

dpu summerLab

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2014 Edition

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Leveraging *the city as a laboratory* for developing socially responsive design strategies

M E D E L L I N

Everyday Infrastructures Spectacular cable cars and glamorous design in public facilities, located in the most conflictive areas, are the salient features of the 'Medellin model' heavily publicised by the city marketing - praising the story of overcoming violence and inequality through an urbanism labelled as 'social'

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B E I R U T

Patchwork City Sectarian and political flags, graffiti, posters, banners, bollards on the sidewalks, public space practices, road diversions, road blocks, even at times security cameras, music blasting from car radios, news oozing through balconies, sounds of mosques and churches, and street talk and conversations

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L O N D O N

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The patchy patches practice: stock of possibles in the patchwork city

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The Goldfinger effect: displaced narratives and popping-up legacies

by Giorgio Talocci

A sense of design?

by Caroline Newton

Meanwhile... in Newham... Travels across the 'Arc of Opportunity'

by Alberto Duman

and with special contributions by

Rubyselen Ortiz Sánchez
Vrouyr Joubanian & Diala Lteif
Sue Brownill & Tamsin Omond

special insert

Depoliticising Verticality

in collaboration with
Advanced Graduate Design Studio
USF School of Architecture
+ Community Design
Tampa Florida, US

with a contribution by
Josue Robles Caraballo

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Acknowledgements

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Credits

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Challenging Design: encountering urban territories

by Camillo Boano

Since we started the DPU summerLab initiative back in 2011, more than 115 individuals participated in the 10 one-week-intense-laboratories. A fantastic thought unexpected success. The word laboratory is not chosen lightly and just to tap into a wider contemporary global urban phenomenon, that wishes to provoke the one-sided reference to experiments, scientific oriented didactics, bodily-related and a place of applied-research.

Rather, it is used to offer the possibility for an ‘other’ encounter with urban territories: an in situ immersion and a locus of experimentation where the boundaries of spatial agency and design processes are actively pushed and where inter-disciplinarity deliberately challenges the authoritative claims on knowledge by built environment professionals – while at the same time dispensing with radical political agendas in “the politics and practice of small incursions in material spaces, the possibilities they open up and the forms of sociality they might entail”.¹

Since the first immersion in a few squat-occupied spaces in Rome in 2011, the Labs have become an open immersion in both discrete objects and social processes, in order to avoid any disciplinary construction of territorial fortresses while suggesting hybrid (mutable and contextual in nature and yet scaleless) tactical processes of design. The word *tactic*, firstly introduced by Gramsci, was of great significance for the development of DPU summerLab because it denotes *resistance* within a given urban context allowing the participants to – unlike the radical tools of modernist urbanism and the new ‘urbanist fix’ – depict and investigate resistance as an outcome of urban small and continuous adaptations. It does not only dictates an overall transformation but also favours bits-and-pieces, incremental and contingent change in relation to the context whereby

it operates. Each Lab becomes an action-oriented transcultural exercise where, using a pragmatically theoretical approach, it attempts to uncover and research the hidden forces that shape material urban worlds and, vice-versa, how the material and everyday conditions shape identity, relationships, imaginations and people. They each show how design is essentially about the production of space, not as a fixed and abstract reality but as something actively and contingently produced. As such design is understood as an impure and discrepant practice, as a way to address urban challenges from the perspective of excluded groups in contested urban spaces. Each Lab shows that the potential of design can no longer remain within the realms of intent, form, or representation but needs to tie these to its consequence and effects: to its agency.

The ‘other’ encounter with urban territories can emerge only if we reconsider and recalibrate how we imagine, plan and make cities. Each Lab pushes us to use our professional capacities differently, taking on different design approaches and practices to respond effectively and responsibly in the context of rapid urbanisation, population growth, constrained resources and spatial injustices. Not renouncing to architecture, design and planning knowledge, but leveraging the materiality and the discursive reality of the city as a laboratory for developing socially responsive design

measures and promoting spatial justice. As Jeremy Till once said “Architects are possessors of both specialised knowledge and conditioned, evolving, understanding as they move between the roles of expert and user [...] It is an acknowledgement of this combination of knowledge and understanding that is central to any reformulation of practice which has the potential to empower the user”.² Such new encounter, a weak, non-arrogant and humble one, with the urban reality lead to discussions of spatial reconfiguration –because it is in space that the tension between “dirty realism and angelic aspirations are manifested”.³

Central to this reasoning is the idea of critical strategic design. The classical notions of urban design and the understanding of the role of the practitioner are recalibrated. Participants become critically immersed with urban transformative practices – researching, exploring and intervening in the complex dynamics of the ways cities are shaped. As we already advocate in the MSc Building and Urban Design,⁴ strongly and in our own continuous research,⁵ we make a plea for an urban design approach, engaging in situated urban practice that is active, relational, collective, embedded, reflexive and transdisciplinary.

Active refers to a practice that is engaged with material conditions and social and political complexities, with an on-going balancing act between withdrawing from taking action and engagement, as it seeks to cultivate a collective imagination alive to the potential of transformative action. In practice, such an approach entails engaging both with activist approaches to research (e.g. building on practices of insurgent



planning, creation of platforms and visible actions) and with methods for institutional development that seek out negotiation and periodic consensus as contingent cooperation between government, business and civil society actors – cooperation that occurs around a design that capitalises on those working progress and imperfect actions of incremental changes and the windows of opportunity that they implied.

Such practices and research are also necessarily relational – recognising that knowledge production and learning are defined within relative positions, and in

of the world as these are unable to produce alternative and counter-hegemonic outcomes.

Finally, transdisciplinarity becomes fundamental – whereby complexity is recognised and celebrated through the promotion of critical engagement with multiple partial perspectives. This is not an attempt to address complexity through a relativist engagement with all possible forms of knowledge. Rather, it is a perspective that prioritises listening, without prejudice, to multiple voices, to the extent that listening can enable fresh perspectives on the world.

The ‘other’ encounter with urban territories can emerge only if we reconsider and recalibrate how we imagine, plan and make cities.

conversation with existing discourses, material processes and the socially constructed and mediated structures of actors, resources and meanings through which we make sense of the world. In essence helping us to see the constraints for action as well as the potentials to open up new spaces of possibility and new visions.

The work is then inevitably collective – whereby knowledge production is understood as a common endeavour pursued by networks of individuals, community organisations, NGOs, and public (and private) sector institutions that share the value of both aesthetics and ethics alike. The starting point here is to question the role of the expert, and the ways that discourses of expertise are constituted in particular contexts, as ‘expertise’ itself often limits the out-of-the-box thinking – thus limiting possible alternative and better outcomes.

Research and design research are also embedded – whereby learning and knowledge production are seen as processes integrally related to the practices and lived experiences of people in specific settings and locations. This means recognising development as a collective endeavour that relates to multiple subjectivities, and is sensitive to emotion, and multiple ways of engaging with the world.

In common with the historical roots of critical theory and critical urban commentary, the research also has to be reflexive – acknowledging the contexts in which it is produced. More specifically the approaches question fixed understandings

Without simply suggesting the supremacy of ‘community architecture’, the ‘social-drift of design’ or a ‘public interest design’ in their false promises of salvation of architecture and design practice, DPU summerLab situates itself in a critical perspective that emphasises a co-constructed and conjoined nature of design practice.

Such co-construction is the interplay of agency and structure, human and non-human actors, and part of processes that, in Fry’s terms, “points to the determinate designing consequences of situated ‘things’”.⁶ In such interactions with the others and its manifold possibilities in the urban territories, design-as-practice unfolds. DPU summerLab hopefully helps design, planning and architecture to be reconfigured and rethought as a field of questions and uncertainties through the experimentation of a design research that is – again – active, relational, collective, embedded, reflexive and transdisciplinary suggesting “architectures of the impure community”.⁷

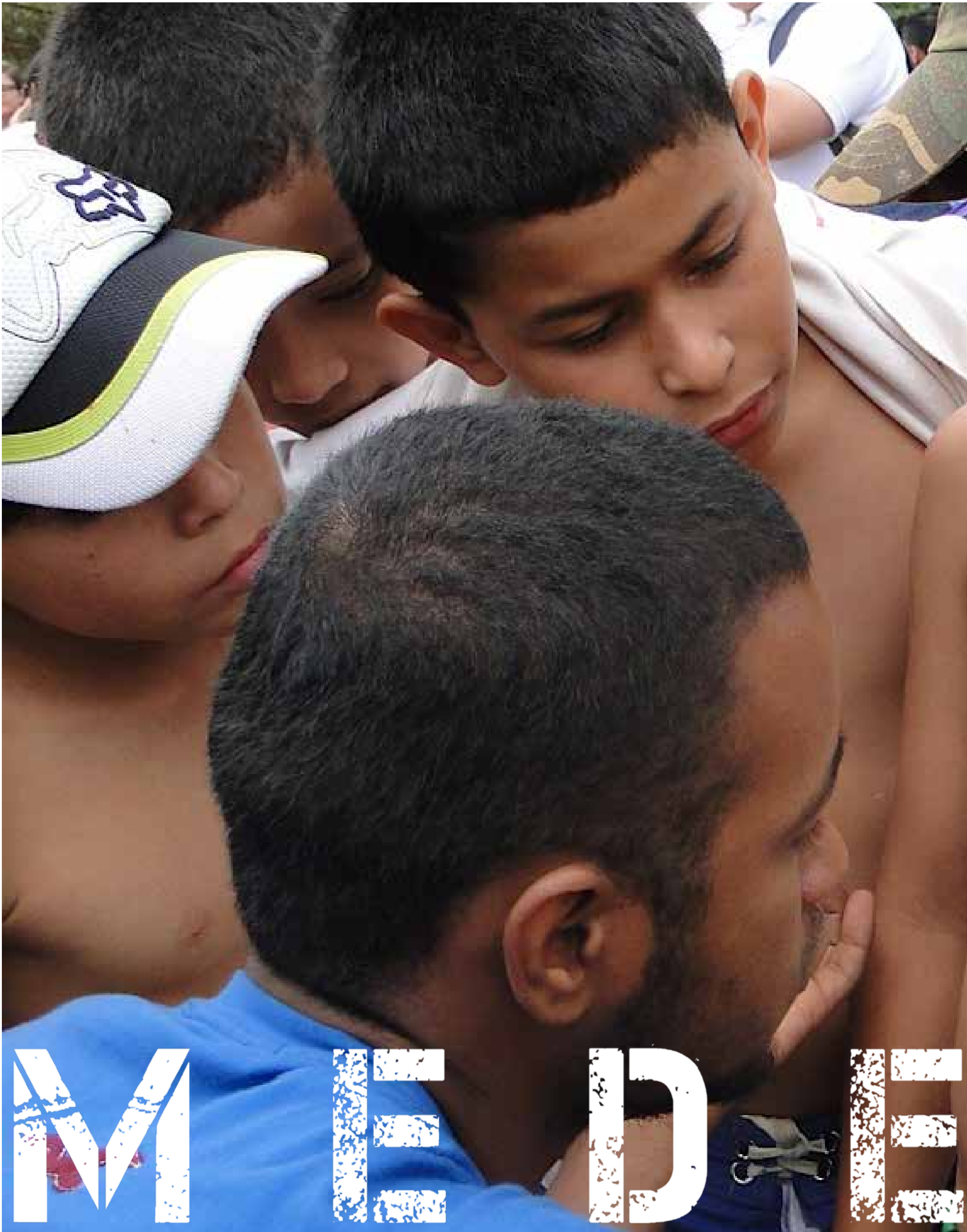
This pamphlet is looking at the different narratives and urbanisms emerged in each laboratory, collecting a series of texts by our local collaborators that in Medellin, Beirut and in London facilitated and organised the ‘territorial encounters’ and the development of design strategies. Structured in a chronological sequence, the three parts feature also reflective pieces by DPU staff members on contemporary practice and the critical design approach put forward during the summerLab;

and a collection of participants’ voices – suggesting different, alternative and contextual visions on the learning and the experience. In addition, the reflection on the Medellin DPU summerLab is enriched with a text authored by Rubyselen Ortiz Sanchez (journalist and Vice-President of the Corporation Cultural Diafora) who offers a vision around the summerLab experience as “*encuentro de personas sensibles*,” meeting of sensitive people. In the case of Beirut, Marc Baroud, Diala Lteif and Vruyr Joubanian from ALBA, are reflecting on the methodological challenge of participation and the ‘design methods’ as fruitful moment of exchange and collaboration. In the London section Sue Brownhill and Tamsin Omond dialogue on the past, present and possible futures of community mobilisation around the Royal Docks.

In addition, a special issue, identifiable with a different background page color, compiles excerpts and images from the University of South Florida’s studio work – carried out as outcome of the partnership with DPU in the London summerLab – illustrating some examples of students’ architectural works around the theme of ‘depoliticising verticality’ which, in a different representational language, are offering reflections around the spatial conditions and challenges of density and verticality and how they are related to the politics of community discourses. As said, a collective endeavour to elucidate *possibles*, possibilities of responsive design strategies and design research pathways.

Notes

- 1 Tonkiss, F. (2013) Austerity Urbanism and the Makeshift City, *City*, 17 (3), p: 313.
- 2 Till, J. (1998) Architecture of the impure community, in Jonathan Hill (ed.) *Occupying Architecture. Between the architect and the users*. London Routledge, p: 41.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 41.
- 4 See: www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/programmes/postgraduate/msc-building-urban-design-in-development
- 5 Boano, C. (2014) Notes around design politics: design dissensus and the poiesis of scarcity. *Planum*, 29(2), pp:13-28; Boano, C., Talocci, G. (2014) The (in) operative power: architecture and the reclaim of social relevance. *STUDIO Magazine*, 6; Boano, C. (2014) Architecture of Engagement. Informal urbanism and design ethics, *Atlantis magazine*, Vol. 24(4), pp: 24-28.
- 6 Fry, T. (2011) *Design as Politics*. Oxford, Berg, p: 75.
- 7 Till, J. (1998) Architecture of the impure community. In: Jonathan Hill (ed.) *Occupying Architecture. Between the architect and the users*. London Routledge, p: 43.



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MEDELLIN - Everyday infrastructures

Designing from the cracks: exploring the potentials of the Medellin Model drawbacks

by Catalina Ortiz Arciniegas

“People as infrastructure indicates residents’ needs to generate concrete acts and contexts of social collaboration inscribed with multiple identities rather than in overseeing and enforcing modulated transactions among discrete population groups” (A. Simone).¹

Medellin has become a model for the re-making of informal areas in the so-called Global South. Spectacular infrastructure of cable cars and glamorous design in public facilities located in the most conflictive areas are the salient features of the ‘Medellin model’ heavily publicised by the city marketing. Media, international urban experts, and multilateral agencies praise the story of overcoming violence and inequality through a type of urbanism labelled as ‘social’. Moreover, citizens seem imbued with civic pride and relief coming from the shifting of the long-standing stigma of drug trafficking and murder. The last decade state-led spatial interventions turned into the pivotal tool for building governance in historically self-managed neighbourhoods. This contribution attempts to uncover what kind of urbanism actually emerges underneath the internationally acclaimed urban transformation and it discusses how dissent voices and resistance constitute the basis for re-imagining the role of designers and planners critically. Based on the academic engagement with community leaders and local authorities, I argue that the *Comuna 8*’s planning and design experience opens up an interstice to enact a new interface between

community self-management and grandiloquent state infrastructure. Thus, such approach challenges what the ‘Medellin model’ overlooks: incremental growth, everyday infrastructures and social mobilization.

The city operates as an intended laboratory of local state ‘best practices’. Even though several local governments in Latin America and beyond perceive Medellin’s inter-institutional coordination, fiscal strength and participatory processes as a reference to emulate,² what deserves more attention is the public relevance of urban design and architecture in the city’s remake. In this process, the general public and media have acclaimed the role of designers and planners. But, what is at stake when designers operate only as providers of iconic public buildings and public space in areas of informal origin? Is that as good as it can get for designers to promote spatial justice? Some of those questions had fed the long-term collaboration with *Comuna 8*’s leaders to recalibrate assumptions about practice, spatial interventions and its political pertinence.

Scarcity, solidarities, and multiple identities are intertwined in *Comuna 8*. While the first and most awarded urban interventions in the city were

the Integral Urban Projects (PUI) in *Comuna 1* – Cable car Line K and Santo Domingo Library Park – and *Comuna 13* – Electric escalators and San Javier Library Park – a new phase of the ‘Medellin model’ is being implemented this time in the third most conflictive area where a violent dispute over territory still remains: precisely, *Comuna 8*. In this hilly area, accessibility and connectivity, as well as growth management, are relevant issues. However, the Green Belt and Cable Cars have been contested and sparked discontent among inhabitants for obscuring other more pressing issues for the community. The local interpretation of the Green Belt spatial strategy is, in fact, that this is a distortion of inhabitants’ priorities, needs and desires because it privileges bike and pedestrian paths in the higher area of the Sugar Loaf hill – the border with the rural area – and postpones risk management works and neighbourhood upgrading. Nonetheless, a strong community organisation has promoted social mobilisation to contend those projects and struggle to implement a different Local Development Plan. *Comuna 8* has multiple layers, from cultural groups at neighbourhood level, a board of victims of forced displacement, local elected officials of ‘Acción Comunal’, to a municipal scale coalition called ‘urban and rural dialogues’. This is why *Comuna 8* becomes a fertile ground for unveiling the clashes and potentials between bottom up and top down planning initiatives.

MEDELLIN - Everyday infrastructures



Efficiency in the delivery of public works is one of the pillars of the 'Medellin model'. Yet, the political need for a fast pace construction of the Green belt and the new cable cars lines hardly matches the fragmented requests from grassroots groups, which add complexity to the slow process of planning and design: rather than right-based claims of infrastructure provision, this disjuncture ignites social mobilisation as resistance to state infrastructural projects pursued in spite of the lack of consultation. The Model indeed largely ignores tensions and disconnections between Mayor's pivotal urban projects, strategic spatial planning and grassroots local plans. Furthermore, in a context governed by the rhetoric of participatory planning, mobilisation and dissensus are, rather, often criminalised.

How do planning and design operate in such asymmetric context? A first crack in the model consists in having elusive participatory stances and communities' weak leverage to achieve collective agreements. Consequently, design and planning are urged to catalyse overlapping and divergent political interests in order to negotiate and build schemes of spatial co-production. In the meantime, new iconic public buildings have risen in informal areas, unveiling the core of the city's branding. Comuna 8 has evolved instead through entrenched trajectories of self-management and auto-construction increasingly expanding on ecologically fragile slopes. The concern about

uncontrolled urban growth becomes salient when justifying the Green Belt project while at the same time dismissing the spatial logics of informal urbanisation.

As a result, the crack of the model lies in the fact it is not fully addressing incremental growth. By focusing only on public space and overlooking existing housing dynamics and its risks the effect on growth management is limited. Yet, the avoided aspects of incremental growth open a wide possibility to innovate in the conception and co-creation of flexible domestic spaces, tactics of collective tenure and relocation in safe areas, and appropriate technologies. Therefore, beyond romanticising self-management and auto-construction the planner/designer needs to scale up the logics of incremental growth to reframe strategies of neighbourhood upgrading and community-led risk management.

The location of public expenditures in spatial interventions at the fringes has been prefaced by the principle of territorial equity, whereby equity results mainly from the distribution of public facilities and access to the integrated transit system. However, this type of approach undermines the Model's multi-scalar nature to tackle the socio-economic vulnerability of its inhabitants. In particular, in Comuna 8 only 16% of the population is engaged in formal employment and 70% of those who live in the fringe settlements are victims of forced displacement.

To acknowledge this critical condition, we need to focus on livelihoods. Designers and planners need to devise the co-generation of livelihoods strategies bringing spatial and organisational potentialities to develop everyday infrastructures. This type of infrastructure refers to think of *people as infrastructure*,³ more than brick and mortar; in Comuna 8, to address everyday infrastructures we need to think of alternative ways to access utilities, income generation and food security.

In conclusion, the new interface between community self-management and grandiloquent state infrastructure demands bringing at the top of the agenda incremental growth, everyday infrastructures and social mobilisation. Rethinking urban design and planning from the perspective of everyday life changes the terms of the dialogue with local communities and defies the scope of the practice: a practice that can only relocate and position itself in the cracks of the system, vis-à-vis the hegemonic city model of unquestioned 'best practices' such as the Medellín one.

Notes

- 1 Simone, A. (2004) People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg. *Public Culture*, 16, pp: 407-429.
- 2 Ortiz, C. & Lieber, L. (2014) Medellín: Hacia la Construcción de un modelo de Estrategias Para la Equidad Territorial? In: *Equidad Territorial en Medellín*. Empresa de Desarrollo Urbano como Motor de la Transformación Urbana - Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo. Medellín.
- 3 Simone (2004).





MEDELLIN - Everyday infrastructures

A sense of design?

by Caroline Newton

“98 percent of everything that is built and designed today is pure shit. There’s no sense of design, no respect for humanity or for anything else” (F.Gehry).¹

When I was reading this quote and looking at the picture showing a ‘big A (attitude) Architect’ I got very annoyed, angry and sad at the same time. Not only is this a problematic position in relation to architecture as a profession: the statement is also completely disrespectful of humanity and our humanistic heritage in contrast to what Gehry dares to claim. Till² has beautifully illustrated that historically the fact that architects claim their design decisions and expertise on the ability to combine both aesthetics and rational reasoning has created a very strong and un-penetrable image to the outside world giving architects the status of ‘Artist – Genius’. Together with many other critics, Till³ shows genuine concern for the role of architects in our current society. On previous occasions I have subscribed to this concern⁴ and I want to explicitly subscribe to it again in this contribution.

Till⁵ stresses that “the key ethical responsibility of the architect lies not in the refinement of the object as static visual product, but as contributor to the creation of empowering spatial, and hence social, relationships in the name of other”. The show-off architecture conducted by people like Gehry or Hadid has completely ignored this responsibility and has degraded the profession to nothing more than capitalist developer driven architectural and urban design. Looking at the current condition of crisis and scarcity, the architecture profession has the moral obligation to (re-)ground itself within this current condition without losing the belief in and aspiration to contributing to the construction of more just urban futures. In order to do so, designers and architects need to re-connect with those who are living the designs, those who have to appropriate the designs and make them work for their every day survival. Thus designers and architects have to learn how to co-create, how to co-construct and thus how to trust the people for whom, or better with whom they are building.

