The Right to the City

Tin Sheds Gallery

[fig.] PUBLIC PHENOMENA, Temporary Services, 2009

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[fig.] FLATPACK, Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro, 2006

Introduction

If you have built castles in the air
your work need not be lost;
that is where they should be.
Now put the foundations under them.
HENRY DAVID THOREAU, *WALDEN*

The Right to The City is an exhibition, symposium, and publishing project bringing together a series of artistic, theoretical and philosophical escape plans. These plans range from the whimsical to the more serious, presenting and reflecting on real or imagined ways of reinventing life in our cities. The project explores the challenge of "putting foundations" under these "castles in the air"—seeking connections between art, architecture, philosophy and action. ¶ Given the perilous environmental predicament we find ourselves in, coupled with our intensifying urbanisation, many artists, activists, planners and architects are seeking ways to "remake" the city in more socially connected and sustainable ways. These activities are often concerned with negotiating the increasing fragmentation and complexity of the contemporary city; developing critical spatial practices that engage in micro-political actions. *The Right to the City* is a collection of artistic and written works that explore these urban interventions—opening up a space in which possibilities for reimagining life in cities can be discussed. ¶ In thinking through those connections, *The Right to the City* takes as its starting point David Harvey's influential article that redefined urban existence as a contested part of modern democracy: "The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights". Harvey's article is reprinted here in full as it provides a contemporary marker for discussions about our "right to the city"; we have responded to its arguments and considered its relationship to broader discourse, as do a number of our contributors, such as Margaret Crawford and Anna Plyushteva. This web of dialogue contextualizes and interacts with the artistic contributions that form the rest of the book. ¶ In this way, *The Right to the City* (the book) is not simply a catalogue to an exhibition—the text and images that are interwoven here do more than document a series of works in a gallery. The exhibition itself features a mix of older and newly commissioned work: some of it appears in the gallery and some is "off-site"; some are temporary installations and others enduring objects. This book relates to that collection of work but offers more than description. It contains documentation of some of the works appearing in the exhibition; however, it also interweaves the reflections of artists on the themes raised, conversations with others about their previous work, independent essays, fiction, and even propositions for remaking Sydney. ¶ As

part of the exhibition, Sydney-based researcher and curator Joni Taylor is presenting a collection of realised and unrealised work that challenges the spatial politics of Sydney, and uses a bottom-up-approach to transforming urban spaces. Entitled "DIY Urbanism", the project offers an overview of Sydney's current urban condition—the concerns and issues that are bubbling away under the surface; distinct from large-scale, commercial and spectacle-driven urban developments. The ideas and projects have been drawn from a public call for submissions, and visitors to the exhibition are invited to contribute even more to the DIY Urbanism map within the gallery—particularly ideas that challenge the hegemony of Sydney's major development processes. Within this publication, we have included just a few of the submissions that are being exhibited, alongside an essay from Joni that explores the urban issues and processes they address. ¶ Joni Taylor's contribution connects strongly with the collection of "Public Phenomena" contributed by the Chicago and Copeghagen based art group Temporary Services. Temporary Services have been actively documenting DIY urban interventions in cities they live in, or visit, creating an expanding taxonomy of spatial rights. From homemade basketball hoops to public memorials, these micro-interventions personalise homogenised urban landscapes, carving out unique territories for the city dweller to exist within. In both the exhibition and catalogue Temporary Services have provided a photographic collection of these temporal assertions of spatial rights. ¶ For this publication, Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro also contribute a photographic series: *Flat Pack*. The artists are known for their impressive installations over the last decade that explore the complex dynamics of urban space. For *Flat Pack* the artists cut and neatly stacked a caravan that was home for a woman in Kladow (a suburb in Berlin) for 40 years. Rigorous and reduced, the form and relationship of the caravan when reinstalled in a gallery suggests a kinship with minimalist sculptures. More than that though, the work deals with the unsettled line between the temporary and permanent nature of home. The physical and emotional flux surrounding the notion of "home" is also explored here in a short personal text by Healy and Cordiero that recounts the global dynamics behind their own relocation from cheap inner city living to cheap living in the mountains on the far outskirts of Sydney. ¶ Sophie Warren and Jonathan Mosley collaborate on projects that explore the intersection between art, architecture and urbanism—interrogating perceptions of architectural and urban space and the articulation of an environment by its inhabitants. One of the key concerns in their work is the examination of our lofty aspirations for the built environment and the, at times, contrasting realities. For this publication they have contributed text and images relating to the large-scale installation, *Strategies of Indirection,* which appears in the exhibition. Constructed from brass stencils, its material quality points to the monumental (brass plaques of commemoration), while stencils are a reproductive lettering system that resists the idea of memorial marking. They are serial, mass-produced, re-usable and liable to be dismantled for other configurations. Using this ambiguous material system, the installation makes intuitive, absurd links between post-modern urban planning and architectural terms and the language of lived experience: movement and flow (shopping plazas), design codes (clover leaf intersections), regulation (self-service elevators) and so on. ¶ Spatial tricksters SquatSpace provide a series of (un)Real Estate ads for empty buildings around the Sydney CBD. These ads cheekily offer the neglected spaces to squatters, poking fun at the ruthless Real Estate industry that drives Sydney land prices. SquatSpace are artists and activists engaged with the politics and pleasures of space in the city. From auspicious beginnings at the Broadway Squats in 2000, SquatSpace has evolved to be a "spaceless" organization; ten years on, SquatSpace continues to produce work about local space, their place in it and the politics behind it. Accompanying the ads is a discussion between SquatSpace and the Right to the City curators about their ongoing relationship to the practices and ideals of the squatting movement. ¶ Atelier d'architecture autogérée's (aaa) work is also focused on *terrains vague*, the neglected or under utilised parts of the city, which open up possibilities for new forms of urban existence. Based in Paris, aaa was co-founded by architects, Constantin Petcou and Doina Petrescu and acts as a platform for collaborative research and action on the city. Much of their work is carried out with other specialists, artists, researchers and institutional partners such as universities, arts organisations and NGOs, as well as the eventual users of their spaces. For this publication they contribute documentation of the ECOBox, a project that they initiated in the La Chapelle area of Northern Paris in 2001. ECOBox centres on a community garden, which draws upon the knowledge of local inhabitants, architects, theorists and artists to form a "heterotopic" environment where the city is created in real time by the experimental interweaving of specialised knowledge and shared experience. They also revisit and rework their essay "At the Ground Level of the City", which lays out the ideas and aspirations driving the project. ¶ Bababa International is another Sydney collective—a shadowy organisation that create performances and focus on providing "services" for interested people in Sydney. *The Right to the City* exhibition is utilising their "services": they will provide catering for all the project's public events. In this publication they follow the "food chain" back to the supermarket and poke fun at the commodified nature of our experiences of food through a series of surreal (or as they might put it "cereal") vignettes. ¶ Marjetica Potrč also engages with our relationships to food production through her contribution *The Cook, the Farmer, His Wife and Their Neighbour* (originally commissioned for Stedelijk goes West, Amsterdam, 2009). With a sharp play on the title to Peter Greenaway's 1989 satirical film *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover,* the project explores the empowering possibilities of growing and eating your own food. Potrč is a Ljubljana-based artist and architect whose fascinating

drawings and installations document the fragile relationships between urban life, ecology and society. Some of those drawings will be exhibited as part of this project, while an extensively illustrated essay reflects on the process and outcomes of the Amsterdam project. ¶ Makeshift is a young collaborative duo, comprised of Tessa Zettel and Karl Khoe, who work across sculpture, installation, drawing, print making, writing, performance and design. Their interdisciplinary works are characterised by mobility and making-do, often appearing as temporary, site-responsive interventions. At the core of all their work is a desire to make people question why things are done the way they are, and how they could be done better. Focusing on that speculative aspect, their contribution to the exhibition explores the urban experience of Sydney experienced through various lenses and looking back from an uncertain future vantage point. ¶ Australian-based New Zealander D.V. Rogers also provides a contribution that explores the uncertainty and fragility of urban life. With a timely focus on "disaster" D.V. Rogers explores urban life in the face of immanent environmental catastrophe. D.V. Rogers is an installation-based, performance artist-engineer working between the fields of geophysics, conceptual cultural theory, activism, systems engineering, and social commentary. His dialogue with Vinay Gupta published here invites us to re-think the city through forms of "autonomous architecture"—structures that bring independence from centralising utilities such as electricity grids and water mains. ¶ This book ends with the contribution from Milkcrate Urbanism, a Sydney collective that has created a mobile, interactive planning studio for the empty North Eveleigh site in Redfern, Sydney. Proposals for what should happen to this site are drawn from a dialogue with the public about the site's potential, collected through a mobile newspaper distribution box and redistributed as a newspaper: *The North Eveleigh Propositional*. Milkcrate Urbanism's open ended and dialogic form of urban planning provides an example of how the city can be built from the "bottom up". We end this book with the blank pages of *The Propositional*—inviting readers to think about how we can, and will, assert our "right to the city" not just in Sydney, but in any city around the world. Zanny Begg & Lee Stickells

[fig.] PUBLIC PHENOMENA, Temporary Services, 2008

[fig.] *The Right to the City* is reprinted from New Left Review 53, Sep-Oct 2008, with the author's permission.

DAVID HARVEY

THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

We live in an era when ideals of human rights have moved centre stage both politically and ethically. A great deal of energy is expended in promoting their significance for the construction of a better world. But for the most part the concepts circulating do not fundamentally challenge hegemonic liberal and neoliberal market logics, or the dominant modes of legality and state action. We live, after all, in a world in which the rights of private property and the profit rate trump all other notions of rights. I here want to explore another type of human right, that of the right to the city.

Has the astonishing pace and scale of urbanization over the last hundred years contributed to human well-being? The city, in the words of urban sociologist Robert Park, is:

> man's most successful attempt to remake the world he lives in more after his heart's desire. But, if the city is the world which man created, it is the world in which he is henceforth condemned to live. Thus, indirectly, and without any clear sense of the nature of his task, in making the city man has remade himself.[1]

The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire. The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.

From their inception, cities have arisen through geographical and social concentrations of a surplus product. Urbanization has always been, therefore, a class phenomenon, since surpluses are extracted from somewhere and from somebody, while the control over their disbursement typically lies in a few hands. This general situation persists under capitalism, of course; but since urbanization depends on the mobilization of a surplus product, an intimate connection emerges between the development of capitalism and urbanization. Capitalists have to produce a surplus product in order to produce surplus value; this in turn must be reinvested in order to generate more surplus value. The result of continued reinvestment is the expansion of surplus production at a compound rate—hence the logistic curves (money, output and population) attached to the history of capital accumulation, paralleled by the growth path of urbanization under capitalism.

The perpetual need to find profitable terrains for capital-surplus production and absorption shapes the politics of capitalism. It also presents the capitalist with a number of barriers to continuous and trouble-free expansion. If labour is scarce and wages are high, either existing labour has to be disciplined—technologically induced unemployment or an assault on organized working-class power are two prime methods—or fresh labour forces must be found by immigration, export of capital or proletarianization of hitherto independent elements of the population. Capitalists must also discover new means of production in general and natural resources in particular, which puts increasing pressure on the natural environment to yield up necessary raw materials and absorb the inevitable waste. They need to open up terrains for raw-material extraction—often the objective of imperialist and neo-colonial endeavours.

The coercive laws of competition also force the continuous implementation of new technologies and organizational forms, since these enable capitalists to out-compete those using inferior methods. Innovations define new wants and needs, reduce the turnover time of capital and lessen the friction of distance, which limits the geographical range within which the capitalist can search for expanded labour supplies, raw materials, and so on. If there is not enough purchasing power in the market, then new markets must be found by expanding foreign trade, promoting novel products and lifestyles, creating new credit instruments, and

[1] Robert Park, *On Social Control and Collective Behavior*, Chicago 1967, p. 3.

debt-financing state and private expenditures. If, finally, the profit rate is too low, then state regulation of 'ruinous competition', monopolization (mergers and acquisitions) and capital exports provide ways out.

If any of the above barriers cannot be circumvented, capitalists are unable profitably to reinvest their surplus product. Capital accumulation is blocked, leaving them facing a crisis, in which their capital can be devalued and in some instances even physically wiped out. Surplus commodities can lose value or be destroyed, while productive capacity and assets can be written down and left unused; money itself can be devalued through inflation, and labour through massive unemployment. How, then, has the need to circumvent these barriers and to expand the terrain of profitable activity driven capitalist urbanization? I argue here that urbanization has played a particularly active role, alongside such phenomena as military expenditures, in absorbing the surplus product that capitalists perpetually produce in their search for profits.

Urban revolutions

Consider, first, the case of Second Empire Paris. The year 1848 brought one of the first clear, and European-wide, crises of both unemployed surplus capital and surplus labour. It struck Paris particularly hard, and issued in an abortive revolution by unemployed workers and those bourgeois utopians who saw a social republic as the antidote to the greed and inequality that had characterized the July Monarchy. The republican bourgeoisie violently repressed the revolutionaries but failed to resolve the crisis. The result was the ascent to power of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, who engineered a coup in 1851 and proclaimed himself Emperor the following year. To survive politically, he resorted to widespread repression of alternative political movements. The economic situation he dealt with by means of a vast programme of infrastructural investment both at home and abroad. In the latter case, this meant the construction of railroads throughout Europe and into the Orient, as well as support for grand works such as the Suez Canal. At home, it meant consolidating the railway network, building ports and harbours, and draining marshes. Above all, it entailed the reconfiguration of the urban infrastructure of Paris. Bonaparte brought in Georges-Eugène Haussmann to take charge of the city's public works in 1853.

Haussmann clearly understood that his mission was to help solve the surplus-capital and unemployment problem through urbanization. Rebuilding Paris absorbed huge quantities of labour and capital by the standards of the time and, coupled with suppressing the aspirations of the Parisian workforce, was a primary vehicle of social stabilization. He drew upon the utopian plans that Fourierists and Saint-Simonians had debated in the 1840s for reshaping Paris, but with one big difference: he transformed the scale at which the urban process was imagined. When the architect Jacques Ignace Hittorff showed Haussmann his plans for a new boulevard, Haussmann threw them back at him saying: 'not wide enough . . . you have it 40 metres wide and I want it 120.' He annexed the suburbs and redesigned whole neighbourhoods such as Les Halles. To do this Haussmann needed new financial institutions and debt instruments, the Crédit Mobilier and Crédit Immobilier, which were constructed on Saint-Simonian lines. In effect, he helped resolve the capital-surplus disposal problem by setting up a proto-Keynesian system of debt-financed infrastructural urban improvements.

The system worked very well for some fifteen years, and it involved not only a transformation of urban infrastructures but also the construction of a new way of life and urban persona. Paris became 'the city of light', the great centre of consumption, tourism and pleasure; the cafés, department stores, fashion industry and grand expositions all changed urban living so that it could absorb vast surpluses through consumerism. But then the overextended and speculative financial system and credit structures crashed in 1868. Haussmann was dismissed; Napoleon III in desperation went to war against Bismarck's Germany and lost. In the ensuing vacuum arose the Paris Commune, one of the greatest revolutionary episodes in capitalist urban history, wrought in part out of a nostalgia for the world that Haussmann had destroyed and the desire to take back the city on the part of those dispossessed by his works.[2]

Fast forward now to the 1940s in the United States. The huge mobilization for the war effort temporarily resolved the capital-surplus disposal problem that had seemed so intractable in the 1930s, and the unemployment that went with it. But everyone was fearful about what would happen after the war. Politically the situation was dangerous: the federal government was in effect running a nationalized economy, and

[2] For a fuller account, see David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, New York 2003.

was in alliance with the Communist Soviet Union, while strong social movements with socialist inclinations had emerged in the 1930s. As in Louis Bonaparte's era, a hefty dose of political repression was evidently called for by the ruling classes of the time; the subsequent history of McCarthyism and Cold War politics, of which there were already abundant signs in the early 40s, is all too familiar. On the economic front, there remained the question of how surplus capital could be absorbed.

In 1942, a lengthy evaluation of Haussmann's efforts appeared in *Architectural Forum*. It documented in detail what he had done, attempted an analysis of his mistakes but sought to recuperate his reputation as one of the greatest urbanists of all time. The article was by none other than Robert Moses, who after the Second World War did to New York what Haussmann had done to Paris.[3] That is, Moses changed the scale of thinking about the urban process. Through a system of highways and infrastructural transformations, suburbanization and the total re-engineering of not just the city but also the whole metropolitan region, he helped resolve the capital-surplus absorption problem. To do this, he tapped into new financial institutions and tax arrangements that liberated the credit to debt-finance urban expansion. When taken nationwide to all the major metropolitan centres of the US—yet another transformation of scale—this process played a crucial role in stabilizing global capitalism after 1945, a period in which the US could afford to power the whole global non-communist economy by running trade deficits.

The suburbanization of the United States was not merely a matter of new infrastructures. As in Second Empire Paris, it entailed a radical transformation in lifestyles, bringing new products from housing to refrigerators and air conditioners, as well as two cars in the driveway and an enormous increase in the consumption of oil. It also altered the political landscape, as subsidized home-ownership for the middle classes changed the focus of community action towards the defence of property values and individualized identities, turning the suburban vote towards conservative republicanism. Debt-encumbered homeowners, it was argued, were less likely to go on strike. This project successfully absorbed the surplus and assured social stability, albeit at the cost of hollowing out the inner cities and generating urban unrest amongst those, chiefly African-Americans, who were denied access to the new prosperity.

[3] Robert Moses, 'What Happened to Haussmann?', *Architectural Forum*, vol. 77 (July 1942), pp. 57–66.

By the end of the 1960s, a different kind of crisis began to unfold: Moses, like Haussmann, fell from grace, and his solutions came to be seen as inappropriate and unacceptable. Traditionalists rallied around Jane Jacobs and sought to counter the brutal modernism of Moses's projects with a localized neighbourhood aesthetic. But the suburbs had been built, and the radical change in lifestyle that this betokened had many social consequences, leading feminists, for example, to proclaim the suburb as the locus of all their primary discontents. If Haussmannization had a part in the dynamics of the Paris Commune, the soulless qualities of suburban living also played a critical role in the dramatic events of 1968 in the US. Discontented white middle-class students went into a phase of revolt, sought alliances with marginalized groups claiming civil rights and rallied against American imperialism to create a movement to build another kind of world—including a different kind of urban experience.

In Paris, the campaign to stop the Left Bank Expressway and the destruction of traditional neighbourhoods by the invading 'high-rise giants' such as the Place d'Italie and Tour Montparnasse helped animate the larger dynamics of the 68 uprising. It was in this context that Henri Lefebvre wrote *The Urban Revolution*, which predicted not only that urbanization was central to the survival of capitalism and therefore bound to become a crucial focus of political and class struggle, but that it was obliterating step by step the distinctions between town and country through the production of integrated spaces across national territory, if not beyond.[4] The right to the city had to mean the right to command the whole urban process, which was increasingly dominating the countryside through phenomena ranging from agribusiness to second homes and rural tourism.

Along with the 68 revolt came a financial crisis within the credit institutions that, through debt-financing, had powered the property boom in the preceding decades. The crisis gathered momentum at the end of the 1960s until the whole capitalist system crashed, starting with the bursting of the global property-market bubble in 1973, followed by the fiscal bankruptcy of New York City in 1975. As William Tabb argued, the response to the consequences of the latter effectively pioneered the construction of a neoliberal answer to the problems of perpetuating class

[4] Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, Minneapolis 2003; and *Writings on Cities*, Oxford 1996.

power and of reviving the capacity to absorb the surpluses that capitalism must produce to survive.[5]

Girding the globe

Fast forward once again to our current conjuncture. International capitalism has been on a roller-coaster of regional crises and crashes—East and Southeast Asia in 1997–98; Russia in 1998; Argentina in 2001—but had until recently avoided a global crash even in the face of a chronic inability to dispose of capital surplus. What was the role of urbanization in stabilizing this situation? In the United States, it is accepted wisdom that the housing sector was an important stabilizer of the economy, particularly after the high-tech crash of the late 1990s, although it was an active component of expansion in the earlier part of that decade. The property market directly absorbed a great deal of surplus capital through the construction of city-centre and suburban homes and office spaces, while the rapid inflation of housing asset prices—backed by a profligate wave of mortgage refinancing at historically low rates of interest—boosted the US domestic market for consumer goods and services. American urban expansion partially steadied the global economy, as the US ran huge trade deficits with the rest of the world, borrowing around $2 billion a day to fuel its insatiable consumerism and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

But the urban process has undergone another transformation of scale. It has, in short, gone global. Property-market booms in Britain and Spain, as well as in many other countries, have helped power a capitalist dynamic in ways that broadly parallel what has happened in the United States. The urbanization of China over the last twenty years has been of a different character, with its heavy focus on infrastructural development, but it is even more important than that of the US. Its pace picked up enormously after a brief recession in 1997, to the extent that China has taken in nearly half the world's cement supplies since 2000. More than a hundred cities have passed the one-million population mark in this period, and previously small villages, such as Shenzhen, have become huge metropolises of 6 to 10 million people. Vast infrastructural projects, including dams and highways—again, all debt-financed—are transforming the landscape. The consequences for the global economy

[5] William Tabb, *The Long Default: New York City and the Urban Fiscal Crisis*, New York 1982.

and the absorption of surplus capital have been significant: Chile booms thanks to the high price of copper, Australia thrives and even Brazil and Argentina have recovered in part because of the strength of Chinese demand for raw materials.

Is the urbanization of China, then, the primary stabilizer of global capitalism today? The answer has to be a qualified yes. For China is only the epicentre of an urbanization process that has now become genuinely global, partly through the astonishing integration of financial markets that have used their flexibility to debt-finance urban development around the world. The Chinese central bank, for example, has been active in the secondary mortgage market in the US while Goldman Sachs was heavily involved in the surging property market in Mumbai, and Hong Kong capital has invested in Baltimore. In the midst of a flood of impoverished migrants, construction boomed in Johannesburg, Taipei, Moscow, as well as the cities in the core capitalist countries, such as London and Los Angeles. Astonishing if not criminally absurd mega-urbanization projects have emerged in the Middle East in places such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi, mopping up the surplus arising from oil wealth in the most conspicuous, socially unjust and environmentally wasteful ways possible.

This global scale makes it hard to grasp that what is happening is in principle similar to the transformations that Haussmann oversaw in Paris. For the global urbanization boom has depended, as did all the others before it, on the construction of new financial institutions and arrangements to organize the credit required to sustain it. Financial innovations set in train in the 1980s—securitizing and packaging local mortgages for sale to investors worldwide, and setting up new vehicles to hold collateralized debt obligations—played a crucial role. Their many benefits included spreading risk and permitting surplus savings pools easier access to surplus housing demand; they also brought aggregate interest rates down, while generating immense fortunes for the financial intermediaries who worked these wonders. But spreading risk does not eliminate it. Furthermore, the fact that it can be distributed so widely encourages even riskier local behaviours, because liability can be transferred elsewhere. Without adequate risk-assessment controls, this wave of financialization has now turned into the so-called sub-prime mortgage and housing asset-value crisis. The fallout was concentrated in the first instance in and around US cities, with particularly serious

implications for low-income, inner-city African-Americans and households headed by single women. It also has affected those who, unable to afford the skyrocketing house prices in urban centres, especially in the Southwest, were forced into the metropolitan semi-periphery; here they took up speculatively built tract housing at initially easy rates, but now face escalating commuting costs as oil prices rise, and soaring mortgage payments as market rates come into effect.

The current crisis, with vicious local repercussions on urban life and infrastructures, also threatens the whole architecture of the global financial system and may trigger a major recession to boot. The parallels with the 1970s are uncanny—including the immediate easy-money response of the Federal Reserve in 2007–08, which will almost certainly generate strong currents of uncontrollable inflation, if not stagflation, in the not too distant future. However, the situation is far more complex now, and it is an open question whether China can compensate for a serious crash in the United States; even in the PRC the pace of urbanization seems to be slowing down. The financial system is also more tightly coupled than it ever was before.[6] Computer-driven split-second trading always threatens to create a great divergence in the market—it is already producing incredible volatility in stock trading—that will precipitate a massive crisis, requiring a total re-think of how finance capital and money markets work, including their relation to urbanization.

Property and pacification

As in all the preceding phases, this most recent radical expansion of the urban process has brought with it incredible transformations of lifestyle. Quality of urban life has become a commodity, as has the city itself, in a world where consumerism, tourism, cultural and knowledge-based industries have become major aspects of the urban political economy. The postmodernist penchant for encouraging the formation of market niches—in both consumer habits and cultural forms—surrounds the contemporary urban experience with an aura of freedom of choice, provided you have the money. Shopping malls, multiplexes and box stores proliferate, as do fast-food and artisanal market-places. We now have, as urban sociologist Sharon Zukin puts it, 'pacification by

[6] Richard Bookstaber, *A Demon of Our Own Design: Markets, Hedge Funds and the Perils of Financial Innovation*, Hoboken, NJ 2007.

cappuccino'. Even the incoherent, bland and monotonous suburban tract development that continues to dominate in many areas now gets its antidote in a 'new urbanism' movement that touts the sale of community and boutique lifestyles to fulfill urban dreams. This is a world in which the neoliberal ethic of intense possessive individualism, and its cognate of political withdrawal from collective forms of action, becomes the template for human socialization.[7] The defence of property values becomes of such paramount political interest that, as Mike Davis points out, the home-owner associations in the state of California become bastions of political reaction, if not of fragmented neighbourhood fascisms.[8]

We increasingly live in divided and conflict-prone urban areas. In the past three decades, the neoliberal turn has restored class power to rich elites. Fourteen billionaires have emerged in Mexico since then, and in 2006 that country boasted the richest man on earth, Carlos Slim, at the same time as the incomes of the poor had either stagnated or diminished. The results are indelibly etched on the spatial forms of our cities, which increasingly consist of fortified fragments, gated communities and privatized public spaces kept under constant surveillance. In the developing world in particular, the city

> is splitting into different separated parts, with the apparent formation of many 'microstates'. Wealthy neighbourhoods provided with all kinds of services, such as exclusive schools, golf courses, tennis courts and private police patrolling the area around the clock intertwine with illegal settlements where water is available only at public fountains, no sanitation system exists, electricity is pirated by a privileged few, the roads become mud streams whenever it rains, and where house-sharing is the norm. Each fragment appears to live and function autonomously, sticking firmly to what it has been able to grab in the daily fight for survival.[9]

Under these conditions, ideals of urban identity, citizenship and belonging—already threatened by the spreading malaise of a neoliberal ethic—become much harder to sustain. Privatized redistribution

[7] Hilde Nafstad et al., 'Ideology and Power: The Influence of Current Neoliberalism in Society', *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, vol. 17, no. 4 (July 2007), pp. 313–27.

[8] Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*, London and New York 1990.

[9] Marcello Balbo, 'Urban Planning and the Fragmented City of Developing Countries', *Third World Planning Review*, vol. 15, no. 1 (1993), pp. 23–35.

through criminal activity threatens individual security at every turn, prompting popular demands for police suppression. Even the idea that the city might function as a collective body politic, a site within and from which progressive social movements might emanate, appears implausible. There are, however, urban social movements seeking to overcome isolation and reshape the city in a different image from that put forward by the developers, who are backed by finance, corporate capital and an increasingly entrepreneurially minded local state apparatus.

Dispossessions

Surplus absorption through urban transformation has an even darker aspect. It has entailed repeated bouts of urban restructuring through 'creative destruction', which nearly always has a class dimension since it is the poor, the underprivileged and those marginalized from political power that suffer first and foremost from this process. Violence is required to build the new urban world on the wreckage of the old. Haussmann tore through the old Parisian slums, using powers of expropriation in the name of civic improvement and renovation. He deliberately engineered the removal of much of the working class and other unruly elements from the city centre, where they constituted a threat to public order and political power. He created an urban form where it was believed—incorrectly, as it turned out in 1871—that sufficient levels of surveillance and military control could be attained to ensure that revolutionary movements would easily be brought to heel. Nevertheless, as Engels pointed out in 1872:

> In reality, the bourgeoisie has only one method of solving the housing question after its fashion—that is to say, of solving it in such a way that the solution continually reproduces the question anew. This method is called 'Haussmann' . . . No matter how different the reasons may be, the result is always the same: the scandalous alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-praise from the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but they appear again immediately somewhere else . . . The same economic necessity which produced them in the first place, produces them in the next place.[10]

It took more than a hundred years to complete the embourgeoisement of central Paris, with the consequences seen in recent years of uprisings

[10] Friedrich Engels, *The Housing Question*, New York 1935, pp. 74–7.

and mayhem in those isolated suburbs that trap marginalized immigrants, unemployed workers and youth. The sad point here, of course, is that what Engels described recurs throughout history. Robert Moses 'took a meat axe to the Bronx', in his infamous words, bringing forth long and loud laments from neighbourhood groups and movements. In the cases of Paris and New York, once the power of state expropriations had been successfully resisted and contained, a more insidious and cancerous progression took hold through municipal fiscal discipline, property speculation and the sorting of land-use according to the rate of return for its 'highest and best use'. Engels understood this sequence all too well:

> The growth of the big modern cities gives the land in certain areas, particularly in those areas which are centrally situated, an artificially and colossally increasing value; the buildings erected on these areas depress this value instead of increasing it, because they no longer belong to the changed circumstances. They are pulled down and replaced by others. This takes place above all with workers' houses which are situated centrally and whose rents, even with the greatest overcrowding, can never, or only very slowly, increase above a certain maximum. They are pulled down and in their stead shops, warehouses and public buildings are erected.[11]

Though this description was written in 1872, it applies directly to contemporary urban development in much of Asia—Delhi, Seoul, Mumbai—as well as gentrification in New York. A process of displacement and what I call 'accumulation by dispossession' lie at the core of urbanization under capitalism.[12] It is the mirror-image of capital absorption through urban redevelopment, and is giving rise to numerous conflicts over the capture of valuable land from low-income populations that may have lived there for many years.

