

Resistance & Compromise - Spatial & Aesthetic approaches of Alternative Cultural Spaces in Lisbon, Ljubljana & Geneva

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RESISTANCE and COMPROMISE

SPATIAL AND AESTHETIC APPROACHES OF ALTERNATIVE CULTURAL SPACES

IN THE CITIES OF LISBON, LJUBLJANA AND GENEVA

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*La ville est le lieu (...) d'une transformation révolutionnaire de l'existence, à travers
la participation des citoyens et la réintégration du poétique dans l'ordinaire*

The Situationists¹.

¹ in Simay 2008.

Abstract

Contemporary architecture and urbanism concern everyday life in multiple contradictory ways. Floating between alienation and hope, post-industrial and other interstices often hold beautiful and poetic aesthetics of decay, attracting people driven by curiosity or political causes, stimulating the creativity of these spatial environments. Driven by struggles against standardised and authoritarian urban contexts, a search for Alternative Cultural Spaces (ACS) as concrete contemporary examples of spatial, convivial, creative and political experiences is the main objective of this research.

Case studies selected in Lisbon, Ljubljana and Geneva (cities affected by different physical conditions, particular histories and general urban and economic contexts) focus on the years 2005-2015, but also look back to the 1970s. Based on participant observation and other qualitative methods, such as photography, sketching or mapping, the research gives a big importance to visual and spatial production and analysis, in order to reflect social and political engagement as part of wider urban contexts.

Considering that the “aesthetics of resistance” of the ACS are influenced by practices of counter-cultures and avant-gardes (DIY, collage, site-specific), we believe that these “re-architectures” (re-use, re-habilitation, re-conversion) are also architectures of resistance (to mainstream, standardised and normalised spatial practices and to abandonment and negligence). However, these alternative aesthetics have become trendy over the last few years, becoming no longer exclusively used by leading resistance or subversive actions but being object of recuperation and consequently of instrumentalisation by neoliberal strategies. Culture and creativity are now at the core of urban planning, based on competitive processes and aiming at economic profit.

Three kinds of aestheticisation processes were identified: alternative experiences born from grassroots projects, built over time; top-down processes that force the projects and their spaces to adopt restricted norms in order to assure survival; processes born with the projects designed, recreated and guided by a for-profit concern. The last two cases contributively reduce the diversity of urban experience and control creativity, through annihilation or a forced ambiance.

This thesis shows that the visual expression of Ljubljana’s alternative aesthetics of resistance is stronger than Lisbon’s, and that Geneva’s is suffocated by normalisation processes over recent years. The way a spatial ambiance is perceived by the user of a particular space depends largely on the mode of production of that same space, and on the primary intentions existing behind the creation of a particular design or construction, varying from mainstream and institutional approaches to the most subversive ones. Compromise is present and visible through the aesthetics of an ACS.

Logics of urban-spatial occupation highlight the importance of the squat movement in Geneva, of the counter-cultures in Ljubljana, and of the fragmented networks of ACS in Lisbon. They also show how ACS propose a cultural network that is complementary to the mainstream one. Besides, either ACS move in the city or they experience a process of aestheticisation. One and another are directly related with survival strategies.

Assuming a dialectic perspective of resistance and compromise, this thesis exposes the complex, hybrid and ambiguous dimensions of ACS.

Keywords

Alternative Cultural Spaces, Resistance, Compromise, Visual and Spatial Aesthetics, Lisbon, Ljubljana, Geneva

Résumé

L'architecture contemporaine et l'urbanisme ont un impact important sur la vie quotidienne de multiples façons. Naviguant entre aliénation et espoir, les interstices post-industriels et d'autres où sont révélées la beauté et l'esthétique du délabrement attirent les personnes poussées par la simple curiosité ou l'engagement politique. Cette configuration stimule la créativité de ces environnements. Poussée par les luttes contre des contextes urbains standardisés et autoritaires, l'étude d'espaces culturels alternatifs (ACS) en tant qu'exemples contemporains d'expériences spatiales, conviviales, créatives, mais aussi politiques, constitue le principal objectif de cette thèse.

Les cas d'étude sélectionnés à Lisbonne, à Ljubljana et à Genève (chaque ville ayant une histoire particulière, des conditions économiques et géographiques différentes) sont analysés sur la période 2005–2015 et mis en perspective par un état des lieux remontant jusqu'aux années 70. Les principaux outils méthodologiques utilisés, tant l'observation participante que les autres méthodes qualitatives d'analyse visuelle comme la photographie, le dessin ou encore la mapping, placent de façon générale l'analyse de la production visuelle et spatiale au centre de ce travail ainsi que les reflets d'engagements sociaux et politiques urbains.

Considérant que l'esthétique de la «résistance» des ACS est influencée par des pratiques propres aux contre-cultures et avant-gardes (DIY, collage, site-specific), nous pensons que la «re-architecture» utilisée dans le même sens que la ré-utilisation, la ré-habilitation ou encore la re-conversion est aussi une architecture de la résistance face aux pratiques spatiales dominantes, conventionnelles et standardisées, mais également face à l'abandon et à la négligence institutionnelle. Cependant, les esthétiques alternatives sont devenues à la mode ces dernières années: elles ne sont donc plus exclusivement utilisées pour des actions subversives ou comme des lieux de résistance, mais peu à peu récupérées, puis instrumentalisées. Elles illustrent aujourd'hui la mise en œuvre des stratégies de la ville néolibérale. La culture et la créativité se trouvent ainsi au cœur de la planification urbaine mais en étant désormais essentiellement basées sur un processus compétitif dont l'objectif est le profit économique.

Trois types de processus d'esthétisation ont été identifiés: émergence d'expériences alternatives grâce à des mouvements populaires, progressivement construites sur cette base; processus top-down qui contraignent les acteurs des projets alternatifs à respecter des normes restrictives mais sans lesquelles ils ne pourraient garantir leur survie; processus qui ont été tout simplement initiés, créés, re-crés et guidés par des considérations commerciales. Les deux derniers types identifiés contribuent à réduire la diversité des ACS et à contrôler leur créativité.

La thèse montre l'importance de l'esthétique alternative et de résistance à Ljubljana comparée à Lisbonne. Cette même esthétique est quant à elle maîtrisée et contrôlée à Genève par la normalisation. La façon dont une ambiance spatiale est perçue par l'utilisateur d'un espace particulier dépend en grande partie du mode de production de ce même espace et des premières intentions derrière la création d'une conception ou d'une construction particulière, oscillant entre les approches mainstream, institutionnelles et subversives. Le compromis est présent et visible à travers l'esthétique d'un ACS.

Les logiques d'occupation spatiale urbaines mettent en évidence l'importance du mouvement squat à Genève, des contre-cultures à Ljubljana et des réseaux fragmentés à Lisbonne. Elles montrent également comment les ACS proposent un réseau culturel complémentaire au mainstream. En plus, soit les ACS se déplacent dans la ville, soit ils subissent un processus d'esthétisation. L'un et l'autre sont directement liés à des stratégies de survie.

Consciente de cette dialectique de la résistance et du compromis, la thèse expose les dimensions complexes, hybrides et ambiguës des ACS.

Mots clés

Espaces Culturels Alternatifs, Résistance, Compromis, Esthétique Visuelle et Spatiale, Lisbonne, Ljubljana, Genève

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support and collaboration of many people.

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PREFACE

The story of this thesis starts back in the year of 2005, when during my studies of architecture I went to Ljubljana, Slovenia, to live there for some time. Even if the formal framework of this dissertation was only established at the end of 2011, when applying to the Doctoral school “Architecture and Sciences of the City” (EDAR) of École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), it was that first contact with the city of Ljubljana and its Autonomous Cultural Centre Metelkova Mesto that started to shape my interest on the scientific subjects that are today presented in this dissertation.

As someone born in Lisbon, I have intensely been living in and enjoying this city since my earliest days. When coming back to this city, after my living experience abroad, I arrived with the fresh eyes of a visitor, and was able, for the first time, to observe it both with an insider and an outsider point of view. As an architect, the personal life path through the Balkans opened my eyes towards an increasingly critique approach to conventional ways of teaching and producing architecture. I started to pay more attention to the social and political aspects that were directly linked to the city, desiring to understand those aspects better and to participate in the city in a more committed way. That ended up resulting in the creation of this written document. This scientific work is therefore the result of a particular life path designed by personal living experiences, particular interests, sometimes disappointments and so many doubts, but it is also important to refer the fact that the accomplishment of this work has also strongly influenced my personal life from 2011 on. Scientific choices imply particular paths of life, and certain paths of life contribute to the creation of scientific arguments. Through observation, production of images (photography and drawings) and contact with so many people, an analysis and a study of some *alternative cultural spaces* has therefore been made, in the contemporary context of three selected cities located in Europe.

The big changes that occurred in the Portuguese capital city in the last ten years cannot be ignored, particularly in what concerns the mass tourism in the city centre. From a peripheral capital city to one of the hotspots of Europe, Lisbon has been suffering the impact of the multiple consequences that arose from the European and global economic changes, like the austerity measures, the social movements and the political struggles. A particular change was also the boom of the cultural life and, more particularly, the rise of so many *alternative cultural spaces*.

Precisely on this matter I did face two particular interesting situations when living in Ljubljana, during the year 2005-2006. First, the contact with the already mentioned Autonomous Cultural Centre Metelkova Mesto – whose visual explosion of creativity so much positively affected me – and then the squatting operation of Tovarna Rog. This central European city, of a strong Eastern influence, apart from having a dynamic counter-cultural movement, has recently – in the last decade, just like Lisbon – been affected by harsh austerity measures.

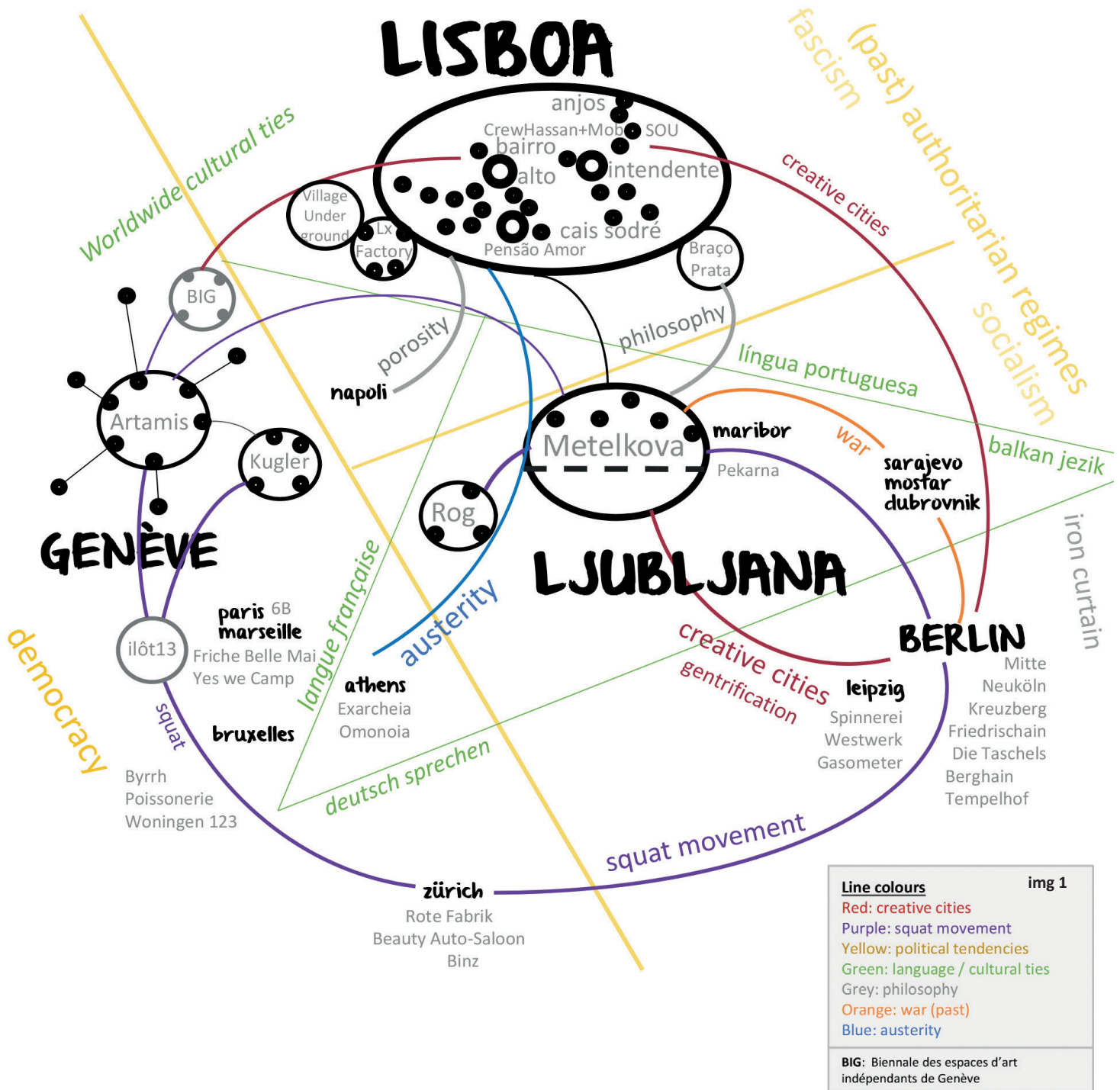
My last stop – the city of Geneva, in Switzerland, country in which I have been living since the end of 2008 – comes as an example that contradicts partially the last two cities, and the general European trend to crisis. The economic success and the associated consequences this Swiss town has been undergoing since the change of the millennium has negatively affected the strong alternative movement this town had experienced in the previous decades and, consequently, the spatial support and the environmental characteristics of the city and its counter-culture.

Historical facts are of course crucial to the better understanding of the present situation of each city, not only at the economic and political level, but also at other levels (urban planning and cultural, for instance). At this purpose, we consider that the last 30-40 years have been determinant and must be taken in consideration in this work. Some key-events – e.g. the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, the transition from socialism to capitalism in Slovenia, and the urban struggles in the neighbourhood of Grottes in Geneva – seem to have triggered important social and artistic movements, whose spatial and aesthetic impacts are still relevant in our days. Some aspects of those movements, explored in this work, are: the street art and the poetry heritage in Lisbon's walls; the punk and the alternative artistic and philosophical Ljubljana movement of the 1970s-80s; the Geneva's squat movement. Furthermore, it is also fundamental to have in mind the legal framework of each city in order to understand better, for instance, the decay of the built heritage of Lisbon's downtown or the tightening of the freedom of expression in Geneva, and the normalisation and standardisation process of the artistic and public space in this city. At last, one cannot ignore the recent mass uprisings that took place in Lisbon and Ljubljana against the austerity measures that resulted from the economic crisis, uprisings whose dynamics influenced heavily many of the alternative cultural spaces in those cities.

My interest in the urban environment, and its relationship with architecture and culture triggered a growing interest on the spatial and aesthetics aspects that are intrinsically linked to the alternative cultural life of the three mentioned cities. Such subject of analysis necessarily called for a political perspective focused on urban aspects, presenting the *alternative cultural spaces* as the main object of discussion, which often lies in a hybrid position between urban resistance and compromise. On the one hand "resistance" to unfair, authoritarian, pro-profit and standardising situations as well as to laws and unfavourable contexts. On the other hand "compromise", whether as an acquiescent attitude (gratuitous acceptance, submission to the political or administrative power or to the market laws) or seen from a more positive perspective, under the form of dialogue, a communication that allows (co-)existence and complementarity.

My own experience as an architect, and the disappointment with the conventional and mainstream contemporary architectural practice pulled me into searching for alternatives, the subject being approached from a critique, theoretical perspective grounded on a cross-disciplinary study, centred in architecture and sociology. This way, an objective and personal approach has been adopted, using a methodology that combines facts and stories and is constructed upon personal experiences (mine and from other people). I believe that the intensity of the living experience I had in so many of the experiences that are mentioned along this dissertation as well as the power of the inherent poetry existing in those spaces – both in spatial and/or visual terms – had a significant impact in my way of looking and understanding architecture and, in a wider sense, this world. That poetical character is also linked to the nostalgic relationship the *alternative cultural spaces* have with their own past, expressed under the form of spatial layers or of visual and material details. These reused spaces, full of "scars" and "adhesive tape", have a basic capacity of telling us infinite stories of other times, other epochs, many of them going back to the beginning of the industrialisation process.

Before moving forward, I would like to use this opening chapter to make reference to a few specific alternative cultural spaces and cities that I visited during my research work, which have also strongly contributed to the general construction of this thesis' argument, and which will not be mentioned later on. The cities are: Berlin, Leipzig, Paris, Marseille, Mostar, Sarajevo, Dubrovnik, Athens, Havana, Zürich, Brussels, Naples. The correlation between these cities and the ones I presented before, is expressed in the following graphic, where the main general context is also mentioned (img 1).



This graphic shows only the European context, excluding therefore the city of Havana, in Cuba. The importance that this city had in my research concerns the way how an excessive amount of a “beautiful decay” can sometimes lose the charm when seen from the insider perspective of a local inhabitant. When dealing on a regular daily basis with such degraded building conditions – resulting from a severe economic blockade, established by the US already a few decades ago – *beauty* or *poetry* allied to *decay* no longer make sense, revealing instead a feeling of repulsion and a desire for clean and new spatial environments (img 2).

Many post-communist and post-industrial decaying buildings have meanwhile become fetishistic architectural objects, used for artistic and cultural purposes, as a background scenario for film shooting and photography, or for urban exploration. This is the case of many buildings in West Berlin, like the Berghain or the Eis Fabrik, for example (a factory transformed into a night club, or a factory that simply became abandoned, respectively – img 3, 4). But it is also the case of the housing block Vele di Scampia, located in the outskirts of the Italian city of Naples, which has become abandoned, half destroyed and later on squatted (img 5, 6). Similarly in Leipzig, where places like the former factory Spinnerei, the Westwerk, or the Gasometer lead one’s mind to dream of faraway times (past or future), inspired by their boldly spatial forms (img 7, 8). However, many of these places have been progressively instrumentalised, managers using the artistic culture as a decoy to attract real estate investors. Associated with these kinds of strategies are gentrification types of processes, responsible for strong urban realm changes. This is also the case of *6B* (a former offices’ building in Saint-Denis, Paris), *La Friche Belle de Mai* (in Marseille’s downtown), or the experimental *Yes We Camp* project, associated with the event *Marseille 2013 – European Capital of Culture* (img 9, 10, 11, 12, 13).

On the other side, the squat movement that occurred in so many of these cities, and the way the respective buildings have been occupied, could not stay indifferent to my eyes and unconcerned to my life experience in the cities I visited. The famous *Die Taschelles*, in Berlin, and so many others in the Mitte area (e.g. *Haus Scharzernberg*), or *Friedrichshain*, have shown me the *SquArts* (squat+art) world, as places having the capacity to marry bohemia and activism in such a desiring way (img 14, 15). Furthermore, the way Berlin exposes signs of destruction and fragmentation, and how from such departing conditions (after the war and the fall of the wall) it has managed to dream, (re)built and overcome difficulties in such a creative way, is a very powerful characteristic profoundly susceptible to shake the visitors’ emotions. The former airport *Tempelhof*, for instance – that opened in 2010 as a public free city park – came to offer Berlin’s inhabitants an immense space of possibilities, revealing a contemporary exceptional example of achievement of the people’s fight for the right to the city (img 16).

During my visit to the Balkans – Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina – the effect I felt on account of the consequences of the war, in terms of spatial destruction (the scars of the wars were still so visible in 2005-6) was also very shocking. The desolate landscapes in those countries, still filled with hidden mines and graves, and particularly the cities of *Mostar* and *Sarajevo*, cause a very intense visual impact, sad and melancholic. Still beautiful, nevertheless (img 17, 18, 19). On the other side there is the city of *Dubrovnik*, beautiful and pretending to be there, unharmed and intact, for hundreds of years, with its medieval (but shining!) pavements and walls, revealing the

kind of role UNESCO may have in the renovation of the built heritage¹ (img 20). This alerted me for several issues related to heritage and tourism, as well as to contemporary architectural practices of rehabilitation and renovation. I realised later, that both kinds of aesthetics – destruction and rehabilitation – were also visible somehow in Metelkova Mesto (the Ljubljana squat that so much impressed me). It was something about the way it addressed both chaos and order, and how that questioned conventional beauty, creativity and design processes.

When destruction becomes allied with poetry, despair and political activism, the city becomes the stage of the quest for better life conditions, solidarity and struggle for human rights. The aesthetics of crisis, of resistance and struggle (or, what we later will call “punk aesthetics”) I did find in the neighbourhoods of Exarcheia and Omonoia, in Athens, in a very expressive way (img 21, 22, 23, 24). Also in a few squats - like Köpi, in Berlin - these kinds of aesthetics are strongly present. A few examples, slightly more bright, but still with a very strong visual and social impact, were the squats I visited in Brussels and Zurich (respectively: Auto Beauty Saloon, Binz; Byrrh, La Poissonerie, Woningen 123 – see img 25, 26, 27). A curious particularity in Zurich is how its Rote Fabrik worked as an inspiration for the first project designed for Metelkova, when it still wished to work as an institutional cultural centre (img 28).

Back in the South, the “porous” (cf. Walter Benjamin) city of Naples makes a deeply appreciated compact and dense urban environment, where ancient and modern layers of history are so intensely intricate. The beauty of the several strata of materials and stories, and such labyrinthine (sometimes chaotic) architecture triggers an exciting and adventurous walk in this city, where the old and the new, the public and the private are so positively intermingled. The way its spatial elements and a million fragments are patched into a coherent whole, is very inspiring (img 29, 30, 31, 32). Somehow a bit the same happens in Lisbon, forced by its slopes that help to create a labyrinthine urban mesh, contributing to the existence of so many interstitial spaces, rising therefore questions related with matters of visibility, accessibility and legality.

*

As we have seen, this particular life experience contributed to the creation of the argument of my dissertation, as we will see more in detail in the methodological approach chapter. We will see therefore how the mentioned topics, as well as some of the referred spaces, will be developed along this work. But first, a few clarifications will be made in what concerns the specific research matters of space, aesthetics and resistance, as well as about the object of study of this work.

1 Dubrovnik is a Croatian historic walled city that joined the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites in 1979. During the war, in 1991, the buildings of the old town suffered a big damage. The reconstruction afterwards (1995-1999) followed UNESCO's guidelines, the repairs being performed in order to restore its original style.





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We should mention, furthermore, that a part of this thesis was also funded by the *Swiss Confederation* (from September 2012 until June 2013) and the *Laboratoire de Sociologie Urbaine (Lasur)*, the entity that hosted me during the four years of my research and that is part of the *Architecture and Sciences of the City (EDAR)* of *École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL)*.

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- img 3** Bergahin, Berlin (2012).
- img 4.** Eis Fabrik, Berlin (2012).
- img 5.** Vele di Scampìa, Naples (2015).
- img 6.** *Ibid.*
- img 7.** Gasometer, Leipzig (2012).
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- img 29.** Naples: An intricate inner space where multiple historical times coexist: Roman (amphitheatre's walls), Medieval (shop of nativity scenes) and Postmodern Naples (windows of the rooms of a Bread'n'Breakfast hostel), (Mai 2015).

- img 30.** Multiple layers on a façade's building of Naples (2015).
- img 31.** Bricolage-architectures, Naples (2015).
- img 32.** Panorama of the city, Naples (2015).



Credits

The illustrations in this thesis are made by the author, except when explicitly mentioned and credited therefore to the respective authors.

Acronyms

ACS	– Alternative Cultural Spaces
BP	– Braço de Prata
C4	– Creative Cities and Counter Culture
CML	– Câmara Municipal de Lisboa (Municipality of Lisbon)
DIY	– Do It Yourself
EGEAC	– Empresa de Gestão de Equipamentos e Animação Cultural de Lisboa
EU	– European Union
FAK	– Fédération des Artistes de Kugler
FBP	– Fábrica do Braço de Prata
LXF	– Lx Factory
MOL	– Municipality of Ljubljana
MzM	– Mreža za Metelkova (Network for Metelkova)
NGO	– Non-Governmental Organisation
NSK	– Neue Slowenisch Kunst
PAV	– Praille Acacias Vernets
PDM	– Plano Director Municipal (urban master plan of Lisbon)
SFRY	– Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
ŠKUC	– Študentski Kulturni Center (Student Cultural Center)
UrbEx	– Urban Exploration

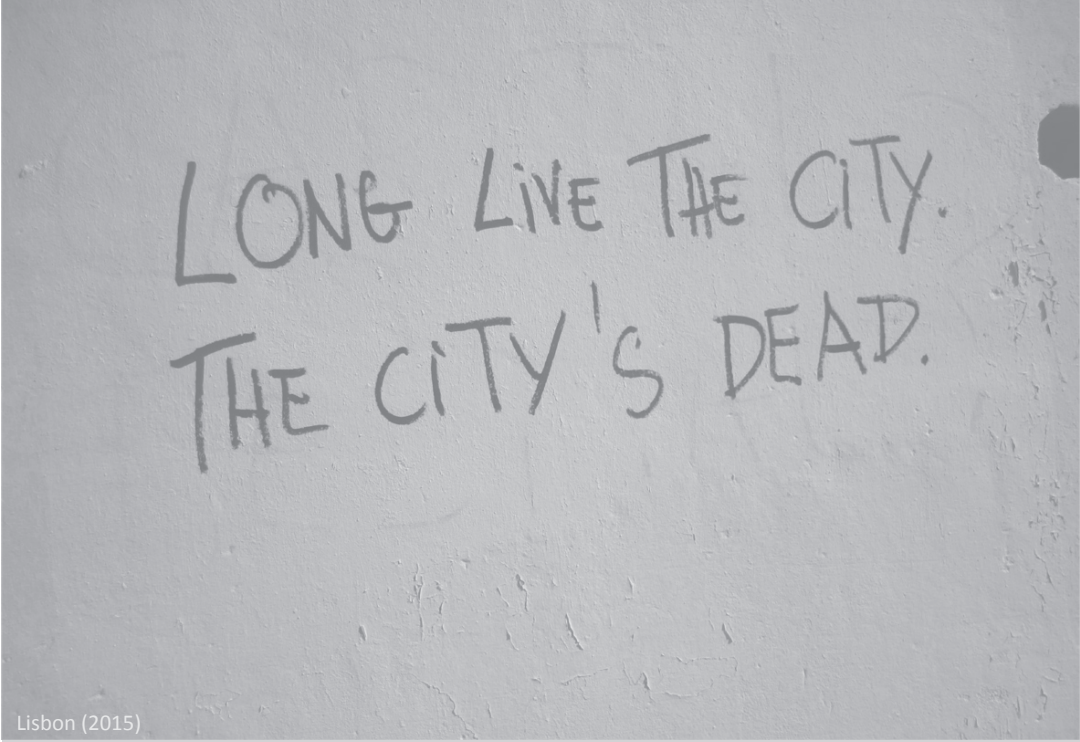
INTRODUCTION

PART I

The subject of *resistance* explored through *space* and *visual aesthetics* is, in this first chapter of the dissertation, developed in order to establish a general theoretical framework. The main problematics and topics of interest of the research are exposed, addressing wider and global issues related to contemporary spatial practices and aesthetics. Within this context, political, urban and cultural approaches expose certain dominant ideologies on the one hand, while referring to alternative practices or ways of doing things on the other. Matters related to the subjects of resistance and of compromise are presented sometimes in a complementary, sometimes in a contrasting way, preparing the ground for the understanding of the object of study of this research: the *Alternative Cultural Spaces*. The role these projects have in the contemporary dynamics of the city is linked to the everyday life of its citizens and to the urban environment, addressing therefore multiple struggles against realities felt as hostile (in terms of violence, control, standardisation and social injustices). Furthermore, it is here also intended to understand what kind of compromises the Alternative Cultural Spaces make (either of their own free will, or forced by circumstances) with local power authorities, urban and cultural policies or the real estate market, for instance.

In doing so, the concept of “*Alternative Cultural Spaces*” will be defined, prior to the introduction of the theoretical specifications about its interrelated concepts of *culture and counter-culture*, *aesthetics and aestheticisation*, *resistance and compromise*. This leads to the presentation of the research objectives and hypotheses, which in turn introduce the following chapters of this dissertation.

I. SPACE, AESTHETICS & RESISTANCE



LONG LIVE THE CITY.
THE CITY'S DEAD.

