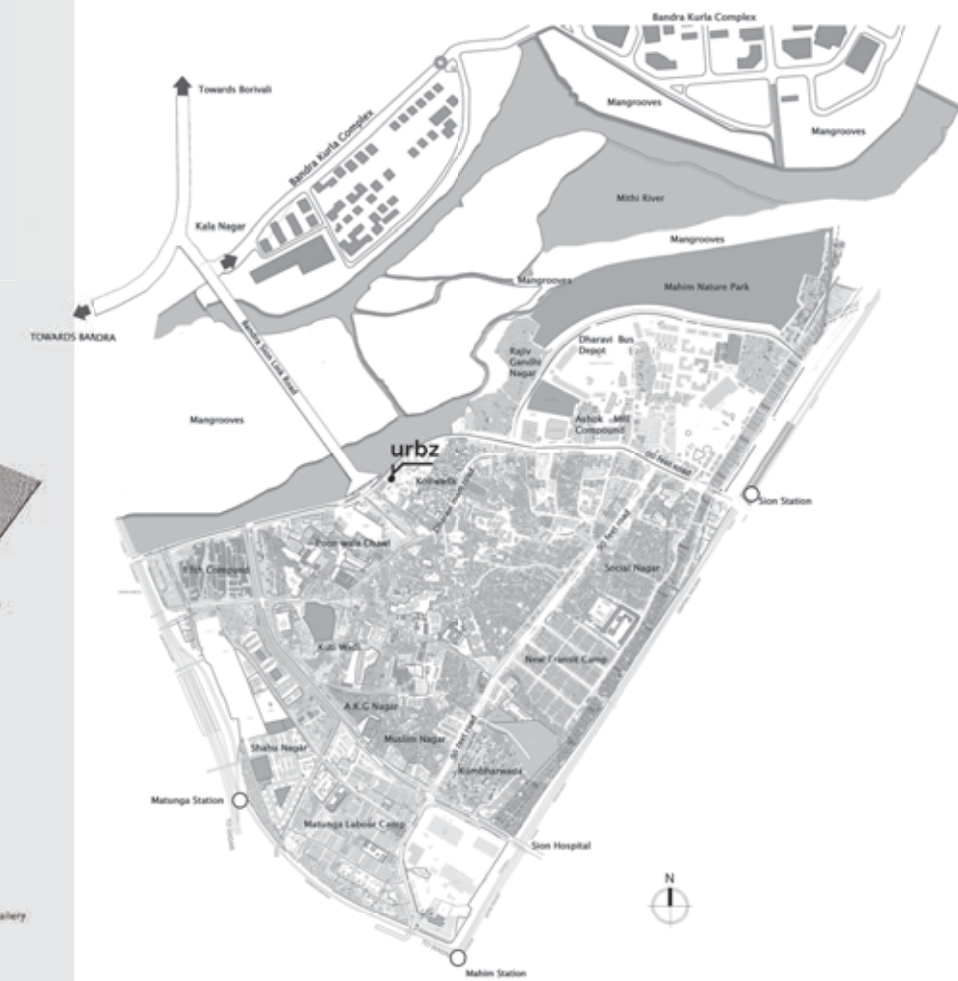
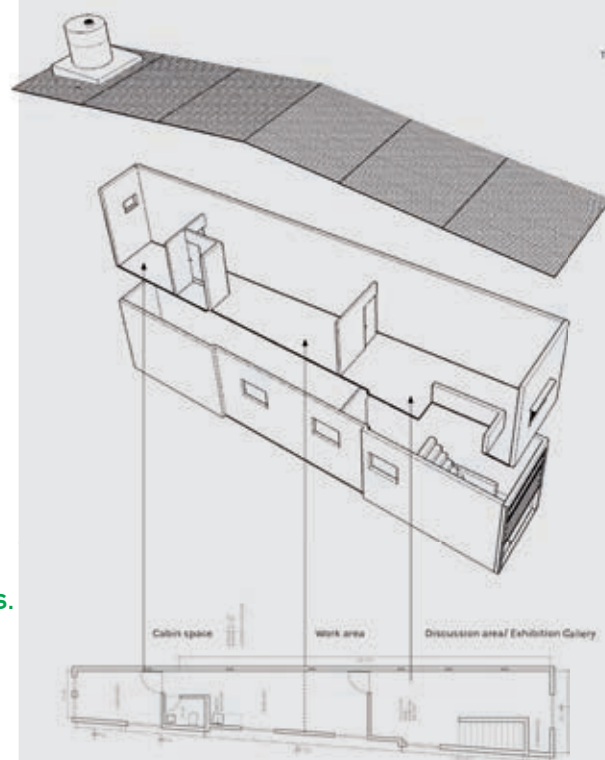
Our approach has been to recognise and validate previously unidentified urban forms as well as the spontaneous organisational principles that drive development of habitats.

The process of recognition involves a reorientation of our gaze, and the way we interpret and deal with the world around us. It is about framing the reality in way that allows us and everyone else to become legitimate actors. It is about the acceptance of our world as an unfinished and imperfect, collective work in process. And taking part in that process.

Our practice builds on the capacity of people to develop their own habitats, to create their own contexts. We recognise the role that people in homegrown settlements play in improving their own condition. This is the first step towards supporting them in their efforts to give form to the places they inhabit.

Instead of inventing the 'city of the future' (smart or otherwise) from the white slate of university labs or architects' studios, we must learn how to take the existing city as a starting point. Our task as urbanists and inhabitants is to keep on improving the city we inherited by making it our own.

We reject the utopia of the 'future' with its inane idealism and naïve detachment from reality. Instead we embrace the present – regardless of its how screwed up it is – and engage with it wholeheartedly.



OPTIMISTIC PRACTICE

Mumbai, Goa - INDIA

# URBZ



## BIO

We started urbz about 8 years ago, after a workshop we organised together in Dharavi, Mumbai. At the time, Rahul had just moved to Goa and Matias was still in Tokyo. After our first encounter in Mumbai, we created the blog [airroots.org](http://airroots.org) and started developing our own approach, which we call 'urbanology'. It combines anthropology, urban planning and our passion for places and the people who inhabit them. We always wanted urbz to be an open, experimental and experiential platform, a vehicle for learning and engagement. We now have collaborators in India, Brazil, Columbia, Greece, Switzerland and the US. We can't imagine ourselves doing anything else!

## OFFICE PROFILE

urbz is an experimental platform for the production and sharing of knowledge on cities and neighbourhoods.

