Thinking Metropolis VI: New Media // New Technology, June 28, 2008

The theme of Metropolis VI was the potential of creative use of new media and new technology in connection with "real" spaces and places in the context of the hybrid city.

KEY NOTE SESSION 1

MARK SHEPARD

Mark Shepard (US) is Assistant Professor at the University of Buffalo, State University of New York, where he holds a joined appointment in the departments of Architecture and Media Study. http://www.andinc.org. He is an artist, architect and researcher. His post-disciplinary practice investigates the implications of mobile and pervasive media, communication and information technologies for architecture and urbanism. Recent work includes the Tactical Sound Garden [TSG], an open source software platform for cultivating virtual sound gardens in urban public space.

Mark Shepard is both theoretically and practically dealing with the questions: How is the use of the technological devices and new media altering our ways of being and interacting in the city? And how can we put new media to use in making the social interaction of the city richer?

In his presentation Shepard showed how new social practices - e.g. the use of iPods, cell phones etc. - produce new spatial conditions and very directly affect our way of being with each other in public space. The use of devices such as cell phones and iPods tends to maintain our private spaces in public spaces, and in some ways excluding social interaction in public spaces. You think twice before you talk to somebody who is texting or wearing headphones.

In the project the *Tactical Sound Garden* Shepard explores how media technology can be used as means for sharing and participating in public space rather than something that disconnects us from (other people in) public space. The Tactical Sound Garden is an open source software platform for cultivating public "sound gardens" within contemporary cities. The toolkit enables anyone using a WiFi enabled mobile device (PDA, laptop, mobile phone) to "plant" sounds within a positional audio environment. The sound can then be picked up by other persons using the toolkit and passing that same spot. The sound garden works like a community and relies on the mutual respect and trust of its users.

Shepard describes the toolkit as a parasitic technology in the sense that it uses existing urban infrastructure (the hot spots) through new software, appropriating the infrastructure to a new use. Shepard sees a great potential in exploring how existing urban infrastructures - being digital or physical - can be put to use in new ways.
See more on http://www.tacticalsoundgarden.net/ and www.cityofsound.com

MIRJAM STUPPEK

Mirjam Stuppek (NL) is curator, founder and director of Urban Screens, a forum for media and public art to be held next time in Melbourne Autumn 08, www.urbanscreens.net

Mirjam Stuppek's presentation evolved around the artistic and political use of screens in public space. Screens in public space are mostly used for advertisement by large companies (e.g. on Times Square). The Urban Screens (a forum which Mirjam heads) explore how urban screens can be used for purposes other than just commercial. Stuppek raises the questions: Can architecture become a place for common stories? And can concrete places in the city (again) become the site for political discussions?
The use of urban screens poses a variety of questions about the organisation of urban space, about ownership of public space, surveillance, security, fear. In practice, the use of screens in urban space raises questions about how to get the
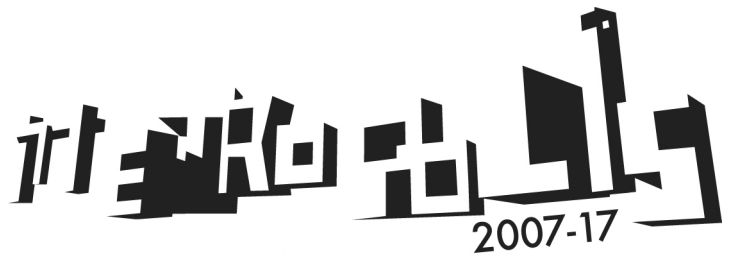
attention of people without being intrusive. In an urban context where people are used to an enormous visual commercial noise, it's hard to get the attention of people.

Also Stuppek spoke about the project Media Facades Berlin that deals with similar themes, posing the question: How can current use of screens be curated and developed? How can the use of screens support a healthy society? The vast amount of commercial screens in public space offers an available communication infrastructure that could be put to other types of use. The question is how this appropriation can be done and how to delimit the commercial and the non-commercial use of the site.

Mirjam argued that the use of screens should be considered in urban planning. The commercial use of screens in the city must be challenged and complemented by community use. Urban planning has to control the commercial overload and secure some non-commercial content in urban space. Multimedia is precinct for the community - and the city square must be seen as the potential living room of the city's residents where they can share their thoughts.

