Urban Catalyst

THE POWER OF
TEMPORARY USE

DOM
publishers

Philipp Oswalt, Klaus Overmeyer, Philipp Misselwitz

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Urban planning and urban reality are generally poles apart. In the past twenty years, for example, this has become particularly noticeable in Berlin. While in the euphoria following the fall of the Berlin Wall the city's Senate assumed vigorous population growth and commissioned a profusion of master plans for large-scale renewal areas, only a small number of these plans could actually be implemented. After a brief construction boom in the first half of the '90s, most projects were put on hold, planning goals had to be drastically reduced, and vacancy rates of the existing fabric rose considerably. Even the widely discussed, official "Planwerk Innenstadt" ("Inner-city Plan") was only partially put into effect. In many respects, it remained pure planning. At the same time, the city developed to an extent seldom seen before. However, it did so without planning. What constituted the "New Berlin" [1] at that time took place outside urban planning.

A vibrant temporary use scene developed on much of the derelict land and in many of the spaces between buildings that remained in Berlin after 1990. There were numerous nomadic bars or clubs. Close friends and casual acquaintances improvised parties in vacant buildings or former industrial areas, primarily in the eastern part of the city. New forms of leisure-time culture developed, as did a variety of migrant economies. Rents were often insignificant. Berlin became an attractive place for the younger generation, as the city allowed for an improvised, inexpensive lifestyle. Word got around.

It was precisely that which was officially considered a flaw—high vacancy rates, derelict land, slow economic development—that became the city's most valuable resources. None of these attractive sites appeared on the city administration's radar. Rather, the issue of temporary use was a taboo. Representatives from the local authorities as well as the real estate industry considered temporary use "uncontrolled growth," which at best had to be kept at bay. The opinion was that informal use would only interfere with urban development. Interim users neither fit in with what the "Planwerk Innenstadt" proclaimed to be "Stone Berlin," nor with the visions of shopping and office districts in investors' brochures. Planning seemed increasingly to operate beyond reality. After the Internet bubble and the New Economy burst, it was only a question of time before Berlin's planning bubble would burst as well. It was in this context that the idea for Urban Catalyst developed in the late 1990s.[2]

As architects, we, the authors of this book, are dealing with a progressively schizophrenic situation: the disparity between the surplus of non-implemented plans on the one hand, and on the other the large proportion of open, incomplete spaces that serve as breeding grounds for a multitude of temporary uses. What interested

us was the contradiction between formal urban planning and informal urban use. After 1945, the bizarre political history had turned Berlin into a laboratory for urban derelict sites and temporary uses. Yet the current situation was revealing a trend that can be found in every other city to a lesser or greater extent. For us as architects and planners, this discovery led to posing the question of how the growing irrelevance of our own profession could be overcome. If temporary uses are an important factor for urban development, how can they be incorporated into planning and urban development? How can planning open itself up to the unplanned? And, conversely, can the unplanned be planned, the informal formalized?

In order to get to the bottom of this set of problems, Philipp Oswalt and Klaus Overmeyer developed a concept for the two-year research project "Urban Catalyst—Strategies for Temporary Uses," based at the Technical University of Berlin under the aegis of Kees Chistiaanse and funded by the European Union.[3] Philipp Misselwitz joined, as well as twelve partners from five research cities. After the research project was completed, Philipp Misselwitz, Philipp Oswalt, and Klaus Overmeyer founded the spin-off "Urban Catalyst" as a working group. The research approach was elaborated within the framework of new studies and interim use projects that had been implemented. The present book is an attempt to take stock of a nearly ten-year-long theoretical as well as practical examination of the issue of urban development through temporary use.

Our investigation of informal urban development takes up the traditional methods of works published in the 1960s and 1970s and which by means of an analysis and conceptualization of the real-life city served as a valuable impulse for a renewal of the urban planning debate. Whether *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs (1961), *Learning from Las Vegas* by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown (1972), *Collage City* by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter (1978), or, published that same year, *Delirious New York* by Rem Koolhaas, all of these very different studies are based on the examination of unplanned and unconscious processes, of aspects of urban development that were repressed, went unnoticed, or marginalized whose potential for future planning practices was opened up. The structures of the unplanned were developed and harnessed. Thus, the investigation of the real-life city also served as a critique of the prevailing orthodoxies of urban planners and architects.

The issue of informal urban development virtually came into vogue in recent urban planning discourse. Yet it only made reference to the rapidly growing metropolises in the Southern Hemisphere. This perspective overlooks not the quantitative

but the strategic relevance of the informal for the old industrial nations of the North. In view of advancing urbanization and the considerable number of existing buildings, unlike in the developing and threshold countries, advancing urbanization and the growing building stock in the North is not about the provision of new buildings for a quickly growing urban population but about creating new uses in the existing fabric. Urban planning has always moved in the field of tension between planned and unplanned development, with informal for the most part prevailing over formal processes.[4] It will consistently be necessary—precisely in the interest of planning—to call existing formalizations into question and subject them to an analysis of those processes that take place outside the established rules and structures. In view of this Sisyphean task, we will be bound time and again to dissolve existing formalizations and formalize informal practices and integrate them into established structures.

NOTHING NEW

Temporary uses are neither marginal nor novel manifestations. They have existed in the old industrial nations for a long time now. In their growth stage during the second half of the nineteenth century, shanty towns were widespread on the urban periphery. In the wake of the Great Depression, in the late 1920s and early 1930s squatter settlements and self-built structures flourished. After World War II, emergency housing and subsistence food cultivation were widespread in Europe's devastated cities. In the course of the 1970s and 1980s, politically motivated squatting occurred in numerous large European cities that engendered alternative lifestyles and housing models in protest against clean-sweep planning and speculative vacancy rates.

With the collapse of the socialist states and the end of the East–West confrontation in 1989, new streams of migration developed in Europe accompanied by informal trade. In lieu of planned economies, the small-scale capitalism of informal economies flourished in Eastern Europe. Yet what is decisive for the boom of temporary use in Europe over the past two decades is first and foremost the transition from Fordism to knowledge-based economies. It was not only the culture economy that gained in importance: the economy and urban structures were entirely transformed. What had previously been permanent unraveled. What had been life-long employment was replaced by a flexible, dynamic, and often precarious working world. Welfare-state security was relaxed and cut back. The relocation of industrial production to low-wage countries as well as the advancing rationalization of production led to the emergence of vast industrial wastelands in Europe, North America, and Japan. On the other hand, new working, consumer, and recreation programs were concentrated in

new exurban centers and sub-centers such as shopping malls, leisure parks, or office districts. This resulted in enormous vacancy rates in inner-city strip malls and office buildings. In many places, out-migration and falling birth rates led to population loss; residential buildings fell empty.

These empty spaces are often condemned to a waiting loop with no prospect of being made use of in the medium term. Hence, the transformation process leads to a spatial polarization: on the one hand, zones with high development pressure and a shortage of space are created at both a regional as well as a local level; on the other hand, areas of stagnation and shrinkage develop where there is a surplus of space. Decay and growth frequently occur hand in hand.