It operates from Mumbai and Goa in India and has branches in Brazil, Colombia and Switzerland.

It organises collaborative workshops around the world, bringing together residents, artists, urbanists and activists.

In Mumbai, urbz works with local actors to design and build within communities, collaboratively and incrementally.

Rather than offering wholesale solutions to "rehabilitate" slum dwellers, urbz works to marginally improve the context in which people live.

urbz believes that residents are experts of their neighbourhoods. Their everyday experience of the places, where they live and work, constitute an essential knowledge for planning and urban development.

## OPTIMISM

Statement about our pessimism and our optimism for the future of architecture

Perhaps it is not so much that architecture doesn't have a future, but the notion of the future itself that has become anachronistic. According to Bruno Latour, we lost the future somewhere in the twentieth century. We are only left with an "avenir".

L'avenir is what comes to us, as opposed to the future, which we were foolishly projecting –and which is now speaking back to us. What seemed to be externalities that could be ignored or dealt with later, are now overwhelming us, and we must cope with the messy world we have somehow created.

The notion that we could expand our present and project ourselves towards a future of our own making has given way to something else –which is not inexorably tragic. Anticipating what is coming next, requires no less creativity and foresight than drawing the future on a blank page.

As practitioners, we must be pragmatic, daring and optimistic. We must learn to deal with forms of emergence that are outside the scope of architectural practice and actually draw inspiration from them. This necessarily implies another relationship to one's own creativity.

It is not about imposing one order onto another, or bringing more rationality into an existing context or process, but about connecting one's own expertise with the knowledge of actors who are rooted in their daily lives.

If knowledge is a function of knowing and experience, then actors rooted in their realities are the best starting point.



## Future of Architecture



Seen from Mumbai, an urban agglomeration of about 20 million people, which generates 20% of the Indian GDP, architecture seems like a nice idea, which along with countless other social ambitions, has found no resonance in the contemporary world. Perhaps it is not so much that architecture doesn't have a future, but the notion of the future itself that has become anachronistic. According to Bruno Latour, we lost the future somewhere in the twentieth century. We are only left with an "avenir". L'avenir is what comes to us, as opposed to the future, which we were foolishly projecting –and which is now speaking back to us. What seemed to be externalities that could be ignored or dealt with later, are now overwhelming us, and we must now cope with the messy world we have somehow generated.

The notion that we could expand our present and project ourselves towards a future of our own making, has given way to something else –which is not inexorably tragic. Anyhow, anticipating what is coming next requires no less creativity and foresight than drawing the future on a blank page.

Along with architecture, the idea of the city, as an engine for growth, as an equaliser, as the locus of modernity, seems irremediably bankrupt.

Overstretched infrastructures and corrupt institutions are weighing on us all. The city is not designed by anyone, but rather abandoned to the tyrannical rule of a brand of ultra-liberalism never seen before.

60% of Mumbai residents are said to be living in slums. That means that they are in effect left to cope on their own, with quasi-inexistent support from the state, and quasi-ubiquitous oppression from institutional agents. At the other end of the spectrum, high-rises are mushrooming like there is no tomorrow, following only the socially and economically irrational logic of real estate speculation, and defying the capacity of people to actually buy the housing stock being produced. Half a million flats are left vacant in Mumbai, which is one of the most densely populated cities in the world. Even this world of new tall buildings, which emulates and exceeds the

most exuberant days of the twentieth century in New York, Chicago or Hong Kong, seems to function better without architects at all. Speculative development doesn't demand design skill as much as accounting and legal expertise. Given the lack of importance given to architecture and design at the high-end of the construction spectrum, one would expect that architects would be rushing where they are most needed: in slums, where people struggle with such fundamental needs as ventilation, light and space optimisation. But in fact, no architects operate in slums. They are not equipped for it. When architects come to a slum, it is usually to plan what will come post eviction. With good reason, local residents see them with much suspicion.

The way we once conceived architecture, the tools we used, its very language – seem totally ill-fitted to address the issues that most people are confronted with in this day and age.



Academic institutions in charge of producing architects seem to exist a space-time warp, where the future could still be conceived as a total project – architectural, social, political. Architectural education is adrift and the same is true of architectural museums and the galleries. These white boxes only seem to be there to reassure us that there are still stories worth being told; architectural fairy tales which we would love to believe. They show good work for a good world, simple and clearly delimited.

Nothing illustrates the disconnection between contemporary architectural practice and the context of Mumbai's slums better than the use of the "plan" – a device indispensable to the transformation of architectural projects into architectural objects. In a context of infinite complexity where responsiveness is everything, the plan serves almost no purpose. This is precisely because it is based on the naïve and dangerous belief that you can erase a little bit of the present world and replace it with another piece, which will fit right in. But it won't fit because the architect comes from a different background. An architect walking in a Mumbai slum is like a 'Prawn' in District 9. A lost alien, whose power is reduced to zero, because nothing in this world fits what he purposed to do. If architecture is to survive at all in a world with no

future and only an avenir, it must be completely reinvented. We must accept that no matter how grand and wonderful, architectural practice as we've learned it ultimately belongs to art history and into big white box museums.

Parametric urban design will not save us – whatever some generation x prophets may be preaching. Supersising the architectural objects, and adding infinite internal complexity thanks to supercomputing capacities, will not be enough to respond to a challenge that really comes from outside the practice and outside the project. Gated communities, university campuses, Special Economic Zones, and smart cities are neurotic responses to the prevailing feeling among architects and planners that they are losing control.



As architects and urbanists who belong to a generation bred in twentieth century institutions and whatever is left of them in the early twenty-first century, we must make a conscious effort to radically transform our practice. We have no choice, but to be even more imaginative in the way we use whatever resources we are left with and whatever technology we can scavenge.

The best way to deal with what's coming is to accept that we can't build our way into the future, and that we must engage with the world as it is – messed up, toxic and unpredictable. We should drop all claims to superiority and learn to work with the context as a living material. Context shapes us and we shape it back. We must invent an imperfect practice for an imperfect world. Let's not reinvent yesterday's beautiful but unexciting utopias.

As practitioners, we must be pragmatic, daring and optimistic. We must learn to deal with forms of emergence that are outside the scope of architectural practice and actually draw inspiration from them. This necessarily implies another relationship to one's own creative agency. It is not about imposing one order onto another, or bringing more rationality into an existing local practice of construction, but about connecting one's own expertise with the knowledge of other actors who are rooted in their imminent reality.





FORM FOLLOWS...

# daily life

Everyday events are observable and measurable in duration and frequency. Together they compose a perceivable rhythmic form.