Stuppek also presented a range of concrete projects. You can read more about the theme and see the projects at www.urbanscreens.net and at
http://www.mediaarchitecture.org/mediafacades2008/

INNOVATION LAB
Peder Burgaard, *Innovation Lab (DK) An international knowledge centre for new technology and the application of new technology in products. In this context he is looking at products which affect urban situations, communication and movement in urban space,* *www.innovationlab.dk*

Peder Burgaard presented a range of data regarding the use of new media and the consequences for social interaction, drawing amongst others on the work of Tim Berners-Lee and Lev Manovic. He talked about how the internet disconnects social space and physical place, making place less significant, but how the same technology can be - and increasingly is - used integrated within physical space. He gave a range of examples on how technological features can be used in everyday life, hinting at the potential of "invasive technologies". According to Burgaard, the future is found by linking physical space and virtual space. The potential is already seen in how physical locations have become part of virtual games. Technology holds the potential of making the abstract very concrete and physically specific and thus increasing awareness about environmental issues. This can be done through for example mobile phones to communicate levels of air pollution, energy use etc.

BREAK OUT SESSION A: Interactive Media, Performance and the City

JAN HATT-OLSEN
Jan Hatt-Olsen *(DK) is a multimedia artist developing interactive art projects engaging with the public in public spaces,* *www.urbanartscape.org*

Jan Hatt presented some of his projects working with urban space as an artwork. Hatt attempts to use art as a catalyst for creating artistic urban space. This is done for example in a project based on poetry-installation and street creativity in Værløse.
Now, the focus for Hatt is the creation of what he calls "re-enchanted urban space" that deals both with the staging of public space and attempts to open up for public co-creation and creative communication in public space.

Hatt's project "Urban wiki / Urban Artscape in Furesø Municipalty" uses wiki-software to augment urban space. This is done by projecting a wiki on two squares in the city of Værløse, allowing for citizens to express themselves in the public

space in whatever way they like. It could be everything from holiday pictures to poems: it is projected directly into urban space. Hatt describes it as a "digital graffiti" that allows for personal expression in public space - without any damage! See www.urbanwiki.net.

In a related project in Vollsmose, the wiki-software was projected in a square and used as a chat-room. This allowed an interactive communication in public space without control or censorship, except for the same social ethics that work on Wikipedia - and of course the law!

The main point of Hatt's projects is to facilitate sharing and encounters in urban space. The virtual expressions are taken back to the physical space. Thus, Hatt tries to make the virtual world and the physical world merge in a new reality - an "augmented space".

RECOIL PERFORMANCE GROUP
Tina Tarpgaard (DK) and **Ole Kristensen** (DK) presented Recoil Performance Group who creates performances through dance, live video and electronic sound, www.recoil-performance.org

Tina Tarpgaard told about how Recoil Performance Group aims to explore generative digital technology as an equal and interacting partner to the performing artist.

In the performance "Grenzstadt" Tina Tarpgaard danced in Copenhagen with a virtual dancer placed in Belgrade through the programme Messenger. The audience could see the performance in both cities, though the two performers never actually met.
The goal was to explore: Is it possible to meet even through an asymmetrical relationship (as the Serb dancer cannot get a visa)? How to cross a border virtually (examples from where borders are hard to cross, e.g. Palestine)?

The presentation also dealt with the challenge of accessibility of global information and ways of using the internet as a dialogical tool on a local/global scale. See www.transfused.net (an open source community) and www.transfused.org (a cultural infrastructure) for more information on this.


BREAK OUT SESSION B: New media as designing tools

DEADLINE
Matthew Griffin (DE) experiments with the emerging information-age structures which are evident in different spheres, but have yet to manifest themselves in urban form, www.deadline.de

Matthew Griffin presented a range of projects and raised the question: how can we use technology to make things possible that would otherwise not have been possible? An example was the website www.templace.com, an internet site where people can rent space fast, thus allowing an easier and more flexible use of office space.

Griffin also presented his studio's own office project, which studio partners ended up developing themselves. The case became a story about the architect and developer relationship and the very concrete challenges involved in the complex development of a building that ended up also including a hotel. Griffin explained how the internet in this context was used for focused marketing, as a way of getting clients and guests for the hotel. The web made it possible to reach people they would otherwise never have reached. As Griffin said, the internet offers possibilities of finding people who take real interest in what you do.
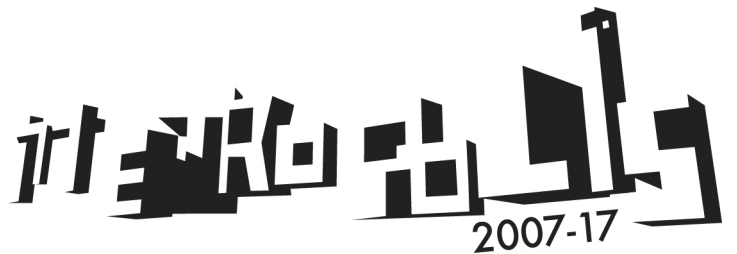
MAPT

*MAPT, **Mads Møller** and **Anders Lendager** (DK) is a small young office in Copenhagen that challenges architecture using new digital technologies for designing and manufacturing. www.mapt.dk.*

MAPT presented their dual interest in the relationship with technology.