Consider the case of Seoul in the 1990s: construction companies and developers hired goon squads of sumo-wrestler types to invade neighbourhoods on the city's hillsides. They sledgehammered down not only housing but also all the possessions of those who had built their own homes in the 1950s on what had become premium land. High-rise towers, which show no trace of the brutality that permitted their construction, now cover most of those hillsides. In Mumbai, meanwhile,

[11] Engels, *Housing Question*, p. 23.
[12] Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, Oxford 2003, chapter 4.

6 million people officially considered as slum dwellers are settled on land without legal title; all maps of the city leave these places blank. With the attempt to turn Mumbai into a global financial centre to rival Shanghai, the property-development boom has gathered pace, and the land that squatters occupy appears increasingly valuable. Dharavi, one of the most prominent slums in Mumbai, is estimated to be worth $2 billion. The pressure to clear it—for environmental and social reasons that mask the land grab—is mounting daily. Financial powers backed by the state push for forcible slum clearance, in some cases violently taking possession of terrain occupied for a whole generation. Capital accumulation through real-estate activity booms, since the land is acquired at almost no cost.

Will the people who are displaced get compensation? The lucky ones get a bit. But while the Indian Constitution specifies that the state has an obligation to protect the lives and well-being of the whole population, irrespective of caste or class, and to guarantee rights to housing and shelter, the Supreme Court has issued judgements that rewrite this constitutional requirement. Since slum dwellers are illegal occupants and many cannot definitively prove their long-term residence, they have no right to compensation. To concede that right, says the Supreme Court, would be tantamount to rewarding pickpockets for their actions. So the squatters either resist and fight, or move with their few belongings to camp out on the sides of highways or wherever they can find a tiny space.[13] Examples of dispossession can also be found in the US, though these tend to be less brutal and more legalistic: the government's right of eminent domain has been abused in order to displace established residents in reasonable housing in favour of higher-order land uses, such as condominiums and box stores. When this was challenged in the US Supreme Court, the justices ruled that it was constitutional for local jurisdictions to behave in this way in order to increase their property-tax base.[14]

In China millions are being dispossessed of the spaces they have long occupied—three million in Beijing alone. Since they lack private-property

[13] Usha Ramanathan, 'Illegality and the Urban Poor', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 22 July 2006; Rakesh Shukla, 'Rights of the Poor: An Overview of Supreme Court', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2 September 2006.
[14] Kelo v. New London, CT, decided on 23 June 2005 in case 545 US 469 (2005).

rights, the state can simply remove them by fiat, offering a minor cash payment to help them on their way before turning the land over to developers at a large profit. In some instances, people move willingly, but there are also reports of widespread resistance, the usual response to which is brutal repression by the Communist party. In the PRC it is often populations on the rural margins who are displaced, illustrating the significance of Lefebvre's argument, presciently laid out in the 1960s, that the clear distinction which once existed between the urban and the rural is gradually fading into a set of porous spaces of uneven geographical development, under the hegemonic command of capital and the state. This is also the case in India, where the central and state governments now favour the establishment of Special Economic Zones—ostensibly for industrial development, though most of the land is designated for urbanization. This policy has led to pitched battles against agricultural producers, the grossest of which was the massacre at Nandigram in West Bengal in March 2007, orchestrated by the state's Marxist government. Intent on opening up terrain for the Salim Group, an Indonesian conglomerate, the ruling CPI(M) sent armed police to disperse protesting villagers; at least 14 were shot dead and dozens wounded. Private property rights in this case provided no protection.

What of the seemingly progressive proposal to award private-property rights to squatter populations, providing them with assets that will permit them to leave poverty behind?[15] Such a scheme is now being mooted for Rio's favelas, for example. The problem is that the poor, beset with income insecurity and frequent financial difficulties, can easily be persuaded to trade in that asset for a relatively low cash payment. The rich typically refuse to give up their valued assets at any price, which is why Moses could take a meat axe to the low-income Bronx but not to affluent Park Avenue. The lasting effect of Margaret Thatcher's privatization of social housing in Britain has been to create a rent and price structure throughout metropolitan London that precludes lower-income and even middle-class people from access to accommodation anywhere near the urban centre. I wager that within fifteen years, if present trends continue, all those hillsides in Rio now occupied by favelas will be covered

[15] Much of this thinking follows the work of Hernando de Soto, *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*, New York 2000; see the critical examination by Timothy Mitchell, 'The Work of Economics: How a Discipline Makes its World', *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, vol. 46, no. 2 (August 2005), pp. 297–320.

by high-rise condominiums with fabulous views over the idyllic bay, while the erstwhile favela dwellers will have been filtered off into some remote periphery.

Formulating demands

Urbanization, we may conclude, has played a crucial role in the absorption of capital surpluses, at ever increasing geographical scales, but at the price of burgeoning processes of creative destruction that have dispossessed the masses of any right to the city whatsoever. The planet as building site collides with the 'planet of slums'.[16] Periodically this ends in revolt, as in Paris in 1871 or the US after the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968. If, as seems likely, fiscal difficulties mount and the hitherto successful neoliberal, postmodernist and consumerist phase of capitalist surplus-absorption through urbanization is at an end and a broader crisis ensues, then the question arises: where is our 68 or, even more dramatically, our version of the Commune? As with the financial system, the answer is bound to be much more complex precisely because the urban process is now global in scope. Signs of rebellion are everywhere: the unrest in China and India is chronic, civil wars rage in Africa, Latin America is in ferment. Any of these revolts could become contagious. Unlike the fiscal system, however, the urban and peri-urban social movements of opposition, of which there are many around the world, are not tightly coupled; indeed most have no connection to each other. If they somehow did come together, what should they demand?

The answer to the last question is simple enough in principle: greater democratic control over the production and utilization of the surplus. Since the urban process is a major channel of surplus use, establishing democratic management over its urban deployment constitutes the right to the city. Throughout capitalist history, some of the surplus value has been taxed, and in social-democratic phases the proportion at the state's disposal rose significantly. The neoliberal project over the last thirty years has been oriented towards privatizing that control. The data for all OECD countries show, however, that the state's portion of gross output has been roughly constant since the 1970s.[17] The main achievement of

[16] Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*, London and New York 2006.

[17] OECD *Factbook 2008: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics*, Paris 2008, p. 225.

the neoliberal assault, then, has been to prevent the public share from expanding as it did in the 1960s. Neoliberalism has also created new systems of governance that integrate state and corporate interests, and through the application of money power, it has ensured that the disbursement of the surplus through the state apparatus favours corporate capital and the upper classes in shaping the urban process. Raising the proportion of the surplus held by the state will only have a positive impact if the state itself is brought back under democratic control.

Increasingly, we see the right to the city falling into the hands of private or quasi-private interests. In New York City, for example, the billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg, is reshaping the city along lines favourable to developers, Wall Street and transnational capitalist-class elements, and promoting the city as an optimal location for high-value businesses and a fantastic destination for tourists. He is, in effect, turning Manhattan into one vast gated community for the rich. In Mexico City, Carlos Slim had the downtown streets re-cobbled to suit the tourist gaze. Not only affluent individuals exercise direct power. In the town of New Haven, strapped for resources for urban reinvestment, it is Yale, one of the wealthiest universities in the world, that is redesigning much of the urban fabric to suit its needs. Johns Hopkins is doing the same for East Baltimore, and Columbia University plans to do so for areas of New York, sparking neighbourhood resistance movements in both cases. The right to the city, as it is now constituted, is too narrowly confined, restricted in most cases to a small political and economic elite who are in a position to shape cities more and more after their own desires.

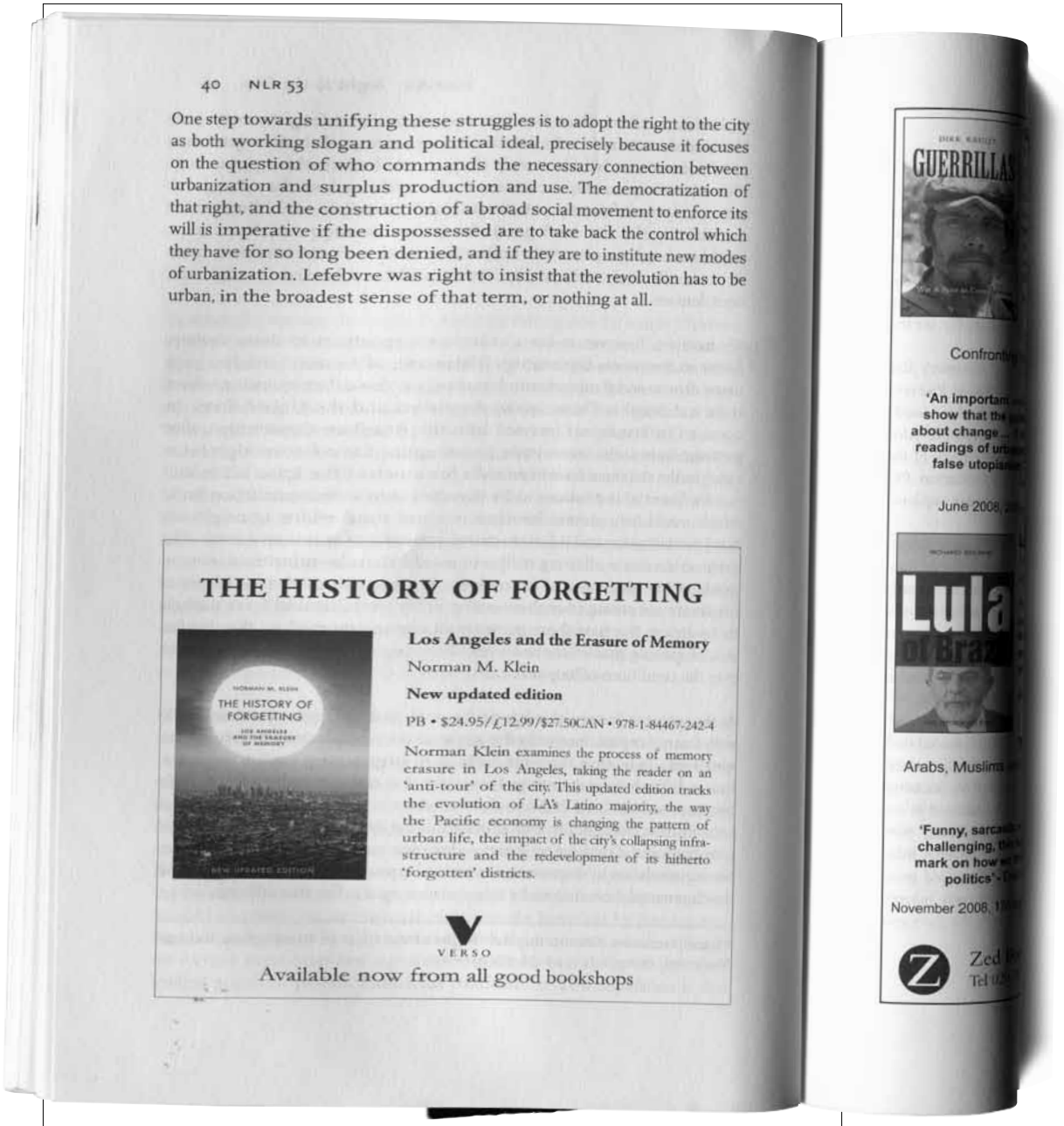
Every January, the Office of the New York State Comptroller publishes an estimate of the total Wall Street bonuses for the previous twelve months. In 2007, a disastrous year for financial markets by any measure, these added up to $33.2 billion, only 2 per cent less than the year before. In mid-summer of 2007, the Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank poured billions of dollars' worth of short-term credit into the financial system to ensure its stability, and thereafter the Fed dramatically lowered interest rates or pumped in vast amounts of liquidity every time the Dow threatened to fall precipitously. Meanwhile, some two million people have been or are about to be made homeless by foreclosures. Many city neighbourhoods and even whole peri-urban communities in the US have been boarded up and vandalized, wrecked by the predatory lending practices of the financial institutions. This population is due

no bonuses. Indeed, since foreclosure means debt forgiveness, which is regarded as income in the United States, many of those evicted face a hefty income-tax bill for money they never had in their possession. This asymmetry cannot be construed as anything less than a massive form of class confrontation. A 'Financial Katrina' is unfolding, which conveniently (for the developers) threatens to wipe out low-income neighbourhoods on potentially high-value land in many inner-city areas far more effectively and speedily than could be achieved through eminent domain.

We have yet, however, to see a coherent opposition to these developments in the twenty-first century. There are, of course, already a great many diverse social movements focusing on the urban question—from India and Brazil to China, Spain, Argentina and the United States. In 2001, a City Statute was inserted into the Brazilian Constitution, after pressure from social movements, to recognize the collective right to the city.[18] In the US, there have been calls for much of the $700 billion bail-out for financial institutions to be diverted into a Reconstruction Bank, which would help prevent foreclosures and fund efforts at neighbourhood revitalization and infrastructural renewal at municipal level. The urban crisis that is affecting millions would then be prioritized over the needs of big investors and financiers. Unfortunately the social movements are not strong enough or sufficiently mobilized to force through this solution. Nor have these movements yet converged on the singular aim of gaining greater control over the uses of the surplus—let alone over the conditions of its production.

At this point in history, this has to be a global struggle, predominantly with finance capital, for that is the scale at which urbanization processes now work. To be sure, the political task of organizing such a confrontation is difficult if not daunting. However, the opportunities are multiple because, as this brief history shows, crises repeatedly erupt around urbanization both locally and globally, and because the metropolis is now the point of massive collision—dare we call it class struggle?—over the accumulation by dispossession visited upon the least well-off and the developmental drive that seeks to colonize space for the affluent.

[18] Edésio Fernandes, 'Constructing the "Right to the City" in Brazil', *Social and Legal Studies*, vol. 16, no. 2 (June 2007), pp. 201–19.



Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro

From Dumpster Diving to ALDI —travels in suburbanism

For better or worse—artists are kind of like fungi—they exist within a state of flux. Fungi exploits plant and animal waste, feeding from this source of complex nutrients that is otherwise inedible for other life and turning it into more easily consumed material to sustain plant life and other small organisms. ¶ It is only now, sitting at our kitchen table cluttered with tools and the remains of tea, looking at the trees in suburban Blackheath, that things seem to coalesce into focus. For the purpose of this story we need to take a step back fifteen or twenty years ago—to mid-nineties Surry hills. ¶ We are not trying to make out that we were the first hipsters to ever move into the inner city and then the urban professionals followed and it became boring. No, we were part of a long sequence of local and global events. At the time—maybe because we were living marginalised existences in semi-illegal situations, we thought that we were not part of the process of the gentrification of the city around us. But that of course is rubbish. We were merely acting like fungi: processing, through our mere state of existence, the inconsumable into the consumable. ¶ We were the inheritors of the rise of the 'Mini Dragons' and the eventual dominance of China in the world of textile production. The wiping out of the local textiles industry did not happen overnight: it took place over the course of a few years. The gradual shutting up of shop in Surry hills meant that for a time, working factories were dovetailed together with illegal share accommodation within warehouses. The gradual disappearance of the factories also freed up accommodation in terrace houses that once housed the workers for the industry. ¶ One of the reasons the middle class did not immediately fill the void created by the gradual disappearance of the textiles industry is noise. The white middle class cannot stand certain noises. Just as fighting fish will attempt to destroy each other on sight, so to will the middle class go rabid if they hear each other. In suburbia, the breeding ground of the middle class, noises such as lawn mowing, leaf blowing and housing construction are permissible—all other noises are intolerable. ¶ Living in the inner city was noisy: factory noises, loud music, delivery trucks, people shouting in the streets, late night Mah-jong sessions, people working all night to meet deadlines, twenty-four hour parties—definitely not the realm of the suburban middle class. Of course most artists come from the middle class. So by logic they should also be noise averse. But noise is like passing wind—when it's your own flatulence; it never smells as bad

as when others do it. Same too with noise: if you're making it, you don't complain about it. And we did make a lot of noise. The city offered the critical mass of like-minded people that we sought during all those lonely adolescent years spent in suburbia. Finally we had the space and numbers to make things and the room to party. So naturally we did. ¶ Unfortunately, we had not stumbled across Utopia. We were able to occupy these spaces at cheapish rents because they were still categorised by council as industrial zones and not many people would choose to live below a sweatshop. We were made to feel marginalised, little things like not being included in the census; council refusing to pick up garbage and the inability to secure a long lease contract were downers. But once the property developers lobbied the right council members zoning was changed and buildings were free to be legally re-styled as New York Style loft apartments: exit artists stage left (or to Marrickville at least). ¶ At this point we should go back to what made it possible for us to inhabit these spaces in the first place: the phasing out of the textiles industry in the inner city. This shift was part of the greater western economic shift from manufacturing to serviced based industry. With the growth of serviced based industries came an influx of young urban professionals moving into the inner city to meet the demands of this sector. ¶ These new inhabitants brought with them not only a different set of values but also larger wallets. This effectively meant that silent suburbia had moved into the inner city and they had the money to make their attitudes respected. They too sought the cosmopolitan convenient nature of the city. The presence of artists in the inner city took the edge off places that had hitherto been deemed undesirable places to live. They loved the city too: just a different kind of city that involved more cafes and restaurants and less studios and collectives. The forces that had provided us the space to reside and create had swung back around and bit us in the arse. Just as the immigrant industrial workers had moved on so to did the hipsters move on to make way for the young urban professionals. ¶ Contrary to public perception artists do not live in a vacuum. The vagarities of economics and public policies do make an impact on what is made and where it made in the art world too. And that's where the avant-garde is. Moving. Looking for room to create. From Surry Hills to Redfern, from Redfern to Summer Hill; from Newtown to Marrickville, from Marrickville to St. Peters… and if all else fails—off to Berlin. ¶ But we have had a gutful; we're living in the Blue Mountains in amongst the tree-changers with the rest of the Newtown refugees, luxuriating in suburbia. We've fled the inner city war against suburbanism. In order to defeat the enemy, you must become the enemy. ¶ Nb. This is not an apology to late capitalism. It is only the documentation of a personal experience, deepest respect and admiration to the brave individuals and collectives out there willing to keep giving to the city.

[fig.] FLATPACK, Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro, 2006

[fig.] FLATPACK, Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro, 2006

Margaret Crawford

Rethinking "Rights," Rethinking "Cities:" A Response to David Harvey's "The Right to the City"

David Harvey's essay, "The Right to the City," first published in the *New Left Review* in 2008, has been widely influential. Going beyond the sharp critical analysis that has made his work a staple of academic debates about capitalism, Harvey offered the outlines of a strategic political response to neo-liberalism, the dominant form of contemporary capitalism. His interest in rights has resonated with a wide variety of urban activists around the world, ranging from the Right to the City Alliance in the US, a multi-city coalition of progressive groups spearheading a national movement for "urban justice, human rights and democracy" to this exhibition and publishing project.[1] The essay is also notable for its expansive and hopeful tone, unusual in Harvey's work. Harvey begins by describing the "right to the city" as a transformative attempt to remake both cities and ourselves. This right, as Harvey puts it, is far more than "the individual liberty to access urban resources; it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city." This would involve creating the "social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire." For Harvey, the right to the city is the "most precious and most neglected of our human rights."[2] In order to explain what these rights are and how they might be fought for, Harvey reverts to a style of argumentation familiar to his readers, laying out a lucid Marxist analysis of the current global crisis of capitalism. Surveying the history of capitalist accumulation, he points out the key role that urbanization has played in absorbing surplus capital. In the current neo-liberal moment, he argues, this process has become global, as finance capital around the world increasingly depends on urban restructuring. Central to this process, according to Harvey, is what he calls "accumulation through dispossession." This occurs when the state and property developers displace the poor in order to redevelop the land they occupy, thus absorbing surplus capital. This widespread practice not only displaces the poor from their dwellings but also eliminates their access to newly gentrified city centers. Harvey's global perspective allows him to identify large numbers of similar cases around the world, from Seoul to Rio de Janeiro to New Orleans. ¶ In the face of the unprecedented scale and penetration of the global urban processes Harvey describes, what kind of opposition could be mounted and from where would it come? Although Harvey sees signs of rebellion everywhere and is aware of the many diverse social movements focusing on the urban question, he finds them too weak

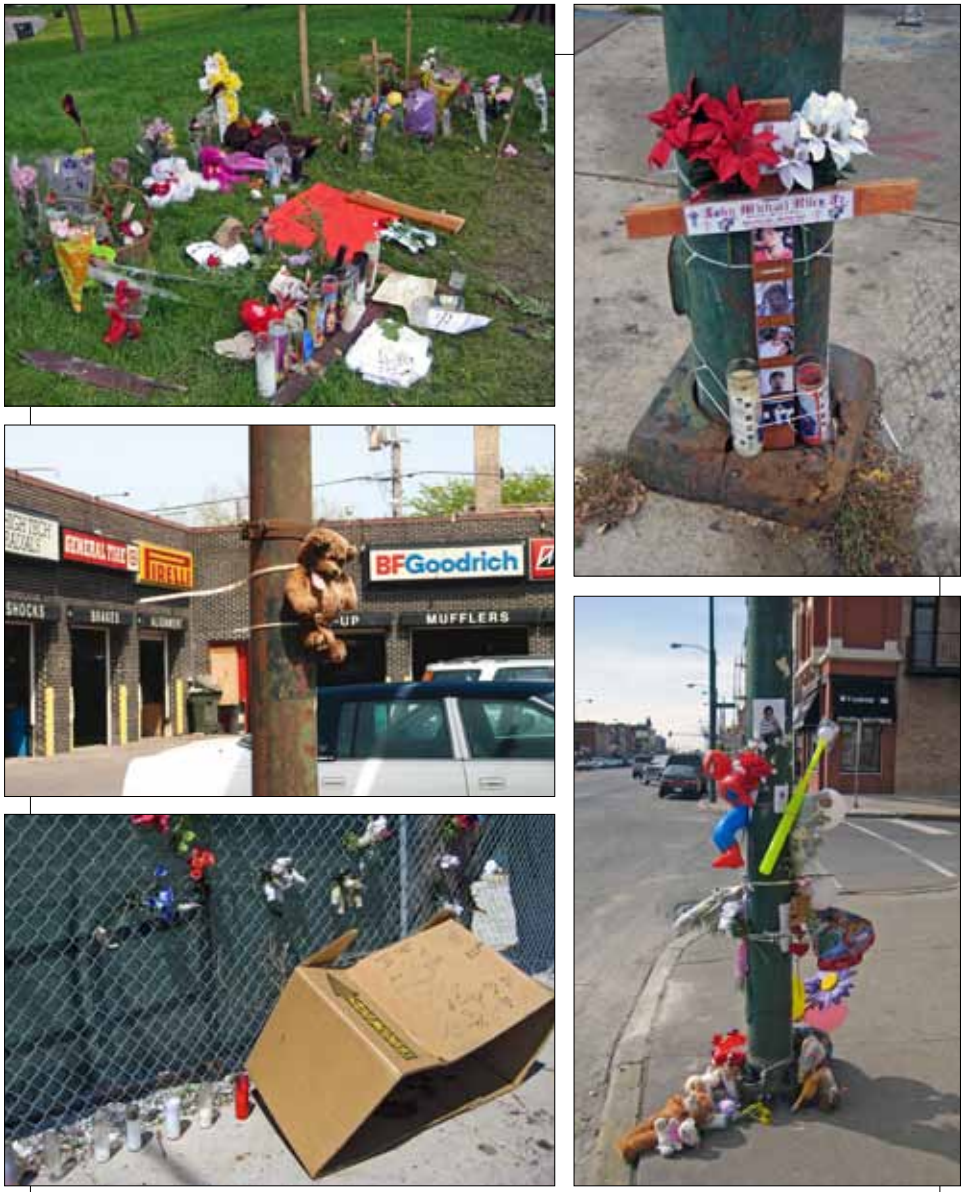
1 http://www.righttothecity.org/ accessed 02.06.2011
2 David Harvey, "The Right to the City," New Left Review 53 (September-October 2008), p.23.

and unfocused to have any impact. Their main problem is they lack a singular unifying aim: "in contrast to the unity of the global fiscal system, they are not tightly coupled or connected to each other." If, somehow, they came together, he argues that they should focus on a single goal: "to gain greater democratic control over the production and utilization of the surplus. Thus, the only adequate political outcome that Harvey can envision is a global struggle between finance capital and an organized and coherent oppositional movement. The "right to the city" would become the working slogan and political ideal to guide this struggle.[3] ¶ Harvey ends the essay by reasserting Henri Lefebvre's slogan, "the revolution has to be urban or nothing at all.4 In fact, although Lefebvre's shadow hovers over the entire essay Harvey never clarifies his position towards Lefebvre's concept of "the right to the city." Lefebvre coined the phrase and developed it in a series of writings published just before and after the events of May 1968, including his book of the same title. A sociologist and philosopher, Lefebvre challenged communist intellectuals by focusing on the city, in orthodox Marxist thought long considered to be a mere reflection of capitalism in space. Harvey mentions him only briefly, citing Lefebvre's 1968 book The Urban Revolution, rather than the Right to the City (Le Droit a la Ville) published the same year. Repeating Lefebvre's prediction that urbanism would be central to the survival of capitalism, he barely mentions Lefebvre's concept of rights, in spite of the fact that his own definition is clearly indebted to it. Harvey's cursory treatment of Lefebvre avoids confronting the many significant differences between the ways in which each formulates these rights and, even more, of their political implications. Understanding these differences, I argue, is crucial to defining the politics that will accompany any attempt to realize these rights. ¶ In contrast to Harvey's crisply rational exposition, Lefebvre elaborated on the 'right to the city' in characteristically elusive but evocative prose. If Harvey condensed the right to the city into a singular "democratic right to control of the surplus," Lefebvre situated it in a far more expansive context. This included both material rights, such as those to housing, (habitat) and the conditions of life (habiter) as well as social and even psychological rights such as pleasure, play (a major concern of Lefebvre's) or personal development. He defined two elements as central to this endeavor. One was the right to produce the oeuvre. This was a Lefebvrian term signifying a life-enhancing environment produced by creative and collective participation. A complex urban environment shaped by specific circumstances, the oeuvre is closer to a work of art than to a material product. The second was the right to appropriation, meaning not only full access to existing urban spaces but also the freedom to create new kinds of urban spaces tailored to the needs of their inhabitants. This would result in a city produced for use rather than exchange values. If Harvey defines the right to the city in largely economistic terms, Lefebvre imagines it as a far more emancipatory project, emphasizing the need to freely project alternative possibilities for urban life. He invented a new methodology, which he called transduction, to encourage the creation of "Experimental Utopias." Framed by existing reality, this would "introduce rigor in invention and knowledge in utopia." [5] as a way of avoiding irresponsible idealism. ¶ Lefebvre's concept of the city was similarly ambiguous and open-ended. He saw the city as a complex and contradictory phenomenon that did not lend itself to simple explanation. Although he portrayed it as a place continually shaped and reshaped by economic and political forces, he believed in the primacy of human actors in its creation. Unlike Harvey, who focuses primarily on the actions of capital in producing urban space, Lefebvre described the city as composed of two interdependent and equally important elements, one, "the city" consisting of the existing physical and material reality, and the other "the urban," as a social reality made up of concepts and relationships. Depending on the specifics of any urban situation, the interaction between the two would inevitably produce unexpected and often paradoxical outcomes. Lefebvre saw the crisis of May 1968 as a vivid demonstration of these contradictory forces at work. In Paris, a city controlled at the time by economic rationality, productivism, and bureaucracy, he discovered, paradoxically, that "the urban" not only persisted but was even intensified, as inhabitants used urban space for encounters, communication and information. As a result, the city became "a place of desire, permanent disequilibrium, the seat of the dissolution of normalities and constraints, the moment of play and the unpredictable."[6] Invigorated by new ideas about what a city might be, physical spaces acquired different and contrary uses and meanings. For Lefebvre, the spatial boundaries of both "the city" and "the urban" were also open-ended. Noting that urban processes had produced urbanized spaces in peripheral, rural, and even wilderness areas, he did not define a fixed urban geography as a given. ¶ As David Harvey's analysis demonstrates, today's urban crisis is very different than the one Lefebvre confronted. Yet, in many ways Lefebvre's way of thinking, emphasizing contingency, acknowledging contradictions and accepting unpredictability, is better suited to our current social and cultural realities than Harvey's. It points to very different political conclusions, moving human actors and their agency to the forefront of political actions. Who are these actors? In spite of his vagueness about many things, Lefebvre is quite specific in stating that demands for "the urban" are never generic but always constituted though concrete struggles based on specific demands. The right to make these demands was radically inclusive; since Lefebvre asserted that urban rights belonged to all inhabitants, not just to officially designated "citizens." At the same time, the demands themselves are necessarily defined by identities and differences since class, race, gender, sexuality, and age all shape the experience of urban life differently. If Harvey seems to set his "rights" as a response to the evident "wrongs" of capitalism, Lefebvre was striving to identify rights from the urban subjects themselves. ¶ This is in strong contrast to Harvey's political recommendations. In "The Right to the City" essay, the distance required to identify urban processes at global scale prevents him from