In the context of Bedroom Exodus, we're not really interested in physical objects as *res extensa* but in events or actions that are distinguishable by their temporal structure. The scale of our observations is set for the everyday.

If you know its patterns of recurrence, you're able to affect daily habits and their rhythms consciously. On one hand we're tied up in such forms every day because we accept them as determined structure of time itself, on the other we pursue our own individual habits. In that way we all shape the pattern of our societies daily rituals. Determined by diverse facts, circumstances, things which are all related to a moment of time, the form of everyday life follows a complex network of zeitgebers.

Time data which structure our daily lives experienced a fundamental change in the last century. The dictate of synchronicity caused by industrial revolution is coming to an end and disappears rapidly. In a global market economy hours of work and entertainment are becoming increasingly disconnected from a fixed schedule.

The fulfilment of our needs is almost completely detached from specific opening hours and locations.

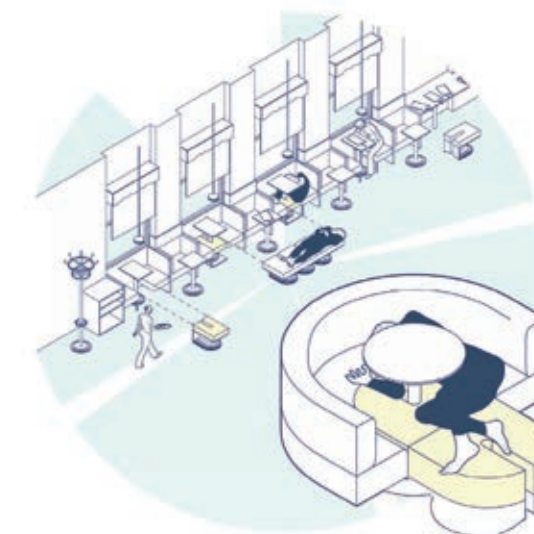
An omnipresent provision of service results in a plural society with differing everyday structures.

An unusual daily routine was practiced by the architect Richard Buckminster Fuller. In 1932, TIME magazine reported on his Dymaxion (dynamic - maximum - tension) system of sleeping: for two years he split his daily amount of sleep into four smaller periods spread equally over 24 hours. Fuller described this time as the most "vigorous and alert condition" he ever enjoyed. Applying his design principle directly to his own body, the adjustment of the daily schedule can be seen as the most substantial implementation of the Dymaxion concept.

This made us curious and we tried to adopt a reasonable sleeping pattern to our very own habits.

By acquiring a polyphasic rhythm we experienced an extreme deformation of our conventional patterns of behaviour.

Similar to Fullers tensegrity structures, sleep is no longer the foundation for continuous wakefulness. It is minimized by perfectly distributing the load of wakefulness on several bracing periods of rest. This has also spatial consequences on the circumstances in which sleep is consumed. Questioning conventional daily rhythms brings up a change of perspective on the relation between sleep and habitation.



OPTIMISTIC PRACTICE

Vienna - AUSTRIA

# J. BECKER, F. SAMMER L. VEJNÍK



## BIO

Bedroom Exodus is a project-specific research collective - founded by Jerome Becker, Florian Sammer and Lukas Vejnik - with a focus on sleep and its localization. Since the beginning of the investigations in 2013 the exchange with researchers from other disciplines - such as sociology, anthropology, sleep research and contemporary history - was an integral part of the work process.

The focus is currently set on architecture and the spatial confrontation with the „occupation of rest“, the relationship between sleeping and habitation as well as the investigation of atypical situations, where sleep is consumed outside the walls of the apartment. The starting point is the consideration of current sleep practices. In order to draw a picture of the current state, we analyse historical trends, socio-cultural backgrounds and diverse cultures of sleep. We diagnose a strong correlation between current changes in a global work environment and changes in sleeping habits. This interaction causes a particularly critical examination of polyphasic sleep concepts in meritocracy.

The first considerations of Bedroom exodus started with a design project at the Institute of Architecture and Design at the TU Vienna in 2013. Subsequently the project was continued as an independent field of research. With the successful participation at „Superscape 2014“ the project „Zzz – Schlafkulturelle Revolution“ was awarded with an honourable mention and was exhibited at the Vienna Designweek 2014. Since 2015, the Schütte-Lihotzky research fellowship by BMUKK permits for us an in-depth research. With interventions and events we try to raise awareness for the topic.

The main thoughts on the topic were published in an essay in PLAT journal 4.5 by Rice School of Architecture. The designs for the ideas of a public sleeping infrastructure were exhibited at the Ars Electronica Linz in September 2015. In May 2016, we organized the symposium „Bedroom Exodus“ at Mobiles Stadtlabor in Vienna. In addition to a lecture of Dr. Hannah Ahlheim - expert on sleeping history - and an interview with Marie Staver / PureDoxyk - figurehead of the Polyphasic Community in the USA - we presented our investigations on sleeping places in specific conditions in private and public spaces.

## OFFICE PROFILE

slow spaces to pause where others rush through.

blown up time to question daily rituals.