1) How can you use technology in the process of architecture? And how can you use new design tools to make interesting architecture? 2) How we use technology in our everyday life.

The ambition of MAPT is using the newest software to make smarter and more sustainable architecture. In terms of their own process, MAPT appreciates working with engineers and computer people from the very beginning, in order to let the technical potential become integrated in the concept development process. MAPT is investigating how to use technology in ways to get results you don't expect.

MAPT also looks at how technology works - or doesn't work - as mediator between people. In their project for the Danish Pavilion for the EXPO with the theme "Better Cities, Better life", MAPT shows how they attempt to make architecture and digital communication interact. The project aims at breaking the boundary between the physical world and the potential of digitally organized knowledge. Also the project tries to show how the building of networks is what really counts and makes a difference in contemporary society. The architectural lay-out of the building should allow people to interpret the network, "making the network human". Another central aspect of that project was integrating play in obtaining knowledge and information. Also the place has to have a feeling of materiality.

RAKETA INSTITUTE

Åsa Lipka Falck/ Camilla Schlyter Gezelius/ Elisabet M Nilsson (SE), Raketa Institute, run interdisciplinary, collaborative projects and experiments within art, design, architecture and digital media, www.raketa.nu

Raketa is a platform for a range of activities aiming at developing concrete strategies fitting every specific task and context. In the spirit of this approach, Raketa, rather than presenting their own projects, presented a range of questions inspired by the Metropolis Lab. It was questions like: What is an architect? What is history? Why this longing for a new beginning? The session evolved into an interactive talk about questions regarding challenges for urban development.

Also Raketa invited a group of participants from Kaliningrad on stage to talk about the many challenges for the city, with its unique, complex and intertwined German-Russian history. The group's talk evolved around the challenges for every city to find its own way between locality and history on one side and international, contemporary urban development on the other side. This balance, avoiding the traps of both historical kitsch and a completely non-situated architecture, is crucial. And - was the conclusion - why the Metropolis Festival is so important.

BREAK OUT SESSION C: Mapping Urban Spaces – Get lost

The exhibition **"GET LOST"** discusses social sustainable urban development – with an emphasis on the conditions of the exposed in a rapidly growing city like Copenhagen. How do we move around and meet each other in urban public space? Is the city made for all? What values should be the basis of the further development of Copenhagen as a large city? The exhibition encounters the audience in their everyday activities in the city in the shape of short-lived art projects and interactive interventions in urban public space. Web-blogs and debates invite citizens to discuss the way in which our cities develop www.getlost.nu. Among the participants are **Bureau Detours**, a collaboration between artists and architects who test the boundaries for the public spaces through social involvement www.detours.biz and artist **Nis Rømer** (DK) www.publik.dk.

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★ Arranged by Københavns Internationale Teater / Supported by The Danish Arts Agency & City Council of Copenhagen ★

Kjersti Wikstrøm (DK), Project Manager at DAC; **Nis Rømer** (DK), artist and co-founder of the artist groups Free Soil and Publik; **Mads Peter Laursen** (DK), artist and member of the artist group Bureau Detours; and **Doung Jahangeer** (ZA), artist/architect and co-founder of the urban space platform DALA

The purpose of this session was to provide an overview of the exhibition *Get Lost*, arranged by the Danish Architecture Centre (DAC) and taking place in Copenhagen from April to October 2008. Moreover, the South African-based architect and artist Doung Jahangeer introduced his investigative City Walks that explore how people in space make places.

GET LOST – THE CITY AS AN OPEN PLATFORM
A wide range of activities are included in *Get Lost*: debate events, a book, an open access web portal and exhibitions in the urban spaces of Copenhagen. The project investigates issues of architecture and social sustainability, including the relationship between architecture and public ownership and the question of how to create a multifarious city that can and will appeal to everyone.