3 David Harvey, "The Right to the City", p.39-40
4 David Harvey, "The Right to the City", p.40.
5 Henri Lefebvre, "Right to the City," in Writings on Cities, (New York: Blackwell, 1996), p.151
6 Henri Lefebvre, "Right to the City", p.129-30

engaging with the multiple manifestations of urban politics occurring around the world. Even so, in the end, he asserts that the only effective opposition to global finance capital must be its equivalent in scale and unified purpose. In many ways, this closely resembles the orthodox Marxist strategy of a mass organization, focused on predetermined and centralized goals. In a 2010 lecture, Harvey took this argument further, categorically rejecting the recent proliferation of NGOs, GROs (grassroots organizations), social movements, undefined self-organizing groups, cultural and social activists and DIY practices that populate the contemporary landscape of urban activism, as either ameliorative or self-defeating.[7] Although he is more sympathetic towards pragmatic movements of the excluded and the dispossessed, he reserves his highest political hopes for left-wing unions and parties, since their struggles have as their ultimate end the seizure of state power. This old-fashioned concept of political agency doesn't acknowledge the unknown and untapped creative potential of the thousands of groups and individuals currently active in a variety of ways in opposition to capitalism and market forces. Imposing a predetermined program and strategy, it reduces rather than expands the possibilities of a genuinely new politics of the urban. ¶ Lefebvre's concept of the right to the city, based on complexity, ambiguity and contingency is far more relevant to our current heterogeneous urban circumstances. If Harvey's depiction of capitalism is in many ways a narrative of loss, Lefebvre, in contrast, is always seeking the new, even when it is barely visible. As geographer Mark Purcell has pointed out, Lefebvre's right to the city is an "open concept," it describes an arena of struggle rather than a precise political program.[8] These struggles will emerge from the context of specific questions and demands in concrete circumstances. How these struggles will ultimately play out is not predetermined, but depends on what Purcell calls "the new urban politics of the inhabitant." This empowers urban residents and groups to act in unspecified ways to define, fight for and claim their rights to the city. By definition, these politics would be far more inclusive than current representative structures, with the goal of encouraging all residents to participate in the making of urban space. In many respects, Lefebvre's notion of the oeuvre is a more spatially focused version of the open, agonistic processes advocated by Chantal Mouffe and other advocates of radical democracy. ¶ The question of what strategies and tactics should be used in these struggles is both open and inclusive. Lefebvre's insistence on the centrality of thought, and the key role of urban imaginaries in understanding, challenging and transforming "the urban" opens the door to a multiplicity of representations and interventions. It also empowers artists, architects, and other cultural activists to become key players in defining struggles and outcomes. In this sense the Sydney version of "the Right to the City" fulfills Lefebvre's demand for "art, conceived as a capacity to transform reality, to appropriate at the highest level the facts of the 'lived,' of time, space, the body, and desire."[9]

7 David Harvey, "Organizing for the Anti-Capitalist Transition" (2010) http://davidharvey.org/organizing-for-the-anti-capitalist-transition/ accessed 02.04.2011
8 Mark Purcell, "Excavating Lefebvre:" GeoJournal 58 (2002), p.99-108
9 Henri Lefebvre, "Right to the City," p.164



[fig.] PUBLIC PHENOMENA, Temporary Services, 2008–2010

Temporary Services

Public Phenomena: Documentation of Roadside Memorials and Basketball Hoops

A drunk driver skids over the curb, hitting a pedestrian and killing them instantly. A gang dispute turns ugly: guns are drawn, shots are fired, and a passing motorist becomes the unintended target. Both situations are, unfortunately, common examples of unexpected deaths that have occurred in many cities; we have recorded their lingering effects on Chicago. When we hear about these kinds of killings, we immediately think about different scenarios that may have prevented these situations from happening. We are human, and our instinct is to investigate, to solve, to ponder. ¶ However, we must also speak to our collective natural reaction to mourn, to reflect, and to memorialize. We honor our dead and attempt to use the lessons of their lives to right the wrongs that may have taken them. It is within this instinctual pattern that people build memorials on the side of the road, on walls, and other direct, public spots in the shared spaces of Chicago. These memorials are often created in the exact location where a body was found, a person was hit by a car, or a bullet hit the wrong skull. They become an ever-evolving public work: as days, weeks, or years go by, the quality and content of each memorial shifts, dependent upon the needs of the living. They are a more fragile, interactive and dynamic kind of public experience than most traditional big-boned publicly commissioned sculptures. ¶ Public Phenomena is the name we have given to the results of this human instinct we write about and photograph. It describes both alterations of existing city spaces to make sites like spontaneous roadside memorials, and the creation of new items, such as homemade basketball hoops. These structures are both physical (like traffic barriers and fences) and emotional/mental (such as public spaces of refuge or reflection). Temporary Services has been taking pictures of these roadside memorials, and other instances of unofficial takeovers of shared city spaces by their denizens, since the group's formation in 1998. In 2005, we published a 28-page booklet of these photos. This was followed by the publication of our 152-page book, *Public Phenomena* (Half Letter Press, 2008). ¶ To find homemade basketball hoops in Chicago, one usually has to traverse the city's network of alleys behind homes. The most common style consists of a boxy plastic milk crate (easy to scavenge from behind corner bodegas and larger supermarkets) with its bottom removed, and a backboard made from any squarish piece of wood, or the occasional store bought item with an improvised net. The hoops are often slam-dunked to oblivion so that only a backboard remains. They are frequently mounted on round wooden

[fig.] PUBLIC PHENOMENA, Temporary Services, 2010

telephone poles but are also affixed to the free space above garages or any other surface that can be screwed or nailed into. ¶ Chicago has many public parks with basketball courts but these may be undesirable for reasons that could include their location, the streets one my have to cross to reach them, as well as the possibility that those streets or parks may be populated by gang members, making them dangerous for adults and more so for children. Sometimes kids and parents also just want to play closer to home. ¶ The impetus to shape the world to meet our needs is strong. One can find alterations, inventions, additions, and new creations that contradict or change the established or official structure in even the most privileged of cities, in the areas frequently assisted with city services and filled with residents in a comfortable social standing. When you go to areas that are more neglected, and that experience income inequality and other institutional forms of discrimination, these modifications are even more necessary for surviving daily violence. The city needs to be fixed and its violence and poverty addressed on so many levels. These photos present a small accounting of the ways in which people try to heal the brutality of Chicago and make their place more livable and fair.

Anna Plyushteva

Rescuing the Right to the City

The notion of a "right to the city" was developed by French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre and first appeared in his 1968 *Le Droit à la Ville*, notably published before the historic protests in Paris that same year.[1] This essay is a contribution towards the project of rescuing the practical and intellectual future of the right to the city as a substantive and formalised right claimed and practiced by citizens. ¶ But why would the right to the city need rescuing? Undoubtedly, it has flourished in recent years, inspiring a World Charter on the Right to the City[2], UN-HABITAT's latest World Urban Forum[3], and the impressive Right to the City Alliance of civil society groups in the USA[4], to mention but a few of its incarnations. ¶ And yet, for a concept so potent, with such vast transformatory potential, it appears to be in danger of losing its immediacy and relevance and blending into the many open-ended debates on the politics of the urban. There is therefore a necessity to propel the critical discussion (and even to inject it with fresh controversy!) so that the need for the Right to the City and its many applications becomes more evident than ever.

Towards applying the Right to the City: Whose right?

A big challenge in implementing the Right to the City and deploying it for resolving real-life tensions in urban society and space is that many attempts to make it workable inevitably water it down, co-opt it into existing power structures, and suffocate its radical nature with procedure. One prominent example is the fate of participatory budgeting, a practical application of participatory democracy. In this model, a share of the local government's budget is allocated to projects chosen by local citizens through a sophisticated multi-stage process of deliberation.[5] Participatory budgeting, now applied on various scales in the local governance of several countries—mainly in Latin America, but also elsewhere—offers some pointers as to what exercising the Right to the City might look like in practice. However, participatory budgeting has left many of its stakeholders disillusioned: what originated as a radical notion of democracy has on many occasions ended up as a procedure which is burdensome for the marginalised to participate in and for authorities to manage, while remaining largely inconsequential in terms of challenging the structures of injustice. ¶ I would like to highlight two important aspects of the right to the city idea before going on to suggest how it can be fruitfully applied in practice. Firstly, the concept envisages a type of urban politics which recognises that shaping the urban realm should not be the prerogative of technocrats, bureaucrats, and generally those who make a living out of city shaping, be they architects, planners, consultants, or politicians. ¶ This brings me to the second key characteristic of the Right to the City vision of urban governance. Unlike traditional citizenship rights, which continue to be based on residence and domicile requirements and thus become increasingly divorced from the urban social reality, there is no legitimacy test for exercising this right, other than inhabiting the city.[6] As a result, the right to the city opens up radically new avenues for social justice and for those who have continually been oppressed, excluded and silenced in the urban space. These include immigrants, squatters, homeless people and land invaders, domestic workers, sexual minorities, people with disabilities, and many, many other groups that have been occluded within the existing socio-spatial structures of the city. ¶ It appears at present that the practical implementation of the right to the city would have to be based on some form of participatory governance model, with some of the responsibilities and resources for shaping urban areas currently held by national and local governments fully surrendered to citizens. When thinking about the implementation of the right to the city, there is an understandable instinctive urge to understand this proposed model from a liberal-democratic perspective, and argue that it should involve everyone equally, thus reducing it to a quest for broadening participation.[7] ¶ However, I would like to argue instead for the right to the city to be adopted as a discretionary rather than as a universal right – giving it to those who have limited or no access to the traditional toolset of urban political citizenship. This would represent a critical step towards patching up the imperfect yet necessary fabric of the democratic model. Making the right to the city a "balancing" right is one of the few ways to protect it from reproducing existing power relations and being hijacked by those who already shape urban governance according to their own agendas. This model would also contribute towards revitalising citizens' political participation—both of those with and of those without entitlement to the right to the city, and redressing inequalities in representational democracy. In other words, the right to the city should be for those who are excluded from the traditional democratic process—those who cannot vote because they have no residency rights, a permanent address or are under-aged, those who cannot afford to sponsor a politician, or even to buy a newspaper, those who pay taxes yet live in a city they cannot get to know because its stairs, buses and narrow pavements are hostile to their wheelchair. This would inevitably mean that most middle-aged middle-income able-bodied heterosexual white males (as the most obvious example) would be excluded from the right to the city process. The argument here is that they already have access to many political and economic alternatives in terms of exercising power over urban space, and should the resulting urban life bring about the marginalisation of the middle-income white male identity, or any other—well, it would be their turn to organise around that identity, become involved in the process and redress the balance. ¶ The fundamental fragility of this and similar applications of the right to the city comes from their reliance on a right that is "given" rather than claimed.

1 Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, "Lost in Transposition—Time, Space and the City", in Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, (Eds), *Henri Lefebvre: Writings on Cities,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p.55

2 James Connolly and Justin Steil, "Introduction: Finding Justice in the City", in Peter Marcuse et al (Eds), *Searching for the Just City: Debates in Urban Theory and Practice*, (London: Routledge, 2009), p.8

3 Social Forum for the Americas, *Carta Mundial de Derecho a la Ciudad*, (2004), available at http://www.onuhabitat.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=50&Itemid=3, accessed December 2010

4 UN-HABITAT, *Report of the Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*, (2010), available at http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=3026, accessed January 2011

5 Gihan Perera, Claiming the Right to the City", *Race, Poverty and Environment,* 15(1), 2008, pp.12-13

6 For more details, see Michaela Hordijk, "Participatory Governance in Peru: Exercising Citizenship", *Environment and Urbanization*, 17, 2005, pp.219-236

7 These examples include: community gardens in New York; participatory budgeting in Lima which includes children in the process of resource allocation; squatter restaurants and art centres in Amsterdam—to name a few.

Similarly to the examples of participatory budgeting described above, this right can be neither effective nor empowering if conceived by academics, institutionalised by politicians and then "handed down" to citizens. The call for implementing the Right to the City should (and occasionally does) come in the form of a demand from the presently silenced and excluded—only then its vitality and transformatory power can be realised. ¶ It may be that the idea of a selectively applied Right to the City is too heretical, or that its practical outcomes may in fact be undesirable from the perspective of a "greater good". Rather than a comprehensive solution, this is a glance at the much-needed continuous revitalisation of urban politics and space, and at the pursuit of a more adventurous urban theory and practice. But it is not entirely nonsensical either. Indeed, why not give an organisation of homeless people in a particular neighbourhood the right to re-design a city square? They are the ones who know it better than anyone else, who spend more time there than anyone else, and who are most affected by any changes in it.

The collective city

The Right to the City is a collective right—a right which belongs to groups and identities, rather than to individuals. The pre-requisite it implies, for unity, deliberation and consensus, is what shelters it from irresponsible or shortsighted use and misuse: *The right to the city cannot be construed simply as an individualised right. It demands a collective effort and the shaping of a collective politics around social solidarities.*[8] ¶ Just as importantly, it is not only a collective right, but also a force for collectivity—its intrinsic purpose is to bring people together in the public spaces of the city, to encourage interaction and a sense of community. Lefebvre imagined the city as a constantly changing, constantly contested environment, which is never stable or completed to any significant extent.[9] Yet, although Lefebvre never suggested what kind of a city he intended his vision of urban politics to produce, it is safe to see a city of greater human proximity and sociality as a desirable objective. Thus for instance, high-density developments are much more in line with Lefebvre's vision than low-density suburban developments. There are many benefits to increased social interaction and the sense of community and belonging in our shared public spaces: greater social interaction fosters understanding, enjoyment and security, both actual and perceived. Greater sociality in public space also makes people more likely to lead healthier lifestyles.[10]

Beyond the city

Having claimed that Lefebvre's right to the city is a solid enough foundation to begin to re-think the traditional democratic model of governance, why stop there? I would go on to suggest it opens up a number of other promising possibilities. The right to the city is a useful platform for cooperation beyond the boundaries of the individual urban community—at the city, national (as demonstrated by the Right to the City Alliance) and global levels.[11] It is a unifying force which creates a shared political language and fosters exchange of good practice and know-how among urban citizens facing similar challenges worldwide. Rather paradoxically, because it is particularly meaningful in relatively small, close-knit communities with a clear understanding of shared priorities and problems, the right to the city might also be particularly relevant in a rural context. There is a powerful sense that we are only beginning to unwrap the full potential of this type of urban thinking, and therefore the task of saving it from demagogical inconsequentialism and extreme relativism is a an urgent one. ¶ In his 1991 preface to Lefebvre's *Critique of Everyday Life*, Michel Trebitsch wrote: *Lefebvre has something of the brilliant amateur craftsman about him, unable to cash in on his own inventions; something capricious, like a sower who casts his seeds to the wind without worrying about whether they will germinate.*[12] ¶ Developing meaningful ways of capturing these flying seeds and building them into the political and social structures we inhabit is a daunting task; it is the hope for a fair and enjoyable urban existence that makes the challenge less frightful.

8 David Harvey and Cuz Potter, "The Right to the Just City", in Peter Marcuse, et al, (Eds), *Searching for the Just City: Debates in Urban Theory and Practice*, p.42

9 Mark Purcell, "Citizenship and the Right to the Global City: Reimagining the Capitalist World Order", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(3), 2003, pp.578

10 Susan Fainstein, *The Just City*, (New York: Cornell, 2010), p.178

[fig.] Tessa Zettel & Karl Khoe GWAGO PATABÁGUN—WE WILL EAT PRESENTLY, 2010, durational site-specific installation including mobile food cart/apiary (found materials, steel, timber, bicycle wheels, solar panel, cooking equipment, beehive with native stingless bees, local honey) and public picnics. *Photo: Matt Venables.*

[fig.] **WHEELIE BIN SOUND SYSTEMS/ SUNNY BINS**

Joni Taylor

DIY Urbanism—Sydney Reconsidered

A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing.

Oscar Wilde

When walking along a paved path, one often makes out other informal pathways going off in different directions. These "lines of desire" eroded into the grass or snow are the routes made by those who take an alternative route to the one laid out. Also known as "desire lines" they are created by those who use the city and wish to create a better way, a more logical way, a more beautiful or important way of being in it. The set road is rejected and a new way of traversing and experiencing the city is created. This is the essence of DIY Urbanism. ¶ DIY (Do-It-Yourself or Design-It-Yourself) Urbanism is an activity that explores what can be done with the city from the perspective of its users. It looks beyond the Masterplan and reimagines the idea of the urban utopia, not as the functionalist failed city of the past, but as a better place to live. ¶ The project *DIY Urbanism—Sydney Reconsidered* gives a platform to strategies, designs and tactical interventions—both built and unbuilt—that challenge the given program of the city, in this case—Sydney. It presents an overview of the current urban condition—the concerns and issues that are bubbling away under the surface, and distinct from the large-scale, commercial and spectacle-driven blueprints already in motion. It subverts and creates new infrastructures within the city, both small-scale and larger visions. Choosing Sydney as a site to locate *DIY Urbanism* is no easy task. While less regulated cities, such as Berlin, San Francisco and even Melbourne, may have a more obvious DIY culture, in Sydney one has to search further to uncover such activities. These ideas around DIY Urbanism differentiate themselves by being more then than just colourful attempts at urban transformation or street art. Here, DIY Urbanism explores critical plans that address specific problems Sydney faces regarding its infrastructure, networks, history and ecological position. ¶ "*under the paving stones the beach*" *Paris '68 graffiti* ¶ For Sydney this may have been be the case for far too long—the beach continuously taking accolades for the city. There has been much said about 20th century Sydney getting by on its beachside laurels alone, and progressive architectural projects (with the exception of the 1973 Opera House) not being given as much priority as elsewhere. Until recently the city has suffered from its lack of pedestrian and cycle initiatives and many potentially enriching infrastructural changes, such as light rail and metro links, have been scrapped at the last minute. ¶ Enter the spectacle-driven "imagineering" of present day Sydney! ¶ Currently, Sydney's centre is facing rapid redevelopment, a virtual tabula rasa of certain inner city areas and the erasure of the familiar and the old,

1 Ingo Kumic and Gerard Reinmuth, "(Re)Making Sydney: Image, Form and Crisis of Vision", Monument 87(2008), p.52

with huge investment in the activation of urban voids. New buildings and large scale precincts are all being constructed, with Barangaroo, Central Park (The former Carlton United Brewery), and two major university campus all in the process of being redesigned or rebuilt. These will have substantial effects on the face and heart of Sydney's CBD, both culturally and environmentally. Some projects are more contentious than others. Perhaps the most politically charged is the 22 hectare East Darling harbour site of Barangaroo. Criticism of the six billion dollar project has come from all directions, attacking its size and scale, lack of diversity, its impact on city life, lack of public transport, faux public spaces and general lack of transparency. The community, including large sections of the architectural and design fields, seems powerless when all opposition is directed at just one stakeholder—the developer giant Lend Lease . This is further complicated by Barangaroo falling under the Part 3A provision of New South Wales' planning law, meaning the project has been taken out of the control of the local City of Sydney council (with its green focused 2030 strategy) and into the hands of the State Government and its Minister for Planning. ¶ With such towering examples—a species of urban Goliaths—it is easy to see how small-scale design interventions seem to have no chance. This is why it is even more important for DIY urbanists to take the initiative in reclaiming spaces and areas that will, if not remain free of corporate co-option, then at least offer up chances for experimental ideas and alternatives.

Adaptable City

Ingo Kumic and Gerard Reinmuth write about Sydney: "This city, like any city, is its society—not its bricks and mortar. If we fail to build capacity for the city to make and re-make itself, we fail to underscore the fundamental reason for its existence".[1] ¶ The DIY Urbanism—Sydney Reconsidered projects all evolved out of an interest in what could be done using a bottom-up approach to urban planning created by those living and experiencing Sydney. However, in order for DIY Urbanism to occur, one needs a flexible and adaptive city — one that offers opportunities to experience difference and experiment in the urban and public spheres. Sydney's shrinking public spaces and over-regulated parks are not conducive to the expression of individual passions or diverse creative activities. What we are witnessing too, is a mad rush to erase any "terrain vague" and dark, gritty corners where clandestine or DIY activities may in fact take place. Barangaroo, in particular, is one such vast urban wasteland, with a rich industrial history that will soon be replaced by, amongst other things, a carpark and fake headland park with programmed cultural activities. Other new developments have offered opportunities for temporary public artworks to take place, but only during the interim stage of their construction. These are merely fleeting and only seem to assist in covering up the fact that these spaces are being destroyed, rather than critique them. ¶ One of the main concerns therefore throughout this project is how Sydney can be made more adaptable, more flexible to strategies and tactics undertaken off the plan. The irony here is not lost: what plans can be undertaken in order to introduce the "Non-Plan"? ¶ The public presentation of DIY Urbanism projects and ideas goes some way in provoking dialogue and inspiring activity. It is important that these "desire lines" and tools be presented for Sydney, to speak for the diversity of its occupants and users. The strategies presented include temporary interruptions, experimental and micro-architectures, the nomadic, the parasitic and the add-on. By their very location and using the city itself as a medium they challenge the current dominance of top-down planning and capitalist driven development. They offer a chance to hack the city and to manipulate the plan. ¶ Utopia does not have to be the grand and ordered vision of the city, but its essence of creating a new and better place needs to be revisited. It is the role of DIY urbanists to envision these new "micro-utopias" and encourage a sense of participation and power in the future of where one lives and plays. Sydney needs to be a place where the hidden and surprising spaces are just as prevalent as the bright and shiny ones, and where time and contingency are allowed back into the fabric of the city. ¶ The city of Sydney is at a turning point. Over the next decade the future urban landscape will be one in constant flux. Now is the time for speculation, inspiration and dreaming.

DIY Urbanism—Sydney Reconsidered includes projects by: &company, Chad Ford (F Beat Productions), Mathieu Gallois, Afia Iram, Jesse Adams Stein, Josephine Starrs & Leon Cmielewski, Pete Strong, Rahul Nath, Mano Ponnambalam, Tom Rivard, Remnant Emergency Artlab, Ian Robertson, Melody Williams and Jason Workman.

DIY Urbanism—Sydney Reconsidered projects

The Ultimo Dream: Local Ideas to Revitalise a Dead Zone

Unrealised But a dream, to provoke discussion and move us beyond a rigid planning mindset

Location Harris Street, Ultimo

Team: Ultimo locals Jesse Adams Stein, Kitty Ray, Erin Riley, Liam Ryan, Maria Gabriela Muñoz, César Albarrán Torres. With thanks to Barbara Adams and Joni Taylor

Project Description: How can we radically re-imagine Ultimo in a way that is sustainable and makes a lasting positive impact on the diverse local community? Many ideas came to mind, but as we sifted through the possibilities, we kept returning to the main problem: The chief blight on Ultimo is its role as major Sydney traffic funnel. ¶ Ultimo is full of fast-moving vehicles. They zoom past, producing a disjointed suburb with little street-life, narrow footpaths, underdeveloped retail activity and unsafe spaces to walk and cycle in. Since the 1990s, freeways have carved through the middle of Ultimo, overshadowing its terraces and industrial heritage, creating bleak concrete black-spots and poor pedestrian amenity. ¶ In response we propose the transformation of Harris Street from a 5-lane road to a 2-lane Main Street, with wide plaza-style pedestrian footpaths, specific ground-floor retail zoning, a 40km p/h speed limit, pedestrian crossings, and a two-way cycleway. Genuine priority must be given to pedestrians, to local businesses and to cyclists. Ultimo residents need to reclaim their Main Street.

DIY Urbanism—Sydney Reconsidered projects

Wheelie Bin Sound Systems/ Sunny Bins

Realised

Locations Sydney streets eg Reclaim the Lanes, Neighborhood centres, Bondi Promenade.

Team: Greg Archer, Mat Flax and Peter Strong

Project description Wheelie Bin Sound Systems (WBSS) were born from the spirit of community protest actions and have re-emerged in a sudden spectacular fashion with new bins being made to cater for small to medium sized outdoor gatherings, festivals, picnics and more. The low brow mobile sound systems bring a smile to many as everyone relates to a rubbish bin. For the first time in human history we are free to party anywhere from the mountains to the streets, beaches and beyond with high volume, high fidelity sound without the restrictions of having to connect to the "mains" or lug heavy generators to your party location. In fact, there is no more need for generators at all or blagging a power outlet and if you need to move it is not difficult.

Food for Thought

Realised Staged from August 2009 intermittently

Location Migratory

Team Michael Lewarne & Thomas Rivard

Project description A migratory, experiential event—designed to generate activity, stimulate discussion and project the future of civic space, through Sydney and beyond. A mysterious, multi-faceted kiosk ritualistically locates in an urban space, roosting in conjunction with other activities. Hybrid progeny of hot-dog stand, ticket booth, puppet theatre and Dalek, *Food for Thought* is an active presence, attracting passersby with the prospect of free soup. ¶ Interested individuals submit a reply to a query posed for that place; essentially an open invitation for ideas. The suggestion is logged; the contributor receives soup—thus, *Food for Thought*. The propositions submitted are disseminated via projections from the kiosk, scrolling signage atop it, a website and Twitter, and printed on cups for future servings of soup. Remotely linked locations, local media and partner websites will also broadcast the ideas. As an extension of the collaborative, consultative nature of the project, notable figures in the community serve the soup: an ever-changing roster of activists, performers, artists, architects, community leaders, public figures interested in the future of their neighbourhood, city or discipline. Also, for each install, a nearby restaurant contributes the soup, further promoting the deeply local nature of each event.

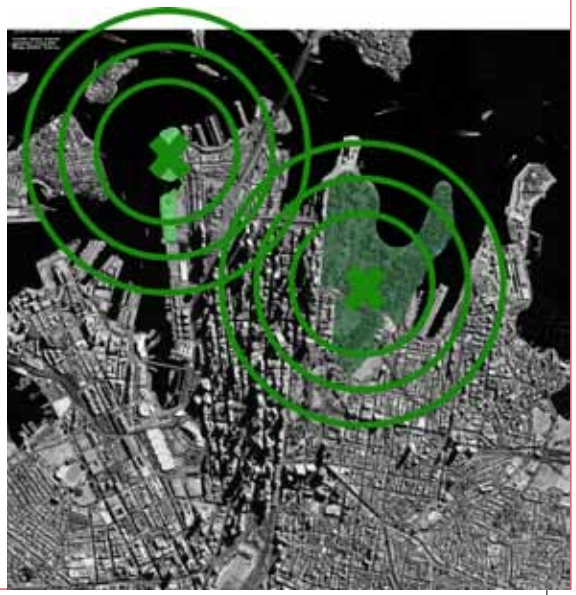
Botanic Gardens Xtension

Unrealised

Location Barangaroo Headland

Team The Remnant Emergency Artlab

Project description A proposed extension to the Sydney Botanical Gardens at the Barangaroo Headlands Development Site. This is to be designed as a possible future location site for flying foxes who currently roost in the Gardens. It engages the Federal Government approved plan to permanently relocate the Grey Headed Flying Foxes from the Sydney Botanic Gardens in May 2011, using industrial noise to scare them away from their longterm roosting site. The project asks a series of questions. Why are the flying foxes choosing to roost in the middle of the city; What are the implications of the "relocation" for this vulnerable species; How can we re-imagine the relationship between humans and non humans in urban environments? What options can we imagine that extend the benefit of the Botanical Gardens throughout Sydney and extend and increase biodiversity?