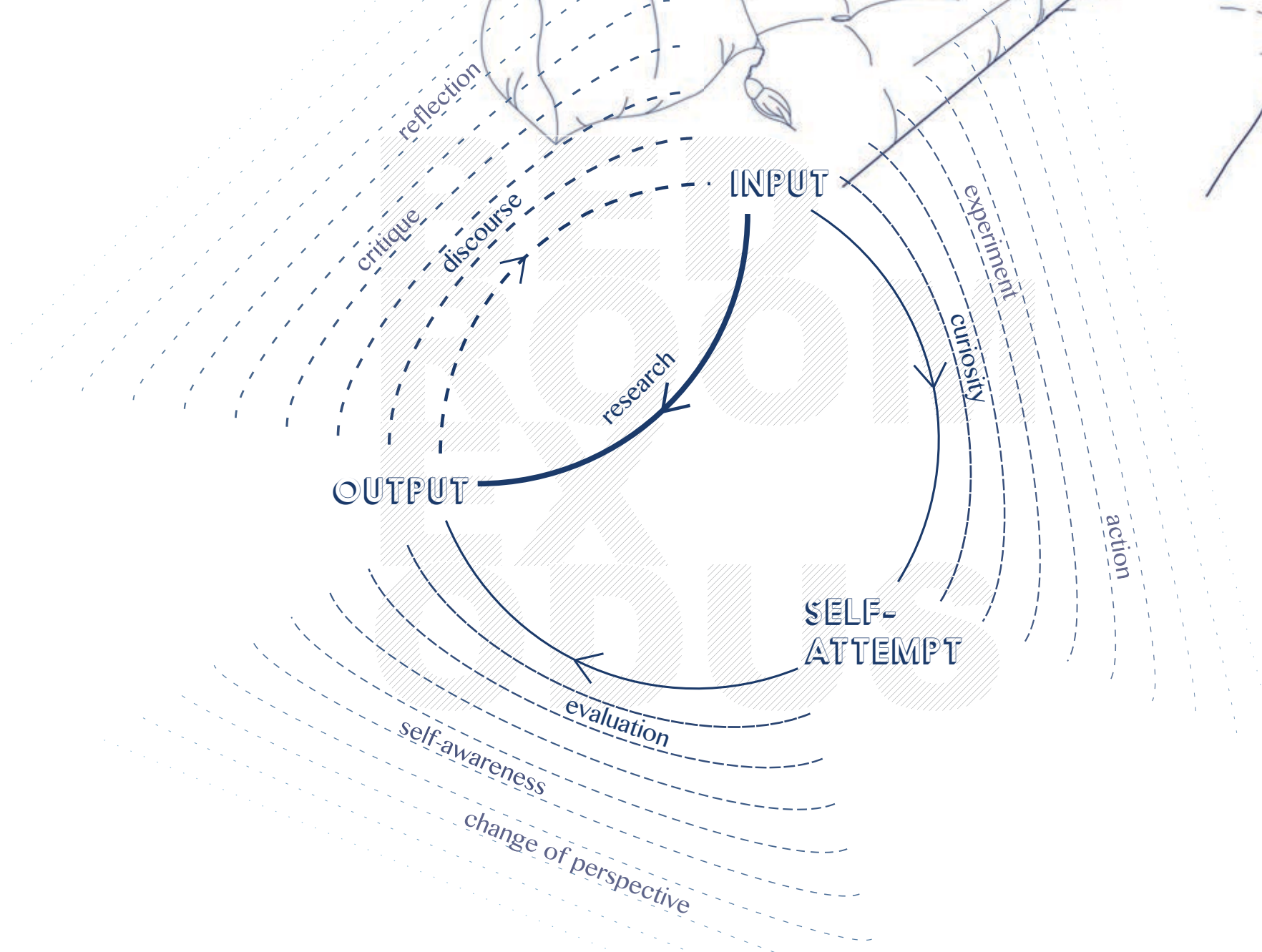
extendable ideas to develop thoughts that do not end in a cul-de-sac.

## OPTIMISM

Since in different areas of every day life, social turnovers happen right now, we'd like to experience and examine these changes in our fields of study and its close topics. Besides traditional research, a direct confrontation and interaction with and in public spaces is still the essential source of inspiration for our work. Furthermore, we profit from interdisciplinary discussions and value the content and its connections to current social issues. This is the way we can perceive architecture differently, which creates a new and optimistic approach for our practice.

Although our ideas are not comparable to the utopian phantasies of the 1960ies, we basically consider architecture as a tool to facilitate daily life. Instead of global designs, we believe in a small utopia, happening in the everyday - observable for everybody - influenced by every possible agent.





**SLEEPING IN PUBLIC:  
A FORM OF  
ACTIVE PASSIVISM.**

Beside research and interdisciplinary exchange with scientists from different fields like anthropology, sociology, history and medicine, the self-attempt is a key component in our work. Searching for fieldlines of rest – that was the preliminary intention, when it came to our first sleeping-experiments in Vienna back in 2014. By doing this we questioned the organisation of daily life in its spatial and temporal aspects. One aim of changing our sleeping-habits

was finding out about social acceptance for bodies at rest in exposed situations. This led to a deeper understanding of the city and its „sleepability“. By practicing a form of active passivism, we confronted ourselves with spatial, socio-cultural and legal issues of public space. This change of perspective leads to different forms of output, that are never considered as a final result. In a process of constant iteration, we try to unravel complexity within the ordinary.





FORM FOLLOWS...

# process

## Form Follows Crisis.

It is of great relevance to consider crisis as a main initiator of change. Although we might feel trapped into a vicious circle, disadvantaged conditions become a prime requirement and fertile ground for developing new optimistic approaches. We should re-question the validity of past models and promote a radical shift in the way architecture is created today. Throughout my projects there is this imminent pressure of responding to complex situations, and in particular to the current London housing problem, with its related repercussions. If building more houses or changing current policies and then fail to solve the issue of providing adequate living conditions for all, we must then come up with ingenious ideas on the way we inhabit urban settings. Zip City: Houseless Not Homeless moves away from the traditional model of housing and promotes a collective lifestyle without dwellings, where the concepts of ownership, sharing and home are reformulated.

## Form Follows Experiment.

Form should not follow a predefined theory and rules but derive from experimentation. Experiment as a first approach to a project. This, by no means, suggests turning our back to the past nor precluding initial perceptions related to a project, but it rather suggests the validity of testing new ideas through research processes and direct action. Throughout my work, ethnographic experience has proved successful in understanding the needs and constraints of each specific context and immersing myself in real life conditions. The main reason for choosing such a methodology, while developing my projects, is that I get to experience a particular situation first hand and play the role of the user while simultaneously spending enough time to understand the dynamics of a place and getting to know the people in the area.

In this sense, I also think this way of working gives the possibility to be confronted to the unexpected, which always makes us see something under a new and different light, opening up new perspectives.

In Zip City, equipped with only a medium size backpack, I embarked upon an expedition to explore the main quest posed by the project. How can we re-imagine an urban system of living without houses that favours inclusion and still responds to our desire for the comforts of a home? This experiment of living without a house and moving around the city has allowed me to get an insight and gain awareness of many challenges that would have not been possible through a different methodology. For instance, questions such as "what makes me feel at home?" or "what is my body relationship with unfamiliar places?" came up to my mind once I was playing the role of the user and started noticing interesting aspects for the project. All this body of research then led to a spatial proposal. The form of the project was almost completely informed by the experiment.

## Form Follows Collaboration.

At the core of any successful scheme lies the question of collaboration. The making and evolution of architecture and urban environments can only happen if people with different backgrounds come together to face a particular challenge. The architect might have the theoretical and technical knowledge on how to design buildings and cities, but others might be more familiar with an area or residents of it, be professionals from other disciplines or just have a different kind of knowledge and interest in relation to a situation. I believe the first collaboration to be established should be with future users.