Lisbon (2015)

Analysed under a dialectic perspective that varies from feelings of *alienation* to *hope*, and issues of *resistance* to *compromise*, the theoretical framework is built on four major topics:

1. *Junkspace [Alienation & Eclecticism]*
2. *Punkspace [Decadence & Nostalgia]*
3. *Re-Architecture [Reuse & Resistance]*
4. *Creativity [Culture & Compromise]*

Each topic is followed by a two-word complement (expressed in between square brackets). Such words give a hint about each concept, directing the reader to a more specific and concrete framework, contributing to announce previously the subject that will be discussed. The four topics follow a chain of ideas, which have, as a starting point, the delusion about certain contemporary urban and spatial practices, and more specifically about the professional framework that concerns the domain of architecture, exposing diverse critique comments and/or some concrete approaches of professionals in the same area. The input from authors of other disciplines – like sociology, anthropology or art – contributes to give consistency and to extend the references exposed by the architects, the whole being exposed and analysed through a recent historical perspective. The “delusion” of unpleasant and undesired material and social results, issued from what is here called as “junkspace” (Rem Koolhaas 2004), is complemented with a more positive perspective, which accepts the possibility of beauty in hybrid postmodern architectures. Such examples are then counterbalanced with a diversion of the first concept (“junkspace”, now transformed into “punkspace”), embodying the possibility of hope in degraded spatial environments, this being achieved through spatial transformation, social action and poetry.

Born from rather hard and violent, and also utopic contexts and approaches, the idea of the theoretical argument is followed by more concrete spatial and urban approaches of resistance, directly linked to practices of reuse and of recycling (“Re-Architecture”). An overview, focused more on action and activism than only on ideas and dreams, is listed and discussed, linking therefore this topic to issues related with the design process and creativity, where art and culture have a major role in spatial transformation processes. The cycle of the four main topics is then almost complete when introducing the concept of “compromise”, leading us somehow back to the departing point, if we consider that this term suggests that, when creativity works under the logics of the market, the outcome often takes a negative turn, which is mostly oriented towards order and profit (discarding hopes, dreams, poetry and social justice). The four major topics lead us to the main field of investigation of this research – the understanding of Alternative Cultural Spaces (ACS) as *objects of hope and delusion* as well as *resistance and compromise*.

Before going deep into each sub-chapter, a brief overview of the four main theoretical topics is presented in the next lines, highlighting the multiple (and sometimes contradictory) political and social perspectives existing behind spatial and aesthetics’ matters.

Junkspace [Alienation & Eclecticism]

Drawing on Rem Koolhaas concept (2004), this first part explores the postmodern spatial production seen through the most negative side of it. It follows the aesthetics of industrialisation and high technology, of standardised details, automatized systems and uncontrollable devices, that so often result in unsustainable architectures and in “non-places” (Augé 1992), provoking a feeling of alienation on their users. Mainstream and homogenised buildings are then complemented with surveillance systems designed to predict deviant actions, this contributing – along with physical barriers – to the expansion of defensive architectures. Oppressive spaces, rigid and intolerant as they are, only increase the urban violence and the construction of slums. Furthermore, there has been a growing tendency to the privatisation of space and to the construction of architectures of consumption, profit-oriented, grounded on competitive design methods. This situation might result both in minimal or excessive aesthetic tendencies. However, this affinity of postmodern architecture to mass, commercial and popular culture, is very often based on eclectic and hybrid approaches, this eventually resulting in original and unconventional approaches, where a challenging nature is expressed in the *collage* of fragments, revealing therefore a critique posture against standardised methods.

Punkspace [Decay & Nostalgia]

This concept arises as resistance to the transformation of the uncertain space into *junkspace* (Carmo, Pedrazzini, and Reitz 2015, 165). “Uncertain space” is the one resulting from the functional obsolescence, decadence and abandonment provoked by the deindustrialization process, which contributes to a general melancholic atmosphere where a nostalgia for the past reigns. These often chaotic and apocalyptic spatial environments hold the aesthetics of decay. However, this ruined and “raw” architecture happens to embrace and radiate a certain beauty and poetics. Their overlapped layers are able to tell a hundred stories. Such places happen in the interstices of the cities, in urban wastelands, attracting explorers and squatters, who claim for the “right to the city” (Lefebvre 1968) by proclaiming “temporary autonomous zones” (Bey 1985), proposing radical and subversive spatial practices. Inspired by several counter-cultures, these new users recycle and recompose the previously existing elements by using informal methods of *collage*, *assemblage* or *bricolage*. This results in organic and hybrid aesthetic environments, supported by a communitarian work and DIY ethics.

Re-Architecture [Reuse & Resistance]

This term is a designation addressed to contemporary architectural practices that are grounded on active resistance, supported by the aesthetics of recycling (in terms of space, materials, objects) and implying spatial transformation aiming at an effective change. Based on a sense of continuity of the physical context, these approaches highlight cultural and historical values (e.g. heritage), and claim a real value of use of space adapted to the needs of the present moment (finding multiple solutions in adaptations and reconversion processes). They highlight the importance of the interstitial spaces of the city as places that still have the capacity to resist regulatory norms and homogenisation practices, and defend the existence and construction of a “porous” environment, where the old and the new, the present life and the past, the private and the public space permeate and merge together, in a continual process of discontinuous transformation. Subject of several architectural exhibitions and biennales, these “alterarchitectures” (Paquot, Masson Zanussi, et Stathopoulos 2012) are able to transform abandoned wastelands into convivial, sustainable, civic and ecological places. These are therefore architectures of resistance, grounded on praxis methods, a knowledge-exchange attitude, site-specific, which present local solutions adapted to the everyday life. While darning the fragments of the urban fabric, they contribute to the empowerment of local populations. And, by assuring the “spatial agency” (Schneider, Awan, et Till 2011) of their users, these “spaces of hope” (Harvey 2000) allow a place for the unpredicted and the spontaneous to happen, supported by an informal activism.

Creativity [Culture & Compromise]

From recycling and resistance approaches grounded on “artistic utopias of revolt” (Ramirez Blanco 2014), some contradictions have been detected on formal and aesthetic solutions. Ideological compromises seem today to “recycle the aesthetics of recycling” into less noble purposes. A trivialisation of the ideas and of the political struggles led by the artistic critique and social movements of the 1960-70s seems to be taking place, and their revolutionary symbols and subversive approaches (expressed in multiple forms) are being recovered and converted in tools of neoliberal politics. This “new spirit of capitalism” (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999) has been instrumentalising the arts and culture for business purposes. The model of the “creative city” (Landry 1995; Florida 2002) is a good example of such dominant ideology. On the one hand, it has become a synonymous of rehabilitation, revitalisation and regeneration of the industrial heritage (but also of gentrification). On the other hand, based on its assumption that creativity contributes to the economic growth of the cities, it has been exploiting the artistic avant-gardes and counter-cultural aesthetics to promote a particular kind of urbanism, where the so-called “cultural industries” have a major role. These “factories as houses of culture” (Debord 1967) are often the perfect marriage between *culture* and *market*, contributing to the continuous festivalisation of cities (supported by a bohemian lifestyle), and the creation of ambiances (where what matters is mainly the appearance). This results in an aestheticisation process supported by intense spatial, material and experiential sensations, giving also its contribution to the “society of the spectacle” (Debord 1967) and to the international competition between cities.

I.I. Junkspace [Globalisation + Alienation]

We live today turbulent times. The globalisation process tends to accelerate time and shrink space, a consequence of the major advances on technology and science of the last 20 or 30 years, which allowed the existence of a fast and wide network of transports and communications¹. The different kinds of architecture that have been produced within this context, due to their scale and purpose, tend to contribute to the present deracination of human being and consequent feeling of alienation. Many of such architectures became *non-places* (Augé 1992), lacking spatial and architectural qualities, or *junkspace* (Koolhaas 2004). This last concept is borrowed from the architect Rem Koolhaas, and used in this research as a kind of reference that represents all those contemporary modes of architectural production driven to a great extent by a profit aim or detached from an engaged socio-political action that envisions an improvement of the people's life conditions. Junkspace represents, furthermore, architectures which have standardised ways of production related with construction methods, materials and aesthetics, framed by endless rules, control device systems and bureaucracy. Junkspace is, in this way, used in this research precisely as a surrogate of the kind of architecture that we criticise. We could have, the same way, chosen the term non-places (or other) to play this role. However – as we will see further on in this chapter – junkspace seems to embrace a wider field that includes more kinds of spatial typologies. Furthermore, Junkspace allows the adoption of a conceptual game with what we propose to call Punkspace – the word and concept that will be defined and used in the next chapter –, which represents the counter spatial attitude that resists contemporary the oppressive and mainstream spatial production. In this sense, we shall start by understanding Koolhaas' concept – in dialogue with a few others used by the author, like The Generic City –, in order to frame this theoretical chapters focused on contemporary deceiving architectural practices and ways of space production.

In his essay named *The Generic City* (1995), Rem Koolhaas asks: “Is the contemporary city like the contemporary airport – “all the same”?” (Koolhaas 2011, 45). This sentence addresses issues related to the globalisation process, the standardisation of habits and cultures and the accelerated flux of people, goods and information. Several authors have been discussing such topics in the last decades, one of them being the French anthropologist Marc Augé, who tried to find a concept that defined the spaces created to serve such context. Augé defined as “non-places” those spaces which have clear objectives and that are made for certain purposes – places of transport, transit, commerce and leisure, for example – considering them as being the opposite of “places”, which hold an identity, history and more human urban relationships (Augé 1992, 118, 100). While for Augé “identity” is an attribute that helps him defining his concept of “place”, for Koolhaas *identity* is the real question – he tries to understand what are its major disadvantages and what happens when we lose identity: is it the *standard*? The *mainstream*? (Koolhaas 2011, 45). This perception of a large-scale progressive homogenisation leads him to

¹ This process goes back to the beginning of the industrialisation process, in the 18th century, but it grew exponentially in the last decades.

define his concept of “generic city” (Koolhaas 2011, 45), just like the Italian writer Italo Calvino had already done using the words of Marco Polo, when describing his *generic city* named Trude: a city that, even if you have never been there before, you already know it when you arrive, because it looks the same as any other, transmitting an uncomfortable and negative sense of familiarity, a constant repetition of references (Calvino 1972, 61).

One interesting fact that Koolhaas notices, nevertheless, is how *the generic city* is not only absorbing the *local identity* but, more than that, is transforming its authenticity into a shape of deceitful publicity (Koolhaas refers himself, more precisely, to the “concentrated blast of local identity” one can find in each airport through “perfumes demonstrations, photomurals or vegetation”): it is the *generic* disguised as *local identity*, taking place in the airport, a space which provides a cohabitation of the Hyper-local with the Hyperglobal (Koolhaas 2011, 53).

But how exactly does Koolhaas define his concept of “Junkspace”? According to him, the *junkspace* has the capacity of mixing all architectural typologies, by a cumulative process, in one single building (Koolhaas 2011, 92). The characteristic elements present in this kind of spaces are: the air conditioning, the lift and the escalator; the vaulted, the arch and the dome; the courtyard and the atrium; the partitions and the modules; dropped ceilings, walls and floors coating or lining patchwork; the fire shutter, the emergency exits and the hot air curtain; in these spaces “kiosks, carts, strollers, palms, fountains, sofas, bars, trolleys” can be found (Koolhaas 2011, 97). The mostly used materials are, as in the case of modern architecture, concrete, steel and glass. But, along with them, a whole new universe of “suspect” materials invades now the space: plasterboard, aluminium, polycarbonate, silicone, plastic (or “plasticized concrete”), metal. Transparent, reflective, muddy, heavy, hairy textures and shiny surfaces proliferate. Structure has become ornamental and ornament is dictated by iconographic styles (byzantine, roman, Bauhaus, Disney, Art Nouveau, Mayan), varying between gorgeous and dark aesthetics – “the deadest resides next to the most hysterical” (Koolhaas 2011, 85-86). Design, produced by *junkspace*, contributes to distract people, “helping” them to get lost through an absurd circulation, guided by a confuse signalisation – which should, above all, show us the right way, but instead compels us to go up, down and to turn, “like the typical path from check-in (...) of the average contemporary airport” (Koolhaas 2011, 97-98).

Koolhaas develops further his description of the characteristics of the *junkspace*, one of them being the “junk-speech”, which transforms lingerie into “Nude, Action, Body” and cosmetics into “History, Memory, Society” (Koolhaas 2011, 117). This “speech” can be pompous as fast as it can be servile, by blocking our passage with messages of apology like “pardon our appearance” and “sorry”, announcing a momentary discomfort (Koolhaas 2011, 92). It is through the use of certain words or expressions – the most appropriated verbs, adjectives and rhetorical figures of speech – that Koolhaas exhaustively explores his subject, in a lyrical and sometimes poetical style of writing:

- A whole group of verbs, previously unknown in architectural history, has now become indispensable: “clamp, stick, fold, dump, glue, shoot, double, fuse”. Koolhaas underlines yet another group of verbs: “cutting, bending, tearing, coating” – these actions represent the joint in architectural detailing, and they transmit “the illusion of an unbroken surface”;

furthermore, the architect insists in revealing verbs that produce *junkspace*, realising how those starting with the prefix re- are so representative in that respect: “restore, rearrange, resemble, revamp, renovate, revise, recover, return (...), redo, respect, rent” (Koolhaas 2011, 90, 101-2).

- An audacious and varied use of adjectives complements and supports the three concepts that he defines – *Bigness*, *Generic City* and *Junkspace* –, respectively: artificial, complex, wide and expansive (Koolhaas 2011, 31-42); repetitive, arbitrary, fast, comfortable, attractive, discreet, mysterious, open and welcoming (Koolhaas 2011, 45-77); closed, unified, cumulative, subdivided, ornamental, transparent, modular, unitary, standard, aseptic, disperse and dysfunctional (Koolhaas 2011, 81-121);
- An exhaustive list of rhetorical figures of speech is also addressed to the contemporary metropolitan spaces or situations, mostly containing a negative sense: dependent, pedantic, impersonal, megalomaniac, opportunistic, perverted, destructive, vindictive, slow, steep, difficult, superficial, provincial, sedentary, neutral, boring (Koolhaas 2011, 45-77), absurd, desperate, empty, infested, embracing, excited, vulgar, repressive, aberrant, disoriented, moribund, hysterical, tiring, abundant, chaotic, anarchic, determined, utopic, unstable, intimidating, authoritarian, dictatorial, entertaining, moralising (Koolhaas 2011, 81-121).

To this long description of the *junkspace*, we can still add some examples of objects that exist on such kinds of spaces that result from industrialisation and the progress of the technological development, such as: standardised details, automatised systems, uncontrollable devices... This kind of architectural production tends to be impersonal, snobbish and sometimes paranoid (Sadin 2009), this feeling being often reinforced by surveillance systems/CCTV. Controlled environments create oppressive spaces, rigid and intolerant to informal and spontaneous actions.

An idea of the characteristics of a part of the urban environment and of the architectural practices and space production in the last few years has been sketched in the previous paragraphs. The globalisation panorama, expressed in the urban landscape and reflected on the world megapolis, is actually quite representative of our contemporary postmodern time. This has provoked big contrasts, between North and South, the city centre and the peripheries. These contrasts are not really placed at the core of our present discussion, since our object of study is located mainly in the historical (and therefore quite established) downtowns of the “old” Europe, as we will see later. Nonetheless, cities that have a long existence have definitely not been indifferent to these global changes, which have affected the modes of living and building the urban space in general.

“Globalised” architecture implies, on the one hand, standardisation, but often, on the other hand, also a mixture of references, which can lead to low quality building standards or, instead, quite original ones. Postmodernism incarnates this mixture – in terms of cultures, methods and aesthetics –, the spaces produced under this framing being a good example of the global hybridisation tendency.

The postmodern condition (connected with the economic crisis of the late 70s and the decade of the 80s) is theorised by several authors, one of them being the American political theorist Frederic Jameson. Jameson analyses postmodernism from a general perspective, considering

on the one hand the conditions of intellectual labour imposed by the late capitalist mode of production (according to a Marxist approach) and, on the other hand, the multi-dimensionality of the culture industry (e.g. architecture, film, narrative, visual arts or philosophy) (Jameson 1991). In his book *Postmodernism, Or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) he refers, more particularly, how postmodernist positions in architecture “have been inseparable from an implacable critique of architectural high modernism (...) or the so-called international style” (led by architects like Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, or Mies van der Rohe) “credited with the destruction of the fabric of the traditional city and its older neighbourhood culture”, and accused of being elitist and authoritarian in its processes and practical application (Jameson 1991, 2).

Reconsiderations on the level of urbanism and of the aesthetic production are dramatically visible and extensively analysed, the effacement of the older frontier between high culture and the so-called mass or commercial culture being evident. “Fascinated by the ‘degraded’ landscape of schlock and kitsch, (...) of advertising and motels” (Jameson 1991, 2), the postmodern architecture explores and highlights (through semiotic analysis) popular, vernacular, eclectic and hybrid approaches, practices and aesthetics. A good example is the analysis work that the American architects Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour did on the Las Vegas strip (e.g. *Learning from Las Vegas*, 1972). The ugly has become acceptable, and so did the possibility of doing things in multiple ways. This more “democratic taste” (Figueira 2014, 95)² results in a kind of architecture that has a strong iconographic potential, and that mixes chronology and styles, using the methodology of citation and collage of fragments, thus creating new meanings. Architecture becomes a “combining art” (Figueira 2014, 108), where now the architect can also be seen as a craftsman.

According to the Swiss art historian and architectural theorist Stanislaus von Moos³, postmodern architecture was not about resolving complicated problems as Le Corbusier wanted to. It was instead about how to design allowing the existence of those problems. This “anti-heroic architecture, ambiguous, imperfect, ugly, common/trivial” dares to analyse “spaces and façades as form” (Figueira 2014, 97-98, 101). This aspect was nevertheless something that was severely criticised by many architects and authors, like the Italian Bruno Zevi, who emphasised its “scenographic and cosmetic aspect” (Figueira 2014, 133). However, postmodern architecture existed in an ambivalent political gap. On the one hand, its formal and aesthetic preoccupation might have seemed to be empty of content, but on the other hand, it was an independent and unformatted kind of architecture, ironic, critique and inconvenient, which worked beyond the “corporate architecture” (Figueira 2014, 95).

Architectural practices, materiality and spaces of the last decades may be therefore expressed through particular kinds of aesthetics, resulting in opposite expressive tendencies: minimal and excessive (img 33). As Koolhaas notices, “minimum is the contemporaneous baroque” which exists “in a state of parasitic co-dependency with overdose” (Koolhaas 2011, 117): some spaces are too clean, white, aseptic and boring – following minimal architectural trends, inspired by

² Influenced by the American big mix and diversity of cultures and tastes (Figueira 2014, 99).

³ Venturi, Rauch, and Scott Brown buildings and projects (1987, 11), quoted by Figueira (2014, 101). My translation.

the modern movement and/or framed by norms produced by the “guaranteed city”⁴ (Breviglieri 2013) – while others may be colourful and attractive, shining with a hundred lights – a real *spectacle* (Debord 1967), actually meant to trigger consumption (as some of the mentioned *junkspace*).

Contrasting with the above-mentioned minimal approaches, as with the grey, conforming and monotonous housing blocks and repetitive office buildings of the modern city that have resulted from the principles presented by the Chart of Athens (1933)⁵, is the “superstar-architecture”. This world-wide spectacle of delirious formal experiences, mainly possible thanks to very sophisticated software, are signed by renowned architects and investors, transforming museums and football stadiums into sculptural pieces of art (e.g. Zaha Hadid, Herzog & deMeuron, Frank O’Gehry). According to the architectural critic Paul Goldberg, there is a prevalence of image, the tendency of letting image define shape rather than the inverse⁶, just like it happened in the 1970s with the first postmodernist architectures. However, Robert Stern (also an architectural critic) sees postmodernism as a movement that prefers compromised or incomplete geometries rather than a pure form⁷. According to the art historian Claire Bishop, superstar-architectures have become the visual expression of privatisation, where the external wrapper is more important than its content, attributing an extreme importance to image (“new, cool, photogenic, well-designed, economically successful”) and to iconicity (Bishop 2013, 11-12).

Apart from these concrete and material examples, we could also observe in these last decades the rise of *virtual reality*, and the development of an increasing abstraction of the concept of *space*. The use of computer software accelerates the design production, distorting somehow the production of architectural design, contributing to the creation of less “human” architectures, disconnected from the social reality. Profit and competition have become the most important goals to attain, triggering the production of impressive 3D models and renders as a must in order to lure clients and real estate agencies. The importance of selling an image, in order to better sell a product, contributes to an architectural production often empty of content, very impersonal, and purely commercial. Corporations, super-studio companies, star-architects, real estate agencies... they all contribute to this situation.

“Behind architecture, our culture at large seems to drift towards a distancing, a kind of chilling, de-sensualisation and de-eroticization of the human relation to reality”, says the Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa (1994). In this contemporary condition, we got used to live with anxiety and distress in a world full of contradictions. Besides, we tend more and more to perceive the material world, and even more the technical world, as a domination world of the subordination of individuals, as the American sociologist Richard Sennet notices (Sennett 1994, 87).

4 This concept is explained further on. See next page.

5 So much criticised by postmodern architects and sociologist in the 1960-70s. “Modern” cities arose as an answer to the population basic needs after the World War 2, as the application of the principles established in the Chart of Athens, which were based on a rational urban planning, the centralisation of decisions and the use of standard methods in the building construction processes. According to the critiques made in the 1960s-70s, this resulted in an impoverishment of the urban experience and worked as an instrument of capitalist exploitation (Pattaroni 2011, 45).

6 Goldberg, Paul, *Post-Modernism: an introduction*, AD, 4, 1977, p. 257, quoted in (Figueira 2014, 121).

7 Robert Stern, “At the edge of post-modernism: some metaphors, paradigms and principles for architecture at the end of the modern movement”, p.275, quoted in (Figueira 2014, 121).

All the examples of walls dividing countries or regions⁸, and the increase of the production of defensive architecture, particularly after the American terrorist attacks of 9/11, have been contributing to a general global alienation, to the growth of social inequities, and to urban violence. The “uneven growth” (Gadano 2014) of gigantic metropolis and their slums (Davis 2006) contrast with high-tech solutions developed in absurd (un)“sustainable” and arrogant structures (e.g. “green” towers, as symbols of power of nations and cities), increasing the logics of territorial exclusion and the criminalisation of deviant behaviours. Fear gets installed, demanding consequently for guarantees to be provided, a situation that generates defensive spaces composed by surveillance cameras and barriers. These devices are in turn conceived to frame the people’s behaviour, suggesting or forcing them to act in certain (predicted) ways, restricting informal and spontaneous actions, working as fragmenting elements that reduce the sensitive and affective qualities of the urban experience. This is what the Swiss sociologist Marc Brevigleri calls “the guaranteed city” (Brevigleri 2013, 214, 217).

minimal



standardisation



surveillance



obstacles



control

violence

non-places

(Marc Augé, 1992)



superstar architecture

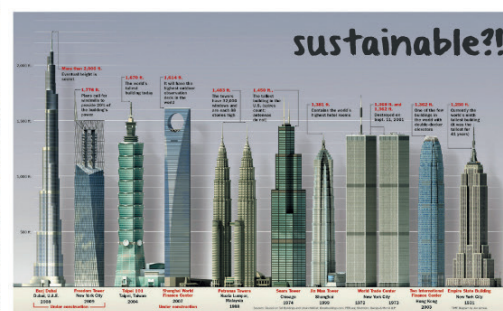


junkspace

(Rem Koolhaas, 2001)

postmodernity

globalisation



excess

consumption
neoliberalism
business
profit
speculation
competition

img 33. Junkspace: opposite expressive tendencies: minimal and excessive.

⁸ “When the Berlin wall came down, there were 16 other dividing borders in the world, now there are 65” (Quando caiu o muro de Berlim havia mais 16 a separar fronteiras no mundo, agora há 65)
[Available at: www.publico.pt/mundo/noticia/em-todo-o-mundo-ha-65-muros-construidos-ou-em-construcao-1706358?page=-1, published in 30/08/2015).

This “violence of urbanisation” (Pedrazzini 2005; Pedrazzini, Vincent-Geslin, and Thorer 2014) – even if it might seem sometimes to address rather “distant” realities (when looking from an European perspective, focused on geographically central urban areas) – is definitely present in closer environments, violence that we often tend not to believe or even notice. Financial and shopping centres, slums or simply urban voids left to abandonment are concrete kinds of “ghettos”, which we happen to pass by in our daily life, in our apparently “peaceful” cities. These particular urban interstices are often the image of scars of urban violence. However, urban interstices may also become signs of hope and of political struggle, and that is what we will explore in the next two chapters (Punkspace and Re-Architecture).

*

1.2. Punkspace [Decadence + Nostalgia]

Even if there is a growing tendency towards control, asepticisation and normalisation, disorder and conflict are inevitably part of the dynamics of the city. These are dimensions that escape the authorities' control. Furthermore, sometimes the complex high-tech systems fail, and 'objects' meant for success become obsolete. The function for which they have been built is no longer optimal. Additionally, wars, natural catastrophes and economic crises happen, provoking destruction, chaos and disorder. We have also known for a while now that the planet resources and capacity are not infinite. The deindustrialisation process also contributes to this general atmosphere, leading to functional obsolescence, decadence and abandonment, and to a melancholic mood and nostalgia for the past, real or legendary⁹. Some spaces might look like "archaeologies of the future" (Rodríguez Cedillo 2016), such as some of the abandoned brutalist examples that can be found on post-soviet countries, or inspired by high-tech architectural utopias of the 1960-1970s. These chaotic and apocalyptic spatial environments hold the aesthetics of decay, expressed in their broken glasses, the peeling ink of their walls, rusty metals, creaking wood, abandoned objects. Yet, a particular beauty can be found in this kind of spaces (img 34). This is in part related to the existence of a million overlapped layers that are able to tell a hundred stories about such spatial environments. These "raw" architectures, ruined, generally correspond to the interstices of the cities, and to vast urban wastelands. Factories, palaces, hotels, warehouses... so many buildings been left to abandonment, since they have not been able to adapt their function to the present days. In order to hide their decadence and prevent risks, walls and fences tend to be raised around them, restricting the access. But these barriers may trigger curiosity instead, challenging people to trespass them in an adventurous mode, thrilling with desire to explore such forgotten spaces. These practices named as urbEx (urban exploration) or "stalking" (inspired by the film *Stalker*, by Andrei Tarkovsky, 1979), have a thirst for adventure in decaying or alienated postmodern environments, sometimes transforming ruins into urban fetishistic objects (Göbel 2015, 11-12). But they can also simply work as retreated spaces, as a solution to evade from the busy life of the city, as attractive places to alienated and solitary "postmodern *flâneurs*" (Shin 2014). According to the Russian Professor and novelist Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own phantasy" (Boym 2001), a definition which contributes to highlight the feeling one might have when wandering in such kinds of spatial environments.

Faced with capitalism, the last poetics possible in the city are the "punk poetics" (Carmo, Pedrazzini, and Reitz 2015), which are reflected in the abandoned, marginal and ruined city:

⁹ A good example of a city that can be found in this condition is Detroit, where plenty of buildings have been condemned to abandonment due to a huge economic crisis.

Coming of age in the heyday of punk, it was clear we were living at the end of something – of modernism, of the American dream, of the industrial economy, of a certain kind of urbanism. The evidence was all around us in the ruins of the cities. Vacant lots like missing teeth gave a rough grin to the streets we haunted. Ruin was everywhere, for cities had been abandoned by the rich, by the politics, by a vision of the future. Urban ruins were the emblematic places for this era, the places that gave punk a part of its aesthetic.

Rebecca Solnit, *A field guide to getting lost* (2005)

The “punkspace” (Carmo, Pedrazzini, and Reitz 2015, 165) arises as a resistance to the transformation of the “uncertain space” into *junkspace* (Koolhaas 2004). “Uncertain space” is the one resulting from the functional obsolescence, decadence and abandonment provoked by the deindustrialisation process, which contributes to a general melancholic atmosphere where the previously mentioned feeling of nostalgia for the past reigns. Punkspace may this way exist under two forms: a more passive one – described above, of interstitial and unconventional spaces of “evasion” to the capitalist society and the *generic city* (e.g. wastelands) – and a more interventionist version, based on the reuse and reappropriation of those ruins and abandoned spaces. *Punkspace* can be based on a direct, raw relationship to creation (artistic, political and social), a spatialised implementation of a ‘non-future’ leading to real-time DIY (do-it-yourself), DIN (do-it-now), and more or less spontaneous, primal action within the social and spatial environment. These residues, supported by a raw energy, are also somehow the random fusion of Situationism, DADA and anarchism, as theorised by Greil Marcus (1990). The *punkspace* is both the place of criticism and the embodiment of the critical space. Hence, it is not only a type of autonomous zone or a land of informality that somehow escaped laws and norms before being overtaken by the forces of urban order. It is also a heterotopia made by its own users (Carmo, Pedrazzini, and Reitz 2015, 177). These often chaotic and apocalyptic spatial environments hold the aesthetics of decay. Inspired by several counter-cultures, these new users recycle and recompose the previously existing elements by using informal methods, resulting in organic and hybrid aesthetic environments, supported by a communitarian work and DIY ethics.