Get Lost sees the city as an open platform, expanding and developing according to public opinion and the actions of residents. Regarding the exhibitions in urban space, curator Kjersti Wikstrøm has been collaborating closely with Danish artists involved in alternative planning. Experienced with working in public space and using participatory strategies, most of their installations disrupt the boundaries between private, public and social spaces and intervene in the everyday life of their audiences.
Through processes of social dialogue, public stories etc. the objective of *Get Lost* is to establish an alternative mapping of Copenhagen. An atlas to be used by planners as a manual on how to create a more vibrant or livelier city.
www.getlost.nu

NIS RØMER – ART AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
Nis Rømer has made a temporary *Intercultural Garden* at a particular square, Otto Krabbes Plads in Copenhagen, to *Get Lost*. Residents and users of the square have been included in the project, thereby creating not only a garden but also an exchange of various cultural traditions of cultivation. With a special interest in the social and political organisation of spaces and how processes of globalization affect the city and our natural environment, Rømer argues that *environmental justice* is the crucial topic of our time. In various earlier art projects he has been investigating combinations of social justice and sustainability, pointing to the fact that polluting businesses often are placed in poor neighbourhoods. Constantly, he has been supporting the viewpoint that art needs to become commonly adopted in politics and urban planning.
www.free-soil.org
www.publik.dk
http://field-work.dk/freeculture/
http://www.interkulturellehaver.dk/

MADS PETER LAURSEN – SMALL-SCALE ACTIVISM
Mads Peter Laursen and his *Bureau Detours* have made a number of projects to *Get Lost*, commonly named *the Splash*. In general, each minor project has been used to establish social or interactive platforms for urban life in clear opposition to conventional huge-scale projects.
Close to Christiania, *Squatted Grounds* is the most controversial project in the range. By establishing a public harbour without permission from the authorities, an alternative society is generated with no use of money. *Bureau Detours* has a wide experience of intervening in public space on a small-scale basis. As Laursen puts it, the group in general breaks the law – "just a little bit and with a smile" – in order to move rigid boundaries and the forces of habit.
http://www.detours.biz/

DOUNG JAHANGEER – RE-NEGOTIATING THE CITY
Doung Jahangeer (ZA) is an architect and conceptual artist based in Durban. Famous for his "City Walks" with reference to "spaces in between" both in terms of physical space and in relation to human beings and their way of interacting.

Doung Jahangeer has not been involved in *Get Lost* but works with issues of art and public spaces as well as empowerment and the politics of urban planning. Investigating the relationship between space and race in contemporary post-apartheid society, he argues that an invisible structure of prejudices is still visible. The structure is even more successful today because people are living and practicing it without knowing.

Jahangeer has been mapping the exact locations where different races in the city of Durban are living – from the white middle-class suburb to the poor black suburbs. Subsequently he has been arranging participatory city walks in order to cross and dissolve the intangible borders between these communities.

By creating an informal network of pedestrians, Jahangeer makes an attempt at providing each citizen an opportunity of renegotiating and taking ownership of his/her situation – of practising freedom. Making people interact across polarities is, according to him, the only way of deconstructing the current discourse from within.

KEY NOTE SESSION 2

UTE META BAUER
Ute Meta Bauer (DE), Associate Professor and Director of the Visual Arts Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She was professor of Theory, Practice and Transfer of Contemporary Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna for 10 years. From 1990-94 director of Kunstlerhaus Stuttgart, and from 2002-05 founding director of the Norwegian Office for Contemporary Art. She was artistic director for the 3rd Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art in 2003-04 and co-curated Dokumenta11 in Kassel, www.curatingdegreezero.org/u_bauer/u_bauer.html

CHRISTIAN NOLD
Christian Nold (UK) Artist, designer and educator working to develop new participatory models for communal representation and engaged in psycho-geography of the city, www.softhook.com

Christian Nold's lecture took its point of departure in the question of how to represent cities - and particularly: how do you represent *the experience* of cities? He thus opened up a discussion on how traditional maps represent places – and what they don't represent. Nold is interested in exploring how to allow for richer forms of representation of urban qualities - and in how to represent personal experiences of cities in public. In his practice Nold has worked with a variety of participatory tools, attempting to supply a more holistic understanding of what public space means at a specific place.

