

THE ADAPTABLE CITY 2

EUROPAN 13 THEME

- T1 - WELFARE STATE VERSUS SELF-ORGANIZATION**
- T2 - SEGREGATION VERSUS SHARING**
- T3 - OBJECT VERSUS PROJECT (PROCESS)**

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ADAPTABLE URBANISM - ALMERE OOSTERWOL - MVRDV (NL)



INTRODUCTION

THOMAS SIEVERTS, PRESIDENT EUROPEAN EUROPE

European needs to **adapt to the changing conditions in the production of urban and architectural environments and encourage new ways of designing and producing spaces.**

With the support of the Scientific Council, and on the basis of 42 contributions by experts from every European country on the possible theme for the 13th session, European is proposing to extend the theme of “the adaptable city” by taking account of three main changes in the conditions of production of European cities.

The first change is **less Welfare State and more self-organization.** One of the issues that professionals now face is that we cannot expect the Welfare State to continue in the same way as it has for the last 40 years. European is one of its “children”, making the public dynamic the main urban driving force, with a very dominant role for municipalities.

So although they are still our main partners, providing sites and content for the competition, we now need to look for a wider range of clients. Sites should no longer be sponsored entirely by municipalities, but perhaps in partnership with private entrepreneurs, with participatory groups wanting to build for themselves, perhaps with action groups employing new forms of activity in urban planning and architecture, to change and adapt the city.

The second change lies in the idea that we live in a paradoxical society which has more than it needs, sufficient material resources, but uses them very badly. Therefore, not only for ethical and moral reasons, but also for reasons of fairness, **society needs to move towards a culture of sharing**, because what we have needs to be better used in the future. The reasons are therefore economic, but at the same time, of course, we need to make our societies more cohesive, and sharing public space, for example, is a significant way of achieving this.

The third theme is about **the object versus the project (process).** In the future, in a sustainable, resilient city, **architects need to be more responsible in what they do**, they need to produce their projects over time and they need to become responsible for the “maintenance” of their projects, their adaptability to the needs of new users. This means that they are not just responsible for the object itself, but also for the process through which the project evolves, and the question of adaptation to uses will increasingly be the architect’s responsibility.

These three themes – self-organization, sharing and the project (process) – are the themes that European is proposing in this session as the **“problematic context” for the choice and content of the sites and as a basis of ideas for the competitors.** Through this broadening of the theme of the adaptable city, European is seeking to contribute to the incorporation of these changes into professional practices.

THE ADAPTABLE CITY 2

It is proposed for European 13 to continue with the generic theme of “**the adaptable city**”: adaption to the need for more sustainable development but adaption also to the context of an economic crisis that the majority of European cities are currently undergoing.

Three generic concepts structure this overall theme:

Resilience as a challenge: to be able to extend or find again the identity of the city’s structural elements (built or landscaped) in a context of significant changes.

Social adaptability as a goal: reconciling the coherence of these structures with the evolving uses and practices.

Economy as a method: managing urban transformations in different contexts of actors and means, yet with limited resources and in the era of the “post-oil city”

Taking these three themes into account induces changes in the urban and architectural order in the logics of actors (Welfare State Versus Self-Organization), in the contents (Segregation Versus Sharing) but also in the design processes (Object Versus Project (Process)) – see details hereafter.

European therefore wishes that the sites be confronted to the major challenges concerning the adaptability of European cities and also propose **concrete innovations in the order given by the site representatives, arousing new project approaches by young competitors.**



REVERSIBLE LANDSCAPE PUBLIC SPACES ON THE BANKS OF THE SEINE - PARIS (FR)

EUROPAN 13 Calendar

2014

January to September: preselection of the sites at the national levels

September: classification of sites through theme families and European Forum of Sites to study the shared issues

September to December: finalization of the site folders

2015

Early February: Launch of the competition

Late June: Deadline for entries

July to October: preselection of the preselected projects (20%)

Early November: Forum of the Cities and the Juries

November: Choice of the winning teams by the juries

Early December: results announcement

A PARTICIPATIVE URBAN PROJECT - HOMERUS QUARTER - MVRDV (NL)



T1 - WELFARE STATE VERSUS SELF-ORGANIZATION

The essence of the European city is a certain sense of the collective. A change is currently taking place from less “welfare state” to more “self-organization”. What will the new relation between the public and private domains be? Who will take care of the public domain if the state is less involved? And what does it mean for the practice as architects or urban planners?

a- A new public / private relation

If today the planners and architects cannot have complete control at the urban scale, they can promote and establish new levels of urban design. That includes and integrates participation of users and cooperative urban planning can become a methodology to create a new relationship between public and private. Instead of the traditional dichotomy, the goal is to underline and promote co-strategies: cooperation, collaboration, co-programming, co-conception... Small scales interventions, bottom-up initiatives, cooperative buildings, privately funded projects. It is a changing attitude in urban planning that becomes more open and perceptive.

b- Entrepreneurial task for young architects

Young professionals could see those changes as a chance to rethink their role. By involving new actors from the civil society (inhabitants, etc.) or some groups of action (farmer syndicates, cyclist association...) caring for some aspects of the public good, their task will be much more focused on the moderation of a team than on the service of an omnipotent client. The architect or urban planner have to develop a sense of enterprise: initiate projects in the field of housing development in cities or regenerate empty building based on collective initiatives. The architect has a pro-active role teaming up with economical actors to initiate the project together.

c- Hands on during the crisis!

Considering the city not as a passive victim of the crisis but as a productive field of activity can favour alternative types of urban development: a sort of “performative urban planning” as building temporary installations or setting up new socio-cultural programs in abandoned sites to revitalize the city. Architects and planners could propose a programme after the needs of the city or point out –by themselves– a strategic intervention, and then establish a financing plan through crowdfunding for example and develop a design that takes those conditions into account.

Consequences for European

These new logics of actors between private and public initiatives must be taken into account for the European 13 sites and the role given to the designers must be enlarged. This implies that:

- the sites, although linked to the public actors, can involve private partners of different types: owners, clients and users, who may be partners involved from the beginning of the competition and in the implementation processes afterwards.

- the sites must make recommendations on the other partners that the designers can or must integrate in their answers. This multi-disciplinary approach, joining different skills depending on the contexts is a key for the emergence of entrepreneurship design.

- but to achieve this goal, the sites proposed in a context of uncertainty about their future must also give some flexibility to designers to formulate strategic projects based on innovative logics of actors and realization processes.



E12 WINNER PROJECT - MARSEILLE, PLAN D'AOU (FR) - A NEW URBAN VILLAGE



T2 - SEGREGATION VERSUS SHARING

Sharing is an issue in the design and regeneration of an adaptable city: sharing of spaces, expertise, values, imaginary; not just an idealistic point of view but also a repositioning for a performative economy and society of another type.