Activists, squatters, but also “artists” or “creativists” remind us of the political dimension of the city, and of the claim to the “right to the city” (Lefebvre 1968). Those users, under the context of this research, are often artists and creative people who, faced with a complex, chaotic, potentially at-risk world, become activists in their way of inhabiting and transforming the city and its interstices, and of dealing with the market system, corruption and social injustices (Carmo, Pedrazzini, and Reitz 2015, 164). By squatting and creating “temporary autonomous zones” (Bey 1985), or even by occupying certain spaces under other alternative modes of production (cultural, social, spatial...), suddenly these *punkspaces* seem to incarnate all possibilities.

In search of new forms of habitat or social and artistic interaction, squats arise in this context as a political act of protest, defending the “value of use” of the city and housing as places of meeting and exchange, against a pro-profit orientation imposed by the market based exclusively on the “value of exchange” (Pattaroni 2011, 45) (Lefebvre 2000, 370-92). Temporary autonomous zones (TAZ) are more utopic approaches. According to Caroline Dionne and Patrick Bouchain, the

utopic thought is the “privileged space of representation, imaginary and possible”. It “allows to see alternatives and contemplate fictive realities” (Dionne and Bouchain 2014, 5). Furthermore, utopia can be characterised by the way how it claims rupture, and by its capacity to break through the thickness of reality, according to Paul Ricoeur¹⁰. In this sense, squats and TAZs create a bridge between theory and practice, proposing real projects based on praxis.

The most paradigmatic social and urban movements took place in the decade of the 1960s of the 20th century, framed by a climate of revolution and “subversion” (in Europe and in the United States). Big events and strikes occurred, the most notable of which being the students’ revolt of May ‘68 in Paris. It is in this context that the French sociologist Henri Lefebvre, faced with the capitalistic, industrialist and modernist conceptions of the contemporary city, and strongly influenced by the counter-culture movements and urban struggles of his time, claims “the right to the city” in his book published in 1968 (Lefebvre 1968). There he denounces the capitalistic production of space of the post-world-war cities (Lefebvre 2000), whose principles had been influenced by Le Corbusier and the Charter of Athens (1933). The squat movement, acting along with local struggles against real estate projects and demolition schemes, led to the development of an urban, social and artistic criticism, usually connected with left-wing politics and community based-on ideologies. Some worldwide renowned examples can be named, like the occupation of Christiania (1971), in the city centre of Copenhagen, which became an autonomous commune and where creative and sustainable examples of “architecture without architects” occurred, revealing interesting models of contemporary vernacular architecture¹¹.

In the years 1960-1970s, the world population started to receive images of the Vietnam War and other wars, but also of revolutions against dictatorships (e.g. Carnation Revolution in Portugal). At this time, the hippie movement emerges in the US and the UK, bringing along positive and militant ideas based on world peace, solidarity, human rights, equality, ecology and freedom, but also on health, welfare, society, education, culture, creation or information. The alternative social movements, led mostly by young people, demanded this way a better quality of life and convivial spaces, rejecting the ideals of the market society, having a considerable impact worldwide.

“The quest for authenticity of the previous generations’ hippie movement is seen, in the next decade of 1980, by the punks, as a false and impossible fight”, as the Slovenian philosopher Helena Motoh highlights. Punks reflect precisely “the impossibility of this authenticity and the falsity of escape.” (Motoh 2012, 294). Yet, both counter-cultural movements influence spatial and cultural approaches taken in the object of study of this thesis – the Alternative Cultural Spaces. Based on the German architectural theorist Heinrich Klotz’s essay *The History of postmodern architecture* (Heinrich Klotz 1988, 2), the Portuguese architect Jorge Figueira refers that Klotz tests a definition of the concept of “postmodernism” in the same line as “counterculture” of the 60s, declaring that poetry has overcome the “technological *utopianism*”, encouraging improvisation and spontaneity, the imperfect rather than perfection (Figueira 2014, 136-137). Several authors have studied these “counter-cultures” (Bourseiller and Penot-Lacassagne 2013) or “subcultures”

¹⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *Idéologie et utopie* (1986) , quoted in Dionne and Bouchain (2014).

¹¹ Bernard Rudofsky explores these cases of vernacular architectures in a book he wrote in 1964 called “Architecture Without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-pedigreed Architecture” (Rudofsky 1964).

(Hebdige 1979; Yinger 1960) according to sociological and anthropological perspectives. The practices led by such cultural movements – anti-heroic, ambiguous, imperfect, ugly, common/trivial, as we have seen – used certain techniques and methods, such as *collage*, *assemblage* or *bricolage*, which implies the recycling and recomposing of previously existing elements¹². This results in organic and hybrid spatial and visual aesthetic environments, based to a great extent on communitarian work and in the DIY ethics.

DIY ethics is based on sharing and action as principles. According to the definition given by Letícia Carmo, Yves Pedrazzini and Maude Reitz in their article “[Heroic] Figures of Urbanity, ‘Creativists’ and Travellers: New (Post)Heroes in Town” (2015), DIY is a term generally used to describe the construction, modification and repair of various artefacts, without the help of experts or professionals. In common use since the 1950s (in reference to home improvement projects), the term took on a much broader meaning to include (in the context of critical movements of the 1960s) a set of skills allowing one to provide for one’s own basic needs, thus bypassing relationships of production and exchange based on profit. Largely rooted in a desire for independence, autonomy and self-management, the DIY ethos involves creative practices that likewise take a ‘reactionary’ and critical stance as regards the professionalisation and institutionalisation of production practices and the consumer system¹³. While these practices were highly valued and popularised by the punk movement in the domain of music, this form of action, invented *in situ*, took other forms to respond to the demands of everyday life and individual/collective aspirations that have been part of the human experience since the dawn of time¹⁴ (Carmo, Pedrazzini, et Reitz 2015, 172-73). Bringing them back to a more specifically urban context, Michel de Certeau (1980) characterises these DIY activities using play areas, creative cunning and tactics of resistance. In short, the idea of *bricolage* expresses the condition of ordinary people who, in their lives, must constantly build and rebuild, using any means available; in other words, a form of practical intelligence whose implementation takes place without the consent of any authority (Marsault 2010). These informal and sometimes radical and subversive spatial practices lead us to the next topic of discussion.

12 Even if the three methods imply putting together different things, each word is used under a particular context. *Collage* is used for the gluing of 2-dimensional material support (such as photographs, pieces of paper or fabric); *Assemblage* groups together found or unrelated objects, resulting usually in a 3-dimensional support. *Bricolage* is addressed to something constructed or created from a diverse range of things (www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/bricolage).

13 In this context, people inspired by anarchism and the punk movement chose to self-produce and self-distribute their musical creations. Extended to all aspects of life, the DIY ethos then became a tactic and objective of individuals and communities wishing to organize and provide for themselves, without relying on the market or the state. This approach is reflected today in many creative practices, including music, painting, filmmaking and software, to name only a few (Hein 2012).

14 In the first chapter of the book *The Savage Mind*, Levi-Strauss uses the idea of *bricolage* to describe how primitive societies have developed in practical terms, what he calls a “science of the concrete” (Levi Strauss 1985, 30-49). He uses namely a system of classification for interpreting the world, the beings of nature and everyday objects of the environment (natural and social). This ‘DIY thinking’ functions around a practical logic linking *beings* and *things*, and is an ‘instrument that also contains bits and pieces through which structural arrangements are created (Levi Strauss 1985, 51).

poetry of catastrophe
nostalgia



Chernobyl, Ukraine



Palast der Republik, Berlin

punkspace

(Carmo, Pedrazzini, and Reitz, 2015)



Köpi, Berlin

UrbEx



"archeologies of the future"



DIY, vernacular, anarchitecture, architecture "brut" (by Richard Greaves)

anarchitecture
vernacular
'brut'

interstices
DIY
marginal



Detroit

unfinished
imperfect
irregular
chaos

abandon,
ruins, decay

img 34. Punkspace: decay and nostalgia.

resistance

Casas comunitárias, Iquique-Chile, Elemental

Le 56 / Eco-interstice, Paris, AAA



Anna's Bottle House, Tucson/Arizona

re-use
interstices
recycle
readapt
renovate



Kitchen Monument, Raumlabor



Casa do Vapor, EXYZT

participation
empowerment

re-architecture



Litter, Raumlabor



SuperAdobe, the Cal-Earth Institute



Tires' house, Haïti

img 35. Re-Architecture: architectures of re-use and resistance.

1.3. Re-Architecture [Reuse + Resistance]

We saw, with Rem Koolhaas, how the contemporary architect insists in producing spaces in such a way that so many of the verbs that better represent his actions start with the prefix re- : “restore, rearrange, resemble, revamp, renovate, revise, recover, return (...), redo, respect, rent” (Koolhaas 2011, 90, 101-2). We can find in his verbs the trendy speech of architectural production, and we could continue this list: reuse, rebuilt, reconvert, reinvest, recycle, rehabilitate, revitalise, rediscover, react, reduce... Apart from the word “rent” – which is explicitly linked to real estate and profit purposes, and not necessarily related to spatial transformation – all these *Re-Architectures* imply a work that is done with pre-existent spaces and situations; they also imply a second thought about certain realities, aiming at second chances and opportunities (img 35).

The term “Re-Architecture” was labelled by the Romanian architect Sherban Cantacuzino in 1989, but concepts as *restore* or *readapt* have actually already been theoretically discussed since the 19th century. Practical applications of *reuse* and *rebuilding* have always been implemented, due to functional and economic basic needs, but in the second half of the 20th century this kind of approaches (and this kind of theories) have acquired great importance, related to a great extent to environmental issues (mainly since the oil crisis in the 1970s, and the realisation of the limited resources of the planet).

Reuse v.s. Rebuilt

“Adaptive reuse”¹ of these vacant buildings has always had a place throughout history. According to Cantacuzino (who developed his most important works in the decades of the 1970s and 1980s of the 20th century), buildings have always been adapted to all sorts of new uses. It was not until the Industrial Revolution began that it “bec[a]me more usual to demolish and build new”, that being connected with “the departure of the industrial and commercial activities from central areas to suburban” areas. Until then, the changes in the urban fabric used to be slow, based on a sense of continuity of the physical surroundings (Cantacuzino 1989, 8-11).

Restore | Readapt

Along with the arrival of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, and a general curiosity for new architectural forms and materials (due to the development of engineering techniques), a parallel movement of *respect* (and also curiosity) *vis-a-vis* the past, and particularly our built *heritage*², started to appear.

1 The Turkish architects Eyuçe & Eyuçe give us three definitions to better explain the meaning “Adaptive reuse”: 1) the “task of adjusting functionally obsolete buildings for new program requirements through building conversion”; 2) “the process of building conversion so as to accommodate new functional requirements”; 3) “the term ‘adaptive reuse’ is labelled as ‘re-architecture’ by Cantacuzino” (Eyuçe & Eyuçe 2010).

2 As written in the Charter of Cracow (2000), “Each community, by means of its collective memory and consciousness of its past, is responsible for the identification as well as the management of its heritage. Individual elements of this heritage are bearers of many values, which may change in time. The various specific values in the elements characterise the specificity of each heritage”. (“The Charter Of Cracow” 2000).

Importance started to be given to cultural and historical values, firstly focused on the preservation of singular buildings (religious and noble) and later extended to the whole of the city. Two major doctrines of design concerning the built heritage took place in the 19th century: an interventionist doctrine and a non-interventionist one. The first was led by the French architect Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), who defended that historical monuments should be *reintegrated* in their original style, erasing posterior interventions and creating elements (aesthetically belonging to the first style) which have never existed (a good example of the adoption of his theories is the “historical city” of Carcassonne, in France). Following this line of thought, The English architect Augustus Pugin criticised precisely the hybrid mix of several styles in one same building³, pointing out the incoherence of the “eclecticism” and of “historical revivalisms” (Pugin 1836). The second doctrine appears as a *reaction* to the first one, by stating that the emergence of any style of architecture is only possible in the historical time under which it was produced, and therefore cannot be *reproduced* in the present, according to the English art critic and philanthropist John Ruskin (1849)⁴.

An intermediate theory was defended by the Italian architect and art critic Camillo Boito, bringing these contradictory ideas together (Boito 1883). He defended that the elements added after the original architectural work should be maintained (if they had architectural value), considering them as representative of a set of values to be *respected*. He also defended the sincerity in the building construction, and *rejected* invention: if a new intervention should occur, then it had to be clear, highlighted by its colour, technique and appearance. The Italian architect and engineer Gustavo Giovannoni (1873-1947) continued to develop the principles advocated by Boito through the definition of the concept of “Scientific Restoration”. Besides, he felt the need to extend these principles to the environment that surrounds the monument, arguing that the context must be *preserved*, and arguing furthermore that the *heritage* can have a “museological value”, but that it should also have a “value of use” – which may not necessarily be the original, but one *adapted* to the needs of the present moment, permitting the continuation of the building’s life, adding that some features may be outdated within some time (Carbonara 1996, 1:229).

Rebuild and [urban] Regeneration

The contributions of the previously mentioned thoughts of the authors of the 19th century had an institutional support with the approval of several Charters, International Conventions and Recommendations all along the 20th century: it was emphasised by the Charter of Athens⁵ that new interventions made with modern materials should be clearly recognisable (principle of the constructive sincerity); the Charter of Venice⁶ then incorporated “urban settings” and “modest

³ Popular tastes and aesthetics are doubtful, criticised Pugin, when referring to the eclectic styles and historical revivalisms of his time: “Nous avons des chalets suisses dans un pays plat, des villas italiennes sous un climat froid, un kremlin turc en guise de résidence royale, des temples grecs dans les squares populeux, des salles de ventes égyptiennes () tous les styles s’entassent pêle-mêle.” (Pugin 1836, 1-3, 30-35), quoted by (Choay (1965, 157-158).

⁴ Quoted by Françoise Choay (1965).

⁵ Conclusions of the conference in Athens for the Restoration of Historical Monuments, 1931 (“The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments” 1931).

⁶ International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Site, 1964.

architecture” in the definition of “heritage”⁷; the Convention of Hague⁸, the European Charter of the Architectural Heritage⁹ and the Burra Charter¹⁰ promoted the *reuse* of existing built heritage in search for the most appropriate functions for the building in question, encouraging a use that may be compatible, meeting the needs and values of the moment. Also UNESCO¹¹, as a cultural organisation, has been having an important role concerning the safeguard of the built heritage.

We can see how, progressively, the territory has been given a major importance; the notion of *heritage* being enlarged from single monuments to urban settings and modest architectures along time. This turn happened mostly in the 1960s. In the post-industrial era, attention is not only focused on the *conservation* and *restoration* of individual buildings but also on whole areas, now seen as an opportunity for *urban regeneration* of social and economic degraded neighbourhoods or zones. *Transformation* and *reconversion*, along with *restoration* and *maintenance*, are necessary to avoid processes of symbolic over-valuation, fixing an historical village or centre in an artificial original time adverse to the self-dynamics of a city. According to the Italian architect Aldo Rossi (1972), the “old” and the “new” should co-exist; he makes his case by giving examples of two different models of cities: the *Città progressiva* (ex. Budapest¹²) vs. *Città museo* (ex. Venice and Carcassone¹³).

Furthermore, by rejecting the great utopian visions of the modernist “total urban planning” and “total design”, many postmodernist architects supported thus a hybrid urban and architectural approach, as we have seen before. The British architects and theoreticians Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, for instance, support the idea of a “Collage City” (1978) adaptable to a range of utopias in miniature. They defend that the *collage* allows us to accept the utopia into fragments, and give the example of the city of Rome as a remarkable example of a *collage city*: “So Rome, whether imperial or papal, hard or soft, is here offered as some sort of model of which might be envisaged as alternative to the disastrous urbanism of social engineering and total design. (...) The products of a specific topography and two (...) cultures (...) the physique and the politics of Rome provide perhaps the most graphic example of collusive fields and interstitial debris” (Rowe and Koetter 1986, 107). The notion of “interstice” suddenly starts to acquire some value, seen rather as interesting and challenging places to deal with, instead of inconvenient leftovers of the urban territory.

In this line of thought, the German philosopher Walter Benjamin and the Latvian actress Asja Lācis had, in fact, already noticed the importance of the interstitial spaces of the city (1924), a reality which they called “porous”. This term was applied to the city of Naples, in Italy, which

7 “Article 1: The concept of a historic monument embraces not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or a historic event. This applies not only to great works of art but also to more modest works of the past which have acquired cultural significance with the passing of time.” (“Charter of Venice” 1964).

8 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention 1954 (“Convention of Hague” 1954).

9 Adopted by the Council of Europe (“European Charter of the Architectural Heritage” 1975).

10 ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), Australia, 1980 (“Burra Charter” 1999).

11 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

12 Aldo Rossi (1972) describes Budapest as “...immersi in una convulsa zona industriale (...) Teatro romano: è oggi un campo di pallone per i ragazzi del quartiere; Acquedotto romano, è oggi una linea tranviaria.”, quoted in (Rossi 1984, 480).

13 As Rossi (1968) mentions: “La conservazione turistico-pittoresca di Carcassone”, quoted in (Rossi 1984, 365-69).

they visited, and where they noticed that the built environment of this city resisted any fixed or designated functionality. There, the old and the new, the present life and the past, the private and the public space permeate and merge together. In both spatial and temporal terms, Naples is not homogeneous, being rather “a continual process of discontinuous transformation [where] ‘definitive is avoided’, giving rise to the passion for improvisation”. There, “[n]othing seems fixed so that you can’t tell if the architecture is in the process of being built or in decay and ruination” (Mare 2008, 204).

These last two examples of Italian cities highlight the importance of adaptive and continuous environments, and that has, since the 1960s, been a major line of action of architects and urban planners.

Reconvert, Re-invest, Recycle

There are three types of obsolescence: physical, functional and economical – the last two being consequences of technological transformations and changing modes of production or consumption since the beginning of the crisis of the industrial age. Most building types are known to have relatively shorter functional lives compared to their physical durability, being precisely the Industrial ones in the forefront of obsolescence. But these factories, warehouses, and other examples are also usually easily *adaptable* for the most varied programs due to their big surface area, large volumes, large wall surfaces and free floor surfaces (unobstructed by structural elements). These characteristics allow for the use of new materials and techniques, independently of their original structure or space division, such as the construction of additional slabs and, consequently, mezzanine floors – a new building inside an old envelope, or simply a co-existence of two different architectural approaches (Eyuca and Eyuca 2010, 419-28).

According to Cantacuzino, “it shifted (...) from the building as art object to the building as the product of a whole socio-economic system”, and that due to the fact that “more developers have learnt to appreciate the unquantifiable values of age, character and architectural quality”; these managers have also “discovered that people will pay more to be in an old building, where space standards, not to mention architectural quality, are much higher than they would be in an equivalent new building” (Cantacuzino 1989, 8-11). The *restoration* and imaginative transformations of old and solidly constructed structures of public, private, commercial, industrial, ecclesiastical and rural building heritage has now a new and exciting emphasis, supported by a creative fusion of *old* and *new* elements and materials, as already mentioned. The *adaptations* and *reconversions* are multiple (housing, offices, kindergartens, museums, cultural centres, etc), and these operations allow for the maintenance of the structure of an old building and for the “introduc[tion of] completely new environmental standards and services” (Cantacuzino 1989). Some interesting examples of this fusion between the old and the new are the projects of the renowned architectural projects of Carlo Scarpa (Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona, 1959-73), Eduardo Souto Moura (Pousada de Santa Maria do Bouro, Braga, Portugal, 1989-1997) or Herzog & deMeuron (TATE Modern, London, 1994-2000).

Rediscover, React, Re-invent

As a reaction to profit-oriented and competitive kinds of architecture, some more conscious and alternative ways of thinking and “making the city” have been progressively acquiring some importance in the last few years, being the subject of several architectural exhibitions and biennales since the 2010s (e.g. *RE-Architecture*, Paris 2012¹⁴; *Reduce/Reuse/Recycle*, German Pavilion at *La Biennale di Venezia* 2012 titled *Common Ground*¹⁵; *Close, Closer*, Lisbon Architecture Triennale 2013¹⁶). By playing with the contemporary complexity of the metropolis, this promising new generation made of multidisciplinary groups and associations, “experiment the city to reinvent the everyday life of the inhabitants”, according to the Paris mayor¹⁷ Anne Hidalgo (2012), by putting into practice participative projects based on dialogues and shared experiences. These unconventional teams take critical positions through their micro-interventions or larger urban strategies and through their ideas and manifestos. They explore the role of architecture in the evolution of society and take opportunities existing in vacant territories by transforming abandoned wastelands into convivial, sustainable, civic and ecological places. As the general director of the *Pavillon de l’Arsenal* Alexandre Labasse (2012) says, “they make possible forgotten utopias” through auto-produced and auto-constructed, innovative and experimental interventions (ephemeral or durable). They have as principles to *recycle* everything that can be *reused*, to economise what cannot be *renewable*, and also to avoid creating constraints that may limit future choices. As examples of collectives of people who practice this kind of *Re-architectures* we have: AAA (Atelier d’Architecture Autogérée, Paris), Assemble (London), Collectif ETC (Strasbourg), Ecosistema Urbano (Madrid), Raumlabor (Berlin), Rotor (Brussels), ZUS (Zones Urbaines Sensibles, Rotterdam).

Resistance

Contrasting with the excesses of the *superstar architectures*, these curious and experimental “Alterarchitectures” (Paquot, Masson Zanussi, and Stathopoulos 2012), ground their work in participative processes and collaboration. In this sense, they are more solidary, democratic and “human”. By adopting a knowledge-exchange attitude when working together with local communities, these architectures are usually *site-specific* and oriented towards the present and the life of the everyday use. They insure a formal continuity while darning fragments of the urban fabric. This open and flexible architecture allows for change and adaptations at any time, contributing for the *empowerment*¹⁸ of populations and of the individual, thereby being more inclusive. According to the architects Tatjana Schneider, Jeremy Till and Nishat Awan (2011), this kind of architecture has a “spatial agency”. Drawing on the British sociologist Anthony Giddens definition of “agency”, they define their concept: “agency means being able to intervene in the world (...) with the effect of influencing a specific process or a state of affairs (...). Professions

¹⁴ A collective exhibition of several groups of politically and socially engaged young architects and artists at Pavillon de l’Arsenal in Paris, 12 Avril – 31 Aout 2012.

¹⁵ www.reduce-reuse-recycle.de/index_en.html (13th International Architecture Exhibition, directed by David Chipperfield).

¹⁶ www.close-closer.com.

¹⁷ In 2012, Anne Hidalgo was the First Deputy Mayor of Paris and the responsible for urban planning and architecture, but also the president of the *Pavillon de l’Arsenal*.

¹⁸ Process of development of individuals in order to achieve a more just, equitable attribution of power.

rely on [the] assertion of stable knowledge in order to give themselves authority over others, and so to accept acting otherwise is to recognise the limits of one's authority". Abandoning hierarchy means "working with others". On the other hand, if *agency* is the "capacity of an agent to act in the world", i.e. to make choices, then it is also "the ability of the individual to act independently of the constraining structures of the society" (Schneider, Awan, and Till 2011, 30-33). An *agent* would therefore be "one who effects change through the empowerment of others, allowing them to engage in their spatial environments in ways previously unknown or unavailable to them, opening up new freedoms and potentials as a result of reconfigured social space" (Schneider, Awan, and Till 2011, 33).

As we can see, these types of architectures have "values outside of the normal terms of reference of the market, namely those of social, environmental and ethical justice." (Schneider, Awan, and Till 2011, 27-28). They look for more sustainable solutions, leaning towards the reuse and recycling of pre-existing elements, following the ethics of the "slow" and "shrinking" cities (Philipp Oswald and Kulturstiftung des Bundes 2005), and of "degrowth" (Bayon, Flipo, and Schneider 2010).

However, many of these spatial approaches are *temporary*. The architects Doina Petrescu, Constantin Petcou, and the sociologist Anne Querrien, see these collective experiences and the participation in the production of a temporary corner as *a certain way to act in the city* (which they call "L'agir urbain", or the "urban act") that is informal, solidary and engaged in critical activity. The city, as the place of protest, revolt, manifestations and demonstrations, still possesses several interstices, which lie in the gap between two environments (Petrescu, Querrien, and Petcou 2007, 11-15). Curiously, those interstices are the places in the city that still have the capacity to resist the regulating norms and homogenisation (Nicolas-Le-Strat 2008). It is at this local scale, in the street corner, that it is important to "act", provoking informal transgressions, based on "informal activism" (Petrescu, Querrien, and Petcou 2007, 13-14).

These spatial projects can be led by architects, but also by collectives of people that might include artists, designers, civil constructors, citizens, or others, and are often born from bottom up initiatives, following horizontal and democratic approaches instead of vertical and authoritarian procedures. In that sense, these are architectures of *resistance*. Also because they resist to normalisation and standardisation processes, propose hope through transformation, are politically and socially engaged and defend the "value of use" of the city, i.e., as a place for meeting and enjoyment, against its reduction to a place of profit (bought and sold as products to consume). The "architectures of use" threaten this way the rational use of the space and challenge the established order, standing for the possibility of the city's own inhabitants to think, change, transform and appropriate it, giving room for the unpredicted and the spontaneous (Pattaroni 2011, 45; Breviglieri 2013, 221, 234-35; Lefebvre 1974). It does "not accept a *laissez-faire* attitude [and are] never formalistic for the sake of form; they start out with a clear transformative intent and do try to produce work that has both a political and ethical content" (Schneider, Awan, and Till 2011, 37-52).

*

The growing popularity of these types of spatial practices of *resistance* has arrived somehow in parallel with the worldwide uprising movements¹⁹ – e.g. *Occupy* (Chomsky 2013), *Global Spring* or *Indignados*, – which stood for democratic, horizontal, constructive and interventionist practices. General dissatisfaction, in great part provoked by a huge economic crisis, led people to demonstrate out in the streets, to protest against austerity, but also against wars, social injustices, terrorism or environmental crimes. With the *Occupy* movement, a revival of the “right to the city” movement (Lefebvre 1968) was visible; multiple occupations of squares, banks, stock exchange headquarters occurred, attacking financial institutions and emblematic places of power.

After a period where the Marxian Theory was in decline (1990s), according to David Harvey “the only form of empowerment (...) lie[d] in the gun”, *participation* must again be “understood as political act”, just like it was in the 1970s. Contemporary spaces of political struggle are now being tested, which reflect on our contemporary condition with optimism, opening up “ways of thinking that have for too long remained foreclosed” (Harvey 2000, 3-18). The “spaces of hope” (Harvey 2000) that were born from such protest movements resulted from a process of “praxis”. This “critical practice”, out of which action arises, “propelled by a critical understanding of external conditions”, intends to be transformative (Schneider, Awan, and Till 2011, 28-29). Those recent examples of spaces produced by collectives of architects and artists that we have just mentioned are not focused solely on architecture’s own concerns and obsessions, being grounded on processes of praxis.

The aesthetics of the spatial approaches we have now discussed are also inspired on bricolage and DIY approaches. Strongly adopting the recycling of objects and materials, a certain way of “producing architecture” is starting to be identified with this kind of “activist architectures”. Shipping containers, wooden pallets, mismatched chairs and tables, candles, vintage objects, urban gardening and street art, for instance, are elements which can quite often be found in such spaces. Not even ten years have passed, and these “resistant architectures” can already be identified as an “alternative style”. Maybe a “style in revolt”, as Dick Hebdige called to punk-fashion in the 1970s? (Hebdige 1979, 106).

¹⁹ See “Protests and Uprisings”, in Chapter 4 (p. 95).