PARK/PARK for International PARK(ing) Day

Realised

Locations Throughout Sydney CBD

Team Presented by &company. Installation design: Harriet Watts, Sarah Spackman and Marion Gelbart Assisted by: Anna Lise De Lorenzo and Ben Elbourne

Project description Explores how we choose to make use of public spaces. It is based on the premise that by feeding money into a parking meter, one is leasing that space and can use it as they please. The founders, Rebar, ask that participation be non-commercial—it is "intended to promote creativity, civic engagement, critical thinking, unscripted social interactions, generosity and play." ¶ &company took to the streets to present *PARK/PARK*, installed around the city on Park(ing) Day on September 17, 2010. Conceived by young designers the interactive cardboard installation established a tangible representation of the PARK(ing) Day ethos: put your coins in the meter and make your choice—how will you make use of this space? Punters were invited to enter into our cardboard world: Do you want to park, or do you want a park? *PARK/PARK* popped up across Sydney's CBD, attracting many strange looks, entertaining conversations, lots of laughs—and strangely no animosity at all from Sydney drivers! The exhibition *PARK/PARK: PARK(ing) Day Revisited* documented activities on Park(ing) Day through photography and film footage of the locations, process, public responses and the fun along the way.

[fig.] **CUBA**
Photo by Lee Stickell

Lee Stickells

The Utopian Archipelago

There are other worlds (they have not told you of) SUN RA, 1978

Definitions

Introducing the notion of the right to the city in 1968, Henri Lefebvre argued it "is like a cry and a demand"; and the intensity of longing he conveyed was echoed materially in the May events of that year.[1] The creativity and experimentation in urban living that defined those upheavals offered a clear, forceful expression of Lefebvre's contention that human beings have "[a] need for creative activity, for the *oeuvre* (not only of products and consumable material goods), of the need for information, symbolism, the imaginary and play".[2] The *oeuvre* was a concept that recurred in Lefebvre's work and stood for a more expansive understanding of the city, placing it as an unintentional and collective work of art, richly significant yet embedded in everyday life– beyond the realm of commodified space.[3] ¶ Lefebvre's right to the city argued for the enabling of citizens to participate in the use and production of urban space. Citizenship was conceived as including all urban inhabitants, and conferred two central rights—the right to *participation* and to *appropriation*. Participation allows urban inhabitants to access and influence decisions that produce urban space. Appropriation includes the right to access, occupy and use space, and create new space that meets people's needs. In this way, the right to the city emphasized a right to the city as a whole, not simply the notion of rights within cities: "The *right to the city* cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed *right to urban life*."[4] Critically, for Lefebvre, this "right to the city" manifests itself in creative terms: it is the right to participate in the perpetual creative transformation of the city, which thus becomes 'the *ephemeral* city, the perpetual *oeuvre* of its inhabitants."[5] ¶ Lefebvre's writing outlines a difficult, open concept; David Harvey has argued that the openness and expansiveness of his discussion "leave[s] the actual spaces of any alternative frustratingly undefined."[6] Certainly, Lefebvre's discussion of rights offers little in the way of a normative framework for evaluating contemporary policy-making experiments in cities. However, this has not stopped the broad concept of the right to the city being taken up as a unifying slogan, and attempts to formalise that right have proliferated. These initiatives range from the grass roots activism of Right to the City Alliances in the US and Europe, to the efforts of UNESCO, UN-HABITAT and international NGOs to locate the idea within a human rights framework. ¶ In comparison with Lefebvre's radically emancipatory conception, that institutionalized adoption of the right to the city clearly narrows the understanding of its scope. For example, the *World Charter for the Right to the City*—drafted by international human rights groups at successive World Urban Forums—articulates the right as a legal instru-

1 Henri Lefebvre, "Right to the City" in Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Eds), *Writings on Cities* (New York: Blackwell, 1996), p.158
2 Henri Lefebvre, "Right to the City", p.147
3 Henri Lefebvre, "The Specificity of the City" in Eleonore Kofman and Eliabeth Lebas (Eds), *Writings on Cities,* p.101
4 Henri Lefebvre, "Right to the City", p.158
5 Henri Lefebvre, "Right to the City", p.172
6 David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), p.183

ment to reorient and strengthen existing urban processes, helping to fulfill: "the social functions of the city and of property; distribution of urban income; and democratization of access to land and public services for all citizens, especially those with less economic resources and in situations of vulnerability."[7] The advocacy of this new human right—moving towards its legal recognition, implementation, regulation and placement in practice—while laudable in its own terms, sloughs off Lefebvre's more fugitive, yet powerful, implications. The "right to the city" for Lefebvre was not reducible to the right to better housing, lower rents and participatory budgeting in the framework of the capitalist city, but the right to a very different life in the context of a very different, just society. ¶ Lefebvre situated the right to the city in a more humble—yet simultaneously far more expansive—context than the pursuit of more equitable urban governance. His defining of a right to produce the oeuvre exemplified this—incorporating the need for play, desire and creativity, alongside material rights to things like housing, in the everyday making of the city. What Lefebvre's notion of the right to the city offered was a politicised form of daily life such had been given vivid embodiment in the uprisings of May '68. The Situationist activist Raoul Vaneigem provocatively emphasized its importance: "People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints—such people have a corpse in their mouth".[8] ¶ David Harvey's more recent essay "The Right to the City" takes up the legacy of Lefebvre's concept (even though he spends very little time discussing Lefebvre). In part, Harvey's writing tackles the institutionalisation and subduing of the concept through its broad adoption by NGOs and development agencies, and the essay has been an extremely important, influential prompt to addressing the "right to the city" as contested terrain. Like Lefebvre, Harvey offers an impassioned, evocative tone, however, his examination and speculation both narrows and opens the scope of realisation. ¶ It narrows in that the abstract empiricism of economics and the equally abstract idealism of declared revolutionary norms gird his analysis—condensing the right to the city into "greater democratic control over the production and utilization of the surplus."[9] When Harvey writes that "a global anti-capitalist movement is unlikely to emerge without some animating vision of what is to be done and why", it signals a solidly Marxist emphasis on a unifying theory ("vision") that clarifies what a unified revolutionary subject has to do (and why). ¶ However, the ambit is somewhat expanded in Harvey's echoing of Lefebvre's "cry" for a more fully transformative "right"—arguing that "The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire."[10] This also underpins his declaration that: "The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city."[11] ¶ In this more expansive tone, Harvey comes closer to Lefevbre's suggestion of the urban, and the right to the city, as a perpetually contested terrain, rather than a defined political program.

7 Preamble to *World Charter on the Right to the City,* Elaborated at the Social Forum of the Americas (Quito, Ecuador—July 2004) & the World Urban Forum (Barcelona, Spain—September 2004), http://www.urbanreinventors.net/3/wsf.pdf accessed 04.02.2011

8 Raoul Vaneigem *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. (London: Rebel Press, 2003). p.26

9 David Harvey, "The Right to the City" *New Left Review* 53 (September-October 2008), p.37

10 David Harvey, "The Right to the City", p. 23

11 David Harvey, "The Right to the City", p. 23

12 Henri Lefebvre, "Right to the City", p.149

13 David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, p.183

14 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, (London: Blackwell 2009), p. 59

15 Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988, Tran. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg).

16 Carl Freedman, *Critical Theory and Science Fiction* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 2000) p.66.

17 Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future* (London: Verso, 2005), p.232

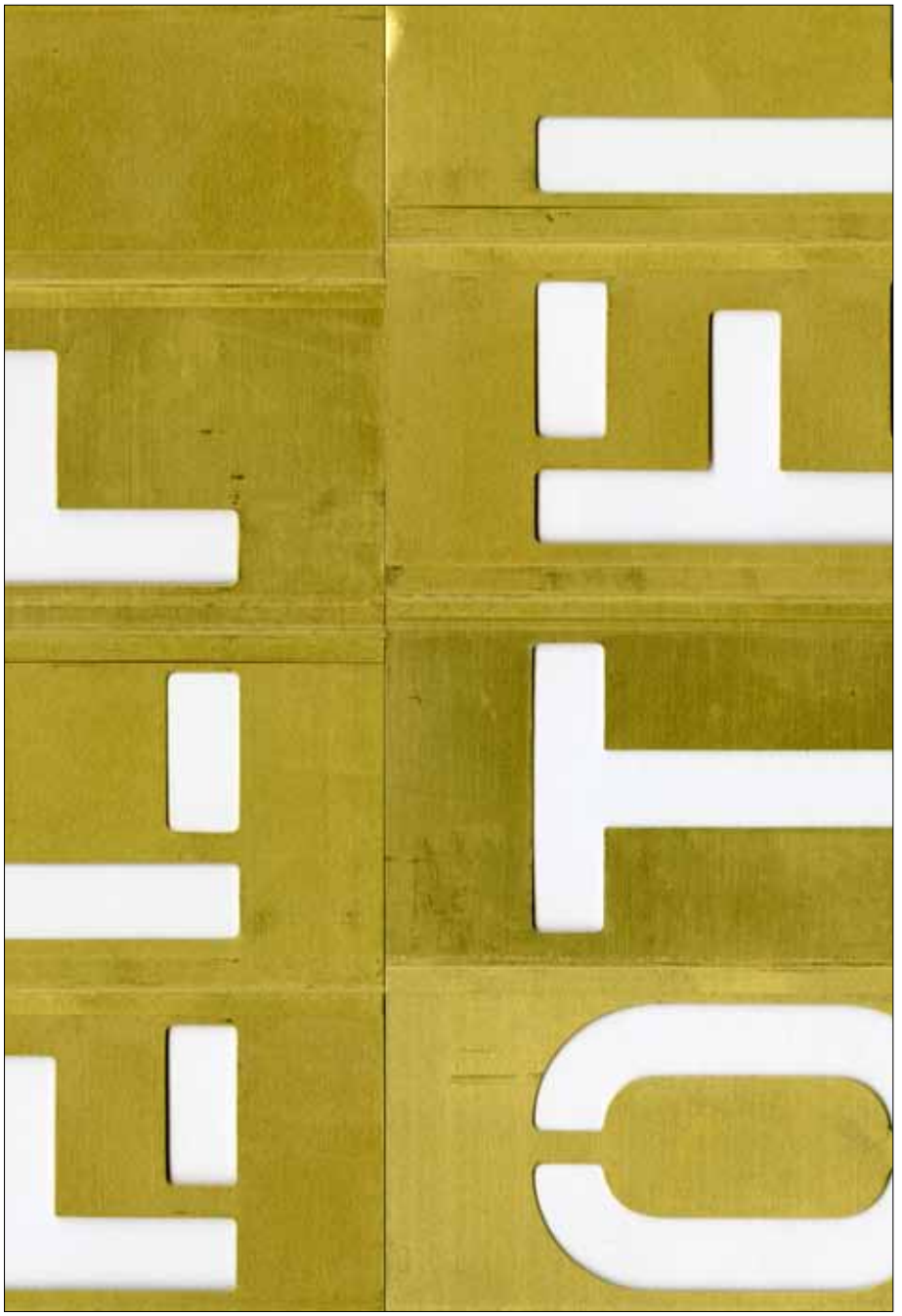
However, the gap emerges between Harvey and Lefebvre in imagining transformation. Whereas Harvey defines the struggle for the right to the city as essentially a global, economic conflict, Lefebvre imagined it as a more acutely empowering project, emphasising the transformation of everyday life into practical Utopia: ¶ Utopia is to be considered experimentally by studying its implications and consequences on the ground… What are and what would be the most successful places? How can they be discovered? According to what criteria? What are the times and rhythms of daily life which are inscribed and prescribed in these 'successful' spaces favourable to happiness?[12] ¶ Thus, he advocated the construction of "Experimental Utopias" simultaneous with a continual, looping process of reflexive speculation-investigation-critique-implementation (which he termed "transduction"). Harvey's difficulty with the openness of Lefebvre's concept relates to its refusal to settle on specific recommendations—to provide a clear, unifying political and spatial program for realisation. Harvey sees this as an ambiguity that allows for avoiding the problem of confronting closure. For Harvey, Lefebvre's refusal embraces: "an agonistic romanticism of unfulfilled longing and desire."[13] However, we might instead see that ambiguity as productive for thinking another possible, more just world. The relentless working of that "gap" becomes the exploration of alternative possibilities for urban life.

The Archipelago

Change life! Change Society! These precepts mean nothing without the production of an appropriate space. A lesson to be learned from Soviet constructivists of 1920–30, and from their failure, is that new social relationships call for a new space, and vice versa.[14] ¶ Focusing on the role of Utopian practice in Lefebvre's articulation of the right to the city—the "Experimental Utopias— it might be connected to a compelling strand of thinking that argues Utopian hope should be seen as, by definition, *not* a program. The work of Ernst Bloch is important to this stance. For him, Utopia emerges as receptiveness to the not-yet-become, but desired, possibilities inherent in the future; something Bloch referred to as the not-yet-conscious.[15] Concerning Bloch's work, Carl Freedman wrote that "[the] Utopian hermeneutic is after all a kind of *labor*, a political practice, which makes no claim to empiricist 'reflection' but construes its objects in an avowedly interested—a collectively interested—way."[16] In this context, it does not seem inappropriate to transpose the sentiment to Lefebvre's conception of perpetual, imaginative spatial play as vital to exercising the right to the city. ¶ Continuing this emphasis on the *practicing* of Utopia, Frederic Jameson in his meticulous rumination on the relationships between Utopia and science fiction, *Archaeologies of the Future*, argued that a properly impractical Utopian impulse must be retained (as he put it, an "anti-anti-Utopianism"), in order to keep clear a space for oppositional thinking. The formal "flaw" of Utopian projection—its lack of a practical-political picture of transition—instead becomes a rhetorical strength, in that it "forces us precisely to concentrate on the break itself: a meditation on the impossible, on the unrealizable in its own right."[17] Thinking

the "break" then is a conceptual trajectory that anticipates the otherness of the future. ¶ It should be said that Jameson narrows the Utopian project to those who aspire to model imaginary but radically other worlds, and hangs on, rather nostalgically perhaps, to the prospect of revolutionary change. Further, in his account of the totalisation of "late capitalism" he stresses our incapacity to imagine a radically new future or even to move towards transformative solutions from within the ideological limits of our current situation. Nevertheless, he identifies something critical to an artistic, or architectural, Utopian impulse—the desire to model alternatives to the way things are, in order to force some sort of engagement with them. ¶ Connecting with the public, discursive spaces of contemporary art, civic activism, architecture and planning, this Sydney version of "The Right to the City" draws together practices that conceive, perform and generate a range of alternatives to the way things are. The artists, architects, activists and writers involved in the project offer a multiplicity of tactics, representations, interventions, provocations and resistant practices in the pursuit of other possible worlds. To frame the heterogeneity found in the exhibition it is useful to turn again to Jameson and *Archaeologies of the Future*. In a chapter titled "The Future as Disruption" he discusses a new formal tendency for utopian production that breaks from the traditional delineation of building plans for new societies. Instead, what is utopian becomes: "not the commitment to a specific machinery or blueprint, but rather the commitment to imagining possible Utopias as such, in their greatest variety of forms."[18] ¶ Jameson goes on to suggest that this kind of Utopian production is characterized by the supercession of the overarching or structural Utopian vision by the intoxication of multitudinous individual Utopian details (micro-Utopias perhaps). He argues that this proliferation of details ("Utopian Fancy" as he puts it) should not be underestimated, as they operate like alternate fuel sources, bringing "inventiveness and ingenuity to bear on a tangle of problems, seemingly as unresolvable individually as they are inseparable in the first place."[19] ¶ To more easily visualize a framework for such a pluralism of utopias, Jameson draws on Fernand Braudel's classic history of the Mediterranean, extrapolating from Braudel's conception of it as a nexus of seas—a vast, complex expanse within which life operated. Jameson focuses on the combination of properties of isolation with those of relationship that Braudel illuminates, proposing that we think of the swarm of autonomous utopias as "so many islands: a Utopian archipelago, islands in the net, a constellation of discontinuous centers, themselves internally decentered."[20] This is also how we might view the collection of works that have been gathered for The Right to the City exhibition. Like Braudel's islands, the contact between these works and their world-views can be like "electric charges"—some of them connect and resonate with Harvey's lucid exposition of contemporary capitalist urbanisation's destructive force; some align with Lefebvre's ideas in their activation of de-commodified public spaces, or close attention to everyday creativity; while others pursue more ephemeral modes of critical spatial practice. Collectively though, this utopian archipelago expands the possibilities for understanding and reimagining, and transforming urban life for asserting the right to the city.

18 Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, p.217
19 Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, p.218
20 Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, p.221



[fig.]
STRATEGIES OF INDIRECTION (AFTER MEL BOCHHER, AFTER JEAN-LUC GODARD
2011 (detail)
brass sheet stencils
350 x 47cm (high from floor)

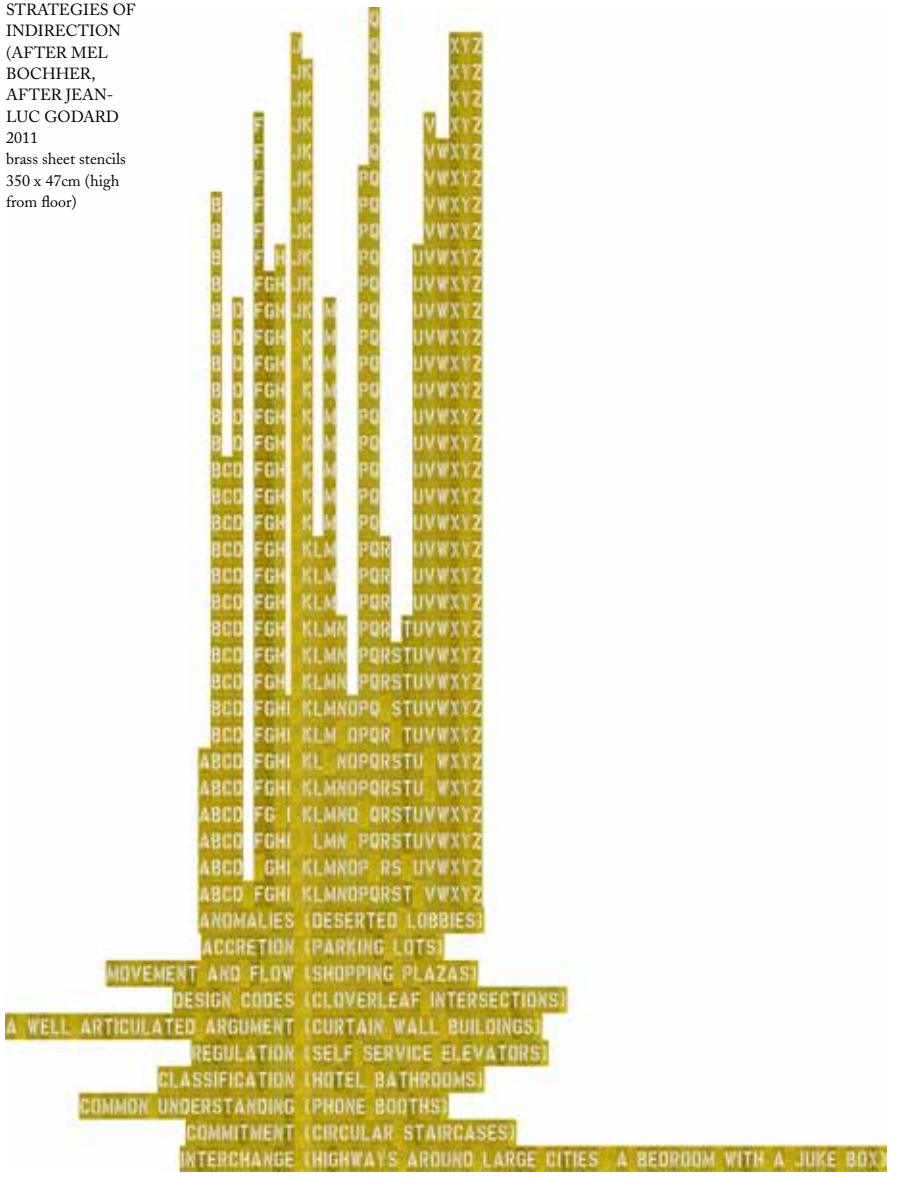
Sophie Warren & Jonathan Mosley

Strategies Of Indirection (After Mel Bochner, after Jean-Luc Godard) 2011

Strategies of Indirection is one of a series of spatial text works. The locations (in parentheses) are identified by Mel Bochner in *Alfaville*[1] from Jean-Luc Godard's film *Alphaville*. Each location is paired with a word or phrase from the screenplay *Beyond Utopia*[2] to create a series of discursive strategies. ¶ "The capacity to extrapolate from a current state of technology and science into the future, to provide a "realistic" image of social change has become impossible in post-modernity... The current crisis, however, is compounded by our inability to detach ourselves from the present in order to gain perspective on the whole. If reality has assumed a simulacral aspect, then it is because we cannot place ourselves outside the framework of the globalized network of communication technologies and transnational institutions of late capitalism. Faced with this infinite-or, rather, *scaleless*-appearance of post modernity, Jameson maintains that it will be necessary to develop elaborate "strategies of indirection." Such discursive strategies or processes of cognitive mapping, insert themselves as catalyzing agents within the mediated realm of everyday experience."[3] ¶ "Look at any word long enough and you will see it open up into a series of faults, into a terrain of particles, each containing its own void."[4] ¶ "The notion of completion is at fault. What is experienced and what is known continually replace each other. Nothing reveals itself without at the same time concealing something else. The concealed is the source of thought. And thought, which we hope to use to "fill in the gaps" is in itself bottomless or…incomplete."[5] ¶ "[As high rise blocks and components of a city] X, Y and Z are the last letters of the alphabet. But on the other hand, after the Z follows A again. "[6]

1 Mel Bochner, "Alfaville, Godard's Apocalypse", *Arts Magazine* (May 1968), p. 14
2 Sophie Warren, Jonathan Mosley, "Beyond Utopia" (Berlin / Los Angeles: Errant Bodies Press, 2011)
3 Eric de Bruyn, "Notes from *Alfaville*, or the Utopics of Mel Bochner", *Grey Room* (Winter 2003: 10), p. 95., citing Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism*, or, *The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991)
4 Robert Smithson, 'Dying Language' section of "Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects" *Artforum* (September 1968)
5 Mel Bochner, "Seriality and Photography", unpublished catalog statement for *Art in Series* (artist's archive), 1967, n.p.
6 Rem Koolhaas on the X, Y and Z high rise blocks—a postwar addition to the Rockefeller Center, New York designed by Wallace Harrison, Rem Koolhaas, "Delirious New York" (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1994), p. 290

[fig.]
STRATEGIES OF INDIRECTION (AFTER MEL BOCHHER, AFTER JEAN-LUC GODARD
2011
brass sheet stencils
350 x 47cm (high from floor)



~ ADVERTISEMENT ~

Forgotten

UnREAL ESTATE

Cnr Wentworth Avenue and Commonwealth Street, Surry Hills

Griffith's Tease!

Once the hub of Sydney's business district, now a forlorn forgotten fragment of former frenzied fiscal functions.

You and a few hundred other homeless could soon see this mammoth unused space thriving again!

No lack of rooms here – why not throw a Griffiths Tea-Party?
Make mine a mixed herbal infusion!

At the very least, do us all a favour, get in there, go up to the roof and add a giant letter E to the tail end of the building's name!

Don't Let Houses Rot! MT

info @squatspace.com

Zanny Begg

Under the Beach lies the City

[fig.] UNREAL ESTATE, SquatSpace, 2011

Social space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced and encompasses their interrelationships.

Spatial politics might seem a newly popular field of inquiry, but David Harvey reminds us of Frederick Engels' nineteenth century urban investigations, and how, as early as 1872, he identified a key issue still persisting at the heart of the politics of the city. Observing a continual cycle of urban displacement Engels explained: "the bourgeoisie has only one method of solving the housing question… that is to say, of solving it in such a way that the solution continually reproduces the question anew".[1] ¶ While much has changed in the intervening years since Engels wrote *The Housing Question*, the fundamental dynamics he observed have only intensified—involving ever-larger geographic areas and urban populations. The cycle is now familiar and continues to repeat itself globally: slum areas are gentrified, forcing the poor out of run down but desirable locations to recreate the ghettos they left behind in areas further out, only to be forced onward at a later date when the city again expands. In a world where the absolute majority of people now live in cities, as Mike Davis so forcefully explains in *The Planet of Slums*, this dynamic plays itself out with expansive regularity. Thus the conflict over space, or Real Estate as we have come to understand it, lies at the heart of discussions over our "right to the city." ¶ Sydney is perhaps a difficult city to conceptualise having a "right to". As the thirteenth most expensive real estate market in the world—where the price of house to income ratio is approximately 5:1—life here is expensive and restrictive. Housing is rarely discussed within the discourse of "human rights": houses are "assets" to be bought and sold. Those unable to enter this market eke out accommodation in a rental market that is vastly over-priced and which gives tenants fewer "rights" then their counterparts in many other countries. Our "right to the city" is therefore exchanged in our imaginations for the right to own property: a mortgage on a piece of land, however small or far from the city, and the slavish demand this creates to work, conform and perpetuate the existing logic of the city. ¶ The contumelious nature of Sydney's real estate market is exemplified by its disregard for the breathtakingly beautiful harbour and bush its land value is largely derived from, and the historic working-class struggles that created and/or defended some of the prime real estate areas poor people are now almost completely excluded from living in. The Green Bans, enacted by the now degegistered Builder's Labourers Federation (BLF) in the 1970s, defined a rare "right to Sydney" that was environmentally sustainable and inclusive. Forty-two citizen initiated

1 Federick Engels in David Harvey "The Right to the City" New Left Review 53 (September–October 2008) p. 33

bans were imposed between 1971 and 1974 protecting key assets such as the Rocks, The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kelly's Bush in Hunters Hill, Centennial Park and so on. For their trouble the BLF were demonised and eventually deregulated and fellow urban activists, such as Juanita Nelson, vanished from the city, believed murdered. ¶ Conceptualizing a "right to the city" in an urban environment produced by this situation can be difficult. Most working-class neighbourhoods have been pushed far from the city, with the few remaining affordable inner city areas occupied by the remnants of a neglected public housing system and transient groups of students and young renters in share houses. Rent is expensive, public space is limited and attempts to create free spaces, through activities like squatting, are heavily policed. It is perhaps no surprise that the bulk of responses to the call out for participation in the programs associated with this exhibition came from cities other then Sydney: where artists and activists seemed to express an easier spontaneous affinity with Henri Lefebvre's "cry and demand for the right to the city".[2] ¶ Sydney is a city brutally dominated by what Lefebvre might have described as "abstract space", a homogenous urban experience where space is no longer something lived, created and experienced but has become something to be looked at and admired. For Lefebvre abstract space is the result of a process of reduction: "the reduction of three-dimensional realities to two dimensions (for example, a "plan," a blank sheet of paper, something drawn on paper, a map, or any kind of graphic representation or projection)".[3] Sydney is a city produced in these two dimensions: a postcard of the Harbour Bridge, the tourist photograph of the Opera House, the master plans for Barangaroo or the Old Kent Brewery, the glossy pages of the real estate section of the newspaper. ¶ Yet Lefebvre's interest in spatial dynamics was too complex to regard "abstract space", as inert or a pre-existing given. "From a less pessimistic standpoint", he argued, "It can be shown that abstract space harbours specific contradictions. Thus, despite—or rather because of—its negativity, abstract space carries within itself the seeds of a new kind of space".[4] However much Sydney looks like "their city" it also feels like "ours" too. In many important ways people reshape their own urban experience and find ways to create and share culture in this city with others: whether through the plethora of temporary venues in warehouses, shop-fronts and empty buildings that spring up in the inner city; or through the annual squatted film festival coordinated by SquatSpace; or the DIY markets in Newtown; or how people regularly gather for rallies and cultural events at The Block, Redfern; or how people get the bus home from the beach through the city covered in sand and only wearing their bathers; and so on. These micro-interventions shape the city, creating moments of "lived space" and the seeds of a new city within the codified space of the existing one. ¶ This exhibition brings together a small collection of these moments, not just from Sydney, but experiences from around the world. While these actions may be small scale or tentative, their significance lies in the ways they help us imagine the city differently. Lefebvre saw the "moment" as a gesture or action that breaks with the continuum of everyday life by providing a critique of the totality of moments that constitute this continuum.[5] According to Lefebvre these moments were destined to be lost but in their moment of risk and anticipatory fantasy they reconfigured the possible.