Who are they? How can they benefit from a new urban scheme? What forms of participatory architecture can be implemented for each specific case? For the projects I have been part of, this regularly took the form of meetings and events with local residents to establish a strong dialogue and get ideas from them as well a lively presence on site for long periods of time. Form comes from the bottom rather than the top, from engaged citizens rather than detached decision makers.

The architect is in a position to mediate between the users, the residents and anyone involved in the design process. I choose this way of working as I think you learn and come up with more interesting and successful ideas if you merge different forms of knowledge and opinions.



OPTIMISTIC PRACTICE

London - GREAT BRITAIN

# LAVINIA SCALETTI



## BIO

I am an architectural and urban designer who has been living in different European and South American countries before setting up my practice in London. Between the hours spent working full time in projects and research, largely as an extension of my previous university work at the Royal College of Art, investigating issues of housing and citymaking in cities.

The experience at this art institution has offered me the opportunity to test new methods of research that could be applied to architecture and in urban settings. One of the most relevant to my work is ethnography. Although we might sometimes associate ethnographic research to the fields of sociology and anthropology, I believe it is becoming increasingly important to adopt such a method of working in architecture to better understand the peculiarities of specific contexts.

This approach of immersing oneself into real life situations is recurrent throughout my work, where depending on the type of project, I develop and test particular methodologies that I believe might be the most appropriate ones. While developing the project Zip City, rather than coming up with a set of predefined rules and theories, an important time was dedicated to research, using first hand experience to explore the notion of home and understand it through the user's experience. Other ethnographic methodologies have involved writing,

photography, the organisation of events and interviews to collect valuable feedback, and even performances where specific topics were discussed in front of diverse audiences.

I tend to use London as the ground for my research as it is one of the most interesting examples of cities undergoing major regeneration and is struggling to successfully offer adequate living conditions to all its residents. I believe this scenario is an exciting opportunity for architects who are forced to think of new approaches for inclusion in our cities and to redefine the role of the profession.

## OFFICE PROFILE

My first resource is my body; it allows me to read, draw, move, think, communicate, perceive, or sense things. I have external ones that regularly help me develop a project: a pen and a pencil, a camera, a sketchbook, a video camera, a shelf full of books, or a cafe. I have external ones that I use not so often: hostels, hotels, shelters, or other people's places. And I have unexpected resources: a growing collection of unplanned encounters, valuable experiences, and more to come.

## OPTIMISM

We live in a period dominated by uncertainty and pessimism coming from a growing awareness of the limits of our current economic system and its consequent crisis.

Although I might often be influenced by this currents of negativity, I explore the benefits and opportunities presented by these situations. Coming out of possibly one of the worst financial crisis, we are in a position from which we should see crisis as an opportunity rather than an obstacle, as a chanceto set up new values and start building upon them. This could only be a challenging but exciting position as we are forced to think laterally to move forward. Here are some of the many questions we should address. What are the mistakes to learn from? What new forms of living and building cities can arise from this? Who should be involved in the citymaking process and the architecture resulting from this?

Taking the London housing crisis as a starting point for the project, Zip City takes an optimistic approach for dealing with this scenario. It questions whether the possible solution for the housing problem lies in building more houses or if instead, a complete redefinition and consideration of the concept of home presents a more adequate response. It promotes a completely new life without dwellings with spaces accommodated for our current and changing needs, taking advantage of technological improvements as well as people's increasing ability to adapt to places.



**House as home.** If a house means home, it is because it gives me a sense of:  
**SECURITY** - enclosed, a shelter, a trustable routine  
**PRIVACY** - intimacy in the confined boundaries of a room, introspection, being alone or choose your company  
**FREEDOM** - creativity in every sense, walking around naked or in the most unimpressive outfit  
**FAMILIARITY** - furniture, objects, every corner of space  
**REST** - relax, slow-down, meditate

**The microwave.** Quick cooking is translated into quick eating, where not only the preparation of meals is considerably diminishing in time, but also the act of consuming it. I think that the condition of houselessness would only require a few microwaves on the street or outside the stations for heating meals. The microwave becomes an object of socialisation. Conversations and chats seem to happen all around the microwaves.