TEMPORAL INSTABILITY

Post-Fordism is characterized by a flexibilization and dynamization of social processes. This is also reflected in the use of space. Temporary uses are only one example of a broader tendency of particular interest to us that includes the "eventization" of urban spaces as well as the spatiotemporal dynamization of services. Where employees are often in transit or work at home, they no longer have a fixed workplace in an office but various working options in a differentiated environment such as hot-desking a lean office space. Permanent ownership is increasingly being replaced by sporadic access, as shown, for example, by the growing number of car sharing schemes.[5] These developments are being reinforced by opportunities for mobile communication and site-related information, by locative media and social networks.[6] The potentials of this augmented urbanism stimulate—and indeed generate—completely new urban practices, of which flash mobs and virtual urban games were only the first, early examples. Architecture is for the most part too sluggish for the innovations of the post-Fordian knowledge society, which has led to the emancipation of numerous new urban practices from building production.

FROM ISLAND URBANISM TO THE URBANITY OF IN-BETWEEN SPACES

These developments are accompanied by a changing planning culture. In the initial decades following World War II, urban planning policies were shaped by the ideas of classical modernism influenced by social democracy, above all in Western Europe. Integral and comprehensive urban planning was to ensure quality living conditions for the entire population. Yet by the 1970s, this model fell into a state of crisis and was replaced by the concept of the "corporate" city. The primary goal of planning was now the stimulation of private investment. However, a policy of this kind

only has its eye on the financially sound, solvent strata of the population. A typical example of this is public–private partnership, in which urban planning increasingly occurs on the part of the investor. In terms of land management, this concept manifests itself in a kind of island urbanism: sites that are relevant for investments are planned as projects, while the territory in between disappears from the public consciousness. Enclaves develop in which everything is planned down to the last detail—such as influencing buying patterns by means of color, music, and the design of floor surfaces. But the territory between the investors' islands is ignored. And along with that, the socially and financially weaker residents as well. What was once a continuum of urban space ultimately disintegrates into two areas with virtually opposing characters.

Yet it is precisely those areas neglected by the state, capital, and planning that often stand out due to their special urbanity. Because here, the city is designed and influenced by financially unsound players who are excluded from the projects supported by corporate urban policy. By exhausting non-monetary resources—such as derelict spaces, unofficial network and people power—these players succeed in inhabiting another form of city in zones that are temporarily unusable in traditional real-estate terms. Only here, beyond the controlled enclaves, can such temporary, informal, and innovative practices unfold.

THE NEW UNDERCLASSES AS THE AVANT-GARDE

The social background of many temporary users is prototypical for the changing social composition in what were once the industrial nations characterized by Fordism. Temporary users are the pioneers of different uses of space and increasingly unstable, deinstitutionalized ways of life. This development is reflected, for instance, in ever more rapidly changing employment relationships as well as in the abundance of the self-employed, of small-scale business enterprises, and of part-time employees. Alongside the obsolescence of the ideal of permanent employment, today's knowledge society demands additional qualifications. Networking culture and the development of a diversified knowledge environment are not only of growing importance for the individual, but for cities as well.

The departure from traditional working structures is reflected in the working biographies of today's temporary users. In many cases their activities alternate between project-related work, unpaid involvement, unemployment, or illicit, temporary, and part-time employment, while these different types of work are frequently combined. Depending on the perspective, these players are either members of the

new underclasses or of the avant-garde. Knowledge society's innovations tend to develop outside the classic economic apparatus and are frequently based on the principle of traveling light: free not only from the architecture of large businesses and institutions, but also from their inflexibility and from the obligation of large-scale investments. The heroes of our epoch are the garage do-it-yourselfers. With solid know-how, with ideas and their power of imagination yet with few means they succeed in developing the innovations of our new age. The lack of institutionalization or financial means is not an obstacle, but more a precondition for success.

CULTURES OF MIGRATION

The current practices of urban use are at the same time strongly influenced by migration and shifting sociocultural processes. Self-confident new players thrust themselves into the public space of traditional European cities and have a profound influence on conventional, everyday practices and established points of view. European metropolises are increasingly colorful and culturally diversified, and while the children of earlier immigrant worker generations are aspiring toward emancipation, many of the newcomers who joined the regional and international labor migration movements have also contributed to cultural diversification, in particular in the last two decades. The gradual opening of Eastern Europe, increased migration within Europe through the liberalization of the job markets, as well as the growing global networking of European cities fueling increased migration from countries outside of Europe explain this new reality. Informal markets and new forms of trade, imported from threshold countries, are progressively defining the everyday image of our cities. Immigrants have in many cases occupied niches that play a subordinate role for established social classes. The acceptance of lower standards opens up new scope for immigrants, which they skillfully exploit for the development of their own networks and economic cycles. In metropolises such as London or Paris, parallel, largely informal economies developed long ago that ensure the livelihood of many newcomers as well as many refugees, asylum seekers, and illegal immigrants without financial resources.

FROM ENCLAVES TO MAGNETS

Middle-class bohemians and destitute newcomers frequently meld into temporary use environments. Unlike the sub-cultures and protest movements in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, whose attempts to implement an alternative or counterculture also made them interim users and squatters, today's temporary users are generally skeptical

about all too high political demands. Their actions are less oriented toward a utopia of liberated society and more toward personal visions, be it entrepreneurial self-fulfillment or a specific cultural project.

Temporary uses also distinguish themselves spatially from the sub-cultures mentioned above in the sense that these tended to form enclaves of a collective shaped by political leanings, whereas contemporary informal urban users operate almost diametrically. Instead of creating self-contained areas, they create public places as magnets that, if they are successful, function as urban hot spots. The basic principle is not exclusion, but creating attractors, even if these places target a very specific public. In terms of politics and culture, today's temporary uses are marked by a great deal of permissivity, if not promiscuity. The importance of the spaces and platforms that develop is for the most part attributable to their public character, which plays a considerable role with regard to life in the respective city and thus for its identity and image. These places act as breeding grounds for innovations, and even as trendsetters for the mainstream.

"CREATIVE CITY": A MISUNDERSTANDING

While temporary uses continued to be almost a non-issue in the public debate into the late 1990s subsequently the situation has radically changed. On the one hand, a large number of architects, planners, and urbanists entered the debate, which rapidly became more dynamic and led to new research, new publications, and new projects.[7] On the other hand, many municipalities have opened themselves up to the issue, to the extent that temporary uses have almost become an integral part of official urban planning jargon. However, many of the urbanist and urban policy debates are marked by fundamental misunderstandings and instrumentalizations that should be judged critically, as city administrations and landowners often attempt to strengthen their own interests by way of temporary uses.

While cities still liked to adorn their advertising brochures with classic investor projects until well into the 1990s, today one finds attractive illustrated descriptions of a "creative micro-milieu of temporary users," small businesses, and start-ups from the area of the so-called creative economy. In the meantime, even small and medium-sized cities chant the mantra of the "creative class," which has become the primary beacon of hope for investments and economic growth. But does the concept of the "creative city"[8] really lead to a new municipal policy that is not only more positive toward temporary uses and takes advantage of them for the purpose of site marketing but also actively supports them? In most cases, talk about the "creative city" is hardly more than an

urban marketing slogan that has no impact whatsoever on established political practice.

Subsuming temporary uses under the term "creative economy" also means that—as far as something is really undertaken—only the entrepreneurial temporary users are acknowledged and assisted. But efficiency is not the goal of all interim users. They operate to a substantial extent in the gray zone of the non-profit sector, experiment irrespective of economic gain, cooperate with voluntary initiatives, and make a considerable contribution to the social equilibrium and the social stabilization of neighborhoods. Yet it is precisely in cases of a temporary use oriented toward the common welfare or culture that the florid words are often followed by little action that could lead to the improvement of the conditions for the development of that specific activity. While the urban marketing rhetoric is being updated, urban policy adheres virtually unchanged to its traditional methods, player networks, and policy concepts.