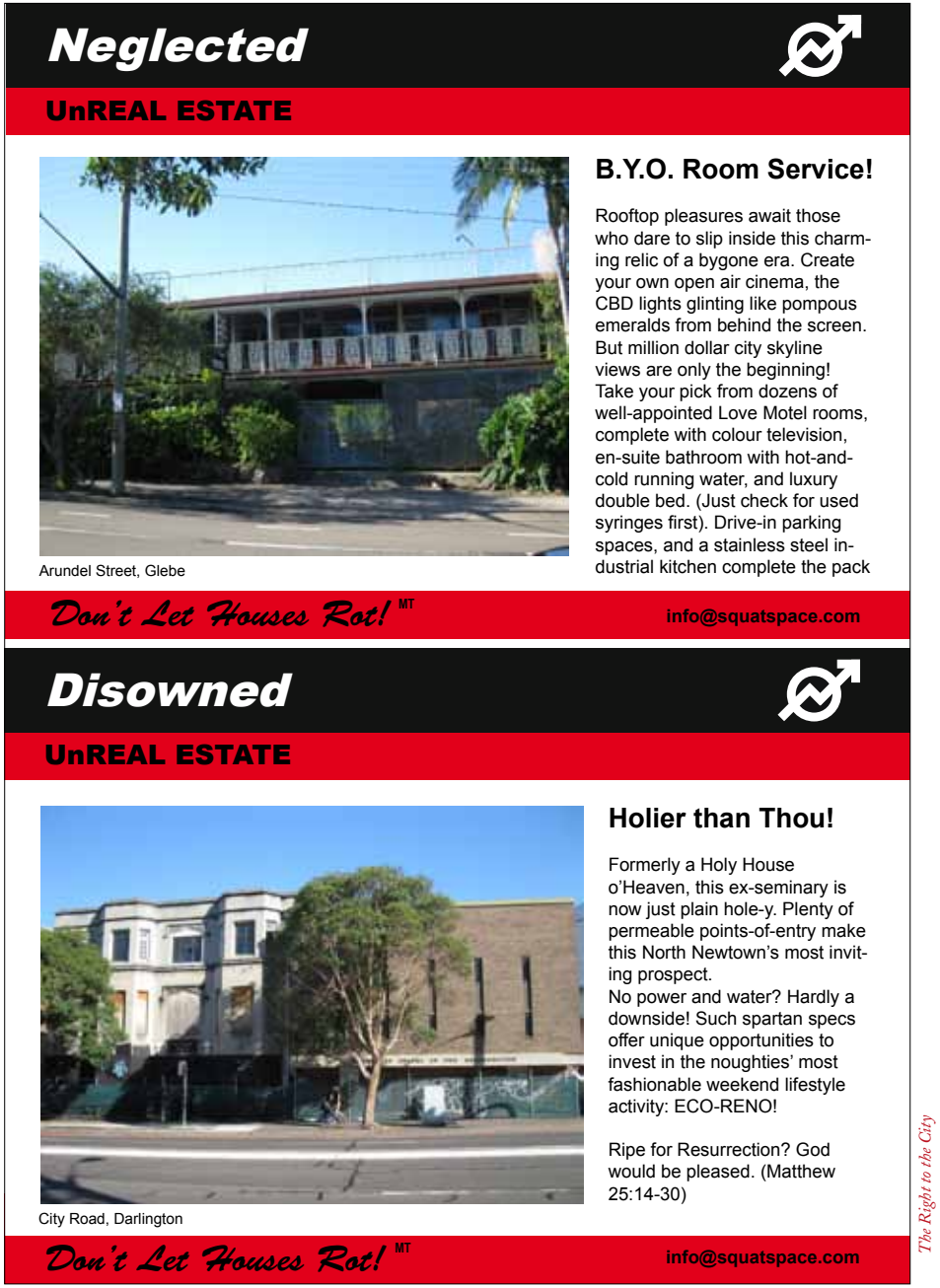
2 Henri Lefebvre, "Right to the City" in Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Eds), Writies on Cities (New York: Blackwell, 1996), p. 158
3 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, (London: Blackwell 2009) p. 52
4 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 52.
5 John Roberts, *Philosophising the Everyday: Revolutionary Praxis and the Fate of Cultural Theory*, (London: Pluto Press, 2006), p80.
6 Guy Debord in Mihalis Mentinis, *Zapatistas: The Chiapas Revolt* (Pluto Press: London, 2006), p97

Another City is Possible

There have been more recent collective articulations of the "right to the city" than the Green Bans of the 1970s. While a small movement in Sydney, the emergence of the alter-globalisation movement in the late 1990s was a powerful global articulation of the urban multitude's right to the city: this movement was not mentioned directly in Harvey's article but I would suggest it provides a key impetus for renewed interest in spatial practice at the time he was writing. Focused around tactics such as reclaiming streets from cars and blockading the financial district the alter-globalisation movement staged a colourful and temporary occupation of the city by diverse groups of the urban multitude. ¶ This multitude placed strong emphasis on creativity, play and spontaneity and drew consciously from the archetypal urban artist collective, the Situationists. The basic building block of the movement was the "affinity group" a small group of friends or fellow activists who would plan their own way of participating in larger events. The actions of these affinity groups were like quasi-*derives* involving the passage of a few persons (the affinity group) through a rather brief unity of time (the protest). ¶ While some affinity groups focused on more traditional activities, such as blockades or sit-ins, many of the groups used the demonstration as a platform for creative experimentation in forms of protest. The sum total of these experimentations could be regarded as *constructed situations* that disrupted the spectacular operations of capital. The Situationists' idea of *constructed situations* was close to Lefebvre's notion of the moment and similarly sought to facilitate a spontaneous praxis that created non-mediated forms of agency and cultural activity. Guy Debord summarised the goal of these actions as creating "an intervention directed by the complicated factors of two great components in perpetual interaction: the material settings of life and the behaviors that it incites; and that overturns it".[6] ¶ The alter-globalisation movement's claim to the city was fleeting. A decade on the (global street) party was over, busted up by tear gas and police batons. Yet its brightly coloured presence left a mark in the make up of contemporary capitalist cities, smudges of which can probably be found in most guerilla garden actions or squat collectives. The movement facilitated a re-connection between notions of pleasure and politics—something that had been more stymied in the preceding political climate. Furthermore, it encouraged people to see the city as a space for creative experimentation, to use the city as a site for counter forms of existence in the here and now rather then focusing their political activity on distant utopias.

The alter-globalisation movement has been somewhat dismissed as a short-lived rebellion of disaffected youth in advanced capitalist countries. But this criticism is perhaps too harsh. The savage beauty of the movement lay in how it captured the imagination of a generation who were raised in relatively affluent and stable societies but who found ways of articulating their disgust at both the conservative politics of the old left and the neo-liberal economics of the new-right. The movement was genuinely inspired by, and connected with, movements in the south and for a brief time after the end of the "end of history" together they managed to articulate a compelling, collective right to the city. ¶ It seems to me an urban movement like this provides an example of the "unifying link" Harvey muses on in his article. The alter-globalisation movement gave us an inkling of how a crowd could act as both a multiple and singular force at the same time. The term multitude, borrowed from Benedict de Spinoza, was used by Antonio Negri to explain the *potentia* of the new Post-Fordist revolutionary class, a political force no longer cohered by the discipline of the factory. A political practice that is truly transformative is able to bring people together to share their desires for "another world" while also creating the diverse beginnings of this world in their daily lives. ¶ Lefebvre once asked "what is an ideology without a space to which it refers, a space which it describes, whose vocabulary and kinks it makes use of, and whose code it embodies?" The space of the city encodes the ideology of existing power: alternatives to this thus inevitably also seek out and create their own space to live in the city. So while "the housing question" Engels identified back in 1871 still forces many lower income people further out of the city, what is apparent today is that their return is as inevitable as the process that drove them away. Everyday life continually "produces anew" alternative ways of living in and occupying the city and I hope this publication provides some inklings of ways in which people are claiming their "rights to the city".

[fig.] UNREAL ESTATE, SquatSpace, 2011



SquatSpace Interview

unReal Estate

Zanny: Can you tell us a bit about the real estate beauties you have advertised? What impact does it have on the city these buildings being left empty for so long?

Diego: SquatSpace has concerned itself with the politics of space from the start, and in some ways the topic is what define the group's trajectory. unReal Estate is yet again another playful look at the loop holes: buildings are left abandoned for speculation purposes, creating focus areas for urban renewals, while at the same time denying living possibilities.

Lucas: I think these empty buildings also become, somehow, part of the city's character. Griffith's Teas, especially, is legendary—known to everyone and an icon that makes us shake our heads in disbelief at the waste. Such a glorious building left empty for years, even decades! There's a sense of urban injustice about it, which I think is part of what defines us as Sydneysiders: "Things are fucked up here, yep, that's our city!" And yet, in an alternate reality, Griffith's Teas would have been torn down and replaced by a concrete and glass apartment building years ago, and it would be just a distant memory. Having these gargantuan empties in the city reminds us that there is still the (admittedly remote) possibility of a different future—it doesn't have to be the relentless march of capital.

Keg: Yes, On one hand there's this travesty that these incredible buildings have been unoccupied for so long but sometimes trying to imagine the future 'deadspace' of an internal courtyard on yet another giant apartment block in Sydney—which unfortunately seems to be the only fate I can imagine for a lot of these buildings—is a more depressing thought. Though there's a harsh irony in that in this city with some of the world's most pricey real estate that these incredible gems could be left unused for so long.

Zanny: Can you explain a little bit of the history of UnReal Estate project?

Diego: UnReal Estate originated as a fun gimmick during the period of contestation and media interaction that surrounded the Broadway Squats. The project was meant to criticise the real estate exponential economy system while acting as a service for the homeless. Back in 2002 we decided to take the provocation further by creating a fake real estate agent in Newcastle shopping quarter as part of This Is Not Art festival.

Keg: We had visited the festival previously and were astounded by how many empties there were, providing us a vast variety of places for us the stay on our visits, from unused car showrooms to beach side mansions—the high concentration of empties was a squatter's delight.

Lucas: The Newcastle iteration of UnReal Estate was one of the first times that we worked together as a group outside the Broadway Squats. We set up this fake agency, featuring over 40 empty, "squattable" buildings from Newcastle, and we were surprised at the stir it created. Locals instantly recognised these downtrodden specimens of their own built environment. Of course, the now famous "renewal" of Newcastle of the last few years has brought a new angle to the city's fortunes. But that's another story...

Lee: Recently in Berlin, police moved in to evict tenants from one of the city's most famous squats—Liebig 14. Previously the squatters had signed a lease to make them legal residents, but the building was recently sold to developers. How do you view these kinds of processes, where the simple boundary of legal/illegal occupation starts to blur?

Diego: The legal constrains of business are always blurry: whether we consider third world country exploitative practices, to the patenting of traditional knowledge by pharmaceutical companies to over-riding existing lease contracts. The masses are not new to these double standards. Only when real participatory democracy and social accountability is regarded as important as individual (or share holder) gain, then we would stop being surprised by such blatant discrepancies.

Lucas: In the case of the Broadway Squats (where SquatSpace began) in 2000-2001, those boundaries were blurred from the very beginning. Four households of squatters were able to stay for an extended time in those buildings, precisely because of the blurring of legal/illegal conditions. Guided by some of our fellow squatters who were law school graduates, the group began a process whereby our illegal status as squatters was deliberately muddied via a legal process being put through the local council. We were supported by the Greens, and some Labour councillors too, and we tried (and eventually succeeded) in changing our status from "squatters" to "caretakers" with a legal right to remain on the premises. This took about nine months to go through council—a temporary chink in the armour of lawful process—and during this time we were able to carry on any number of social, political and creative actions, somewhat outside the confines of the law. As one of our crew, Gavin Sullivan put it at the time: during this period we were not illegal, but "extra-legal"—slightly outside the confines of existing law.

Keg: Yes, the 'outing' of us Broadway squatters during this "extra-legal" period granted us many freedoms that we were never allowed during our hidden days- we went from having a doorbell hidden in a nook down the alley to starting the (very public) SquatSpace gallery, a free food café and being able to host numerous events. During this time we built up much support from the community as we had a 'face' to the squats, something we were never able to do before we were 'discovered'.

Zanny: SquatSpace are marking their ten-year anniversary this year, can you explain a little bit about your approach to spatial politics? Has it changed at all during the last ten years?

Diego: It never changed really, SquatSpace still is operating as a group despite the changes and redefining of 'memebership' because it always had a clear and defining intent.

Keg: From our beginnings we have always looked at the politics of space from our local perspective and I think that's where SquatSpace's interest lies.

LUCAS: We've always tried to work from "where we are right now", rather than moving into the realms of pure theory about spatial politics. So our projects have been practical exercises in social education (of ourselves, primarily!) in the neighbourhoods we live or work in. One of the big differences between then and now is that, by now, we all have our own spin-off practices and projects, and we haven't been "authoring" as many things under the banner of SquatSpace recently. But the work that we've done together as a group has been hugely influential on many of the things we've done individually and with other collaborative groupings.

LEE: How do you place your own experience of the Broadway squats—in terms of what was happening prior, and what has happened after, your time there?

DIEGO: My experience of the Broadway Squats was as a supporter. I engaged with the collective—active at the time—bringing my own experience of reclamation of social space I had in northern Italy in the 90s. My prior involvement with the politics of squatting was therefore of a different kind, or rather, grew in a different social contest. Soon after the Broadway Squats closed the Midnight Star Social Centre was opened, arguably an even more antagonistic space, which lasted 10 months, and then the Balloon Factory, 3 months, and the William street occupation, which never eventuated as the developers moved faster, and a number of other short occupations.

KEG: The Broadway Squats was the reason I moved to Sydney. Sydney real estate was something I could have never considered after Perth rent in the 90s but my sister mentioned she was going to start a squat and I should move over. I had no idea how much living at the Broadway Squats would change my life. The squats were a real community, our activism generated out of necessity for housing, coupling this with the variety of skills and personalities of the residents and supporters generated this incredible collective energy I had never experienced before. The squats felt like a 'brief utopia', especially in the context of the pre-Olympics world-gone-mad climate of Sydney.

LUCAS: Like many of the folks who lived at the Broadway Squats, my experience was shaped by the housing stress I'd been under in the years leading up to the Sydney Olympics. Desperation and vulnerability can lead to extraordinary creativity and courage, and I think that's what brought us all together at Broadway. It was—and still is—incredibly empowering to think that intelligence, resourcefulness and a collaborative spirit could lead to a different model of living from private property ownership, the depressing prospect of renting, or the over-bureaucratised housing co-op scene. A lot of things have changed since 2000, but I think what remains for many of us who were involved with Broadway is a set of skills in collaborative activism which revolved around creativity and intelligence, rather than sloganeering and head-butting opposition. "Slipping through and dwelling in the cracks of capital" was a modus operandi. Rats were celebrated as animal emblems of more or less the same brazen survivalism. It was never a question of overturning everything for utopia, but—quite pragmatically—thriving (parasitically? symbiotically?) on the waste of a corrupt system.

[fig.] UNREAL ESTATE, SquatSpace, 2011

Deserted

UnREAL ESTATE

Take the Top End of Toytown!

Stackable space, squandered by absentee landlord, stands by for stampedes of starry-eyed squatters!
Such stunning squalor! Nestled in the grey end of the city, the former PLAYWAYS EMPORIUM is your ticket to a second childhood! Vertigo is the only occupational hazard in this tower of fun!

Playways! The name says it all! This is a veritable Squatter's Playground, with ten floors of fun! Fulfill what you only ever dreamed about, because you never had the space – until now! An abandoned toystore, playways is hiding treasures for young squatters, and for those who, well, just never grew up!

"If Necessity is the mother of invention, then Play is surely its father." - Plato, Athens, 401BC

Clarence Street, Sydney

Don't Let Houses Rot! MT

info@squatspace.com

Discarded

UnREAL ESTATE

The White Whale!

This former coal-fired power station is the "Moby Dick" of Sydney empties. Why settle for a poky terrace when you can stretch your legs (and lungs) in this leviathan of less-than-legal leisure lifestyle? No development application required. Power to the People!. (Particulate respirators not included).

Robert Street, White Bay

Don't Let Houses Rot! MT

info@squatspace.com

Constantin Petcou, Doina Petrescu
(founders of atelier d'architecture autogérée)

At the ground level of the city

ECObox was initiated by atelier d'architecture autogérée in the La Chapelle area of Northern Paris in 2001. It is an urban project, centred around a community garden, which draws upon the knowledge of local inhabitants, architects, theorists and artists. ECObox forms a "heterotopic" environment where the city is created in real time by the experimental interweaving of specialised knowledge and shared experience; it forms a building site at the ground level of the city where people can walk straight in and suggest cultural, social or political projects to others.[1]

Reclaiming the "contemporary city"

In the 1990s, critical debates in architecture and urban development began to take into account the dynamics, mutations and conflicts of life in the "contemporary city". The term contemporary city itself was coined to differentiate these urban experiences from the troubled "modern city" which had fragmented by its own autonomous processes.[2] ¶ Similarities emerged between these debates in architecture and the discussions taking place in contemporary art about the social and spatial dismantling of the "global" city. Common themes emerged; the transformation of urban spaces by "illegal" occupants; the privatisation of public space and the rise of gated communities; the increasingly artificial nature of urban settings and concomitant environmental problems; social and economic fractures affecting the mobility of populations; protest movements, urban actions and so on. These discussions also questioned the part played by artists' in creating an alternative, a "substitute" city that invents new ways of winning back the contemporary city for its inhabitants[3]. These discussions raised the need to restore a sense of the "commons" to the contemporary city, reconceptualising public property within what Lars Lerup calls a "socio-political ecology."[4] ¶ One of the functions of architecture is to provide the tools for the socio-political ecology of the contemporary city. *aaa* feels that achieving this task is impossible without the initiative and direct participation of the city's inhabitants. Despite great progress being made in theoretical debates on this subject, practical experiments in participatory urbanism are still in their infancy. Subsequently, rather than working within the mainstream of the architectural profession, *aaa* chose to align itself within a critical continuation of spontaneous actions carried out in the 1980s by different groups and inhabitants who reclaimed different ways of living and different social and urban policies. aaa draws inspiration from the squat movement in Germany, Holland and throughout Europe, the interventionist demands and urban movements in the USA and England (Reclaim the Street, Green Guerrilla and The Land Is Ours (TLIO)) the *centri sociali* in Italy, and also communal experiments such as KraftWerk1 in Zurich and citizen initiatives such as the citizens' urban development workshops (ateliers populaires d'urbanisme) in France and, more recently, the use of tactical media by activist groups as instruments of urban self-organisation.[5]

1 This text is an updated version of an article published in French in Multitudes 20, Editions Exils, Paris 2005 and in English in urbanacción 07/09 (Actar: Barcelona 2010)

2 As Michael Bell suggests that in the early 90s, Los Angeles was the focal point of many major theoretical studies because the city featured the new paradigms of the "contemporary city". ("Nouvelles Cités de Réfugiés" in Archilab, Orléans 2004, p. 14)

3 See ErsatzStadt in Berlin (www.etuipop.de/ErsatzStadt), the ironical EasyCity in Amsterdam. (http://www.vrijeruimte.nl/easycity/) or CityMin(ed) in Brussels (citymined.org)

4 See Lars Lerup, in Archilab, Orléans 2004, p. 19

5 See Kraftwerk1, Zurich (http://www.kraftwerk1.ch), The Land is Ours (TLIO) (http://www.tlio.org.uk), Centro Sociale Leoncavallo (www.leoncavallo.org), DASH-http://eu.d-a-s-h.org/

6 From the 90s onwards, "terrain vague" became an important land paradigm of the contemporary city (see particularly Ignasi Sola Morales's article "Terrain vague").

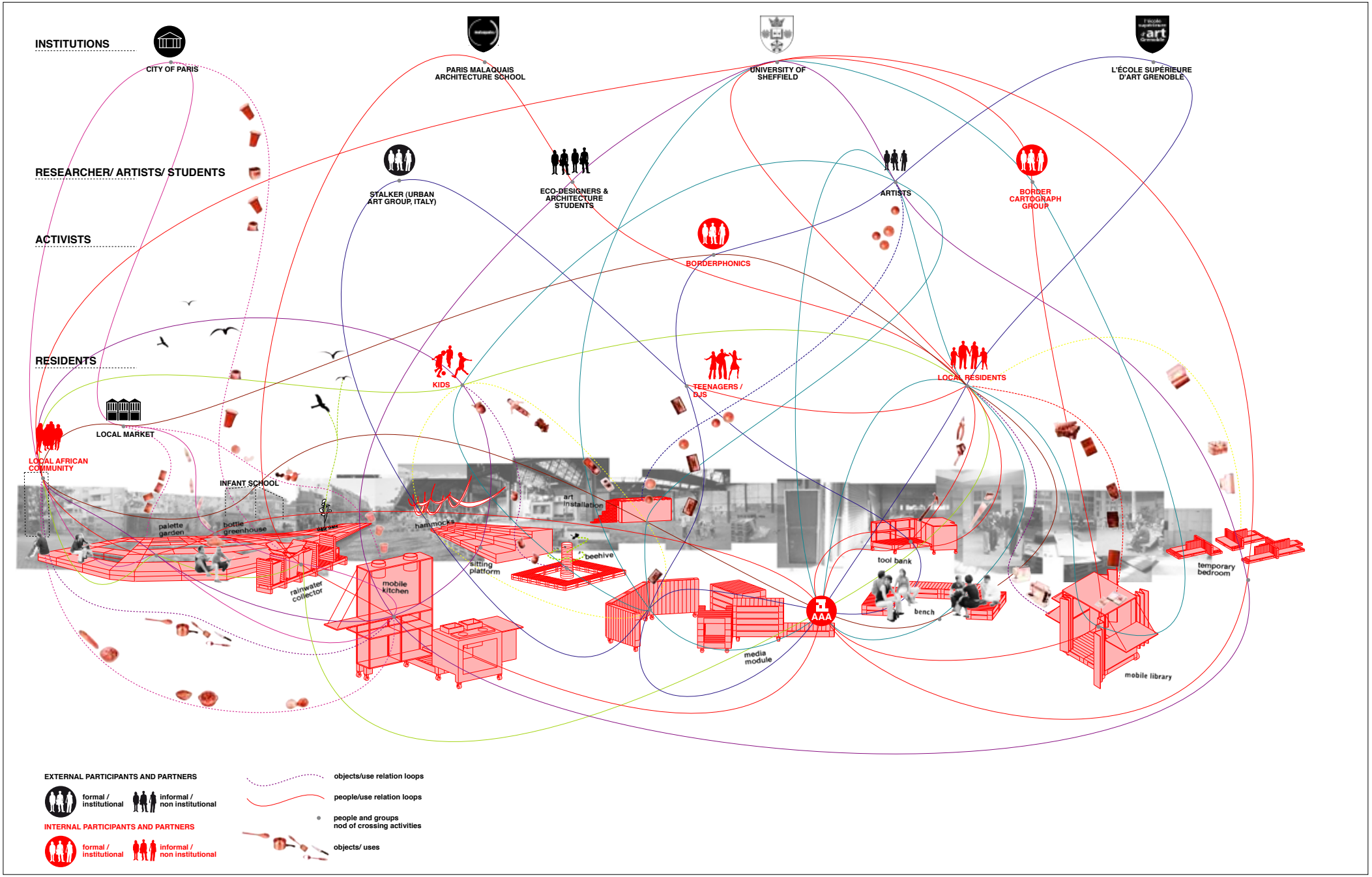
7 We have borrowed the term "tactics" from the sociology of Michel De Certeau who uses it to describe the everyday practices, the flair for doing things, the ruses and ways of behaving that "ordinary people" employ to avoid the consumer society. See Michel de Certeau, L'invention du quotidien 1. Arts de faire, Unions générale d'éditions, Paris 1980.

Interstitial land

Generally speaking, as *atelier d'architecture autogérée*, we position ourselves, as Deleuze would say, "in the middle": in a dynamic, transversal position inside a production process based on the participation of many parties: residents and users, specialists and artists, politicians and institutions. We have positioned ourselves within the interstices of habits, customs and mindsets but also the spatial interstices of the city: abandoned, fallow and run-down urban areas. ¶ Urban interstices represent spaces that have so far eluded, perhaps temporarily, land development policies. They are the metonymy of everything not yet invested in the city - the stock of "available space". Lying at the other end of the spectrum from the spaces frozen by the forms and functions of private ownership: they resist homogenisation and definitive appropriation. It is the neglected, urban and fallow land that conserves the potential of the city's undefined and unspecified elements.[6] ¶ La Chapelle, because of its geographical location as an "urban island" between the major rail strongholds of the Gare du Nord and the Gare de l'Est, is a district with considerable amounts of undeveloped industrial estates and abandoned land. As a temporary and uncertain urban space, it remains uncodified by standard administrative development procedures. aaa argues that areas such as La Chapelle be granted a *de facto* status for flexible, provisional community use. We have baptised these spaces *terrains of urban vagueness* to emphasise that their vague, undefined, and fleeting nature forms a crucial part of their ongoing urban quality. We propose they be run using temporary, flexible and reversible programming under self-management principles.

Infrastructures and agencies

aaa seeks to reinvent the city's political and social space by proposing new types of urban practices stemming from the spontaneous dynamics of the everyday.[7] The economy of the "temporary interstice" creates new possibilities for impermanent arrangements, mobile devices and urban micro-dynamics. As a result "temporary" becomes an essential principle; being temporary can streamline a project's structure and enable barriers to be overcome more easily, making the project more open, creative and utopian. ¶ After long negotiations, in July 2002, *aaa* was granted the temporary use of two plots of land in the La Chapelle area belonging to the French railways. In October 2002, in conjunction with Sheffield University and with the participation of local school students and residents, we created a prototype garden in the courtyard of Halle Pajol. The ECObox garden cost nothing, being built from pallets, gravel, plastic bottles and materials collected from


INSTITUTIONS
RESEARCHER/ ARTISTS/ STUDENTS
ACTIVISTS
RESIDENTS
CITY OF PARIS
PARIS MALAQUAIS ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD
L'ÉCOLE SUPÉRIEURE D'ART GRENOBLE
STALKER (URBAN ART GROUP, ITALY)
ECO-DESIGNERS & ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS
ARTISTS
BORDER CARTOGRAPH GROUP
BORDERPHONICS
KIDS
TEENAGERS / DJS
LOCAL RESIDENTS
LOCAL MARKET
LOCAL AFRICAN COMMUNITY
INFANT SCHOOL
palette garden
bottle greenhouse
rainwater collector
hammocks
art installation
beehive
sitting platform
mobile kitchen
media module
tool bank
bench
temporary bedroom
mobile library
AAA
EXTERNAL PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS
formal / institutional
informal / non institutional
INTERNAL PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS
formal / institutional
informal / non institutional
objects/use relation loops
people/use relation loops
people and groups nod of crossing activities
objects/ uses

a range of recycled local urban waste. To adapt the project to the plot of land, we set up a flexible, modular system making it possible to create a series of plots, of different sizes, delimited by rows of stacked pallets. An addition principle was applied to the construction of the garden: each person or family wanting a plot had to make it themselves using pallets to build the boundary of their own patch and contributing to the communal path that led to it. ¶ The plot of wasteland was transformed into an interlocking network consisting of a nomadic garden (that was able to be dismantled and moved) and a number of mobile structures providing amenities lacking in the district: a cinema, an exhibition hall, an audiovisual workshop and a library. The project also included a kitchen, a tool bench, a rainwater tank, a mobile library and a mini media lab. These facilities helped create social infrastructure that opened up possibilities for desire and enjoyment of life in the city. Some of the facilities were used by residents to re-appropriate urban space; for example, the kitchen module was used to cook family meals illustrating subtle resistance to individuated ways of city living. Rather than seeing ECObox as a series of objects and structures we conceptualised it as a series of *agencies*.[8] Because everything was mobile and negotiable, the project was able to move from the initial location of Halle Pajol and be reinstalled twice in new locations, taking different forms and involving new users. Currently, ECObox is self-managed by a user association.

[fig.]
Previous and current page, ECOBox, ECOBox Garden, atelier d'architecture autogérée, Paris, 2009

Micro-politics

What residents find in ECObox is a space, free from preconceived ideas, that provides the freedom for participants to develop initiatives and new ways of doing things. Participants find their own way of negotiating inter-culturality, group self-management, political criticism, physical construction and arrangement, recycling and so on. By taking part in the building and managing of the project, and by being encouraged to find ways to take their own initiatives, people using the garden gradually shift from passive to active participants. ¶ This transition conveys not only the aims of the project's methodology but also what Deleuze and Guattari calls a "subjectivisation processes": "One can indeed speak of subjectivisation processes when one considers the different ways individuals or groups emerge as subjects: such processes are only of any worth insofar as, when they are made, they elude both established knowledge and dominant powers: even if they subsequently give rise to new powers or run through new knowledge. But at the time, they certainly feature a *rebellious spontaneity*."[9] ¶ One of the questions we ask is how these moments of individual "rebellious spontaneity"can be incorporated within the collective project. Nicolas-Le Strat talks about the ECObox "micrology", a dual logic of intensifying and opening up the project. Scale is important when talking about spontaneous and rebellious practices based on subjects' desires as desire circulates at the molecular level. Guattari also mentions the "micro-politics of desire" and a micro-political scale of institutional experimentation that enables subjects to position themselves as subjects of desire in the social realm. ¶ According to Guattari, this "release of the energies of desire" is in the form of "a function of collective agency of the *socius* no longer seeking to force people into pre-established frameworks (...). This is the condition enabling the singularities of desire to be respected."[10] By way of example, Guattari mentions Fernard Deligny's atypical work with-autistic children in Cévennes, where he set up "a collective economy of desire that links people, gestures, economic and relational networks, etc" in order to "provide desire with a channel of expression in the social realm"[11]. ECObox seeks to set up a collective economy based on the "desire to create the city" and able the singularisation of inhabitants' desire whilst simultaneously allowing them to relativise the model of desire imposed by institutions, brands and the media. This was made possible by the in-depth work of a painstaking, patient, micro-political molecularity that takes the time to create relationships, overcome fear and mistrust, and employ everyone's capacities to deal with conflicts and contradictions.

