



Vienna University of Technology
Department of Spatial Planning
Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space

BECOMING LOCAL VIENNA Planning, Design and Action for Shaping Inclusive Public Spaces

Networking Meeting of the Thematic Group on Public Spaces and Urban Cultures
of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP)

29 August 2014, Vienna Austria

ORGANIZED AND HOSTED BY:

Ass.Prof. Dr. Sabine Knierbein

DI Tihomir Viderman

Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture
and Public Space

Department of Spatial Planning

Faculty of Architecture and Planning

Vienna University of Technology

SUMMARY

A one-day meeting organized by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space* at the Department of Spatial Planning** of Vienna University of Technology^{3*} made a contribution to the working framework “Becoming Local” of the Thematic Group on Public Spaces and Urban Cultures^{4*} of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP)^{5*}. “Becoming Local”^{6*} is the umbrella theme that has covered the group’s activities in the years 2013 to 2015, equally involving researchers and practitioners, locals and internationals, with the goal of exploring and rethinking relations among different concepts and meanings related to (local) spaces and places, policies and practices, and everyday life. Becoming Local has approached public spaces as arenas of conflict, negotiation and consensus involving a variety of actors who shape the city. It has also suggested that creative approaches and strategies, either individual or collective, bear potential to involve vulnerable and marginalised urban groups (beyond the so-called mainstream society) in the making of urban spaces.

Vienna meeting has taken place as a precursor to the WWTF Summer School, offered by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space and the Centre of Local Planning of Vienna University of Technology, which under the title “Designing places of emancipation?”^{7*} started a day later. It brought into dialogue themes of scaling of the “Becoming local” framework and issues of emancipation and space, which lied in the focus of the summer school.

* Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space <http://skuor.tuwien.ac.at>

** Department of Spatial Planning <http://raum.tuwien.ac.at>

^{3*} Vienna University of Technology <http://www.tuwien.ac.at>

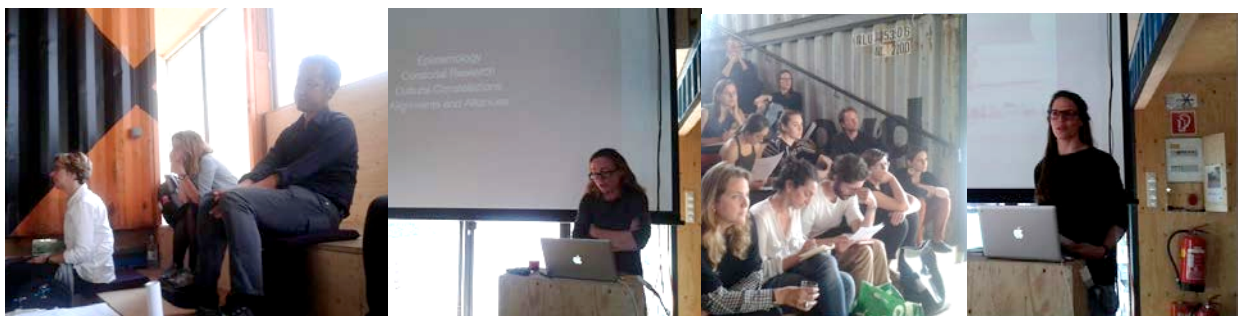
^{4*} AESOP TG Public Spaces and Urban Cultures http://www.aesop-planning.eu/blogs/en_GB/urban-cultures-and-public-spaces

^{5*} Association of European Schools of Planning <http://www.aesop-planning.eu>

^{6*} Becoming Local

http://www.aesop-planning.eu/blogs/posts/en_GB/urban-cultures-and-public-spaces/2013/05/11/readabout/becoming-local-call-for-interest

^{7*} Designing places of Emancipation? <http://skuor.tuwien.ac.at/en/summerschool>