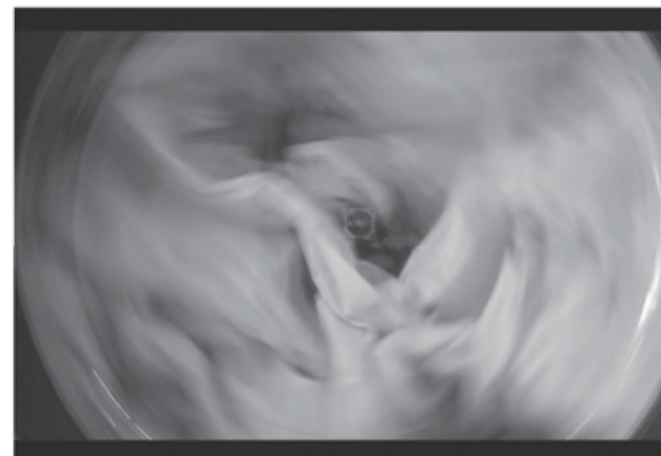
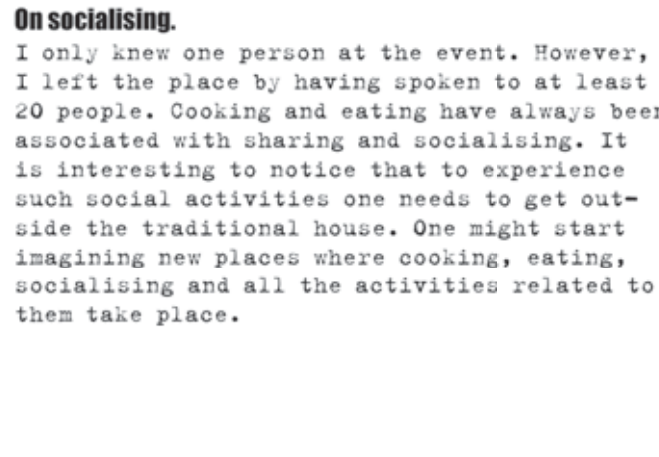
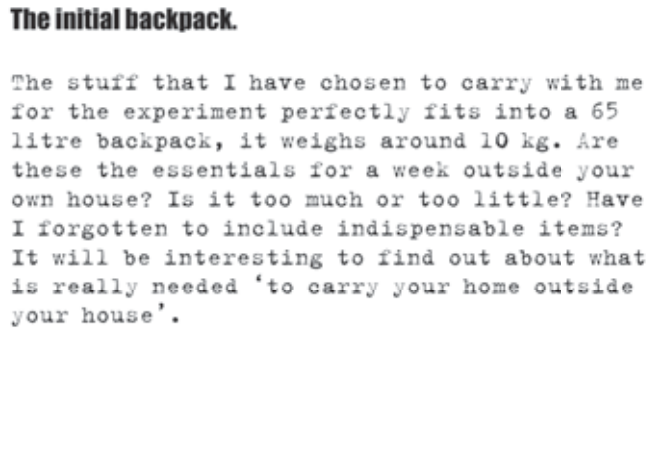
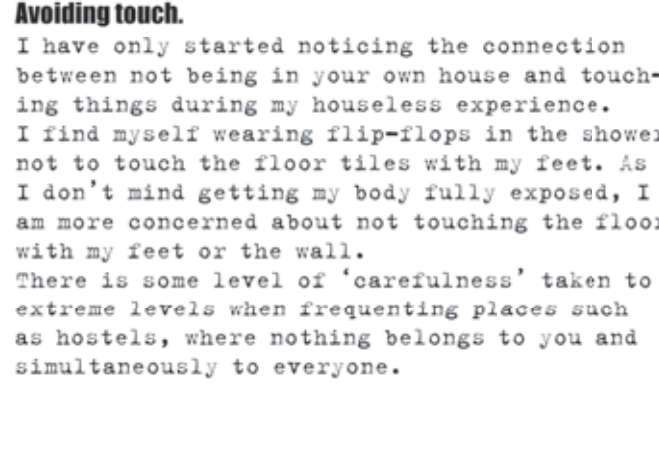
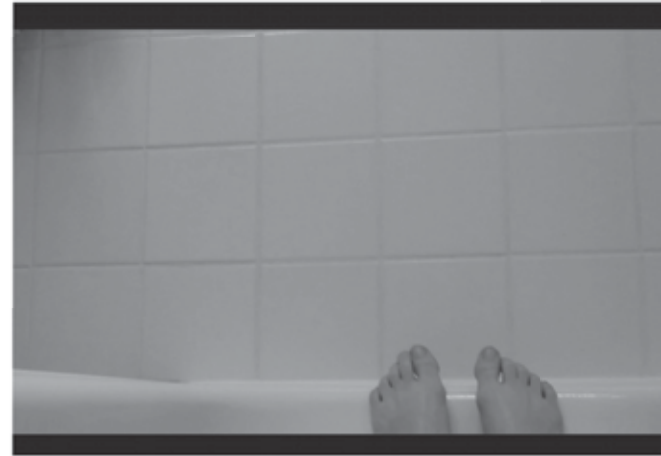
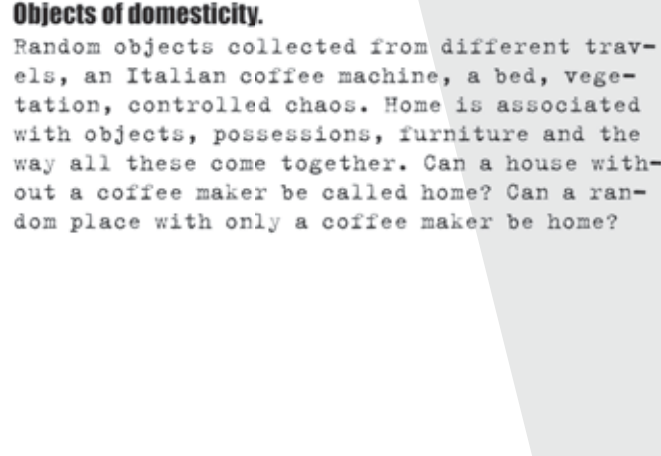
**Objects of domesticity.** Random objects collected from different travels, an Italian coffee machine, a bed, vegetation, controlled chaos. Home is associated with objects, possessions, furniture and the way all these come together. Can a house without a coffee maker be called home? Can a random place with only a coffee maker be home?

**Avoiding touch.** I have only started noticing the connection between not being in your own house and touching things during my houseless experience. I find myself wearing flip-flops in the shower not to touch the floor tiles with my feet. As I don't mind getting my body fully exposed, I am more concerned about not touching the floor with my feet or the wall. There is some level of 'carefulness' taken to extreme levels when frequenting places such as hostels, where nothing belongs to you and simultaneously to everyone.

**The initial backpack.** The stuff that I have chosen to carry with me for the experiment perfectly fits into a 65 litre backpack, it weighs around 10 kg. Are these the essentials for a week outside your own house? Is it too much or too little? Have I forgotten to include indispensable items? It will be interesting to find out about what is really needed 'to carry your home outside your house'.

**On socialising.** I only knew one person at the event. However, I left the place by having spoken to at least 20 people. Cooking and eating have always been associated with sharing and socialising. It is interesting to notice that to experience such social activities one needs to get outside the traditional house. One might start imagining new places where cooking, eating, socialising and all the activities related to them take place.

**On senses.** It is interesting how senses recall the idea of home. You are in the the laundry room, with its warm atmosphere and its imponent smell of soap, and you could perfectly be in one of you house's room! Nothing more to say, only to remember how pleasant this moment is for me who has not being in the house for almost a week!





# FORM FOLLOWS... rural

Form is being strangled and is desperately following some air.

Today we are led to believe that it is impossible to design in isolation from the larger systems of production, and that to intervene meaningfully with design, we must take account of a multitude of layers, scales, phenomena and ideas, to think globally, to produce to "everyone".

We came to believe that form is stuck in a pyramid system. Steering are the top profit-driven economies, seeking for global profit opportunities, ordering their technocracy laboratories to create profit... it means: to create the needs. Global generic needs, profitable needs. Led to product productivity and put any particular long-winded need under an invisibility cloak.

But then we found rural!

Places where form can find some clean air and transcend to a new form of autonomy regarding design, production and governance.

Places that follow rural nature.

Rural, where forms still grow in. Where processes can be sowed, come up and dead. Where processes can take its natural speed. Where we can observe closer, create closer, live closer. Where there's still a human-to-human scale and face-to-face exchange, with no intermediaries, autonomous from the global plans of supply-demand. Rural, where all we can follow the growth of forms and learn from it, understand it.

So we REFRAMED IT!

We follow the RURAL, we CLOSE-UP, and we SLOW DOWN.

We melt with the inhabitants, put the hands-on and co-create a local self-paradigm. No abstract principles, no generic processes, we take time, and co-create them too.