8 P. Nicolas-Le Strat, Un projet d'Eco-urbanité : L'expérience d'ECObox dans le quartier La Chapelle à Paris , ISCRA: Montpelier 2004, p. 66 (http://www.iscra.org/page_252.php)
9 G. Deleuze "Contrôle et Devenir" in Pourparlers, Minuit 1990/2003, p. 238.
10 F. Guattari, La révolution Moléculaire, ed. Recherches, 1977, p. 172
11 *Ibid.*, p. 172
12 See G. Agamben, *La communauté qui vient. Théorie de la singularité quelconque*, Seuil, 1990

Everyone's architecture

ECObox is aimed at everyone: users are not filtered or chosen by their geographical location or ideological preferences, they are simply the ones "who are there". Participants are only united by a desire to share some time, space and knowledge and a desire to do something together where they live. In the words of Michel de Certeau, the project brings together those seeking to express an "undecipherable and yet inevitable coexistence". From this point of view, ECObox is a group experiment of what *everyone's architecture* could be:[12] an architecture built of the singularities of desire which are almost invisible yet whose inventiveness and audacity springs from the modest means used, the heterogeneous solutions chosen, and the "radical", democratic ways they re-create the city. ¶ Arjun Appadurai, in his research into the cultural phenomena of globalisation, speaks of the "production of

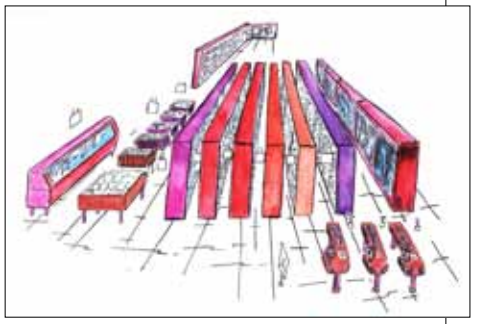
imagination" as a social act—he emphasises the right of all citizens to take part in "the work of the imagination."[13] He explores obstacles encountered by certain minority groups, existing under the dual neo-capitalist and neo-colonialist symbolic banner, to participate in this important social act. Appadurai emphasises the need for policies that acknowledge that "even the poorest should have the ability, privilege and skill to take part in the work of the imagination."[14] For Appadurai the task of producing *locality,* a "structure of feeling stemming from the social and ideological existence of a specific community", is increasingly at odds with the contemporary city. We feel that ECObox has successfully produced "locality" thanks to the gradual investment made by the different participants and the productive dynamics of their imagination. ¶ At the moment the ECObox experience is the exception—a heterotopy amongst the district's other development projects and the dominance of regulated urban space. In his study of heterotopic places, Michel Foucault emphasised the contradictory relationship between these spaces and other more regulated spaces of the city describing the potentiality of the garden as being a "sort of happy, universalising heterotopy since the dawn of Antiquity." [15] ¶ ECObox thus shifts between being both a real "garden," and, as Foucault suggests a "universalising heterotopy": the project is directly linked to inhabitants desires to make different use of the city in the here and now *and* to the possibility of a line of flight into future modes of existence. ECObox is a *heterotopic construction site*, where knowledge of the city is generated at the ground level empowering participants to propose cultural, social or political projects to themselves and others.

English translation by Ana Medez de Andes

13 See A. Appadurai "The Right to Participate in the Work of the Imagination", in *Transurbanism*, Rotterdam, V2_Publishing/NAI Publishers, 2002, p. 34 and *passim*
14 *Ibid.*, p. 46
15 See M. Foucault, *Dits et Écrits*, vol. 2, pp. 1577-1578

Bababaa International

Super-Supermarkets



[fig.] SUPER-SUPER-MARKETS, Bababa International, 2011

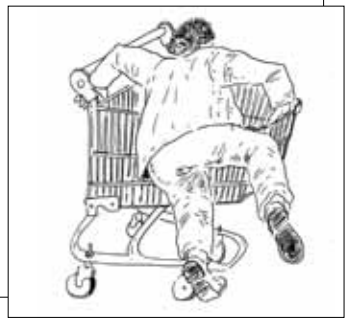
Having been invited to contribute to this exhibition with an artwork featuring food, we turned to the supermarket. We arrived at this topic via an interest in a new supermarket that had recently opened across from Redfern Oval. This commercial apparition caused us to pause and ask a number of questions about the distribution of resources within a city. We wondered about the logic guiding a company like Woolworths (the proprietor of the new Redfern supermarket) into opening a new outlet. What do they know about the neighborhood and its needs? And what, potentially, does this tell us about the ways in which food is distributed generally? ¶ Unfortunately, we never managed the necessary level of organization to answer these questions with the depth and rigor they demand. Time ran out. ¶ However, we did make a number of spirited ventures into the conceptual space of supermarkets. On these occasions we emerged warily from this historical vortex with a sense that these sites of food lay somewhere on the leading edge of immense global forces that are shaping human society into a thrilling and ever-shifting procession of odd, unseen and misshapen forms. ¶ Awed and galvanized, we have attempted to respond in the only way we know how; with proposals for impossible art. So, if you can bear it, we would like to present these misguided, yet staunchly sincere ideas for your consideration. ¶ But first, we would like to begin with an exercise. The task is to visualize and construct a mental supermarket using the memories you have collected from a lifetime of grocery shopping. In this exercise there is no definitive method by which this market of the mind should be built, nor is there any definitive outcome. As long as you have raised your experience and expectation of supermarkets to the level of conscious reflection, the exercise has been more or less successful. ¶ (Please note: If you have never been to a supermarket, do not feel left out; you may keep what you read here in the back of your mind in case you ever happen to encounter one of these nodes of contemporary convenience.) Start by casting back into the shallows of your recent past and pull up whatever half-submerged fragments of experience you find there that relate to the last time you visited a supermarket. Now, holding them up in view, try to extrapolate and pin

down the layout of that particular supermarket: did you enter from the left or from the right? What type of product greeted you? How were the items displayed and grouped? What products were in which aisles? Where was the dairy located? ¶ At this stage you should be entering into the supermarkets layout through blunt recollection. When you feel that you have gone as far as your memory will carry you, stop and try to consolidate the details within your mind's eye. You may want to store these details within a construct analogous to a real-world method for organizing information (i.e. a plan drawing, excel spreadsheet etc.) Or you may want to try something much bolder and build an interior version of this market. Whatever you decide, try to ensure that all your hard and clever work is consolidated. ¶ The next step takes you back further, to the supermarket before the last one. It is likely that you habitually visit the same supermarket as a matter of convenience. This exercise hinges on the comparison between forms, so if you are stuck at the all-to-familiar turn style of your local store, you may need to double your efforts in order to recall other, alternative experiences. Now, with your feet further in the past, repeat the small acts of gathering that allowed you to re-build the first market. When you have conjured your second model it is time to take an active and potentially destructive hand by comparing and finally combining your two models; searching for similarities, differences, shared organization and divergent logics. ¶ When you have your comparison in place, take the similarities and merge them into the one feature. For example, if both deli counters happen to be located at the back of both stores then mould them together into the one counter. For all divergent features you should do the opposite, placing each in the location that you found without eliminating, or moving anything else that occupies that place. However, if you do find that a particular position or feature has two competing claims on it you can negotiate them through transformation. A fruit counter may be merged with a children's ball-pit, or a check out clerk may suddenly find himself or herself swiping your items on top of the seafood section. ¶ Now repeat these steps with every supermarket so that your memory can manage until you have constructed one vast, comprehensive and densely integrated *super*-supermarket.

[fig.] This and following pages SUPER-SUPER-MARKETS, Bababa International, 2011

Educational Supermarket Odyssey

Becoming deliberately expansive instead of contractive, we ask, 'How do we think in terms of wholes?' If it is true that the bigger the thinking becomes the more lastingly effective it is, we must ask, how big can we think? Richard Buckminster Fuller



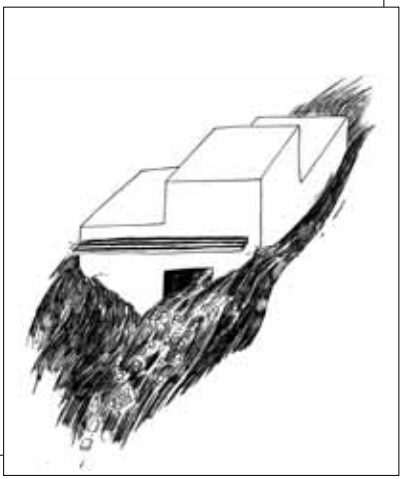
You're faced with a difficult decision. You stand in front of a vast multicoloured wall of boxed cereals knowing that the choice you make carries with it a bag of consequences. You steady your eyes and attempt to focus on a section of the wall, examining the wooing motifs, labels and ant-sized nutritional information printed on these tightly packed cardboard rectangles. While the data can be useful and the designs persuasive, the static material in front of you is not enough to service an informed, confident decision. You are curious to see the bigger picture of the product, to know for certain if you are a 'Berry Berry Kix' kind of person, a 'Captain Crunch' acolyte, or a 'Double Chocolate Cookie Crisp' client. ¶ So what's the solution to this cereal problem? ¶ Addressing the modern day shopper's hunger for farm-to-trolley info, *Education Supermarket Odyssey* offers a comprehensively rip-roaring learning experience. Using the trolley as a vehicle, the shopper takes a seat and programmes their journey via the items he or she wishes to retrace, understand, and, ultimately, eat. ¶ This is a supermarket where each item or product generates its own informative trip via a complicated system of conveyer belts and portals. So, as you pick up the 'Double Chocolate Cookie Crisp' cereal, for instance, your trolley veers left, down a ramp and through a door. From here you will be greeted by a decorously steady voice, narrating your journey as you travel along a visually mechanised history of the chosen product. E.g. (imagine voice): ¶ "…to the left you will see how Double Chocolate Cookie Crisp cereal arrives at the supermarket…to the right you will notice how it is packaged, assembled and processed at this particular General Mills factory... if you look above you will find the marketing and design team furiously working on taglines, campaigns and characters… and just up ahead we will arrive at where it all begins; here is the farmer, here is the wheat field, and here is the soil…" ¶ *Education Supermarket Odyssey* aims at providing a complete picture for every available product—a finish-to-start ride that expands and elucidates the contents of your trolley.

Supermarket Flow

The pleasure of the table belongs to all ages, to all conditions, to all countries, and to all areas… Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

At what point could a supermarket become a natural resource? Statistics indicate that processed foods account for around 80 per cent of global food sales, combine this with the growth of supermarkets per capita—and their increasingly visible presence on the landscape—and you can begin to reconsider two things:

1. The method and management of supermarket proliferation, and;
2. The definition of what constitutes a 'natural resource'.

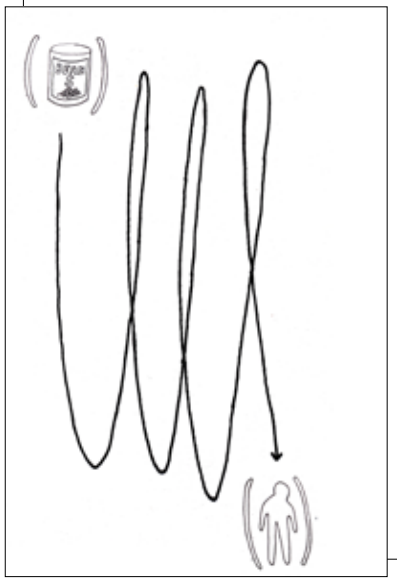


Our plan is to convert all supermarkets into a prodigious, fast-flowing, necessarily bountiful, global river. This abundant torrent will surge over national borders, into city centres, past supermarket-front neighbourhoods, until finally cascading down into various sorting and restocking reservoirs. Here items will be replaced, checked for buoyancy, and if on special, sent back upstream. Apart from distributing global comestibles more fairly and efficiently, this man-made waterway aims to encourage riverside tourism, salaried and recreational fishing, entrepreneurial mariners and innovative packaging solutions. ¶ In line with other geoengineering endeavours such as cloud seeding and solar radiation management, *Supermarket Flow* liquefies the growth of supermarkets and utilizes the possibilities of environmental manipulation in order to enhance food transportation, allotment and convenience.

Limited Superlinkage

Even the most distant and exotic place has its parallel in ordinary life.
Paul Theroux

Our final proposal aims at joining two points and solving any problems or obstacles that would prohibit their connection. ¶ The first point, a human being, is in a specific location and is more or less stationary—let's call this point (A). (A) has access to a flag and is now raising it. This act signals that (A) is ready to eat, which subsequently introduces point (B), an item of food. From here (B) becomes mobile and will move towards (A) without the aid of familiar routes, prime movers or human contact. ¶ At this stage, (B), which on this occasion is a can of beans arrives at (A). (A) may now want to imagine the logistics of how (B) has appeared, and thus possibly re-imagine how food moves and functions in the city. ¶ *Limited Superlinkage* is a rigorously elaborate system of demand and supply. By building engineering, science, chance, and chain reactions into every supermarket experience, we will subtract common practices and familiarities from a habitual activity and establish a new supermarket. We will call this a super-super market.



Marjetica Potrč

The Cook, the Farmer, His Wife and Their Neighbour

[fig.]THE COOK, THE FARMER, HIS WIFE AND THEIR NEIGHBOUR, 2010. Photo by Henriette Waal

The on-site project *The Cook, the Farmer, His Wife and Their Neighbour* consists of a community garden and a community kitchen in the Nieuw West district of Amsterdam. This was a collaborative project initiated by the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, which lacked a permanent exhibition space in 2009 and so pursued activities in other locations throughout the city. Soon after the Stedelijk Museum invited me to do a project in Nieuw West, I discovered that Wilde Westen, a collective made up of a cultural producer, a sociologist, two architects, two designers and an artist, had already carried out research there the year before, so we joined forces as the core group behind the project. Over the year in which *The Cook, the Farmer, His Wife and Their Neighbour* developed, however, the neighbourhood residents themselves became the most important people involved, and after Harvesting Day, on September 27, 2009, they took over its management. They formed a committee of eight residents, which is responsible for the two spaces. During the six months when the project was taking shape, Wilde Westen and I acted as mediators between the neighbourhood residents, the municipality and the Far West Housing Corporation. Today we serve on an advisory board that also includes representatives from the Stedelijk, Far West, Koers Nieuw West and the Geuzenveld–Slotermeer district authorities; we meet as needed with the residents' committee to discuss the life of the project. ¶ The interest this project has generated is not surprising. With its focus on local food production and neighbourhood development,

it redefines the state of urban–rural coexistence and contributes to the city's network of green and garden areas, which serve a similar purpose. I am very proud that the community garden and community kitchen have generated new connections between neighbours and between the neighbourhood and the municipality. Right from the start, the project has attracted the involvement of many individuals, local initiatives and institutions. It offers a good example of redirective practice, i.e. a collective form of action that demonstrates a process of cultural remaking. Community develops from working together in ways that transcend the limits of any one discipline. ¶ The community garden and community kitchen are located on Lodewijk van Deyssel Street in the Geuzenveld district, which is part of the post-war modernist development of West Amsterdam. Today, however, it faces widespread unemployment and difficulties in integrating new arrivals. At the same time, Nieuw West is one of the largest residential redevelopment areas in the European Union. What happens here has the potential to inform the redevelopment of modernist neighbourhoods elsewhere. ¶ As a local case study in Nieuw West, our project articulates practices designed to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The existing policy for redesigning the modernist district foresees an increase in the density of the built areas at the expense of open public space; this would also mean the relocation of low-income families. Our project, in contrast, views the current low-income population, which consists mostly of immigrant families, as an "added value" in a sustainable neighbourhood. It rejects the twentieth-century modernist ideal of the metropolis and opts instead for a city composed of strong, smaller neighbourhoods; in other words, it shrinks the city into smaller parts. Here the green area is preserved and its

[fig.] LOOKING ONLY GREEN, Lodewijk van Deysselstraat 61, 25 August 2010. Photo by Rufus De Vries and Henriette Waal

[fig.]THE COOK, THE FARMER, HIS WIFE AND THEIR NEIGHBOUR, Lodewijk van Deysselstraat 61, 25 August 2010. Photo by Rufus De Vries and Henriette Waal

potential is activated as agricultural land, which in fact revives the memory of an area that was farmland as recently as fifty years ago. Public space is transformed from an open, undefined space into a community space. The project shows us that, not only is it desirable for residents to participate in designing "their" city, it is also possible. The project introduces a bottom-up process in an over-regulated Dutch society where residents have become passive and frustrated while the housing corporations, which have been given carte blanche in the redevelopment of the district, simply reproduce unimaginative formal designs. ¶ A previously unused house at Lodewijk van Deyssel Street 61 is now a community kitchen and a meeting place for the community that has formed around the project. It provides a centre around which the community can engage in the process of "building a place"—a much-needed ritual in a climate where families experience continual resettlement. Beyond the core group of residents, the community kitchen attracts other residents, too, who take part in the activities there. With its open-door policy, now in effect a full year, the community kitchen has also brought security to the street, another added value for the neighbourhood. ¶ The community vegetable garden is located behind the kitchen on land that used to be fenced off. Today, twenty-two families from seven ethnic groups take care of the garden. Opening up the fenced-off lot can be understood as a form of reappropriation of the land by the residents and a symbolic act that articulates their need to be involved in redesigning their neighbourhood. ¶ As I mentioned, Nieuw West Amsterdam was agricultural land only half a century ago. In 1934, the architect Cornelis van Eesteren drafted a master plan for the area. Construction began soon after World War II, and a garden city, a Dutch version of modernism, was laid across the fields. As with

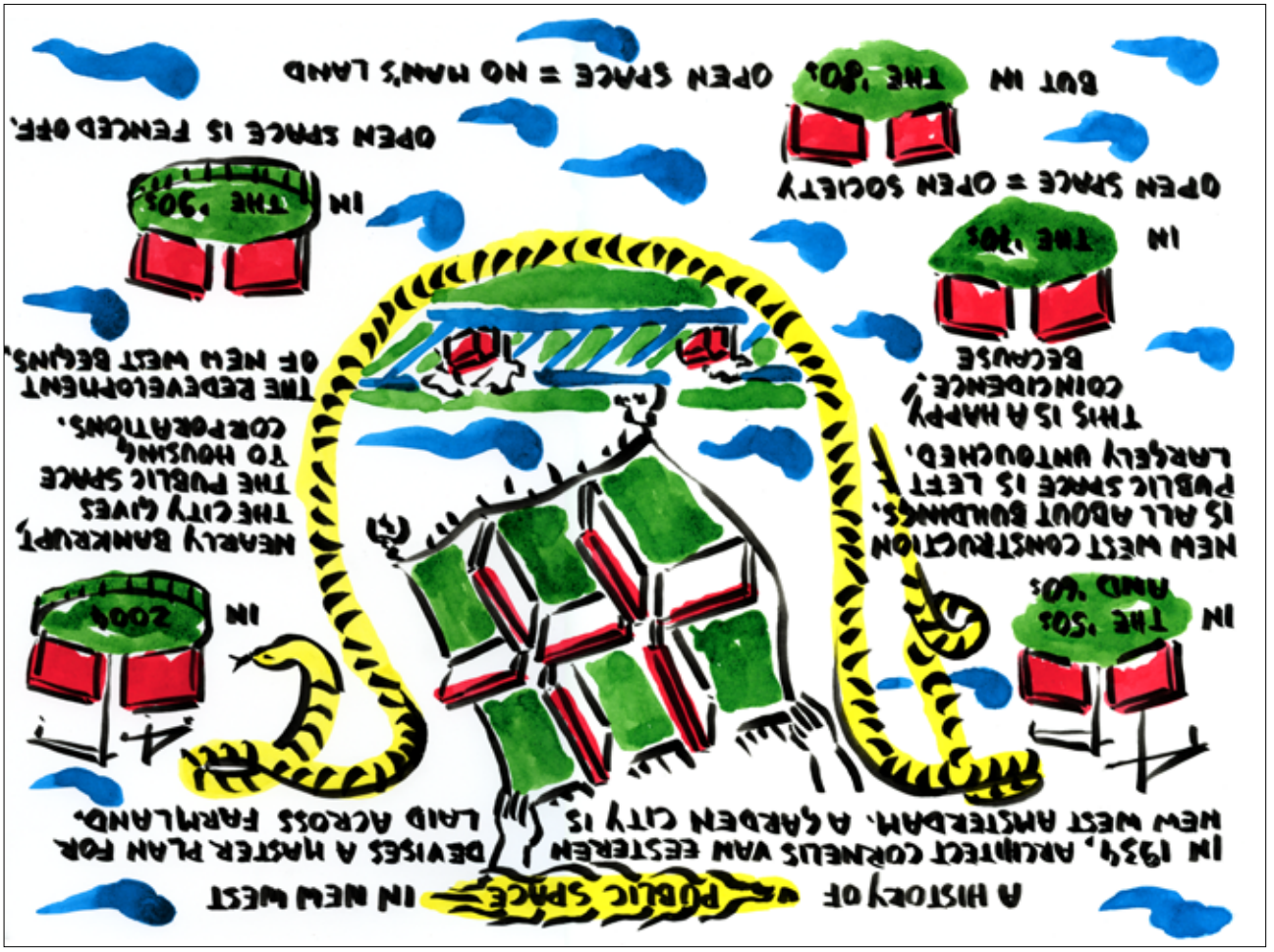
many modernist developments, there was money for the buildings but not for developing the public space, which van Eesteren understood as playing an important role in social integration. So the public space remained largely open and undefined. This turned out to be a happy accident, since in the 1970s open space represented the open democratic society. During the 1980s, however, this space turned into a no man's land, and in the 1990s, many of the lots were fenced-off and became "look-only gardens" (*kijkgroen*). Residents paid for their maintenance but could not enter them. In 2004, facing bankruptcy, the city handed the space over to housing corporations, an act that sealed the fate of public space in the district. Today, the link between residents and the government is broken, while the housing corporations see no reason to maintain the open public space, which holds next to no value for them; in their view, it is merely a source of continual maintenance costs and also potentially dangerous. By engaging the residents of the neighbourhood, the project *The Cook, the Farmer, His Wife and Their Neighbour* overturns this perspective. The public space is personalized as community space, maintenance costs are reduced and the area becomes more liveable and more stable. Both residents and the city gain. The space is not only reclaimed, it is also redefined. But beyond issues of space and place, the project visualizes the potential of social architecture. Simply put, the community garden and community kitchen serve as catalysts of change for the community that takes shape around them, and Lodewijk van Deyssel Street as a whole is transformed. ¶ I recently heard from Lucia Babina and Henriette Waal, two members of Wilde Westen, that the project has secured funding for at least another year. Residents have built a greenhouse in the community garden in anticipation of the new growing season, and several communities from the neighbourhood and beyond are planning to follow the example set by the project.

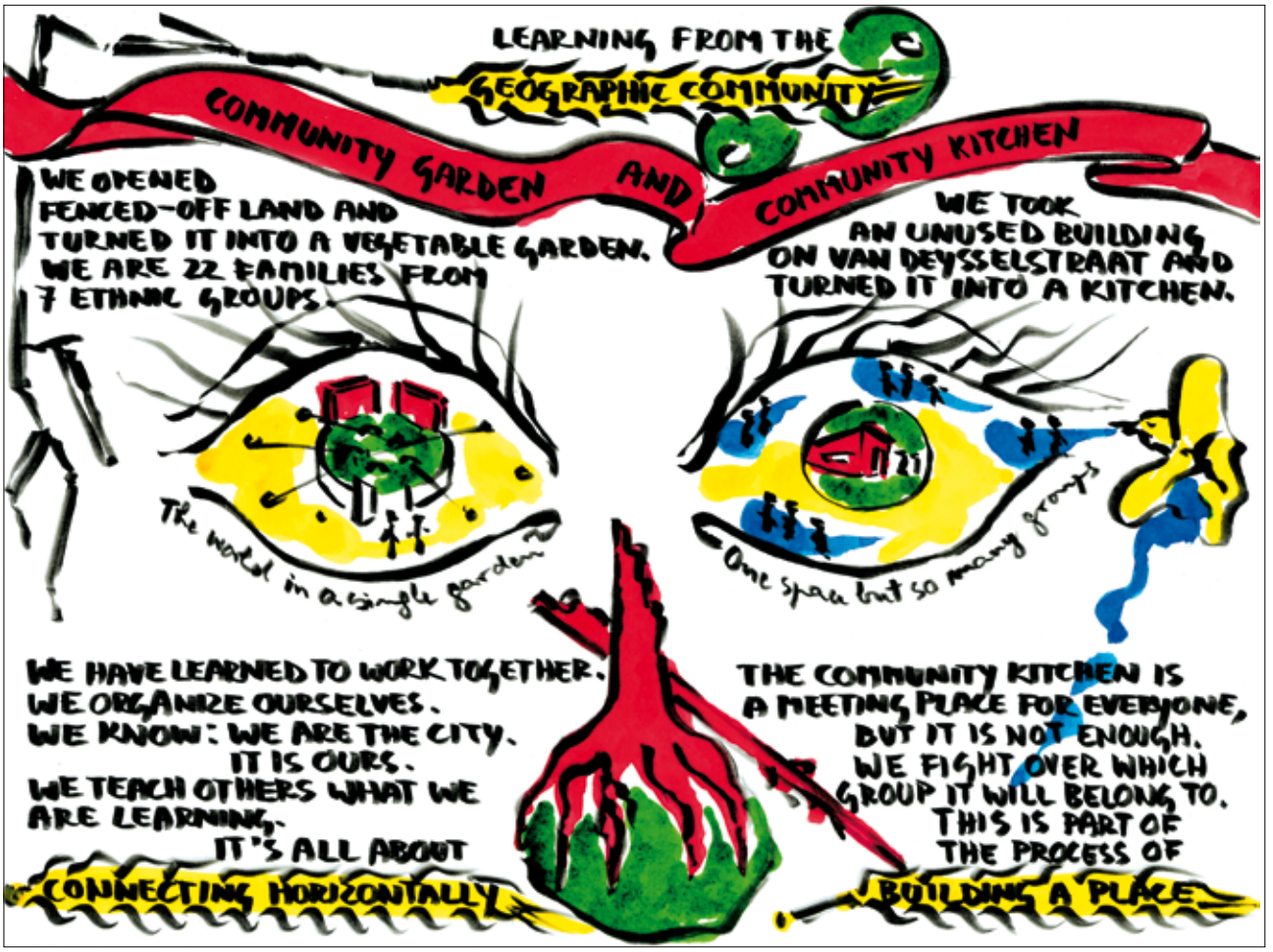
[fig.] These pages THE COOK, THE FARMER, HIS WIFE AND THEIR NEIGHBOUR, 2010. Photo by Gert Jan van Rooij

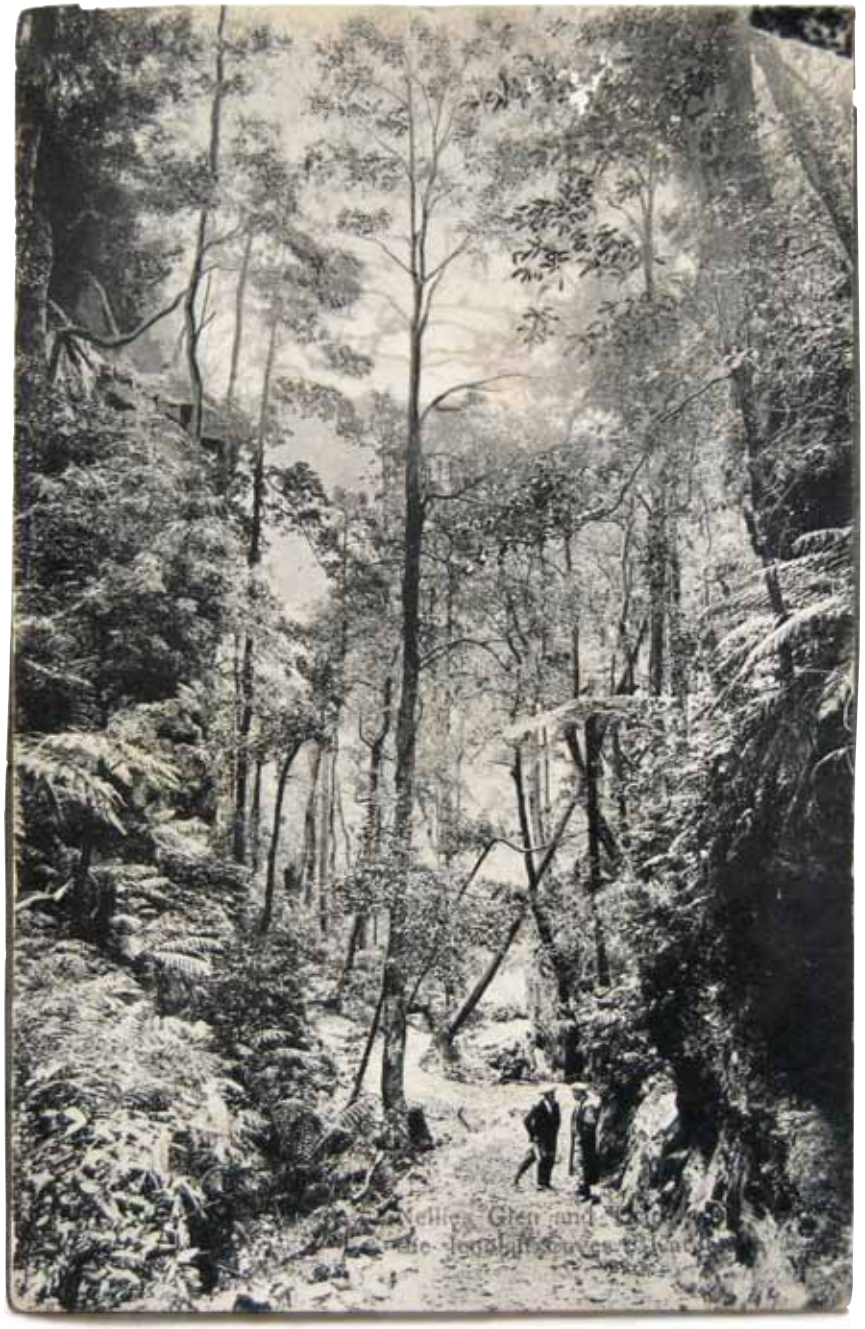
Following pages HOPE AFTER MODERNITY: THE STORY OF THE RESIDENTS OF AMSTERDAMS NEW WEST 2009, Drawings No. 1,2,3, and 5 (selection) Based on the on-site project *The Cook, the Farmer, His Wife and Their Neighbour*, 2009. Courtesy the artist and Meulensteen Gallery, New York.