Sharing at the urban scale can stimulate the “empowerment” of coexistences between different cultures: preserving the collective while inventing a more appropriate organization of the society. How could sharing be a way to develop cheaper and lighter solutions to build an ecological and sustainable city? How could it be a way to co-regenerate the inhabited environments?

The figures for sharing are an antidote against a strong tendency to individualism and against excessive division and artificiality. They are strong project tracks and a “capacity to do”. Could sharing help support change and foster “productive frictions” in respect of the other in other forms of activation of citizenship?

a- The figure of solidarity to increase active sharing

Installing solidarity amongst different kinds of people at the urban scale implies a dimension of culture. In other words, investing in active social engagement allows the creation of a “common” between an increasing diversity of the cities’ inhabitants.

Consequences for European

Each site brief could encourage the participants (cities, users, site developers and young designers) to visualize a fantasy of solidarity and active sharing beyond the mere representation of physical objects and linking the final result and the process of making.



E12 WINNER PROJECT - KØBENHAVN (DK) - OUR COURTYARD IN THE STREET

b-Sharing by increasing accessibility to urban amenities

Urban amenities and services generate a sense of sharing and belonging at the proximity scale of neighbourhoods. Still, the safety regulations and fragmented governance too often transform such infrastructures into isolated mono-functional enclaves.

Consequences for European

The sites must allow offering alternatives of uses and spatial connections to proximity. *Timesharing through reversibility or the evolution of uses increases accessibility and adds new urban roles to such services (schools, athletic facilities, shopping centres, public transport, roads, etc.)* The sites must allow increasing accessibility for alternate uses.

d- Sharing to reduce self-sufficiency

The crisis brings out the necessity to design and manage spaces with fewer resources. It helps break open the self-sufficient consumerist bubble and introduces a collective dimension in the urban everydayness.

Consequences for European

The sites can propose new programs that encourage such kind of sharing. For example, retired persons living alone and unable to pay for separate facilities may generate new residential developments with sharing services. Or car-sharing decreases car use in the city therefore increasing the possibilities of multi-use of liberated public space.

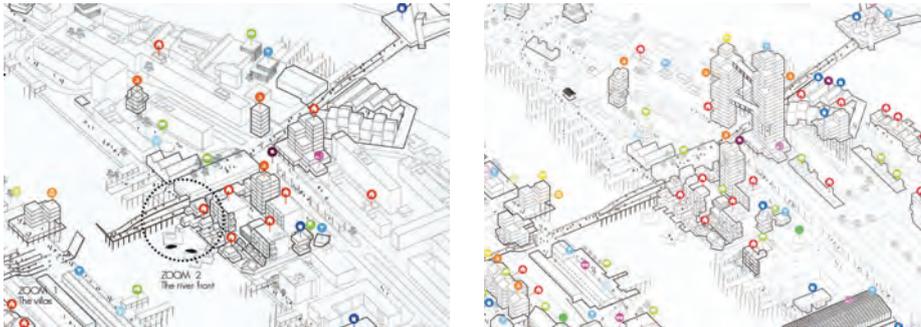
e- Sharing between humans and non-humans

The energy sufficiency and reversibility of human actions require rethinking new alliances between human and non-human actors: people, natural resources, animals, technology, etc. While creating a diversity of associations this sharing modifies the representation of actors in the making of the urban environment.

Consequences for European

The sites briefs must propose new representations of sharing in human and non-human actors spaces, of their conflicts or convergences and their priorities.

E12 RUNNER-UP PROJECT - ROUEN (FR) - ROUEN ON THE MOVE



T3 - OBJECT VERSUS PROJECT (PROCES)

With communication tools and social networks in the rising, our culture grows less object-based; and this phenomena affects architecture and urban planning.

Many young architects are emerging through the implementation of projects presenting less physical objects, yet where the scope of the projects is as important as the objects involved. The objects can already partly exist and the project is about managing the existing, dealing with social constructions, developing a context and raising the question of "urban planning with less or without growth".

a- Contexts and not only sites

The project can become one additional "layer" over a context, without a clear predefined outline for the intervention on the ground - a context that may also be social, cultural or economic and not only physical.

Consequences for European

The sites briefs must include maps of a context around questions of identity, proximity, production, social relations, generational conflicts... The questions must allow strategic projects, projects as a route map.

Some sites can be small as long as their mutation is strategic on a larger context. Some sites can encourage opportunities for upcycling: not just recycling but rather taking them as they are, as raw material to integrate in a higher cycle of production.

b- Programmatic innovation

An open question may lead to an unexpected answer. There may be room for programmatic innovation, even redefining the relationship between programme and physical support - both the question and the answer may only be about reprogramming the existing.

Consequences for European

New agents in the production and management of space –other than the classic trio of promoter-designer-user– may be called for, both in the questions and in the answers. A project may be based more on the actors sitting around the table, on social construction and not only physical construction.

c- New implementation process

Focusing on the project in its level of appropriation rather than on the object may imply redefining the implementation process.

Consequences for European

Some sites can need more incremental projects, projects to develop step by step, with different scopes in time from short to long term, redefinable projects, able to change direction depending on the results of the first steps. Allowing for multiple small interventions –spread over time or space– requires redefining procedures for a new kind of light urban planning.

E12 WINNER PROJECT - SACLAY (FR) - LIEU(X) DE NÉGOCIATION(S)



d- Innovative representation

How can we describe a social context or a question of identity? What can we give as information to stimulate the research of opportunity areas? And unusual shapes of representation may arise in this context because a classical render of the project may not be very adapted to describe this kind of projects/processes.

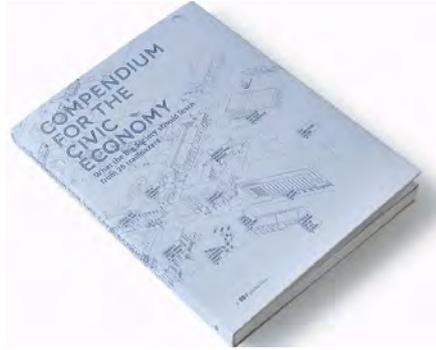
Consequences for European

The sites briefs must give information on innovative ways. But we can also ask for new graphic languages to be developed in the answers. It may not be easy and misinterpretation is possible... but a flashy rendering can also lead to a wrong impression!

T1 - WELFARE STATE VERSUS SELF-ORGANIZATION: POINTS OF VIEW

EXPERT 1 - DAVID SAXBY, 00:/ LONDON (UK)

DAVID SAXBY IS AN ARCHITECT AND LEADS THE 00:/ OFFICE PROJECT TEAMS, DESIGNING AND BUILDING SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS, INNOVATIVE WORKING SPACES, NEW EDUCATIONAL PLACES AND VERY LOW ENERGY HOUSING - WWW.ARCHITECTURE00.NET



INTRODUCTION

Kristiaan BORRET, Architect, Urban-Planner, Teacher (BE), European Scientific Council

The essence of the European city is a sense of “collectivity”, and, in Europe, we are used to the fact that the Welfare State takes care of public space, public communities, public housing. But now because of changing economic conditions, and dominant political ideologies, there is a shift from the Welfare State to self-organization.