FROM PARTICIPATION TO DO-IT-YOURSELF

With the island urbanism of postmodernism, not only were extensive areas of the city marginalized, so also was that share of the residents that does not develop any market power, thus does not participate in shaping the city through its purchasing power or investment of its own. An effort has been made since the late 1970s to involve urban dwellers in urban planning by way of participation. However, this process often led to unsatisfactory results on both sides. While planners and investors for the most part view participatory planning as a bureaucratic complication of their work, the participating residents and their representatives experience a frustrating powerlessness, because while they have a say in things, they are not allowed to make their own decisions or map things out. Temporary uses solve the stakeholders' dilemma in a different way. A do-it-yourself takes the place of what is often only the formal participation of marginalized players. The most important condition for this is that space as a resource is available at a reasonable cost or even at no charge. Individual initiative, sociocultural capital, and the principle of minimum intervention take the place of financial means.

THE BUILDING AS THE STARTING POINT—SPHERES OF ACTIVITY OF A NEW URBAN VISION

Until now, urban development was primarily understood as an act of colonization—initially about the designation and development of land for building, and then erecting new buildings. However, since the old industrial nations have, as it were,

become completely urbanized and their populations are stagnating or even shrinking, the idea of colonization has lost its justification. In the post-colonial age, so to speak, it is more about addressing what has already been built and how it accumulated over a long period of time. In this process, the view is reversed: the built environment is no longer the goal, but the starting point. A different perception of the existing city is associated with this change. And new perspectives on development open up from this perception.

The present book is devoted to the city's open spaces, all of those areas whose future is vague for a definite or indefinite period of time; which find themselves in a state of no longer or not yet. The book still attempts to pay tribute to the acute need for a better understanding of structures, activities, and demands in this diffuse zone. It formulates models of action for dealing with the open city.

NOTES

1 See the cover story, "New Berlin," of the news magazine *Der Spiegel,* no. 36 (1999).

2 The idea for the project Urban Catalyst developed out of the study *Berlin Stadt ohne Form: Strategien einer anderen Architektur* by Philipp Oswalt with the collaboration of Anthony Fontenot (Munich: Prestel, 2000). The book examines Berlin's automatic urbanism and treats the temporary as one of a total of nine themes.

3 The research project Urban Catalyst was stimulated and led by Philipp Oswalt and Klaus Overmeyer. It was funded by the European Commission, Key Action 4 "City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage" within the Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development Program as part of the European Union's 5th Framework Program (2001–2003). The project was coordinated by the Technical University of Berlin and participated in by eleven partners from Berlin, Helsinki, Amsterdam, Vienna, and Naples. Further information at www.urbancatalyst.net.

4 See Michelle Provoost, ed., *New Towns for the 21st Century: The Planned vs. the Unplanned City* (Amsterdam: Sun, 2010).

5 See Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age of Access: How the Shift from Ownership to Access Is Transforming Modern Life* (London: Tarcher, 2000).

6 See the Web site www.themobilecity.nl.

7 See, for example, the Web sites www.zwischennutzung.ch, www.zone-imaginaire.ch, and www.zwischennutzungsagentur.de.

8 Charles Landry's book *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* (London: Earthscan, 2000) took up the discussion of the concept of "creative industries" introduced in the mid-1990s. This was the first publication to formulate the urban-policy model of the "creative city." More influential, however, was Richard Florida's book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

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WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

With temporary uses more and more often playing a strategic role in urban development, the question arises what city planning can learn from them. How can the potential of unanticipated developments and the energy of spontaneous uses be incorporated into planning processes? Can temporary users do more than serve as stopgaps until the return of economic demand? How can their potential be harnessed for long-term developments? Are alternative models conceivable for a brand of urban development that does not dictate or define but rather enables?

With the subject of temporary use, fundamental parameters of classical urban development are called into question. Traditionally, planning begins by formulating an end result and then proceeds to consider how that result can be achieved. With temporary use, this relationship is reversed: one begins by asking how a dynamic can be engendered, without defining an ideal final state. In this scenario, planning is restricted to a time-limited intervention that does not seek to dictate the total development. Such a minimalist approach to planning acquires strategic significance particularly in phases of transition: through targeted interventions, it is possible to instigate, accelerate, or facilitate the transition from one state to another. For long periods of time, no planning intervention whatsoever is undertaken. Development is largely left to pursue its own trajectory.

In this way, planning acquires the character of "enabling," a notion first introduced in the 1960s by the British architect Cedric Price.[1] According to Price, the primary aim of planning is not to specify an ideal state but to open up new possibilities for the participants. In the context of temporary use, this amounts to a kind of "weak planning," in which resources and energies are activated by the removal of development obstacles and inhibitions, by de- and reformalization, and by the reinterpretation and conversion of existing structures. With this approach, a minimum of effort achieves maximum effect.

This entails a shift in the role of the planner. The heroic and visionary designer is replaced by an agent working on others' behalf. He or she is not a "decider" but rather an enabler who brings the various actors together. The users themselves become producers of space. The planner's role is that of a strategist, agent, or curator. He or she mediates among the disparate worlds of the users, owners, and governmental bodies. With the abandonment of the grand final plan, the instruments of planning change as well. Instead of a situation dominated by an architectural and city-planning design whose realization requires that all other actions be subordinated to it, there are multiple different actions that take place in parallel. In addition to spatial and constructional interventions, which continue to be important, these actions primarily consist of economic, legal, communicative, and organizational measures. They may include payment guarantees, loans, and rental agreements, as well as press campaigns and the formation of interest groups or round tables. The change in the nature of the instruments reflects the change in the content of planning. For rather than the question of built form, the dominating issue is that of the program.

OPEN SOURCE CITY PLANNING

When applied to city planning, the idea of enabling may be compared to the open source principle. On analogy with the open source principle in software programming, whose recipe for success is "open source = many ideas," urban development can also benefit

from this fundamental idea by involving a broad range of social initiatives in the genesis of the city, by allowing citizens, not just to inspect plans, but to design the urban landscape themselves.

But what is the difference between open source city planning and classical planning models? There are three key aspects.

1. Planning Becomes Dynamic

Unlike traditional master planning, dynamic planning only defines rough objectives at the outset; this is done on the basis of possible use programs, built and unbuilt spaces, and webs of spatial relations and densities. The "source code" of the existing structures of a disused site represents the principal foundation for open source urbanism; the latter's goal is to define as little as possible and as much as necessary.

The principle of dynamic development turns classical planning mechanisms upside down. Instead of first achieving an accumulation of building volumes and then renting space to users, open source urbanism seeks to bring about a gradually increasing concentration of activities, programs, and networks, which little by little begin to express themselves in constructional terms as well.

In the first phase, the emphasis is on the informal activation of the area— securing usable constructional resources, stimulating public awareness, and cultivating temporary uses. Directly interacting with spaces produces an idea of a site's potential, above all a notion of how it might be used. The result is an initial activation without a large investment of capital. The period that separates the existing state of the site from its desired condition (the realization of the planning goal) is more effectively utilized; valuable stimuli are provided for long-term development. If the process of informal revitalization is successful, the site comes back into use. A specific public identity comes into being. What were originally temporary users may even become renters or owners later on.