HUMANITY IS US. WE COME WITH NEW IDEAS WHEN OLD ONES DON'T WORK ANYMORE. OURS IS A
SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE
IT'S PEOPLE!
Modernism Has Come Down
Natural resources dwindle.
Immigrants flood in.
Small-scale models, taking root, become green cities of the future.
THE MODERNISTS ENVISIONED A NEW ARCHITECTURE THAT COULD CONSTRUCT A NEW SOCIETY AND CHANGE THE WORLD. AND NOW, IN 2009, WE MUST DEAL WITH THEIR DELUSION!
NOW IS THE TIME TO SOLVE THE RIDDLE! "WHAT COMES FIRST, PEOPLE OR ARCHITECTURE?"

IMAGES CAN BE DECEIVING
CAN THIS BE WHAT AMSTERDAM'S NEW WEST WAS LIKE, WHEN IT WAS FARMLAND?
OR,
IS THIS WHAT FLINT, MICHIGAN WILL LOOK LIKE VERY SOON, WHEN WHOLE NEIGHBOURHOODS IN THE SHRINKING CITY ARE BULLDOZED AND THE LAND RETURNS TO NATURE?
MEANINGS CHANGE. RURAL KNOWLEDGE WAS SWEPT UNDER THE RUG OF MODERNITY BUT NOT ANYMORE. AND MIND YOU, IMMIGRANTS HAVE MUCH TO OFFER IN AMSTERDAM'S NEW WEST!
THE GARDEN CITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY
TOGETHER, WE THE RESIDENTS OF NEW WEST PRACTICE:
1. VEGETABLE HARVESTING: WE GROW OUR OWN FOOD!
2. PLACE-BUILDING. A GEOGRAPHIC COMMUNITY BECOMES A NEIGHBOURHOOD.
3. LOCAL CITIZENSHIP. THIS IS DEMOCRACY BUILT FROM BELOW.
WE LIKE TO LIVE IN VILLAGE COMMUNITIES, IN STRONG NEIGHBOURHOODS IN SMALL CITIES, SURROUNDED BY NATURE. WE DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN SPRAWLING METROPOLIS. THERE IS HOPE IN
SURVIVING MODERNITY


A HISTORY OF PUBLIC SPACE IN NEW WEST
IN 1934, ARCHITECT CORNELIS VAN EESTEREN DEVISES A MASTER PLAN FOR NEW WEST AMSTERDAM. A GARDEN CITY IS LAID ACROSS FARMLAND.
IN THE '50s AND '60s
NEW WEST CONSTRUCTION IS ALL ABOUT BUILDINGS. PUBLIC SPACE IS LEFT LARGELY UNTOUCHED.
THIS IS A HAPPY COINCIDENCE, BECAUSE
IN THE '70s
OPEN SPACE = OPEN SOCIETY
BUT IN THE '80s OPEN SPACE = NO MAN'S LAND
IN THE '90s
OPEN SPACE IS FENCED OFF.
IN 2004
NEARLY BANKRUPT, THE CITY GIVES THE PUBLIC SPACE TO HOUSING CORPORATIONS.
THE REDEVELOPMENT OF NEW WEST BEGINS.


LEARNING FROM THE GEOGRAPHIC COMMUNITY
COMMUNITY GARDEN AND COMMUNITY KITCHEN
WE OPENED FENCED-OFF LAND AND TURNED IT INTO A VEGETABLE GARDEN. WE ARE 22 FAMILIES FROM 7 ETHNIC GROUPS.
WE TOOK AN UNUSED BUILDING ON VAN DEYSSELSTRAAT AND TURNED IT INTO A KITCHEN.
The world in a single garden
One space but so many groups
WE HAVE LEARNED TO WORK TOGETHER. WE ORGANIZE OURSELVES. WE KNOW: WE ARE THE CITY. IT IS OURS. WE TEACH OTHERS WHAT WE ARE LEARNING. IT'S ALL ABOUT CONNECTING HORIZONTALLY
THE COMMUNITY KITCHEN IS A MEETING PLACE FOR EVERYONE, BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH. WE FIGHT OVER WHICH GROUP IT WILL BELONG TO. THIS IS PART OF THE PROCESS OF BUILDING A PLACE



[fig.] FOUND POSTCARD (NELLIE'S GLEN AND TRACK), collection of the authors.

Tessa Zettel & Karl Khoe

Land-escapes: à propos of time, the city and its other

At one end of a darkened room or corridor is a curious construction attached to the wall and spot lit. The object is the reverse side of a wearable mask/piece of personal architecture, built up from an old stereograph viewer with found materials (timber, urban waste, things picked up in the bush etc.). It affords some protection from the elements—perhaps it has an awning, a small solar panel powers a light, a receptacle catches water—and formally or materially references certain masks held in the collection of the Macleay Museum. The mask could be characterised as anachronistic and tragic, invoking survival and escape as well as resourcefulness and desperation. ¶ *The stereograph component (left intact) holds one of a series of black and white stereographic images depicting 'wilderness' landscapes in which a small figure can be discerned standing in the receding background, facing the viewer and wearing the very mask the viewer is now looking through. The photographs are all taken on the fringes of the city, in locations such as the Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury River. They refer to a collective imaginary that is neither fully past, present or future, in which inhabitants of 'this place' (Sydney) feel—almost—at home amongst tall trees, dense undergrowth and rocky paths. Also evident in the image on inspection are traces of the built environment: defunct or decaying machinery and components of infrastructure (a burnt-out car, a defunct streetlight).*

Some weeks ago, Matt Poll, Indigenous Curator at Sydney University's Macleay Museum, shows us a neatly arranged drawer of stone tools, collected around the Blue Mountains over decades by geologist/lecturer Father Eugene Stockton, and now the subject of a minor scientific scuffle over age and authenticity. Our conversation also takes in the not uncommon disturbance of historical Aboriginal skeletal remains during building excavations for new public works, whose repatriation the Museum then manages. Hanging above the staircase is another quiet reminder that this city's foundations are lodged uncomfortably in the living ground of its dispossessed other—a huge latex mould (a 1940s Boy Scout badge-earner) of an ancient rock carving, long since asphalted over by Epping Road. ¶ More dubious delights are encountered in the offsite storeroom: elaborate New Ireland masks and a puffer fish helmet from Tarawa island, beads exchanged for country by colonists, and a copper plate proudly declaring 'this land 22,000 acres was bought by C. Delatore from the chiefs and people'. Back in the public display Matt points out a wrinkling photograph of a bushland scene somewhere in Wentworth Falls, where archaeological sites have shown at least 22,000 years of human occupation, and where we ourselves spent two years evading rising Sydney rents to live amongst the hippies and the ghosts of escaped convicts striking for China, just over the hills ... ¶ At the time of writing, we two are literally escaping

from the City to the Country, or since we are in Australia, to the Coast (better still, to one on the other side of the continent)—en route to Esperance, WA, via a languorous train journey that cyclone-related track wash-outs stretch out a little longer. A tinny announcement marks the passing of Metropolitan Sydney's invisible border, as suburban backyards and industrial lots slip past the double-glazed frame before bleeding into project homes, ramshackle tin sheds and eventually the manicured green of the Southern Highlands. Over several days there are incidental stops (demanding contemplative time that is purpose-less or at least less purpose-full) in Adelaide, in the so-called ghost town of Cook at sea in the Nullarbor plain, and in Kalgoorlie, site of Australia's worst race riots in 1934, where cavernous pressed metal ceilings look down on racks of dusty two dollar shop plastic. ¶ Books stacked in a pile above the fold-out sink in our capsule hotel-sleeper cabin, relative weight balanced by potential usefulness in the development of a new project that has been percolating for several months: Simon Schama, *Landscape & Memory* (1996), 653pp., a brick of a book; Flaubert's 1881 *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (Gallimard French edition and 1976 English translation); Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (the Peebles Classic Library, undated); Griffith Review 27: *Food Chain,* Autumn 2010, 245pp. paperback; Tony Fry et al., *Metrofitting: Adaptation, the City and Impacts of the Coming Climate*, (2009) 49pp.; Claude Levi Strauss, *The Way of the Masks*, (1983 translation); *Mortality* exhibition pamphlet, ACCA, 2010. Of course we need them all, and curse for those left behind.

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ACCONCI [1997]: "Land ho!": the sailor's cry of discovery, from high up on the mast, as the ship approaches its goal after a life at sea. This is the beginning of the word "landscape." In order for discovery to be possible, land has to be considered first as far away: land has to be far off so that it can be seen all at once, as a panorama. Land recedes and becomes "landscape". "Landscape" equals land-escape; the land escapes, out of your reach: the word "landscape" pulls the land away, or pushes you back away from the land.'[1]

THOREAU [1881]: 'From the desperate city you go into the desperate country and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. … It would be some advantage to live a primitive and frontier life, though in the midst of an outward civilization, if only to learn what are the gross necessaries of life and what methods have been taken to obtain them. … The New Hollander goes naked with impunity while the European shivers in his clothes.'[2]

LEVI-STRAUSS [1975]: 'Each type of mask is linked to myths whose objective is to explain its legendary or supernatural origin and to lay the foundation for its role in ritual, in the economy and in the society... "everything seems to come easy to those who have the mask".'[3]

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In employing a kind of 'shuttling' between time scales and fictional but still recognisable worlds, the work seeks to confront what theorist Tony Fry has called our innate 'chronophobia'—an inability to think much beyond the limited timeframe of our own lives and a key determinant of the 'defuturing' urban trajectory now in full swing. It attempts to create space (and time) for participants to rethink who and indeed where they are, on the basis that to remake the city is to remake ourselves. It asks what we, here, could potentially be, in what other ways we could 'dwell' (the fantastical as well as the pragmatic), and by implication what the urban infrastructures or built worlds supporting our new, changed selves might look like.

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SACKS [1996]: 'Now, as I wandered in the cycad forest on Rota, it seemed as if my senses were actually enlarging, as if a new sense, a time sense, was opening within me, something which might allow me to appreciate millennia or aeons as directly as I had experienced seconds or minutes.'[4]

FRY [2010]: 'In making 'our' world of habitation futural we not only have to create its object-being as a physical and mental reality but equally fabricate another way of becoming. Here then a fundamental fact of design which bleeds into the imperative of forming new imaginaries, visions and processes of realisation. In such a project self-making, the agency of others and world-making cannot be divided.'[5]

ACCONCI [1997]: '… our projects *perform* a site, it's as if we're trying to coax the project out of the site, as if it's been there all the time … the project is built *with* the site, *by means of* the site—the architecture grows out of the space around it. On the other hand, it's as if our projects build a scaffolding over the site: it's this scaffolding that can support another site, either on top of or within the old one—a future city, a city in the air, precisely because it *wasn't* there all the time.'[6]

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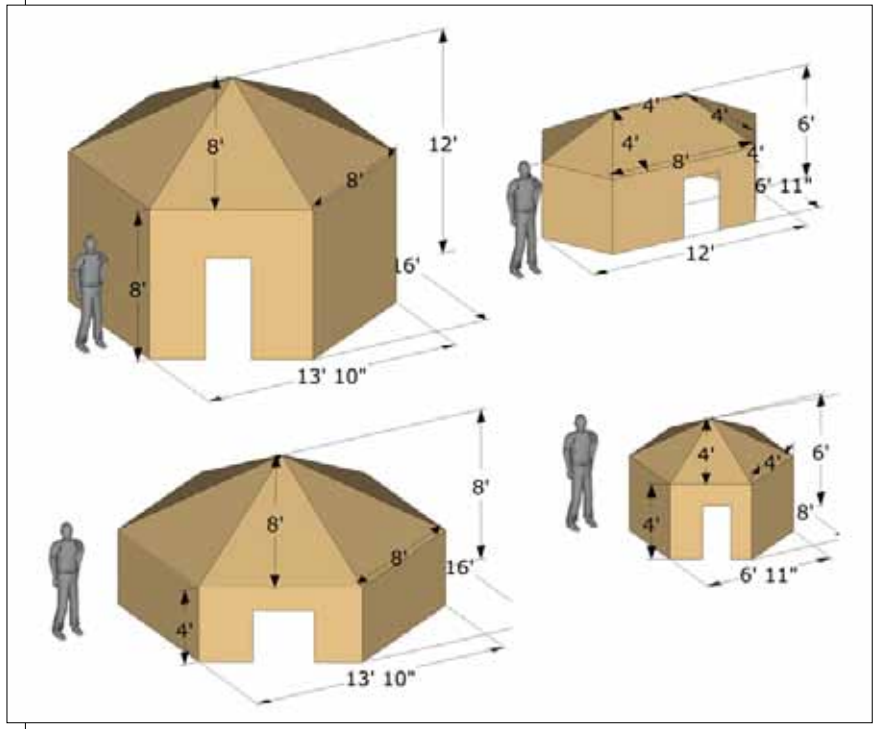
In another room of the Macleay archives lie at rest strange and cumbersome camera equipment and filed stacks of photos reaching back to the early days of the colony, when Sydney was a cluster of huts captured on glass in silver emulsion, when everyone wore hats and horses and trams shuttled busily up George Street, when the edge of town was being carved out of the hostile ground daily. This fragile built history sits awkwardly alongside a collection of early postcards on permanent display, documenting the purportedly 'disappearing' way of life of those that occupied this place otherwise for many thousands of years. Outside, in the glinting Broadway traffic and shopping centre melee, to imagine such a city sustaining any view 22,000 years hence does not come easy. ¶ Twice removed, and looking sideways to boot, seems a useful place to acquaint oneself with the death of the city (such as it is), as well as that which came before it; with the city as landscape (constructed, as all landscapes are) and with the land-escape that the myopic city appears to afford. To escape our own diminishing finitude will require something else to be built over and within this artificial home, an architecture of the body which has roots (and sense) all the way down, through time and land that is as much our others' as it is ours. ¶ If time permits there may in fact be three or four different masks/viewing devices on display in the gallery. There is further potential to take the objects to nearby outdoor locations as a one-off public event, with passers-by invited to view these 'otherwise' images through the masks, framed by the city street.

1 Vito Acconci. "Leaving home—Notes on Insertions into the Public", in *Public Art: A Reader*, ed. Florian Matznew (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2004), 30.
2 Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, (New York: Peebles Press International, 1967), 5–10.
3 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Way of the Masks*, trans. Sylvia Modelski (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983), 14–23.
4 Oliver Sacks, *The Island of the Colour-blind*, (Sydney: Picador, 1996), 224.
5 Tony Fry "Time, Things and Futures", unpublished paper.
6 ibid. 31.



[fig.] Top: STRONG ANGEL DAY, San Diego, California, 2006

Below: HETYURT SCHEMATIC, by Vinay Gupta, http://hexyurt.com

D.V. Rogers Interviews Vinay Gupta

'Disastr Hotel' —The place you stay when you visit the future today!

D.V. Rogers: Disastr Hotel is a performance/installation based on your Hexayurt Shelter System, a de-centralized design approach employing whole system thinking to the design of refuge camps and disaster response shelters. Your open source Hexayurt model is a comprehensive family support unit that includes drinking water purification, composting toilets, fuel-efficient stoves and solar electric lighting. When did you start work on the Hexayurt Shelter System and why?

Vinay Gupta: There's a big answer and a small answer to that question! The small answer is, as these things always are, "right place at the right time," but the long answer is quite an interesting bit of cultural history, so let me drag it out. ¶ There's a thread running through world culture, about decentralization and individual autonomy. I got the bug from Gandhi, with his vision of little farming villages that make all they need scattered all over India. I could have got much the same vision of the future from Buckminster Fuller the engineer or even Thomas Jefferson, the American Founding Father. But I got it from Gandhi the saint. When I visited The Farm, Stephen Gaskin's commune in Tennesee, I met Albert Bates and they showed me their domes and talked about manufacturing waste in the dome-making process, and I knew some of the relevant math, and it became a little project, to try and design the waste out of the geodesic dome. ¶ But it's the political vision that really animates the project, sensitises it. If I had been a different person, it would have been a start up company or a charity going into the field and building them. A few thousand units a year either way, and no global change. What I got from the Big Guys was a different model of how things work, and the core notion that the size of the problem is the key to your success, not the sophistication or genius of your technology. The Hexayurt Project was my way of shouldering some of the load of the world, following the lead of the Big Guys—it was never "look at my hut!" but rather "look at the number of people who need shelter!" ¶ In that sense, the project started before I was born. I'm just working on the same basic agenda, pushing towards the same world as the big visionaries in my own little way. The hexayurt itself is a very useful "how" but the Hexayurt Project is really about the "why."

Rogers: You discuss how your Hexayurt Shelter System is an 'autonomous building,' which is a nice concept, but in your view what do you mean by autonomous buildings?

Gupta: The old vision, this common thread in Jefferson, Fuller, Gandhi and many others is about people being economically self-sufficient, and therefore "free" in some spiritual or political sense. ¶ The grid—exquisitely complex supply chains and trillions of dollars of power stations and cables and water pipes and storm drains and so on—requires a massive political bureaucracy

to maintain. If you need that grid, you more or less need a government at this level of complexity and authority to maintain it. ¶ An autonomous building, in its simplest form, is a tipi or a yurt in nature. Heat comes from locally harvested wood, water from a stream, sanitation from an outhouse a safe distance from that stream and that's your basic essential services right there. Then things get complicated—we want electrical light, we want flush toilets, we want higher population density and greater access to high tech services. Now there's a tension between our desire for independence and autonomy, and our desire for stuff. Into that complex conflict comes conventional control politics because you need some kind of bureaucracy to manage the local sewer system and pretty soon you have a town council and a mandate you must have a lawn and two garden gnomes and submit proof of income to your tax authorities. All that comes from the architecture! The political control structures are living in our architecture! ¶ So autonomous buildings, at the most theoretical levels, are about re-internalising the political control structures by reclaiming the functions of a building from the power grid and water grid and road network and putting them back under our personal control. The autonomous building is autonomous from the infrastructure grid at a very practical level—it processes its own sewage, purifies its own water, harvests its own power from the wind and sun. But the benefit of this to society and to our fellows is that we cease to have to govern our neighbours in order to enjoy a toilet that works! ¶ Now scale this to a refugee camp: 100,000 people sharing a tiny patch of land with almost no money. If you go down the conventional approach and deploy efficient systems you will wind up with a central infrastructure for water and for sanitation and these will be maintained by a government or an NGO or the UN and the refugees will be dependent on this group for their lives and, worse, they will have no political control of how these vital services exist and are delivered. They are kept alive, but have no control of their lives. The infrastructure is much of the shape of a refugee society. ¶ Now imagine these refugees live in tiny autonomous buildings—small cabins that provide essential services, which can be moved. Now the camp can be split up into 2,000 small villages, each extended family group self-sufficient unto itself. No longer bound together by a well head and a toilet block, perhaps those who's village is safe to return to can go back there at the first opportunity, taking shelter and infrastructure with them. Perhaps they can be resettled in small groups to other places with available land, rather than living anonymously in a gigantic slum.

Rogers: I have read how you presented the Hexayurt Shelter System model to the American Red Cross and the US Department of Defense—how did this go?

Gupta: Bluntly, the Department of Defense in the USA have been the strongest supporter of the Hexayurt Project and its goals. This is not surprising—the DoD has consistently supported decentralization in energy grids and in computer systems (witness the Internet which started its life there). They've been fascinated by the work of Amory Lovins and the Rocky Mountain Institute for 30 years, and I worked on their "Winning the Oil Endgame" book while I was at the Institute. They have a real cultural dislike of fragile, complex, interdependent systems and a deep cultural affinity for technologies like solar panels and the Internet: Simple, cheap, works-anywhere, no moving parts. The basic story of "so we just cut up some plywood and screw it together, and this gives us about twice as much shelter for a given amount of plywood as a square house?" went across pretty much instantly, because these are practical people. ¶ So every year there's an exhibition of humanitarian technology at the Pentagon, right in the garden in the middle of the building, and they have tents and stoves and solar panels and water filters, and hexayurts. Nobody else does that, yet. ¶ The American Red Cross loved the hexayurt too. It went right into their arsenal of options for truly huge disasters. I did a rough plan for rehousing entire cities, using the autonomous building approach to cut the organizational complexity of providing for so many people down to something that could be done with mostly-volunteer labor, and I believe that this approach would get used if a whole city crisis occurred. ¶ There aren't really any other credible plans for handing whole city events, I've been told.

Rogers: Considering the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) shelter system, provides temporary accommodation for six and costs $40,000 (USD) and your Hexayurt Shelter System, using general Home Depot supplies (the Bunnings Australia Equivalent) costs less than $1000, why are the large federal agencies reluctant to deploy your design in the field?

Gupta: When you show somebody a hexayurt for domestic use in a peaceful time in a rich country, they compare it to a four-bedroom house with a two car garage. They say "well, its better than a tent, but we would never put Americans in tents." Compared to a FEMA trailer, which has bedrooms and a little kitchen and so on, the hexayurt doesn't even seem like it solves the same class of problems. But after a really big disaster, when 10% of the people displaced have totally filled the available trailers, and the hotels, and the stadiums and people are in the streets the hexayurt looks very different. Part of the rigorous simplicity, the insistence on using no complex materials—plywood and screws—is accepting that nobody will plan in advance to use hexayurts on a massive scale in the US context. ¶ So I've done what I can to make it easy for federal agencies to pick up and use the design after the event, if they are faced with a truly unprecedented disaster such as a terrorist nuke, or a civil war, or a worst-case earthquake levelling LA. It's designed to be adopted after the existing systems have failed, after the existing emergency systems have failed, after the last ditch systems have failed. In an American context, its what you do when there's nothing else to do. Very different from, say, Haiti or long stay refugee camps where you can actually say, apples-to-apples "better than what they have now, let's start moving people into hexayurts!"

Rogers: You talk about a 'Soft Development Path' towards a tangible solution to global poverty and environmental degradation—where do you see the Hexayurt Shelter System fitting into the grand scheme of this concept?

GUPTA: There's two ways this might go. The first is the most likely path, in which the hexayurt is a band-aid for maybe a couple of hundred million people a decade, more or less exactly like tents, used by those in refugee camps, those in natural disasters, those in war zones, or climate refugees. People use for a few years, then move into something better. What has the real impact in that scenario is the hard push towards autonomous building and distributed infrastructure, and the political simplification which goes with this, enabling new options like partial continuous resettlement of refugee camps and taking disaster relief equipment and using it for development aid. ¶ The other option is that some consortium of people take the hexayurt further forwards and it turns into a "linux of housing": an ultra-low cost, factory manufactured integrated autonomous building system which doesn't just replace the tent, but replaces the cinderblock-and-sheet-metal slum house and the mud hut and various other vernacular architectures. ¶ I'm not at all convinced that is a good idea, but if there's one thing we've learned from the success of the cell phone, it's that the crap-filter of the poor living in their villages and slums is utterly bombproof. They have rejected round after round of humanitarian innovation, and everybody in the field has quietly blamed "cultural problems" for non-adoption of their chosen humanitarian technology. People say "well, they didn't like our stove because of cultural problems" and that's a keyword for "because they are too stubborn to accept progress" and the blame for projects which don't go anywhere is quietly shifted away from the failed technology and on to the poor who "failed to adopt it."√The mobile phone has cut through all of that crap like a chainsaw. The poor saw something they wanted and they found the money to pay for it, which financed the infrastructure to supply it. If any of the stoves or toilets or solar cookers or low cost medical options or any of that stuff had actually done the job the poor wanted done, at a price they found reasonable, they would have paid and built the infrastructure necessary to supply the service they wanted. ¶ So I'm confident that if the poor do not like hexayurts, they will reject them as soundly as they rejected all the other technologies that have not scaled. If the hexayurt winds up being everywhere, it will be because poor people like it, and for no other reason. The lesson of the cell phone is that the poor are in charge.

ROGERS: Your background is in software development and it seems a natural fit to apply open intellectual property licenses towards the necessary technical and social solutions to disaster relief and development aid. Maybe this is why the Hexayurt Shelter System has not had much uptake with support from the US Federal Agencies as there is NO money to be made from the corporate sector?

GUPTA: Nobody supplying the government likes fair competition. But plenty of companies are printing money selling patent-free technology to government—roads and bridges and dams and printer paper and office chairs and so on. So at this point I think its really only a matter of time until some enterprising plywood manufacturing company or building contractor figures out that the hexayurt is a license to print money for them and that they can eat the lunch of the tent guys or the trailer guys and off they will go to the races. You don't need a patent to make money in this world, and open source just leaves more on the table for the people actually delivering the service! In the long run it will probably be more profitable for whoever figures out how to push it through the government bureaucracy in the form of some kind of disaster service to the state.

ROGERS: I guess corporate capitalist culture is yet to buy into decentralized infrastructure and autonomous buildings. Disaster and Aid relief is a touchy subject—for every dollar that is promised how much actually gets used on the ground where it is most needed?

GUPTA: Right now, nearly all the wind and solar capacity in the world is sold by big corporations. Generally speaking, they do what we want them to, they move to where the money is. I like to think of corporations as mice the size of elephants, barging their way through our kitchens and living rooms looking for any scrap of energy, any crumb of money, that we are willing to give them. ¶ Gandhi showed us how to handle corporate colonialism—stop buying services from our oppressors. That was the core of his Swadeshi philosophy. ¶ Now, on aid... god help us. It's not even about getting the money on to the ground, its a raft of political, legal and corporate problems which grow up around, frankly, the public throwing money at logos and never watching where the money goes after it's been tossed into the charity bucket. The lack of pressure from the donor public for people to show results is why the aid game is full of organizations that are brilliant at fund raising and much less competent at delivering services. It's our fault that the aid agencies aren't sleek, hyper-competent, ruthlessly professional life saving machines—we give to the same old players because we trust the brands, trust that they have this covered, and then we allow ourselves to stop worrying about the poor because we gave money at the office and now somebody else worries on our behalf. We don't look back to see what happened next.

ROGERS: How did the Hexayurt for Haiti project work out with Grass Roots United?