So we need a new kind of urban planning, a new kind of architecture, that is active and performative, that is taking action in the real city life, driven by civic commitment, and where the architect acts as an entrepreneur.

Some examples can illustrate this new attitude. (1) The New York’s *High Line Park* was initiated not by the public government but by a group of private people. (2) In Berlin’s *Baugruppen*, the architect is also working as a real-estate developer, bringing the clients together with the future inhabitants, to buy the land and to finance the project. (3) The *Campo de Sebadá* in Madrid is an empty space in the middle of the city where a group of architects have started a kind of cultural program on the site, with festival, movies, and so on. And now it is gradually becoming a leverage for the empowerment of the local community over there, so the goal is social. (4) Rotterdam’s *Luchtsingel* is a pedestrian bridge next to the Central Station, never asked by the city government. It is an unsolicited project that the architects themselves started. They invented the idea and they designed the bridge, but also they invented the financing model with Crowdfunding and each citizen can buy one piece of wood for the construction of the bridge.

In all these examples, the goal is different: sometimes social, sometimes cultural, sometimes about finance or public infrastructure, but the spirit is the same: the spirit is entrepreneurship. So what we want to stress on is the role of the architect as a civic entrepreneur, taking part in the production of the city in real life.

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ARCHITECT

As a practice and on the basis of a manifesto project for European 6, we tried to define the meaning of entrepreneurship for architects: a call for action without a commission, on their own initiative, and in fact probably a conviction that at a given moment this would be part of a sustainable approach to architecture. Many of our projects began with this philosophy and not all of them were initially successful, but we were able to test a new approach.

Our analysis was about how to escape from a duality in the commission.

On one side, we had the Welfare State conceived as a body of centralised resources, distributed by a benevolent state through organised commissions, with information controlled by the government.

On the other, we had the private market economy, also centralised around entities with the economic resources, which invest for their own profit and also have strong control over information.

But beyond these two prescribing entities, we were interested in what we could actually see emerge in real life, what we call the *social economy*. Many things that went on did not fit in with these categories, were neither public, nor private, like new responses to adversity or reactions to a source of frustration and disenchantment.

There were new groups of protagonists initiating projects, who were often ordinary members of the community; their main feature was that they were in networks: social and professional networks, interconnected with resources, even latent resources, which nobody had identified yet and which these new actors began to use.

For example, there was an abandoned marketplace held as a sort of latent plot, with a value for future e-development simply by allowing a very well-connected group of young people to use it.

From here we developed the idea of a form of community participation that is more than consultation. It is not only about asking people what they can do, but also trying to involve them in the production and, in fact, as architects, we co-produce the environment with them.

One example is a community supermarket in which you pay a sort of subscription, in fact by giving a certain number of working hours in the week in return for a discount on your shopping.

Another example is a village that was isolated from the big transport networks. By chance, a couple of residents worked in the telecommunications industry and managed to supply high-speed Internet in this rural area.

THREE TYPES OF ECONOMY TO PRODUCE THE CITY

THE SOCIAL STATE	THE PRIVATE ECONOMY	THE SOCIAL ECONOMY
<p>AGENCY CENTRALISED AMONG OFFICIALS</p> <p>RESOURCES DISPENSED BY THE STATE</p> <p>LABOUR FORCE MARKETS</p> <p>PROPERTY OWNED BY STATE</p> <p>GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED INFORMATION</p>	<p>AGENCY CENTRALISED AMONG EXECUTIVES</p> <p>RESOURCES DISPENSED BY THE CORPORATES</p> <p>CAPITAL MARKETS</p> <p>PROPERTY OWNED BY CORPORATES</p> <p>CORPORATE-CONTROLLED INFORMATION</p>	<p>AGENCY DECENTRALISED AMONG CITIZENS</p> <p>RESOURCES DISPENSED BY CITIZENS</p> <p>MASS CIVIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP</p> <p>PROPERTY PROTECTED BY CREATIVE COMMONS</p> <p>OPEN INFORMATION</p>

Often, these projects were financed in a very hybrid way: by subsidies from foundations, by public loans, not only by a private client, but through a mix of participatory funding, if necessary European funding, and also including the commercial dimension. Often, it is about reusing what is already there: like the case of a church where a congregation of five people decided that they should do more to fulfil their mission, and it has now become a community centre simply by opening up spaces that can be used by other people.

The public sector would like to create “concrete” services and say: “We have created a civic space”. And developers are encouraged to create neighbourhoods that resemble a community. For our part, we have identified contexts to create alternative shared spaces. For example, the *Design Tactics* programme we created is now a worldwide network of 28 co-working and event spaces, 3 of them in London, which provide workspaces, meeting areas and centres for social action.

They are often open processes. There is no product, there is no endpoint, there is no: “We have spent money and it’s finished.”

These processes are about initiating an action, but also about its growth, in fact almost literally, like a town in northern England, where an enterprising and energetic lady simply decided that the town’s flower beds could be used to plant vegetables. Now all the town’s public green space is used for productive market gardening. It’s amazing! Someone said to this woman: “I’m in business in the town, and every time I ask the local authorities if I can do something, they say no.” And she said: “I’ll tell you what your problem is: you ask!” These new actors take the initiative, they are entrepreneurs. The only characteristics of these initiatives are openness, the need for transparency, the need for quality.

The question this raises is: “What is the role of the designer in these processes?” Are we responsible for action or are we simply the ones who provide the platform for action? For our part, we moved from designing façades to designing complex relational ecosystems. We



ENTREPRENEURSHIP BASED ON NEGOTIATION

still build buildings, but within the framework of these new ecosystems or platforms.

There is much to learn and it is a process that is difficult and still a bit messy. We have had a crisis in the world economy. In fact, this creates an opportunity. We have moved from stable conditions to new circumstances that actually generate more effective solutions for resolving

problems that nobody knows the answer to in a very open world. It is a place for experiment.

That being said, we now have a big office, we are consulted by many governments and in fact we tell them that they have to change the way they do things! We are really working on big challenges. We don’t know the answers. They are there and they involve changes that perhaps an organisation like Europan could help us clarify. However, the results are profound, long-lasting and significant.

How does this new approach affect the life of an architect? What kind of work does our office do? Well, part of it is linked with the housing crisis. The housing sector was managed by the State in the UK and has collapsed since the early 1990s. The big problem is what happened with the explosion of property prices.