Examples of this approach are the planning of the Revaler Viereck (a former railroad repair works in Berlin), the NT area in Basel, and the KDAG factory grounds in Vienna, where many of the preexisting buildings were preserved. All of these projects began with small-scale measures that might be compared to "acupuncture treatments," in which access points were created, infrastructure was reactivated, buildings were converted, and surfaces were modified. In this way, the planning effort supported a lively appropriation of the area even before the construction of any new buildings, and that process of appropriation has gone on to serve as an important catalyst for all subsequent development.

Thus, in open source city planning, the planning of buildings and open space is less important at the beginning of a project than it is in its later stages, once clear uses have developed and can be planned for with the long term in mind. As the process goes forward, the plan is checked against reality and continuously adapted.

2. Shared Control

To play, as it were, with a site's possibilities in the opening phase of a project by exploring a variety of uses without any prior investment in construction—this is a method that involves surrendering a fair amount of the control, design, and utilization of the site to its

active users. However, this supposed loss of "supreme planning authority" can lead to the minimization of risk and to a win-win situation for all involved. In difficult economic and city planning situations, new developments can be sparked when owners, municipalities, and active citizens overcome existing barriers and release synergies. Precisely what role the principle of shared control actually plays in particular open source planning projects depends on the ownership structure and the constellations of actors. The prospects for user participation are more favorable when the public sector leases an area to a group for a low price, or when the chances for successfully marketing a site are so poor that the owner is happy to have users of any kind and is more than willing to hand it over to these particular users for a period of time.

An innovative example is the borough of Amsterdam Noord. Here the city held a competition for the temporary use of a shipyard hall and, in this way, incorporated local initiatives into the urban development process. In the best-case scenario, the users themselves become owners—for example, thanks to temporary financing provided by sympathizers or foundations—and can freely decide what to do with the site. In the case of projects with private owners, the likelihood that the development process will be left entirely in the users' hands is slim. In practice, where a site is privately owned, the creation of "open source islands" is a more realistic prospect. Either the owner allows a limited period of time for broad involvement by multiple users, or else he or she limits the open source approach to a portion of the overall area in hopes that the rest of the site will benefit from it as well. Here too there are positive real-world examples: with the help of its municipal Broedplaatsfonds (or "breeding ground fund"), the city of Amsterdam creates financial incentives for private project developers who are willing to enter into an organic development process involving temporary uses.

3. Sampling

In open source processes, site designs and use concepts do not come about as the result of architectural competitions and approval planning efforts. Instead, they come about as the result of action. The existing planning instruments, however, are not intended to facilitate the direct appropriation of space but are focused instead on the establishment of permanent structures. They must therefore be supplemented by new management tools that, on the one hand, make it easier to work with unfinished states and transitory situations and, on the other, lower the entry bar for active involvement on the part of a broad range of participants. In the same way that sampling is used in music to create carpets of sound with distinctive sonic patterns, city planning seeks to expand the latitude for action, to integrate short- and long-term action, and to devise planning strategies that combine hard and soft tools. Calls for ideas that invite applications for pioneering uses, the cultural activation of public sites, the manipulation of access points, the recoding of preexisting structures, and the creation of networks of actors supplement the provision of infrastructure and the design of public spaces, that is, construction activity.

THE ENABLING STATE

For several decades now, the notion of the social welfare state has increasingly been replaced by that of the economically oriented "lean" state. The resulting increase in social problems is supposed to be addressed by the concept of the "activating state" (to use the new buzzword). The state spurs civil society to assume social welfare tasks itself. Thus, this notion implies the existence of a passive population that must be activated by the state. Despite this note of paternalism, however, the state is also determined to carry out former social welfare tasks in a cost-effective manner.

By contrast, the notion of the "enabling state" is based on the initiative of the citizens themselves. It sees the potential for significant social impulses precisely in the actors' ability to organize without external control. From this perspective, it is the task of the state to support actors who are innovative but lack sufficient capital, to stand by them as cooperation partners and allies in cases where their activity has positive consequences for development and social cohesion. This concept counteracts the antisocial consequences of neoliberal conceptions of policymaking and politics—as expressed in such slogans as "strengthen the strong"—without, however, falling back into the paternalistic mold of the classical welfare state. In terms of open source urban planning, this means enabling financially weak actors to actively design the city.

This approach is expressly not a matter of multimillion-euro support programs but rather of making intelligent use of governmental authority and available resources as well as activating untapped potentials. The reformulation of legal regulations (planning law, property law, neighborhood law) can make it easier to find innovative solutions and reduce the hurdles faced by weaker actors. Accelerated permitting procedures for temporary uses, the possibility of short-term licenses, and reduced legal standards for plans involving minimal construction can make it considerably easier to activate disused urban areas. Another approach that has great potential is the reform of property law. Thus, in the Netherlands, property owners' rights are restricted in order to make buildings that stand empty for a long time available to the public. In return, the owner's liability or level of property taxes can be reduced, something that is already being done in Leipzig, for example, through the use of license agreements. The situation is even simpler when the government makes state-owned buildings available. In this case, short-term, purely fiscal calculations must give way to long-term cost-benefit analyses that take the entire society into account.

The state can also play an important role as mediator between the various private actors. By providing a payment guarantee for the initial phase of the project, the borough of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg actually made it possible for temporary use of the Revaler Viereck railroad area to proceed. For in this way the borough created the conditions in which the private owner was willing to offer a rental agreement to the temporary users. As a mediating agent, the state helps to eliminate obstacles and inhibitions and brings together space providers and interested users into temporary use pools.

PARADOXES OF MANAGEMENT

As enablers and supporters of informal uses, municipalities frequently find themselves faced with a twofold dilemma: the existing management and planning instruments are designed to maximize control and definition, while the fostering of user-oriented projects calls for openness, autonomous momentum, and the surrender of control. City governments are often afraid of this contradiction and refuse to even consider taking on the role of enabler.

An additional paradox is that attempts both to integrate financially weak actors by organizing programs to eliminate vacancy and to encourage business creation or neighborhood initiatives sometimes have the opposite effect, especially in inner-city areas. New identities and scenes attract additional investment; established firms and solvent renters materialize. The primary beneficiaries of rising rents and real estate prices are property owners and investors. The original initiators of the transformation, however—provided they have not become owners themselves—are excluded from the value creation chain. Certainly the upgrading of urban neighborhoods leads to an improvement of living conditions for their residents. When it is the users themselves, however, who have driven the development in question by their own efforts, it may reasonably be asked to what extent they themselves benefit from the "upgrade," be it through secure lease agreements, options to buy, or financial compensation.

The paradoxes of management cannot be resolved. Their contradictions, however, make it necessary for urban developers—a group that includes private actors and users in addition to cities and towns—to grapple more intensively with the intersection of informal activation and formal planning, control and autonomous momentum, profit and non-profit, professional design and design through use.

STRATEGIES FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TEMPORARY USE

It goes without saying that these principles do not pretend to be a magic remedy for unmarketable disused sites and the absence of investment. They do, however, open up new avenues toward an alternative form of urban development. The focus of this approach is the designing of space by users with little capital who become active in their own right. The open source method offers them the opportunity to be more than mere temporary stopgaps. On the contrary, they are given the opportunity to become serious partners and catalysts of a use- and process-oriented form of urban development. The latter should not be restricted to strategies of recycling like beach cafés and pony rides. Its goal must be to synchronize the stages of formal planning (competition, outline plan, development plan) with the phases of informal activation (establishment and cultivation of temporary uses). In the best-case scenario, the formal planning process is so open that, as in the case of the Revaler Viereck, the informal development of uses becomes part of the forward projection and realization of the plan. Thus, actor- and program-focused conceptions of development do not by any means exclude traditional city planning. But it is an outrage when city planning excludes actors.