This year’s experience in Medellin can be understood within such concern. By looking at how ‘everyday infrastructures’ have been created by the inhabitants of Comuna 8 we have been able to understand (or define) how grassroots practices are true city building. The engagement of the inhabitants of Comuna 8 with the urban planning of the city of Medellin is an inspirational example of how people are not merely claiming their ‘right to the city’ but rather they are practising it in the sense that Harvey described it, namely as “a right

to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization”.⁶

The inhabitants of Comuna 8, using their networks with academics and students in planning and architecture, have developed alternative development plans for their area. These plans are not naïve and inward looking. Sometimes these ideas take the form of almost real proposals; sometimes they are innovative alternative visions for the redevelopment of the area, in which the concerns of the city’s experts and external planners have been integrated. An example is the integration of the green belt idea. Residents do understand the potential threats of urban sprawl and acknowledge the necessity of containing this sprawl and safeguarding the green open edge. But in contrast to the formal Parc that has been suggested by the city, the collaboration between the inhabitants and the academics and students has resulted in some alternative visions. During the summerLab one of the projects called ‘Barrio Productivo’ looked at how the edges between the built up spaces and the nature reserve could become areas that enable urban food production. Whereby this food production is not merely limited to some garden plots but it is a catalyst for green economy initiatives and a local food kitchen that can supply food for the children in the local schools. As such it becomes a crucial joint in a whole local economical network of green and sustainable food production. Another project asked the question “¿Cómo te imaginas que tu comuna?”⁷ inviting users and inhabitants to participate directly in the process of re-imagining their area. The reflection on the kind of neighbourhood they envisaged for the future was central in the project, as well as thinking about structural needs and constraints, such as accessibility and containing the urban sprawl. Another group looked at how housing policies (such as housing cooperatives) that already exist can be adapted to steer the redevelopment of the area around a future cable car station, using relocations within the same area.

Firstly, and referring back to Harvey, our experience shows that residents are, as a collective power, already reshaping the urbanisation processes. Numerous resident organisations have contributed and worked together to voice their ideas, for example through a website and through

the publication of a newspaper called ‘Vision’. Recently the alternative development plans have been showcased during an exhibition in one of the public libraries. This event has again attracted a lot of attention from local media and government.

Secondly, the engagements, both with the urbanisation processes of the city and the academia and students, shape and transform the inhabitants, academics and students. Being part of these processes makes participants think about the different roles they have to play and the attached responsibilities. Mezirow⁸ would call these processes ‘transformative learning’ as they help not only students, but all those engaged to re-examine their understanding of the world and revise their beliefs systems and behaviour.⁹

It is precisely this kind of engaged and embedded (design) practice that we need if we want to create more just urban futures, in which empowered and emancipated people are able to engage in equal relationships with those in power. The outcome of these practices will thus be urban spaces and architectures that enable local residents to appropriate them and to shape them according to their (changing) needs. These urban futures are adaptable, flexible, open and generous. They will probably look chaotic, impermanent and messy, but they will be inhabitable and they will have the potential of becoming home. They might not appeal to the world of the big A architects but... why should we care about those 2 percent, they can apparently take care of themselves!

Notes

- 1 Quoted in: Rosenfield, K. (2014) Frank Gehry Claims Today’s Architecture is (Mostly) ‘Pure Shit’. Retrieved from: www.archdaily.com/?p=560673.
- 2 Till, J. (2009) *Architecture Depends*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, p: 60.
- 3 Ibid., 178.
- 4 Newton, C. & Pak, B. (2012) Innovative Technologies for Invigorating Critical Thinking in Architectural Design. In K. Drazic (Ed.), *Eastern Surf_Kernel Panic Control* (pp. 100–105). Open University of Velika Gorica; Newton, C., & Boie, G. (2011) Resuscitating the architect in a technology-driven discipline - The case of the fragile project. In *EAAE International Conference: Rethinking the human in technology-driven architecture*. Chania, Crete.
- 5 Till (2009), *ibid.*, 178.
- 6 Harvey, D. (2008) *The right to the city*. *New Left Review* 53 p: 23–40.
- 7 “How do you imagine your Comuna?”
- 8 Mezirow, J. (1997) *Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice*. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, 1997(74) 5–12.
- 9 Mezirow, *ibidem*; Clark, M. C., & Wilson, A. L. (1991) Context and Rationality In Mezirow’s Theory of Transformational Learning. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 41(2), 75–91.

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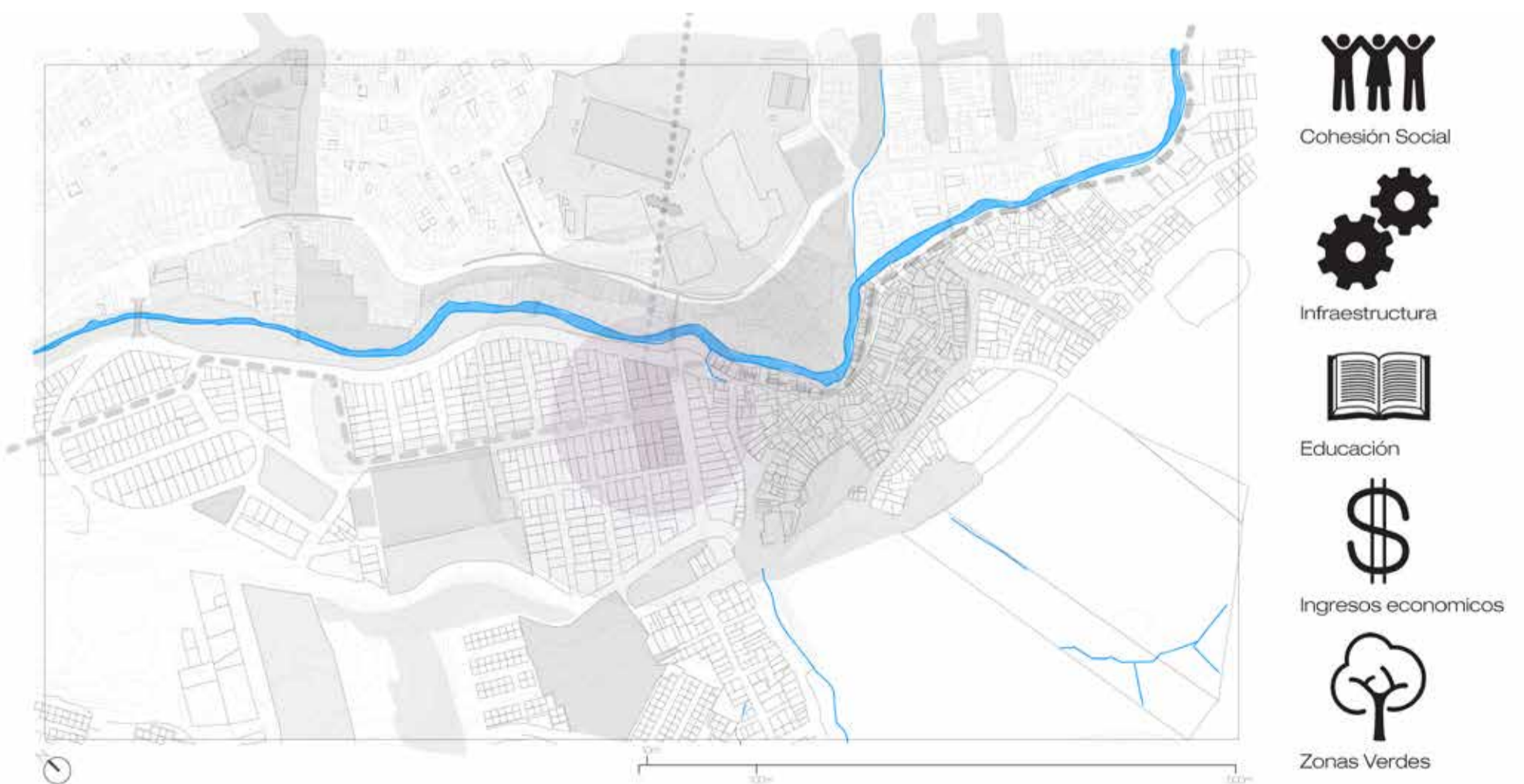
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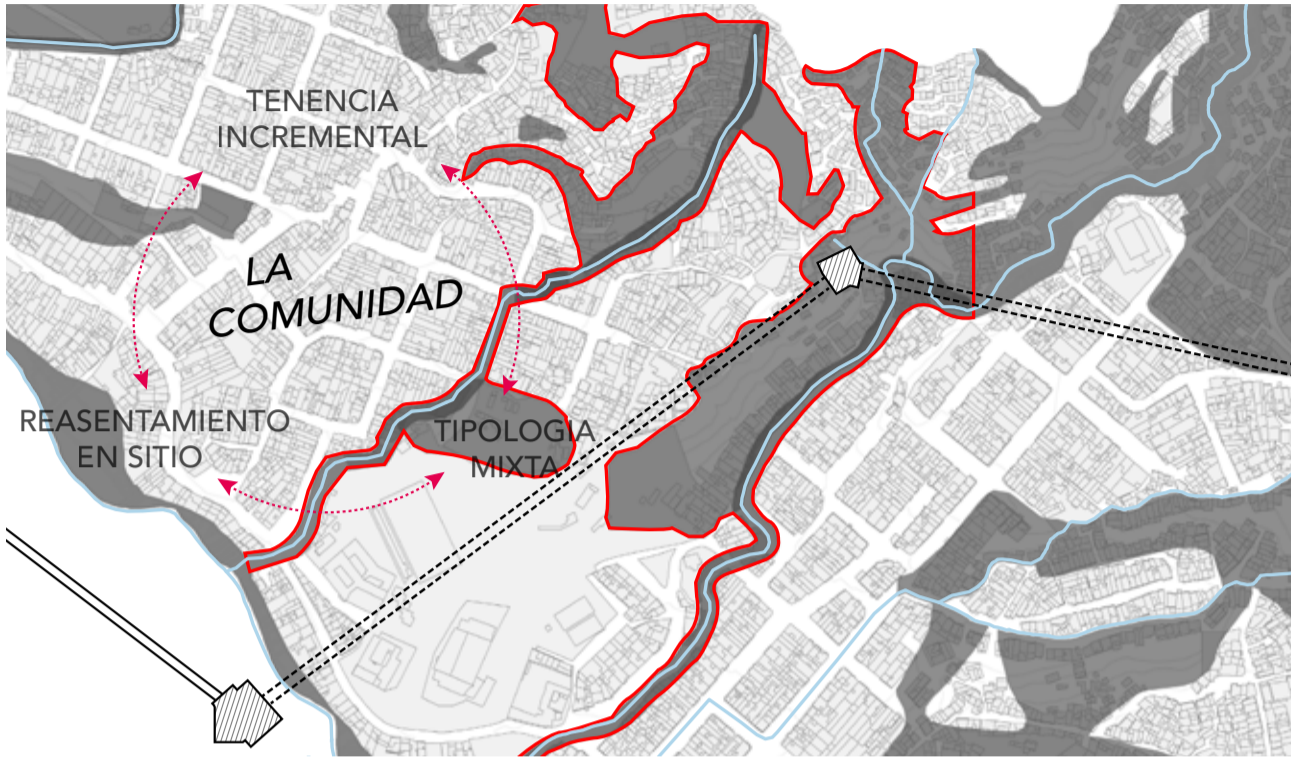
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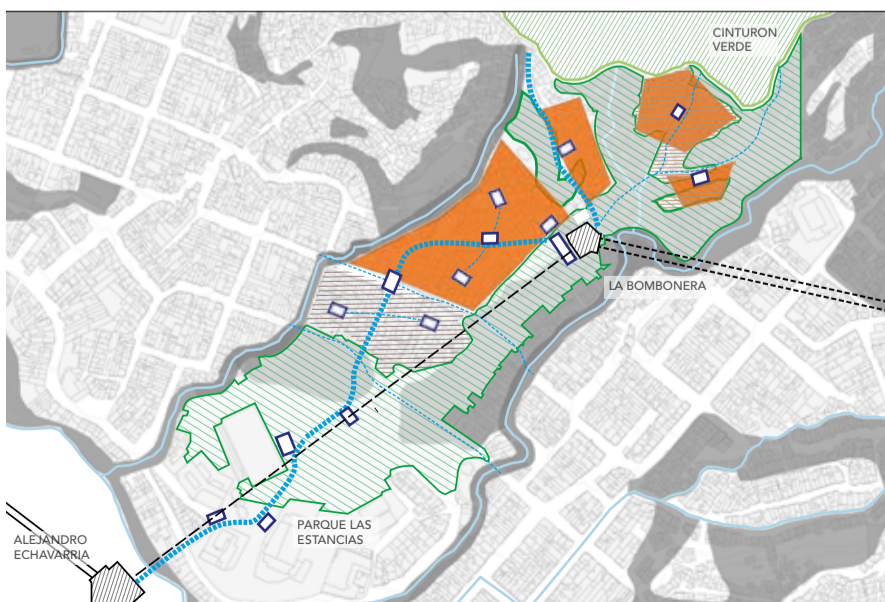
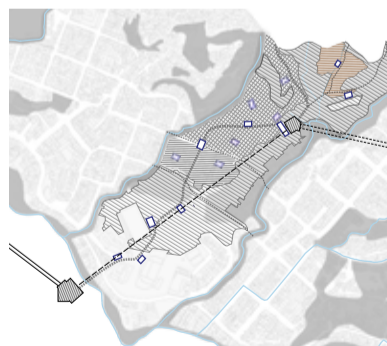
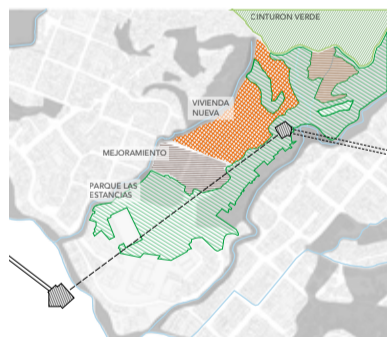
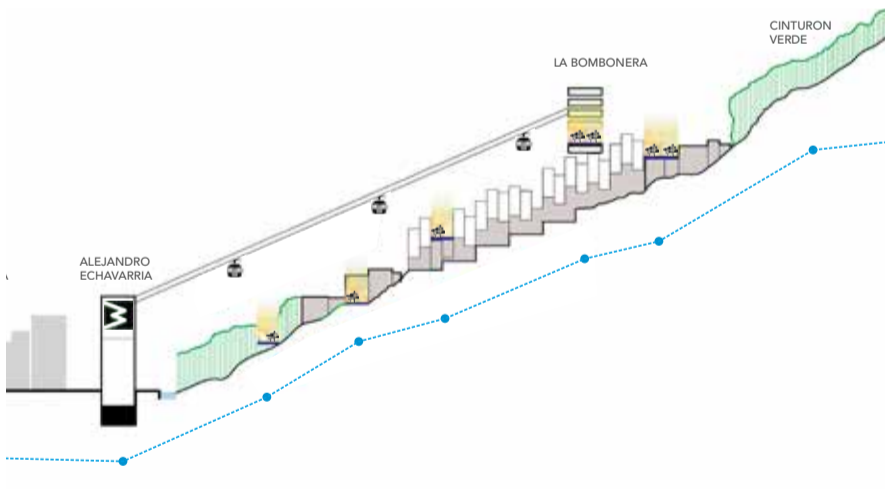
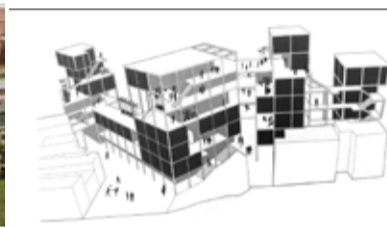
ESFUERZOS DE PAZ: HOY

Esta propuesta de intervención hace parte del taller DPU Summerlab 2014, enfocado a la zona de influencia de la Línea de Metro Cable Alejandro Echavarría, en el transepto que compone la estación integrada del tranvía y

la estación de Metro Cable La Bombonera. Se realiza tomando como base la configuración social de la Comunidad para generar un sistema de conectividad por tierra entre el proyecto del Cinturón Verde y la línea de Metro Cable.



Arriba: Vista de Esfuerzos la Paz



In the previous page

Proposal for the Tramway corridor. A 'blank' map sets as a tool for engaging the communities in the activity of grounding different categories of projects (the icons on the bottom left) on their territories. The projects are about fostering social cohesion, education, income-generating activities, green and public spaces, and infrastructural development.

In this page

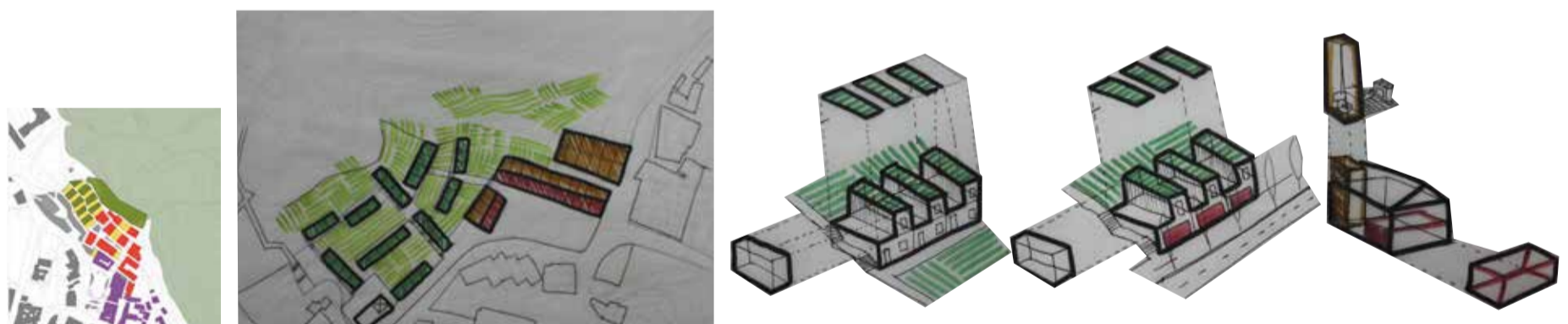
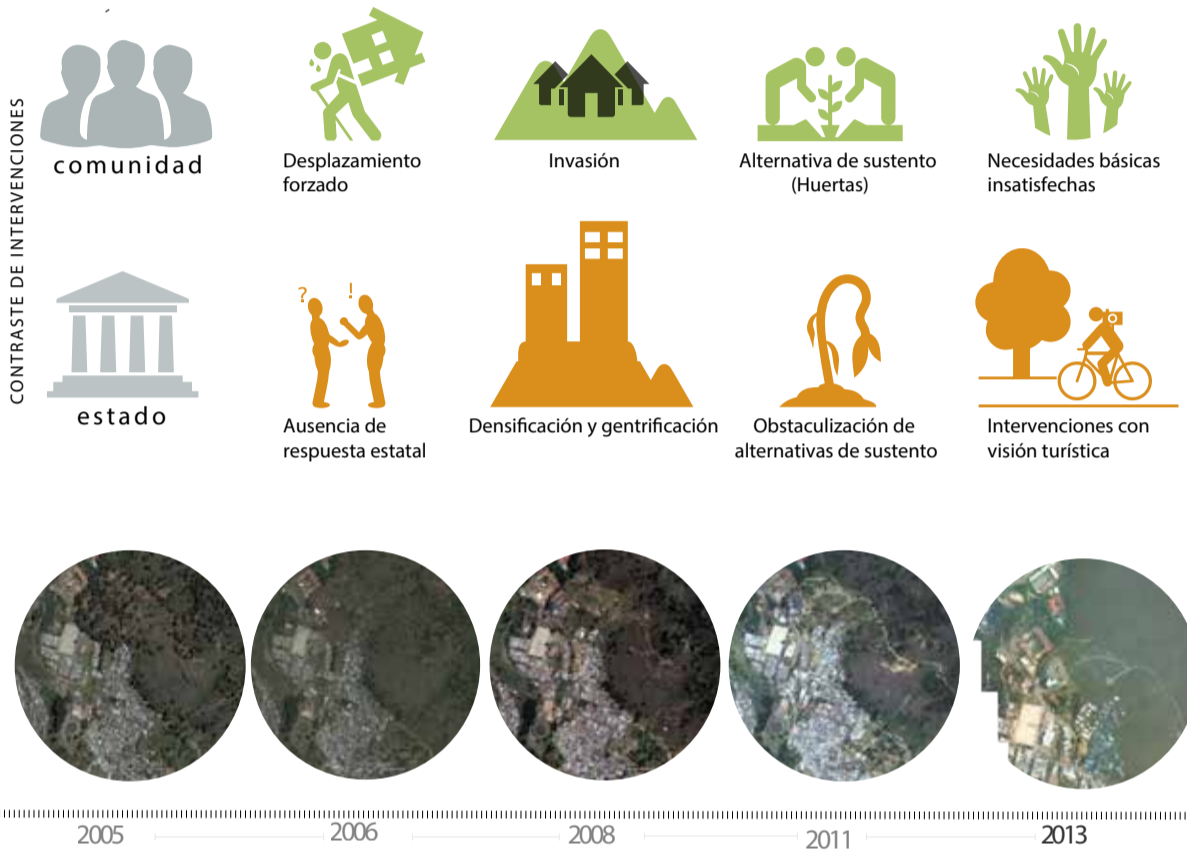
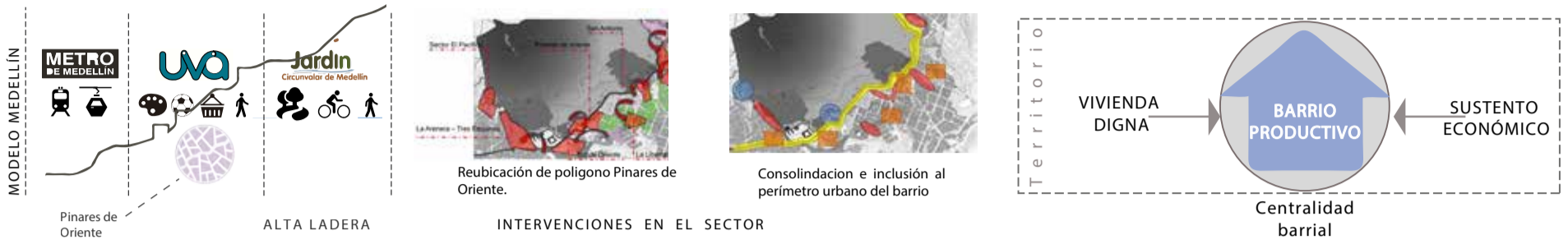
The proposal is called "Weaving the *barrio*" and seeks to strengthen the socio-spatial structures already existing in the sectors of Esfuerzos de Paz, La Bombonera and Last Estancias, areas of strongest impact of the major transformations that are currently happening – the green belt and the new lines of the cable-car. It involves the reconstruction / upgrading of the housing units lying on the areas of risk and, consequently, the creation of a system of public spaces along the new infrastructures, allowing connectivity at the ground level and the creation of new centralities.

In the next page

Proposal for Pinares de Oriente. The entry points for this project are income-generating activities and the right to decent housing for the local communities. The two elements converge in the idea of 'productive neighbourhood', aiming to consolidate the area as an important centrality in the Comuna, and in so doing making it a nodal point for wider urban dynamics.

MEDELLIN - Everyday infrastructures

BARRIO PRODUCTIVO - PINARES DE ORIENTE



-Huertas Verticales-
Crear zonas cultivables con poco espacio, esto con el fin de generar mas aprovechamiento del area.



-Agricultura, Urbana-
Generación de huertas o viveros para sostenimiento alimentario, en los solares de las casas.



-Auto-construcción-
Taller donde se elaboracion de vivienda por auto-construcción.



-Vivienda de costo bajo-
elaboración de vivienda con poco presupuesto con dotación completa de servicios (unidades sanitarias, cocina, servicios)



-Posibilidad de Desarrollo-
Posibilita el crecimiento de la vivienda en un futuro por parte de sus propios moradores ya que cuentan con zonas de ampliación.