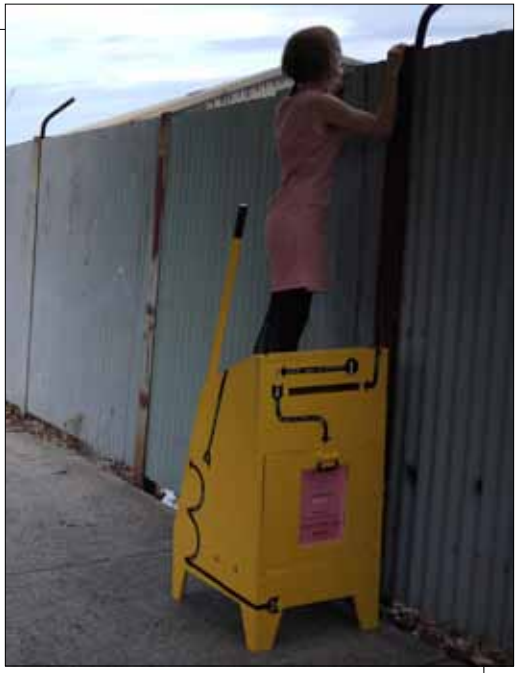
Gupta: Bit of a mixed bag, really. Haiti is about the worst mess in humanitarian terms ever—something like $10,000,000,000 (yes, ten billion!) was raised for humanitarian aid and reconstruction, and a year later nearly everybody whom the original earthquake displaced is still homeless, and the original tents and plastic sheet have rotted in the sun. ¶ On the other hand, the hexayurt we got built out there has not done so well—I saw pictures recently, and it's very beaten up by the sun and the elements. It needed a coat of paint or two, and probably a better foundation. But one of the Grass Roots United staff members lives in it, and that's basically our quality test right there. Staff are living in hexayurts in Haiti right now, and—thanks, open source—the next hexayurt will be painted and have a better floor and so on. We've always said the right thing to do is to build a couple of dozen hexayurts a year in disaster prone areas, improving the design, the choice of materials, the environmental fit until the design stabilizes at something

people are genuinely happy with. Then when you have a disaster, build those. ¶ I'd still very much like to get a crack at Haiti. There's a million people homeless still, with little progress on constructing even the very basic transitional shelters, and they're at continued risk from hurricanes and so on. It's a humanitarian crisis that has changed little since the months after the earthquake. But I wrote to everybody involved in Shelter Cluster in Haiti telling them about what Grass Roots United were up to, and nobody out of that group followed up with us. I got two replies to that email, in fact. ¶ I'm not a field operations expert. I'm not going to build a charity to go there and build hexayurts in the field, competing with every other charity for the donor dollars and becoming one more player. What I'm hoping to do is give away the technologies that will make the existing players more effective. And it's a straight binary choice, because if I was competing for donor dollars with existing charities, they would likely never adopt the technology. ¶ So we take slower progress now, in the hope of catalysing revolution later. It's hard, but it's the strategy I evolved based on Thomas Kuhn's "Structure of Scientific Revolutions" and it's served well so far in terms of negotiating with large bureaucracies and understanding patterns of adoption. The people who saw hexayurts in college will be the generation that puts them into the field is Kuhn's basic message, and that seems to be right so far.

∞∞∞

D.V. Rogers interest in designing, building and occupying 'Disastr Hotel' on the grounds of Sydney University as part of 'The Right to the City' exhibition is based around three ideas; 1. A demonstration of Vinay Gupta's, Hexayurt Shelter System as a real world test and 2. A play on the idea that all disaster is imminent whether it be ecological, geological, or economic and 3. a performance of whole system thinking which demonstrates self-sustainable infrastructure which could be easily applied to everyday 21st century urbanization. ¶ Effectively 'Disastr Hotel' is about Australia today, immune from what is happening around the world at this very moment in time and one of the only western countries to Not be greatly affected by the recent global economic collapse beginning in 2008. Australia has become a resource quarry for South East Asia, much like Brasil and Chile residing under a band-aid mining boom bubble, thats what Australia is today! ¶ 'Disastr Hotel' is not about destruction it is about survival in our somewhat fashionably precarious age. Shelter system design, water purification, low budget solar power, composting toilets, gasifer stoves and survival supplies lasting twenty-four days. A de-centralized performance of DIY survival—'Disastr Hotel' will be built from Bunnings hardware and visitors to 'Disastr Hotel' will be fed food rations supplied from the Coles supermarket reign. (http://disastr.urbanactio.org) ¶ Unfortunately social movements are not strong enough or sufficiently mobilized to force through solutions of ecological sustainability and economic change. Individuals of action are yet to converge on the singular aim of gaining greater control of sustainable models for the new urbanization required in todays technological, socially mediated age.

[fig.] THE NORTH EVELEIGH PROPOSITIONAL, Milkcrate urbanism, 2011. Photo by Hugo Moline.



PROPOSITION #1.The Propositional.

Towards a People's Urbanism.

What kind of city would we make if we could start from scratch? If we stopped making do, tinkering at the edges. It could be anything. If we could stop worrying about what we don't want and start creating what we do....

The Propositional aims to upend the typical process of city-making. Week by week, day by day it will publish and disseminate alternative proposal for the site at North Eveleigh. Everyone is invited to submit their ideas, agendas, their personal gripes and grand schemes. These will then be published so that others can see, share, agree or disagree, comment, critique, endorse, rework or replace them with something entirely different.

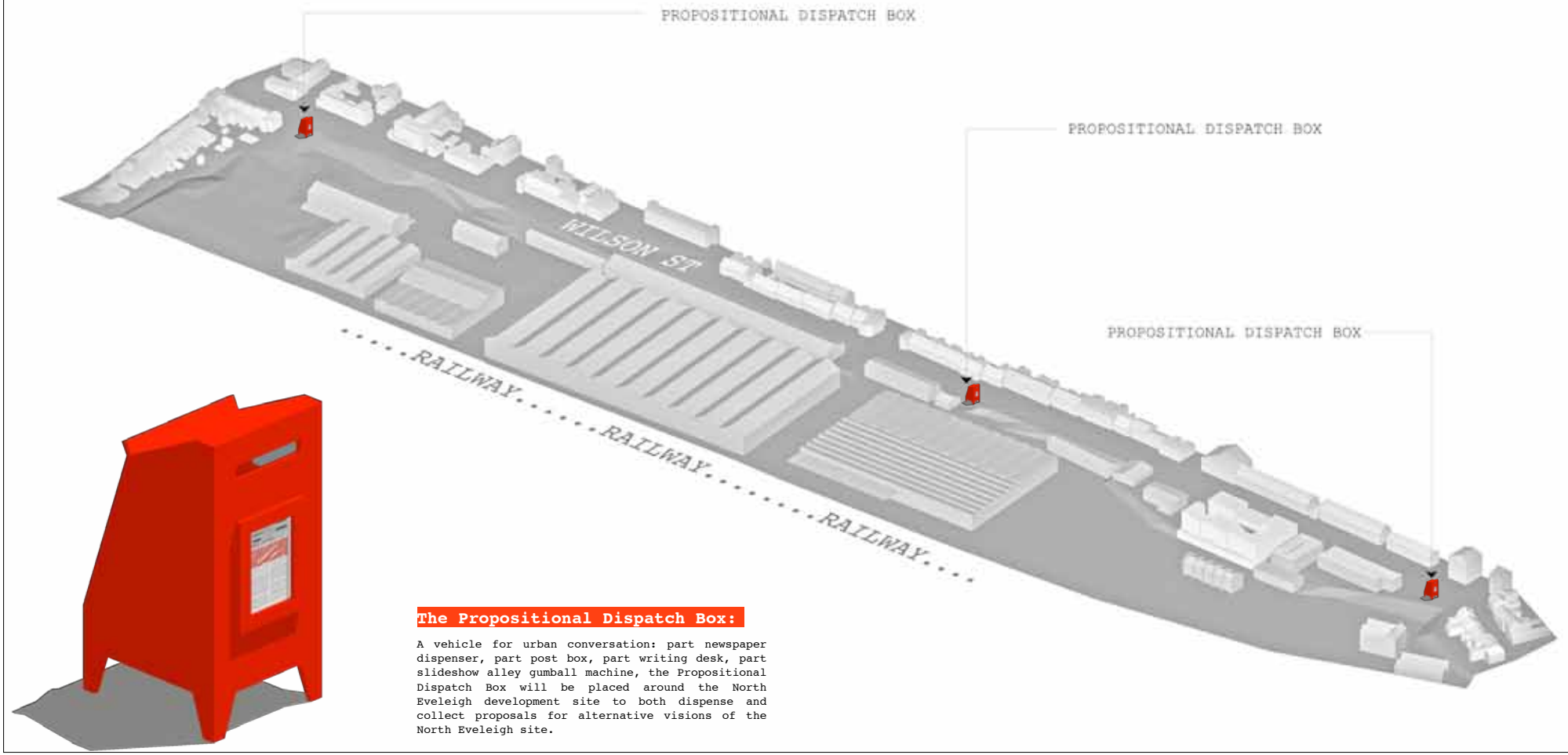
Given that the government has already approved their own scheme for the site (in the ultimate triumph of Regulator-Speculation) and are proceeding towards a quick sale, returning to the drawing board could be seen as a futile gesture. We at The Propositional strongly feel however that given the lack of critical public discourse about the future of such a significant piece of our city, a discussion of what else is possible is needed now more than ever.

The Propositional does not aim to find one perfect design, rather it seeks an accumulation of ideas, polished or rough, wild or pragmatic, heart-warming or spine-chilling, a permanently evolving catalogue of potential North Eveleighs.

We at The Propositional make no claim to represent or 'speak for' anyone, rather we are seeking to set up a space where people can speak for themselves, where everything is up for discussion and discussion is really the main aim.

The proposals may remain simply paper architecture, a silent witness to what could have been. But a more radical possibility exists: The proposals could go beyond polite dialogue to become a viable plan, giving us something to argue for, rather than against, something we can hold up to the spatial oligarchs, and say: 'this is what we want! and this is how to build it..'

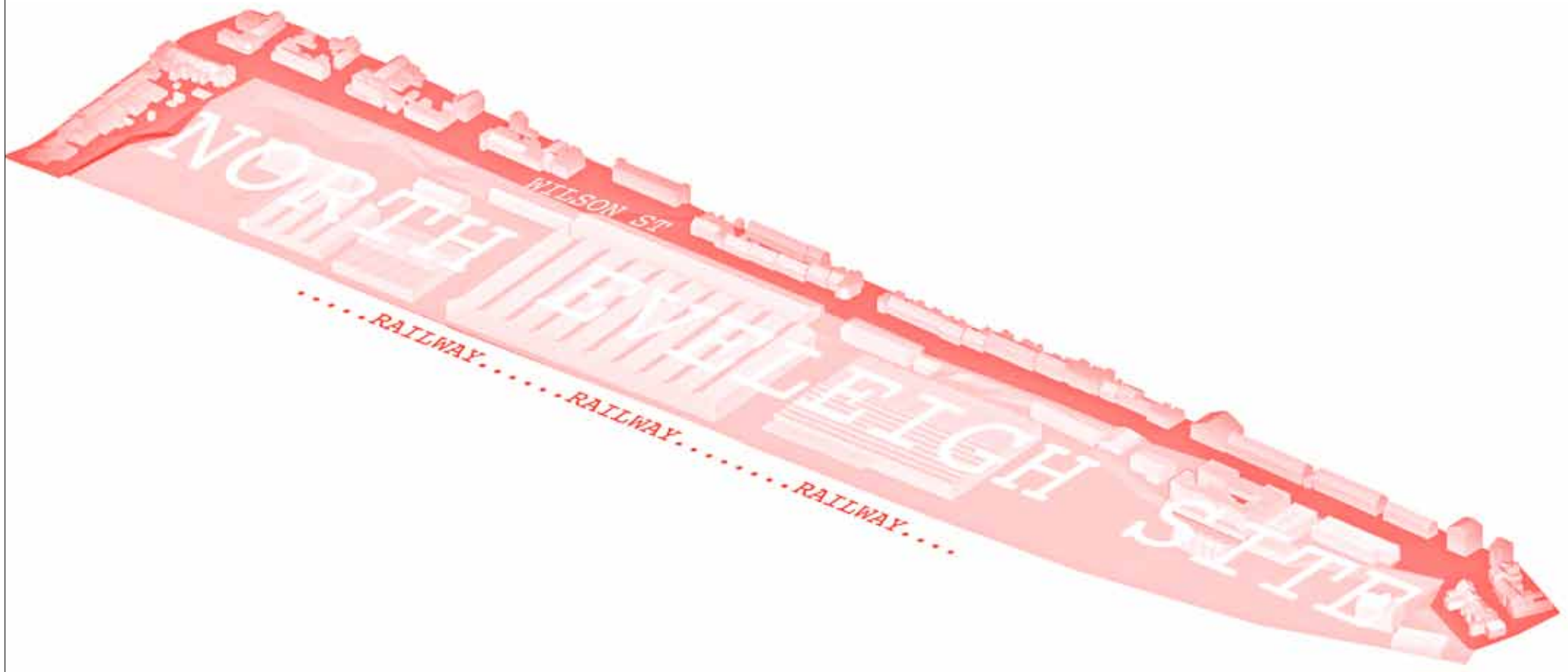
So let's begin...

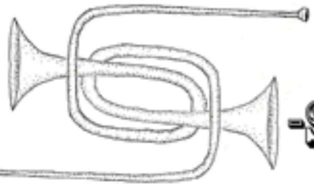


The Propositional Dispatch Box:

A vehicle for urban conversation: part newspaper dispenser, part post box, part writing desk, part slideshow alley gumball machine, the Propositional Dispatch Box will be placed around the North Eveleigh development site to both dispense and collect proposals for alternative visions of the North Eveleigh site.

PROPOSITION #... .....



THE NORTH  EVELEIGH

PROPO- -SITIONAL

ISSUE #... ....

Contributors

atelier d'architecture autogérée (Paris)

atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa) is a collective platform founded in 2001 by Constantin Petcou and Doina Petrescu in Paris. The platform conducts actions and research on urban mutations and emerging practices in the contemporary city, involving architects, artists, students, researchers, activists and residents with different social and cultural backgrounds. aaa 's projects focus on issues of self-organisation and self-management of collective spaces; emerging networks and catalyst processes; resistance to profit driven developments; recycling and ecologically friendly constructions; and collective production of knowledge. Recent projects include *Ecobox*, a nomadic eco-urban network in La Chapelle neighborhood in Paris and *Passage 56*, an eco-interstice in St. Blaise area. Currently aaa runs *R-Urban*—a strategy for local resilience in metropolitan Paris, involving the creation of a network of locally closed ecological cycles linking a series of urban activities (i.e., economy, dwelling, culture, urban agriculture) and reversibly used spaces. www.urbantactis.org

Bababa International (Sydney)

Bababa International was set to become an icon of 21st century living, helping to transform the perennial problem of habitat into a fully resolved and comprehensively built environment. Planned for every major city in the world, Bababa International was the total apartment building, able to accommodate as many tenants as there was demand, with no upper limits on the number of souls its concrete frame could accommodate in both style and comfort. Unfortunately, the project was deemed unfavourable by a coterie of private and public interests and was thus unable to raise even a modicum of the vast amounts of capital required to fund it's realisation. As yet, the new owners of the Bababa International name have yet to publicy state their intentions for it, despite some minor activity in various cultural circles and service industries. We can only hope their purpose is half as optimistic as the future for which it was originally conceived. http://www.bababainternational.com/

Zanny Begg (Sydney)

Zanny Begg is an artist, writer and activist and the Director of Tin Sheds Gallery, Sydney. She works in a cross disciplinary manner, her work revolving around an investigation of the politics of space, both in the broader globalised context and a more specific local one: she is interested in both the architecture of space and the social relationships which construct it. Zanny was invited to Hong Kong for an Australia-China Council Residency (May 2007), Indonesia for an Asia-Link Residency (June 2008), for a Performance Space Residency in Redfern, Australia (Oct 2008), Australia Council Residency in Chicago (2010) and an Australia Indonesia Institute Residency Yogyakarta (Jan 2011). Her recent exhibitions include Emeraldtown at Artspace (with Keg de Souza) , Istanbul Beinnale, Taipei Beinnal, *There Goes The Neighbrouhood*, Performance Space Sydney (with Keg de Souza), *Have the cake and eat it too: Institutionskritik und instituierende Praxen,* Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, Austria, and *Self Education—Self organization*, National Centre for Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia. She has been published in many magazines including *Third Text, Moscow Art Magazine* and *Chto Delat?* www.zannybegg.com

Margaret Crawford (San Francisco)

Margaret Crawford is Professor of Architecture in the College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley. Her research focuses on the evolution, uses and meanings of urban space, and she has published numerous articles on shopping malls, public space, and other issues in the American built environment. She edited *Everyday Urbanism and The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment and Daily Urban Life*. Her book, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns*, examines the rise and fall of professionally designed industrial environments. More recently, *Nansha Coastal City: Landscape and Urbanism in the Pearl River Delta* was published in early 2006 and co-edited by Alan Berger. Before joining UC Berkeley she was Professor of Urban Design and Planning Theory at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. She has also taught at The Southern California Institute for Architecture, The University of Southern California, The University of California at San Diego, The University of California at Santa Barbara, and The University of Florence, Italy.

David Harvey(New York)

David Harvey is a renowned geographer and social theorist; who specialises in geographical knowledges; urban political economy and urbanization in the advanced capitalist countries; architecture and urban planning. He is the Distinguished Professor, The Graduate Center, City University of New York and has received many awards and honours such as Leverhulme European Scholarship, 1960-61, to Uppsala University, Sweden, Outstanding Contributor Award of the Association of American Geographers, 1982, Doctorat Honoris Causa, Roskilde University, Denmark, 1997, Elected Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy, 1998, Honorary Doctorate, University of Uppsala, Sweden, January, 2000, Honorary Doctor of Science, Ohio State University, 2004, Elected American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2007, and Doctorat Honoris Causa, Lund University, Sweden, 2008. He has published many books including *Social Justice and the City*, Edward Arnold and The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973; *The Limits to Capital*, Basil Blackwell (Oxford) and University of Chicago Press, 1982; *Consciousness and the Urban Experience*, Basil Blackwell (Oxford) and Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985; *The Urbanization of Capital*, Basil Blackwell (Oxford) and Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

Healy and Sean Cordiero (Sydney/Berlin)

Claire Healy and Sean Cordiero have created a series of impressive installations that explore the complex dynamics of urban space. They were the Australian representative for the 53rd Venice Biennale and their recent exhibition include: *The Ultimate Field Trip*, Akiyoshidai International Artist Village, Japan, *Once Removed*, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Australia, Setouchi Art Festival, Setouchi, Japan, *Australian Art for Berlin*, Gitte Wiese Gallery, Berlin, *There Goes the Neighbourhood,* Performance Space, Sydney, *The Flats*, Bicentennial Park Homebush Bay, Sydney, *Contemporary Australia: Optimism*, Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, *Leading Lights*, Ivan Dogherty Gallery, Sydney, *Urban Jealousy*, Tehran Biennial. For more information: www.claireandsean.com

Milkcrate Urbanism (Sydney)

Milkcrate Urbanism is a Sydney-based collective of artists, architects and urban practitioners seeking to develop more democratic ways to make, use and understand the cities we live in. They take their name and inspiration from the humble yet prolific milkcrate, an object of near infinite usefulness and the closest thing modern Australian society has to collective property. In all their work they seek to remain true to the spirit of the milkcrate. Projects by the Milkcrate to date have included street furniture for public appropriation in Berlin (DE), a mobile site for exchange in Nakhon Pathom (TH), a new typology of dense, collective, suburban housing for a migrant co-op in Western Sydney (AU) and a people's mapping of squatter settlements in Lautoka (FJ).

Marjetica Potrc (Ljubljana)

Marjetica Potrc is a Ljubljana-based artist and architect. Her work has been featured in exhibitions throughout Europe and the Americas, including the Sao Paulo Biennial in Brazil (1996 and 2006) and the Venice Biennial (2003 and 2009). She has shown her work regularly at the Meulensteen Gallery (formerly the Max Protetch Gallery) in New York since 2002, and at the Nordenhake Gallery in Berlin and Stockholm since 2003, and elsewhere. Her many on-site installations include Dry Toilet (Caracas, 2003), Power from Nature (Barefoot College, India and Catherine Ferguson Academy, Detroit, 2005), and *The Cook, the Farmer, His Wife and Their Neighbour* (Stedelijk goes West, Amsterdam, 2009). Her fascinating drawings and installations document the fragile relationships between urban life, ecology and society. She has contributed the drawing series *'Community Gardens in New West'* for *The Right to the City* exhibition, courtesy of the artist and Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

Anna Plyushteva (London)

Anna Plyushteva has a Master's degree in International Development Studies from the University of Amsterdam. Her research interests span urban space and urban politics, public transport, globalisation, citizenship and social exclusion. She works in a community organisation in London, UK and commenced a PhD in 2011. Her publications include a chapter on the creation of public space in informal settlements in the forthcoming volume The Politics of Space and Place: Exclusion, Resistance and Alternatives, edited by Certoma, C, N Clewer and D Elsey (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholarly Press).

D.V. Rogers (Sydney)

New Zealand born D.V. Rogers is an installation-based, performance artist-engineer working between the fields of geophysics, conceptual cultural theory, activism, systems engineering, and social commentary. During 2007-2008 he was artist-in-residence at the US Geological Survey in Menlo Park, CA, USA. This research produced the seismic machine earthwork '*PIEQF*' which took place in Parkfield, Central California during the US summer of 2008. Through his work with earth science he collaborates with USGS scientists creating a linkage between earth science and art in order to broaden the reach of earthquake awareness and preparedness using a contemporary cultural model. For 'The Right to the City' exhibition Rogers will build and occupy an emergency relief shelter based on the Hexayurt Shelter System, an open hardware shelter technology design by Vinay Gupta. This Hexayurt design is integral to the Networked Domestic Disaster Response project for handling millions of domestic refugees in the event of a natural disaster, epidemic, industrial accident, WMD or other event using standard hardware materials found at the US hardware supply chain Home Depot. For this Australian field test of the Hexayurt Shelter System, materials sourced at Bunnings hardware supply chain will be appropriated. http://disastr.urbanaction.org

SquatSpace (Sydney)

SquatSpace are artists and activists engaged with the politics and pleasures of space in the city. From auspicious beginnings at the Broadway Squats in 2000 SquatSpace has evolved to be a «spaceless» organisation. The Broadway squats were the first squats in some time to be open about their autonomous occupation. Due to the criminal trespass laws that apply in Australia, squatters are usually quiet and unassuming and quickly evicted once discovered. At Broadway the squatters mobilised broad community support from homeless people and housing organisations, unions, and many members of the broader community. A free food dumpster cafe opened up in one of the squats and in another, an old locksmith shop, the squatters cleared it out and launched a dynamic art and event space in December 2000. The gallery played host to politi-

cal film screenings, free dinners, durational performances, experimental sound nights, site-specific installations. Less than a year later the squatters were evicted but SquatSpace continued to produce out of gallery events and projects. Ten years on, SquatSpace continues to produce work about local space, our place in it and the politics behind it.

Lee Stickells (Sydney)

Lee Stickells is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydney, where he directs the Master of Urban Design program. His research is characterised by an interest in relationships between architecture and the city. It particularly addresses shifting conceptions of architecture's urban role, meaning and affect, with a focus on the architectural construction of spaces for encounter. Lee's writing has appeared in anthologies including Beyond Utopia (Errant Bodies Press, 2011), Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society (Routledge, 2009) and Trash Culture: Objects and Obsolescence in Cultural Perspective (Peter Lang, 2010). His essays have appeared in journals such as *ARQ: Architectural Research Quarterly, Transition, Architecture Australia* and *Monument*. Lee is currently co-editor of *Architectural Theory Review*.

Joni Taylor (Sydney)

Joni Taylor is a researcher and curator with a focus on the urban environment. In her own work she aims to present radical ways of envisioning and responding to our landscapes. She worked in Berlin for five years as a journalist for publications including Landscape Architecture Australia, Artichoke, POLoxygen, Realtime, DAMN and Zoo Germany and has contributed book chapters on architecture, locative media and land art. In 2010 she curated the Urban Transformations roundtables at the Performance Space and the "Wildlife in the City" safari for the exhibition "In the Balance: Art for a Changing World" at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Other coordinating roles include the 2009 conference "Sculpture in Public (and Not so Public) Space" at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and co-directing the Electrofringe Media Arts festival in 2001 and 2002. She earned a degree in Art History and Theory from the College Of Fine Arts (UNSW) and is currently undertaking a Masters of Research on utopian city design at the same institution.

Temporary Services (Chicago)

Temporary Services is Brett Bloom, Salem Collo-Julin and Marc Fischer. They are based in Chicago and Copenhagen and have existed, with several changes in membership and structure, since 1998. They produce exhibitions, events, projects, and publications. They co-founded an experimental cultural center in Chicago (Mess Hall) in 2005. They expanded their practice in 2008 by creating a publishing imprint and webstore called Half Letter Press. This is the second time they have worked in Australia participating in the *There Goes The Neighborhood* exhibition that the group You Are Here organized in Sydney in 2009. For Temporary Services the distinction between art practice and other creative human endeavors is irrelevant. www.temporaryservices.org

Sophie Warren & Jonathan Mosely (Bristol)

Sophie Warren is an artist and Jonathan Mosley is an architect. They have a critical spatial practice that employs strategies of play, hybridisation and the construction of imaginary architectures to resist homogeneous perceptions of urban space. Their work has been exhibited internationally including the Showroom, London (2010) with *Rogue Game* an ongoing series of hybrid games in collaboration with Can Altay, Berlin 60th and 58th International Film Festivals (2010 and 2008), Sydney International Architecture Film Festival (2010), Crosstalk Video Festival, Budapest (2010), Smart Project Space, Amsterdam (2009), ITU Gallery, Istanbul (2008), Gymruy International Biennale, Armenia (2004), Centre of Contemporary Art, Glasgow (2003), The Armory Show, New York (2002), Frederike Taylor Gallery, New York (2001) and Gasworks, London (2000). Initiating transdisciplinary projects the practice is a site of exchange and ongoing collaboration with artists, writers and architects. A book of their recent project *Beyond Utopia* with contributions by Maria Fusco, Brandon LaBelle, Marie-Anne McQuay, Paul O'Neill, Elizabeth Price, Jane Rendell, Lee Stickells and Robin Wilson will be published in 2011 by Errant Bodies Press, Berlin / Los Angeles. Jonathan Mosley is senior lecturer at University of the West of England, Bristol, UK, where he leads the MA Architecture programme.

Tessa Zettel & Karl Khoe (Sydney)

Tessa Zettel & Karl Khoe (makeshift) collaborate together on a wide range of projects spanning sculpture and installation, drawing, printmaking, writing, performance and design. Their interdisciplinary works are characterised by mobility and making-do, often appearing as temporary, site-responsive interventions that activate public spaces and provoke new ways of interacting with urban and 'natural' environments. Both teach at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales and the University of Technology Sydney, write and curate exhibitions. In all their guises they are concerned with enabling sustainable futures through redirective practice and unpacking the various ways landscapes are contested and reshaped. Recipients in 2009/10 of a Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship and a JUMP mentorship with Fiona Hall, their latest undertakings include a mobile food cart/native beehive for *In the Balance: Art for a Changing World* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, an indoor market garden at 4A Centre for Contemporary Art (Make-do Garden City) and an experimental food preserving kitchen at Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (Making Time). They are currently Artists-in-Residence at the Cannery in Esperance, WA, as part of IASKA's SPACED program. www.makeshift.com.au

Acknowledgements

This book was published in tandem with an exhibition and symposium also called *The Right to the City*, at Tin Sheds Gallery, Sydney. For more information www.therighttothecity.com

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Thanks to: the artists in the exhibition, Anita Lever, Sandra di Palma, The Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation for providing accommodation for Marjetica Potrč, and all our generous volunteers.

Thanks to Joni Taylor for coordinating the DIY Urbanism project and for being such a sunny part of the *Right to the City* team. And thanks to Nic Papas for co-ordinating the volunteer team for the Edible Garden Project.

THE RIGHT TO THE CITY
EXHIBITION, PUBLICATION, SYMPOSIUM
TIN SHEDS GALLERY, APRIL 7 - 30 2011
Participating artists: Atelier d'architecture autogerée (Studio for Self-managed Architecture, Paris), Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro (Australia), Milkcrate Urbanism (Australia), D.V. Rogers (N.Z./Australia), Marjetica Potrč (Slovenia), Sophie Warren and Jonathon Mailey (UK), BaBaBa (international, Australia), Temporary Services (USA), SquatSpace (Australia) and Tessa Rapaport and Karl Legge (Australia).
Curated by Lee Stickells and Zanny Begg
Exhibition opens 6pm, April 7
and runs April 8-30
Keynote lecture: 6:30pm, April 8
Symposium: 10-6pm, April 9
Tin Sheds gallery
Faculty of Architecture Design and Planning
University of Sydney
148 City Road, Sydney
www.therighttothecity.com
ph: 9351 3115 e: contactrighttothecity@gmail.com
With thanks to the generous support from:
THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY
NSW Communities arts nsw
THE RIGHT TO THE CITY
We are called on to be the architects of the future, not its victims.
Richard Buckminster Fuller