1.4. Creativity [Culture + Compromise]

We have briefly discussed the consequences of industrialisation in the architectural and urban design process for the last two centuries, and how it influenced modern architecture. Then we surveyed the critiques addressed to such kinds of spatial production, in the 1960s, which considered they were assigned to a commercial taste (Rossi 1972b)¹, and had part of the responsibility for the emptying operations of historical centres, forced by big speculation processes. Rossi argues that this damaged the lifestyles of the popular class (Rossi 1972a)². Furthermore, we have also seen the increase in framing of the built environment submitted to technical specificities, such as the excessive production of overzealous safety and security norms and other conventions (e.g. certifications of quality), which contribute to reduce the diversity and the range of experiences possible in the urban context. This “guaranteed city” aims at a systematic categorisation of all undefined spaces, the respect for the private space, the neutralisation of conflicts and the promotion of a predictable individual, by default (Breviglieri 2013, 216, 222, 233). What remains, then, once the unpredictable has been removed? An extreme neutral and boring city, which can only provide “disperse and weak sensations”, “rare or scattered emotions” (Koolhaas 2011, 49-51) to its inhabitants? How can people claim back the control of their choices and actions?

We have seen some examples of architectures that propose resistance, of what happens when activism and creativity merge, applied to spatial contexts. This “creativism” happens when people use artistic means to make politics in order to produce some change. Drawing on the essay “Multitudes” by the Italian political philosopher Toni Negri, the art historian Julia Ramírez Blanco (2014) wonders what is the visual vocabulary of the “multitudes’ creativism”, discussing the difference between *utopia* and *politics*. She believes that *utopia* is related to the creation of alternative lifestyles (these peaceful approaches, grounded on counter-cultural movements, are like a “dream-world”) and that *politics* happen when action is related to more realist situations, proposing change through a concrete programme. *Politics* is agitated, and it takes a risk while fighting. She wonders, therefore, what happens when *utopia* and *politics* work together, and how that is expressed through art and space. Are these “artistic utopias of revolt”, that gather the “counter-cultural laziness” and the “political action”, the new vocabulary of protest? (Ramírez Blanco 2014, 13-24).

¹ Quoted in Rossi (1984, 444).

² Quoted in Rossi (1984, 477).

Creative Cities

In an attempt to somehow fight the disenchanting side of the spatial production and urban environment, by the end of the 20th century, the British urban planner Charles Landry comes up with the concept of “creative cities” (1995), defending that “creativity is central to any thinking about the cities of the next century” (Landry 1995, 12), this idea contributing to trigger the international competition between cities. Later developed by the American urban studies theorist Richard Florida, the notion of “creative cities” entails that the promotion of arts and culture (including the more alternative and experimental forms) is fundamental for the economic, social and territorial dynamics of a city (Landry 1995, 2006; Florida 2002). However, the role of *creativity* in the economic and social thought had already been born by the late 18th century (Genard 2003), with the development of the ideas of *taste*, the *artist seen as a genius*, and *invention*. This led to the emergence, on the one hand, of the “bohemian” lifestyle, in the late 19th century, and on the other hand, to the so-called “artistic critique” (Chiapello 1998; Boltanski and Chiapello 1999). It is this “artistic critique” that is at stake in so many of the 20th century mobilisations against capitalist society, particularly those which culminated in the events of May 68.

Nevertheless, capitalism has evolved over the last forty years, recovering and gradually integrating this “artistic critique”. We have witnessed the emergence of a renewed “capitalism” centred on the ideals of creativity and innovation (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999), which resulted in a deep change, not only in the production methods but also in public action (Genard and Cantelli 2007). Inspired, to a great extent, by the formal and spatial approaches of artists in New York by the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, the “creative city” has also become a synonym for the rehabilitation and revitalisation of the industrial heritage, and for the regeneration of entire areas.

New York 1970s

A noteworthy experience took place at Soho, in Manhattan, consisting on the illegal occupation of former warehouses lofts, preventing therefore the demolishing of the industrial buildings of this area. About 50 “alternative spaces” of culture (amongst which could be found Andy Warhol’s Factory), proposing spontaneous, collective or individual initiatives – such as art installations and performances – were the starting point for an urban and economic renewal of this area. Of informal and random nature, but also of precarious condition, they offered new spatial and artistic approaches that contrasted with the ones that could be found in museums or art galleries. Opposed to the model of the “white gallery”, these spaces proposed *site-specific* installations and happenings (Terroni 2011). One good example of this kind of approach is the “anarchitecture” work of the artist Gordon Matta-Clark, who proposes “absurd functional plans” (Matta-Clark 2011, 11-12) through structural cuts in buildings.

Matta Clark is interested by the perspectives these cuts are able to create, more than simply by the visual aspect of it (Matta-Clark 2011, 13). Attracted by unexpected places, his activity is

intrinsically linked with performance, taking the form of a “theatrical gesture that divides space and structure”, defined by himself as “a metaphorical, sculptural and social gesture”(Matta-Clark 2011, 22, 68, 78-79)³. “The transitory, ephemeral character of my work is opposite to architecture, and to many established forms of art”, says Matta Clark (Matta-Clark 2011, 60), arguing that when he destroys a building, he expresses himself against multiple aspects of social condition: “I open a closed space, conditioned by a physical need, but also by the industry that produces housing “boxes” in suburban areas, along with passive and isolated ‘clients.’” Furthermore, he claims to stand against “the more or less accepted situation of private property and segregation”, focusing on “the gap between the individual and the American capitalist system (...) where our individual perceptions are constantly corrupted by the media, the market, the companies’ interests, controlled by industry.” (Matta-Clark 2011, 67-68). Matta Clark comments most specifically on the 1950s-60s situation of New York: “while the city was being transformed into a glass and steel megapolis built in an international style, many residential zones were left to abandonment. These neighbourhoods remained as sad witnesses of the principle: ‘Exploit it or leave it’. It is the generalisation of the phenomena of the wasteland that provoked my enthusiasm. [...] Since these buildings could be found at the borders of society and did not obey to any desire of property or protection, they were open to everyone.” (Matta-Clark 1977, 91-92).

These spaces, where the artists would both live and work, have been studied by Cristelle Terroni, an expert in the New-Yorker artist-run spaces (i.e. self-managed by the artists themselves). She argues that the Soho examples had an explicit avant-garde aesthetics, they were not just an occurrence but something that was sought, as we can see by Matta Clark’s interventions. These spatial and artistic approaches and aesthetics – alternative to the dominant models – are in fact political choices that challenged the institutional and commercial world of art of New York at the time (Terroni 2011).

Nonetheless, many areas of other cities that suffered process like the Soho (e.g. Berlin in the 1980-90s) have meanwhile being targeted for having a *cool*, artistic and “bohemian” lifestyle, attracting a new middle class, often named as *bobos* (*bourgeois bohemian*) (Brooks 2000), *hipsters* or even the “creative class” (Florida 2002). According to Richard Florida, it is more important to have a local and organic “ street-level culture ” (which is the one existing in these zones) than big museums or “cultural districts” (Florida 2002, 182). He believes that the existence of a multitude of small cultural places, integrated in the existent urban fabric, contributes significantly to revitalising and animating an area. This factor of attraction is no longer just a characteristic of historical or central zones, but it includes now interstitial zones and more peripheral urban wastelands. There, one can be find cafés, ancient buildings and lofts (Zukin 1982), and usually also a bigger cultural diversity, tolerance and cultural life (Florida 2002). Such conditions necessarily provoke a gentrification⁴ process in the area. The new middle class, once it comes into these neighbourhoods or into an abandoned building of a brownfield, initiates a revalorisation process. And once public powers and real estate agencies become aware of these new dynamics, rents

³ All quotes of Matta-Clark have been translated from a French version of his interviews.

⁴ The classical interpretation of this term consist in the expulsion of the working-class occupiers of the houses of popular neighbourhoods in favour of the new middle classes, morphologically transforming, therefore, the character of those areas (Glass 1964).

rise, chasing away the original residents of those areas (Smith 1996). Then, it follows a change in the ambiance of the neighbourhood/area: inspired by the previous underground, alternative or popular existing particular life, a new trendy atmosphere gets installed in its place.

Culture and Urban Regeneration

In the last decades, arts and culture (including their most experimental and alternative forms) have become a central component of urban policies, which now understand them as crucial elements of quality of life. Furthermore, they trigger the international competitiveness and dynamism of cities. This represents the main idea of what Charles Landry and Richard Florida called “Creative Cities” (Florida 2002; Landry 1995, 2006).

Culture at the service of the *competition* between cities has become quite clear in examples like the Guggenheim museum of Bilbao (1997), designed by Frank Gehry. This explosion of iconic architectures (identified before as “star-architectures”) tends to focus on aesthetic issues rather than on functional ones, and is used by urban policies to strengthen the economy of a city, particularly those that were previously degraded. An unprecedented proliferation of new museums dedicated to contemporary art has then happened. These museums of an increased scale, where “bigger is better”, are the “current incarnation [of] a populist temple of leisure and entertainment”. This big business of the last twenty years, reveals “the dominant logic of privatisation” that has been taking place in Europe (Bishop 2013, 5-9). This way, the “creative city” appears closely linked to the transformations of capitalism and to the emergence of an “urban marketing”, as the key element in the game of the “global cities” (Sassen 1991).

According to Richard Florida (2002), the operator (theoretical and practical) that links cultural policy to the economic development of cities is a new type of emerging capitalist elite, that of “creative professionals” or “creative class”. This “class” includes all professions involved in the invention of new forms of knowledge⁵ and the ones using their creativity as a key factor in their work⁶ (Florida 2002). These “creatives” are not only the boosters of an international economic dynamics, but also the consumers of the new urban forms of the “creative city”, like those described above (cool, tolerant, mixed and cultural). Soon, the theoreticians of this “creative city” became the promoters of a “creative” urban planning, by establishing a set of indicators of “creativity” and by having an active lobbying work in the cities (Peck 2005). This movement has been particularly strong in North America where, “from Memphis to Toronto, from Seattle to San Francisco”, municipal urban planners and cultural services strive to present their city as “creative”, highlighting their cultural life as an asset (Vivant 2009, 11).

The discourse about the creative city, grounded on the assumption that “urbanity brings economic growth and happiness” (Keil and Boudreau 2010), along with the trivialisation and “recovery” of the ideas and struggles led by the “artistic critique” (i.e. creativity, authenticity, freedom, spontaneity), can be considered a new form of “dominant ideology” (Marx and Engels

5 Such as the “scientist or engineer, and architect or designer, a writer, artist or musician” (Florida 2002, 9).

6 Such as “business, education, health care, law or some other profession” (Florida 2002, 9).

1976 [1932]; Boltanski and Chiapello 1999; Menger 2002). However, this debate is not entirely new. Back in the 1920s, Walter Benjamin had already denounced “the politics of aestheticism”, which he defended ought to be fought through a “politicisation of the artistic and the cultural work” (Genard 2003, 9). Today, the “creative city” works under the influence of two particular factors: the rise of the “cultural industry” (developed since the 1960s) and, more broadly, the rise of neoliberal policies.

Cultural Industries & Urban wastelands

“Cultural industries” have become an integrant part of cultural and urban policies based on the ideology of the “creative cities”. Often happening in post-industrial clusters, the spatial support of these new “industries” is generally found in all those buildings left to abandonment by the industrial, military or commercial decay. They frequently occupy whole city blocks, having large open spaces and exposed structures (as we have seen, Cantacuzino draws the attention to the conversion potential of these “industrial archaeologies” (1975, 189-91). Many of these buildings, once rehabilitated or simply re-occupied, become “spaces of art”, like museums or alternative cultural venues.

“Cultural industry” corresponds to all those activities which “derive their economic value from their cultural value,” such as “literature, publishing, printing, film production, advertising, museums, libraries, nightclubs, theatres, galleries” (Bayliss 2007, 891). Furthermore, these “cultural industries” have the capacity to “bridge techno-sciences, humanities, art, cinema, photography, architecture, design, sound art” presenting certain kinds of artistic and curatorial “approaches (...) [that are] fundamentally different from those explored in most exhibition venues” (Moreira 2012, 30). In the same way that the architects of the 1960s praised the hybrid spatial approaches resulting from the mix between old and new elements, the Portuguese architect Inês Moreira highlights the importance of multiple influences brought together in such contemporary approaches, claiming that one should “read the post-industrial as a present condition and as its potential for future intervention, diverging from historical/heritage crystallisations and *pastiches* of past moments.” As “semiotically overloaded production places” these “factories and industrial remnants provide intense spatial, material and experiential sensations to both informed and uninformed visitors” and, when analysing these spaces from a curatorial perspective, “the materiality of existing buildings can be considered as an extension of exhibited objects” (Moreira 2012, 29-30).

As we had already seen, many of these post-industrial buildings and urban wasteland are able to capture “the romantic gaze of photographers of ruins” (Moreira 2012, 29). Nonetheless, several sociologist and geographers have also been exploring these spaces in their relation to social and cultural issues, linked to the European cultural situation, like Fabrice Raffin (Raffin 2002, 2007), Boris Grésillon (Grésillon 1999, 2002; Grésillon and Andres 2011; Grésillon and Kohler 2001), Helmut Ploebst (2002) or Phillippe Henry (2011a; 2011b). Raffin, for instance, refers to the emergence of aesthetic sensitive productions in those spaces, stating that they can be articulated or not with social, political, economic or urban issues. But he adds that the

cultural actions having their own aesthetic forms can range from: “art for art” to “strong claiming political action”; “leisurely use of the aesthetics” to “poetic depiction of the daily life”; or “art as a way of producing economic values” to “political management tool” (Raffin 2007). Guy Debord, for instance, says that the “factories as houses of culture” are integrated in the system and are particularly organised towards the benefit of a pseudo-community (Debord 1967, 140). Was he maybe referring to the *Factory* of Andy Warhol, his contemporary?

Aestheticisation of Post-industrial environments and Counter-Cultures

On the one hand, we have seen “cultural factories”, growing from the 1960s-70s artistic movements, whose approaches consisted of explicit avant-garde aesthetics (Terroni 2011), based on site-specific and unconventional artistic and spatial approaches. On the other hand, we saw how many vacant, obsolete and abandoned buildings have been explored or squatted (and how these actions resulted in “punkspaces”, inspired by strong social movements and diverse counter-cultures), and how they have triggered participative, convivial and solidary transformative techniques based on DIY and *bricolage*. It did not take long for both cases to be targeted as cool places by the market agents and local cultural and urban policies, that realised it was possible to make profit out of such stimulating environments. This way, an instrumentalisation process of the cultural agents and spatial and visual forms and aesthetics followed, leading to a kind of a marriage of *culture* and *market*.

This recycling of the “aesthetics of recycling” and the “recuperation” of subversive or revolutionary symbols is a product of the “new spirit of the capitalism”, according to the sociologists Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello (1999), which manages to transform these cultural and spatial approaches into “official culture”, “entertainment places”, “fashion”, “consumable products” and “lifestyles”. This “society of the spectacle” (Debord 1967) is then extended to the whole city, proposing us a constant party mood under the form of an “event city” (Boullier 2010). As the French philosopher Gilles Lipovetsky and the writer Jean Serroy explain, these days the most important is to feel, to live intense moments of pleasure, discovery, evasion, and not to be in accordance to the codes of social representation. The users of this new creative model of city are drug addicts of consume, easy leisure and culture (Lipovetsky and Serroy 2013, 29-30).

The vulgarisation of alternative artistic/spatial practices and cultures and the increasing “festivalisation” of the city are connected with the rediscovery of the “ambiances” (Amphoux, Thibaud, and Chelkoff 2004), which aims at the intensification of the concept of “urban experience”, inspired in part by the Situationists approaches presented in their “Internationale Situationniste” (1957-1972). However, the Situationist perspective has meanwhile somehow been distorted and, in many of these new spatial approaches, what matters is mainly the appearance, the way it looks, favouring the visual capacity rather than other forms of sensorial perception. This “aestheticisation of the world” (Lipovetsky and Serroy 2013) led by the market logics and extreme individualisation is in reality also a characteristic of the “guaranteed city”. We may consider that many of these spaces have today become part of this urban model, since the previously mentioned trivialisation of the “alternative discourse” leads in fact to superficial

relationships and neutralised sensorial ambiances (Brevigleri 2013, 223-24) leaving no space for real improvisation or spontaneity.

This way, the environments of many of those cultural industries, creative clusters, co-working spaces, *squArts* (artistic squats), and so many other “alternative cultural spaces”, are often “recreated” and sponsored by advertising of liquor brands, banks and powerful institutions and companies. Grounded on an appealing design, stylistic revivals of previously existing atmospheres, counter-cultures or artistic avant-gardes, the market manages therefore to transform revolutionary slogans into trademark labels (img 36). A paradox arises therefore: grounded on the desire of a competitive, creative and convivial city, the effective consequences such a city actually results in the extinction of utopia (Pattaroni 2011, 56)⁷.

Having the general framework been defined, I shall now define the object of study of this research work – the Alternative Cultural Spaces –, which is intrinsically linked to the complex reality theoretical framework that has been here presented.

*



TATE Modern, London (Herzog & de Meuron)



MATA DERO MADRID



Park, Duisburg-Nord, Ruhr, Alemanha (ph: Peter Latz)

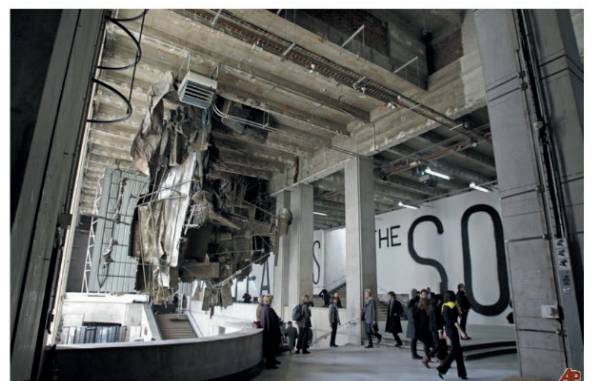
creativity
museums
galleries
'clusters'
street art
graffiti
urban wastelands
culture



Stadtbad, Berlin



GALERIA DE ARTE URBANA



Palais de Tokyo, Paris 2012 (Lacaton & Vassal)

img 36. Creativity: culture and compromise.

⁷ This last part of the theoretical framework is in fact the core of the project that has been developed by the Lasur team of research, under the FNS context, dedicated to the “Counter Cultures and Creative City”.

2. ALTERNATIVE CULTURAL SPACES



Img 36. "Assim eram as noites do Salão Olímpico" ("This is how the evenings were at Salão Olímpico"). Cartoon made by Bruno Fonseca da Silva, published in the book *Salão Olímpico 2003/06* (p.145). Salão Olímpico used to be an alternative cultural space of the city of Oporto, in Portugal. At the right bottom of the image we can see a man smoking and discussing alternatives to the term "alternative" ("Neeeh...I am tired of listening people saying that the Olympic is alternative. What we are looking for is a parallel artistic circuit, I mean... independent, or a platform... better, an autonomous structure that allows a place for cont...")

The main object of study of this research is the “Alternative Cultural Space” (ACS). My interest on studying ACS is related with their capacity of addressing so many varied topics of great interest to me, such as: space, architecture, art, creativity, culture, aesthetics, urban territory, society and politics. I felt there were many things to tell about these places, these projects, the cities where they exist and develop their activity as well as about the people involved. I felt therefore it was important to define this concept.

Several ACS have been studied in three European cities – Lisbon, Ljubljana and Geneva –, the time frame of the analysis centred mainly on the years between the years from 2005 to 2015 (but looking to the previous decades, back to the 1970s), as we will see in detail in the following chapter. However, the word “alternative” is often a problematic concept, since it may lead to never-ending debates about “what is alternative” and to the question “alternative to what?”. The concept, in this dissertation, is mostly used together with the other two words, i.e. “cultural spaces”. I will start by defining these “alternative cultural spaces” within the context of this research and then I will clarify some other related concepts, frequently used, and whose meanings might be ambiguous if were not explained: *Culture* and *Counter-Culture*, *Aesthetics* and *Aestheticisation*, *Resistance* and *Compromise*.

Having these discussion topics in mind, the idea was to understand the role ACS have in the cities today, why they appear, under which departing conditions, how they are created and transformed, and what is the impact they have in the city and in the urban space. Do they actually present some concrete and real solutions to the empowerment of people, reflecting a critique of the present urban condition and neoliberal policies? Are they able to use spatial transformation and aesthetics as a fighting tool? Are they, in fact, truly spaces of resistance, or do they end up being forced to make compromises in order to survive, and be integrated in or destroyed by the system?

The word “Alternative”

What is “alternative”, after all? A principle? An ideology? A style? A new market strategy? A different way of living life? Is it merely visual, aimed solely at aesthetic concerns? Or is it rather a reaction to the *mainstream*, the real estate market, the standardisation of urban living styles, the death of the heart of the city and the socially disruptive capitalist system? What made me choose the term “alternative” to classify the kind of cultural spaces I study?

If we look for the etymology of the word, we realise that “alter” means other in Latin. “Alternative” therefore should mean the other possibility, the non-conventional, the counter-practice, other ways of doing things, or of acting. But what kind of things are these? And what kind of actions? They are those that question conformism and are of experimental nature. Those which, according to the French philosopher Thierry Paquot, are against the establishment, what is imposed, normalised, prescribed and standardised; those which are against the absurd economic system, authoritarian regimes and the consumer society (Paquot 2012). *Alternative* may then by default be opposed to *mainstream* – which can be considered as being the norm that most people follow, be it ways of living, ideologies, aesthetics or cultures in general. By default, the *alternative projects* do not follow commercial conventions nor do they fit in with the interests of power. There are, therefore, *alternative movements*, *alternative ways of living*, *alternative cultures*, and so forth. Thus “alternative”, in the context of this research, concerns *action*, *everyday life* and *culture*. However, this concept is permeated by relativism and subjectivism. Its significance varies along time, as cultures evolve, which means that the concept itself has an ephemeral character.

The Spanish researcher Maria Luísa Falcón helps us defining the concept of “alternative” based on its positive and negative character (Falcón 2009, 4). Concerning the negative character of “alternative”, she grounds her definition on the Australian academic and planning activist Kate Shaw’s opinion, who says that such a character is related to the idea of opposition to a political system or a dominant culture, denying values or movements that are accepted by the majority of the community where actions take place¹. Shaw adds that these movements are usually related to radical ideologies that may be sympathetic towards anarchism, left-wing politics or anti-capitalism². Considering now the positive character of the “alternative” concept, it is its creative, independent and original attitude that, in search of an identity, prevails. Advocating the line of ideas mentioned relatively to the negative character of “alternative”, the Portuguese art historian and critique Sandra Vieira Jürgens emphasises the idea of confrontation against the dominant conditions. Nonetheless she sees this double-edged definition in slightly different (though not opposing) terms: additionally, according to her, the word “alternative” presupposes a situation of dialogue and negotiation with the dominant conditions (Vieira Jürgens 2016, 185), this perspective directing us to the topic of “compromise”³.

¹ Dick Hebdige, when trying to define a meaning for subcultures, enhanced this negative aspect due to their nature of criticism to the dominant societal standard (Hebdige, 2002).

² Shaw (2005, pp. 149-169), quoted by (Falcón 2009, 4). Shaw is a specialist on the relationship between gentrification and the alternative culture. Shaw’s PhD in planning (University of Melbourne, 2005) was entitled “Room to move: the politics of protecting the place of alternative culture” and used a number of case studies from European and Australian cities to investigate the range of policies that have been used to support alternative culture in neighbourhoods subject to gentrification (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_Shaw).

³ This term – “compromise” – will be deeply developed later in this chapter, on p. 71.

Taking the idea of “alternative movements” being born out of a political background, the cultural critique Brian Wallis (2002) refers how the alternative phenomenon springs from political movements, but adds that it is also related to the exercise of an artistic practice of an experimental kind (cf. also Vieira Jürgens 2016, 182), related to criticism of official artistic circuits and of conventional creative models (Falcón 2009, 4). The use of this concept becomes more common at the end of the 1960s / beginning of the 1970s and, when applied to the artistic world, it comes together with from the concepts of “independence”, “autonomy” and “informality” (Vieira Jürgens 2016, 184).

More recently, architects have also been discussing the term “alternative” in what concerns spatial kinds of practices. They believe these practices involve projects or ways of doing that offer possibilities. They tend to have more human approaches, to care about ecology and the environment and to use the practices as a tool of critique against social injustices, business, profit and speculation. Nonetheless, as seen above, the term “alternative” is quite difficult to define, and it can be quite limiting as well. Just like the architects Awan, Schneider & Till try to explain in their book “Spatial Agency – other ways of doing architecture” (2011), the reason why they did not call it “Alternative Architectural Practice” instead was due to the difficulty in defining the word “alternative”. They believe this “defining” is limiting since this word “becomes bound by exactly the terms of reference that it would wish to escape”, inevitably identified by the norm against which it is set. Nevertheless, “the critique of the norm is explicit” (Schneider, Awan, and Till 2011, 26-27).

It is within this context, which involves ideas like political action, critique, culture, art and architecture, that the concept of “alternative cultural spaces” will now be discussed.

Alternative Cultural Spaces

What are Alternative Cultural Spaces? Are these spaces simply related to art as a way of expression, or also to political and social struggles? Are they the image of current lifestyles, grounded on leisure principles, solely willing to satisfy the desires of the *bourgeois-bohèmes*? Are they a hope for a more economically sustainable future, when space approaches are concerned? Or are they already incorporated in the system?...

We should start by delimiting the ACS in space and in time. The selected case studies concern three European cities (mentioned above), but its wider context of analysis concerns the Western cultures in general (and the “neo-Western” cultures, which is the case of Slovenia). Additionally, even though the timeframe of the analysis addresses most specifically the last decade (2005-2015), the historical background goes back to the 1960s.

The first conditions that define an ACS, common to all studied examples, are:

1. The reuse of previously existing spaces;
2. Their cultural dimension;
3. The free open access to people.

Many other conditions vary like, for instance, the kind of activities proposed in those spaces or the degree of their political and social engagement.

We will first define the historical background of the ACS, then the matters related with their specific spatial practices and methods and the ambiances and visual aesthetic environments. Afterwards, not only the general characteristics related to their cultural dimension but also some comments about the legal status of the ACS, will be discussed. Most of these characteristics have already been mentioned in the Space, Aesthetics and Resistance chapter, which has established the general theoretical framework under which these projects arise.

Historical background

In dialogue with political movements and student protests in the 1960s and 1970s, ACS arose out of an oppositional context of anti-institutional and anti-commercial critique, their activities being presented as incompatible with mainstream organisations. They were “places for marginalized artists, art forms, agendas, and ideas that were counter to orthodox taste” (Rosati 2012, 41). According to the British art critic Lawrence Alloway: “*alternative spaces* is a general term referring to the various ways in which artists show their work outside commercial galleries and formally constituted museums. It includes the use of studios as exhibition space, the temporary use of buildings for work done on site, and cooperatives of artists, whether for the purpose of putting on one exhibition or for running a gallery on a long-term basis”⁴.

“Alternative artistic spaces” were born in the alternative artistic scene of New York in the 1970s, in response to a distinctive socio-political and economic climate characterised by the radicality of their approaches (and also by a closer accessibility and site-specificity) (Ault, 2002; Rosati 2012; Terroni, 2011). These “independent art spaces”, i.e. run and self-organised by the artists themselves, not dependent on external institutions or curators, were very often both working and living places (the most famous typology having been the loft)⁵.

However, this study concerns a larger range of “alternative spaces”. ACS, as understood in this research, concerns organisations, spaces or projects associated with art and activism. Apart from hosting studios for art production and halls for art exhibition, in these multi-use facilities are also organised, for example, direct action protests, workshops, dinners, discussions and screenings on social issues. The link behind is the *cultural* dimension which is revealed using multiple forms. Another important characteristic of ACS is the “cross-disciplinary modes of engagement”, since they “facilitate interaction among diverse arts audiences, encourage collaboration, and provide stability in an otherwise unstable economic climate.”, as noted by the art historian Lauren Rosati (2012, 43).

These are spaces of temporary and ephemeral nature that, according to Jürgens, not only propose a fusion between art and life and integrate all human activities, but actually also have at their origin a further historical background in the artistic vanguards, like the dada movement of

⁴ Alloway (1978, 4), quoted by Terroni (2011).

⁵ For more information on the New York alternative art spaces see Chapter 1.4. (p.40).

the 1910s (Vieira Jürgens 2016, 179, 549).

A few examples of other kind of alternative cultural spaces and projects, according to Paquot (2012, 29), are: cooperatives and communities, libertarian colonies, “schools for so-called ‘new’ education”, hippy encampments, deserted villages revitalised by neo-rustics, eco-villages, collectively-managed housing projects, advocates for “de-growth” or “others, who simply wish to take things more slowly”, TAZ (*Temporary Autonomous Zones*). Still, the universe explored in this research is focused on an urban context. And within this context, the alternative scene may concern some of the most “underground” environments up to some very “institutional”. Furthermore, somewhere in the middle of those two realities, some ACS are actually the result of a deliberate spatial and aesthetical transformation, decorated in an “alternative” way in order to create a certain kind of ambiance, while offering “experimental” concerts and parties lasting all night long (e.g. bars and museums).