RESULTS

The meeting has been conceived as a series of workshops offered by the research partners from Istanbul, Paris, Naples and Zagreb on four themes, which were intersected by the fifth closing theme which rounded off discussed issues and reflections. Workshops discussed processes and practices that connect global forces and locally present issues, while putting a specific emphasis on situated learning experiences and citizen-empowerment perspectives as a means of inducing meaningful spatial changes. Invited hosts each proposed inclusive workshop formats on the theme connected to their professional practice-based work, which they elaborated and reflected on in their talks. Their perspectives on the theme of the workshop were brought into dialogue with inputs from actors working in the Vienna's local context. A substantial portion of each workshop, however, was dedicated to a debate and output-oriented work engaging all the participants, during which they were able to get to know each other, exchange ideas and discuss experiences in a convivial atmosphere.

The event brought together around 30 participants from various disciplines and domains of action, including researchers and practitioners, civil servants, NGOs and activists, whose practices and interest have been directed at creating inclusive public spaces. They joined in the exchange of knowledge and experiences thus stimulating vivid discussions concerning possibilities and limitations of empowering and constituting city publics over the vast range of space-time scales, from local to global. A great deal of the meeting's focus was therefore placed on practical experiences and approaches. Diverse participants furthermore allowed for informed debates on often neglected links between emancipatory practices and social and technical sciences. Understanding emancipation as both the philosophical theoretical conception, and as a social practice that materialize in urban spaces, the meeting cast a new perspective on the scientific ideas and technological advancements, recognizing them as products of various spheres of human activity that simultaneously inspire and influence one another in shaping new spaces of concern.

In addition to creating space for debates on the theme "Becoming Local", the meeting also provided scope for networking opportunities and establishing long-term professional relationships and cooperation between various institutions. Cooperation agreements that were established in connection to or on occasion of this event include teaching cooperation and exchange with Özyeğin University Istanbul (Turkey) and École nationale supérieure d'architecture de Paris-La Villette (France), both realized within the framework of the Erasmus teaching staff mobility programme. The meeting has further strengthened cooperation between two units of the university's Faculty of Architecture and Planning, namely between the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space and the Centre of Local Planning. The meeting also provided an opportunity for university's staff to reach out to extitutional actors and members of the civil society, and involve them as partners in education and research conducted at the university. Vienna University of Technology has constituted and will continue to act in the capacity of the central partner.

5 THEMES



Beyond participatory discourse and process

Inclusive Design and Emancipatory Public Space in the Fragmented Cities of Neoliberalism?

Burcu Yigit Turan

Ozyegin University Istanbul, Turkey

Urban spaces of the cities in the process of neoliberalisation have been changing dramatically for the last decades; they have become the experimental terrains for capitalistic oriented urbanism that was imagined and initiated piece by piece by the central government and private entrepreneurs with top-down interventions. The urban cultures have been disintegrated from each other, heterogeneous urban fabric has been homogenized, historical phenomenality of places and the public spaces are destroyed in the process of gentrification. People are forced to live in strictly defined social, ecological and spatial conditions. However, those urban spaces, which are seen as tabula rasa, are full of personal histories, sentiments, patterns of everyday life, and ideas and tactics of survival, and creativity in the city, as well as variety of tragedies. Against such a background, there are emerging urban movements, activists' led alternative practices, civil resistances and contested spaces in order to define different forms of urbanism and of making the public space in the attempt of conserving the existing and imagining alternative social, cultural and ecological futures in the way of 'becoming local'. However, despite of their discourses referring to inclusion, justice and democracy in the making and experience of urban, grass roots movements and practices' voices might be lost, diverted and marginalised in the clashes of power and different subjectivities in the fragmented cities of Neoliberalism. What kind of processes and conflicts do the contested sites go through? Are inclusive design and emancipatory public space possible in this context? How can research and design practice involve in the processes? What are the methodologies? In this workshop, the issues and the questions will be discussed through elaboration of case studies from Istanbul and other cities in order to shape a framework for the studies of summer school collectively.