PROYECTO REFERENTE:
-<http://communitygarden.org>



PROYECTO REFERENTE:
-<http://thisbigcity.net>



PROYECTO REFERENTE:
-Estudio Teddy Cruzna-



PROYECTO REFERENTE:
-Monterrey (Mexico) por: Alejandro Aravena-



PROYECTO REFERENTE:
-Iquiepe (chile) por: Alejandro Aravena-

Stephania (Colombia)

We are witnessing intense urban transformation processes in Colombia. Reflecting on the implications for both the territory and the communities that are part of it requires keeping an ethical commitment. Having sufficient sensitivity is deemed to be necessary to handle the concerns against changes, territorial manifestations and social tensions in the community, but also requires sanity to understand the intentions of the interventions proposed by the local administration. This requires a critical and responsible judgment when assuming the city as a laboratory and each component becomes a fundamental agent of its transformation. Since my professional education has been completed quite recently, I am beginning to form an academic character that allowed me, during this workshop, to tackle the opportunities to grasp with great interest the contributions made by participants from other countries and the interdisciplinary encounters occurring in each meeting.

The proposal we put forward was a challenge for creativity and materialisation between the social phenomena and the spatial transformations that governmental agencies promote in this peripheral sector. This required us to set out a comprehensive proposal for a highly complex area in physical-spatial and socio-economic terms. Being trained as a geographer, having been part of the formulation of a proposal that is useful to the community and a stimulus for the continuation of the dialogue between them and the municipal authorities that intervene in their territory, is a major achievement for me and brings me to continue reflecting on the role played by each agent of transformation. It commits me towards an even more critical approach in regional planning and urban studies.

Maria Estefania (Colombia)

During the DPU summerLab we certainly felt the city as a laboratory. The fieldwork became a very important part of the process, it led us to dialogue with the community allowing us to hear a 'real version' of the situation. This approach took us away of papers, maps, plans or Google Earth and at the same time it put us closer to a consistent and pertinent response to the basic needs and aspirations of the community. Also, the possibility of working with interdisciplinary teams has provided the possibility of applying multiple knowledge sources. As a consequence, the final proposals has been made considering a multitude of wills while guaranteeing social participation.



Nicola (Italy)

There are two different reflections that I can do about Medellin – before having been there and after. When I studied the urban issues of Medellin as a case study for the Critical Urbanism Studio module at the DPU, I considered the metro-cable like an overimposed structure on the society, on its everyday life, on the local needs of its inhabitants. Then, during the DPU summerLab I took the metro-cable and one of the travelers in front of me was actually an informal settler of the East side of Medellin. During the journey, we spoke a lot about the problem of the area, about the relation between the informal and the formal part of the city – and how the metro-cable has been changing this relation, helping connectivity and exchanges. Reflections that were strengthened while speaking with other inhabitants of the ‘informal city’, understanding also how – also for the effects created by the new infrastructures – the difference between formal and informal was no longer clearly perceivable. I realised how in one decade a macro-infrastructure project has balanced problems related to the imposition of it. I still do not agree with urban decisions taken ignoring people instances, but in this case, I have to admit that through the use of the metro-cable, people acquired a deeper awareness about their physical and social positionality. In my vision of Medellin, the metro-cable can be considered as an element in a group of elements involved all together in a chain reaction that is still going on. The ‘rising star’ of the Latin American urbanism is still moving towards a direction, but actually it is impossible to provide its final destination. Medellin could be seen as a real laboratory of urban experiments in which it is possible to see at the same time what happened, what is going to happen and what is happening looking at the same subject.

During the summerLab, one of the urban reflections focused on the surrounding area of a future project about a new infrastructural hub. The analysis focused on several issues at different scales and the project guidelines defined the general ideas that could be followed, to catalyse the reflections coming from Comuna 8. However, the project ‘solutions’ have been left as questions – in the form of a symbolic blank map – for all the inhabitants, invited to define the answers by themselves: while it is not possible to stop some transformations, people – watching what happened with the first branch of the metro-cable – have acquired more experience about developing plans and therefore have to be taken into

account about the use of public resources and the implementation of infrastructural projects.

The increasing number of social organisations in Comuna 8 represents the power of people wanting to be part of Medellin’s project, and not its victims.

International and transdisciplinary workshops on Medellin must engage with an attempt about overcoming the dualisms formal vs. informal city and, also, developed vs. developing world. The reflection occurring thanks to the DPU summerLab offers a great occasion to overcome these dichotomies, offering the only way to understand Medellin’s urban transformation: being part of it.

Samuel (Colombia)

Having the opportunity to participate in a workshop as the summerLab, where you have to go out to the field and touch with your own hands the reality of several communities (in my case the communities from my own city), makes me question more deeply how territories are being planned and what is the position and role that as professionals or academics we might adopt. The opportunity we have to approach from a close distance the realities of our environment, and to share this experience with people from other places that might not be familiar with the needs of these people, helps us being more conscious of our position on the city. This leads to deeper questions of how territories are conceived, how these are constructed and the way people live them.

Experiences like these turn out to be very fruitful for me, as they differ from what we usually do in academia, where we face hypothetical cases and model stereotypes which would not have much of an impact on the city’s reality. However, taking the city itself as a laboratory, one begins to experience solutions for change, or to imagine urban strategies to benefit communities. The potential of transforming the urban reality intrinsic in the summerLab’s exercise, led us to a much more rigorous and detailed thinking, believing that what we do directly affects the livelihoods of people and their territories. I think that, as a student of architecture, I have the capacity of contributing to this process by creating spaces, environments and experiences that affect the quality of life of people... and that this will be much stronger when I will start to attend and to respond to certain people’s needs and aspirations through this exercise of thinking, designing and creating new opportunities.



MEDELLIN - Everyday infrastructures

Global Village, Global Commune

by Rubyselen Ortiz Sánchez

Rubyselen Ortiz Sánchez, resident of Comuna 8, is a journalist at the University of Antioquia. She has worked as a communications assistant and producer for alternative and popular media, and on participatory processes for local development planning and implemented development communication strategies for local communities. Currently she is following the Social Fabric Strengthening process in Comuna 8 and is the coordinator of the memory and communications area of the Diáfora Cultural Corporation, of which she is also vice-president.

We live in an interdependent social system, incapable of existing on its own, a system that delineates and unveils singularity in a context of homogenisation. However, it is difficult to grasp difference or distinguish singularities, when we also need to generate standards that can be clearly relied upon to appreciate those systems – standards or models which allow applying methodologies in order to understand and / or modify these contexts.

The task is daunting and, for many, impossible, unless such methodologies emerge out from these same systems; they generate a bond of communication and mutual understanding; not only can they be appreciated, but also they can cater for connections and interactions, which allow them to live together with others beyond that singularity.

These are (dare I say) the conditions that take place in the city of Medellín, a system composed of other systems trying to homogenise its peculiarities. The city has 16 communes and 5 townships, with peculiarities shaped by its geography, socio-economic status, initiatives, vicinities, production capacity, population density, infrastructure development, qualification of its inhabitants and interests.

Each of them is a unique system and could become even more unique, when it comes down to the scales of the district, the block, the quarter or the family. The city administration has the challenge of harmonising these systems, ensuring life quality, sustainability, balancing between natural and population elements,

preventing risks and ensuring rights (life, education, health, employment, housing, public space, mobility, utilities, culture, sports, coexistence, security, social organization, etc.). It is difficult though to generate models that allow those 21 contexts to be understood and modified for the better.

Comuna 8 is located in the Eastern centre of the city of Medellín. It has a population of 161,000, 80% of which live in strata 1 and 2. It has several peculiarities: (I) its geographical conditions of being a slope crossed by several water sources puts it at risk; (II) it is ranked as one of the most violent districts of the city; (III) it is the main recipient of people displaced by the war; (IV) it is identified as one of the three Communas with strongest leadership for the responsibility of its inhabitants; and (V) it is the one with the highest commitment of its people due to the vast amount of social organisation that it fosters.

In this peculiar context, using standardised methodologies of analysis and interventions would be very difficult and would even risk omitting or neglecting critical points that are not so common between them, not having much of an impact on the real underlying problems.

This is why – taking advantage of its social capital, committed and with great organisational capability – this Comuna crafted its communication bonds, thus creating different strategies to detect the singularity and proposing methodologies to understand and modify that particular context: amongst others, it is here worth

mentioning the Local Development Plan, the Plan for Cultural Development, the Human Security and Coexistence Plan, the Directory of Organisations, the Development Agency Foundation, the Social Fabric Strengthening process and the various media created to read the territory, and several Life Plans in neighbourhoods such as Villaturbay, el Faro or Altos.

These adaptations and those connections, that need to be recognised in their difference, led to the generation of a management model. A model that includes all different systems, not only territorial ones but also union-based systems for instance, that pursues not only development but also, and mainly, its residents' guarantees. People are at the centre of all development and surrounded by social organisations, government, employers and universities.

And this is where the search for the articulation of these actors began, and therefore different engagement processes were initiated – including the University in them – with the tools and resources of the Commune, that lacking an administration budget sought for the so-called 'tenderness' of people: solidarity. In these articulations and collaborations, the Commune was put under the microscope and used a laboratory to be studied, to remain identified with its uniqueness, to be known, and to generate new methodologies to locate its peculiarity. Universities are called to elaborate these theories and connections, from their study and theorisation, they can help strengthening these ties of communication and, in doing so, they can create methodologies of transformation and understanding of the territory.

This is how Comuna 8 and its social organisations (like Displaced People's board, Housing and Public Services Board, DIAFORA Corporation), its community leaders, its strategies (the Local Development Plan for instance),

MEDELLIN - Everyday infrastructures

managed to be taken into account by the DPU summerLab. Through the summerLab workshop, together with Universidad Nacional de Colombia at Medellin and its Master in Regional and Urban Studies, a process of mutual benefit has been able to articulate. A process where the community has been able to diversify its lenses of approach, and from this to obtain an amalgam of alternative interpretations: not only do these help the Commune to better understand itself, but also to generate new ways of communication with external entities. Students and universities have been able to witness alive and real processes – not a simulacrum – which help to enhance creativity, to implement some theories and unveil others, and to increase the clarity of intervention processes, their multiple variables and the need to be socially responsible when approaching the readings of a territory.

The DPU summerLab is a process in which interests and wishes come together. Beyond what it implies 'technically' though, it is the encounter between sensitive people and the Commune's particularities that signify its case: its vulnerabilities for instance, like not having anything to do laundry with or anything to eat. The Commune's people see in this work the opportunity to broaden their agency, to show the urgent need to ensure rights to all citizens in a community, to discern a methodology to understand and transform their context.

Acknowledgements

The DPU summerLab - Medellin Everyday Infrastructures wishes to thank: Jaime Maya (community leader); Rubyselen Ortiz (community leader); Claudia Velasquez (ISVIMED); Luis Fernando Dapena (UNAL); Jota Samper (MIT).





BIEFI



in collaboration with
Public Interest Design Levant
and the **Design Department**
Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts
University of Balamand

RU'IT

BEIRUT - Patchwork city

Beirut's fabrics: lines & borders

by Dalia Chabarek

Beirut urbanism is a complex of conflicting patches separated though aesthetically similar landscapes where obsolescence and modernisation, decadence and preservation, destruction and reconstruction are ever-present. Then there are points of dichotomies, stark differences from one neighbourhood to the other, shiny and new versus deterioration in a spectrum of severity. Usually these dissociated neighbourhoods are divided along harsh lines, like highways or bridges, displeasing the journey of the pedestrian taking a stroll down the streets of Beirut. Neighbourhoods are fabrics of ever-changing dynamics, stitched up like patchwork in the overall urban body; there are stitches rough along some edges, bombarding the linkages between urban fabrics, and others that create harmonious blends of fabrics.

"اسأل عن الجار قبل الدار"

The famous proverb in Arabic translates to: *ask about the neighbour before the household in question*. The neighbourhood is sculpted and governed by its residents, and is thus a reflection of them. Neighbourhoods also inflict practices on fellow neighbourhoods – security versus threat, support versus competition, harmony versus conflict, and a number of other dichotomies at play. Neighbourhoods narrate lived and imagined stories, and their observations and experiences perpetrate their habitat. Patches of Beirut reflect the complexity of the different community narratives, whose foundations, values and systems have been produced by their locals and their environs. Their spatial contours are defined by their presence, interactivity, interdependence and independence.

Understanding this patchwork nature is best managed through walks across the city, navigating within and across patches, crossing the stitches and observing the built environment, mapping out the histories, digging into narratives, aesthetics, identities and colours of neighbourhoods, tracking down reinforcements to their habituation, understanding the maintenance of the status quo, otherwise the efforts to break it.

A stroll down the history of the patchwork city. Beirut is considerably a modern city, a significant capital in the

Middle East when in the late nineteenth century the Brits and the French started fancying the region. While Britain began investing in the port of Haifa, France raised the bar and refurbished the port of Beirut making it Europe's most productive gateway to the Middle East. The gated city of Beirut (what is now only its central district) was to expand in size and services and accommodate for international standards. It was to become 'Little France' with a centre that was a replica of Paris. With more services and opportunities offered in the city, the population was rising exponentially, bringing people from all corners of the region. Beirut was officially recognized as a capital, economically, judicially, educationally and culturally.

Through Lebanon's on-going sectarian strife, Beirut has always been home to a diversity of sects that usually harmoniously coexisted. Throughout the twentieth century, as the political turmoil meddled with religious beliefs, different sects started pulling away into respective neighbourhoods, huddling together for the securitization of living amongst their breed. Neighbourhoods of Beirut started carrying socioeconomic, sectarian and political labels of identity. This was still happening at a relatively slow rate until the civil war of 1975 when Beirut was sliced into a Christian East Beirut and a Muslim West Beirut, along Damascus Road; a demarcation line, a green line, a no-man's land, securitized and militarized to the degree that the osmosis from one side to the other

was practically impossible. The fifteen-year civil war meant that the two sides of the city had to develop to become self-sufficient, and the harshest sectarian division along the green line would be the most apparent stitch in the city, the largest artery in the patchwork with branches on either side.

Following the war was a reconstruction process, aiming to refurbish the city as a whole but focusing particularly on the central district. The result of the reconstruction thus far has stitched up a new artery, subdividing Beirut into the fully recovered versus the severely devastated. Further linkages were broken, further communities were isolated. In the meantime, political and sectarian lines across the different neighbourhoods thickened within the capital, in ways only noticeable via their experience. Sectarian and political flags, graffiti, posters, banners, bollards on the sidewalks, public space practices, road diversions, road blocks, even at times security cameras, music blasting from car radios, news oozing through balconies, sounds of mosques and churches, and street talk and conversations; all these can contribute to the signification of neighbourhoods. By now you have the obvious stitches of the city combining fabrics of totally different colours, and the intricate ones that thicken and loosen through grey scales of time and space.

The particularity of El Khoder neighbourhood. Bordering El Khoder are lines so harsh that underscore its induced isolation. An island in East Beirut detached from all sides, El Khoder is secluded from the rest of the city with highly severed access into it. To its east lies the Beirut River, currently running on a concrete channel and paralleled by a highway. In the 1950s, a wide seaside highway was constructed south of the neighbourhood, to connect the north of Lebanon with Beirut. This highway is now one of the most congested and key arteries leading into the city's historic core. A neighbourhood once known for its vibrant and frequented public beach, its northern boundary has been

BEIRUT - Patchwork city



continuously redefined over multiple phases since the 1920s while the port of Beirut at its west expanded into its north cutting its access to the Mediterranean Sea. Its proximity to the port and location on the periphery of Beirut has motivated the centralization of Beirut's industrialization, and has since labelled it as such. Factories and warehouses of various sizes are found around the residential blocks and along the highway.

El Khoder has served as domicile to a variety of sects and ethnicities. Following the Armenian genocide, many Armenians relocated within and around the area, most of which resorted to temporary shelters of a quarantine camp. The Armenians also contributed to the creation of the first slum in Beirut within close proximity to El Khoder. Those who eventually moved out of the area left their shelters behind for other migrant and transient populations to occupy, including Kurds, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese from other regions of the country. While on the periphery of Beirut's municipal vicinity but also neighbouring the financial core, El Khoder has been an ideal and affordable location for the workforce in Lebanon. Nonetheless, El Khoder's natives are landowners associated with the once greatest and most successful slaughterhouse in Beirut. With roots so deep in their land, they have been resourceful within their premises. They have little interaction with the world they are so excluded from beyond the highway. Though scarce, they seek educational and employment opportunities within or around their homes. Though surrounded by heavy urbanization, their sense of enclavement has produced the 'othering' of the rest of Beirut, and their self-identification as a village.

During the sectarian Civil War, El Khoder neighbourhood, along with those around it, was deeply affected. One year into the war, the neighbourhood was completely razed during what is referred to as the Karantina massacre, leaving hundreds killed and many others fleeing elsewhere. Weeks before, a massacre fell through in the adjacent port

in which many residents of El Khoder (in particular the Muslims) were employed. This massacre gave the Christians domination of the port, and therefore an economic weapon in the country. Two back-to-back massacres, the growing power of Christian parties, and the strategic location of a poor and diverse neighbourhood in East Beirut with a handful of unwelcomed Muslim residents, left El Khoder doomed to fall victim in a war loaded with sectarianism and stigmatised residents. After the war, the once diverse neighbourhood became a patchwork of exclusive and isolated communities. The buildings still suffer bruising from the war and residents of different sects barely communicate. The neighbourhood gets little attention from the municipality, and is barely recognized by the majority of the Lebanese population. The identities assigned to the neighbourhood – associated with the nearby industrialised land, port, slaughterhouse, and junkyard – have all contributed to further stigmatising and geographically excluding the residents.

Grassroots efforts to patch up the fabric. After much back and forth about consolidating a controversial development plan that extends from the Beirut Central District towards El Khoder, the plan has faced a deadlock. Efforts for reconciliation from the war, achievement of social/spatial justice and claiming the right to the city have emerged in the form of activism, where civil society organizations and communities collaborate to stir change on different scales. Development on community scale has picked up, formally and informally, to appropriate spaces and spatial practices. Grassroots development is providing leeway that overcomes centralized decisions that tap into policies, bureaucracies and procedures.

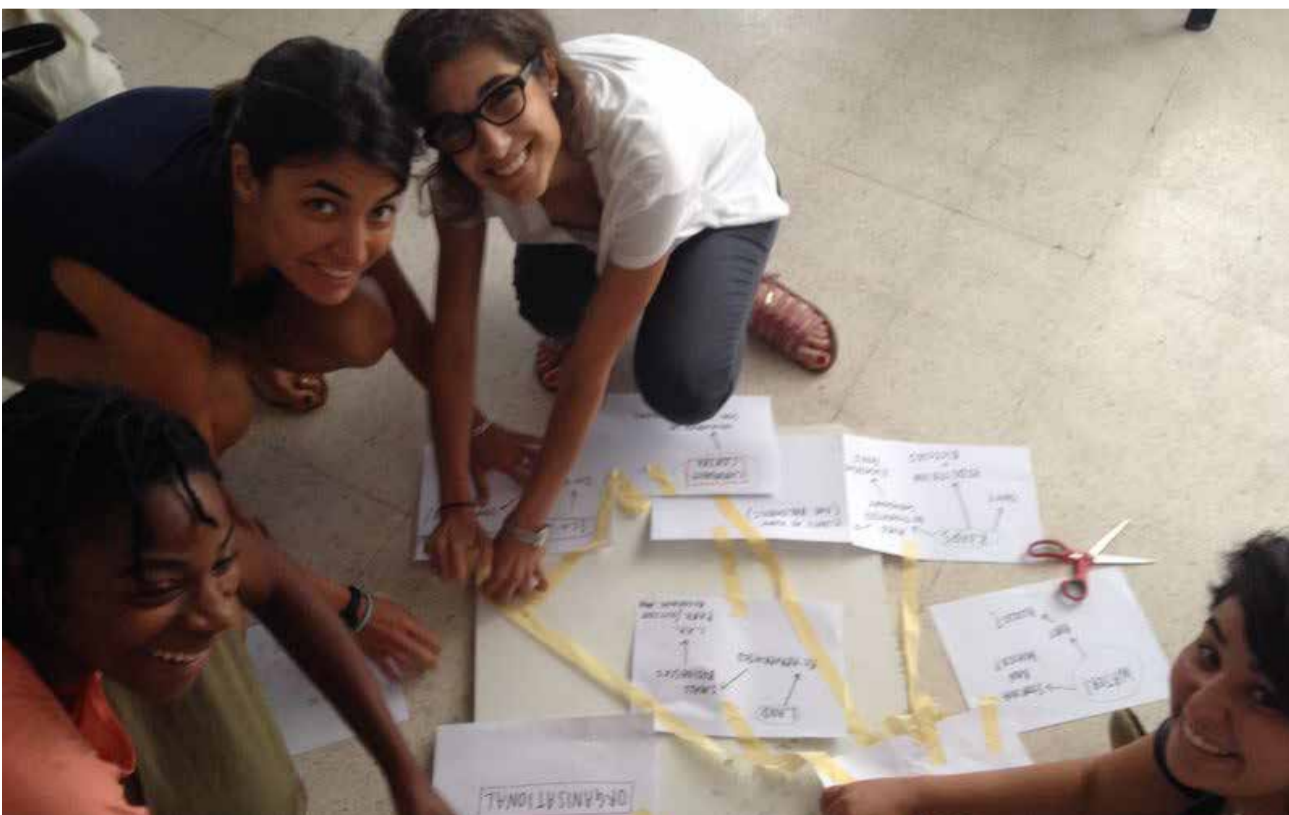
The neighbourhood of El Khoder had long been neglected, but is recently making an appearance on the map. Over the past year, its residents have been collaborating with Public Interest Design Levant (PID Levant), an organisation thriving to create sustainable

communities with the aim to implement a grassroots local development plan. Using a human-centred approach, PID Levant works within the communities and collaborates closely with the residents to address the cultural, social, environmental and economic parameters required to positively transform urban and rural environments. Subsequently, PID Levant acts as a facilitator and coordinator to match the needs of the communities with resources provided by the civil society as well as the public and private sectors.

An opportunity to collaborate on the ground. The Patchwork City workshop was an opportunity for PID Levant to exchange knowledge with academic institutions (the Development Planning Unit and the Design programme at ALBA) and practitioners from various backgrounds in order to collectively construct real world, implementable and affordable strategies towards enhancing the neighbourhood of El Khoder. Participants of the workshop worked closely with PID Levant to understand the systems and pillars of El Khoder, navigate across the residents and their urban practices, and pinpoint elements worth building on. The different teams of participants presented their strategies tackling short, medium and long term plans for sustainable uplifting of the neighbourhood aesthetically, economically, environmentally, culturally and socially. Their proposals were holistic and human centred and encouraged participatory development. The proposals have been assumed by PID Levant as baselines for future interventions in the neighbourhood.

The outcome of the transformation that PID Levant encourages in the neighbourhood would locate it back on the map, as an economically sufficient patch in the urban fabric, with empowered residents capable of taking charge of positive change in their local setting and integrating with their surroundings. While El Khoder is in fact detached from the rest of the city along harsh lines, change beyond the physical realm can bridge it back.