So it is not a sustainable model, and what we need is new models. So in our office we analysed the housing market, we looked at its constraints, we did a survey on alternative

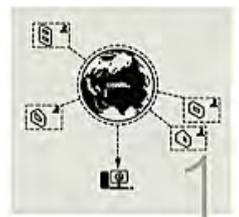
SELF-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM WIKIHOUSE



www.wikihouse.cc

WikiHouse is a mass-collaborative design project. Its aim is to make it possible for almost anyone, regardless of their formal skills, to freely download and build structures which are affordable and suited to their needs. There is no single design, or single designer. Houses and components are designed by an open community of designers and users for everyone's benefit.

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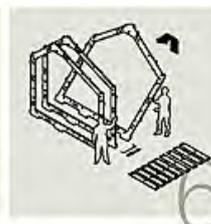
Download houses and components which are created and shared by an open community of users around the world. Individual components can be combined or adapted to form a structure which responds to an individual site or set of needs.



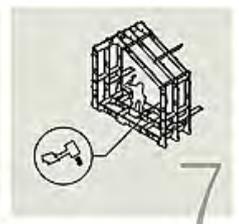
4 Set out the parts for each section onto the ground, assembling it like a jigsaw.



5 Wedge together the two layers to form a single section.



6 Stand the sections up vertically, positioning them approximately at 600mm intervals.



7 Fit the connector pieces into the slots in the section. These should be staggered

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ARCHITECT

solutions and we came up with proposals on self-build housing – not the every evening and weekend idea! – but more like the Baugruppen model, i.e. how to find a wide range of tactics to produce our own housing, coproducing our homes and neighbourhoods.

For this purpose, we developed the WikiHouse programme, a project we created for the Gwangju Design Biennial organised by Ai Weiwei on how big a community of designers could be and, we replied: “The whole world!” And what is the basic need? A roof. And that is how WikiHouse was created as a response: it is a system, an online platform, you can go onto it, download parts, edit them, print them with a CNC machine and build your own house like assembling an IKEA wardrobe.

We now have WikiHouses built in many different places. And in return, we get new solutions from self-build practitioners: appropriate high-performance building structures.

As architects, we obtained €5 M in both investment and public funds to stimulate local economies, in fact funding for start-ups.

The question is how and why do you need an architect to run this programme?

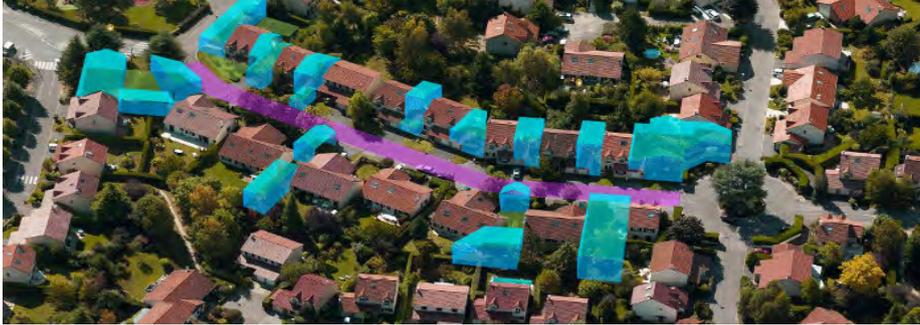
In fact, we have made a real undertaking to run this programme that exists through platforms that use Internet technology; the workspaces I mentioned are more than physical space, they are orchestrated communities and a funding network. There are now 30 spaces of this kind around the world and 28 more coming. It is a great system of civic infrastructure which, as architects, we created unsolicited, on our own initiative as an architectural practice and we began to undertake this campaign in 2011. And in the 2012 budget, the government set aside £50 M to implement it.

So it is a hub set up with public resources, but in reality it is a free and open access to public space to support the growth of enterprise. It is based on an open franchise that can be reproduced throughout the UK and even in Europe.

HUB - WORKING PLATFORMS PROGRAM



DENSIFICATION OF SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL TISSUE - BIMBY



URBAN DENSIFICATION AND SHORT NETWORK

In France, 97% of the land allocated each year to housing is occupied by detached houses, and it is mainly farmland.

Back in 2002, as a young architect, I wondered whether it was possible to build detached houses without consuming any more agricultural land. The simple answer is to use people's gardens. Often, as people age, they find their gardens too big to maintain and they could make a little money by selling some of their land. I therefore tested this approach in a town in Île-de-France, 40 km South-West of Paris, a place with a castle, an old centre...

On average, building a villa took 1,000 sqm of new land. This means that in the next 10 years, the fields would be replaced by houses and this would result in a "moth-eaten" landscape that nobody wants. However 80% of French people would like to live in a detached house and are not even that keen on strip housing. So I proposed this solution as a way of finding the space for 90 new houses without using farmland, just by "infilling".

In Île-de-France, with land pressure, the average value of a plot is €150,000. Residents can therefore see that it could be advantageous to sell part of their extensive plot at that price. The idea was that they could then build a bungalow at the bottom of their garden, perfect for retirement, and resell their existing house with a little land for €350,000. That would give them a profit of €200,000 without having to leave their home environment.

So people were fairly satisfied with our arguments, but the day after this presentation there was an article in the newspapers, and the residents filed a petition saying "not in our backyards"! They thought that the French style Welfare State was going to take part of their land to build social housing! So we realised that instead of thinking for people, designing their homes without asking their opinion, we could

turn the problem round and start by asking people what their plans were.

In France, we produce what are called planning documents, which establish rules that are used for subsequent building. And since we are very "sustainable development", we go from the global to the local and we do consultation. Which means consulting the residents and explaining them that there is too much CO₂ in the atmosphere, which is melting the ice caps, etc., which is caused in particular by too many cars, and so we are going to build an eco-neighbourhood behind you...

Learning from this first unsuccessful presentation, we tried the opposite approach. So we decided to invite all the people of the village to come and meet an architect free of charge for an hour, to describe any projects they imagined on their plot before making rules. So there was an interaction between architect and residents. It starts with incorporating a garage and in the process we show how to add an extension, for example: the street frontage. Then a further idea emerges of using the end of the plot for another small house, because that would provide additional income. And then we propose different constructions, at the bottom, in the middle of the plot... until the ideal solution is found. And then the residents are reassured and see the advantage of the approach.

Of course, there is still the question of how the housing problem will be solved with this individual participatory approach. However, if we take into account that in another town, with a population of 100,000, 25% of homeowners came to talk and 60% of them built one or two dwellings on their plot, we get growth over 10 years which, through proposals by residents, is enough to meet housing needs without threatening the residential qualities that local people enjoy.

So starting from a micro process used as a testing ground, we have been able to develop

a few macro processes in places like Rouen. The result of the masterplan, i.e. 10 years of territorial change, shows that the population is increasing in the city centre, whereas in the outskirts, in the first towns around Rouen, it is falling. However, these towns are where the employment dynamic is happening and where there has been investment to create tramways. And if the population is falling, it is because a dwelling that formerly housed 5 people now only houses 2. In towns with falling populations, 35% of homeowners are over 65 and own plots larger than 800 sqm. In the next 10 to 15 years we may assume that this 35% will evolve in one way or another, either because the homeowner wants to live in the sun, or because he or she would rather build a smaller, wooden house at the bottom of the garden. That makes a change of some 2% a year, precisely the desired rate of growth in towns of this kind.