Beyond participatory discourse and process

Homelessness in Vienna: encounters with and insights into lives of the "others"

Teresa Morandini

*Master Programme Social Design,
Vienna, Austria*

Initially started from historical research and architectural methodologies about measuring of urban space and filling exciting individual, collective and social voids within urban realm, we came across the topic of homelessness in Vienna. The Canisibus, funded by Caritas, is a food bus line that provides hot meals for the homeless in Vienna on a daily basis. Our focus specifically set on one of the eight bus stops, Friedensbrücken. In our thesis, we departed with the intention to offer ways to improve the existing dining situations of the bus guests on site. Under this perspective and with extensive observations, consistent communications and prototype experimentations, we examined the history of homelessness, its political and social attributions, and the following support and prevention incentives all within the Viennese urban framework. Throughout the process, we firmly believed that individual cases ask for individual solutions. Our physical implementation of dining table on bikes had successfully injected function, support and the sense of community into our clients. The final instalment included a bike-table construction manual for the public to apply, and an upgraded city map with all support facilities highlighted for the homeless to use. It served as an open-end note to a grassroots movement that calls for communicative intervention in situations of meetings and gatherings. The bike went beyond its original function after its context has been redefined by the table installation. Not only applicable at our specific project site for the bus guests, our bike installation can also be widely applied to multiple social scenarios as an activation tool. It can potentially break down the complex social barriers that are embedded deep into our daily lives. Hence, the implementation also serves as the link that brings parallel realities that exist amongst the diverse micro dynamics disregard citizenships, classes and statuses. Within this project we aimed to raise awareness about the issue of urban homelessness, to bring dignity and call for respect for those who are pushed involuntarily towards the edge of society.

Between emancipatory practices and everyday life

In between towers and blocks: the reshaping forces of everyday practice as emancipation from "Modernity"

Maria Anita Palumbo &
Olivier Boucheron

*Ecole Nationale Supérieure
d'Architecture de Paris la Villette,
Paris, France*

We would like to propose a debate session focusing on everyday practices and initiatives of ordinary citizens transforming specific places: we are interested in the case of social housing projects, constructed around the globe between the 1950s and the 1980s. This globalized form of towers and/or (high-rise) blocks of social housing is interesting at a double level: as an "imposed" urbanism provoking a standardization of the way of life and, at the same time, as the context of multiple forms of re-appropriation and transformations by inhabitants. From Europe to Asia, but also Africa as well as North and South America, we can observe diverse "evolutions" and "hybridizations" of the same urban-architectural form, especially if we concentrate on the space "in between" these blocks, which has often been left unplanned at the time of construction and has become the place of inventions and appropriations by dwellers. These examples compose a worldwide spanning case-study network of the interaction between standardisation and differentiation at the same time. In the context of contemporary debate on the conservation or destruction of these architectural and urban forms, we want to focus our attention on the genesis and comparisons among these diverse inhabitants' initiatives that have been taking place within the context of big social housing projects, as well as the lessons we can learn from this hybridizations of "hard" urban models. We could analyze this infra-ordinary production of space as emancipation from the "form", emancipation from Modernity. We aim to share our case studies (khoroo in Ulaanbaatar, KKT in Hanoi, Blocks in Yangon, Danwei in Guangzhou, les 4000 in La Courneuve...) and enrich them with others examples, in order to collectively discuss these processes as the place where the conflict between globalized design trends and the struggle to locally belong by the construction of meaningful places, unfolds.

Between emancipatory practices and everyday life

Urban Curating + Strategies of Emancipation

Elke Krasny

*Akademie der bildenden Künste
Wien, Vienna University of
Technology (TU Wien), Vienna,
Austria*

The lecture focuses on examples of Urban Curating that brings together socially engaged or activist art practices and new forms of urban knowledge production. The contemporary urban condition intersects complex issues of agency, austerity, expulsions, financialization, globalization, immigration, and precarity. Urban Curating, a term first coined in the 1990s, brings together artistic, architectural, curatorial, and research-based knowledge production. It exemplifies a post-disciplinary strategy of involved research and critical spatial practices. How does the knowledge produced through curatorial and artistic processes enter into a productive dialogue with critical urban studies? How can urban studies and urban research extend curatorial and artistic methods and strategies? What are the future links to be established and explored between urban curating and urban studies in order to open up an emerging field of post-disciplinary knowledge production.