BEIRUT - Patchwork city

The patchy patches practice: stock of the *possibles* in the patchwork city

by Camillo Boano

The French philosopher Henri Lefebvre said “there is no thought without a project, no project without exploration – through the imagination – of a possible, a future [...] there is no plan without utopia [...] there is no social space without an equally distributed stock of *possibles*”.¹

Although convoluted as in all his *oeuvre*, Lefebvre’s point is clear: contemporary urban issues and their material conditions cannot be detached and considered as simple as unintended consequences of decisions made elsewhere – in the sheer contingency of a historical progression, and leaving untangled the very complex nature of design (being trapped in the tension between inertia and production, between projection and realization, between passive provision and active production).

El Khoder, as many other urban territories in Beirut, is a complex articulation of a multiplicity of spatial devices and narratives waived together in a patchwork of urbanisms: a sectarian and violent one made by the different waves of refugees and displaced families and individuals that populated the area, a leisure one made by the hyper-technological techno-monstrosity of Bernard Khoury’s B018 disco conceived as urban antidote to the dark past of the Karantina neighborhood, and a logistic and transport-driven one – almost generic in nature – made by the port and the highway artificial and hyper functional borders. The built and practised space of El Khoder does appear a stitched urban assemblage. It is organised around the tensions between the

contemporary urban arrogance of private projects and ‘beautification’ schemes that promote private ownership on a large scale (introducing mortgage market as financial model) and the humble, slow, livelihood-centred life of inhabitants and their families. El Khoder is not autonomous; rather it is part of an enormous construct, an un-urbanism that reaches beyond its city limits to engage in a territorial scale. El Khoder is not simply a site: it is both an actor and a locus of the heterogeneous and quite conflictive relations of people and material objects that are present and contingent to its spatial reality.

Walking, mapping, speaking, recording, navigating, representing and playing El Khoder was like staring at the 1349 Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s fresco in the Palazzo Pubblico di Siena “*Effetti del buon governo sulla città e sul contado*”² and witness the multiple, complex and thick agencies at play in such urban environment and immersed in the ‘stock of *possibles*’ mentioned above, including the negative ones. The *possibles* that emerged from El Khoder are definitively pointing to a recalibrated Design. An impure and sometimes inoperative praxis that is not a clear, neutral, fixed discipline but more a discursive and spatial complex

practice, a mongrel with a sheer range of discipline, theories and methodologies and problematic. However, all of them, in a manner or in another and in their more general approximations, made urban design ultimate about place (old/new, physical/social, real/virtual, small/big, etc) and all the processes that, for good or ill, intentionally or unintentionally shape it for its users.

Rediscovering the potentials of urban design in El Khoder was, for all the participants, diverse in background, age and nationalities, first to abandon the arrogance of preconceptions around use, aesthetics, space and agency and to articulate design as an expanded field – an experimental and continuous movement made by non-expert conversations in space and in time. Any attempt to capture the multiple territories of practices and experiences in El Khoder was an open search for a broader definition of design as a space to co-produce urban knowledge, questioning the role of architecture and its relevance as potential answer in the stock of *possibles* able to offer a counter narrative of that particular part of the city and mobilising new sites of critical intervention.

We consciously chose this setting in order to encourage participants to see design and planning as a transformational activity that addresses power dynamics and inequality beyond El Khoder’s specific contingencies, thinking on a Beirut-scale where conflict lines, territorial competitions and ordinary

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vibrant self-made-urbanity are at play with multiple, complex and thick agencies.

The social drift of design and architectural practices is not to be understood here as a simplistic act of expansion (relevance) or justification (theoretical or geographical) but as the recognition and the re-situation of urban conditions as both production of forms, spaces and constructed environments and spatial processes and their complex urban discourses. As such, a recalibrated narrative of urban design aims to avoid the reductionist approach of the old design *conundrum*: social or form, preoccupations with space determinism, spatial fix and neoliberal corporate aesthetics opening the *possibles* of El Khoder reframing invisible patterns.

All the experiences made in the short and intense week of work in Beirut were an attempt to move beyond expert knowledge, carrying both the process by which places and spaces are produced as well as the product that emerged as a result of a sort of 'wiki process'; an open-source exploration. The engagement in such processes required for everyone to make their relevant belief and knowledge – professional and personal – vulnerable. In refusing a conventional, safer, expert-based, object-oriented, aesthetically pure design culture, the different discursive and spatial narratives that emerged from the embodied immersion in El Khoder affirm the power (latent, potential or explicit) of design to make substantial contribution to the messy vitality of everyday life in service of the promise of lives well lived, of just cities, of good places and equality.

One of the projects developed in El Khoder catalysed the latent variegated narratives, focusing on the communities' mentality developing 'softer', less invasive strategies aimed to reverse the isolation of the area and reconnect it with the rest of the city. The project develops vertical arts, colours abandoned facades, creates a community memory photograph exhibition and a series of catalytic activities to reactivate space and connections. Another project titled evocatively as "the net" looked at how some left over, misused and obsolescent spaces in the area (an abandoned school, an empty lot, a house for rent and a Maronite dilapidated building, could all be reactivated through reconnections at different levels: reprogramming their use, re-imagining their visibility and restoring their connectivity. A project focused on a re-naturalisation of the area using green and vegetable 'gardening' as spatial strategies to reconnect the different fragments of

the area and to stimulate urban food production. Whereby this food production is not merely limited to its spatial dimension, its network became catalyst for green economy initiatives and a re-signification of the 'land use' through the development of an urban promenade as a spatial device for resocialisation that could also stimulate new possible pathways of transformations. A movie and a branding exercise were also developed as new narratives and places to air the collective voices of the people in El Khoder.

In El Khoder, design was conceived as the programmatic attempt to creatively strategise, in a specific time and space, the transformative potential of an intervention. Such a definition of design, while provisional and instrumental, carries a twofold obligation related to both process and outcomes. On the one hand, it is meant to facilitate a comprehensive imagination of transformations and changes ("there is no plan without utopia" to reuse Lefebvre's word)³. On the other hand, it implies a practice that aligns with public interest, with the collective will and voices of traditionally marginalized individuals' stock of *possibles*).

As such, design implies a new relation with the everyday that challenges its contingencies, its various codes, experiences and languages and that is developed in the encounter with the urban reality. Multiple forms of knowledge (artistic, scientific, philosophical, place based and historical ones) were exchanged facilitating reciprocal learning, the power to act, the potential to release the forces at play to work in places with a weak design.

Urban design appears to be organised around the refusal, disagreement to professional conventions and the creation of an autonomous field of creativity. Again it is located in the variety of experiences and practices that continue questioning the relationship between architect and political power, between client and service, between ideology and built form doing it as refusal (to engage in what is deemed unjust), subversion (of forms and languages) and retreat (in words, paper and pedagogy). A practice more attuned with an imperfect dialectical relation between the material and the social that approaches architecture not as the image of the political but as an integral part of a more messy politics, in which the materiality of architecture matters as much as those actually producing and using it.

Walking, mapping, discussing, recording, playing and drawing in El

Khoder were taking sides with urban politics through a design research: a form of research not simply ameliorative and focused on revealing injustice – rather, a research attempting to create anew possible futures: the stock of *possibles* in Lefebvre's words.

In taking stock of such *possibles* design and designerly way of researching are using a design perspective both as a vehicle to understand space and as a means to achieve spatial equality – suggesting multi-scalar, consequential and incremental strategies of urban interventions.

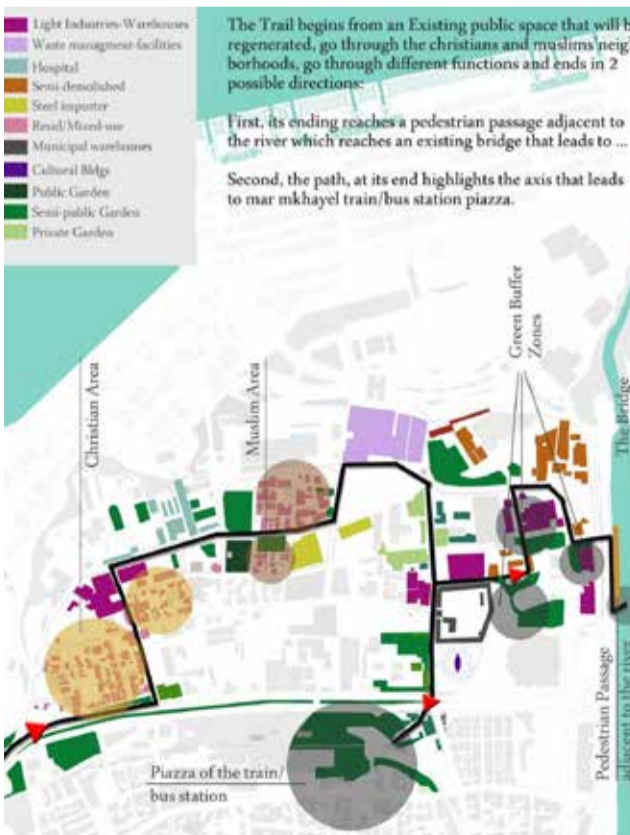
In a moment where urbanism represents everywhere a contested site in which capital, politics, everyday social relations and environmental politics are simultaneously organised and fought actively, the experience of the DPU summerLab in Beirut becomes an 'architecture of engagement' as it unfolds the capacity to reconsider and recalibrate the engagement of design to uncover transformative praxis, embracing a different mode of enquiry design: active, relational, collective, embedded, reflexive and transdisciplinary, which requires a different mode of thinking and researching space and urbanity.

The DPU summerLab in El Khoder was a practice mode of work energised by the power of designerly thinking and motivated by the mix of participant which try to escape self-referentiality, be politically engaged, envision citizenship and use participative tools to leverage for marginalised groups, towards a more democratic urbanity. This ethico-political focus for practice transforms designers into 'angels with dirty faces': their feet on the ground not to suffer utopian delusion, bound to earth and working with non-elites; yet 'angels' with visions, optimistically sceptical against capitalist forces, as Jeremy Till reminds us.⁴ It is a practice that enquires the architecture of engagement, a patchy patches practice – a non-arrogant, non-autonomous design that is urban in nature and in scale. It is a call that contributes to this vision.

Notes

- 1 Lefebvre, H. (2014) Towards an architecture of enjoyment (edited by Lukasz Stanek). Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, pp. 147-148.
- 2 'Effects of the good government on the city and the countryside'.
- 3 Lefebvre (2014), *ibid*.
- 4 Till, J. (1995) Angels with dirty faces. Collected Writings, pp. 1-5. Retrieved from: www.jeremytill.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/post/attachment/43/1995_Angels_with_Dirty_Faces.pdf.

BEIRUT - Patchwork city



In this page

Top: Spatial mapping of El Khoder neighborhood.

Centre: Rebranding the existing slaughterhouse and utilising local skills to generate income and improve community image.

Bottom: A trail connecting plots and neighborhoods and activating spaces for public use.

In the next page

Top: Urban agriculture utilising recycled materials.

Centre: A physical and digital net to connect and activate key locations of the neighbourhood.

Bottom: Mapping community actors and identifying their opportunities.

BEIRUT - Patchwork city



REQUALIFICATION



CONNECTION DIGITAL



CONNECTION DIGITAL

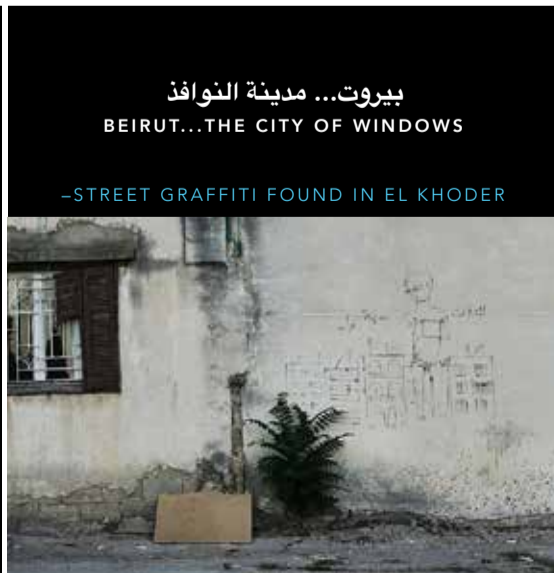


Gallery and Small Businesses
 Shipping Company
 Port
 Children
 Men
 NGO
 PID Levant

Entrepreneur
 Military
 Women
 Men
 Extended Families
 Youth

Light Industry
 Expats living in Lebanon and Abroad
 Potential Sponsors
 Educational Institutions

El Khoder Neighbourhood Development Association



Akil (UK)

One characteristically busy morning in ALBA, groups frantically prepare to present their ideas to the leaders of our DPU summerLab in Beirut, I snuck away from the madness to watch the fireworks of a nearby wedding that danced across the skyline of the Baouchriye neighborhood, visible from the university's top floor balcony. While out there, Lucien, a friend of mine from the summerLab, also joined me and amongst the furor of gunpowder explosions and car horns he told me that there was nowhere in the world like Beirut this week: "summer's almost over and *everyone* is in Beirut".

'Everyone' was truly in the DPU summerLab. The synergy with which the groups in the Lab worked and the remarkably interdisciplinary approaches that invoked the ideas were the result of a plethora of disciplines and backgrounds; from architects to economists, English, Lebanese, Italian, Chinese and much more. As an undergraduate of an explicitly interdisciplinary degree, Arts & Sciences at UCL, it was the definitive realization of a vision that lecturers had been relentlessly selling and reinforcing. I've never had the privilege of using my design skills alongside and in direct interaction with the economic, planning, managerial, architectural, social and photographic skills of others and the results – even more so the process towards the results – overwhelmed me.

My group, Urban Urgency (affectionately but mistakenly dubbed with the acronym “, ,” or Wah-Wah by yours truly) had such a wide mixture of abilities that just on sight of the names on my team list I couldn't help but grin. We had an Economics undergrad with a magnificent flare for photography, an urban planner with invaluable experience in NGO and community-based work and two Lebanese architecture students at AUB and ALBA respectively, not only providing us with vital trilingual proficiency but also architectural and design based knowledge of Beirut that we could not have done without. The variance in expertise wasn't just intriguing but incredibly effective in practice. We were able to mix our disciplinary theories and practical methods to tackle the social and political complexities involved in providing a 'design intervention' to the neighborhood of El Khoder. Also by relating what we observed through interaction with the residents of El Khoder and with our individual skills and academic expertise we were able to reformulate many of our preconceptions and work dynamically by constantly challenge our ideas and existing knowledge.

Amer (Lebanon)

An international workshop is being held in our city, right next door, an opportunity not to be missed! And there we were, with a group of

complete strangers soon to be friends, we went on a journey through a city partially recovered from the residues of war, a city of patches. We immersed into one of these patches: "El Khoder". A neighborhood frozen in time and space, isolated at all levels. Our first observations were startling; the neighborhood was the last breathing village in Beirut!

We were lucky to have the support of PID Levant, and benefit from their built work and experience with the local community. I felt great responsibility, as the outcome of our work will add to their efforts, and perhaps present a potential for future plans. We got introduced to a stigmatized community eager for a fresh start. Being labeled as "Arab Al-maslakh" (a name relating to their origins and work in the slaughterhouse), the locals suffered prosecution during the civil war and were not allowed to recover afterwards. They were seen as a hindrance for development, an unwanted society in a prime location. However the community viewed land differently; it was *their* birth-place, *their* neighborhood. Indeed all the practices resembled a village rather than a city.

Our group chose economy and property as the main theme to proceed with, due to its importance as a determinant of the government's policies and attitudes towards the area. The flow of ideas was driven by a mutual recognition of the importance of property, the community skills, and the integration with the surrounding.

Our approach was to incorporate high quality local meat production within a branding and development strategy. Through the brand: "Meat Me", the premium product and the reactivation of the existing slaughterhouse into a sanitary, animal friendly meat production facility, we hoped to inverse the negative connotation and restore the local's pride in their profession and origins. As such, the project would transform the area into a meat production district, generating work opportunities and empowering the youth to pursue education and acquire professional knowledge and skill. This would be a feasible project, which could convey to the officials in their own language that the local community is here to stay, as a part of a unique, prosperous El Khoder area.

Antonello (Italy)

Beirut, before being a city, has its own tale, and the DPU summerLab gave us the opportunity to be a part of it and to study it from the only level in which it was possible to understand it: the level of the ground and its four-dimensional path.

By walking through its roads, by eating its food, by talking to its people we have discovered the city as a unique experience in real time. This has allowed us to interpret Beirut like users more than passive observers and the discussion

groups have helped us to turn a personal experience into a collective one.

The classtime was the conclusive summary of our impressions and the necessary tool through which we could turn the city observations towards an operative purpose. This was a necessary phase of our interpretative process and thanks to the ideas-sharing with other groups we could feel the workshop as a whole system in which each one of us was just a part. The opportunity of working in groups in part compensated for the short time of the workshop; our shared personal experience was turned into collective knowledge that is much stronger than the individual repository. For instance, first-hand knowledge of local colleagues became fundamental in highlighting urban aspects hard to single out by external visitors.

As an architect, I do believe in cities as the most material and permanent among human acts and the closer and the more absorbed you are to cities, the more complex and fascinating this phenomenon appears. The DPU summerLab in Beirut expressed all of this and it has been a great experience in which, not only have I had the possibility to study one of the most fascinating cities in the world, but also I earned a new growth of sensibility toward the whole subject of urban development.

Hayat (Lebanon)

Being an architect and an urban design student, my interest and concentration have strongly been directed to the shock our city Beirut has been receiving from the real estate development boom and the drastic changes in its urban form and fabric. However, after participating in the DPU summerLab, my perception has shifted to the importance of investigating areas which have been frozen in time, and isolated in space, causing their neglect and deterioration. One of the reasons I chose to participate was the fact that I had no clue about the presence of El Khoder residential island inside the industrial district of Medawar. It was tempting for us to ask, how can we stitch this piece to the rest of the patchwork city through community generated development?

It was impressive and exciting how in a very limited time we were able to imagine the future of this neglected area through long and short term proposals of major development regulations and urban acupuncture projects. I imagine these proposals as catalysts that could gradually improve El Khoder. Working on different themes, I believe we were all able to cover the most important aspects of this neighborhood's development and upgrade. Each proposal looked into the methodologies of implementation, the different stakeholders, time frames, flexibilities and benefits for the community. Perhaps the most important outcome of the summerLab is

that it allowed us to understand the ways in which to work in an interdisciplinary way. Thoughts and ideas became the result of the collaboration between architects, urban designers and planners, economists, social scientists, and artists. This interdisciplinary approach gave a certain sense of logic and reality to our proposals, making them not just imaginary interventions, but ideas that could one day be implemented. .

Jiayi (China)

Attending the SummerLab in Beirut was an outstanding experience that had a number of significant positive impacts on me. It was an incredible opportunity to be taught by experts in the field who actually made their lecture “live”, and spent considerable time leading us to explore all the city corners and answer questions both in and beyond the classroom. It allowed us to study in a friendly but challenging environment, and encouraged us to develop a sense of community and ambition towards our future studies and works. Living and cooperating with people from different academic backgrounds gave me numerous ideas on how we might better understand each other’s fields of expertise and genuinely appreciate the value and validity of them. All of these stunning viewpoints were so inspiring and worthy of further research and implementations.

For someone like me born and bred in an island in Southern China, learning about Lebanese history and civil society was indeed a rare chance to exchange ideas and life experience with local people belonging to different age, religious and political groups. It has greatly enriched my multi-dimensional thinking towards the Middle East. I was also able to experience outstanding mosques, architectures and social environment, which can be regarded as an education. Thank you Beirut! You’ve given me that first breath of ancientness from a fabulous city that has stayed with me ever since.

Maurice (Lebanon)

Our aim was to plan an urban intervention by shedding the light on the main problems of the El Khoder neighborhood. The complexity of El Khoder was challenging. With its social division, economic recess, lack of resources, education and fragile infrastructure, we had to divide our team into multiple sectors each looking into a specific problematic.

Reconnecting this urban slice to the city cake is a sensible matter. To get there, political and social conflict solutions needed to be found. Rethinking and exploring the various resources such as the slaughterhouse and geographic position of the area provided ideas for a better economy and urban infrastructure. But the most important points to apply were the needs of the locals, brainstorming on how to use their

existing skills and culture was a great asset to strengthen the vision we aimed to accomplish.

Thanks to the many international students who joined us and shared their knowledge with us, we were able to get different perspectives and opinion regarding the solutions and impact. Their opinions proved to be outstanding since they could perceive Beirut with different eyes than the Lebanese, ask questions and propose solutions with a different philosophy.

At the end of the summerLab, we summed up various interesting solutions; most of them were focused on facilitation, collaboration and renovation. These solutions met the demands of the challenge in terms of investment, time and complexity... a piece of cake.

Zeina (Lebanon)

Coming from an environmental engineering background, the process of interacting with stakeholders and developing ties with communities was what I was looking forward to. It shed light on the importance of the process, rather than just focusing on the outcomes. In urban interventions, outcomes are complex, difficult to define and very context specific, and I would argue, are not for the planner/urbanist to determine. Outcomes are and should be the result of the communities’ visions, aspirations and aims. On the whole, El Khoder’s residents had a difficult time identifying and consolidating desired outcomes and visions for their community. Towards the end of the workshop, it was becoming clearer that our role as urbanists is to facilitate the path to and develop the community’s capacity for self-governance.

The most valuable experiences and discussions for me were those that questioned the meaning, purpose, form and extent of urban interventions. To what extent do urbanists, especially at a nongovernmental and academic level, have a role in shaping and reshaping the lives, realities and physical and social surroundings of others? How is that role demonstrated on the ground? Do we act as planners and proposers, or merely facilitators, listeners and assimilators of the opinions, needs and aspirations of the communities we work with? Are urban interventions necessary? Will they bring about the required positive transformation in these communities? Who defines positive transformation and how?

The workshop allowed me to re-examine and redefine a city whose social and physical structure I had taken for granted for a long time; to view Beirut as a patchwork of sub-cities which have taken on drastically different development paths over the years, physically, socially and economically. It provided an excellent framework to approach an overwhelmingly complex and problem-ridden city, in every minute, slow and

calculated steps, allowing us to disintegrate issues, isolate spaces and focus on issues and details one by one, while recognising that these complexities are inherently interlinked and they can only be addressed through integrated solutions. On the whole, our enquiry revealed the complexities of urban interventions, which combine political, social, historic economic and environmental contexts and highlighted the core meaning of social urbanism: involving community actors as crucial planning partners, highlighting that what Beirut needs is social development more than anything else.

Katherine (UK)

Beirut is certainly a city of contrasts. Touring the city on foot showed a city emerging fascinatingly from its chequered history. From the unavoidable bullet torn buildings to architectural marvels, luxury Dubai style marinas, beautiful green-spaces and edgy pop up bars - Beirut is a city that contradicted all my expectations.

Considering spatial interventions for El Khoder was challenging. The area has a complex history and as a foreigner the importance of practicing planning as a context orientated activity could not have been clearer. The idea of any top-down interventions seemed totally implausible and inappropriate. As the workshop progressed it was clear that you cannot preconceive the outcome of your design interventions - they must be molded by a communities’ vision and aspirations.