At last, we should mention the so-called “creative clusters”, which usually host *coworking spaces*. These collaborative venues are created in order to assemble “creative professionals” that share “creative ideas”. They are usually founded by young cultural producers and artists and located in the outer boroughs. However, as Rosati notices, “these newer ventures do not necessarily aim to counter the dominant culture” (Rosati 2012, 43).

Spatial practices and conditions

A curious relationship is established between the space and the project (or the container/support and the content), influencing or constraining one another. Since the examples analysed within the framework of this research are pre-existent spaces, the form that those spaces have affects the way of functioning of the new project and of the activities that take place there. But then, the daily (or even occasional) usage also has an impact in the spatial environment. This leads us to one of the main issues of this research: what is the importance that space has in this kind of alternative projects? Is there a message we can find and/or transmit when analysing the spatial practices occurring in ACS?

ACS happen in spaces that were originally not built for the current cultural use neither for the kind of activities these projects offer today. These previously existing spatial supports have several layers of history and stories to tell, visible in the walls, objects, and structure, allowing the visitor to guess what used to be the former function of the place (often linked to industry, commerce, the army or noble housing).

Many of these spaces have experienced a period of abandonment, a situation that contributed to the degradation of their material conditions. This often means that when the new cultural project arrives, the space usually undergoes renovation works, most of the time quite discreet ones, consisting on the minimum necessary adaptations or repairs that allow for the use of such space, with basic (sometimes very basic) comfort and security conditions. These spatial interventions, which mostly consist of a work of darning and later of maintenance, are often constrained by limited budgetary resources, which are generally very low. Therefore, in most cases the liveability conditions tend to be quite precarious. Furthermore, many of these darning

or maintenance projects tend to have a reduced temporal effectiveness, their ephemeral condition being also connected to their material precariousness.

The renovation works are mostly handmade, by the ACS members themselves or their friends. These DIY (Do It Yourself) approaches and the choice of recycling objects, materials and furniture have, in most cases, the capacity of transforming a space into a welcoming and visually attractive and sensorial environment. Space, in this sense, can also work as a vector of cohesion and coherence (Raffin 2007, 91). These assemblages created by collective bricolages (i.e. done by several collaborating people), are necessarily adapted to each locale and situation, this way contributing to provide the ACS with an original aesthetic identity through a qualitative transformation. As the French sociologist Fabrice Raffin notices, the man shapes the space, and the space shapes the man. The appropriation of the space by the transformation works and by the cultural practices is something that deeply marks the space (Raffin 2007, 92).

Since the construction methods and materials are not industrially made, the spaces do not have the same aspect as one whose construction materials are produced industrially, this being the main reason why we identify these DIY and bricolages as “alternative practices”. In this sense, these practices are critique and resist to homogenisation, standardisation and commercial ways of spatial production).

ACS host mostly *site-specific* interventions, rejecting the model of the *white cube/black box* that is generally adopted by most mainstream art galleries. These spatial environments – e.g. factories, warehouses, offices, barracks or apartments – are normally fraught with stories and tend to maintain space in a “raw” condition and to keep existing old objects (like furniture or old industrial machines) used for the former function the building used to host. According to the Portuguese architect Inês Moreira, the actions and activities happening in those kinds of spaces (particularly post-industrial spaces used for art exhibition purposes) “explore the poetics of and immersion in place, and trigger a deeper understanding of the social and economic dimensions.” (Moreira 2012a, 32-33). Those spaces often propose ephemeral happenings and subtle interventions. Furthermore, Moreira highlights the “material illegalities” that might occur in relation to such spaces and practices – linked for example to their processes of production (Moreira 2012, 36) – curiously able to trigger a closer association with beauty and poetry. Two of the most important characteristics of this kind of projects existing in such kinds of spaces are hybridity and complexity.

The use of space in its “raw” condition is a quite common practice. Some buildings are so degraded that they are almost ruins. A reaction to the decaying state of such examples (that are very often victims of speculation processes) is formalised through certain actions of interventional critique, like squatting. Other example of the use of degraded spatial environments is a purely temporary one: it concerns the search for adventure or escape, often connected to the search for spaces out of the limits of the value-producing system of the market. This kind of spaces have the advantage of being found in a *stand-by* state, suspended in time, and with no attributed specific function, this meaning they are open to all possibilities. This condition allows them to acquire a certain aura, often attracting utopia-oriented projects.

Aesthetics and ambiances of ACS

The way Raffin – expert on artistic and cultural practices happening on industrial wastelands – describes the spatial environmental ambiances of some of his case studies (like the squat Usine in Geneva, and others in Poitiers and Berlin) is quite suggestive (Raffin 2007, 93-96). He describes his case-studies drawing on the five senses of the human body. Raffin highlights the way how one might perceive space when facing a few details, like the wall painting, the furniture, the disaffected industrial machines or other random objects. In particular, the way the wall painting most often is not uniform (the different ink colours being visible through superposed layers) or is peeling (because the ink has become too dry and “broken” along time). This goes along with a “raw” usage of most of the buildings where the alternative cultural projects take place, which are left almost in their original state, and where the most diverse marks of usage along time are visible. Contrasting with the grey walls and the favourite industrial building materials (concrete, glass, steel), there are very vivid colours (rainbow style), flowers and handmade posters, with expressive handmade fonts, reminding the pacifist hippie aesthetics. Somehow in a kind of a symbiosis, the punk, the reggae and the “street” aesthetics (rap, hip-hop, skate worlds) come to complete the ACS “scenario”. Posters of concerts, theatre performances or art exhibitions, graffiti and tags cover the ACS walls, in a mix of styles, revealing diversity, but also a fusion of references coming from different cultural roots. Those are all signs that converge towards culture. Furthermore, at the entrance doors, at the façades and walls, flags and posters can be found that work as a first step to order the chaos left by the previous abandonment of the building. However, a certain disorder is still present in those environments, expressed through mismatched furniture (clearly marked by a long-time usage), all kinds of collected objects, tools or dusty bibelots. These ambiances contrast with cultural “classical” spaces of white, cold, smooth and monotone walls, where each object has a proper place to stand, and where signs that indicate one’s path or advertise what can or cannot be done on that place may be found (e.g. museums like Louvre, in Paris, the British Museum, in London, or many renown art galleries).

The sensorial analysis described by Raffin alludes also to the importance of smell, which usually is not very pleasant in such kinds of environments. Beer, coffee, cigarette, transpiration represent the smell of conviviality, of partying. But one can also smell odours of the artistic production, like ink, sprays, sawn wood... The sound is another important spatial aspect, constantly present when living in or using an ACS: the music, the bricolages, the noises coming from the bar/kitchen, voices, discussions, laughter... Also the echo, in large open spaces of the industrial buildings, can be a very distinctive sound (Raffin 2007, 96-99).

One could ask if these kinds of “chaotic” and “not so clean” aesthetics are connected to the lack of economic means of these kinds of projects. Raffin believes this taste for things with uncertain rough, irregular, disorganised and not uniform contours, is linked to a positioning against rational action and spatial approaches, and lifestyles grounded on consumption. Standing for more sustainable approaches through recycling and the recovering of old objects, the kind of “disorder” we can find in an ACS works instead “as a way of order” that has its own rules and rationality, allied to a social and political critique (Raffin 2007, 101-3).

By expressing their tastes, developing their activities and their aesthetic principles, the collectives of people that lead alternative kinds of projects in such kinds of places leave their mark on site and, with this, they appropriate the place. With a critique posture, this appropriation is therefore physical, aesthetic and symbolic, according to Raffin (2007, 91-93). The signs of such appropriation have, in fact, a territorial dimension. According to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980), the expressive is the first reference to the possessive⁶. People feel attached to spaces they have helped to transform or have created themselves, “spaces” becoming progressively transformed into “places”, based on the increasingly “feeling of belonging” (in the sense Marc Augé defines, the last two concepts)⁷.

But the “aesthetics” is a characteristic of a place. Something that is built, constructed, sometimes even previously designed to look in a certain way. Sometimes it happens that a certain ambiance of a place looks like it was “forced” to resemble something in particular. ACS suffer sometimes several processes of “aestheticisation” during their lifetimes. We should therefore mention that there also exist “forced” kinds of “alternative” ambiances in ACS whose aesthetics are very influenced by professional architectural finishing details or a designed kind of furniture. This usually occurs when ACS are framed by a more institutional or commercial project management. This subject of the ambiances of ACS, the issue of the aesthetics and frequent aestheticisation process that these kinds of spaces undergo, is further discussed in the topic of Aesthetics and Aestheticisation.

Cultural dimension

We have considered that all ACS have a cultural dimension, expressed or accomplished in multiple ways (activities, events, art production and/or exhibition). According to several studies that were made about alternative cultural spaces in the last decades, one of the important characteristics of these alternative projects is precisely this multidisciplinary (and sometimes cross-disciplinary) character. Visual, plastic and performative arts are usually present under the form of exhibitions, concerts, theatre, dance, film projections or workshops. Some ACS are more focused on art exhibition, others in art production. Some produce artistic projects on site, others work as exchange and welcoming platforms for external projects, thus encouraging multi-cultural links even across borders. ACS attempt to offer a cultural agenda out of the mainstream circuit, also contributing to offer a free (or a cheaper) access to culture.

Some ACS are alternative art projects, run by the artists themselves, mainly dedicated to art production and art exhibition. According to Julie Ault (2002), Cristelle Terroni (2011), Laurence Alloway (1976), Brian Wallis (2002) and Sandra Vieira Jürgens (2016), who have studied such kind of projects in New York in the 1970s (and in Portugal in the 1990s, as Jürgens did), “artist-run spaces” is a kind of a synonym of “alternative spaces”. This term concerns those kind of artistic projects where the artists have a bigger degree of power and control on their own activity, and are able to curate their own work, this usually taking place in precarious studios, space that

⁶ Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari. *Mille Plateaux*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1980. Quoted in Raffin (2007, 93).

⁷ See more about the definition of “places” and “non places” on Chapter 1.1. (p. 20).

work both as working and exhibition places. They are “independent spaces”, referring to the independence of the artists relatively to the academic jurisdiction, the state and the market.

We must nonetheless be aware that our object of study does not include only “artistic spaces”, requiring a more embracing word that helps defining it, since it includes a wider range of projects that offer many different kinds of cultural activities and also social and political activism, and whose projects are often extended to the public space under the form of festivals or artistic interventions. However, in this research, we consider the ACS neither as being purely “artistic” projects nor as purely “activist” projects. Instead, all the selected case studies present a mixed and hybrid offer. Though centred on cultural projects and activities, they may float between a stronger artistic and a stronger activist nature. We have decided that we should not name and classify ACS according to their main functional tendency (“artistic” or “activist”), since this action would automatically reduce the possibilities these spaces offer, and that it would go against their ephemeral and fast changing nature.

Apart from being a venue for cultural events, it is common for an ACS to have a strong connection with their local environments and the working community, often making use of the voluntary work and different skills of their members to offer a panoply of activities aimed at bettering the life of those involved, giving them tools for greater social autonomy and empowerment, be it through workshops, language courses, shared kitchens or free juridical support. This strong presence of a direct social intervention is, in most cases, backed by political convictions. ACS are grounded on strong solidarity principles, through active political actions. A common example are squats.

As we can see, the artistic dimension is normally complemented with multiple other dimensions. Libraries (existing under multiple sizes and formats), for instance, have an important role in the ACS, contributing for knowledge exchange. Other kinds of activities are also often offered, such as lectures and debates about the most diverse kinds of topics. The offer of pedagogic, political and/or socially engaged activities (e.g. courses, workshops, debates, games, communitarian kitchens, etc.) contributes to strengthen the ties of the neighbourhood and of the local community (even though sometimes its impact is more important at a wider scale than at a local one). The convivial feature is also usually very important: the existence of a bar, free events and frequent parties contribute to this aspect. Furthermore, many examples taken from squats have also spaces for living (dwelling). However, in this research, such an aspect was not considered to be one of the main or most common uses. We should finally mention that sometimes ACS also propose particular lucrative models, like those developed by the so-called creative-industries or creative clusters.

Legal dimension

The “alternative” nature can be determined, according to the Swiss researcher Jérôme Massard, using three criteria: the choices of the cultural agenda that is offered or available (underground or mainstream), the type of internal organisation (self-managed or hierarchised), and the funding (self-financed or subsidies) (Massard 2012, 20-21). This categorisation raises the following questions: a space that offers a “mainstream” content but exists under an “alternative context”, is it really an *alternative space*? We could also ask the question the other way around: a space that offers an “alternative content”, existing under a “mainstream” context, could we consider it as *alternative*?

Other parameters can however also influence the “alternative” character of a space. One of them is accessibility: these spaces are meant to be open to the community for free, without entrance fees nor paid activities. Even if certain legal statuses officially limit the entrance to foreigners and/or visitors (like “associations” only welcoming “members”, or museums⁸ needing an entrance ticket), ACS are freely accessible spaces, open by default to any person in general, as long as those persons agree to accept the rules. Depending on the degree of legitimacy and accessibility of each ACS, this can be translated as “in” or “off” places, in cultural terms (Pinson 2009; Vivant 2009), meaning they are part of a mainstream and payable circuit, or of a parallel (or “alternative”) and free circuit.

The legal status of an ACS actually varies a lot: some are illegal (such as squats), while others are completely legal. Within the examples of the institutional world we can find associations, cooperatives, museums, galleries, bars, and so forth. The legal status is usually linked to the type of management of the space (self-managed, private funds, or institutional support). It is also often connected with *property* and the legal right to remain in a building. Some ACS are owned (the members themselves are the owners of the building or space), while others are rented. If a rent exists, its value can vary greatly, but in general it tends to be inexpensive or made under certain special agreements, like lending contracts.

The use and choice of the term “alternative”

I started to use the name “alternative cultural spaces” when talking – in a colloquial language with friends – about the places we were visiting. While in Ljubljana, when for instance referring Metelkova⁹ to someone, this squat could instantaneously be identified due to the strong identity it has in the context of this city, having no need of further explanations; otherwise, in Lisbon, the fact of referring to an ACS while being at a random location did not allow the immediate and full understanding by the other participant of the dialogue.

⁸ Museums are referred here because, as we will see in the fieldwork analysis, the Museum of Modern Art of Ljubljana has been considered as a “radical museum” by the art historian Claire Bishop.

⁹ A famous squat in Ljubljana.

Examples of ACS in Lisbon, like Braço de Prata, Bacalhoeiro or Crew Hassan¹⁰, showed, at the moment of the creation of the respective projects, different ways of organising their cultural programmes, as well as different ways of decorating their spatial environments, when comparing to what was usual or most common to find in Lisbon in the mid-2000s. Therefore, people and the press¹¹ started (a bit haphazardly, I suppose) calling these kinds of places “alternative”. The festive character is probably one of the strongest aspects of the ACS, and the particular logics of spatial occupation part of their charm: abandoned factories, old decaying apartments, sinuous and labyrinthine paths and the decaying aesthetics. These elements could often be found together in many of the places I visited in European cities. In this sense, there seemed to exist a wider movement, not exclusive of Lisbon, but one that would hold a uniform language (in terms of space and of projects) at a wider level. This fact allowed me to build and ground the concept of “alternative cultural spaces” from the observation and systematic identification of certain elements, in certain spaces whose activities and projects were related to cultural issues.

I realised as well that the ACS allowed me to explore several aspects related to different topics that directly interested me, and which were at the same time topics of discussion in wider debates on contemporary architecture¹².

However, throughout this research work I found several people that disagreed with the use of the term “alternative”, who find it an absurd adjective that is mostly used as a *label*. Furthermore, this would often provoke a discussion around the idea of “authentic” and “fake” ACS, often having as reference a time-based parameter. This parameter could be grounded either on personal living experiences (e.g. “this place used to be *really* alternative when I was young, today it is completely mainstream”) or in a preconceived idea about “recognised” *alternative networks* of individuals (i.e., projects led by people responsible for older/disappeared similar kinds of projects, these examples working therefore as a “the right” *alternative* references). Of course some more consistent opinions have also been pointed out, like evident and visible references to clear processes of institutionalisation, or reports of commercial approaches run behind the “alternative” look of a self-called “alternative cultural space”.

Generally most of the people who expressed their disagreement were generally those who have (or at least who pretend to have) a more radical political engagement or a more concrete activist action and political views. Other words have been suggested in order to replace “alternative”, in an effort to find “the right one”. But usually a part of the sense of “ACS”, according to what I had defined, and the contradictions I wanted to explore, would then be lost (sometimes it would be the dimension of *resistance*, sometimes the *compromises* they make with the market or the authorities). The word “alternative” allowed this coexistence precisely due to its ambiguity. Besides, this word always kept on coming back along the four years of research, as if it was inevitable to avoid it. So I decided to accept this word and use it, though being aware of the problems it constantly raises.

¹⁰ ACS mentioned in the fieldwork analysis about Lisbon, Chapter 5.

¹¹ For instance, the magazine article named “Novos Lugares de Culto”, by Maria da Luz Correia, published in *Visão* (12.04.2007, pp 138-144).

¹² See Chapter 1.

Some examples of alternatives that have been proposed to the use of the term “alternative”, that came up along the research, are: **independent, emergent, autonomous, self-managed, parallel, underground, marginal, counter-cultural...** (img 36). The uses of these terms vary according to the level of political commitment of each ACS, but also vary from city to city, due to the historical specificity of each one. The preference for one word or another depends also on the media, real estate companies, investors or authorities, as we will see.

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In order to better frame our object of study, we will now analyse and define better a few terms that are intrinsically connected to the Alternative Cultural Spaces and this particular research work. We will more concretely start by defining “Culture” and “Counter-culture”.

*

2.1. Culture and Counter-Culture

Culture

“Culture” is a notion with many meanings, a very wide-ranging concept. Following the definition developed together with the C4 group of research¹, a definition of “culture” is drawn.

The “culture” referred to in this work is not the “culture” understood in its broadest sense, as “that complex whole” of which the British cultural anthropologist Sir Edward Tylor defined in 1871, which “includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Chombar of Lauwe, 1970, 17). To become the object of a policy (i.e., a cultural policy), the idea of “culture” had to undergo a significant restriction of its meaning and become over the nineteenth and twentieth century a concept that allows the gathering of a legitimate body of human productions having an aesthetical vocation (Passeron, 2003, 369).

Thus, the notion of “culture” oscillates between two poles: the first, anthropological, which covers the ways of living, feeling and thinking that are inherent to a social group; the second refers to a pantheon of great “legitimate” works (Fleury, 2008, 8). The border between them is tenuous. However, the issue that lies at the centre of the political and cultural fields of the *sociology of culture* is that of legitimacy (Bourdieu 1979, 1992; Lahire, 2004). Therefore, literature abundantly shows how a body of works and institutions acquired a legitimate – and monumental – place in the modern city (Ducret, 1994). Furthermore, as it is shown by the positive welcoming of *urban culture* and its entry into museums (e.g. graffiti, hip hop, punk, etc.), an issue that may at first appear as anthropological (like the assertion of “identity of the street”, the birth of a youth culture, etc.) can then be requalified in a way to cross the borders of the most legitimate world of art.

What catches our attention here is the link that is established between *culture* and *art* or, more broadly, *aesthetics*² and creativity. “Culture” gradually came to symbolise *human creativity*. It is in this sense that the promotion of “creativity” in the contemporary days has become a struggle in order to preserve a measure of humanity to face commercial and industrial logics (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1974). However, the very idea of “culture” is at once paradoxical in view of the ideal of “creativity” conceived as something spontaneous and without rules. It is this paradox at the heart of the institutionalisation of cultural practices that is clarified by the discussions of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu about the “true” or “false” culture, and of “living culture” or “dead culture” (Bourdieu 1992). *Cultural policies*, often understood as *creativity policies*, accordingly face the delicate paradox of having to plan processes which in their nature escape the very opportunity to be enacted (Pattaroni 2011; Bayliss 2007).

¹ See p. 10.

² For a definition of the term “aesthetics”, see further on in this chapter (p. 64).

In fact, the resistance opposed to institutionalisation processes of culture generated, over the twentieth century, a whole set of “counter-cultures” and/or “alternative cultures” that challenged each other or were seeking to create alternatives not only to dominant forms of artistic culture but also to those forms of culture defined in their anthropological sense and understood as sets of values and of community structured practices (Yinger 1960). We felt we needed however to distinguish “counter-culture” from “alternative culture”. In this sense two categories are then defined.

Counter-culture

The struggles of the 1970s aimed at freer expressive forms (theatrical, musical, etc.), but they were also against particular forms of organisation and production of the city³ (Debord 1967) (Gros, 1987). To find spaces to pursue new forms of creation, artists – and other activists that claimed “the right to the city” – had to challenge the rules and devices that were at the root not only of the legitimate order of cultural productions, but also of the practical order in the city (Pattaroni, 2007).

Since then, counter-cultures were offered some recognition, even a prominent place in the city strategies. Their subversive dimension (both cultural and social) was partly eroded along this process of institutionalisation. Henceforth, the boundaries of “legitimate” culture (the “good” cultural practices that promote excitement and competition between cities) move across the old divisions. Thus, the alternative rock concert becomes often more legitimate than the “dusty” museum, but the wild punk concert is undervalued vis-à-vis the trendy gallery. The boundaries between “culture” and “counter-culture” are getting fuzzy, in a world where the “culture consumers” choose indiscriminately from the most established to the most alternative places, the latter having become a “cultural offer among others”, as the expert on culture and creative industries Elsa Vivant explains (Vivant 2009, 24).

The institutionalisation of counter-culture, however, did not erase the critical voice of artists and cultural actors. On the contrary, a part of them is increasingly aware of the ambiguous role it plays in the excesses of the “creative city”⁴. We are witnessing therefore a renewal of the artistic critique, which is directed against the “dehumanisation” of the cities and the expropriation of the urban spaces. Many artists think about the political impact of their interventions in the city, or even commit themselves with social movements that struggle for the recovery of the urban spaces. More fundamentally still, the repertoires of action of the urban movements - their visual and audible forms of expression - have evolved in recent decades under the influence of “artistic skills” (Petrescu and al, 2008, 14; Becker, 1988). This movement has the effect of reducing or even eliminating the distinction between “artist” critique and “social” critique. As suggested by Jacques Rancière, contemporary critiques blend in an unprecedented way social issues and

³ Like functionalist, standardised, industrial, authoritarian.

⁴ See chapter 1.4.

aesthetic matters (Rancière, 2008). Consequently, this intermingling of artistic, cultural and social critiques is considered in the study accomplished about the selected case-studies.

Alternative Culture

Sometimes “alternative cultures” appear as synonym of “counter-cultures” or “sub-cultures” (Bourseiller and Penot-Lacassagne 2013; Hebdige 1979; Yinger 1960). The concept “counter-culture”, when applied to our case studies, does not seem to match entirely the meaning of “alternative”. These concepts are not, in my opinion, synonyms, nevertheless a relationship exists between them. While in the first concept *resistance* is implicit (*counter*), in the second concept there exists a bigger ambiguity. When referring to an “alternative culture”, this does not necessarily imply an opposition action, but rather a different culture from the common one existing at a certain place at a certain time. This might be related to foreign cultures, but also to “sub-cultures” (Hebdige 1979), which might exist in a parallel reality to the mainstream one. According to the British sociologist Dick Hebdige, “subcultures” are youth movements that use symbolic forms of resistance against their parents or to the environment in which they live. In turn, an “alternative culture” is often considered as a “subculture” or a “counter-culture” that has meanwhile been accepted, or is at least, tolerated by society, the *marginal, underground, subversive* or *revolutionary* character being no longer seen as a threat but instead as something cool, fun and attractive. This issue leads us to the “alternative” seen as a *lifestyle*. However, “alternative” may also be seen as a way “to live, to produce, to consume, to educate and to love differently” (Paquot 2012, 29–30). In this sense, according to the French urban philosopher Thierry Paquot “an ‘alternative’ would be someone who refuses to conform to the norm and wishes to reveal the *other* in him or herself” in a non-conformist and experimental way.

Following this last idea, two important characteristics of *being alternative* should be mentioned: the *empowerment* and the *critique*. As mentioned at the conference “Alternate Currents”⁵ (2008), alternative examples show us how “one might operate not only in uncertain times but as a matter of principle” and how critique is “always used as a means to positive action, not as an end in itself” (Schneider, Awan, et Till 2011, 27). In this sense, *being alternative* implies a social engagement and, most of all, a political attitude. This kind of action can be present in the everyday life, and is not necessarily expressed in an extravagant way. The alternative action can be made through small gestures that defy a passive obedience to the rules: inventive and creative practices, strategies and tactics that challenge the way in which one is supposed to act and live, contributing therefore to the empowerment of the people. Many of these actions concern artistic interventions and many others concern the urban space. We have seen several examples of such kinds of “alternative spatial practices” in the framework chapter *Space, Aesthetics and Resistance*, particularly those identified with the so-called “Re-Architecture”.

5 Available at: www.field-journal.org/index.php?page=journal-2 [seen on October 2014].

2.2. Aesthetics and aestheticisation

Aesthetics

aesthetic (n.)

*from Greek aisthetikos “sensitive, perceptive”,
from aisthanesthai “to perceive (by the senses or by the mind), to feel”⁶*

Inspired by an everyday common language, the word “aesthetics” is used in this research in the context of a characterisation of certain spaces, seen through personal experiences. In this sense, “aesthetics” is rather used in the same way that its Greek origins suggest, and should not be immediately interpreted only in the way the German philosopher Immanuel Kant defined it – as a “criticism of taste”⁷ – or as Theodor W. Adorno did in his masterwork “Aesthetic Theory” (1970) – as an exclusive philosophical reflection about “art” and the “work of art”. Though some of Adorno’s ideas and questions are relevant and worth of being taken into account in the present discussion, since *space* is the main object of study of this research we cannot make our analysis in the same way we would analyse a “work of art”. However, the world of “The Art and the Arts” (Adorno 1967) is definitely present in the analysed case studies, being therefore simply not possible to ignore “art” as a subject of study, even if this is not the central issue of this thesis. And just like in the world of *art critique*, matters of *beauty* and *taste* also do concern *space*. Similar issues to the ones considered by the *critique of art* arise when discussing the ACS: to whom are they addressed? Who uses those spaces? Do ACS intend to share a message? Or are they purely spaces one passes by, carelessly? Are they independent from the surrounding context – territory, politics, culture, economy? Or do they have some role in society as a whole? Do they contribute to develop a critical awareness on people visiting these spaces? Or are they passive, purely contemplative spaces, only meant for pleasure and spectacle? Finally, do ACS’ *aesthetics* have a role in these matters? Is a discussion about the *aesthetics* of ACS important somehow?

The usage I make of the word “aesthetics” is closer to the one defined by the German philosopher Gernot Böhme, who calls it “new aesthetics”. Böhme defines it as a “theory of perception” that includes “the affective impact of the observed” - persons, things and spaces - experienced in “bodily presence”. Cities, for instance, can be “boring”, neutral, ugly, minimal and generic, or instead beautiful, exciting, colourful, dynamic and stressful. Any space – just like any city – has specific aesthetics that are felt differently by their users. The primary object of perception is, in this sense, “atmospheres”, received and sensed by the human body emotionally and affectively. The philosopher adds that *atmospheres* – contrarily to what Gestalt psychology thought about *sensations*, *shapes* and *objects* –, are “what is first and immediately perceived” (Böhme 1993, 119, 125). The phenomenological approach is therefore a relevant method used to capture the atmospheres of ACS, considering that:

⁶ www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=aesthetic.

⁷ *Ibid.*

- According to the philosopher Merleau-Ponty, we perceive the world through our bodies (in *Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945);
- According to the philosopher Hermann Schmitz (in *New Phenomenology*⁸), atmospheres are perceived through reference to everyday experiences (Böhme 1993, 119) by emotions, “regarded as spatially extended powers that affect the felt body” (Schmitz 2002, 492);
- According to the architects Christian Norberg-Schulz (in *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, 1979), Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa and Alberto Pérez-Gómez (1994), the phenomenological approach focuses on the experience of building materials and their sensory properties.

The building materials are part of the atmosphere of a certain space, but objects and images (or objects of 2-dimensional support) are also part of those ambiances.

In the present dissertation we shall consider that *atmosphere* is a synonym of *ambiance*. Even if there is a slightly difference between both words⁹, when using them under the context of the analysis of a specific inner space, any of the two serves the desired purpose. For example, when one says “there is a heavy ambiance”, the same idea can be transmitted by saying “the atmosphere is heavy”. Furthermore, according to the *Oxford Dictionaries*, “ambiance” is “The character and atmosphere of a place”¹⁰, and “atmosphere” is “The pervading tone or mood of a place, situation, or creative work”.