In conclusion, therefore, it can be said that in France we build 220,000 detached houses a year, although there are already 19 million. It is therefore enough that one person in a hundred should decide each year to sell part of their garden to build a new house, to virtually meet the whole production requirement for detached houses in France. So the question is no longer whether people want densification, but whether we can resolve certain specific problems facing a certain number of residents by offering them the possibility of building a new house. And architects can play an important role in this bottom-up process.

EXPERT 1 - FRÉDÉRIC BONNET, OBRAS, PARIS (FR)

FREDERIC BONNET IS AN ARCHITECT AND CO-LEADS OBRAS ARCHITECTURAL OFFICE. FORMER WINNER OF EUROPLAN, HE REALIZES A LOT OF PUBLIC SPACE PROJECTS - WWW.PAYSAGES.NET

INTRODUCTION

Chris YOUNÈS, Philosopher, Professor (FR),
European Scientific Council

Is it appropriate, strategic, essential, in a context of metamorphosis in urban societies and adaptation to change, to put our bets on sharing? What does sharing mean? Why share at the scale of the city?

One first observation is that we are the heirs of a culture which, in the name of efficiency, has chosen to separate things, to isolate phenomena. So there is something of an urban disaster insofar as we now see that many ecosystems have been destroyed and that inequality and segregation are gaining ground.

The second observation is that, by practices that are initiated both institutionally and at citizen level, we are asking ourselves the question of what to do to live better, to organise ourselves and therefore to share, to use and hold things in common and finally to take advantage of new technical conditions – digital culture – but also the need to tackle financial difficulties and to take account of the new values of a whole generation that has different ways of living than those of the previous generation. So we need to find a new way of reconciling the art of living individually, even individualistically, but at the same time being able to share with others. It is therefore this dual wish to be of one's time, in a society in which individualisation has progressed over the millennia, but at the same time to have a culture of sharing.

The third observation is that this culture of sharing takes a very different form from what, in the 1960s, was the powerful utopian vision of building another world which would be fairer, more fraternal, in a certain way more loving. Today, we are looking at a new context of sharing which is both an economic priority, a quest to pool possibilities, when dealing with the crisis, but much more profoundly: it provides a glimpse of a new way of making society.

So the question we face is: does this culture of sharing reopen the path to another way of thinking about the future of urban societies?

THE SHARED CITY: A POST-HEDONISTIC AND SOLIDARITY CITY?

Today, as urbanists or architects, we need to ask ourselves the question: what is to be done in the context of a changing Europe, in a context of crisis where the wealth gap is widening, where large inequalities are developing between the North, the South, the East and the West of Europe. And what is happening at European level is also paradoxically happening at the level of regions, departments and cities. There are therefore regions that are very rich, metropolitan, completely integrated into a globalised system, and conversely regions that are in the depths of economic depression where it is not possible to think about projects in the same way as they can still be thought about in rich cities.

However, we need to stay optimistic and European can be a source of hope, because it helps us think about how to achieve a reconfiguration, how to bounce back on what we have in common beyond the very sharp differences that have appeared in recent years with the emergence of neighbourhoods where people live in great economic, social, linguistic and cultural poverty, have no right to speak, have no capacity to organise, to organise themselves, or simply to mobilise around questions of planning. Thankfully, the welfare state still often has the capacity to offset and rebalance this fundamental inequality in the world we

live in. So we need to situate our interventions within this context of social fragility, but with a vision of sharing.

These days, when we talk of urban projects, we still dream of projects where there would be enough money and energy for urban transformations to take place and that – even if they are originally private – they can be sufficiently controlled by public regulation rooted in humanistic principles that guarantee equality between citizens. Neither the private nor the spontaneous economy can be a vehicle for social balances; only a democratic system, an organised system of governance, can contribute to these balances.

The difference, in our circumstances today, is that the contribution of social initiative, the so-called bottom-up processes, is perhaps more intense than it was, because of the weakness of what has long been the driver of urban projects, in other words public action.

These initiatives reveal a real cultural richness, a real social richness, a real richness of knowledge, of narrative, of hybridisation, of physical experiences of places, of relations of collective construction, of different social experience. And it is precisely this richness that should be our starting point.

JORNET LLOP PASTOR ARCHITECTS - RAMBLAS OF LA MINA - PARTICIPATIVE PUBLIC SPACE IN A HOUSING ESTATE - BARCELONA (ES)



COLLECTIF ETC. PUBLIC SQUARE BUILT WITH THE INHABITANTS - SAINT-ÉTIENNE (FR)



The aim was to introduce a top-down “green mobility”, “sustainable development”, but on the assumption that they can only arise if the economic dynamic is the same as it was 10 years ago. Today, however, we can no longer think about these topics in the same way and we can only move things forward if we start with this richness of differences at local level. We therefore need to cultivate this richness of differences, of resources, of economic situations at the European level.

And so we also have to consider the relation to the economy, which is not just the land economy, but also local economies, which means working differently, looking differently at the way we make the city. It is no longer just a matter of taking into account only the intellectual and social skills of citizens, but also the technical skills, the productive skills, of the building sectors. These are questions which were not considered before when there were no economic problems, no problems of resources. Whereas when you start to have a problem of availability of resources, you have to ask yourself: “What resources are there on a given territory?”.

And when you are doing a project, before you even start drawing, you need to look at what companies there are in the region, try to put together consortiums of local firms in order to mobilise them around, for example, the development project, even in public contracts. You mobilise very concrete skills – industrial, craft, scientific, technical, etc. – around a project, not only for ecological reasons, to reduce the distances or the quantity of energy used, but also to reassert, in the transformation of public space, the value of the cultures and social narratives that can be represented, be staged, and in this way be part of the transformation of their own city.

Obviously, it is difficult to incorporate this local scale into an anonymous competition like European. We are obliged to trust the competitors, to allow them to develop this experimentation on the sites, on the ground, whether with economic actors or protagonists, to use the term coined by the urbanist David Mangin.

This requires a new attitude from designers. They need to develop a dialogue with local people, politicians, be ready to get down to earth and get involved. We certainly need to invent a way of doing things in order to link these protagonists. In any case, I believe that this is one of the responses to the current fragility of European urban quality.

There is another important theme to consider with respect to the shared city, which is the question of work. When I won European 3 in 1993 the topic was “At home in the city” and focused on the inhabitant and on a hedonistic city where work played a minor role. It was a city where people lived, went shopping, went to cafes, walked in the landscapes, relaxed, went out with the kids. It was the paradigm of the shared city.