My experience to date has been working on hard infrastructure projects so I chose to work on ‘softer’ projects with a focus on social issues. It was very clear that smaller scale and more immediate projects had a very important role to play, particularly given the absence of any significant funding for larger interventions in the area.

An unavoidable tension was how to balance ‘opening up’ El Khoder with the communities’ apprehension. While community members recognised the benefits of their integration with the wider city economically, and in reducing prejudice, they were apprehensive about what incomers would do to the area and how it would change. This made me think about the purpose of urban interventions and how you balance the needs of a community with those of newcomers.

Working on my projects made me reflect on a number of issues. Firstly the importance of gaining community trust while being conscious of not over committing to a community that has seen the involvement of agencies over a number of years. I also have appreciated the role of projects that happen in the shorter rather than longer term and those that work not just at the large scale but at the small scale, with people on the ground directly.

BEIRUT - Patchwork city

Engaging differently with a familiar context

by Vrouyr Joubanian & Diala Lteif

Diala is an information and process designer with experience in visualisation, community work and field research. She is currently deputy director of the design department at ALBA (Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts) where she co-leads the global design studio to first year masters students.

Vrouyr is a multi-disciplinary designer and consultant with experience in products, services, and systems. He is currently a faculty member in ALBA's Design department, where he co-leads the first year graduate design studio in the Global Design Program.

At the design department at ALBA (Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts) we believe that collaboration is key to growth and success. In our definition, design is a participatory practice meant to serve the community and imagine preferred scenarios for our city.

When both Public Interest Design-Levant (PID-Levant) and the Development Planning Unit approached us to host the first Beirut edition of the summerLab, we were excited by an opportunity that matched our pedagogical objectives – and that would give our students the chance to interact with an international community and experience a field-work.

As the academic host, we became the meeting point of our different partners, where our role was to bridge the two entities – DPU with the overall vision of the urban laboratory and PID as a key to the neighborhood – while providing both the physical and intellectual the space for all the involved parties to collaborate.

We also designed the process of the workshop and introduced our methodology while combining it with BUDD's own.

Overall our experience was very positive in terms of the success of the event. In this reflective piece, we measure the intellectual shift our students experienced during the summerLab, and our own learning as facilitators from this collaboration.

The students. This was the very first exercise of our academic year in the first-year graduate Global Design studio.

It played the role of an intensive boot camp to give our students a quick and effective overview of our usual process and get them in shape for the rest of their graduate studies.

Condensing the whole process of designing – from contextual research to design proposals – in one week was an intense and stimulating exercise for all of us that resulted in training the students to work under time pressure and various unexpected field constraints.

The multi-nationality and the difference in cultural and professional backgrounds (urban planners, social scientists, economists, architects, designers, etc.) of the participants were essential drivers that triggered interesting conversations among the crowd. They brought together different perspectives to study the same space, based on diverse personal experiences. This resulted in an in-depth understanding of the context and the scale from the cityscape to the individual level.

The summerLab was especially enriching for our students, because they put on several different hats throughout the week. From being the local geographical guides, sharing their experiential knowledge of Beirut at the beginning of the workshop, they took on eventually the role of connectors between the locals and the internationals, serving as language and cultural translators. The overall experience developed amongst the Lebanese participants higher emotional intelligence since they empathised with the locals to gather data and communicate

it back to their international peers. This created an opportunity to reflect on one's own experiences and externalise tacit knowledge.

The facilitators. In our design practice, we have organised several workshops and charrettes where we typically relied on design research tools (such as affinity mapping, persona creation, user walkthroughs, etc.) to guide the creative process in a specific context. Although we embrace uncertainty, we often tend to design a structured process and 'trust' it. Building on the methodology of the summerLab and the MSc Building and Urban Design in Development allowed us to take a step back and look at this process through a different lens: one that questions the immanent structures of the social and built environment, pushing us for instance to perceive the unexpected roadblocks throughout our journey as areas of opportunity.

By combining our continuous feedback loops and the daily debrief led by Camillo Boano, a dynamic atmosphere was created amongst the teams, which fostered critical thinking and created a shared understanding.

Another valuable insight was the importance of semantics and the choice of words that influenced our mindsets. Camillo Boano created a shift in our approach by contesting the use of the term 'solution' when designing. By acknowledging that our role is not always to 'solve' but to 'propose,' we as facilitators ease our students into reaching socially responsive design strategies.

The summerlab was a nourishing experience for our department as a whole, by giving both faculty and students the chance to engage differently with a familiar context. Through this experience we were able to create a true interdisciplinary practice and build promising partnerships.

BEIRUT - Patchwork city



Acknowledgements

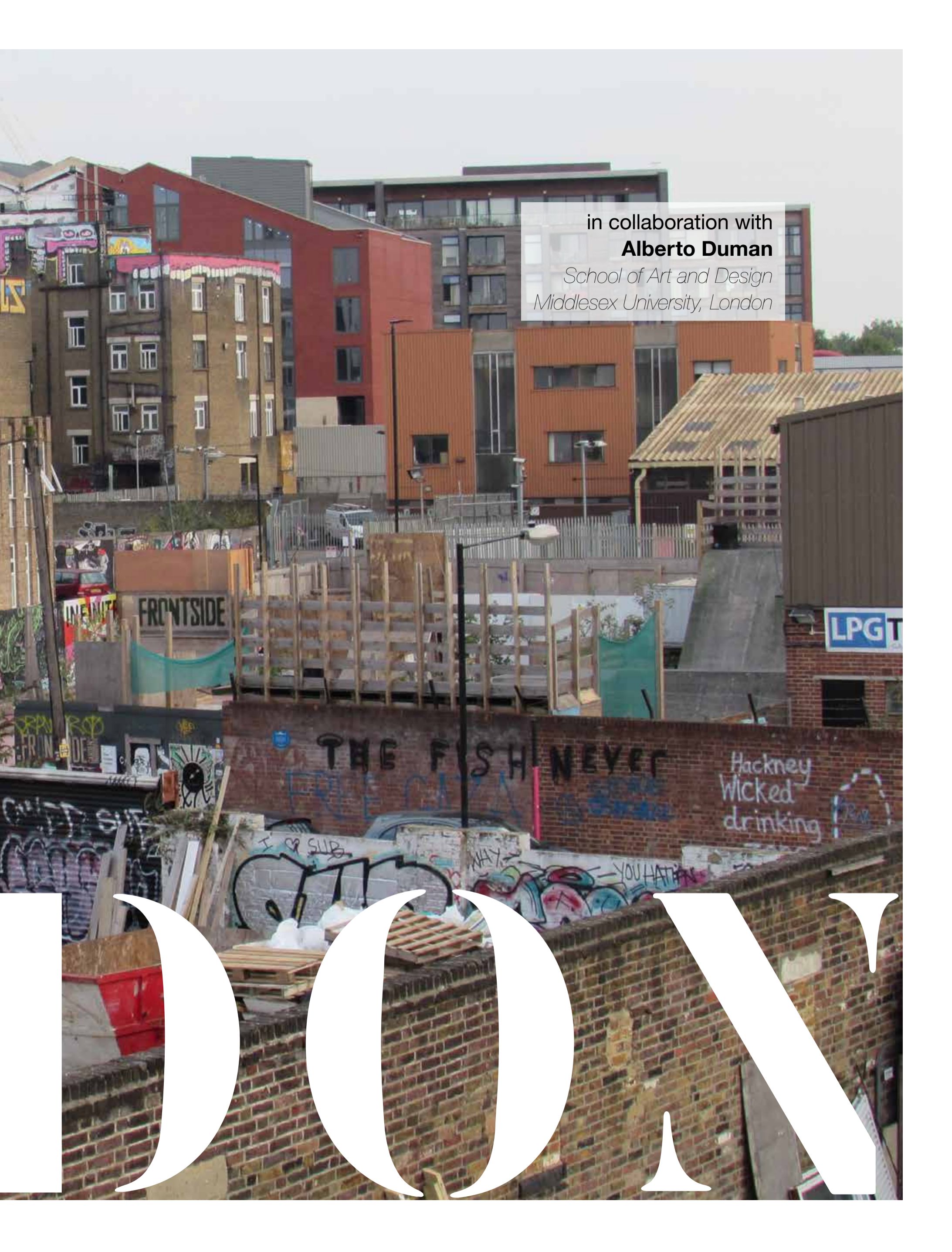
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in collaboration with
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DON

LONDON - Localising Legacies

Meanwhile...in Newham Travels across the 'Arc of Opportunity'

by Alberto Duman

The summerLab in London was initiated by a spatial and temporal reflection on the long-running narrative of the 'Arc of Opportunity' in Newham, which accompanies the current borough-wide regeneration masterplanning project.

While revisiting last year itinerant workshop model, we decided to include, rather than select among, all the three main areas of Newham: Stratford, Canning Town and the Royal Docks. This decision was mainly due to the desire to explore how different personal stories intersect with the official narrative of this 'Regeneration Supernova'¹ – as described by Newham Council and the LDA when the 'Arc of Opportunity' narrative became the framing device in the offering package for global investors at the Shanghai World Expo 2010.

Squeezed in between the fading horizons and uncertainty of the post-financial crisis period and the euphoric scenario of pre-Olympic dreams lying ahead, this 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity sale pitch, presented a 'blended governance' of London as Newham and Newham as London – instigated many of the conditions that we witnessed and discussed in our nomadic analysis of ground conditions in between deep transformation and lasting malaise.

As we cut our paths within its loose boundaries, the image of the 'Arc' became visible; the latest repackaging of the 1998 Newham masterplan terminology. The masterplan by David Mackay was the winner of the Newham Design Competition initiated by the New Deal for Communities and made possible thanks to funds available to high-ranking areas in the New Labour's Index of Deprivation. What became even clearer as we progressed, was that the formulation of 'new' initiatives in Newham had its own history of burials, excavations and resurrections, which reveals continuities and discontinuities shrouded as novelties. The limited range of options legitimised under a process of 'fashionisation' of urban planning as marketing has increasingly manipulated and

shrunk the realm of arbitration of available narratives of development in Newham. The consequent clouding of due process and lack of clear governance onto which demands can be made, has engendered an uneven territory of negotiation that is fertile for dynamic and mobile actors, but exhausting for those lacking in choices and inaccessible for others if not through occupation, disruption or direct action protest.

A few days after we met them to discuss their demands, in the Carpenters Estate in Stratford, one of these makeshift groups – the Focus E15 Mothers – took matters in their own hands and occupied four boarded-up flats in the Carpenters Estate under the banner '*Social housing, not social cleansing!*'.² Two weeks later and having made their point, they willingly left the flats having achieved the goal of pushing into public debate the matter of social housing maintenance and provision in Newham. Following their action, Sir Robin Wales, Mayor of Newham, has arranged the reopening of 40 flats in the Carpenters estate for occupation by social tenants.³ But whilst the large public exposure of the Focus E15 mothers' case might have galvanised a sanguine restoration of openly antagonistic public actions to expose the gap in social housing provision in Newham, it remains only a breach into the much broader issue of London's redundant urbanism.

In the currently developing regime of opacity encountered in our field explorations – where legal frameworks regulate public-private contractual agreements through confidentiality agreements and shifting alliances of capital investment are protected by secrecy until announced through press releases – the '*overriding motivation for urban activists to develop practices aimed at social transformation, not just the use of a set of*

tools aimed at the production of knowledge or solving a local problem'⁴ becomes increasingly slippery. The testimonials of many of our interlocutors brought up hopes and specific struggles but also raised crucial questions of disorientation into unaccountable or invisible processes, therefore hard to grasp or engage with in meaningful ways.

When everything is moving in shady territories, the only possibly effective mapping device is a lack of fixity of viewpoint whose line of enquiry is made by walking and whose data are harvested by successive encounters at all levels. As such, our process of observation meant shifting our positionalities and ranges of visibility: not to mirror the specificity of engagement of our guests but, rather, crossing their fields of action. This method allowed equally shifting dynamics to come to the fore as the main condition to confront and also as the point of departure to revisit the options open to the most vulnerable groups often without access to institutional support. As an example, in 2011, after overall budget cuts from the Government to all local authorities, Newham Council cut the budget for the Newham Tenants Federation, and transferred tenants representation within its own housing department. This action effectively silenced grassroots voices from the civic debate whose preferred option was the maintenance of social housing stock with options of refurbishment and more secure tenure rather than demolition of existing building and evident displacement.

Evidence such as this one, reveals the administrative manoeuvres for managing social dissent and the slant towards developers currently at play in Newham. It also highlights the growing need for new localized structures of representation, where emerging collective demands arising out of local narratives and perspectives may be discussed in community boards independent of the local authority but with say in the development of their areas.

LONDON - Localising Legacies

The plight of social housing tenants in the borough, the emergence of a fairground aesthetic in the Royal Docks reimagined as corporate showcase (Siemens' The Crystal, Brand Pavillions), financial enterprise zone (Asian Business Port) or architectural experimentation (The Floating Village), and the case of 'meanwhile' projects and 'creative placemaking' activities as the strategic interim uses in land under transitional property arrangements, were all quickly identified and proposed as the main viewpoints into this opaque regime of governance, in which disconnected, screened-off stories and perspectives press upon each other with bursts of friction, whilst looking for entry points to lobby for their claims.

The subsequent emergent necessity of the summerLab became that of critically engaging with the rhetoric of the 'Arc of Opportunity' narrative. In particular, we wanted to question the narrative's artificially evened-out and packaged surface. We also wanted to discuss the extent to which a more sober return to a language of opportunities affects the everyday of 'islands' such as North Woolwich, sandwiched in between the arrival of the Crossrail and the City Airport, a once-supposed 'temporary' remnant from the days of the London Dockland Development Corporation regime and now an encumbering local stakeholder in a pending demand for expansion. This particular point is expanded in the contribution offered in this same publication by Sue Brownill and Tamsin Omond, spanning over the 30 years between the People's Plan for the Royal Docks and the activities of Momentum, whose demands both centered on the City Airport as the crucial destabilising element for a possible reimagining of the Royal Docks.

Critical jump-cuts such as these kept emerging as we travelled across the Arc of Opportunity in its spatial and temporal narrative, ultimately defining the purpose of our passage as akin to a cinematic montage. For this reason, the 'Meanwhile...in Newham...' cue offered here, deliberately recalls the language of synchronous sub-plots in a film noir script and its overlapped multiplicity of events as seen from the 'celestial eye' of the narrator, as well as the specific terminology used to describe temporary projects assigned 'interim uses' in sites awaiting scheduled future developments.

Whilst keeping at bay the symbolic ills of overgrown buddleia and illegitimate occupation after the evacuation of previous land uses -mostly social housing- and the creation of large craters in the urban space for long reconstruction periods, these pop-up place holders are perhaps a fitting reference to the 'Regeneration Supernova' effect promoted by Newham in Shanghai in 2010. As space fillers, they act as movie sets within an

otherwise 'tabula rasa' effect caused by major scale developments. Also, this seemingly haphazard connection between dramatic cinematic devices and temporary uses of land has its own reason to exist, impinging as it does on the possible effects that an 'archeology of the recent past' – experienced in abandoned sites suspended between waste and resource – has on the urban landscape over time.

On the day that we walked behind the future Hallsville Quarter currently in construction, we came across a large abandoned portion of housing stock at the edges of the Keir Hardy estate, named after the founder of the UK Labour Party. Roughly boarded up but still accessible, this open air concrete and brick composting pile instantly rendered other uses of the term 'meanwhile' redundant and opened different views into the 'Arc of Opportunity' narrative. This impromptu encounter with the unwilling spectacle of 'ruin porn' standing in the shade of the Vermilion Tower, revealed more of the current dynamics at play under the Arc of Opportunity than many others. Decanted under the spell of an 'ambitious' regeneration plan stretching beyond its current financial limit, this still but synchronous appearance of otherness gave an appropriate measure of the distance between rhetoric and reality that is currently filled by other interim uses.

Meanwhile... in Canning Town... the fly-through promotional video of the Hallsville Quarter anticipates its own future by inserting in the animated hurly-burly of its computer generated life a 'Newham Biennale', asserting in the wishful presence of an imaginary forthcoming global art event its ultimate proof of a 'regenerated' city centre; another jump-cut, this time forward to ourselves, and a step towards the completion of the Arc.

During the day we spent at Caravanserai, still in Canning Town – the last remaining interim site of 'Meanwhile projects' left out of the 2012 Mayor of London initiative in Newham – we discussed the factor of temporality in a developing agenda of urban spatial justice and the possible value of temporary spaces with Mara Ferreri.⁵ As the conversation deepened, it became apparent that everything else around this elected and sanctioned zone of interim use was also predicated on a scale of limited, controlled temporalities, ranging from the arrangements for the temporary transfer of land in the Hallsville Quarter from Newham to the developers Bouygues, to the short-term letting of apartments in the Vermilion Tower under the brand of 'Fizzy Living' or the temporary occupation of the site opposite Caravanserai as temporary garden and allotment space by Core Landscapes,⁶ where all the planters are on pallets, fit to be relocated at the ready. As we

wrapped up our week-long incursion across the Arc of Opportunity, it appeared to us that the ambition of the managerially-led 'opaque city' we witnessed, is to make everything unstable, temporary and interim; market-led narratives or 'Arc of Opportunities' are simply employed to generate equally temporary consensus with objectives other than those declared. These short-term arrangements are the necessary precondition for sudden manipulations, hasty capital transfers and impromptu instrumental alliances that necessitate this ultimate mobility as the requirement to strike deals on the spot.

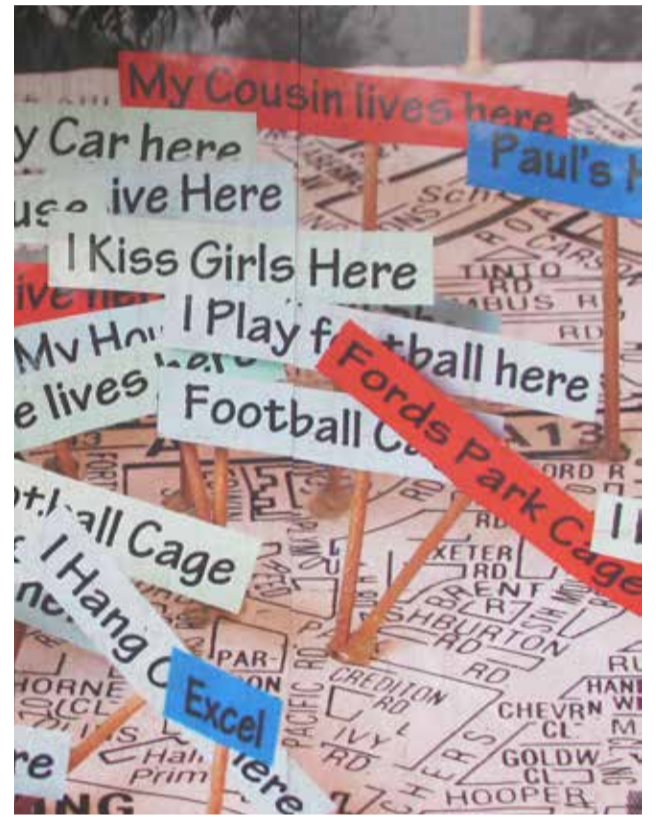
Governance structures as well as remnants of built environments are restructured and shored up to be prepared to such sudden burst and pruned accordingly to remove structural barriers to such requirements. If this view of the current urban regime in East London is correct, the fleeting, itinerant qualities rewarded in these 'meanwhile' places are dependent from these sudden shifts – as a way to resist any application of principles of urbanism or democratic governance, if not understood in a digitally recombinant, 'smart' management doctrine (such as that fostered in the Siemens' Crystal at Royal Victoria Docks, and nurtured in the co-produced pamphlet 'Investor Ready Cities').⁷

Temporality therefore emerges as the real determinant of spatial justice under the Arc of Opportunity of Newham; how to make a home in this environment has emerged as an act of resistance in itself. The pedagogy on the move of the London summerLab 2014 was offered as contingent to this awareness.

Meanwhile... in Newham...

Notes

- 1 Hancock, D. (2014) A 'Regeneration Supernova' is about to destroy East London as we know it. Retrieved from: www.vice.com/en_uk/read/dan-hancox-regeneration-supernova
- 2 Stone, J. (2014) Why I'm occupying a boarded-up east London council house. Retrieved from: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/23/why-occupying-boarded-up-east-london-council-house-social-housing
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LONDON - Localising Legacies

The Goldfinger effect: displaced narratives and popping-up legacies

by Giorgio Talocci

Most readers would know Goldfinger was the name of James Bond's main enemy in Ian Fleming's famous novel series. And many, probably, would know also that the villain was actually named after a great architect, precisely Erno Goldfinger.¹

The story tells us that Fleming had previously been amongst the objectors to the pre-war demolition of some cottages in Hampstead – removed to make way for a project by Goldfinger at 1-3 Willow Road (including his own house, at no. 2). And also that the architect was known for being a rather humourless and prone to rage man, deserving eventually to inspire agent 007 nemesis' character.

The latest London summerLab saw its participants in the need of transforming themselves, somehow, in secret agents fighting against Goldfinger, i.e. against a villain to be better identified in the grand narrative of the so-called Newham's 'arc of opportunity', (from Stratford to the Royal Docks passing by Canning Town), and in the political subjects that are interweaving its official discourses.

Such grand narrative is producing an urbanism that finds its perfect paradigm precisely in one of Erno Goldfinger's most celebrated works, the Balfour Tower in Poplar. The tower indeed embodies the visible outcomes of what we can define as the *Goldfinger effect*, namely an infinite series of displacements, both spatial and temporal ones:

- Space has been folded, stretched, curled up and then unfolded many times in Newham. The grand narrative of a successful 'arc of opportunity' has been relentlessly producing, conversely, micro-narratives of

displacements amongst the borough's once most deprived population – now being slowly 'replaced', in a bitter social turnover, by an upper-middle class that finds the E15 and E16 postcodes increasingly attractive and well connected to central London. Balfour Tower's transformation is exemplary of this trend: once part of a social housing estate, its original population have now been decanted and its flats are waiting to be retrofitted to accommodate a much richer population;²

- Time, as well, has been either expanded or shrunk in the artificial creation of permanent 'legacies' and temporary 'pop-up' spaces. While 'legacy' has been the keyword for winning the Olympics bid back in 2008 (and since then has become a very contested term), a multitude of temporary uses has popped-up in spaces whose destiny has been left unclear by authorities and developers. Again, Balfour Tower represents this tendency paradigmatically, representing in itself a terrific legacy of the Brutalist era (and now being commercialised as such) while being condemned, in the last six years, to acquire its significance during short periods of time, e.g. opening up its flats to the public for events, or temporarily renting them to artists who – a bit further back in time – would engage its inhabitants in collective performances while battling their displacement.³

If there exists a *Goldfinger effect* then – with Goldfinger in this case being interpreted

by an overlapping of the figures of Robin Wales, Boris Johnson, the Greater London Authority or any developer or investor having an interest in the land over the 'arc of opportunity' – any possible design act cannot do anything but, on one side, start from investigating Goldfinger's plan, to understand it and find its crevices in order to dismantle it. On the other side, this design act will have also to search for any possible 'resistant' reality, already contrasting such plan while emerging with its alternative stories and visions.