Co-creating based on interdisciplinary and not specialization, understanding that housing is not just about a house, and, if we want to intervene meaningfully it's necessary to move beyond the traditional overlap of specialties domains. And immersing on the community, co-creating and co-building, improving the population's tools to re-shape it for a continuous updating in the face of successive needs.

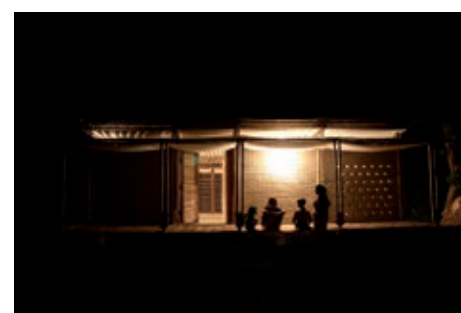
Two types of co-creation at the end melted in just one: the pursuit of co-operation in-between technocracy and local informal 1:1 synergies. Putting the hands on the dough, merging roles, dropping the '-lonialism' and taking the 'Co-'. Being aware that only if inhabitants are at the forefront of all decisions, the paradigm will thrive.

An engagement with the singular requirements of a place. A local self-paradigm that follows human nature and its immutable need for customized 1:1 forms. A paradigm of forms that take time to contemplate, to breathe and dive. A form of process in which interaction, discussion and reflection are actions we fall for too. A long-flow trial, back and forth tested, that needs time to mature, to listen, talk and get to know its purpose more literally.

So we follow places where time lasts, and we don't fear time.

A call to descend into the rural fieldwork, release the form and let into its natural popular melody.

And then comes the strongest power of architecture, to put all these forces into form. Embodying the lifelong triangle utilitas, firmitas, venustas synthesize rural nature and produce 1:1 form... because matter matters.



# OPTIMISTIC PRACTICE

Porto - PORTUGAL

# S. NEVES F. ESTRELA



## BIO

We've been thinking together since 2008, but we have worked separately in other projects until 2015. Actually we have been thinking, working, living, travelling and having fun together since 2008, and that's why architecture for us is not just a job nor has set time or place.

Last year, driven by the same interest for fieldwork and for architecture, made from, for and, mainly, with the ordinary things of each particular place, we decided to create our own studio. Since then, we've been developing an model housing project in rural India, a school libraries project in São Tomé and housing recovery projects in Portugal.

Our projects are being developed in partnership with local institutions of social development, valuing the analysis of the quotidian and their requirements, just as much as the technical construction requisites to fulfill the demands. We see construction as a potential booster of inclusive systems and communities' autonomy, so the projects' authorship and implementation are also shared with the inhabitants.

We like to believe that deep technical knowledge is the most important, that interdisciplinarity is the best, collective consciousness is a duty, and that local framework is the philosopher's stone. And to embody all this, rurality is the way!

## Filipe Estrela

I'm a Portuguese architect, master degree by the Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto. During my last year, I was selected to represent the faculty in the Campus Development Forum – Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne with my thesis project. I worked 3 years in the Portuguese studio Seródio Furtado Arquitectos, in Porto, and in 2015 I went to India to collaborate on an affordable housing project to rural India, booted by Drishtee – an Indian social enterprise focused on rural sustainability.

## Sara Neves

I'm a Portuguese architect, master degree by the Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto. I was co-editor-in-chief of Dedalo Magazine, where motivated by the refusal of abstraction and generalisation of principles in the architectural process, we organised talks, workshops and projects promoting a direct cooperation between inhabitants and professional of different areas.

In 2014 I collaborated in the newspaper Homeland – the Official Representation of Portugal on 14th International Architecture Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia – focused on Portuguese housing research and typological survey. After, through Ashoka, I travelled to India, where I collaborated during one year with Drishtee, on an affordable housing project to rural India.

## OFFICE PROFILE

Internet, a lot of internet, to know about the world, the context, the moment, to stay away and be aware  
Books, technical books for a deep knowledge about materials, processes, logics, forms, sustainability and all their small technical details  
Paper, cardboard, clay, drawings, models to imagine  
Computer to carry out  
Words and concepts to discuss, to think, to learn, to teach and create passion  
Hands and hand tools, raw builder tools to draw, to shape, to build, to experiment learning, to reflect on doing and to give passion  
Home to be attached to, to feel the duties, the responsibility, to be a citizen, to build like a citizen, to be realistic  
Travel to meet our role models, to find best practice cases, to be inspired, to boom, to think beyond, to be optimistic  
But mainly,  
Human resources to collaborate, co-create, co-operate, to immerse in all the previous steps, to understand our role it and make it happen.

## OPTIMISM

We admit we are powerless over urbanisation, and that our lives are becoming unmanageable. We made a fearless moral inventory about urbanisation, and we admit that the exact nature of it will increasingly make matters worse. Switch on: We don't want to be stuck in the urban tautology.

We admit that the value we are trying to add to the urban world we can find naturally in rural areas. We are entirely ready to quit the urban problems' addiction, humbly remove the shortcomings to ruralise the urban, and see the light of the pure rural. We acknowledge that by being closer to the natural resources, we can be, more easily, independent of the global and centralised management systems. We believe that taking rural as a valid alternative, we let the cities breath and we contribute to the emancipation of urban transformation. We'll enshrine our century's progress of mobility and communication, and record that modernity reaches the rural.

We come to believe that the rural environment could restore us to sanity. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives to rural environment, as we understand it. Rural is the future of cities and our future as architects. Rural is the autonomy's future and the answer to sustainable futures. Rural is the future of our optimism.





Close-up connect with the inhabitants, co-create a local self-paradigm of architecture. A bottom-up approach of a points of view medley - 'I architect' - 'we org' - 'she farmer' - 'you mason' - considering a less common perspective more powerful.

## DROP THE '-LONIALISM' AND TAKE THE 'CO-'

# RURAL FRAMEWORK

### India needs

20 million urban houses and  
45 million rural houses

### Bihar is

the third most populated state  
**89% lives in rural areas**  
**45% are under 20 years old**  
**30% lives at less than \$1/day**  
their houses  
**50% are made of raw matter**  
**62% haven't toilet**  
**89% haven't electricity**

This is probably not the first time you came across an affordable housing project for marginalised dwellers.

So, what stands out?

### RURAL framework

The pressure on farmland for fast paced urban growth is leaving behind a trail of destruction in villages leading to lack of livelihood, housing and access to basic services.

Many government funded schemes and grants are available for rural projects, yet skilled labour is meager and proper town planning is poor. Even tough aspirations of the villagers have increased, due to the challenge of accessibility to material and skilled labour, housing and infrastructures are challenging factors for the low-income rural families.