However, a large proportion of the activity of city dwellers is focused on work. While urban officials, including designers, may do a job that they love, there are people who may only work 20 hours a week but are extremely unhappy, because their world has contracted around a job that no longer has any meaning. There is a massive deterioration in the relation to work for

the vast majority of our fellow citizens. The question of work is one of the foundations of urban quality which is at least as important as housing. And what is interesting in the current social economy is that we find a form of work that is not only for money, but also forms of personal productive commitment of different kinds and amongst all social categories. It is this unpaid production by citizens that changes the relation to work. We can return to these themes and reconsider the places of consumption, the places of economic production, workplaces, the places of social exchanges in all the diversity of the urban fabric, even in detached housing estates, which provide services that are not always institutionalised, globalised, but sometimes spontaneous, free, in the form of exchanges and in forms different from that of the dominant economy.

So urban conditions today are very fragile, but there is a lot of hope. For we can imagine that the European dream of a dynamic urban life, the humanistic dream, generous but founded on values that are now greatly weakened, can be enriched by these experiences by these differences.

COLLECTIF BASURAMA - THE INHABITANTS BUILD URBAN FURNITURE UNDER THE SAN CRISTOBAL ROAD - MADRID (ES)



THE SHARED CITY: A POST-HEDONISTIC AND SOLIDARITY CITY?

As a professional, I think that we cannot do urban projects, we cannot make the city without subscribing in some way to a sort of humanistic pact, without subscribing to a certain number of values which are those of sharing, democratic values, where we don't work just for the top 10% who can buy houses that are not affordable for more than 90% of the population. Doing urban planning is not about doing a good job in any situation, without critical thinking, and arranging the handful of luxurious neighbourhoods where resources are available to do things as well as possible. Urban planning is also about the commitment to asking questions about cinderella neighbourhoods, orphan areas where the economy doesn't work in at all the same way and where there is real despair, real difficulties, and where life is quite simply not possible.

It is therefore this gap between these two types of situation that we must not lose sight of in remodelling the way we do things, questioning ourselves, but always in a fruitful way, on our profession and our commitments. So we need to go back and take hold of the less favourable locations, which isn't easy, because they are not usually where commissions come from.

We need to help to redistribute the grey matter, which somehow today is essentially focused on rich neighbourhoods, or else if it is concentrated on a few disadvantaged areas, it is because there is public money seeking to adjust the balance, but we know that today this way of working is less and less common.

The second thing for architects to do is recapture the political question, to emphasise the political dimension of all decisions, to emphasise the power of politics, whether in the sense of socio-economic power, the citizen aspect that starts with initiative on the ground, but also politics itself, which is responsible for taking decisions for the public good.

KARO ARCHITECTS - THE INHABITANTS OF A POOR NEIGHBORHOOD IN A PARTICIPATIVE PROCESS, COLLECTING BOOKS FOR THE NEW LIBRARY - MAGDEBURG (DE)



The third challenge for our role as designers is to make the link between the question of the public interest and factors associated with self-organization.

The question of the city is the question of sharing: public space is space where everyone can go; and that is the definition of those spaces, squares, parks, promenades, that everyone can go there. And when there is consultation, everyone is interested and there are very intense debates. This means that people feel that they are joint owners of public space. And what matters is the connection between what is "the common good" and initiatives that are often on a community scale.

What constitutes European urban quality, what European countries have in common, is precisely this renewed relation between questions of community and the general interest that makes the city.

How does this citizen energy contribute to the building of a shared public space? It is a vital issue at a time when the European dream of urban quality is fragile: and what needs to be avoided is that many particularities, many demands should go much more in the direction of rejection than generosity in giving.



This means tackling a certain number of problems, including those in citizen initiatives, which can in fact appear extremely experimental, but which must avoid moving towards a certain rejection of others.

That is why it is important to say that things are going badly when they are and it is necessary to make a real diagnosis of the local resources in an open project, including the things that don't work and results in disconnection by local people, because often the political discourse does not do enough to confront these problems on the basis of an ideal of a shared city.

LUP - PARTICIPATIVE URBAN LABORATORY, SOCIAL SOLIDARITY PLACE, MULTICULTURAL SPACE - PARIS (FR)



T2 - SEGREGATION VERSUS SHARING : POINTS OF VIEW

EXPERT 2 - STEN GROMARK, ARCHITECT, GÖTEBORG (SE)

PROFESSOR CHALMERS SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

AN IDENTIFIED HABITAT



terest for this issue. But let us take the example of Cord Siegel and Pontus Åqvist's Urbana Villor project, in 2008, once again in Malmö. It was also a co-housing situation; but the project focuses on landscape with a number of villa plants on top of each other, extended to green gardens, a green loggia and green terraces, with a lift that goes from the bottom floor to the individual departments. There is a very high level of conviviality realized through the building, a sort of alternative to the single family housing structure, a condensation, a concentration of housing in the city.

Open architecture, malleability and full 100% adaptability are achieved in Pia Ilonen and Sami Wikström's Tila project (Talli Architecture & Design 2011). In this project the architects were confronted to a lot of difficulties as they wanted to give complete freedom on 10 times 10 meters and 5 meters height and say to people: "You can do whatever you want there" and then see what happened. And it perhaps promoted a feeling of conviviality between the inhabitants, who actually took part to this fantastic adventure to invent their own spatial reality for the future.

To react on the topic of alterability, there is a tower building –developed by students from the Chalmers School of Architecture– designed to be used for individual purposes; yet, they also wanted to show that it could be shared, so they imagined different floors that could be a sort of community of elderly people, of youngsters or of students that actually share the whole house on one level. So this is the way they perceive the situation, the potentiality to open all the doors and activate this progressive symbolic transgression.

SHARED HOUSING AND SPATIAL INNOVATION

The key notion here is the becoming of the residential identities. How can we, as architects, provide the occasion to create residential identities, just like the one where acrobats in Berlin can build themselves a home where they can train their own acrobatics? They invent a new way of life, just like in the project in München's Neubiberger Strasse (DE) by architects Ralph and Doris Thut. In this case it was about 4 or 5 families with two active architects designing, buying the plots, realising the building, getting the building material from some junkyards, and also providing for the culture of plants on the sides. In this case it is not only about the identity on the individual level, but also on the collective level.

We are currently seeing emerging new diversified ways of residing. It is a sort of new paradigm in which we would like to fight against a situation of isolation, of individualisation, and create integrative ways people or handicapped and non-handicapped people.

We are then confronted to the empowerment of those situations where it is necessary to invent specific procedures of projective participation and deliberation. Pierre Bourdieu formulated the notion of transgression as follows: "The symbolic transgression of a social frontier has a liberatory effect in its own right because it enacts the unthinkable." This relates very much to architecture and to the specific situation of the origins of the collective movement in Scandinavia.