The six strategies presented below are all based on different intentions and constellations of actors. Each model influences and modifies the character of temporary uses in its

own particular way. Whereas the strategy of "enabling" is the one that most fully accommodates the unpredictable character of possible uses and is wedded to the perspective of the users, in the case of the strategy of "exploitation" priority is given to the interests of the owner or municipality, to which the range of possible uses is subordinated. Each of these models is incomplete, since each one only corresponds to a limited stage of development, so that in the course of a project multiple strategies may be employed. Strategies like "enabling" and "initiating" stand at the beginning of temporary uses, while interventions that employ the strategy of "formalization" cannot take place until much later on.

This overview of strategies is based on the study and conceptualization of a practice—still quite young—in which architects, planners, agents, owners, investors, municipalities, and users incorporate the practice of temporary uses, which has always existed, into classical forms of city planning and real estate development. It was only once the shortcomings, indeed the crisis of the model of the "entrepreneurial city," which was introduced in the 1970s, had been recognized that the subject of temporary use began to spark interest beyond the subcultures. With the growing importance of the "cultural industries" on the one hand and the critical shrinking of so many locations on the other, efforts to incorporate temporary uses into urban development will increase.

When informal uses are combined with classical planning, both are transformed; something different from both of them arises. This fusion initially has a paradoxical character, for in many respects it attempts to combine what are actually polar opposites: one term is based on small, short-term steps without a long-term goal, the other on a grand final vision. One of them essentially operates from the bottom up, the other from the top down. One of them attempts to enable development without capital, while the purpose of the other is in most cases capital growth. The new hybrid of open source urbanism will not be able to preserve the authentic anarchistic character of informal uses; nor will it be able to achieve the security, stability, and singleness of purpose associated with classical planning. Nor will it exhibit the "one true face" of an alternative city planning. Instead, it will give rise to a variety of hybrids: short-term and long-lasting ones, goal-oriented and open-ended ones, spatially compact and fragmented ones. There is one thing, however, that all the heterogeneous forms of open source urbanism have in common: they all incorporate spaces, actors, and developments into the process of city planning that classical city planning has long since ceased to reach.

NOTES

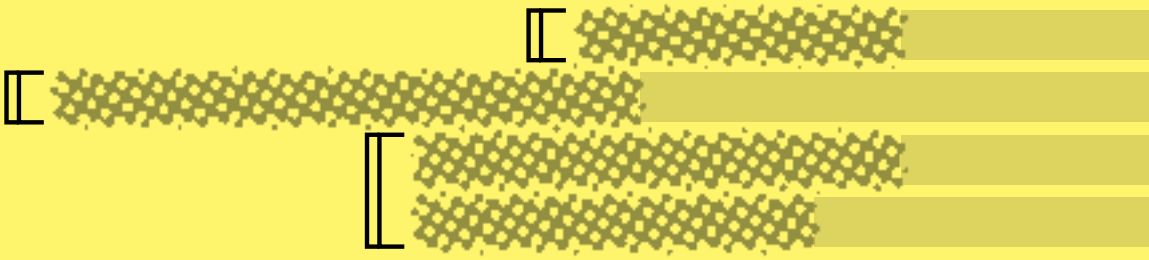
1 Royston Landau, "A Philosophy of Enabling: The Work of Cedric Price," in: Cedric Price, *Works II* (London: Architectural Association, 1984), 9ff. See also "Das Ungewisse, Die Freude am Unbekannten, Philipp Oswalt im Gespräch mit Cedric Price," *Arch Plus,* No. 109/110 (1991): 51ff.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

ENABLE

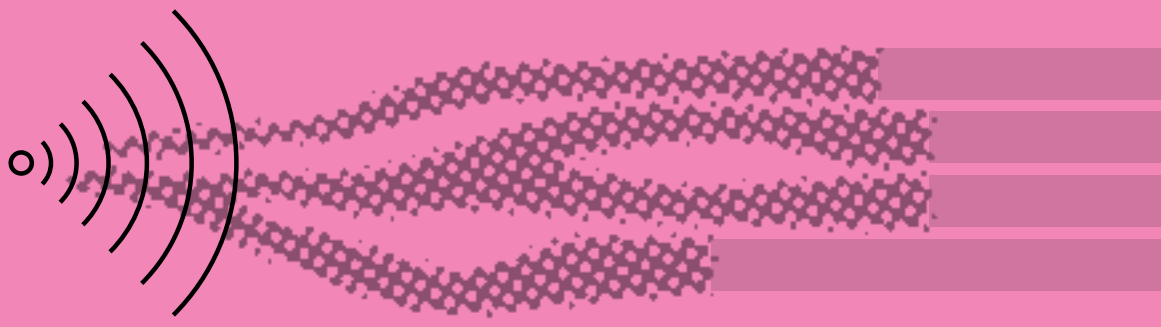
The inhibition thresholds for temporary uses are broken down: possibilities for using derelict spaces are pointed out and publicized, access to these spaces is made easier, communication between property owners and potential users is improved, and legal problems are solved. The initiative for all this is taken by the city, property owner, or agent, whose goal is to revive a sizeable urban area with many little-used properties and make it dynamic. Programmatically unspecific, the intervention is open to the as yet unknown ideas of prospective users.

A typical example of this strategy is the placement agency: as an intermediary between property owners and users, it generally has access to a pool of available properties. In addition to direct mediation it also takes care of legal issues such as liability, designing the contract (license agreement), and obtaining a permit. This function is usually assumed by the city—or sometimes a nonprofit association—which is able to assist with the process in important ways, whether by cosigning leases, providing municipal liability insurance, or radically simplifying the process of obtaining permits and communicating with the authorities through the creation of one-stop offices.



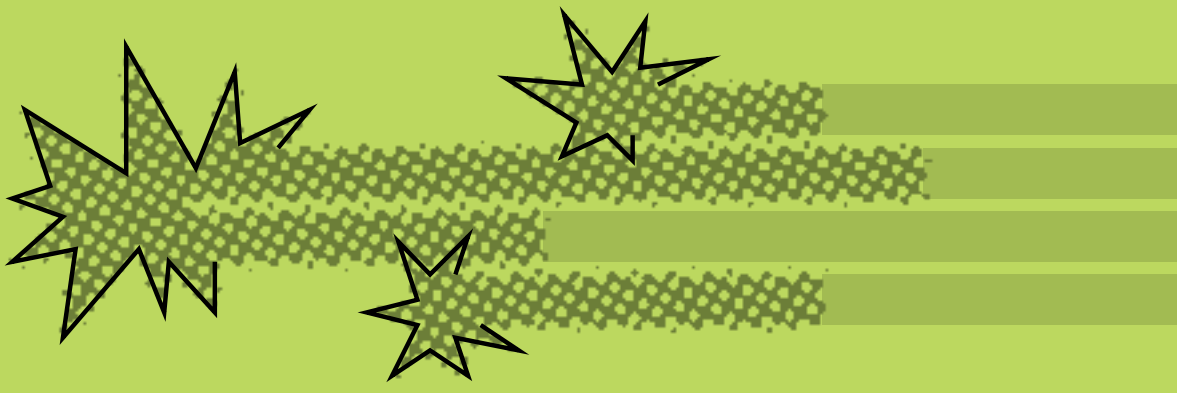
INITIATE

Agents initiate a cluster of temporary uses for a sizeable unused area—an agreement with the property owner and the resolution of legal questions creates a foundation for users. The starting point is sizeable derelict inner-city sites for which there are no commercial development opportunities in the short or medium term and that are also too big for individual temporary users. Planners, associations, or alternative real estate developers act as agents to develop a short- to midterm strategy for the location and interact with the property owner and licensing authorities to negotiate a concept with possibilities for the activities of a wide variety of users. Within this framework, there then arises a cluster of extremely diverse activities, whose profile and programmatic orientation bear the stamp of the self-conception of the initiators, their networks and motivations.