Böhme in his book *Architektur und Atmosphäre* (2006)¹¹, develops the idea that “the uniqueness of a stabilised built atmosphere – from a praxeological point of view – ... interlinks human states with the built environment”, stressing that “...atmospheres neither belong to objects, nor are they the property of subjects. They are exclusively enacted in between the subject and object”. Then, to construct a building, to sketch its character, is the beginning of the construction of an atmosphere. But, “what is experienced is the atmosphere, not the object as such” (Wingley 1998, 18)¹². Furthermore, we also refer to “ambiance” when addressing the visual and spatial aesthetics of an ACS. However, ambiance (or “atmosphere”) is somehow more embracing than the word “aesthetics”, since it depends on (therefore, it includes) the users and their behaviours.

⁸ “What is New Phenomenology?”, in *Gesellschaft für Neue Phänomenologie e.V.* [available at: www.gnp-online.de/index.php?id=15&L=1, seen in 03 May 2015].

⁹ “Atmosphere” is a wider concept that can be used to address to the element *air*, “the envelope of gases surrounding the earth or another planet” or used as a “unity of pressure” (in *Oxford Dictionaries*, www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/atmosphere?q=atmosphere+).

¹⁰ In *Oxford Dictionaries* (www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ambiance?q=ambiance).

¹¹ Mentioned in Göbel (2015, 10).

¹² Wingley. *The architecture of atmosphere*. Daidalos 68: 18-27. Quoted in Göbel (2015, 9).

Aestheticisation

The choice of the use of the word “aesthetics” in this work comes together with the choice of the use of the word “aestheticisation”, when referring to the conscious creative process of “decorating” a space in a certain way. According to the *Oxford Dictionary*¹³, “ornamentation”, is a synonym of the word “decoration” (“The action of decorating something or making it more elaborate”), and “decoration” and “aestheticisation” have close meanings. I believe that one of the main differences relies on the opinion that “decoration” has a less pretentious aim than “aestheticisation”, and can be detached from a professional artistic intention (if we consider that a grandmother likes to “decorate” her house with flowers and doilies, for example). As the Austrian architect and theorist of the Modern movement Adolf Loos saw it, “ornament” brings joy to people’s life (he mentions, in particular, artisans like his shoemaker, referring the pleasure he has in “ornamenting” shoes, and if one takes that pleasure away from him he will feel sad – Loos 1908, 86-87). In this sense, “style” is a synonym of “ornament”, and every age has its own style (Loos 1908, 74). Could we therefore consider “alternative” a contemporary “style”? Could we take “alternative” as a kind of “decoration” process applied to buildings, ambiances, urban space and art?

When we think today about “street art”, could we agree – in the sense Loos does (1908, 86) – that art has taken the place of ornament? Is street art today filling up ACS’ walls only to decorate those spaces? Or does it still have an implicit critique and radical political message?

If Loos, on the one hand, advocated for a radical aesthetic purism in 1908, claiming that the erection of sober buildings was linked to a matter of cultural evolution, we have seen, on the other hand, how meanwhile such kind of aesthetics has been criticised by post-modernist architects and other professionals dealing with the urban environment. These professionals accused such aesthetics of being too “cold” and impersonal, responsible for so many social problems related with those inhabiting the corresponding spaces. We have also seen how the avant-garde artists of the 1960s-70s in New York reacted to those aesthetics, in terms of spatial use and appropriation, standing rather for irregular and imperfect living and working and exhibition spaces¹⁴. Loos was aware of the “mortification” provoked on people by the usage of what he called “simplicity” (Loos 1908, 76). Hence, he saw “ornament as [a] crime” that inflicted serious injury on people’s health, on the national budget¹⁵, and hence, on cultural evolution (Loos 1908, 78).

On the subject of “ornamentation”, Siegfried Kracauer had also a negative point of view, particularly when used to manipulate the “masses”. Kracauer’s disenchanted vision of modern civilisation – linked to a great extent to the rise of the Nazi’s power in Germany in the 1930s – alerted him about the “threatening of regression” that “the mass ornament” can have on society (2008 [1920s-1930s]). The “cult of distraction” and entertainment of people was led in part by the instrumentalisation of media – like cinema or photography – as privileged tools to experiment aesthetic manipulation (Agard 2008, 7-14). Could therefore, this be called “aestheticisation”?

¹³ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/ornamentation>.

¹⁴ See chapter 1.4. (p. 40).

¹⁵ According to Loos, ornament generally increases the cost of an article and is a wasted labour power, since the worker spends much more time to ornament an article than he would just to create/build it (Loos 1908, 80).

According to the *Oxford Dictionaries*, “aestheticisation” is “the action or process of making something aesthetic in character or appearance”¹⁶. Böhme, for instance, is interested in how his concept of “new aesthetics” responds to the “progressive aestheticisation of reality”, this being a central subject in my analysis as well. The same way as the philosopher notices, I consider that, on the one hand, there is an aesthetic *pleasure* – captured by perception –, and on the other hand, an aesthetic *manipulation* – the so-called “aestheticisation” (Böhme 1993, 125), or “creation of ambiances”. This “aesthetic manipulation”, when pulled into an extreme, is linked to the situation that Kracauer denounced, related to the media used as an “ornament” to manipulate people. However, it can also have a more neutral aim. As a creative process used by so many professional activities (like the interior designer, the graphic designer, the landscape architect, scenographer, but also the musician, photographer, filmmaker, sculptor, painter...), aesthetic manipulation covers the most diversified areas (like theatre, advertising, cosmetics, film industry, etc). The practice of “giving certain things and materials certain properties” as architects do, is engaged in the imagining, conception and production of visual and material elements designed to exist in specific spatial environments. Atmospheres or “scenes” are therefore “produced through the choice of objects, colours, sounds, etc.” (Böhme 1993, 123). Of course, objects produced by artists have a big impact in “atmospheres”. But other architectural elements (other than objects or materials), also participate, like the use of light and shade or the variation of spatial scales. In what concerns the two-dimensional universe, the existence of symbols, words or sentences (like political slogans) can also have a big impact on the creation of certain ambiances.

Reflecting on *the aestheticisation of the everyday life*, Lipovetsky and Serroy draw our attention to the fact that the aesthetic-emotional dimension became the core of competition between brands, and used for profit. This is what they call “capitalisme artiste” or “créatif transesthétique”, produced by the intermediation of the “design process” (Lipovetsky and Serroy 2013, 12).

The world of the *Theory of Art* or of *the work of art* – the one related to the museums and galleries – is “confined to a sphere separated from action and educated elites”, hiding the fact that “aesthetics represent a real social power” (Böhme 1993, 125). The hybrid and mixed world of “arts” (Adorno 1967), and also of “crafts” (William Morris 1877), hold the aesthetics of political critique and the aesthetics of usage of the everyday life. These kinds of aesthetics are present in ACS, just like the ones referred by the French art historian and critic Nicolas Bourriaud: the relational aesthetics of participation, interface, meeting, proximity, and the one of resistance to social formatting (Bourriaud 1998). But we can also find in ACS the aesthetics of transgression, subversion, protest, disorder, irregularity and chaos (seen as a kind of order, with its own rules) and of risk and excitement. Alternatively, the aesthetics of recuperation, sustainability and recycling, issued from the practices and techniques used on place, as we have already mentioned. ACS also reflect certain types of aesthetics according to different kinds of social origins – popular, bourgeois, vintage, or the one of a marginal and/or subversive “underground” world.

¹⁶ www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/aestheticization?q=aestheticization+.

According to Böhme, the “classical aesthetics” dealt only with a few atmospheres: the beautiful, the sublime and (the benjaminian) “aura”. But, the fact is that these concepts make no sense on their own, without their opposites, namely the ordinary and the ugly, or even the kitsch and the useful, for instance (accepted in the architectural production since the postmodernist period). The latter have a strong presence in the atmospheres of ACS, and do not necessarily exclude one another but can be combined. Furthermore, the common linguistic expressions reveal a much more complex knowledge of atmospheres than simply the ones suggested by The *Aesthetic Theory* of Adorno: “serene, melancholic, oppressive, uplifting, commanding, inviting, erotic, (...) serious, terrifying (...) the atmosphere of dread, of power, of the saint and the reprobate” (Böhme 1993, 114, 122, 123). Moreover, I would add the already mentioned ambiances of crisis and decay; of poetry, melancholy, but also hope.

The unspecific timeframe of the just mentioned aesthetic atmospheres can be completed by specific ones generated by the contemporary context – globalisation, postmodernism, multiculturalism – which is what Bourriaud proposes to do in his book *Radicant* (2009). What I propose to add, within the context of this research, is an analysis of *the aesthetics of the alternative cultural spaces* existing today in some European cities (characterised by a perceptive approach) and an analysis of the *aestheticisation* process that some of these spaces suffer:

- on the one hand, seen from a rather *negative* perspective, where “aesthetics” are seen as the privilege of a dominant ideological category (Vieira Jürgens 2016, 18), and “aestheticisation” is seen as a manipulation of certain neoliberalist ideologies¹⁷ and/or the impoverished aesthetic result of the process of normalisation imposed by the safety and controlling measures associated to the construction industry;
- on the other hand, seen from a neutral or rather positive perspective, where “aesthetics” are understood as a simple visual and spatial condition that helps to characterise a certain object or environment, and where “aestheticisation” is an ambiance’s result of a professional design work done by an architect, a designer or a decorator, or a “decoration” process that occurs along time, growing out of participative and communitarian approaches.

Aestheticisation can therefore be the result of a long term process or, alternatively, an almost immediate application of a projected design, as we will be able to see when applied to our case studies. The relevance of analysing these visual transformations and variations is centred in the way how such kinds of processes reveal larger cultural policies and urban planning tendencies, which may tend to become stricter or more tolerant. Aesthetics, and any evolution it may have, is a matter of politics, and should be discussed accordingly, since it concerns our closer spatial environment.

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¹⁷ See chapter 1.4 (p. 39).

2.3. Resistance and Compromise

Resistance

We have seen, when defining “alternative cultural spaces”, how the term “alternative” is ambiguous, sometimes contradictory and all-embracing in its meaning and implications. This double-edged definition, holding a *positive* and a *negative* character, constantly directs us to larger issues related with “resistance” and “compromise”. This is the reason why it is necessary to give shape to more precise definitions of these two concepts. Within this context, it is important to keep in mind the questions we asked before concerning the ACS conceived as spaces of *resistance* or, taking another option, if they are necessarily forced to make *compromises* with the market and/or the local authorities in order to survive (against destruction or eviction).

According to the *Oxford Dictionary*¹⁸ definition, “resistance” has a somehow negative meaning related to “the refusal to accept or comply with something” (e.g. resistance to change, progress, innovation...). It can sometimes be expressed or interpreted as a purely stubborn attitude of discordance or disagreement. However, it can also have a more aggressive meaning, linked to “the use of force or violence to oppose someone or something”. However, the dynamic nature of *resistance*, normally seeking a justice achievement, does not have necessarily to be linked to the use of violence or force. “Resistance movements” and actions can be expressed in multiple forms, and usually have a strong organisational background. Secret or exposed, they are politically engaged (e.g. “he went underground and joined the resistance”). A clear and classical example of a “resistance movement”, briefly mentioned in this thesis, is the one occurred in Slovenia (back then Yugoslavia) during the World War II, when Slovenian/Yugoslav Partisans opposed the Nazi occupation and siege of Ljubljana¹⁹.

Why do people “resist”? “Resistance” arises when people feel they have to change things, look for justice, and search for better conditions. It is related with social and political critique, and revolt. When pushed into an extreme due to the necessity of surviving, *resistance* can also become a kind of an instinct. Nonetheless, when analysed under the framework of this thesis, “resistance” embraces somehow the meaning of several words we have previously discussed, like “alternative”, “counter-culture”, “punkspace” or “re-architecture”. All of them, in one way or another, address a desire of resistance: to what is imposed, normalised, prescribed; to order, standardisation and formatting; to certain ways of living, doing and producing things; to the establishment, the repressive authorities, intolerant ideologies and violence; to labour models considered as “oppressive”, to an absurd economic system and the consumer society. Basically, “resistance” works as a tool of critique against social injustices, business, profit and speculation.

¹⁸ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/resistance>.

¹⁹ See Ljubljana’s chapter (6) for more information (p. 265).

Sometimes “resistance” turns into “revolution”, like it happened in Portugal in the 1970s (and in so many other countries worldwide in other moments of time), where the resistance against the existing dictatorship turned into the so-called Carnation Revolution²⁰. Other clear examples are the violent transition periods between different economic and political systems, like the one of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

“Resistance” usually proposes other ways of action, of doing things, other possible futures and ways of living, more original and fairer. It works as a tool that brings hope along, and invigorates new possibilities through the use of poetry and humour, in a defiant/rebellious and subversive attitude. It also tries to acquire a better understanding of the enemy or adversary in order to be able to play with or fight against it. It is grounded on a deep collaboration and cooperation between people, having recourse to information sources and to deep organisational work in order to be able to propose alternatives to what is identified as “wrong”.

Spatial Resistance

In what concerns forms of “spatial resistance”, we should mention that one that struggles against “the violence of cities” and “the violence of urbanisation” (Pedrazzini 2005; Pedrazzini, Vincent-Geslin, and Thorer 2014) under multiple forms: architectures and spatial practices that challenge “junkspaces”, mainstream, standardised, conventional, established, commercial and authoritarian designs and environments, for instance. A very affirmative example, and often referred to in this thesis, are squats, whose vindictive, demanding nature is born from a context of political struggle of protest, claims and searches for new forms of habitat and social and artistic interaction. By defending the “value of use” of the city and housing as places to meet and exchange, squats stand against a pure “value of exchange” of the city and housing (Lefebvre 2000, 370-92) (Pattaroni 2011, 45). Squat movements act along with local struggles against large-scale real estate projects and demolition schemes, and contribute to raise a bigger awareness on urban, social and artistic matters.

In this dissertation some words and concepts that have been mentioned address the subject of spatial resistance, such as “bottom-up” or “grassroots” approaches, “spaces of hope” (Harvey 2000), *Temporary Autonomous Zones* (Bey 1991), different kinds of spatial utopias, “punkspace” (Carmo, Pedrazzini, and Reitz 2015, 165) or “re-architecture”. As mentioned in the respective chapters of the dissertation, these architectures of resistance (and the people who do it) propose hope through transformation, are politically and socially engaged and defend meeting, exchange and enjoyment. They appeal to people to think, change, create, transform and appropriate space, instead of being simply consumers or contemplative spectators (“emancipated spectators”? (Rancière 2008)). By using a DIY ethics and *bricolage* methods based on rearrangements of fragments and available resources, architectures of resistance propose a “collage city” (Rowe and Koetter 1978) built through creative darning. They never build only for the sake of form, and tend to deal with the unpredictable and the spontaneous. Since the construction methods and

²⁰ See Lisbon’s chapter for more information about the Carnation Revolution.

materials are not industrially conceived or made, the spaces do not look the same as if they had been produced industrially. We should furthermore add that many of these *bricolages* happen without the consent of any authority.

Some architectures of resistance related to alternative kinds of cultural projects usually work with the most adapted spatial solutions to each situation, in what concerns design and materials. Many are actually based on a continuous work-in-progress, which allows a flexible practice based on change and transformation and susceptible to be applied at any stage of the production process. At last, the spatial praxis – which gathers theoretical critique and concrete action – is also a quite common practice under a milieu of spatial “resistance”.

Aesthetics of Resistance

Julia Ramirez Blanco asked what happens when *utopia* and *politics* work together, and how is that expressed through *art* and *space* (Ramirez Blanco 2014, 13-24). If we join the dimension of *resistance*, we have then an idea of what could mean the “aesthetics of resistance” of an alternative cultural space. Most ACS present site-specific interventions, “resisting” to the model of the white cube/black box that is most often adopted by mainstream art galleries, as we have already seen. Of course this kind of approaches is today no longer rebel and original as back in the 1970s. But we have seen how the “chaotic”, “not so clean” and “decaying” ambiances of the ACS’s spaces propose, anyway, some kind of an “aesthetics of resistance”: on the one hand, as an expressive and provocative attitude against established and renown institutions such as museums; on the other hand, as a consequence of the lack of economic means this kind of projects usually has to be forced to look for alternative ways of production that end up to be more sustainable and ecological. In both approaches there is a struggling action that becomes visible in the surrounding spatial support, expressed in a rough, irregular, disorganised and not uniform way.

Compromise

When *resistance* is affected, when the expectations become lower, then it means that somehow a *compromise* was reached. Sometimes resistance fails, because people are exhausted of fighting and decide to quit, or simply because the forces of the opposition take the upper hand. It can also happens that there is actually no other way out, no more ways to keep the struggle alive. Quite often *compromise* is also reached under rather *negative* conditions, through mere acceptance or easy agreements, revealing conformism. However, “compromise” is not necessarily what happens when “resistance” fails, and compromise is not always, or necessarily, a bad thing. “Compromise” does not imply that the ACS accept all the real estate interests’ or the “oppressive” authorities’ (municipality, police, institutions, EU) demands and rules, even if sometimes they do. But “compromise” is neither a synonym of “weakness” nor “submission”. Sometimes *compromise* allows precisely to continue the fight, and to improve chances through

dialogue, in view of finer solutions.

We have seen how Sandra Vieira Jürgens sees, inherent to the meaning of the word “alternative”, a position of dialogue and negotiation with the dominant conditions (Vieira Jürgens 2016, 185). The fact of presupposing a *dialogue* means that an effort is made to find *solutions*. Sometimes the results achieved after adopting those solutions are deceiving and disappointing, but sometimes they will make things clear, and allow the implementation of more mature projects. Going somehow in the same sense, the *Oxford Dictionary*²¹ defines the word “compromise” as “an agreement or settlement of a dispute that is reached by each side making concessions.”, and also “an intermediate state between conflicting alternatives reached by mutual concession” (e.g. “a compromise between the freedom of the individual and the need to ensure orderly government”). However, this same dictionary also explains that “compromise” can signify “the expedient acceptance of standards that are lower than is desirable” (e.g. “sexism should be tackled without compromise”). This addresses precisely examples that play with real estate and the markets’ logics to create some kind of business, for instance, or examples that, by becoming victims of a sudden huge success (in terms of popularisation) let go some of their former ideals of “resistance”.

Under the framework of this thesis, “compromise” concerns a few concepts that are explored in several chapters, some of which have previously been defined, such as: an hybrid between *junkspace* and *punkspace*, *alternative* (evidently), *aestheticisation*, *institutionalisation*, *instrumentalisation*, *gentrification*, *touristification* or *festivalisation*, for example. We can see how many of them are “processes” (those ending with the suffix *-ation*), which means they are the result of a negotiation, and we can remember, or we will still see, how some of these concepts have contours rather hard to define, standing in a kind of ambiguous position. If we give the example of *aestheticisation*, we realise it holds first a negative connotation (related to the creation of ambiances designed to appeal to consumption), and then a more positive one (related to the creation of super creative and original environments along time). But what is clear is that this process is necessarily the result of a *compromise*, a constant negotiation between the users of an ACS (in our case) and the established power, or the convergence of the multiple desires and tastes of the users themselves.

Also the postmodern architectural movement/style brings up the subject of *compromise*, as the architectural critic Robert Stern highlights, in the way it prefers incomplete geometries rather than a pure form²², or the way in which it mixes references and styles. Furthermore, all kinds of spatial intervention and practices that concern the reuse and the renovation of spaces necessarily imply compromising solutions, since they have to play with pre-existent situations. The ACS, as “postmodern” architectures and projects that reuse and renovate pre-existent spatial environments, and due to their cross-disciplinary character and the fact of welcoming multiple influences and different kinds of people, express well the *positive* side that a spatial *compromise* can have. We should question ourselves if the contemporary cultural scene of resistance

²¹ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/compromise>.

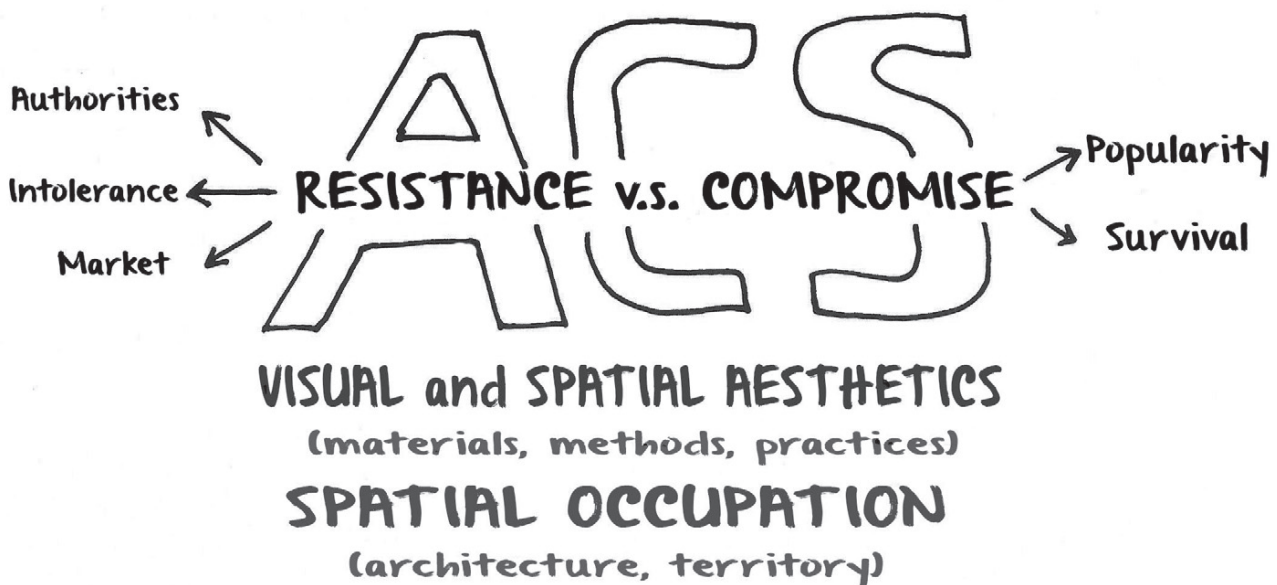
²² Robert Stern, “At the edge of post-modernism: some metaphors, paradigms and principles for architecture at the end of the modern movement”, p.275, quoted in (Figueira 2014, 121).

is actually so radical that rejects all kinds of *compromise*, or if what we call the “alternative cultural” scene isn’t rather build up on multiple agreements – with the local authorities, and also with other cultural kinds of projects, more institutional or mainstream. When Raffin refers that the aesthetic forms of the cultural actions can today range from “art for art” to “strong claiming political action”, from a “leisurely use of the aesthetics” to “poetic depiction of the daily life”, or still from “art as a way of producing economic values” to “political management tool” (Raffin 2007), he transmits the idea that these universes may be quite fuzzy. In addition, the fieldwork that has been made in this dissertation will confirm how multiple coexistent universes exist in such kinds of environments. Furthermore, when Elsa Vivant (2009) refers the fading of the borderline between the “in” and the “off” cultural offer, this is also a sign of a certain complicity and complementarity between radical, underground and institutional worlds.

*

2.4. Objectives and Hypotheses

The main objective of this research is to analyse the visual and spatial characteristics of the *Alternative Cultural Spaces* and understand to which extent they have the capacity of reflecting social and political issues. By studying the practices as well as the materials and methods used by these *Alternative Cultural Spaces*, and through the understanding of their logics of spatial occupation (in terms of architecture and relationship with the urban context), we aim to realise in which way *Alternative Cultural Spaces* may reveal approaches of spatial and aesthetical *resistance* (to authoritarian, intolerant or market-oriented people or principles), or may reflect *compromising* kinds of approaches (linked with survival strategies or excess of popularity).



Furthermore, on a secondary level, this research seeks to understand the wider context in which the ACS arise and vanish, and how these concrete contemporary examples relate to urban theories concerning the political role of architecture, particularly when committed to cultural matters.

In order to reach these objectives, the following hypotheses have been established:

H1) [On the Aesthetics of Resistance]

Alternative Cultural Spaces (ACS) have an active role of political resistance in the context of European cities today. The signs of this resistance are present in their visual and spatial aesthetics, which arise from specific kinds of practices and methods. These practices (DIY, bricolage, collage/ assemblage, hybrid, organic, communitarian, site-specific...) have been adopted by different counter-cultures, generally associated to social and artistic movements, inspiring visual and spatial approaches, and consequently the ambiances of contemporary ACS.

H2) [On Compromise and Aestheticisation]

Due to certain policies, ACS may be forced to make certain compromises in the course of their existence. They may be transformed and adapted according to the authorities' demands and rules, or falling under the influence of the logics of the market. They may even have been created under those marketing logics. In any of the three cases – even if clearly inspired by the spatial and visual aesthetics of resistance – their projects and ambiances may eventually become negatively compromised, which can result in aestheticised ACS.

H3) [On Spatial Resistance and Compromise]

Resistance and *compromise*, often simultaneously, are present in the way ACS occupy space while staying dependent on their own spatial and architectural characteristics as well as on their singular logics of spatial occupation within a territorial context (a city, a neighbourhood, or a street). Consequently, architecture and urban territories could serve as tools for spatial resistance by refusing the common compromise with formal for-profit growth (such as real estate development).

Prior to testing the research hypotheses, the methodological approach applied to this research is explained in the following chapter. Thereby several detailed field studies have been carried out in order to accomplish a thorough multifaceted analysis.

*

WANDERING THROUGH A FEW EUROPEAN CITIES

PART II

3. A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

*C'est pour moi une vieille
habitude de vouloir être
séduit par des villes*

Walter Benjamin, 1938

This research was developed in two different moments: a first one, prior to the research itself, which lasted from 2005 to 2011, essential to the definition of the fieldwork and the setting of the main research questions; a second one that officially started with my doctoral studies at the university, lasting from the end of 2011 until mid-2016, consisting in a deeper exploration of the fieldwork and in the construction of a theoretical framework.

My academic and professional background is in architecture. When I began my PhD, I have integrated the urban sociology laboratory (LASUR), which belongs to the Architecture Faculty of École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL). Sociology methods of analysis were then needed to continue my research, in combination with the architectural ones acquired on my master studies and professional experience.

My first instinct was to tackle directly the fieldwork and gather some first (or second) impressions in order to better understand my case studies, now under the context of my research, but still mostly in an empirical way. Having as departing point a few already known case studies (ACS), my approach was to head firstly to those places and to confirm whether it still made sense to study them. From there, I would follow the hints the city (and the people I got in contact with) propose, hoping this would lead me to the discovery of new examples of the present dynamics of the alternative cultural life of each city.

This is therefore, to a great extent, a qualitative research grounded on direct and participant observation of specific places, spaces, cities and social actors.

< “It is for me an old habit to desire being seduced by cities” (my translation). Letter written by Walter Benjamin to Adorno (27 March 1938), quoted by Jean Lacoste in “Voyager avec: Walter Benjamin. Les chemins du labyrinthe», Paris, La quinzaine littéraire-Louis Vuitton, 2005, p.21. Quoted in (Petitdemange 2005, 65).

Comparison

I knew what my object of study was, but I had no fixed number of case studies. The same process happened with the cities: I started by having three cities in mind (Lisbon, Ljubljana and Berlin) and initially intended to draw a parallel comparison between them. But I have soon realised this was impossible since my knowledge of the cities was not and would never be equivalent, neither at the time nor in the foreseeable future. My capacity of understanding the language and culture of the city of Lisbon was much bigger than in the other cities. In Lisbon, the city where I had grown up, I was an insider, I was part of the city. I had known well the codes, the costumes and its secrets for many years. On the contrary, in Ljubljana and Berlin, language was a big barrier. Ljubljana I knew it as much as someone who lives in a city for a period of a year can know it, and Berlin was actually a city I knew not that well, after all. In Geneva, even though I master the French language, the context was rather unknown to me at the time of the beginning of this research. On the other hand, the scale of the three cities and their economic situations were very different, making them hard to compare as a whole.