The material, the mental and the lived space

...when spatial development meets heritage

Gabriela Esposito de Vita

*IRAT – National Research Council,
Naples, Italy*

The contemporary city is affected by a profound crisis due to the loss of traditional social networks, the loss of cultural identities, the loss of places of a shared way of living. Public spaces are the mirror of this scenario: images, forms, functions, symbols and perceptions of places of public life have changed under the influence of increasingly present global trends. This profound awareness about opportunities and limits of the material and mental transformations occurs when contemporary spatial development endeavours meet heritage. However, it is in stagnation times when urban strategies need to particularly carefully combine tradition and innovation in support of creative processes and bottom up initiatives. The workshop will discuss both the redevelopment and the regeneration processes with regard to the virtual dialogue between the material and immaterial cultural heritage on the one hand and future development endeavours on the other. It will investigate how planning practices deal with the production of material, mental and the lived space by introducing experiences from other urban areas and different redevelopment initiatives. On the cases of waterfront developments in Naples (Italy) and New York (USA), the different approaches, strategies, partnerships and backgrounds will be discussed in order to identify criticisms, gaps and opportunities of both temporary and permanent transformations of waterfront skylines. The presentation will include video-interviews with designers involved in both development projects. The following questions will be addressed: How could the decision-making process enhance enabling strategies? Who takes part in the process of the production of meaning and space? What are their views and believes? What are the means to convince and to succeed? How participatory is the process? What is the role of planners and designers in such a process?

The material, the mental and the lived space

Designing places of emancipation?

**Sabine Knierbein &
Tihomir Viderman**

*Vienna University of Technology
(TU Wien), Vienna, Austria*

Presentation of the theme of the summer school. Discussion on integrating situated learning experiences and a citizen-empowerment perspective for inducing spatial changes that are meaningful for the local dwellers and civil society. How to enhance the capacity of public space to mediate between different fields of knowledge (e.g. everyday, scientific, professional and practice-based knowledge)? We proposed working in groups that bridge disciplinary and cultural differences and combining action and reflection at particular locality. This means not only understanding the social world by conducting urban studies, but also using urban research to experientially practice change. More information on the summer school is available at <http://skuor.tuwien.ac.at/en/summerschool/summerschool>





Cultural practices creating alternative values

Housing policies and their implementation in Croatia: Becoming local in Novi Jelkovec, Zagreb?

Dafne Berc & Branimir Rajcic

Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb, Croatia

The workshop discusses the possible methodology of empirical enquiries to help the processes of improving the current situation in a housing development in Zagreb, including the contemporary roles of the state, market, civil society, experts and agents involved in place making. Novi Jelkovec is a newly built housing estate on the city outskirts, where 2713 dwellings and a certain number of office and commercial spaces were planned on a 39.47 ha plot on the grounds of the former intensive pig farm. More than half of the dwellings were meant for social housing and public rental, while the rest was intended for the free market sale. The project was developed through a series of architecture competitions conducted in 2003, the construction began in 2006, and the first buildings were inhabited in 2009. During this short-term process there was a series of changes of the development's socioeconomic model, such as the ad hoc shifts of social policies, the abolition of the state subsidy to housing policy and the introduction of the City as the main investor. The development's social and environmental landscape qualities failed to match the original plan due to the aforementioned changes. In 2013 the Citizens association of Novi Jelkovec was established with the goal of improving the residents' living conditions and from 2014 Novi Jelkovec has been included in the program supported by public cultural institutions and foundations with the agenda of introducing the artistic content in public space. To what extent did the development's location and scale contribute to its social exclusion? How can the same urban logic as the one in the modernist neighborhoods produce different levels of social exclusion? What are the effects of art-activists' actions in the public space? What kind of initiatives, beside the cultural ones, could respond to multitude of social problems?