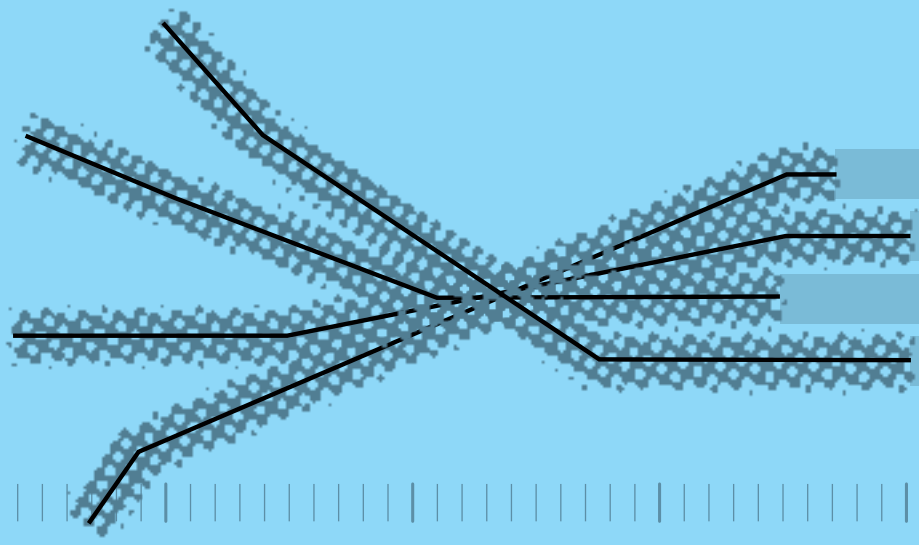
CLAIM

Users fight for contested spaces and spaces for contested activities. Their efforts are based on a programmatic idea that generally stands in conflict with the objectives of the property owner and city planning authorities. The intention is to create new public spaces that generate new cultural and social impulses and are protected from commercial development, a social platform in which many different groups participate, some of which are marginalized in the formal city. Central to success is a public debate, which the initiators generate by means of actions in the public space and reporting in the media. The illustration of alternative use scenarios and their potential also arouses the interest of the public.



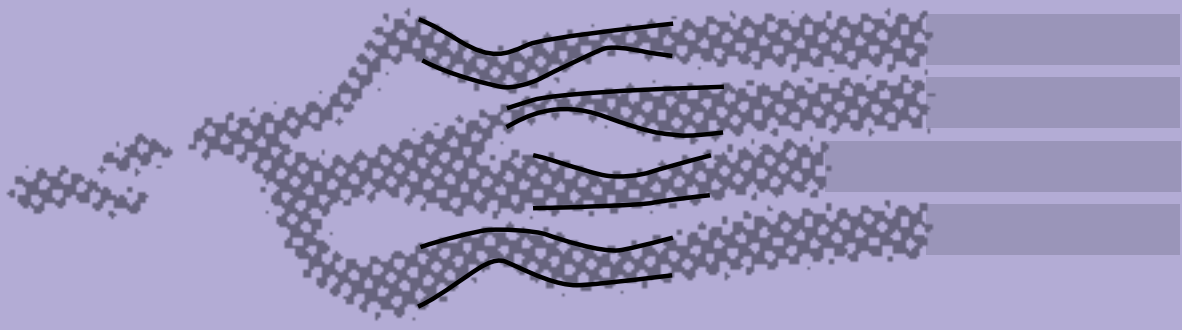
COACH

Users and interested parties are given support and linked together into a network. This leads to the creation of joint platforms, which increase the network's public presence and lend its members greater weight for carrying out their objectives. Support of this kind may be self-organized (as in the case of the Clubkommission, or Club Commission, in Berlin), or it may be provided by sympathizing agents (as with Stalker: Ararat, Rome) or by the government (as in the case of neighborhood management). Whereas self-organization, stabilization, and further development promote uses that originated on their own, government intervention within the framework of a crisis management effort often seeks to eliminate local deficits by stimulating civil society activities. When taken to an extreme, this leads to the simulation of use and urban life—autonomous and independent activities are replaced by the artificially generated and short-lived animation of areas.



FORMALIZE

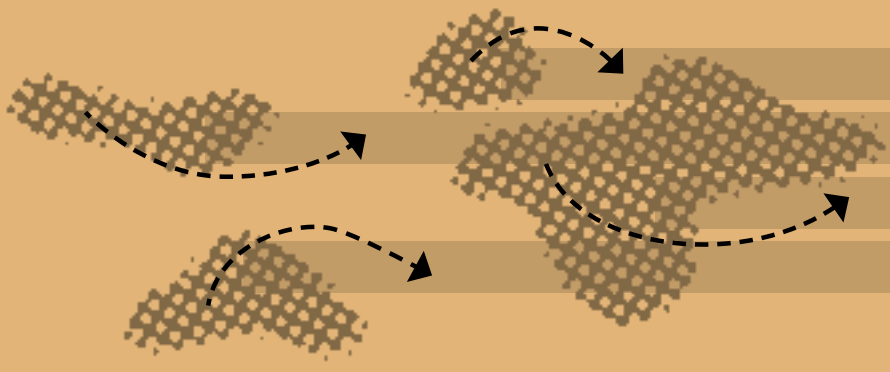
Successful temporary uses have generated a critical mass, and there is now a desire to use their potential for the long term. Improvised, informal solutions give way to lasting structures such as open-ended leases and permits, consolidated legal structures, and professionalized management. The goals of such consolidation and perpetuation vary depending on the actors involved. Solid business models are developed in the service of an economic interest (as in the case of Arena in Berlin), associations work to enhance their neighborhoods (RAW-Tempel e.V., Berlin), and cultural politicians champion new programs (Tempodrom, Berlin). When a use becomes formalized, its profile changes, and these transformations sometimes fail, as shown by the example of the Tempodrom in Berlin. The impetus for formalization may come from external pressure and the endangerment of the use, for example by the threat of eviction; or it may be based on a potential for development, for example long-term rental income or an option to purchase the building.



EXPLOIT

Temporary uses are employed by third parties as a way of pursuing interests of their own. Property owners initiate temporary uses in order to win public awareness for their sites and build up use milieus that attract commercial users. In doing so, they benefit from the fact that today's temporary users organize important programs for the life of the city and are able to attract a great deal of attention with their public events, whether in art, culture, entertainment, recreation, or other areas. In this way, the temporary users also generate the cultural milieus that are so important in today's knowledge society and whose proximity is increasingly being sought by commercial developers. Through targeted interventions such as selecting the users or defining framework conditions, the property owners are able to influence the profile of the temporary use in accordance with their plans. Despite such exploitation, collaborations like these can be beneficial for both sides. Such models also receive support from town planning authorities, which see them as a way to promote a vital mixture of uses and urban diversity in the city's neighborhoods.