Considering this, I realised this could not be a simple comparative study, since the conditions and the previous knowledge of each city was not balanced. Also, the comparison between the case studies (ACS) seemed hard to manage if worked under a classical parallel type of comparison. For instance, in Ljubljana, ACS were concentrated on two or three main spots, while in Lisbon, a network of many small ACS was starting to be identified. Conversely, when first contacting with Geneva's reality, there seemed not to exist many examples of ACS. Hence, these differences and particularities are expressed in the structure of this thesis. For instance, when reading this dissertation, the reader will notice that a parallel analysis structure does not exist in its entirety:

- In the chapter on Lisbon, for instance, great attention is given to the urban development of the city, while in Geneva that aspect is not so much explored. This is related to the fact that the alternative cultural life of Lisbon is nowadays composed of a network thanks, in part, to the development of urban planning and urban policies which, seen through a historical perspective, are necessary to understand the contemporary spatial distribution of the ACS in the city;
- By contrast, in the chapter on Geneva, the major focus was given to the rise, life and death of the local squat movement (1970s-2000s), considered the main "culprit" for the evolution and the changes of this city concerning its alternative life and culture (Lisbon has never known a similar movement, in such form and expression). Since this movement has progressively been "asphyxiated", the spaces that resulted from it (the spaces for "emergent culture"¹) have become spatially fragmented – depending rather on the scarce availability of cheap dwellings than on a deliberate geographical preference. Therefore, the emphasis on Geneva's context has been put rather on the processes responsible for those transformations (economic growth, housing shortage and political repression);

¹ This is the expression used by the people of Geneva's alternative scene.

- The economic situation of Lisbon and Ljubljana contrasts sharply with Geneva's. This is the reason why the contemporary movements of protest and resistance are given great attention in the case of the first two cities, having in mind that these movements have intrinsically been linked with some of the ACS still existing today in those cities;
- In the chapter on Ljubljana, particular attention is given to the artistic and philosophical movements of resistance against the communist regime during the 1980s, a situation that finds no parallel in the other two cities, and which has largely contributed to the defining of the contemporary life and spaces of the alternative culture of this city.

The different spatial distribution and urban kinds of occupation were precisely two aspects that started to intrigue me, they were something I was curious to explore. Suddenly, the comparison seemed to be possible after all, if I admitted that this was not a comparison settled on exactly identical parameters of analysis, but rather built from the particular differences of each case. I realised there were in fact some common elements, which were the ACS themselves (understood as the object of study), despite their spatial and visual differences. But their particular differences could even be found within the same city. Some aspects of ACS were also common to the three cities (Lisbon, Ljubljana and Geneva), namely the fact that they were being used for cultural purposes, or that they were located in reused spaces, not meant for such purpose in their past life.

Furthermore, all ACS seemed to have some social or political engagement, in one way or another, i.e. they all addressed wider questions of urban resistance and/or compromise that are manifested by their visual and spatial choices and approaches. The capacity a particular case study has to reflect on subjects linked to issues concerning power and resistance in modern metropolises is actually an important aspect of the "Extended Case Method", a methodological approach developed by the sociologist Michael Burawoy (1998). Burawoy considers that there are constant exchanges between macro and particular universes, and that they constantly affect one another; therefore, objects are necessarily part of a specific context. These constant exchanges, between the object (ACS) and the context (the city, or the urban environment) are definitely present in my research.

My methodology makes use of some aspects of a particular kind of comparative approach discussed by the geographer Cynthia Ghorra-Gobin: it is meant to contribute to a better understanding of globalisation and its social, economic and cultural transformations through local examples/case studies, using a common framework (Ghorra-Gobin 1999). The common framework is, in the case of this research:

- The European urban context (3 cities in Europe);
- The timeframe of the analysis (starting from the end of the 1980s, with a particular focus on the last ten years, 2005-2015);
- The object of study (ACS) as a space meant for cultural purposes, existing in reused spaces.

Narrative and stories

This research is about particular spaces, projects, people, events and situations. These have been linked together with the help of schemes, which in turn have been used as a work-in-progress tool to write down a few stories. These stories, considered together, form a narrative that addresses a more global context – social, urban, political – complemented with a deep research on written data sources, statistics, historical literature and other documents. Using both an objective approach and a personal kind of approach, the narrative built in this work combines in that way different methods.

The “stories” – created with the help of the previously mentioned narrative – have, apart from the use of objective sources, been created based on personal experiences and paths travelled during the fieldwork, i.e., on the selected urban environments and their alternative cultural spaces. This “grounded theory” – which has its roots on the “ground”, built directly from the experience of the fieldwork² –, required the use of particular tools, particularly useful in a direct and participant observation approach, like photography or sketch and written notes in a diary, for instance. Also, several informal talks contributed to a better knowledge on the ground, as well as planned (and sometimes spontaneous) interviews. Furthermore, the technique of *la dérive* (i.e., wandering), explored by Guy Debord and the Situationists (Debord 1958), has been very inspiring, and was applied in this research particularly in the case of Lisbon.

According to Guy Debord, *dérive* is “a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances [that] involve playful-constructive behaviour and awareness of psychogeographical effects” through which people “let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there.” The technique proposes that “[t]he subject is invited to come alone to a certain place at a specified time [while being] freed from the bothersome obligations of the ordinary rendezvous since there is no one to wait for”. This way, the person observes the surroundings and is encouraged to start up conversations with passers-by. A *dérive* can last a few hours, a brief moment, or several days, and Debord highlights how the use of time may take “an unexpected turn” (Debord 1958). By following the instinct of the moment, determined by the surrounding spatial environment, in my own *dérives*, paths and directions have been chosen based on certain architectural elements, influenced by spontaneous encounters and people’s suggestions or even meteorological conditions, for instance. Debord also refers to some of these as conditioning elements, and addresses a few resulting actions of urban exploration that can be compared to the *dérive*, like “slipping by night into houses undergoing demolition, hitchhiking nonstop and without destination (...), wandering in subterranean catacombs forbidden to the public”. Some “trespassing”, particularly of abandoned and ruined houses, has been done under the framework of this research, in places that are not my object of study (since all ACS are actually currently used and lived places), but that addresses indirectly the topic of *punkspace* or squatting, for instance.

² We must, nonetheless, note that this “grounded theory” has been mostly applied to the city of Lisbon, and also partially in Ljubljana – two cities where my research started with a direct contact with the object of study, In Geneva, however, my stories have been built over other existing stories, written by other people (mostly those made by the other elements of my FNS research team).

The irregular topography and the urban fabric of Lisbon increase the labyrinthine character of this city, providing excellent conditions for the urban *dérive*. These characteristics facilitate a constant change of directions and provoke contrasting spatial scales, as well as strong variations of light and shade. The fact that most façades of the historical centre, or other kinds of surfaces, belong to different epochs, results furthermore in very a stimulating spatial and urban environment to accomplish such wandering practice.

Apart from this influence of situationist methods, the way a few authors (sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers...) approached their fieldworks, and the way they have worked the collected information under a text form, have also been a source of inspiration for the construction of my stories. A parallel was found, according to my own point of view, between my own experience on the field and that of other authors, in the way they have experienced and described their encounters, difficulties, and problem-solving attitude³.

A very important author is necessarily Walter Benjamin, and his texts about Naples, Paris, and so many other cities (Benjamin 1927; Benjamin 1929a; Benjamin 1932; Benjamin 1935; Benjamin et Lacis 1925). The way he describes and comments on the environments and the changes that occur in a given city is very careful, poetic and subtle. The book written (and drawn!) by the Portuguese anthropologist Manuel João Ramos about his travels to Ethiopia (2010) has been very inspiring, encouraging me to explore the relationship between text and image, most specifically, hand-drawing (or sketching). The diaries of the famous Slovenian architect Jože Plečnik, fictioned by the Dutch architect and researcher Klaske Havik (2013), about Plečnik's daily walks in the city, have also urged me to pay more careful attention to detail in observation along the paths of everyday life⁴.

The sociological research made by William Foote Whyte (1943), about the American *Street Corner Society* and its gangs in the 1940s, was useful to learn a few ruses about the participant observation on the field, even if a large part of my research work has been mostly based on direct participation. In any case, the way Foote Whyte shared his stories based on his personal experiences on the ground, as well as his misadventures, contributed to the understanding that one might learn a lot from mistakes committed on site, as well as to realise that it is precisely from apparently insignificant observed situations or apparently insignificant data that significant meanings may arise, and also of course relevant material for a good work of research.

The personal stories based on the fieldwork experiences of the sociologist Yves Pedrazzini (1994), presented at the start of his PhD thesis about the Caracas' barrios of Venezuela, are also very inspiring and constitute poetic descriptions about particular and complex realities. This example shows us – just like Foot Whyte's – how the experience of participant observation may result in an unseparable part of the researcher's own life.

³ For instance, asking a few delicate questions like « who did this ? » in a certain milieu – a more activist, underground or illegal one – made me experience distrust and uncomfortable situations sometimes. Also, when approaching certain people and explaining to them my interest for an « alternative » culture, or « alternative places », resulted once or twice in verbal aggressions.

⁴ See Chapter 6.2 and 6.3.

In which sense has my observation during the fieldwork been participant? Or, was my research based only on direct observation? ACS are spaces I have been visiting and using for a while. My participation in several events, workshops, debates, parties, concerts, etc, is definitely not the one someone who is deeply engaged with a particular space would have; I did not take part on the internal decisions or management of any ACS, but I was an assiduous user of most of the places. Therefore, my position stands somewhere between that of an insider and that of an outsider, between direct and participant observation. This position has necessarily advantages and disadvantages for the research work: on the one hand, I do not entirely master the whole complex reality of any particular ACS but, on the other hand, I have a certain distance that might allow me to see certain things probably more clearly, from a wider perspective of analysis, considering my knowledge of similar situations located in other places, in other cities.

Typologies & Mapping

After the first visit to the field, under the framework of this research project, quite extensive lists of typologies have been created, that identified and classified all the visited ACS, which were structured from left to right from the most “underground/subversive” examples (in ways of production and political terms) to the most “institutional/mainstream” ones⁵. This means that a comparative approach is implicit.

Another form of categorisation used as a method in this work was the mapping of ACS, considered necessary in order to understand the spatial urban distribution of the ACS networks. An Excel document has been used to create a database, indicating the location and the address(es) of the ACS, as well as the main activities and the cultural programme of each project. This data was transferred to a SIG software, and an interactive map started being produced. This allowed for a better understanding of movements that existed in the city in the previous few years, and of the networks of the alternative culture.

More “artisanal” maps have also been produced, such as psychogeographical maps, inspired by those produced by the Situationists (Debord 1958), which consist of the mapping of environments created by a *dérive* on the field that changes according to humor, directions, feelings inspired or affected by the stimuli and encounters on the way. Debord precises that if “the lessons drawn from *dérives* enable us to draw up the first surveys of the psychogeographical articulations of a modern city”, then this allows us to discover “unities of ambiance”, their main components and spatial localisation, their principal axes of passage, exits and defences. Letting oneself go, following the natural rhythm of the city, is one of the ways to better know the unveiled cultural life of a city. This method requires therefore a playful and instructive behaviour, favouring spontaneity, using the labyrinth as a matrix of a path to explore (instead of taking a previously determined path).

⁵ These lists are not presented here because they are very extensive, and because they were rather useful for me as a work-in-progress tool used in the initial phase of the research than they could be as an informative elements to the reader.

Used mainly in the city of Lisbon, the psychogeographical maps produced under the framework of this research are the result of a collage of the paths that have been taken, this new arrangement creating therefore a new map of the city organised according to a particular perspective of the alternative cultural scene of Lisbon.

Other examples of mapping approaches are those composed by the overlapping of multiple layers. For example, overlapping existing maps produced by cultural events (such as festivals, for instance) allows for the establishment of links between larger cultural policies (developed by municipalities or private initiatives) and the spaces of the alternative culture (my case studies), contributing to validate their importance in the context of the city at a given moment. These events, once they are mapped, also contribute to give a greater visibility to some of these spaces, which are usually (or at least very often) out of the mainstream circuits.

We must, nevertheless, be aware that mapping can be a risky method, for two reasons:

- the difficulty of establishing a stable final result, since there are constant spatial movements, address changes and mutations at the core of each specific project (many ACS are fragile, ephemeral and fragmented experiences, as we will see);
- once mapped, tagged and cased in a certain category of 'objects', ACS risk to be affected in some way, most likely in a negative one (destroyed by their success/popularisation, due to exposition and consequent mediatisation, or instead 'crystallised' in a selected single image defined by itself, preventing the future potentially flexible character of the project, thus reducing its complexity).

Relating to the first point, the Portuguese architect, curator and researcher Inês Moreira sees in the action of mapping the new spatial practices – while they happen – the same risks the cartographer takes when mapping new territories (Moreira 2010, 22). It is an action which necessarily diverges from the process of historical research, which aims at offering a clear picture of a stabilized reality and at producing absolute classifications. This process should also be distinguished from journalism, since it does not seek sensationalism or information only based on immediacy. It necessarily considers history in order to frame the object of study and to be able to attribute a political and social sense to the findings.

Regarding the second point, we must be aware that scientists contribute to transform the unknown into the known but, just like the American writer Rebecca Solnit notices about her memories, for instance, "whenever I write one down, I give it away: it ceases to have the shadowy life of memory and becomes fixed in letters; it ceases to be mine." (Solnit 2006, 38). The same happens when mapping, or when drawing paths and labyrinths of ACS: they stop being mysterious, blurry realities, to become assumed, and consequently accessible to more people. This makes us question the role of scholars/researchers as agents of gentrification, for instance, as, by their presence and interest on the field and consequent information sharing of a certain reality, they might influence the expectations and interactions of the public that will visit a given space in the future, consequently affecting the existent environment of the milieu.

Characterisation of atmospheres, Architectural Phenomenology, Visual Sociology and Situationism

Space, as we have mentioned, has a central place in this research. According to Juhani Pallasmaa, architecture is seen as a set of partial experiences rather than a totality: “The passage of time, light, shadow and transparency; colour phenomena, texture, material and detail all participate in the complex experience of architecture. (...) [the] tactile sensations of textured stone surfaces and polished wooden pews, the experience of light changing with movement, the smell and resonant sound of space, the bodily relations of scale and proportion (...) [is] one complex experience (...)” (Pallasmaa 1994, 41, 42).

Architecture shapes our visual perception of space. This way, when analysing the ACS, other dimensions (light, smell, sound, food or music) have also been considered, depending on each specific case. These spaces, due to the kind of activities they offer, are rich in emotional and sensorial experiences of this sort; they are “territories” invested in a sensible way, generators of sensations and of curiosity. The visual sociologist Fabio La Rocca, for instance, refers to the metropolis as a set of existential places and sensible atmospheres where collective practices happen, giving shape and substance to the urban imaginary. Atmospheres and practices observed through a sensitive approach allow us to capture certain social and architectural dimensions of cities and places (La Rocca 2015). ACS, as social and emotive places, occur in specific spatial conditions. This research does not give much focus to those architectural aspects more directly linked to the practical and functional point of view of this discipline (e.g. buildings understood simply as shelters or structures); it explores, rather, those architectural aspects which directly involve spatial ambiances, informal ways of doing things in daily-life practices.

The description of lived experiences through personal sensations (touching, smelling, seeing...) contributes to feel more accurately the material environment that surrounds us, rich of important details that, when captured by our perceptions, emotions and memory, might contribute to characterise ACS and their contexts. According to La Rocca (2015), this kind of approaches can be understood as “methodological situationism” (contrasting with an *a priori* thought), a methodology that implies “situationner” oneself according to the times in which we are living, observe and describe the *Zeitgeist* of the city and its spaces, “capturing the air we breathe” (La Rocca 2013, 2015).

Looking through personal experiences evokes another kind of writing style (Sennett 1994, 80). Furthermore, the contemporary complex and fragmented reality, constantly under the pressure of the ephemeral, the fugitive, the clash of images, information, entertainment and the chaos of wars and environmental disasters, boosts a deconstructivist kind of writing, made of fragments, citations, hints... This “*flâneuse* writing” (Robin 2005) – which floats and wanders in the necessary directions, creating links between fragments, grasps heterogeneous thus giving them a common (or a wider) sense – is able to “decipher the city as a text”, and is precisely the one used by Walter Benjamin, according to the historian and sociologist Régine Robin. Benjamin understands the city as a text, or rather as an open book where one can walk through, like we can see in the texts about the several cities he has been to – Naples, Moscow, Paris, Marseille, Berlin (Benjamin et

Lacis 1925; Benjamin 1927; 1929a; 1929b; 1932; 1935). In fact, according to the philosopher Bruno Tackels, Benjamin develops a “phenomenology of *flânerie*” in his book of *Arcades Project* already in the 1920-30s, forty years before the Situationists (Tackels 2009, 297-98).

Another reference mentioned by Robin is the critic and critical and theoretician Siegfried Kracauer, whose *flâneuse* experience in the Berlin of the 1920s/30s – made through a photographic lens – proved helpful to capture and to think the contemporary mood of his city. This chronicler of a “culture of the fugitive”, the ephemeral, the “new tempo of the city and its rhythm”, takes note of the metamorphoses of the urban shape, its aesthetic forms and the cultural spaces (Robin 2005, 45) in a city threatened by Nazism, on its way to collapse.

A similar approach is used in this research, when focused on the city of Lisbon, almost one century later: the grasping of the essence of a city bustling with art and creativity, which is, at the same time, affected by a massive touristic trend and ravaged by the poverty triggered by the austerity measures derived from the global economic crisis. This work tries to capture and reveal the Lisbon’s sort of destructive poetry and catastrophic beauty and, along the same lines, a parallel can be drawn with a contemporary cinematographic work – “Arabian Nights” (2015)⁶ directed by the Portuguese film-maker Miguel Gomes – which reflects on the contemporary Portuguese situation, showing Portugal as a victim of the austerity measures in a lyric, playful, political and melancholic way. “Poétique de la résistance” is the title given by the newspaper *Courrier* to the article dedicated to this *oeuvre* (Loewer 2015)⁷. It is precisely these “poetics of resistance” that the narratives about Lisbon, Ljubljana and Geneva try to capture, and the case is the same for a few other cities that have been somehow inspiring or important for the work developed in this dissertation, expressed as visual and spatial *aesthetics of resistance* and/or *recycling*. But, because resistance, beauty or poetry necessarily have to face and contrast with less noble realities, that reality has been also tried to be captured within this work, explored through a critical perspective.

Assemblage. The relationship between image and text

The relationship between image and text is a very important aspect of the present work, which is based on this inseparable dialogue, as the reader will be able to confirm. The analysis of visual and spatial elements is one of the most important features of this thesis, since I believe they work as signs that are able to express and reveal important issues related to urban matters of resistance and/or compromise. Visual and spatial elements are therefore political, and able to contribute to a larger theory of the *aesthetics of the alternative culture* and of the *aestheticisation of the counter-culture*. In this sense, the simultaneous presence of both elements – text and image – works as a whole and as a unity.

6 “As mil e uma noites” (pt), “Les mille et une nuits” (fr, ch).

7 www.lecourrier.ch/132557/poetique_de_la_resistance

The image, a fundamental element of this research work, does not work as a simple illustration of text, being its role actually active, for it contributes as an argument – just like words. By using different supports and techniques, images are used in several ways. Photography, sketches, maps, posters, videos and newspapers are edited and recomposed, creating schemes and photomontages, handmade or with the help of computer software such as Photoshop, Prezi⁸ or PowerPoint. They are used as part of the thinking process, as a tool to help reflection, and do not necessarily pretend to represent a finished and “proper” work, or final conclusions.

Two major methodological influences, developed by architects, who have deeply explored these kinds of methods that work with image analysis aiming at a theoretical discussion are *The image of the City*, by Kevin Lynch (1960), and *Learning from Las Vegas*, by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour (1972). Both present photographs, plans and schemes that allow them to analyse the urban fabric and environment of American cities. Their interest is focused on elements that capture or define the people’s perception and their experience of the urban environment. In what concerns particularly the kind of analysis present in the second book, the attention is given to vernacular architectures that result from commercial urbanisms. Their decorative and symbolic functions are analysed, a great importance being given to the aesthetics of very hybrid architectural approaches (Venturi, Brown, and Izenour 1972).

Together with other collected data – e.g. fleeting impressions, spontaneous meetings, informal talks, interviews or information collected from the media – a dialogue is created, inspired on the *collage* or *assemblage* methods of the Situationists⁹, punks (cutouts and fanzine style) and even the alternative artistic movement of Ljubljana of the 1980s¹⁰.

Assemblage is also present in this work in the way architecture and social sciences (but also artistic!) methods are used and combined, the fruit of, respectively:

- my professional and academic background, and doctoral studies at the doctoral programme of the Faculty of Architecture (architecture);
- my integration in the laboratory of urban sociology (LaSUR) and in the team work that has been developed with my colleagues of the FNS project (who are sociologists and philosophers);
- my artistic formation and personal interests (more precisely, hand-drawing and cartoons).

However, one of the most relevant things to keep in mind is that this is mostly a qualitative research based on direct and participant observation.

⁸ Prezi is an online software that allows, in a very simple way, to create sketches out of images and work them as we would work with traditional handnotes – but instead of doing it on a paper, one does it on a virtual support. It is very useful, during the work-in-progress process, to present and discuss ideas, and edit them simultaneously (it is possible to share it online between several people, who can edit it at the same time).

⁹ Even though they were working with existing images, and recomposing them, rather than creating/producing their own.

¹⁰ See Ljubljana’s *Philosophical and Artistic Alternative Movements* (Chapter 6.1.1.).

A few more clarifications about the use of image

Image production

Discussing on a more technical level of image production, one must be aware that different methods are used to achieve different results. For example, to take a picture with a camera or to draw a certain environment or object by hand leads to different perceptions and understandings of a same object: the time used to make an almost instantaneous click on a camera is very different from the time required to sit down, observe and draw. This last process is longer (it can take hours) but allows us to get a closer view, and therefore a deeper knowledge of our object of study and of its several layers (spatial, sociological, etc).

Hand-drawing

One of the particularities of spending time drawing our environment is the capacity this action has in capturing the attention of people who pass by – those who get curious about our drawing and come to talk with us. They often ask to be drawn. These are people who, for the most part, have some free time and enjoy talking, and often also people who live or spend a lot of their time in the surrounding area – i.e., *insiders*, whose knowledge and stories about those places can actually be very valuable to a better understanding of the unwritten reality of a certain place. Drawing was something I practiced during my visits to the fieldwork, an experience I could test, and which contributed precisely to a closer approach and to a more attentive look at the multiple dimensions of certain places and spaces.

One style of drawing that particularly inspired my sketches and the layout of my document was the cartoon, another was the style of drawings produced under the “urban sketchers” meetings. The relationship between cartoon and the people and the city, present in the book *Archi & BD: la ville dessinée* (Thévenot and al. 2010) has also been very inspiring.

Drawing is a form of communication with oneself and with others. For the architect, it is also a working tool, among many others. A way to learn, understand, communicate, transform and design (...). Each gesture – just like drawing - is endowed with history, unconscious memory and an infinite and anonymous knowledge¹¹.

Álvaro Siza, 1987

Drawing is a struggle between nature and the artist, and the better the artist understands nature's intentions, the easier will be his triumph over her. For him no question arises of copying; it is a matter of interpreting in a more simple and luminous language.¹²

Charles Baudelaire, 1846

11 My translation of: “O desenho é uma forma de comunicação consigo próprio e com os outros. Para o arquiteto, é também instrumento de trabalho, entre tantos outros. Um modo de aprender, compreender, comunicar, transformar; uma forma do projeto.” (...) “Cada gesto – assim também é o gesto do desenho – é dotado de história, de memória inconsciente, de um saber anónimo e infinito.”)

12 Translated by P.E. Charvet: “Le dessin est une lutte entre la nature et l’artiste, où l’artiste triomphera d’autant plus facilement qu’il comprendra mieux les intentions de la nature. Il ne s’agit pas pour lui de copier, mais d’interpréter dans une langue plus simple et plus lumineuse”.

To draw is first of all to look with one's eyes, to observe, to discover. To draw is learning how to see¹³.

Le Corbusier, 1960

Photography

An interesting detail about the process of taking pictures is the difference in attitude and reaction between institutional, mainstream, underground or illegal places. For instance, when using a photographic camera in institutional environments, people are usually quite receptive (except when it is specifically forbidden, like in some museums, where a special authorisation is needed to take pictures), since it is considered as a normal act of curiosity or a “tourist” kind of habit.

On the contrary, in underground environments, the process is more delicate. One must first gain the trust of the *habitués* of the place, or just use a friend or a particular object as an excuse in order to be able to make a picture without provoking a wrong impression or creating a conflict.

The difference between the use of a compact or a reflex camera concerns, on the one hand, matters of discretion (a smaller camera does not draw so much attention), but on the other hand, using a big camera gives someone more professional credibility. These choices will depend on the game one chooses to play (a simple visitor, user or a researcher), and should be adapted to each particular case.

Image editing

By colouring a drawing in a specific way, choosing a particular point of view when taking a picture, disposing images in a certain way to create a composition of images, or even drawing arrows on a map to schematise certain urban dynamics, for instance, it is possible to highlight and focus on certain aspects that may become useful in some way to our research, and to create a narrative. For instance: the decision to colour a sketch, and not necessarily with the real colours observed on site, might be considered as manipulation, or a non-scientific action, for it may be understood as an interpretation that distorts reality. However, even the classical scientific drawing is only just a representation, therefore necessarily a particular interpretation. Even photography expresses a personal view of something, a particular perspective of things, defined by the chosen frame, light, etc.

The use of particular software, like Photoshop or Indesign, had an important role in this research work, mostly in what concerns the image composition.

Image analysis

In order to communicate results under a classical scientific format (the dissertation), the use of image and text is crucial. Examples of data that have been analysed in this research using visual supports are: materials, textures, colours, artistic objects (2D, 3D), furniture, ambiances, maps and plans. These elements are the result of certain processes, they express particular ways of

¹³ My translation of: “Dessiner, c’est d’abord regarder, avec ses yeux, observer, découvrir. Dessiner, c’est apprendre à voir”.

doing things, and, therefore, leave us some signs. They communicate. The works of the American philosopher Charles Peirce (1839-1914) and of the French semiotician Roland Barthes (1970) on semiotics translate precisely the capacity that objects/images have as elements capable of communicating information. We will see, throughout this dissertation, how the use of *images* as *signs* has been important to interpret *processes* and concealed *meanings*.

Interviews

From the end of 2011 up to 2015, I have contacted about one hundred people within the framework of this research. Most of them were semi-structured interviews I conducted, a part of which together with some of my team work colleagues Mischa Piraud, Luca Pattaroni and Éléonore Pigalle. More than 30 interviews and informal talks have been conducted in Lisbon, an almost similar number in Ljubljana, and I participated in about 10 in Geneva (see ANNEX I). In the case of Lisbon, the round tables about the “spaces contributing to build the city of Lisbon”, directly related with the ACS of the city, should also be considered as valuable sources of information. Those round tables were promoted by the atelier Artéria, and named as *The Ground Sessions*, to which many people responsible for such projects have been invited¹⁴.

The interviewed people (creators and headers of the projects, architects, visual artists, dancers, philosophers, sociologists, researchers, cultural managers, gallerists, musicians, professors, activists, social assistants, designers, hackers, curators, historians, barmen, or simply random users or self-appointed informants) were directly or indirectly connected with the ACS or the cultural life of each city and are mentioned in this dissertation at the relevant moment. Those who have kindly accepted to participate under the context of my research work are not treated anonymously in the text, since the views and approaches taken by certain people necessarily correspond to certain not secret spaces, which are open to the public, being consequently accessible, the same happening with their projects. In some cases, informants actively participated with enthusiastic support, but in other cases they showed a fundamental scepticism about my work. These distinctions are not necessarily related to the milieu – institutional or underground – but rather to the availability of each person, or to the previously established contacts. The statements of people I got in contact with through an informal talk, for instance, are not directly mentioned or quoted in the text, but some of the information provided along those talks has been used to built the “story” of each case study (see ANNEX I).

This way, different ways of obtaining information through the contacts with people have therefore been used:

- the semi-structured interview, previously prepared, recorded and complemented with some hand-notes:
- the “free interview”, based on a few main topics of discussion, sometimes recorded, sometimes hand-noted;

¹⁴ 8+2 sessions, made under the context of the Trienal of Architecture of Lisbon, in 2013 (see ANNEX I).

- the commented-pictures interview (which consists of preparing a few images, and discussing them based on visual support);
- the informal conversation, not recorded, but out of which people know what my research consists of;
- the informal talk, where questions have been asked just like any curious user of a certain place would do it (in this case, a few notes have been written after leaving the place).

Transcriptions have been made with the help of several students and friends, being therefore analysed in detail. A few of the main questions that were asked to the interlocutors are shown at the end of this work, along with the correspondent table that identifies the people that have been contacted.

Random data sources

A large part of the collected data comes from the analysis of official documents (reports, laws, statistics, etc), books, essays, dissertations and scientific articles, but also newspaper and magazine articles, social networks and other media.