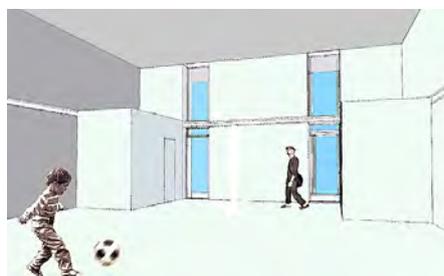
It began with the social democrats in Sweden in 1935, with architect Sven Markelius and social democrat Alva Myrdal. The movement had its origins in the history of social democracy and modernism in the Swedish situation. And this is one situation of the housing production that I regard as a situation of becoming, of inclusion and also of sharing.

This situation expanded and the co-housing movement was also considered in the development of architecture. Iwo Waldhör's Bo 100

project –developed in Malmö (SE) in 1991– is an extensive participation and demonstration of a diversity project. It was a fantastic situation for the inhabitants, spending 100-150 hours with the architects to design their flats; in this situation there was also a sort of emblematic demonstration of a new diversity that was suddenly possible to develop. This was also regarded in the international press as the best event in the history of Swedish modern architecture.

If we consider contemporary days it might be interesting to see if there is a new wave of in-

TILO PROJECT - TALLI ARCHITECTURE - A TOTAL FREEDOM TO PLAN - HELSINKI (FI)



EXPERT 1 - BERND VLAY, ARCHITECT, VIENNA (AT)

BERND VLAY IS AN ARCHITECT IN VIENNA, WHERE HE TEACHES AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EUROPEAN AUSTRIA

INTRODUCTION

Carlos ARROYO, Architect, Teacher (ES),
European Scientific Council

The world development is not at all related to building something new but development could in fact be related to something that already exists and to how to make it evolve on this basis. Constellations of architects are following this line and a significant number of citizens want to join in. The question is how to articulate the way for them to meet, and it is an interesting question for the European city representatives from the moment sites are chosen.

But what if instead of looking for sites we looked for contexts: specific situations without a clear outline on the ground, without a clear physical definition, but with social, cultural, economic or identity situations as well as physical conditions?

We would then have to ask ourselves how to describe these contexts. How do we describe an evolving situation in existing circumstances? What kind of documents do we prepare and also what kind of questions do we ask?

Small interventions can be strategic on a larger context. And the answers may be unsolicited architecture that also integrates opportunity for programmatic innovation. So thinking about the context is an opportunity for new programs to come to the surface and to be redefined or verbalised. New agents may also turn up, other than the classical trio of actors—client, designer and final users. As well as new implementation processes that may be incremental, spread over time or re-definable, so that something can be done first, then we see what happens and we react accordingly.

How will the competitors define these kind of re-definable projects? It is also a challenge in terms of representation and documents to produce. It is a challenge that you define in the context. And it is also a challenge to read the proposals. A new language may have to be created. Actually, in the past editions we have already seen examples of competitors trying to describe a process-based project with a new language.

WHEN SMALL PROJECTS HAVE BIG EFFECTS...



MIYATO-JIMA - RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS INVOLVING THE INHABITANTS - SANAA OFFICE (JP)

The MAK (Museum für angewandte Kunst, Museum of Applied Arts) in Wien organised in 2013 an exhibition named Eastern Promises – Contemporary Architecture and Spatial Practices in East Asia (China, Taiwan, South-Korea and Japan). It was a very successful exhibition on a new approach of architecture, a new deal between aesthetic and social uses. The attitude of new architecture offices can indeed also be used in Europe and concerns the European competitions as far as the choice of the sites and new questions to the competitors are concerned.

The most striking insight of Eastern Promises is that there is no dualism between aesthetic and social aspects. “The exhibition deals primarily with projects in which social agendas, ecological strategies and artistic practices are closely tight to architecture in aesthetic issues. We have tried to portrait a complex multi-layered landscape of actors who see architecture less as the production of iconic objects and spectacular forms, than far more as a catalyst for a structural reorientation of society in its spatial dimensions. In shorts, the social exists in as

much as the aesthetic exists. Either we have social aesthetics, or we have neither aesthetics, nor the social.” (Excerpt from the exhibition catalogue)

Some concepts of this new attitude of Eastern architects engaged in new social dynamics could also be interesting in Europe and integrated in European as new challenges.

ÆSTHETIC BUT ALSO SOCIAL

Architect Juniya Ishigami's Kait Workshop project is a very aesthetic yet also social university institution, a facility where students work in conjunction with the local community. The relation of space to its function is a loose relationship, it is not as much functional as it is a programmatic space, which reminds the uses of something that is out of the space functions themselves. This means that it brings in new qualities that go beyond the instrumental use of the space, and these qualities are very much related to nature, publicness and place. In general architects in Japan are engaged into aid programs of post-disaster conditions, like

IMPERIAL ROAD - AMATEUR ARCHITECTURE STUDIO - HANGZHOU (CN)



the Sanaa office project Miyato-Jima Reconstruction. The goal of this project is to create a space of negotiation where the people that lost their homes can understand the topography in which they are living. The model traces the tsunami-affected area with the disappeared buildings and the new buildings to come. This way the project involves the inhabitants in the reconstruction.

NEW FORMATS AND NEW ROLES

Architect Kengo Kuma considers that the role of the architect is “to serve as a bridge between design and the harsh reality. Unless we fulfil that role, the culture of space could end up becoming obsolete.”

In China for example the culture of private architectural offices is very new. City Switch 2013 is an office connecting 3 countries –China, Japan and Australia– and working in shrinking cities areas of a mid size, where the inhabitants are over-aged. The question in this context is: “what should they do if there is not growth yet a strong necessity to evolve is felt?” They create local projects like the Shinmon Visitor Centre, in which they work directly with the communities (they do not sit at their desks anymore) and organise a workshop with the inhabitants to develop a program on what to do.

RURAL VISITS

The Chinese Rural Urban Framework –or RUF– is a research and design collaborative intervening in areas that are left over by the process of urbanization, rural areas suffering from people leaving to go to the cities, situations of shrinking cities. RUF worked on the overall renovation of a village centre where only old people and very young kids remained and the middle generation left to work in the city and send money to the village. They reprogrammed the old school and built a new school as a new community centre: the new school is now a village centre that also inheres programs of assembly and general programs of the village; and it can also function as a festival place and as a landscape adapted to the openness of the rice fields.

PRIVATE/PUBLIC MICRO-ECONOMIES

In South Korea, the Heyri Art Village is a culture cluster that in itself creates a sort of new publicness by re-programming the type of single family home as a public building: every single family home there is a building with a public program. In European we also have projects dealing with the issue of reprogramming the small scale and addressing this privacy/publicness issue without a lot of things we can do for the collective space on the level of private initiatives.

INNER-URBAN INTERVENTIONS

The last example is about inner-urban interventions, just like the Imperial Road Hangzhou by Amateur Architecture Studio. Hangzhou is one of the seven ancient towns that are really important in China and this has been one of the first projects to deal with the old heritage of the city and has tried to integrate it into a new commercial environment that is a sort of shopping strip where the old buildings were somehow integrated and hybridized. Hybridized also programmatically because Amateur Architecture Studio integrated museums that are open 24h a day.