By contrast, when fashion labels adopt temporary use models as a way of marketing their products and brands, the result is a one-sided exploitation with no productive spin-offs. Whether it be Adidas, Nike, or Comme des Garçons, the imitation of subcultural activities attracts young target groups and helps lend the brand in question a hip profile.



A decade after the beginning of our involvement with temporary and pioneer uses, they have now become a permanent part of current discourses on urban development and urban planning. The practice of maintaining scope for experimental uses as a necessary resource of urban development has not only asserted itself in regions affected by economic crises or outmigration, but also in cities experiencing heightened pressure to develop.

HafenCity Hamburg, for example, currently one of the largest urban planning projects in Europe, recently updated its master plan. The eastern section, which was previously scheduled for development, will for the time being be left open in order to gain space and time for an open-source process involving temporary uses. It is suspected that behind this decision there is an instrumentalization of temporary uses in order to better market property, yet at the same time it is associated with a noticeable paradigm change in the development of the flagship neighborhood that is due, to a great extent, to ramifications of the worldwide economic crisis.

The collapse of the financial markets at the European level, triggered by the real estate crisis in the United States, has been directly reflected in a building freeze, the pull-out of investors, and the abandonment of real estate projects, as well as in vacancies, above all in retail and commercial properties. To date, this has resulted in only very few new options for temporary uses, as many investors are attempting to "wait out" the vacancies in anticipation of a renewed upturn. The fact that temporary uses are in many cases used to bridge a gap in a crisis-ridden real estate economy is not new. However, it is interesting to note that for those places affected by the crisis, the overlap of two completely opposing systems—a delocalized financial market that has lost control and a network of locally rooted temporary uses—presents itself as nothing less than a challenge to realign previous policy.

With the collapse of real estate financing, the crisis of the financial market exposed the dysfunctionality of a purely monetarily controlled urban development system. It was the tentative climax of an entrepreneurial urban policy that had been propagated for more than twenty years and which was increasingly geared toward the interests of financial investors and their thinking in terms of benchmarks and returns on

investment. With the uncoupling of owners and property, this system turned away from real urban uses. In fact, investors are largely unaware of the specific projects in which they have invested their money. A maximum abstraction from property occurs due to the diverse forms of pyramiding and repackaging of financial products. The system is no longer able to trace the real values that stand behind the property titles. This is not only a problem for risk assessment and the well-founded evaluation of property titles; it also reduces property to purely quantitative fiscal dimensions. Any other dimensions of property—be they, for example, social obligations, local commitments, or environmental awareness—are completely blocked out.

Traders take advantage of quick transactions to gain a maximum of capital out of short-term value fluctuations. The system works as long as buyers can be found to speculate on further increases in value. However, if demand collapses, as it has during the economic crisis, asset value is no longer accompanied by equivalent value, and the interim purchaser is left with his piece of property. Because few owners are willing to ease the development rights and enhance the asset value of the property, a large number of properties and pockets of land become derelict.

In many places there is talk about recovery after the crisis and a revival of the markets. Yet there continues to be a deep mistrust toward an abstract financial and real estate market, to whose rules urban neighborhoods are subject. With the growing awareness of the fact that one's own way of life is directly connected with the production of one's living environment, people are taking the initiative to again exercise immediate influence on the design and use of their environment. Temporary uses are not a cure-all, but they are evidence of this change in thinking and lead the way toward an organic urban development.

PRACTICE URBAN DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT CAPITAL

Temporary use allows groups of the population with insufficient capital to actively design the city. At the same time, other territories are introduced into the urban design. The increasing capitalization and commercialization of society are countered with the valorization of non-monetary resources.

USE AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The transformation of what already exists is the key to the urban development of tomorrow. It is about how what is given can be perceived, used, changed, or removed. Existing structures, structural atmospheres, and structural environments are valuable resources, and it is essential that they be integrated into development concepts.

APPRECIATE THE INCOMPLETE

Vibrant cities do not originate in test tubes but develop over time. The focus is not on urban design, but urban use. The incomplete, the dissimilar, the transitory, the temporary become part of the cityscape. They harbor the chance for fields of tension of a more hybrid and multifaceted city.

ENABLE GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT

Temporary uses can constitute an important impetus for a new form of processual urban development concerned with the recoding and reprogramming of existing space. The present book presents examples for intelligent growth in which urban development is not viewed as an urbanistically structured accumulation of building mass, but as a successive condensation of activities, programs, and networks that also structurally manifest themselves in phases.

PROMOTE COPRODUCTION, SHARE VALUES

Temporary users are spatial entrepreneurs. They develop their projects in a trial-and-error process irrespective of market and location analyses. What is done is what the location yields and whose use stands the test. Unlike spatial consumers, who use the objects executed by architects and planners, spatial producers build their city according to their own ideas. Coproduction means winning over temporary users as partners in development. This involves both participation in responsibility as well as in economic success.