The 2014 London summerLab has been about this: about reading and interpreting the discourses of the several actors involved in the transformation of this part of East London; about listening to the stories of displaced people; about finding 'official' pop-up spaces and highlighting emergent ones; about localising – finally – legacies, in so doing creating an alternative narrative of the 'arc of opportunity' and strongly contesting the mainstream one. In the following pages of this publication the reader will find part of the elements of such 'Newham re-writing'; a collection of stories echoing the ones from Balfour Tower, subjects displaced in the space/time dimension while at the same time being the necessary elements (or ingredients) of a future Newham.

"They moved us around as if we were pigs", told us Sharon, an ex-resident of Clays Lane, an estate evicted and then demolished to make room for the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Thanks to her job at the NHS, Sharon can now live in a flat in the East Village, one of the official legacies of the Olympic Park itself. She makes

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fun of her triangular living room, although this was able to fit some fifteen of us while she was telling us her story. Although being better off than many of her former neighbours at Clays Lane, she is still struggling with high rents and isolation in the new Village.

Julian was from Clays Lane too, he had been living there for almost 20 years when he eventually got evicted. He is now in a temporary house, where he barely knows his neighbours – he is still in touch with the former ones, though it is harder now that everybody has been spread apart. He tells us of his campaigns against the new developments, and his memories go back to the old estate and its series of small courtyards, whereby people would sit outside and talk to their neighbours. There are courtyards today as well, much bigger though, and with green spaces looking very artificial; the commercial ground floors are not working properly yet, to the extent that each courtyard is basically empty during daytime.

Joe instead has not been evicted, but he definitely got very close to it. In his case, 'the villain' would have been UCL Estates, the real estate investments' arm of University College London (where I work too!).⁴ Joe joined a group of residents to protest against the demolition of the Carpenters Estate to make room for a new campus, eventually resulting in stopping the UCL East plan (actually just managing to move it a bit further away).⁵ Joe dreams about a mixed and diverse neighbourhood, where also newcomers are involved in the development of a stronger sense of community.

Jasmin belongs to the Focus E15 Mothers group, another displaced narrative in Newham and probably amongst the strongest and more transparent opponents of its Mayor. A few days after the summerLab ended, they occupied one of the empty units at the Carpenters Estate.⁶ The Mothers had been formerly evicted from the Foyer, a temporary hostel for 210 homeless young women and their babies, many of them with a past of domestic violence.

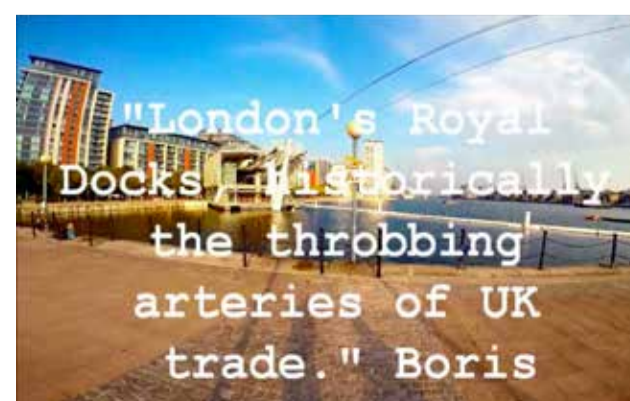
The Mothers are one of the emergent, though displaced, narratives that we envision making up Newham's future story. Their presence in the Carpenters Estate is probably temporary, but it is important to highlight their role as breach (a very successful one on the media) in a vision for the 'arc of opportunity' that so far had been portrayed as monolithic and flawless. Other breaches are opening – Momentum⁷ is being a powerful driver for the residents of North Woolwich for instance) – and other pop-up activities are striving, more or less successfully, to claim a permanent role and to configure as long-term legacies. As in the Balfon Tower though, the role of the temporary uses is problematic: the pop-up

space formula risks to become just another powerful tool in the hand of authorities and developers to drive further attention on some key areas, in order to eventually raise land values (and we are obliged to consider how this increase of value is often provided for free, since most pop-up realities work thanks to the commitment of volunteers).⁸ Brick Box, Core Landscapes, Assemble, Caravanserai (and the list could go on) are pop-up realities whose presence in the 'arc of opportunity' is under threat of both displacement and co-optation by the Goldfinger effect's masters.

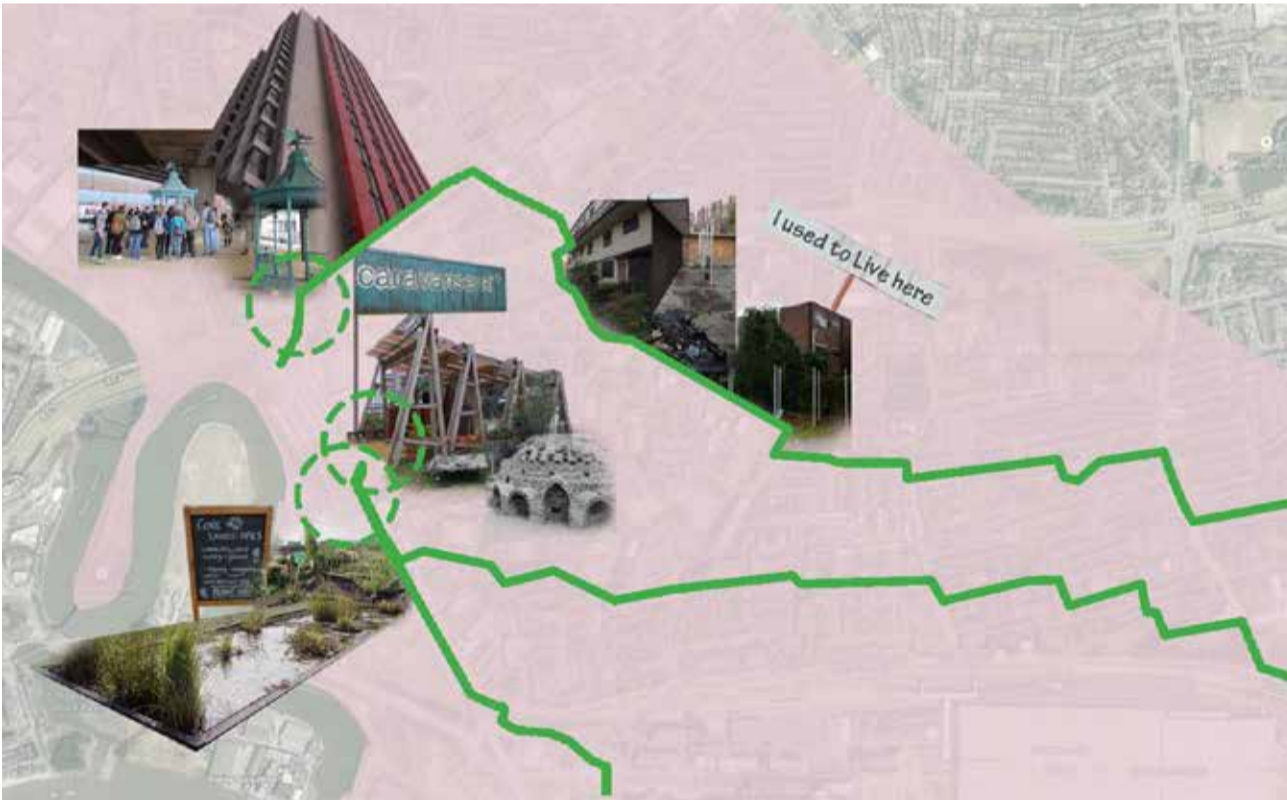
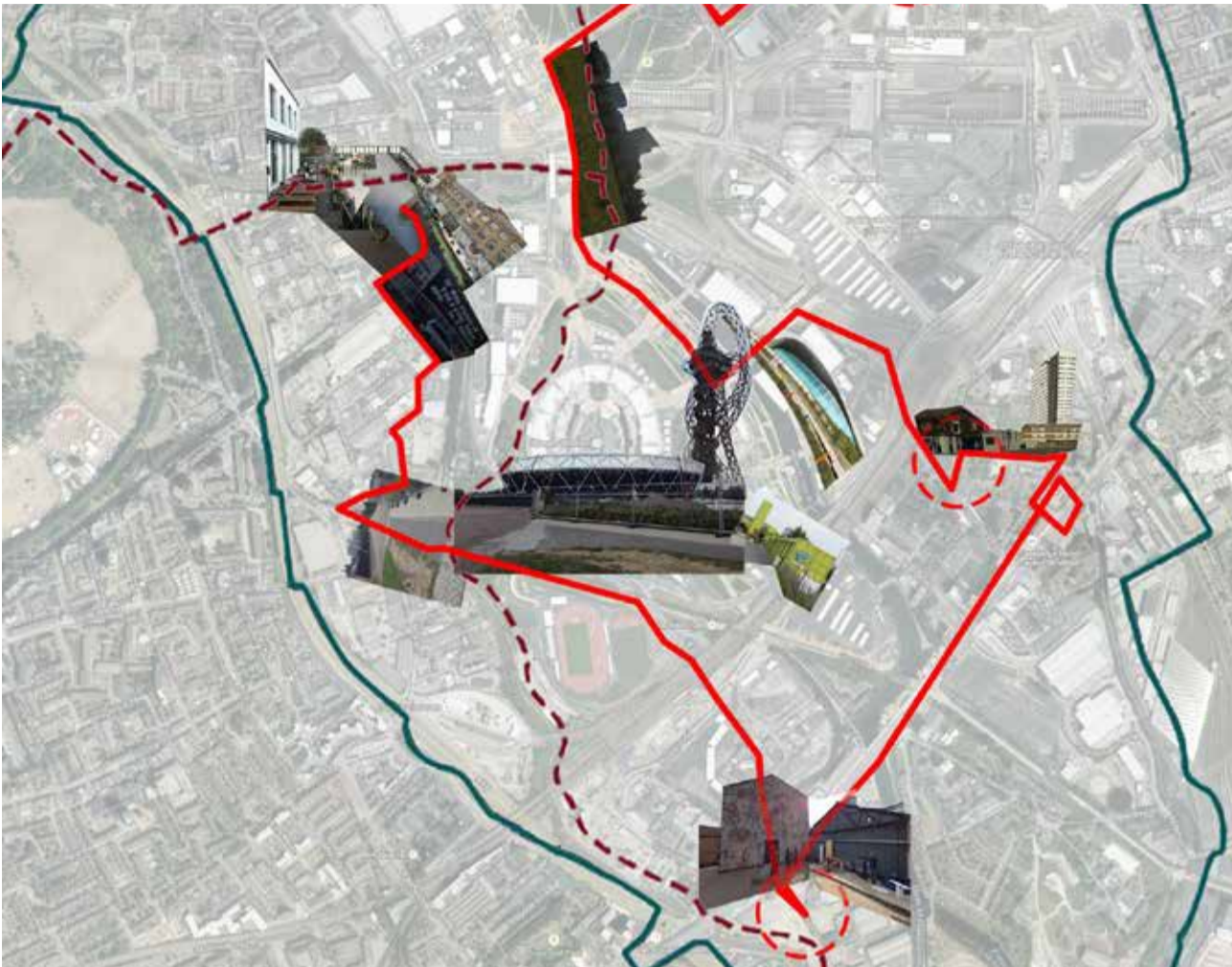
The DPU summerLab has been, on one hand, a collective effort about understanding and unmasking such Goldfinger effect. On the other hand, such effort has wanted to unveil a multitude of realities – or design elements, entry points – that, in spite of looking weak and isolated, are actually acquiring momentum and striving to reverse the displacing dynamics of the latest years. Their picture is still partial and incomplete, and linkages have to be strengthened and enriched: the first – paramount – design act, therefore, must place them on the map, making them visible and able to talk with each other. The London summerLab and its concluding event at the Building Crafts College in Carpenters Estate (and these pages too) are precisely this act of design.

Notes

- 1 Ezard, J. (2005) How Goldfinger nearly became Goldprick. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/jun/03/film.hayfestival2005>
- 2 Hunter, W. (2008) The future's golden for Balfon. Retrieved from: <http://www.bdonline.co.uk/the-future's-golden-for-balfon/3124933.article>
- 3 Wainwright, O. (2014) Wayne Hemingway's 'pop-up' plan sounds the death knell for the legendary Balfon Tower. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/architecture-design-blog/2014/sep/26/wayne-hemingways-pop-up-plan-sounds-the-death-knell-for-the-legendary-balfon-tower>
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- 7 See: www.facebook.com/themomentumproject
- 8 Ferreri, M. (2014) Values of Temporary Use. Retrieved from: www.academia.edu/8501141/Values_of_Temporary_Use



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In the previous page

Still frames from several videoclips shot along the London summerLab's path: the sheer overlapping with one single sentence, pronounced by a significant actor of the urban transformation, results often in a stark contrast between the perceived reality and the way this is phrased in the discourses of its political subjects.

In this page, and in the next one

The London summerLab has been about walking through the 'arc of opportunity' in Newham, from Stratford to the Royal Docks passing by Canning Town. It has been about mapping such 'arc' and let a possible alternative narrative of it emerge. These maps and the cards in the next pages represents the action of exploring Newham's emergent urbanisms and making them visible, and to give them voice through an act of design.

LONDON - Localising Legacies

Sharon



Why?
Sharon is an ex-resident and active community member of Clays Lane Co-op Housing and new resident of East Village in Queen Elizabeth Park. When the Queen Elisabeth Park started to be built, the residents of Clays Lane were evicted and Sharon and her family relocated to a house nearby. With her new home being currently refurbished and not being able to live there, her family was given a flat in the East Village, as part of her research at NHS. Having seen her community dispersed and fragmented, Sharon now hopes to be able to build something new. Through her position with the NHS, Sharon is comparably better off than some of her ex neighbors, however she still struggles with high rents and isolation in the new tower building and her children are affected by high unemployment rates and a lack of perspective in their lives. She is trying to set up a football club for the residents with the aim of rebuilding a sense of community for her family.

"They moved us around as if we were pigs without taking into account that there were real people living there in real communities."

"Housing is brutal in East London."

"Being poor shouldn't mean being left out."

Legacy:
The Olympics and the regeneration plan completely transformed Sharon's physical environment and disrupted community ties that had been built among residents of the area.



Rosie THE BRICK BOX

Why?
Rosie lives in a Community Interest Company working in the fields of arts and regeneration and committed to creating spaces that bring people together and encourage creativity.

The A15 Green
A temporary art-led regeneration project funded by Newham Council that runs along the A15 River in Green Lane during the summers of 2013 and 2014. Through a programme of events, Rosie has wanted to welcome a previously under-used space, bring local people together, and attract visitors to the borough while also exploring the longer term possibilities of the space.

Legacy:
By creating a space where people did not know about the project and Brick Box made it happen every week... Why not?

"We create atmospheres where everyone has the right to express themselves"

"This wasn't just an art project but an exercise in placemaking and people-led regeneration."

Nemone Core Landscapes

Why?
As the Historical Manager of Core Landscapes Community Agency in Canning Town, the project aims to activate the community and creatively-led organisations to develop, design, plant, maintain, care for, and improve the area. The project is more than just a garden; it's a place where people can meet, talk, and share ideas. The project reaches out to include those who are retired, unemployed, recovering from illness, depression, and those who need to find community support.

Core Landscapes
As a 2-year membership project, it occupies an area awaiting future development. Core Landscapes have developed the area project to be a place where people can meet, talk, and share ideas. The project reaches out to include those who are retired, unemployed, recovering from illness, depression, and those who need to find community support.

Legacy:
The really nice thing about Core Landscapes is that it's a place where people can meet, talk, and share ideas. It's a place where people can meet, talk, and share ideas. It's a place where people can meet, talk, and share ideas.

Alice Superhouse Studios

Why?
Alice is part of ASSEMBLE, a young architects collective based at Superhouse Studios in Canning Town with a core group of 7 members. They are interested in the potential of sites that have been abandoned and reimagined into temporary spaces that can be easily dismantled and reassembled into different structures and simple building methods.

Superhouse Studios
Assemble's work includes designing temporary structures, working on projects for the local area, curating workshops and public events, and more. Set on a vacant site awaiting development, their project Superhouse Studios will stand for two years and has transformed a former warehouse into architecture studio, a prototype of affordable studio housing, work and make workshops and event space.

Legacy:
ASSEMBLE was supported by L.L.C. who delivered the Superhouse studios for 100,000. The site will eventually become a block of luxury flats and will be used as a model for future development.

Julian



Why?
Julian is an activist and was one of the last residents to be evicted from Clays Lane Housing Cooperative where he had been living since 1991 to make place for the Queen Elisabeth Park developments.

Julian has been actively campaigning against the developments being built and the changes the area is experiencing. He aims to inform the public, build community, resist regeneration plans and fight speculation in the area.

Legacy:
The Olympics and the regeneration plan completely transformed Julian's physical environment and disrupted community ties that had been built among residents of the area. He is currently living in a temporary residence.

"I had been there [Clays Lane] since 1991. Where I am now, I don't know anybody particularly well. At Clays Lane I knew a whole variety of people. I would visit them, and there were social hubs where people would congregate. I got to know people. The estate was laid out as a series of courtyards, so people would sit outside and chat to their neighbours as they walked past - it was very sociable. I'm still in touch with people, but it's much harder work - everyone has been spread apart."



Tamsin Momentum



Why?
Tamsin is an environmental activist who initially became involved with the **Silvertown Community** when she protested against the ecological impacts of City Airport.

Project
She is now works regularly in the Silvertown area and has focused her efforts on strengthening this marginalized community through her organization **Momentum**. Momentum assists residents' projects, and over time she has built up a lot trust. She is campaigning for the shut-down of the **London City Airport**, where the surrounding community suffers from noise and air pollution, as well as physical and social barriers.

Legacy:
The East London regeneration plan has heavily influenced the **Royal Docks area**. Private investment is being attracted to this zone and several high-end business and housing developments are being built or planned in the area, while local and long-standing residents are being pushed out or left on their own.

"People have been told they shouldn't expect anything, that they are at the margins and they always will be."



Joe



Why?
When UCL and the Newham Council announced their plans to demolish the estate and to develop the space into a new campus, Joe joined a group of residents fighting for their right to stay in the estate.

C.A.R.P.
Joe wants to continue living in the Carpenters Estate, strengthen his community and build a mixed neighbourhood with the new residents moving into the East Village. One of his ideas is to build a **Neighbourhood Forum** that would be recognized by the Council and protect his community from being evicted.

Legacy:
Through the Olympics were used as a platform for spreading the residents' message and more attention has since been paid to the area, land values continue to rise and threaten developments like the Carpenters Estate. Planning laws are often not accessible to the residents that are not familiar with its language. How can the gap be bridged between the legal mechanisms and the citizens they are supposedly made for?

"At the end of the day it's all politics. They can twist and turn it [the laws and regulations] as they want."

"The people most affected are the less able to get involved... We want to make them understand the real value of mixed communities."



Jasmine



Why?
Jasmine is the co-founder of Focus E15 Mothers. Jasmine and the other ex-residents of the Foyer fight for decent and secure social housing for all. Their slogan is "Social housing not social clearing." They struggle against fast-rising rents, bullying landlords, over-crowding, physical neglect such as mould and damp, and short term tenancies.

Core Landscapes
Jasmine was living in a Foyer, a temporary hostel for 210 homeless young women and their babies of whom most are under the age of 25 and many have struggled with domestic violence. The residents were handed eviction notices in September 2013 to leave a month later without being provided adequate alternatives. Since then Focus E15 has held weekly meetings on Saturdays, gathered thousand signatures for a petition and organized a protest of 100 people marching through East Ham. In January they occupied a showroom flat in the East Thames building and then Newham council's housing offices. The protest resulted in a part-victory where some mothers were offered housing in London though still short term private lets. However no long term solution was reached which meant Jasmine and the other women would find themselves in the same situation in a matter of months.

Legacy:
The promises of the Olympics made to young people including secure housing and amenities have not reached marginalized groups such as the E15 mothers. Development plans such as the UCL new East London campus put tremendous pressure on vulnerable residents fighting against the demolition of their already less than adequate housing stock.



Christina Caravanseraï



Why?
Caravanseraï aims to use areas set for future development and turn them into temporary community spaces that would hold the land while bringing a function prior to their construction development.

Caravanseraï
As a result of a design competition, the project was constructed on a demolition site opposite to the Canning Town transport interchange station. This temporary, low budget project will be present for 5 years and aims to create opportunities for local community and visitors to interact and make a place of their own. Functioning as a laboratory for experimental commerce, education and community engagement, this space is flexible to accommodate any event.

Legacy:
Their time has been cut short due to prompt development in the area. Relocating this space risks may risk losing the experience that has become a common ground to the local community. Where will Caravanseraï go next?

Mara Ferreri
PHD - Queen Mary University
"Occupying Vacant Spaces: Precarious Politics of Temporary Urban Reuse" is the title of Mara's PhD that focused on the value of temporary uses such as Caravanseraï in relation to practices and populations that this dynamic can activate. In attempting to bring together practitioners and urban researchers, her main aim is to provide a real investigation into temporary use as a form of urban action and regeneration at a time of austerity.



Bea (Hungary)

London is not a neutral ground for anyone. The city evokes some images and tales to everyone, most of which are probably associated with hyphenated buzzwords such as financial hub, diversity, fast-moving, multi-cultural and changing, dynamic, young, and forward-looking, and the slightly less glamorous “fish and chips”. East London, however, is still much less known to non-Londoners such as me and has only recently penetrated the “must-dos” of guidebooks and conversations among “couchsurfers”. If the city of London is an agglomeration of men in ties and women in slack suits hurrying for their morning coffees, the imaginary of East London is that of an alternative, laid-back, and young crowd in the midst of the poor and excluded. A mix of dangerous, abandoned and free. So close to The City and yet so different.

And indeed, walking through East London reveals the coexistence of several spaces: the deceased East London, built by the memories and hands of those that produced their homes and were forgotten; those who lived their everyday struggles close to the shiny city yet whose benefits nevertheless laid beyond their reach. This is the East London that was “discovered” by visionaries seizing “London’s most exciting development opportunity in a generation” (LLDC) and deciding that a new era had come. And there comes the shiny and trendy East London, born out of heavy investment and a wish to change the imaginary of the area, to modernize a space that does not live up anymore to the expectations and needs of a modern society and “fuzzy living”. By the time of the Olympic Games in 2012 at the latest, East London had entered the game of prosperity, entertainment, technology, modernity and its era as “a new energetic and sustainable commercial hub for the capital” (LLDC). While “London is moving East” everything seems possible, anything can fit. The city becomes a laboratory from which, with the right ingredients, anything can emerge.