Cultural practices creating alternative values

Walking Interviews = Strollology + Narrative Urbanism

Amila Sirbegovic

*Gebietsbetreuung – Stadterneuerung
9/17/18, Vienna, Austria*

In order to talk about the city and to be able to grasp it, it is necessary to move within its urban space/s and to walk it. I will present the research method of walking interviews, based on strollology (Burckhardt) and narrative urbanism (Krasny), developed during my PhD on impact of migration and transnational practice on local city parts development in Vienna and St. Louis. Researching locally based but global, transnational and cross-cultural, national and urban changes, the question arises how to explore these space/s and at the same time make their qualities readable for outsiders? This leading to the question, how can transnationality be translated into urban development and urban planning?

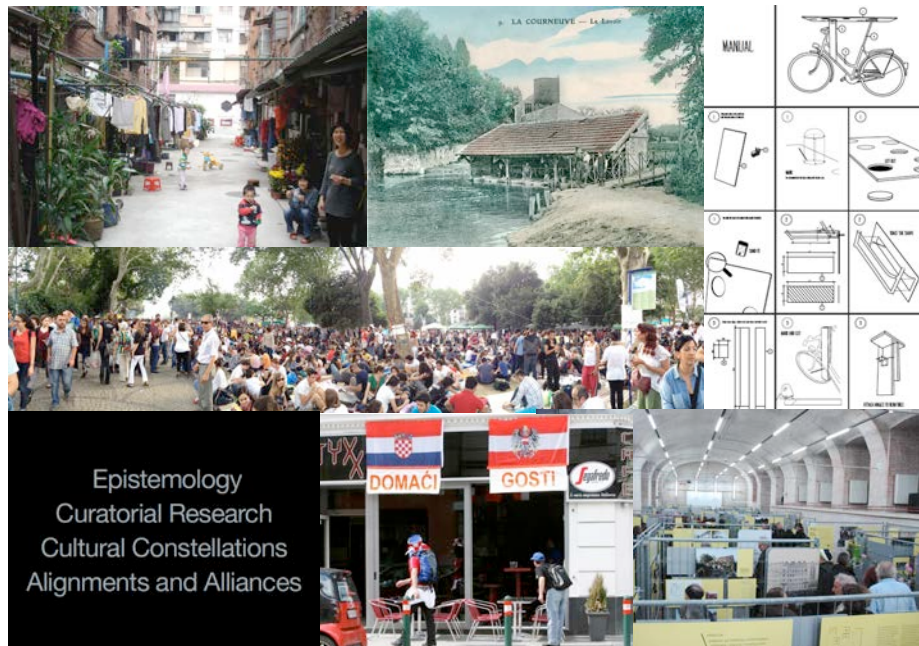


Between everyday life and scientific insights

Rounding-off: Creating bridges of collaboration, support and action

Sabine Knierbein

Vienna University of Technology (TU Wien), Vienna, Austria



Excerpts from presentations given at the meeting.

The event was materially supported by the Department of Spatial Planning, and the City of Vienna Visiting Professorship 2014 at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space, both at Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Vienna University of Technology, Austria and has benefited from the active participation of the members of the Thematic Group for Urban Cultures and Public Spaces of the Association of European Schools of Planning.

CONTACT

AESOP TG Public Spaces and Urban Cultures
http://www.aesop-planning.eu/blogs/en_GB/urban-cultures-and-public-spaces

psucnetwork@gmail.com

Vienna University of Technology
Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture
and Public Space
Karlgasse 13/2
1040 Vienna, Austria
<http://skuor.tuwien.ac.at>

knierbein@skuor.tuwien.ac.at
tihomir.viderman@skuor.tuwien.ac.at