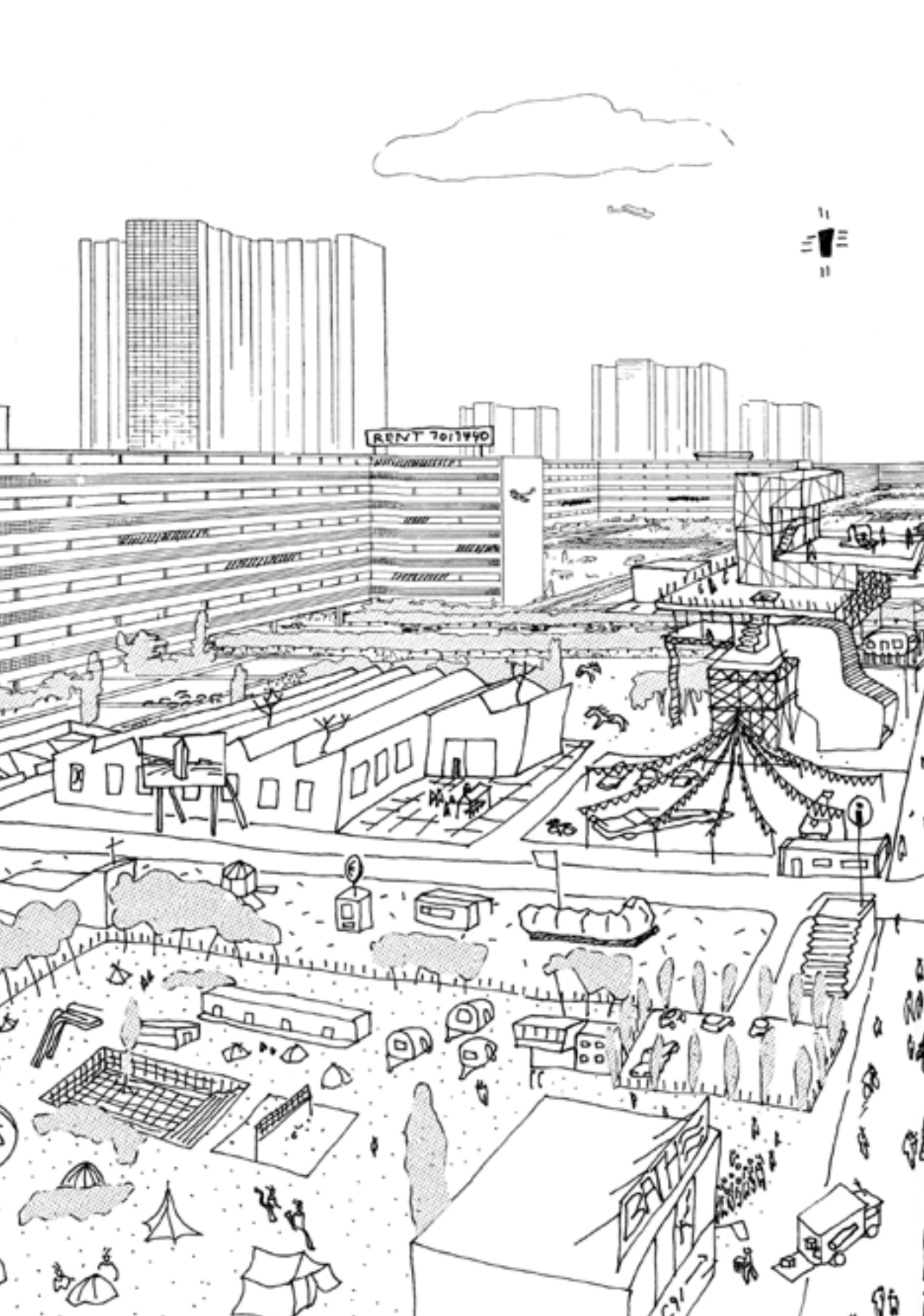
COMBINE TOP-DOWN WITH BOTTOM-UP METHODS

Temporary use does not exclude long-term planning. Direct space appropriation and the built vision are still frequently perceived and treated as two mutually exclusive extremes. But a city that would like to constantly reinvent and rejuvenate itself needs both: on the one side, open spaces for unanticipated uses from "below," and, on the other side, spatial-programmatic specifications and designs from "above." Development concepts that dovetail with both have to be augmented by new instruments alongside classic planning tools.

The issue of temporary use transcends itself. It is the antithesis of the monetary urban developed outlined above. To put it hyperbolically: the urban production of financial markets is exclusively based on the organization of money flows that are completely uncoupled from issues concerning the use of urban space. Conversely, temporary use

is urban development without financial means that is solely based on the use of urban space. It can be understood as a particularly striking example, the prototype of a new urban practice conceptualized in more universal terms.

Urban Catalyst is therefore an appeal to again make the use of the city as the gateway to urban development—in contrast to the paternalistic practices of the classic welfare state and the neoliberal concept of the entrepreneurial city.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LA VILLE CONTEMPORAINE ?
Los Topos

Urban Catalyst was initiated as a research project (2001–2003) by Philipp Oswalt and Klaus Overmeyer. After finishing the research project Philipp Oswalt, Klaus Overmeyer and Philipp Misselwitz founded the interdisciplinary platform for research, design, public intervention, conferences, exhibitions and publications of the same name. Urban Catalyst aims to support the public discourse about contemporary urban issues and to develop new concepts and models of action for urban development.

This publication is based on the result of the research project as well as a series of further projects, publications and exhibitions by Urban Catalyst.

EU research project Urban Catalyst (2001–2003) —Strategies for Temporary Uses

Twelve partners in five urban metropolis coordinated by the Technical University Berlin studied temporary uses in local test areas and developed tools that enable their potential to be harnessed be used for urban developments.

Idea and concept

Philipp Oswalt und Klaus Overmeyer

Direction and coordination

Philipp Oswalt, Klaus Overmeyer and Philipp Misselwitz with Ali Saad, Thomas Hauck, Melanie Humann, Jurij von Ortenberg as well as Penny Herscovitch, Tashy Endres, Christian Mika

Project director

Kees Christiaanse, TU Berlin, since 2004 ETH Zürich

Coordination EU

European Commission DG XII-D.1.4./ Vincent Favrel

Partners

Helsinki University of Technology – Christer Bengs, Helka-Liisa Hentilä, Timo Kopomaa, Kaisa Schmidt-Thome, Helsinki

Gallotta + Tischer - Marcella Gallotta, Stefan Tischer, Naples

CPA Città Paesaggio Archeologia - Francesco Escalona, Claudio Finaldi-Russo, Fabrizia Ippolito, Pepe Maisto with Maria Ceretta, Franco Lancio, Neapel

Florian Haydn Architekt – Florian Haydn, Robert Temel, Mirko Pogoreutz, Vienna

Magistrat Wien, Magistratsabteilung 18 – Brigitte Jilka, Ina Homeier, Jutta Kleedorfer, Micheal Mellauner

Nyenrode Business Universiteit – Annemieke Roobeek, Erik Mandresloot, Damian van der Bijl, Amsterdam

Stadsdeel Amsterdam Noord – Ted Zwietering, Rob Vooren, Con Vleugel

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Deadline – Britta Juergens, Matthew Griffin, Berlin/ London

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For further information about Urban Catalyst see:

www.urbancatalyst.net

As a part or result of the research project, the following further **publications** have been produced:

Bündnis für den Palast/ ZwischenPalastNutzung e.V./ Urban Catalyst, eds., *Zwischennutzung des Palast der Republik, Bilanz einer Transformation* 2003 ff, Berlin, 2005

Florian Haydn, Robert Temel, eds., *Temporäre Räume/ Temporary Spaces* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006)

Panu Lehtovouri, Helka-Liisa Hentilä, Christer Bengs, eds., *Tilapäiset Käytöt. Kaupunkisuunnittelun unohdettu voimavara/ Temporary Uses. The Forgotten Resource of Urban Planning* (Helsinki: Espoo, 2003)

Magistrat Wien, Magistratsabteilung 18, *Urban Catalyst, Werkstattbericht Nr. 60* (Vienna: Magistrat Wien, 2003)

Philipp Misselwitz, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Philipp Oswalt, eds., *Fun Palace 200X. Der Berliner Schlossplatz. Abriss, Neubau oder grüne Wiese?* (Berlin: Martin Schmitz Verlag, 2005)

Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung Berlin, ed., *Urban Pioneers* (Berlin: Jovis 2007)

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Editors and Concept

Philipp Oswalt, Klaus Overmeyer, Philipp Misselwitz

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Editorial Team

Philipp Oswalt, Klaus Overmeyer, Philipp Misselwitz with Nina Brodowski, Lisa Buttenberg, Christiane Kania, Melanie Klofat

Copy Editing

Nina Brodowski, Nicole Minten, Rudolf Stegers, Ruth Ur

Translation / from German into English

James Gussen, Antje Pehnt, Rebecca van Dyck

Proofreading

Mariangela Palazzi-Williams

Graphic Design

Tom Unverzagt

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In many cities, urban wastelands and vacant structures suddenly metamorphose in exuberant places. After city planners and the real estate market have failed in their initial attempts to develop them, these sites become the setting for clubs and bars, start-up firms and art galleries, migrant economies and informal markets, recreational activities and nightlife. Indeed, it is often precisely here that innovative cultural production and a vibrant public sphere are to be found.

The Urban Catalyst research team explored these unplanned temporary uses in five European countries over the course of several years, and did far more than merely analyze their hidden logic. Building on the team's own participation in a number of different projects, Urban Catalyst examines various ways in which city planning can incorporate informal processes and describes important lessons architects and city planners can learn from temporary users.

Included are seminal contributions by Azra Akšamija, Kees Christiaanse, Margaret Crawford, Jesko Fezer, Florian Rötzer, Saskia Sassen, and others, as well as key projects from European cities such as Amsterdam, Basel, Berlin, London, Rome and Zagreb.

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