Amongst his experiments has been a psycho-geographical map of cities based on measurements of a range of people's emotional responses to different sites. Also he has worked extensively with the organisation of workshops and different ways of developing ideas collectively. Nold sees a range of challenges in the actual participatory development processes. One is the very 'realistic' approach of many participants which tends to keep people from getting good ideas. Another one is the challenges of getting political ownership to ideas developed in workshops. But the participatory programmes can, in Nold's view, offer a chance of exactly challenging fixed ideas - and a chance to take the local population more serious.

ASHOK SUKUMARAN

Ashok Sukumaran (IN) is an artist based in Mumbai. His recent work deals with technological infrastructures and how we may move and act across them. Sukumaran's work has been shown internationally and has received a number of major honours, including the first prize of the UNESCO Digi-Arts Award, 2005, and the Golden Nica at the Prix Ars Electronica (for Interactive Art) in 2007, www.out.in

Ashok Sukumaran presented his artistic projects, most of them taking place in an Indian context, in different ways addressing issues such as urbanity, neighbourhood, shared spaces, surveillance and networks. Through using actual existing technology like CCTV systems and TVs, he shows the potentially ambiguous use of technology. For example in one project, Sukumaran uses a CCTV set at a workplace to enable an increased communication between family members. In this way a communication system designed for security-reasons, to control workers, becomes a means to make connections.

BREAK OUT SESSION A: New media, Spaces and the Stage

Kirsten Dehlholm (DK), artistic director of the performance company Hotel Pro Forma, who for 30 years has created unique projects and integrated media to create multilayered perspectives of time and space, www.hotelproforma.dk

Jacob Schokking (DK), artistic director of the performance company Holland House, who uses highly imaginative designs to link the performative element with the new media element in their work, www.hollandhouse.dk

Claire Hallereau (US) presented the work of The Builders Association, a New York-based performance and media company that exploits the richness of contemporary technologies to extend the boundaries of theatre, www.thebuildersassociation.org

No resume of this presentation.

BREAK OUT SESSION B: Light and the City

Artistic directors and curators Catja Thystrup (DK) and Stine Keiding (DK) from Illumenarts, a light and media art gallery located in the modern part of Copenhagen, Ørestad Nord, who uses public spaces and buildings of urban areas as a setting for exhibitions, www.illumenarts.dk

Victoria Coeln (AT) develops light spaces she refers to as "Chromotopes". Her work condenses and concretizes light and incorporates scientific knowledge as well as the power of emotion and personal encounter. www.victoriacoeln.at

Viera Collaro (DK) is an artist born in Bratislava/Slovakia, educated at the University of Michigan and at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen and with a huge experience of urban installations. www.vieracollaro.dk.

No resume of this presentation.

BREAK OUT SESSION C: Mapping Urban Spaces

PROGRAM
*Co-directors **Carson Chan** and **Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga** (DE) from **Program – Initiative for Art + Architectural Collaborations** in Berlin work in the field between art and architecture and stimulate collaborations between architects and artist.*

Carson Chan and Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga showed their open cross-disciplinary office space where artists and architects can learn from each other. Program wants to discern architecture from buildings and explore a broad understanding of architecture as organizing space.

Carson Chan and Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga presented their project "re-place Berlin", a web-based urban project that aims to reveal and celebrate the everyday rituals of Berlin's inhabitants. The project offers a web-platform where people are encouraged to share stories and reflections about particular sites in Berlin. The project shows how *spaces* become *places* through the experience of the occupants of a city. The project can be seen as a living archive of personal stories of the inhabitants of Berlin. The Re-place Berlin project allows the outsider to become a tourist in somebody else's everyday life. As a tourist you can travel another person's daily journey.

ANU PENNANEN
***Anu Pennanen** (FI) is a visual artist based in Paris. Her work mainly focuses on the influence of spatial organization, urban architecture and modernization of human behaviour. www.anupannanen.com.*

No resume of this presentation.

VINEKE JENSEN
***Vibeke Jensen** (NO), is an artist based in New York. She works in the interstices between photography, video and installation and has produced several public art commissions, http://www.thing.net/~vibekeie*

Vibeke Jensen showed a variety of her art projects in public space from both the US, Great-Britain, China and Norway. A recurring theme in parts of the projects is surveillance of and in public space and more generally how we *see* in public. A project from NYC uses the aesthetics of the TV crime-series - an aesthetic that in itself alters our way of being in and perceiving the city. The project "The Eye" - a projection of a movie of an immense eye on a building in an urban location - puts the discussion of authority and of controlling space on the agenda in a very manifest way - not least in Shanghai where the work was put up in guerrilla-style and shortly after taken down by the authorities.

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