The DPU summerLab is a journey through these spaces; our feet explore contradictions, stories, memories, anger, hope and resignation. Through the asphalt a feeling of being overwhelmed by the seemingly inevitable way history proceeds and consumes spaces emerges and settles uncomfortably in our beings. Our journey takes us through urban landscapes that make us feel tiny and insignificant and our feet stride through spaces where every step of our life is measured, orchestrated and qualified by designers, planners and developers

conceiving the script of the daily routines of the modern citizen. The city is a playground manufactured by urban planners, playing with the lives of others and shaping the rules of the game. As different narratives of space become blurred and our feet get tired, questions emerge and the feeling deep down inside us palpates - when overflying noiselessly the Royal Docks and the Thames in the Emirates cable car, when paving our way through newly deserted and abandoned housing estates, when standing on the 20th floor of the Balfour tower looking down on the never ending stream of cars and lights and listening to the endless buzzing of the city; the feeling grows stronger when we stand on a playground next to the entrance of the City Airport where only the 130 decibels of the airplanes cut through the yelling voices of the children and make us forget the smell of kerosene, once every 4 minutes. Where ones’ “world class infrastructure” is the soundtrack of life for the others, we cannot but listen to our feelings and ask ourselves: For whom is the city? Opportunities, but for whom and what for? What about those that refuse to play the game or that are left behind?

To me, the DPU summerLab is a journey through the complexity of urban planning and spatial projects addressing public-private partnerships, gentrification, vested and political interests, the roles of urban planners, designers and architects in society, shedding light on people’s agency and the capacity of communities for organization, the constraints they are facing and the solutions they are creating. A journey that, fuelled by the pace of the visits and the changing faces and contexts, adds layers upon layers and certainly induces more confusion and questions in our minds than simple answers. The DPU summerLab addresses the difficulty of integrating social objectives, and good and functional urban design, without being ashamed of asking whether the utopia of a city of coexisting difference -despite the fact of being at the core of the discourse of social activists, community leaders and major for-profit urban developers- is within reach or an ideal never to be achieved. As a student in the social sciences, the DPU summerLab also allowed me to engage with the views and ideas of urban designers, planners and architects with whom I so rarely cross paths.

Our journey through London did not ask us to judge: good or bad. It did not ask us to make naive judgments or to suggest solutions; but it asked and continually asks us, as participants, to stop and think ... and to listen. To listen to what was around us, and to what was inside us: to feel.

Alicia (UK)

I could write about how the globalized nature of the flows of capital, investment and consumption have created a new urban landscape of privatization and security, cleanliness, conspicuous consumption and depressing social inequality – but you probably know that already. Indeed, our 3 days of curated walks and meetings beautifully exposed the insanity, inequity and complexity of city making today – decanted housing estates/new build ghost towns, young homeless single mums/young successful urban professionals, disappearing and struggling communities/ endless community-building events and projects, CGI fly-throughs/graffiti, couscous/chips.

As an experiment I literally just read the city - documenting the words I came across and here they are, augmented with quotes from the people we met/the invisible words (and workings) of the city. This is really a work in progress, not too rigorous, but I have enjoyed seeing how much can be revealed by this method and how much is hidden in a post-political landscape of ‘community’, ‘development’ and ‘family fun’.

DAY 1 – Olympic Park, East Village and Carpenters Estate

We start in The Old Rectory, Hackney with Alberto and Giorgio

DIG

NO, JUST NO

Newham’s Arc of Opportunity and Regeneration Supernova

“walking paradigm and psychogeographies”

Alberto

Welcome to St. John at Hackney Churchyard Gardens

Beatrice – Beloved Wife of Thomas . . .

Hackney Carnival 2014 – East London’s Ultimate Street Festival

SAVE The Chesham Arms Hackney’s FIRST Asset of Community Value

Anya Hindmarch, Burberry . . .

Adizone ‘impossible is nothing’ London 2012 Adidas Official Sponsor of London 2012

We enter the Queen Elizabeth Park

DIG DEEP

Chef’s Daily Specials Chicken Chorizo Stew with Couscous £6.50

Be a Park Champion

Join us Resident’s Meeting – Find out what’s happening in your local park

Take Part in the UK’s First Social Saturday – Unleash your spending power

Multi-Faith Room/Toilet

THIS IS E20

Into the East Village (largely empty)

Voted best new place to live, London Planning Awards 2014



“They moved us around like pigs without taking into account that there are real people living there in real communities” Sharon

Belvedere Play Area – In the interest of public health and the safety of all users, the following are not permitted in the play areas - no dogs, no smoking, no drinking

To the Carpenters Estate (largely decanted)

Focus on the Future Decent Housing for All Sunday 21st Sept is Funday – to celebrate 1yr of Focus E15 campaigning against social cleansing – Repopulate the Carpenters

“We are trying to make a Community Plan for the Carpenters but the people most affected are less able to get involved” Joe

To Sugarhouse Studios

“we were given £70,000 from the London Legacy Development Corporation” member of Assemble

DAY 2 – Canning Town

A walk around ‘town’

John Charles from Canning Town first black player for West Ham Utd and to represent England at any level 1962-3 winning five caps for the England Youth Team

Postwar Housing, Street Parties

Growing Place E16 Growing all the time . . .

The Newham London Waterfront Festival, Royal Victoria Dock E16 FREE family fun by the docks

Aurelia Apartments – Phase 1 all sold and Phase 2 all reserved off plan

I used to live here, Pie & Mash, I kiss girls here, Tate & Lyle, Football Cage, Shazad born 1993, Excel Opens 2000, Cundy Street Blitz 1940, Canning Town station built, 1846, Tate & Lyle 1887

Warning Site Monitored and Alarmed 24/7 by Sitex Orbis 08000 830 850

New Credit Community Credit Union Limited, The Sun, CORAL, Custom Cleaning Services Laundrette, Customs Bakery, Celebs Hair and Sunbed Studio, Nisa Local

London Borough of Newham Dogs must not be exercised on this green

London Borough of Newham Lyes Road Allotment Site

Core Landscapes Community plant nursery and garden - “we work an open door policy and with people with mental health issues” Nemone

Caravanserai The Caravanserai is for you and your friends

Car-a-van-se-rai 1. An oasis-like inn and trading post. Hundreds of Caravanserais lined the world famous Silk Road which connected people and provisions from Asia to their counterparts in the Mediterranean, North and East Africa and Europe. These hubs offered rest, water, food, entertainment and business opportunities.

Tweet @CTCaravanserai

DAY 3 – Royal Docks and Silvertown Starting from Excel

GES Global Experience Specialists

Millennium Mills Spillers (derelict and beloved by urban explorers)

Across the water to Silvertown

Asta Community Hub (recently done up a bit as part of the Momentum Project)

“in that shop over there we created The Peoples Plan for Docklands in the 1970s funded by the GLC’s Popular Planning Unit” Sue

Roz’s Café Sausage Egg and Chips £1.99

The Royal Oak Freehouse (derelict)

Newham London The Woodman Community Centre – For your wedding reception – business meetings – book and project launch – prayer meetings – end of year parties – group study bookings (closed)

Field of Hope, Marie Curie Cancer Care supported by the London Docklands Development Corporation (bit of grass)

In loving memory of Frederick Rowling (1881 – 1944) Killed by a bomb while working in these gardens 26 July 1944. Also remembering his wife Emily and their children Caroline, Frederick, Emily, Alice, Rosina, Lillian, Elsie and George. All now reunited

Site for Sale

. . . (c)ould this space be used for? Draw/write SID + DADDY 2014, Let it rot for 30 years then rebuild it for 10 million, How long has this been left to rot > its listed and history

Great Eastern Railway Museum Woolwich Old Station 1854

ROYAL DOCKS No Parking in front of post SS ROBIN

Royal Victoria Dock Footbridge PRIVATE Yes, you do need a license to film here. Contact: Royal Docks Management Authority Limited

Fix the lift you tight twats

We end at The Siemens Crystal – the world’s largest exhibition on the future of cities

London’s Royal Docks, historically the throbbing arteries of UK trade, present a huge opportunity that we are determined to **CAPITALISE** on, The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson (you seriously couldn’t make it up)

Five days on the summerLab exposed the difficulty of working in the city – where worthy and worthwhile community projects give regeneration a caring, sharing face but still communities are struggling for a voice and suffering the affects of gentrification. How can we as urban practitioners act within this complex context to make a difference? It may be daft but I am going to start by talking to developers – and maybe get some to come on a walk with me. As the wonderful Marshall Berman (RIP) told us we have just got to “keep on keeping on”.

LONDON - Localising Legacies

The People's Royal Docks, 1984-2014

a dialogue between Sue Brownill and Tamsin Omond (edited by Giorgio Talocci)

Sue Brownill is Reader in Urban Policy and Governance (Department of Planning, Oxford Brookes University) and was once involved in the development of The People's Plan for the Royal Docks, back in 1984. Tamsin Omond is an activist and founder of The Momentum Project, aiming to create and support sustainable community projects and to work with Newham's local residents to imagine and create the best future for their borough. In mid-November, two months after the end of the London summerLab, Alberto Duman and Giorgio Talocci visited Tamsin at her place, in what she said to be "the north / very fast being gentrified end of Newham". During that afternoon, in a long skype session, Sue and Tamsin, went along the last thirty years of transformation and community mobilisation around the Royal Docks.

TAMSIN: Sue, I would like to hear more about The People's Plan, it has been such an important part of the social and political memory of the area. Our work is somehow the continuation of what you did, but we actually began without knowing your work.

SUE: Maybe I can start telling you about my role in that period: I was a research officer at the Docklands Forum, a Docklands-wide public consultation body. [...] We were generally responding to what was going on in the Docklands, trying to get people's voices. When the airport idea came along [...] the Greater London Council, in opposition with the London Docklands Development Corporation, set up the Popular Planning Unit: the idea was not to oppose the plan but rather to come up with an alternative to it. At the time, the Docklands were a sort of ideological battleground, with lines very toughly drawn between the different parties, particularly between the LDDC and the GLC [...]. The Dockland's community was divided as well, although generally aligned against the airport proposal. The People's Plan though was very much in line with the GLC's agenda, that needed an example of popular planning in action. There was a lot of discussion for instance around the plan for Mondragon, a community in Spain that was responding to the industrial decline organising workers' cooperatives. The Plan came in that vein, in order to 'put something positive in that space'. [...]

TAMSIN: The People's Plan for the Royal Docks has actually become a sort of community bible on how to engage with the community to create an alternative vision [...]. My entrance into being politically active in the Docks started

working with the New Economic Foundation, precisely to develop a sort of alternative vision of what can exist on the airport land: what could benefit the local community and whole London better than the airport? [...] I had found myself being very scared about climate change and had got in an activist group called 'Plane Stupid'. We were talking as a sort of national group, looking at all airports. Then we got more localised: I was coordinating the London Plane Stupid group – there was obviously a lot going on and we decided to get really involved against the expansion of City Airport. [...] My role at the beginning was really one of an environmental activist. [...] We broke into the airport and chained ourselves to private jets.

SUE: [...] What happened to me was feeling quite uncomfortable at that time, I felt I was promoting this idea of The People's Plan, but what we were putting within that was to a great extent GLC's policy, and not what people said. There is always a lot to say about the role of activists, of researchers... and it is always about how you navigate politics. Something was there, definitely: the idea of getting back the Docks to a use that was at the time underplayed – there were proposals for community childcare, community gardens, community laundrettes, women networks were starting in the area... That was the important somehow, but people were as well excluded from other possibilities. [...]

TAMSIN: [...] This is why I wanted to know what the community thought. I needed to create more content to justify our political and environmental activism, so I went out into the streets that surround the airport, especially

the North Woolwich area and knocked on doors with a petition against the airport expansion [...]. Part of the response that I got was much deeper and much more diverse than what I could expect from my early assumptions about the airport. [...] I kept knocking on doors with questions about what kind of area these people wanted to see, about how we might organised locally to create a community garden or a community choir [...]. That was kind of the beginning of the Momentum project [...].

The full dialogue is available at:
<http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/programmes/summerlab/2014-series/london/royal-docks>

Acknowledgements

The DPU summerLab - London Localising Legacies wishes to thank all those who kindly waited, met and spoke with us at short notice, gave us more time than we asked, share food and drinks with us, opened their house to us, allowed us to gatecrash their event, and fed our minds all along the 'Arc of Opportunity'.

Andrew Coombs and Will Bock (The Old Rectory in Hackney Central); Penny Bernstock (UEL Head of Sociology); Julian Cheyne (Ex-resident of Clays Lane Co-op Housing); Sharon O'Callaghan (Ex-resident of Clays Lane and new resident of the East Village, QE Park); Paul Watt (Senior Lecturer in Urban Studies at Birkbeck); Jasmine Stone and Sam Middleton (Focus E15 Mothers campaigners); Alice Edgerley (Assemble/Sugarhouse Studios); Nemone Mercer (Core Landscape); Mara Ferreri (academic researcher on the Value of Temporary Spaces); Jessie (Keeper at Caravanserai); Rosie Freeman (Brick Box); Michael Owens/Ralph Ward (London Urban Visits); Sue Brownill (Reader in Urban Policy and Governance at Oxford Brookes University); Tamsin Omond (activist, Momentum).

Thanks, finally, to: Mel Evans (Principal Lecturer in Housing and Regeneration); Sarah Ruiz (St. Luke's Community Centre); John Appleton and Tim Martin (Building Crafts College).

Depoliticising Verticality

a collaboration with Advanced graduate design studio, USF School of Architecture + Community Design, Tampa, Florida, US



“East London hosted the 2012 summer Olympic Games, the 3rd time the games were hosted in the city. The Olympics were held immediately west of our study area in Stratford.

These third games were branded as Legacy games, and seen as an event that would build up, develop, and bring money into east London. New housing developments, large shopping hubs, big tube stations were put into place.

The whole Stratford area has been rebranded

to attract consumers, and the Olympics did certainly drive a much larger influx of customers to the area. Were the Olympics though also a benefit for the community?

Trying to answer this question, the key ideas for our projects decided to focus on visualising and enhancing social capitals while claiming a sort of ‘localism’: an idea of community interest, or ownership, is a concept that helped us to identify, make visible and enhance a set

of local values. What is the community (or are those communities) known for?

Not only should new architecture address contextual conformity, generate income and tackle the immediate needs of a community: it should also look at the community’s intangible assets, future aspirations and social capitals.”

Christopher Galbraith, participant of the DPU summerLab 2013 series

Depoliticising Verticality

Challenging the politics of vertical communities via collaboration

Josue Robles Caraballo

For the second consecutive year, USF School of Architecture and Community Design have participated in the DPU's London summerLab. The graduate students have used the summerLab as the conceptual foundation for their advanced design studio: Depoliticizing Verticality. The design studio focusses on challenging the current spatial delivery for community located in residential towers. As part of their advance comprehensive design studio, USF SA+CD students designed a high density project utilizing architectural concepts and ideas acquired throughout the program in general. Apart from the delivery of the built form, students are asked to design a mid-rise tower that acknowledges its communal impact and utilizes the community as a design asset rather than a solution to be resolved. Working closely with any community possesses a great number of positive factors and inevitably some hardships, even within an academic exercise. However, the process of working with the community has proven to be more reviling than any other means utilized. Working in collaboration with the community allows the students to truly understand the power struggles, stake holders, and possible avenues of engagement. Thus, paving the road for the development of the students design.

The benefits in working with and for the community are obvious; identifying the appropriate means of collaboration is a difficult one. The DPU summerLab generates a platform for local and international design professionals to experience firsthand community participation methods. The summerLab "Localizing Legacies", directed by Alberto Duman and Giorgio Talocci, allowed the students to hear, walk, and talk the post 2012 Olympics impact on east London. For the duration of the lab, USF and other international participants submerged themselves in Stratford's everyday socio-cultural landscape illustrating numerous design opportunities while exposing many communal vulnerabilities. As the summerLab concluded students had accumulated a robust body of information to be used to shape their studio project in the future. The end of the summerLab in London marked the beginning of the individual analysis and design development at the USF studio in Tampa, where they developed a series of social energy mapping from areas engaged during the lab. Each student crafted four different mappings on commerce, housing, transportation, and communal inclusions. The analytical mappings allowed the students to boil down all information covered at the summerLab to a handful of manageable ideas.

For the studio's final project the students designed a mid-rise residential tower at the heart of Stratford. Stratford is located at the epicenter of the 2012 Olympics urban redevelopment wave, confronting the students design with the community's rich past, rapidly changing present, and uncertain future. While addressing the community's needs and wants, students had to fully resolve their architectural proposals. Programmatically, the residential project is to host both market rate and attainable social housing units. In addition to the residential requirements, the tower will accommodate a range of community spaces as each design proposal is developed. The two months design process is structured in individual and studio wide critiques. Studio wide critiques have hosted a great number guest from both the local Tampa design community and DPU staff. This issue includes student proposals of summerLab participants from 2013 and 2014. The students work shows a range of resolution, challenging the existing residential and commercial developments. Students programmed and designed architectural responses considering the two different residential core groups, while creating spaces for the community to manifest a great number of innovative and cultural activities. For the second time the summerLab has allowed students to effectively engage the current community discourse of east London, the New London. We look forward to continue to collaborate with Camillo Boano and the BUDD family. Lastly, I would like to thank the students for their inspiring hard work. Needless to say, USF students were tremendously lucky to have worked hand by hand with Giorgio Talocci and Alberto Duman, thanks for sharing your passion and professional ideologies. In Tampa, thanks for the ongoing support of the Director of the SA+CD Robert MacLeod and Mary Hayward the keeper of all doors.



Brian Watts

DPU summerLab 2013

While designing the Stratford Tower, my experience with the summerLab helped shape my design process by allowing me to think about the consequences involved in each design decision. By seeing firsthand the impact of the Olympics on the East London Boroughs, it opens your mind to the possibilities, implications and influences of the building on the community. Since the beginning of my design education I have never had such an in-depth site analysis for a design project.



Daniel Houghton

DPU summerLab 2013

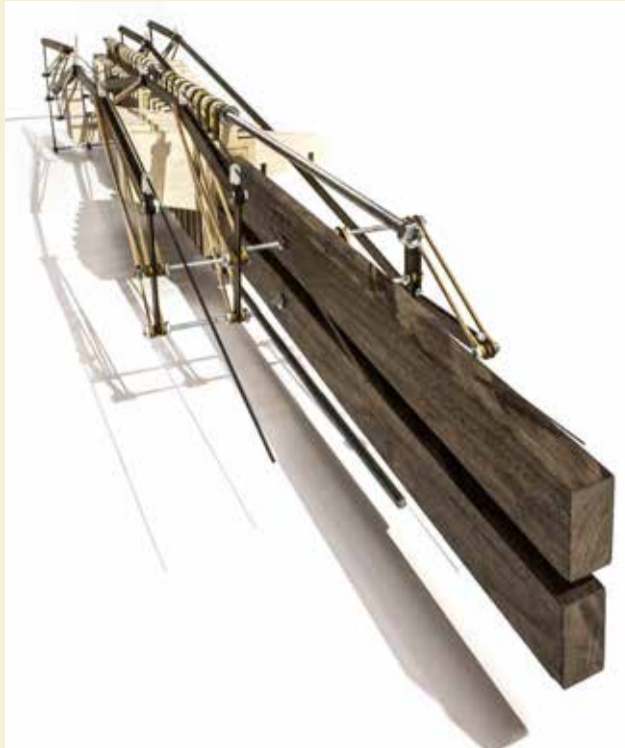
The program for this project is a residential tower mixing market rate housing, and subsidized housing. Adding to this requirements and the final design outcome the influence of the social-political background that the site has, as a consequence to the 2012 London Olympics. I focused on localizing the existing legacies by providing a live-work environment that talks about work and production of beer, understanding the importance of the pub culture in London.



Christopher Galbraith

DPU summerLab 2013

The conceptual model idealizes molding the context to the needs of the population. In this case the context would not be necessarily the physical site, which would be an anchor. The context would be the local identity that many communities strive to acquire. I tend to think of the arts when I think of local identities. People tend to farm their own foods when possible and sell their wares to make ends meet. Given a sort of freedom to pursue their passion and desire could prove fruitful as it could become a destination in itself to those who desire what is created, be it music or a trinket. The place would not identified intangibly but it would also begin to take on the physical appearance of those inhabiting



Diana Sanclemente

DPU summerLab 2013

Located in Stratford, East London, this project aims to create a place where people have access to cultural activities that are affordable and available to everybody. As a response to the city of Stratford's master plan and after participating in the DPU summerLab, the proposed library would become a hub for the community, to bring different social groups together, as opposed to more commercial shops. The proposed library will encourage the city to continue to grow stronger through knowledge, culture and education.

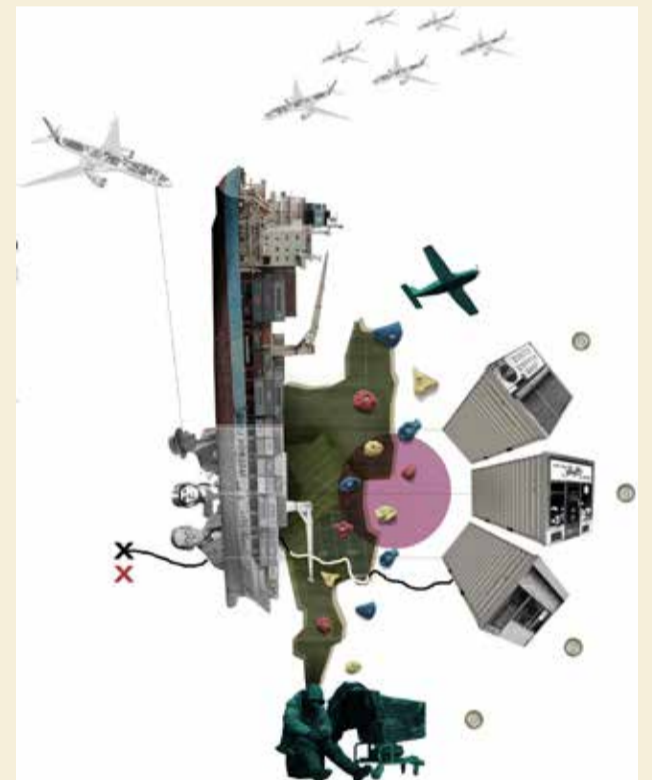




Juan Ferreira

DPU summerLab 2013

There are several socio-political forces influencing the development of London's architectural fabric. Urban planning for the 2012 London Olympics has served as a catalyst towards the redevelopment of East London. The speed at which this redevelopment is happening, however, has increased gentrification in the area. Long after the close of London's Olympics, development continues in the east of London at a rapid pace. This studio aims to study the socio-political and cultural aspects of this community and develop a physical model, in the form of a tower, in which the different groups of East London can be brought together.



Zachary Yarnell

DPU summerLab 2014

At first glance, there appears to be two sides to the argument; keep what is there or completely replace one community with shiny new one. But narrowing it down to a black and white idea is simply too basic of a concept when you realize an entire community is at stake, and they are barely surviving as it is. So no, we cannot bulldoze what is there in hopes of a new utopia replacing it, but leaving it how it is also not an option. New and old must come together to find mutual benefits that influence urban growth that all parties would like to be a part of.