Majority is focused on the cities' future and the problems coming from its population growth. Rural exodus still continue to grow.

But, does everyone wants to live in cities?

In Saurath, the village of Gharaunda's prototype, the majority of young people prefer to stay in their village if they can access to better living conditions.

Rural is the best framework for autonomy thrives



Its easier to access to natural resources and the fact of being marginalised, the rural areas are less suffocated by the profit-driven economies.

Empowering the local population, "skilling" them to explore of their own resources, will enable the younger generation to keep living in rural areas by choice and proud of its own rural identity.

Put the **community on the forefront** of their lives, producing acts of resistance, autonomous from global businesses', opportunities of supply-demand.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: LOCAL

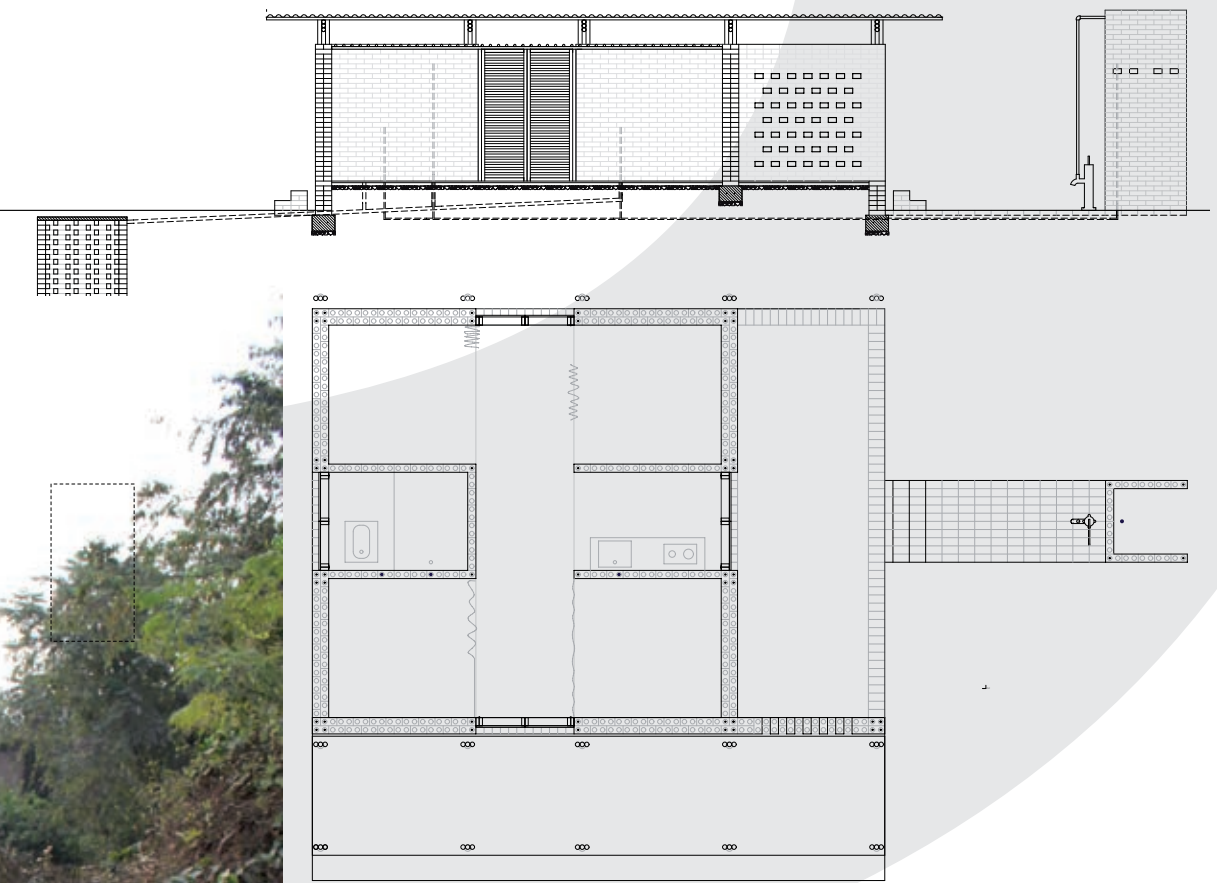
A circular architecture that covers the whole cycle - from conceptualisation and production to maintenance and long-term impact - based on a local value chain and producing acts of resistance. A sustainable and inclusive eco-system that addresses the rural population issues of affordability, accessibility, livelihood opportunities and environmental sustainability.

## natural resources

**Material:** mainly indigenously bamboos and mud organic bricks  
**Waste:** reuse of waste to energy and fertilizer production  
**Human:** locally empowered for produce, build and manage the whole circle value chain



## simple



Improvement of local techniques and simple modular design for an easy and fast construction. Co-build it and give the local population the tools to re-shape it for a continuous updating in the face of successive needs.

## ecological

**Energy efficient manufacturing and minimum polluting production**

**WATER SUPPLY** - adapting tradition  
Hand-pump of the local market connected by pipes to a tank

**SEWAGE** - absorbing new local solutions  
Septic system, eco-friendly and affordable, the digested waste can be used as soil-conditioner, for agriculture or as biogas fuel.

**BIO GAS** - recycling natural resources  
Produced with biodegradable materials such as manure, sewage, green waste and crops, which can be used for cooking.

**SOLAR ENERGY** - including new technologies

**ECO-BRICKS** - It takes thousands of years for nature to build fertile Topsoil, but it takes minutes for brick kilns to decimate it. The ecological bricks are manufactured using a hydraulic press machine, manufactured on site using local raw soil. The holes create pockets of air, essential for thermal insulation.

**BAMBOO** - fast renewable resource widely locally available.  
Treated naturally, and ideal for seismic-resistant constructions.

## youth ventures

Eco system mapping, launching and supporting housing ventures at the local level - brick production; bamboo harvesting and treatment; housing sales; housing assembling; construction; machinery and tools rental...

### The 4C by Drishtee:

**Channels:** Leverage Drishtee's village presence and franchisees to intermediate villagers access to rural housing credit, housing package supply and assembling support.

**Capacity:** Promote the "skilling" and empowering of villagers for the different ventures supporting the Gharaunda housing value chain.

**Capital / Credit:** Organise capital that may be required, particularly for the housing supporting ventures.

**Community:** Drishtee's strong relationship with rural villages and its main references guarantees the support of local communities and the easy promotion / implementation of the project from village to village.