Integrating new attitude in design, creating a new direct connexion between social innovation and architecture in small site contexts but with a strong resonance at a larger scale – this can be a promise for European and could give European a chance to renew in the coming years.

SHARED KITCHEN, RESTAURANT, CULTURAL PLACE - RYO ABE - TESHIMA ISLAND (JP)



T3 - OBJECT VERSUS PROJECT (PROCESS): POINTS OF VIEW

EXPERT 2 - BELINDA TATO, ECOSISTEMA URBANO, MADRID (ES)

BELINDA TATO IS AN ARCHITECT AND TEACHER. SHE CO-LEADS THE ECOSISTEMA URBANO OFFICE, EXPLORING NEW LOGICS OF PARTICIPATIVE PROJECTS - WWW.ECOSISTEMAURBANO.COM

URBAN SOCIAL DESIGN

I studied during the 90's both in Madrid and in London and at that time all the emphasis and focus were on geometries, forms, shape and nobody in neither of these schools –that were very different in many ways– had ever mentioned the social aspect, the people, the last consumers or potential users. So when we started our practice we were very chocked to realise how ignorant we were with regards to this question. That is why in our office –Ecosistema urbano– we like to call ourselves urban social designers instead of urban designers because we try to incorporate the social dimension in our everyday practice. The three different elements we usually work with are: social, environment and technology. And depending on the nature of the project, they are combined in different ways. But all our projects have these dimensions.

The first statement of our work is that public space means public engagement and in order to be successful it has to be democratic and inclusive.

CLIMATIC COMFORT

In the suburbs of Madrid urbanism not is very interesting, repeating the same kind of blocks, ignoring completely the conditions of topography and orientation; moreover it is very little related to our Mediterranean lifestyle in which we spend a lot of time in public spaces. One of the projects we developed was located on a 400-meter-wide boulevard and the idea was not only to create a lively and quality public space but also to bring solutions for bioclimatic comfort. We proposed to plant many trees because they are really efficient and also purify the air.

The idea was to make the boulevard a bit more pedestrian-friendly. But we had to occupy the space during the growth of the trees, so we decided to create “built media-trees”, which can also play the role of urban climate regulator. We got the inspiration from this middle-East tradi-

tional architecture in which the air goes through a series of wet material, so it gets cooler creating a microclimate inside the building. We designed a structure on this principle, in which the air goes in a cooling tower and gets in contact with water atomisers, creating a microclimate at the ground level of the public space. We provided a helicoidal ramp to make it easily accessible.

People have appropriated it for many different purposes and thanks to this project and many other good architectural social housing around, it has become a kind of popular neighbourhood for inhabitants and architect groups from all over Europe!

ECOBOULEVARD IN THE SUBURBS OF MADRID (ES)



PUBLIC SPACE AND EDUCATION

We won a competition to provide a kind of new environmental museum for an existing building in the city of Madrid. The building is from 1850. And the competition was not only to provide it with the architectural skin but also with the program and the functions, i.e the management, the idea, the whole concept of it. The question we asked ourselves was: How can we make an environmental program that is appealing right now? The idea was to combine different potential users. So it wouldn't be only for tourism or scientist or school kids, but it would be a kind of combination. How can they find out the different information that they want and how can you make them be active in it?

PUBLIC SPACE AND PARTICIPATION

We developed an exhibition for Copenhagen's Louisiana Museum (DK) on the definition of cities and the way people can bring ideas to the cities to improve them. We have a very developed digital layer and we incorporate it in every project because it is a very strong and powerful tool to communicate and it enables us to work in many different ways.

PUBLIC SPACE AND PLACE MAKING

We realized a project in Norway called “Dreamhamar”. “Dream Your City” sounds interesting.



DREAMHAMAR (NO) - A PARTICIPATIVE PROGRAM TO INTENSIFY PUBLIC SPACES HAMAR (NO)

But what does it really mean? “Dream Your City” is an innovative way of transforming urban spaces by setting up conditions that stimulate a public debate and generate new ideas and by connecting local citizens to professional and academic networks worldwide. Is this just another utopian dream? Has anyone tried it yet? Yes! We recently used “Dream Your City” in Norway where we redesigned Hamar’s main town square. We launched “Dreamhamar” with four tools:

The PHYSICAL LAB, an onsite meeting place used for various events; its open-door policy made it a perfect spot to listen and be listened to;

URBAN ACTIONS, public events on the square during which citizens could experience and test ideas at real scale;

The ACADEMIC NETWORK, allowing over 1,500 students and faculty from various local schools and international institutions to become part of the design process;

The DIGITAL LAB, in order to connect Dreamhamar to the world, and where creative people from all over the world could propose their ideas and interact with others.

Outputs from all these spheres of activity helped shape the new urban design concept for the square. So why “Dream Your City”? It builds resilient and proactive communities and allows the creation of more inclusive and meaningful designs.

CONCLUSION

Pascal AMPHOUX, Architect, Professor (CH), European Scientific Council

Some themes seem very significant with regards to the experiences of the new project approaches that were presented.

- CONCEPTION OF A POTENTIAL SPACE

This is about how to reinvent the notion of program where one do not draw something that is frozen on a functional division; and even if the drawing is extremely precise, the program is left open and the question of the uses potential is raised by the æsthetical proposal.

- SHARED REPRESENTATIONS

We are witnessing a shift to the role of the architect as a mediator without denying the architect’s expertise; the focus is now on the issues of the sharing of representations. This is a way to invent different representation modes that are not only virtual, using digital tools, but also definitely physical, as the architects settle at one place –the project place or in the neighbourhood, in a school, etc.; they somehow call the close citizen in but also, potentially, the global citizen. The physical aspect is not opposed to the virtual one and after some fifteen years of banalisation of the digital tools we are now beginning to understand that we invent and set ourselves in hybrid situations where we are as much physical as we are virtual. Nowadays we –as architects– have the responsibility to invent physical spaces that allow us to accept this new relation to the world.

- LOWER ACTIONS / CAPITAL EFFECT

Some examples that we studied earlier presented a specific æsthetic that I would qualify as lower; interventions on small parts of the site have to set off chain reactions. We do not know what will happen, we invent the rules of the process at the same time it is happening and along its evolution. We can see small objects that are very precious, on which one could have a formalistic speech, but this is not the debate. This is misleading as we believe this is just a small æsthetical object while this lower object will have a capital effect on the whole process.

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This edition is published after the work on the theme and the European 13 lectures in Paris on November 8th, 2013

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Printing

Ministère de l'Écologie, du Développement durable et de l'Énergie (MEDDE)

Edited by

EUROPAN

La Grande Arche, Pilier Sud

92055 Paris La Défense Cedex

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