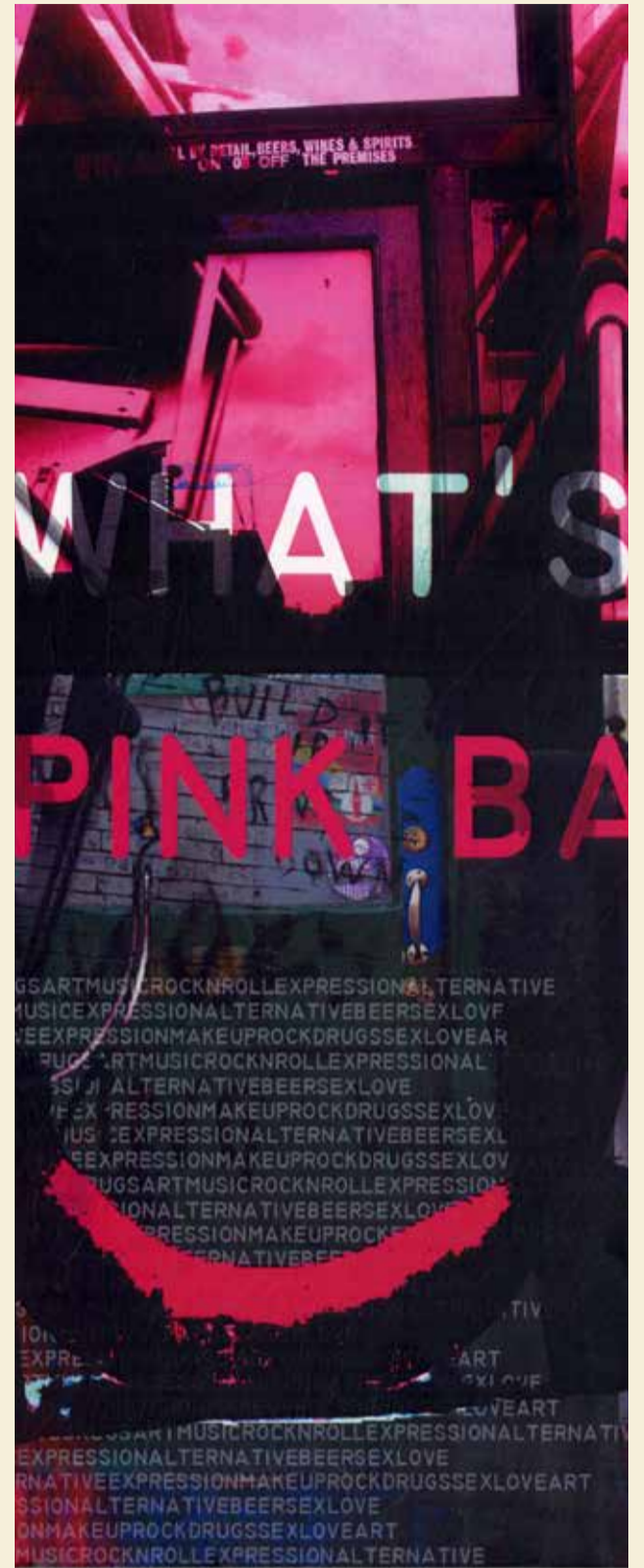
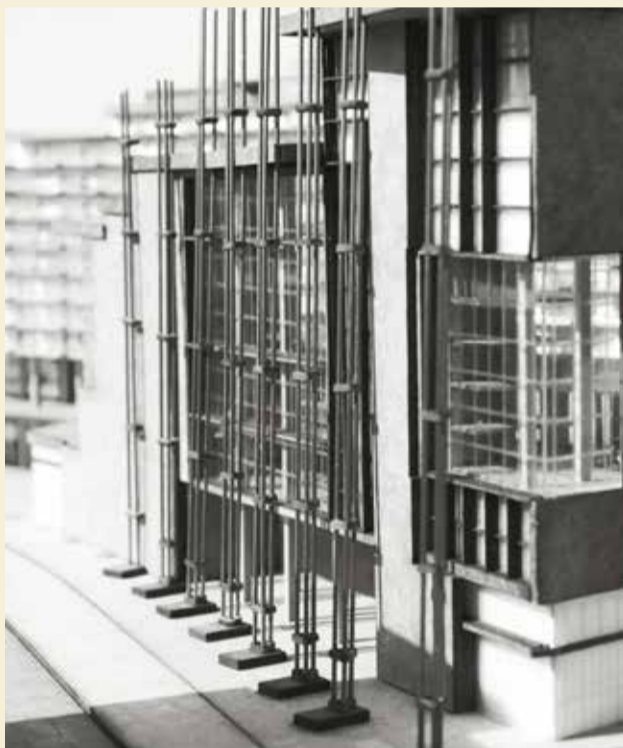
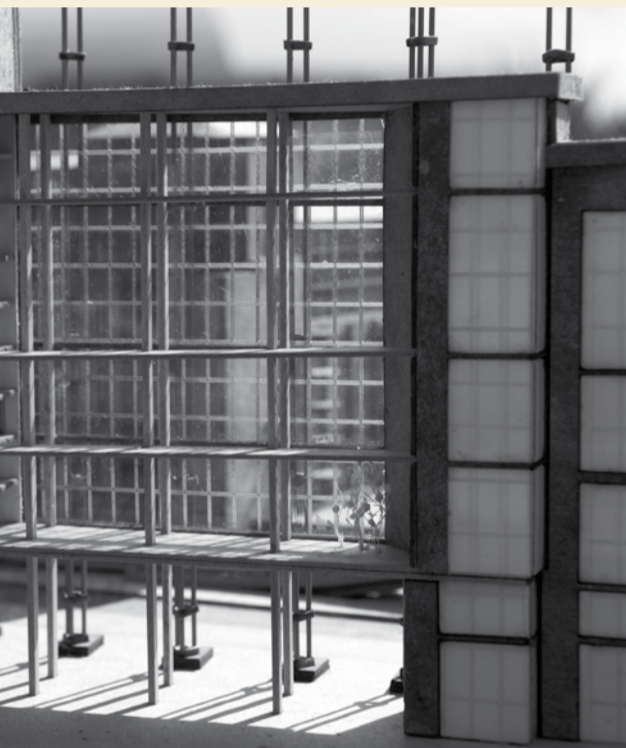
Christine Schorr

DPU summerLab 2014

In a month or so, it will be all over. The glamour and hype of distant travels will become no more than a memory, a stamp in a traveler's passport, and a few drunken recollections sneakily captured on a pixilated blurry camera phone will be all that is left. The food, the culture, the bar scenes, the hype, all gone. And then it hits you, the cold reality that the terrifying scene of the exhausted father and his lifeless expression complete with tumultuous flailing children can be the solution to the jobless borough. Struggling artists will starve no more if, perhaps, their sculptures and trinkets actually permeate their way onto the respective wall or end table of a travelers home.

The warm glow of a conservatory in the endless cold is a beacon. The shops and galleries line the tracks, lending as a base for coffee shops and restaurants, the greenery of the landscaping a welcome home sign readily embraced by its residents. The permanent, the temporary, the old, the new, the under-appreciated. All are welcome here. Dissolving the urban warfare between the old community and practically everyone else, this place is a platform for everyone to have a say, a home, a job, a market, a community.

An oasis is what Stratford needs. A small patch of optimism that if nothing else, will make this place suck a little less for everyone.



Edward Smith

DPU summerLab 2014

What is needed is not a promise of handouts, a numerical value of supposed new jobs within the next couple of years or a glamorous place of residents that caters to only those that can afford it. Those have already been done and yet still continue to appear to no change. A long term plan with no immediate and constant aid.

The largest event has since taken the jobs it gave and forced the people out. If given a place that allows for acts of opportunity, for one to start and sell an idea; what would become of it? A place one can work and live, cutting down on the long commute and allowing the freedom of expression. A flourish of ideas that can take off and bolster the community.

Nathan Baker

DPU summerLab 2014

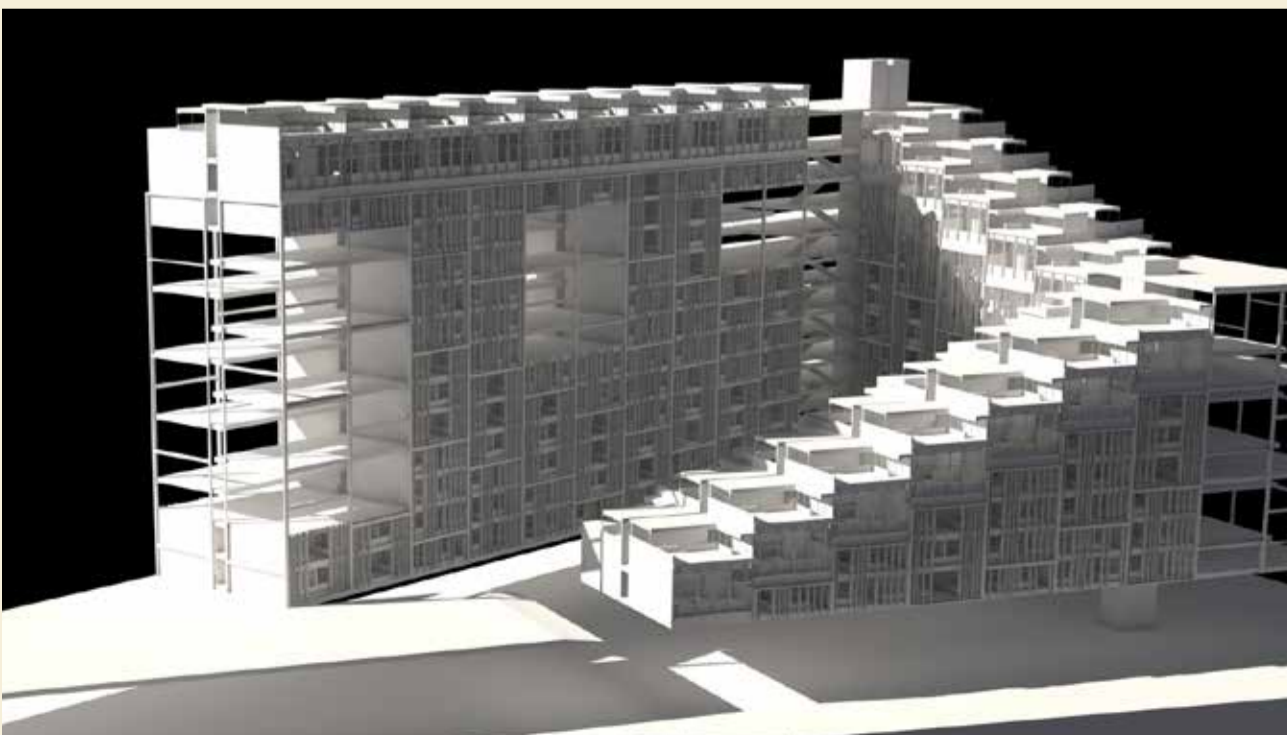
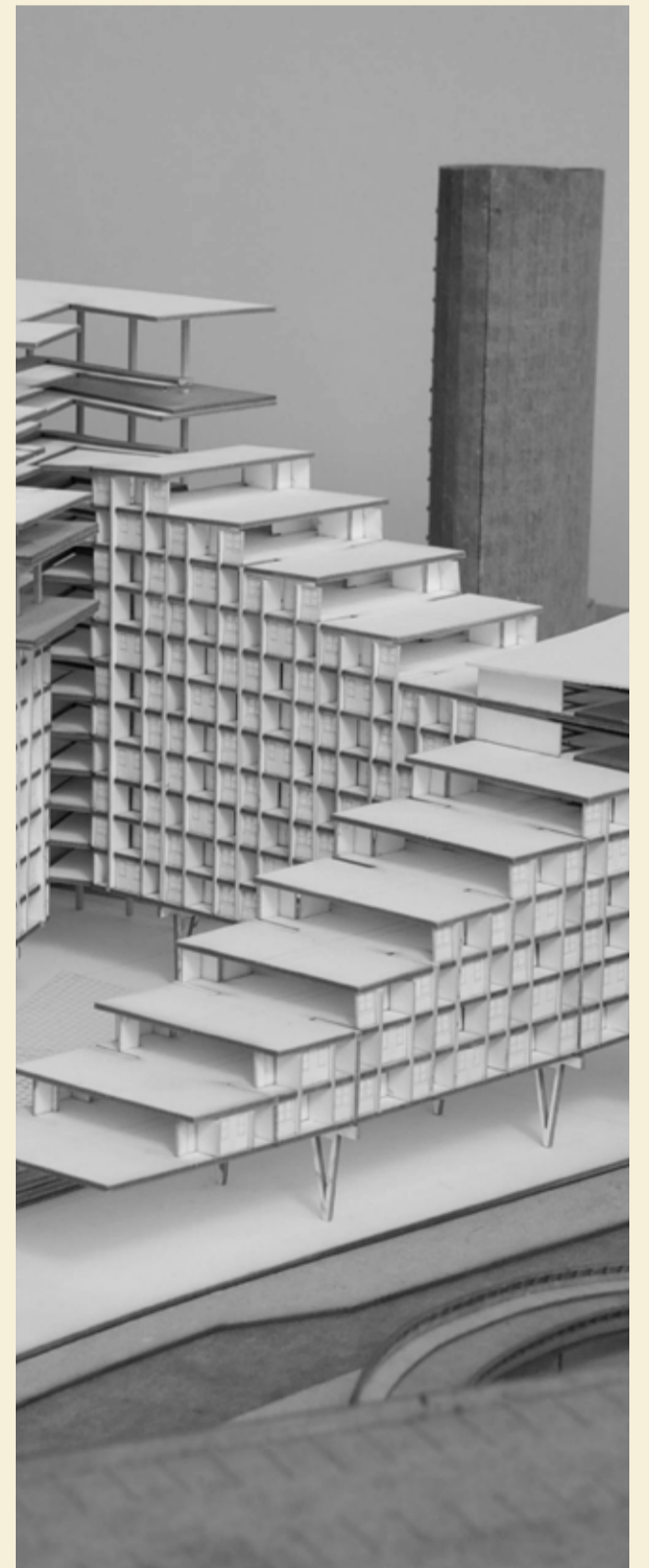
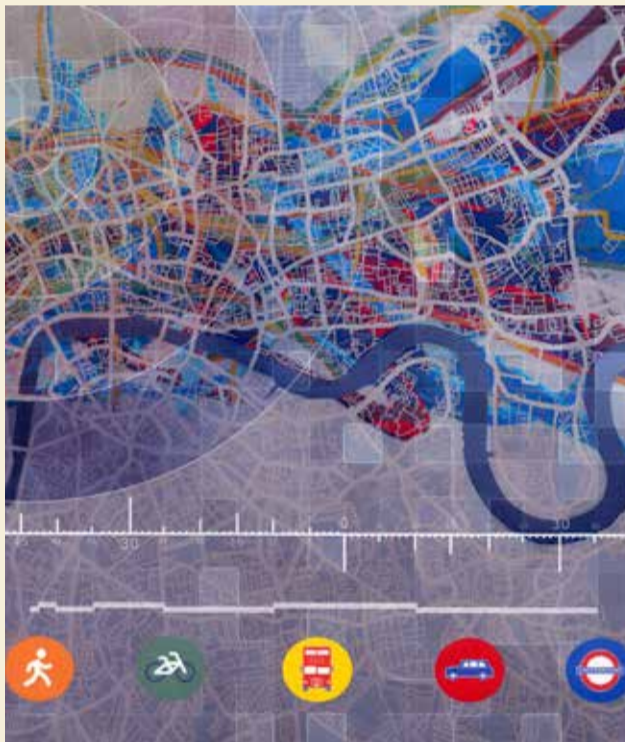
I decided that I would focus on providing open spaces for the community to gather and talk, play, have fun, interact, relax, etc. To me, there were problems with the green spaces in London. At the Olympic Village: The green spaces are exactly what the community needs and wants, but there is little to no community living in the Olympic Village because the prices that the residents were told that they could let the apartments for after the Olympics is not what the prices are right now.



Daniel Becker

DPU summerLab 2014

This project aims to provide a conversation to the existing urban context and create built forms that relate to the scale of the adjoining neighborhood community, signifying the transition from suburban housing to commercial activity. The offset to building heights promotes access to light and views, and an opportunity for greenery without extensive ground level site remediation. In order to effectively manage so many people living in the city, the project needs to be developed in a way that can accommodate an influx of population that requires housing, sanitation, infrastructure, jobs, food and a decent standard of living.



A militant to-do-list (in the form of a map) for future DPU summerLabs

by Camillo Boano and Giorgio Talocci

The city is *polemos*, conflict. Conflict is the stage of great tensions between rootedness (*polis*) and pact, treaty (*civitas*), fixity and movement, dwelling, property and exchange, commerce, memory and future. The summerLab has always wanted to dwell into the *polemos*, into the conflict happening in a city's contested spaces. The essence of the urban – from the Greek *polis* to the contemporary Medellin, Beirut, London and all the other cities we visited in the previous years' series – does appear to be the capacity to hold such competing different qualities in a dynamic perennial conflict in an irreducible tension: the city is evolving, growing and changing, through the courageous attempt of recombining the elements of such tensions, despite being unable to resolve them.

It is *cumplexus*, what is embraced, weaved together, in a multiplicity of forms in an impossible final synthesis. The city transforms itself in a continuous changing polysemy in time and in space – which we cannot harness, nor want or probably need to, but must become object of design. Designing the city is reading its fabric, researching its forms, scanning its folds and picking up its multiple threads. As such, it does require multiple forms of knowledge, a plurality of looks, a cacophony of voices, a plurality of languages and – certainly – a quite abundant number of walks in and through its spaces to depict its *forms-of-life* and its encounters.

Such depiction does not happen aseptically. Rather, the DPU summerLab, in its mapping out contested scenarios, is already a manifestation of an 'architecture of engagement' with the urban *polemos*. It tries to enquiry critically into the homogenising and totalising attempt of design practice and architectural arrogances to give the city a unitary design and a univocal grand narrative.

To keep investigating the relationship between forms, images and definition of what we call urban is an unfinished job and a continuous challenge. We want here precisely to have a look at this 'open' job, at the big map of the contested 'city as laboratory' that we have been investigating and designing to date. In order to do so, we must not forget how such investigation is in need of imagination. Imagining is what Italo Calvino suggests as the capacity to uncover the extra-ordinary in the ordinary – the non-usual, the unseen – and open the reality to its multiple possibilities. So if writing have the possibility to create new images, design is at the forefront of producing urban narratives. If artists (building this time on Agamben) have the capacity to create new worlds, then designers are immanently engaged into envisioning a new world and thus its new politics. Writing and art, as design, render visible what tends to be neglected in our everyday relationship with reality. Design arouses awareness of what might

superficially be overlooked; it draws our attention to the marginal, the forgotten.

Precisely, in Medellin, Beirut, London, we attempted to uncover and re-write the narratives of such cities' contested spaces, as we did in other cities in the previous series of the summerLab. The DPU summerLab thus far has organised ten workshops, visited six cities, met and worked with a number of individuals, activists, scholars in a multitude of design acts – all deeply engaged with the everyday politics of the spaces we experienced in Rome, Zurich, Medellin, Santiago, London, Beirut. Making the exercise of drawing and highlighting such politics and spaces on a map, the urban *polemos* will look like an intricate conundrum made of:

- Forgotten and neglected spaces: from Rome's squat-occupations, interstitial spaces and urban voids to Zurich's deprecated red light districts, from London's bits of housing stock purposely left to rot to Medellin's informal areas, until the point when the 'neglected' becomes the city itself;

- Walls at several different scales: from our first encounter with a wall dividing in two sectors a squat-occupation in Rome to the ones – physical and mental – dividing Beirut's neighbourhoods from each other and from within. Also, when not the product of sectarian divides, walls were raised for the need of stating a certain elitist status and its security function, or because of fear;

- A jam of networking and trespassing acts: networks of people, knowledge, goods, creating webs of solidarity, or strong alliances amongst resistant realities. It is the case of Rome's squat-occupation and the social movements taking forward the struggle for housing and dwelling. Or in Medellin, with different housing associations united by a common goal. Or in London, whereby many emergent urbanisms are striving to talk to each other;

- A complex web of infrastructures and their manifold forms, uses and programmes: the roads haunted by prostitutes' clients in Zurich; the infrastructural scars in East London and their intrinsic character of spaces for mobility for some and of immobility for others; the Medellin's cable car and its impact on the *comunas*, its grand narrative versus the micro-one disrupted or created on the ground;

- Monuments and the powerful symbols of urban legacies: the monumental pillars of the Medellin's MetroCable; Rome's squat-occupied strongholds; the official and rhetoric 'legacy' of East London's Olympic transformation and the micro-legacies that are emerging out of narratives of displacement and transition;

- Temporary and popping-up spaces and their uses: in Zurich's fringes, where transient monuments made up of shipping containers provide alternately spaces for refugees, artists, students, prostitutes, filling up a construction site meanwhile a new development can get started; or in any space of East London whose development plan is still unclear: pop-up community gardens, spaces for concerts, cafés that will live just a certain time before being trashed (or displaced) to make room for more and more condos.

Quite a journey in which nonetheless we found a city relentlessly producing emergent and resistant urbanisms – all of them with their own contradictions but certainly contributing to discard exclusionary logics and a sterile politics of consent. Other cities and other contested spaces will appear on the map in the coming years: what is missing, or what looks still blurred and in the need of further investigation, is part of a hypothetical (and open) to-do-list that cannot be anything but a militant one. These signs on the map represent a series of obligatory commitments that urban and architectural design – and therefore the DPU summerLab programme, too – must engage with:

- Walls (again) and divided cities: Beirut's green line has been part of the first of a series of investigations that in the future might bring us to Belfast, Mostar, Nicosia – looking at those instances where 'walls' become the city itself, profound and painful scars in their historical development and in the present one;

- Walls (again and again) as borders, and border cities: we will place these same walls on a transnational border, sitting on the convergence of different governmental mechanisms, looking at the cross-fertilisation of different cultures, at transnational exchanges of people, economies, knowledge. We will observe the overlap of *dispositifs* and *counter-dispositifs* of control, and reason on what they represent for the development of possible border urbanisms;

- The urban-rural fringe, as privileged space for the development of hybrid urbanisms that are developing in its areas – Istanbul's *gecekondu* landscape or Cairo's sprawl are definitely on our list;

- Contested Mediterranean waterfront territories: after having had a glimpse of their significance in Beirut, the summerLab wants to target other cities on the Mediterranean coast and the way their waterfronts have become the battleground for the inception of spectacular programmes of urban boosterism, while maintaining, at the same time, an interstitial character.

The original idea for the DPU summerLab, by now five years ago, started from an un-developed research project on the Mediterranean itself and its contested gates – as blurry border(s) where migrant communities meet and clash, shape temporary urbanisms in particular entry points (the island of Lampedusa for instance, and many more) to then leave, striving to be welcomed in a new reality or being rejected toward an older one. This navigation, grounded eventually in an array of contested cities and their own inner borders and transient communities, has produced maps scarred by walls, emptied (or filled) by forgotten spaces, enriched and activated by a variety of networks and infrastructures, solidifying or fading away on the threshold between permanence and temporariness. Other walls, borders, fringes will certainly characterise the next series of DPU summerLab in the continue exploration of the critical encounter of territories and design strategies. Keep in touch!

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