ACS own supports for diffusing information – such as their websites, blogs or Facebook profiles, or their own publications (fanzines, books, etc.) – have been very helpful as primary sources of information. Magazine and newspaper articles mentioning the appearance of new ACS or referring to related issues, changes and transformations have also been considered, such as those referring to relevant urban transformations occurring in the cities. This allowed me to be up to date when located on a distant place (in Lausanne, for instance).

At last, I should refer to the word-of-mouth, one of the most valuable sources to stay in the loop of the less conventional and mediated news of the cities.

Major Challenges

There were two major challenges for my research, in methodological terms:

- the fact of dealing with present-time case studies – a very changing and often temporary reality, constantly transforming and mutating, therefore quite hard to grasp – contrarily to research work on historical case studies, whose history is more fixed/stable, and often been studied by someone else already (where an official narrative is often already reached, and verifiable as possible, given the information available to obtain from the past);
- the constant need to deal with different languages – English, Portuguese, French and Slovenian (apart from a few others, often present in my daily life at an international university). The frequent switch from one to another has been a real challenge, both in the everyday oral expression, and while reading the most varied literature sources.

4. A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELDWORK

In this dissertation three cities are analysed, belonging to three countries which have something in common – they all have tried, in some way, or were lucky enough to avoid destruction inside their own territories:

- Switzerland: a country located at the heart of Europe, but which is known for having, since a long time, an independent and neutral position that allowed the country to avoid the two world wars taking place around its borders;
- Portugal: not only its territory was not the stage of any of the two world wars (it did not even participate in the second one) but the colonial war (1960-70s) took place overseas; the 25 April revolution of 1974 was pacific, not violent, which was symbolised by its adoption of the carnation (a flower); the anti-crisis demonstrations of the 2010s have been mainly non-violent;
- Slovenia: although being part of a very troubled recent (and not so recent) history, it managed to escape the huge destructive Balkan wars in only 10 days.

However, two of the analysed cities – Lisbon and Ljubljana – have been victims of very destructive natural catastrophes not so far away, situations which have largely contributed to wide scale reformulations of their urban fabrics. Furthermore, these very cities have totalitarian recent historical pasts (fascism and communism, respectively). Geneva, instead, had no natural destructive catastrophe, and is part of a country known as a mainstay of democracy.

On the other side, both Geneva and Ljubljana have had a troubled history over the last centuries, having belonged to different countries or even empires. Ljubljana, particularly, has always been under the rule of foreign cultural ties, as we will see. The political borders of both countries, to which these cities belong, are quite recent, especially when compared to the Portuguese ones (the oldest of Europe). However, Portugal has been a colonial empire for many years, and this has enormously contributed to the wide of cultures we can today find in Lisbon, these hybrid roots having contributed to one of the most original characteristics of this city's cultural atmosphere.

Due to other reasons, Geneva is also a city of a wide mix of cultures. Being a centre of international organisations, research institutions, multinational companies and banks, to which is mostly due its growing economic prosperity, it has attracted many foreigners in the last decades, this way originating a very distinct melting pot of people, where “immigrants” and “ex-pats” inhabit distinct worlds in one same territory. Ljubljana's cultural mixture, even if this city has hosted so many foreign different cultures, is much less international than the other two cities, its immigration today being mostly composed of people coming from other Balkan countries.

The cultural artistic scene of each city is therefore influenced by these historic, social and economic conditions. But it is also influenced by the topography (in particular Lisbon, which is very irregular) and the urban planning development, this being clear in the way ACS are distributed through the city of Lisbon, for example, creating a network of several very different examples of spaces and projects. Instead, the spatial occupation and distribution of ACS in Ljubljana is rather compact, concentrated on two major spots.

European periphery (Atlantic coast) PT: nation-state (1 language, 1 official religion) oldest boarders in Europe

40 years of fascism (end in 1974) economic crisis & austerity emigration

mass tourism & accelerated gentrification (Baixa, Cais do Sodré, Intendente)

"law of the rents" (lei das rendas), degraded buildings, street art

counter-culture offer: ACS 2008 boom
 moving and mutating + network logics
 counter-cultural aesthetics: soft, poetic, nostalgic
 alternative/creative aesthetics: colorful, expressive

LISBOA

portuguese immigration
 some cultural ties
 (via french culture)
 "cosy"
 Bons-vivants
 Squat
 repression

Categories of Analysis:

Context
 Alternative Culture

UE
 capitals
 past: authoritarian regimes
 economic crisis
 austerity measures
 gentrification, touristification

ACS
 2005-2015

European cities
 Space - Aesthetics
 Resistance & Compromise

GENÈVE

neutral country
 CH: cantons (multiple languages, religions)
 political polemics
 stable economy
 immigration: ex-pats + multicultural immigrants' boom
 housing shortage problem
 counter-cultural aesthetics: progressively normalized
 counter-culture offer:
 once very strong, now tamed
 alternative movement / emergent culture

LJUBLJANA

small little country, former socialist regime (ex-Yugoslavia)
 multiple dialects & ethnic groups
 immigration: from ex-Yugoslavia

counter-cultural aesthetics:
 very creative, exuberant
 counter-cultural offer:
 very strong (comparing with institutional offer)

2 big clusters (Metelkova & Rog)
 grassroots & Hypsters

Central Europe (Alps)

counter-cultural aesthetics:
 expressive, rough, raw, colourful...

Eastern Europe
 (Alps & Mediterranean)

However, the distribution and transformation of these ACS in the urban environment depend also on the history of the social and artistic movements, and on the tolerance and/or repression of the official cultural and political policies adopted in each case. For instance, the squat movement in Geneva has been a determining factor on the composition of the spatial distribution and occupation of the alternative cultural life of this city. The same applies to Ljubljana, a city where the strong importance of the counter-culture must be highlighted when compared to the city's institutional offer (which is quite scarce for a capital city). Both cities – Geneva and Ljubljana – have suffered a substantial housing shortage problem, this leading both to the origin and extinction of the squat movements (depending on each case¹). Of course squatting is also intrinsically linked with specific local protests against megalomaniac urban projects that envisage the destruction of entire neighbourhoods or buildings, as it is linked with concrete political actions of critique to the abandonment of the urban built environment. Though the latter reason is valid for the cases of Geneva and Ljubljana, it is also valid for Lisbon at some extent, even if in a much more discreet way.

In a different way than the cases of Geneva and Ljubljana, the downtown of Lisbon was being left empty and abandoned in the last decades. As a matter of fact, a huge real estate speculation turned on decaying buildings whose large numbers resulted from the rental freezing derived from an ancient law regulating the housing market in force for much more time than advisable. The history of squatting has been quite different in this city (and country), its major movements having occurred during the Carnation Revolution, more directly linked with housing than with cultural/artistic purposes.

The artistic movements that resulted from processes of social and political changes have greatly influenced the spatial and visual aesthetics of the contemporary spaces of alternative culture. The murals of the revolution in Lisbon, on the one hand, and the punk and NSK² movements in Ljubljana, on the other hand, have contributed in some way to the specific (and so different) ACS aesthetics present in each city (in a general way). More recent street art interventions, on the other side, are elements that are generally present in contemporary ACS. Even if these elements are part of wider (more global) contexts, they have particularities that are specific to each city.

We could say, in a very brief way, that Lisbon's spatial and visual aesthetics of the counter-culture is normally softer than in the other two cities. In Ljubljana, the impact of these aesthetics is present in a more expressive, affirmative or even aggressive way; in Geneva, on its turn, the counter-cultural aesthetics is being progressively suffocated by the strong normalisation process that this city has been suffering the last years, and that is responsible for neutralising any kind of deviant expression (or action). On the other side, processes of aestheticisation have been instead quite strong in what concerns the spaces of the alternative cultural scene of Lisbon, many ACS having already been born, as we will see, under the "creative cities" ideology.

¹ See Geneva Chapter 7.2. and Ljubljana Chapter 6.2. and 6.3. for more details on this topic.

² *Neue Slowenische Kunst* (see p. 274).

The case-studies analysed in this dissertation focus more or less on the last 30 years, this varying with the city. Lisbon's analysis, in particular, is centred on the last ten years (2005-2015), but its alternative cultural background goes back to 1974.

Each chapter is organised differently, but all start with a general reference to the urban, political and economic context. The second part of each chapter is dedicated to the mapping (geographic and historical) of the ACS in the city. At last, a few cases studies are analysed.

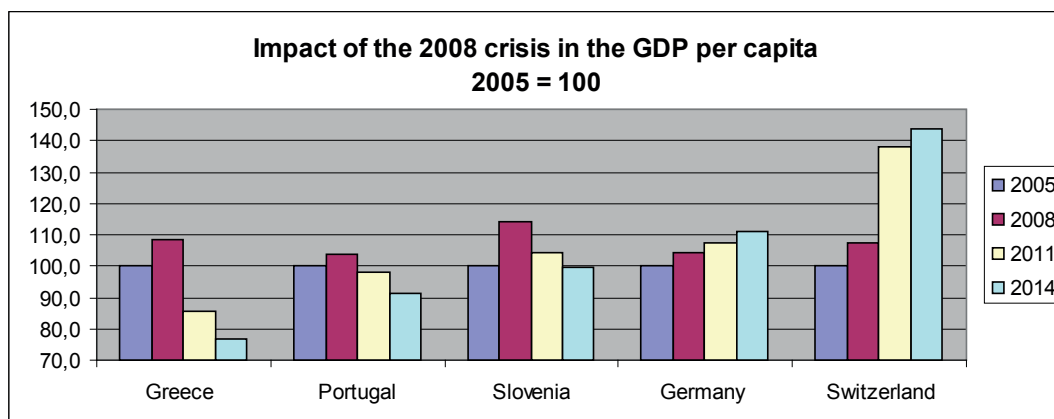
Before proceeding to the individual chapters, the contemporary European economic and political context will be addressed, by mentioning a few statistical comparative data about GDP and unemployment rates. This data will then be linked to the 2010s social movements and protests.

Contemporary general economic European context

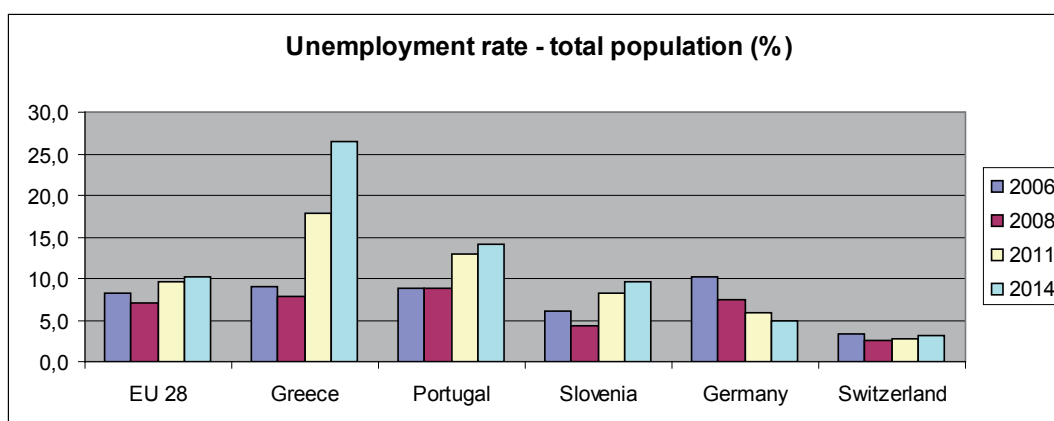
Lisbon and Ljubljana are the capital cities of Portugal and Slovenia and Geneva is an important city in Switzerland. These countries have had different behaviours in the economic field in recent years and one may expect that cities situated in their territories have followed similar steps in the same domain. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (at 2015 prices) in Slovenia amounted to € 17,958 in 2014 while it was € 20,590 on the year the crisis began, in 2008, the corresponding figures for Portugal being € 16,120 and € 18,260. This evolution shows a negative reaction, as expected, to the crisis, the amounts mentioned revealing production losses of respectively 12.8% and 11.7%. It is a development that contrasts a lot with that observed in Switzerland³, where equivalent figures show a progress of 34.1%, the values of GDP per capita being in 2014 € 65,052 and in 2008 € 48,512. These values compare with those for Germany, respectively € 36,033 and € 33,949 (+6.1%), and those for Greece: € 16,297 and € 23,125 (-29.5%). The figures for Slovenia and Portugal reflect a much greater impact of the crisis in their economies (not to speak of Greece, where, as it is well known, the impact has been even wider). In order to have a more detailed understanding of the development of the economic fundamentals in the countries above, a comparison of the corresponding evolution (period 2005-2014) is made in the following chart⁴:

³ Data for Switzerland should be considered with special care for reasons that seem to derive from differences between the exchange rates in force in 2008 (about EUR 1 = CHF 1,50) and in 2014 (about EUR 1 = CHF 1,215). In fact, figures given by the Swiss *Office fédéral de la statistique* show a much smaller difference in GDP (current prices) between 2008 (CHF 597.4 billions) and 2014 (CHF 642.3 billions), i.e. +7,5%.

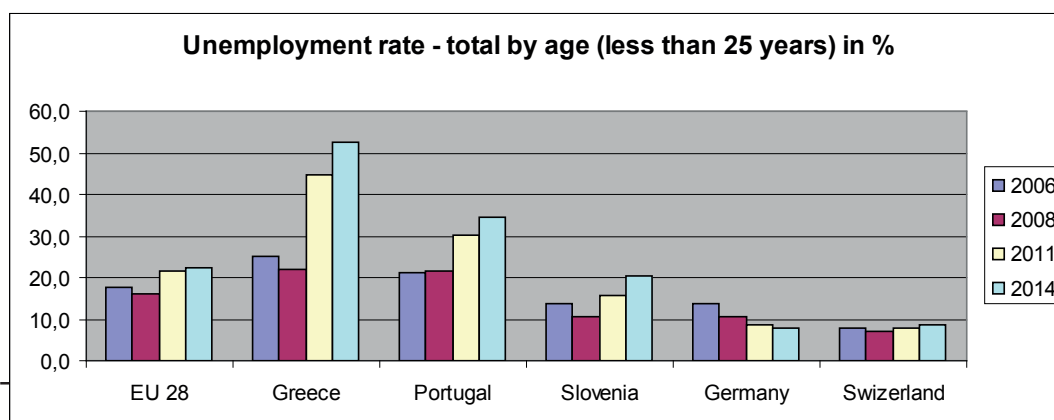
⁴ These figures have been calculated with data (populations, GDP and price indexes) taken at http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=POP_FIVE_HIST (populations), and at Eurostat (price index and GDP); accessed in March 2016.



Such an evolution in these countries could not but influence negatively the employment in Portugal and Slovenia (and also of course in Greece) where the unemployment rates rose sharply: from 8.8% and 4.4% in 2008, respectively, to 14.1% and 9.7% in 2014. In Switzerland, by contrast, the rise of the same indicator, in the same years, was only from 2.6% to 3.2%. The following chart gives a better understanding of this evolution by showing it over a larger period and making a comparison with the corresponding data for the European Union, Greece and Germany.



In particular, the unemployment rate of the young population (less than 25 years) has proved even more unfavourable. In Portugal, these rates were 21.6% and 34.7% (2008 and 2014) while in Slovenia were 10.4% and 20.2%. In Switzerland, the corresponding figures were much lower: 7.0% and 8.6%. As it was done for the total population, a comparison chart is shown below⁵.



⁵ Data available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics, www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/fr/index/themen/03/03/blank/key/registrierte_arbeitslose/entwicklung.html; www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/fr/index/themen/03/03/blank/data/02.html [accessed in March 2016].

But what is behind these figures? What particular context has been responsible for such economic and social transformations and such differences in each country, in the contemporary European reality?

Protests and Uprisings

Since the beginning of 2011, a new wave of rebellions and global movements started, first in North Africa, with the so-called “Arab Spring” (Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Syrian, Yemen and Libya), and afterwards it spread to other parts of the globe (Europe, United States, Chile, Hong Kong...). All this happened in a wave of global solidarity provoked by a contagion effect, supported by a real time connection based on the internet space (Soeiro, Estanque, and Costa 2013, 32). In Europe, some of the most relevant protests happened in Iceland (with the *wikiconstitution*⁶), Spain (the *Indignados* and the occupy movement of squares), Greece (and its violent clashes at Syntagma Square, and all over the city), but also in Portugal (mass demonstrations and new movements as *Precários Inflexíveis*, *Geração à Rasca*, or QSLT⁷) and Slovenia (Occupy movement⁸).

If in the past the working class was heading most of the protest movements, and in the 1960s the middle class partially took up this role, today the mass demonstrations have been mostly called through social networks by unknown youngsters, independent of traditional political parties or trade unions. Protesters today are heterogeneous and fragmented crowds of “middle class” and “working class”, according to the Portuguese sociologist and deputy José Soeiro (Soeiro, Estanque, and Costa 2013, 33).

According to the Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells, three main elements explain the emergence of the revolt (that first occurred in Tunisia): the existence of an unemployed graduate youth, a very strong cyberactivism culture and a high rate of diffusion of Internet use (Castells 2012, 28-29)⁹. Social networks and mobile phones, for instance, had a major role in the mobilisation processes. Of course the squares have been the main spatial stage of the global protests (Tahir, Tiananmen, Syntagma, Taksim), proving once more the importance of public space and of the city centre as an important symbol of power. However, ACS had also somehow a quite important role during this period, as we will see, working concretely as meeting spaces for demonstrations and resistance organisational purposes, and as debate platforms to discuss the ongoing situation.

But what led people to protest on the streets? Which were the causes of the people’s indignation? On the one side, the growing precariousness of the working conditions¹⁰, the unemployment, the social inequalities and the poverty linked to the economic global crisis (and the consequently

⁶ Iceland’s most relevant aspect was the *wikiconstitution*. Since January 2009, Iceland witnessed a process of popular mobilization against the recovery of debts of private banks, resulting in an institutional change in governmental power, changing the state. This revolution was “silenced” (Soeiro, Estanque, and Costa 2013, 32).

⁷ See p.124.

⁸ See p. 283.

⁹ In Soeiro, Estanque, and Costa (2013, 31).

¹⁰ Resulting from, namely: the process of globalisation, decentralisation, flexibilisation, the decline of Fordism, decentralised production, greater specialisation, technological innovation, multiplication of contractual forms and teamwork (Soeiro, Estanque, and Costa 2013, 34), resulting in the need for a constant adaptation based on a short-term horizon.

imposed austerity measures). On the other side, the widespread distrust of political institutions (accused of corruption and self-interest) and the demand for real democracy and social justice (rejecting authoritarian regimes, censorship, police brutality and the interests of financial elites).

The main characteristics of the contemporary uprisings have therefore been multiple. In the first place, the use of a “hybrid public space” (Castells 2012), the action having occurred in online social networks, but also through the physical occupation of public space. In the second place, the horizontal communication, which avoids leadership and traditional forms of organisation. In the third place, the fluidity, the spontaneity, the rapidity and the volatility of the mobilisations. Finally, the participation of qualified young people, connected to the university system (Soeiro, Estanque, and Costa 2013, 33; Harvey 2012, 119).

*

These introductory data helps to frame a part of the most recent context of the ACS analysed in this dissertation. But a detailed monography of each city will now be presented, followed by the analysis of the selected case-studies.

*

5. LISBON

A Restless Porous Network



Quiosque da Estrela, Lisboa

5.1. General Context

The origin of Lisbon dates back to pre-Roman times, possibly to the Phoenician period, in which some believe the name that this city bore in first place appeared: Olisipo, deriving from “Allis Ubbo” and meaning “safe haven”. Another legend says that “Olisipo” would have been the city founded by Ulysses in one of the steps of his Odyssey. Leaving behind the legend, it is known that the Romans settled on the banks of the Tagus in the second century B.C. (archaeological remains exist in the area corresponding to the current Baixa, and around the Castle Hill). Later on, in 714 A.D., the city is conquered and occupied by the Moors of North Africa. The Christian rule comes in 1147 when the first king of Portugal, with the help of the Crusaders in their way to the Middle East, takes over Lisbon¹.

Then the city population increased rapidly, especially in the Age of Discovery, amounting to about 120,000 inhabitants in the end of the XVI century. Population growth slowed afterwards but reached anyway about 190 thousand in 1755, the year of the great earthquake². With this cataclysm, the Napoleonic invasions and the Liberal Wars, the population growth process was necessarily affected³. But from 1840 and until 1960, growth is resumed, reaching a total of 802 thousand inhabitants⁴. A trend towards a continuous loss of population within the geographic limits of the municipality (760 thousand in 1970, which is temporarily reversed in the mid-70 with the massive migration of people from the former colonies) starts then and since 1991 the population sharply declines, reaching 548 thousand in 2011 (data from INE: Instituto Nacional de Estatística - Statistics Portugal). These figures result from a sharp drop in the birth rate and the progressive transfer of population (mainly young) to the neighbouring municipalities of the capital⁵. In addition, however, other factors contributed to the population decrease in the city centre, particularly the sharp deterioration of the buildings and the lack of apartments for rent at affordable prices.

Hereafter, a brief history of the urban and architectural evolution of Lisbon will be presented, through which these data can be better understood.

1 At that time the city area, within the walls, would be 15 hectares but, including the urban area outside the walls, of about 30 hectares. Its population would be between 10 and 15 thousand inhabitants. (C. Guardado da Silva (2012), 2-3 and 7. However, in Oliveira Marques (2003), 17, only 5000 inhabitants are referred).

2 Teresa Rodrigues (2008), 7 and Raul Proença (1924), 188-189.

3 About 155 thousand in 1840. But the sources are not categorical about the amounts for this period. For example, according to Teresa Rodrigues (2008), 7-8, the population of Lisbon in 1755 would be about 191 thousand inhabitants (and the number of dead due to the earthquake 21 thousand) while Tomás dos Anjos (2013) indicates a number of deaths from 12 to 15 thousand. He states nevertheless that modern studies indicate that in a city with 275 thousand inhabitants had died from 70 to 90,000 people.

4 The values given for the dates that go to the early twentieth century vary according to the authors. See, for instances, Oliveira Marques (2003), 17.

5 The administrative boundaries of the municipality of Lisbon were essentially defined in the nineteenth century, the period from which it makes sense to talk about “cidade-centro” (the municipality of Lisbon) and neighbouring administrative areas (the so-called “concelhos limítrofes” – surrounding municipalities – the most populous of them hosting the satellite cities of Loures, Amadora, Almada, Cascais, Oeiras, Cacém, Odivelas and, somehow distanced, Setúbal and Vila Franca de Xira). Most of these satellite cities have developed initially as dormitory towns of the “cidade-centro”, when the concentration in the latter of the secondary sector occurred and, in recent times, the same happened with the tertiary sector. Furthermore, according to Oliveira Marques, “it is not possible to understand the development of the economic hub that was the large city without the existence of the riverside area: in the north bank, from Cascais ... to Vila Franca, and, in the south bank, from Almada to Alcochete and Benavente” See Oliveira Marques (2003), 15 and 26.

5.1.1. Brief history of Urban Planning and Architecture

Lisbon grew up through a radial development having as geographical centre the neighbourhoods of Baixa (the downtown) and the Castle, spreading through several main axes, firstly along the Tagus River, and later towards North (see img 37), as we will see.



Img 37 - Map of Lisbon city. (source: CML)

The urban sociologist Vítor Matias Ferreira (Matias Ferreira 2004, 281-98; Matias Ferreira 2013) defines four main phases of the urban planning of the city of Lisbon, since the earthquake that occurred in the 18th century:

- Second half of 18th century: the post-earthquake period and the Marquês de Pombal plan;
- Second half of 19th century: development towards North and the “New Avenues”;
- First half of 20th century: the public works of Estado Novo;
- Second half of 20th century: the metropolitan area of Lisbon.

The post-earthquake period and the Marquês de Pombal plan

The tremendous earthquake of 1755, along with the tsunami and the widespread fire that followed, destroyed most of Lisbon, particularly the area that today corresponds to the central downtown neighbourhoods (Baixa). The city's quick reconstruction was the first concern of king D. José's powerful Prime Minister, better known as Marquês de Pombal. A new orthogonal urban plan was designed, following strict and hygienist rules, based on Pombal's Enlightenment ideas. The plan was proposed by the architect and engineer Manuel da Maia, designed by Eugénio dos Santos (França 1997, 91-204; Santos 2005, 52, 83) and built according to strict technical details and norms that paid particular attention to safety matters, specifically those concerning seisms and fire prevention⁶. The completion of the building process lasted more than a hundred years after the earthquake. Following the Baixa Pombalina's large-scale urban design, a long "Public Promenade" (*Passeio Público*) was created⁷, a small bourgeois luxury that became the meeting place of the Lisbon's high society (Albuquerque 1994, 132). That creation was also the first gesture of the city's extension towards North.

Development towards North and the "New Avenues"

In the second half of 19th century, a new and active Public Works policy starts throughout the country, headed by the Minister Fontes Pereira de Melo. Railways, roads, bridges and viaducts are its most prevalent expression. In Lisbon several railway stations were built, like Santa Apolónia, Rossio and Cais do Sodré, linking the city to the North (North Line) and to the satellite towns of Cascais (Cascais Line) and Sintra (Sintra Line) (Fernandes 1994, 174). On the one hand, the resulting railways made easier the access to distant places, but on the other hand, together with the great infrastructure works of the Lisbon's Harbour all along the river front, these railways blocked the relationship between the city and the river since then, restricting or even preventing the access of the city's inhabitants to the water. Around the 1900s, several markets, exhibition pavilions, garages, department stores⁸, lifts⁹ and funiculars¹⁰ were built.

At the time of the First Republic (proclaimed in 1910) the city inherits from the previous regime a "General Plan for Improvements" (*Plano Geral de Melhoramentos*) approved in 1904 by the engineer Frederico Ressano Garcia (1847-1911). The proposed model, designed in a Haussmannian style, structures the urban mesh under clear and straight axes (Sousa Lobo 1994, 251), giving place to the so-called "New Avenues" (*Avenidas Novas*)¹¹, where beautiful buildings

⁶ In order to better resist the earthquakes, a *gaiola* (birdcage) wooden structure was adopted, allowing a greater flexibility and therefore, a greater resistance. Another of Pombal's architectural particularity was the extension of the side wall dividing two buildings', that was higher than the roofs and built with the intention of avoiding the flames propagation from one building to another, in case of fire (Albuquerque 1994).

⁷ Built in 1764, a project by Reinaldo Manuel. The *Passeio Público* area gave place to Avenida da Liberdade later on, being transferred to the actual Parque Eduardo VII.

⁸ E.g. *Armazéns Grandella*, in Chiado, a project of the French architect George Demay.

⁹ E.g. *Elevador de Santa Justa*, connecting Baixa to Largo do Carmo, a project of the engineer Raoul Mesnier du Ponsard, 1901.

¹⁰ E.g. *Ascensor da Bica, Glória or Lavra*.

¹¹ The big new avenues connected the roundabout of Marquês de Pombal to Praça do Saldanha, which in turn is

(designed by architects like Ventura Terra, Norte Júnior, Ernesto Korrodi, Pardal Monteiro, Cassiano Branco, among others) can or could be found. Along with the avenues, great mobility infrastructures, boulevards and residential neighbourhoods were built.

The public works of Estado Novo

In the first half of the 20th century, particularly during the 1930s and 1940s, Lisbon assumed the role of capital of the Colonial Empire, under the nationalist ideology of *Estado Novo* (this is the title that the dictatorial regime that ruled Portugal between 1933 and 1974 gave to itself). In this period, other large infrastructures were built, like the airport, the first highway and the vast park of Monsanto. Duarte Pacheco, Salazar's powerful minister of the public works and the city mayor, initiated a merciless process of land expropriation in order to accomplish his public works, transforming private land into municipal owned land¹². In 1938, the urban planner Étienne de Gröer is hired by the municipality to coordinate the "General Plan of Urbanisation and Expansion of Lisbon", finished in 1948¹³. It was a dynamic expansion plan, which became nevertheless rigid, once it was approved. Considered to be the first land use plan of Lisbon¹⁴, it settled the foundations for municipal intervention, in a period where, in an integrated perspective, town-planning and construction activities were very intense, adopting unifunctional zonings and establishing a connected road system, composed of a mesh of circulars and radials (Sousa Lobo 1994, 253).

The vast town-planning operation framed the construction of *Instituto Superior Técnico* (Engineering School) and of *Instituto Nacional de Estatística* (National Institute for Statistics)¹⁵, and some residential areas, such as the neighbourhoods of Alvalade¹⁶ and Restelo, designed by the architect and urban planner João Faria da Costa. In 1940, the world exposition "O Mundo Português" ("The Portuguese World") took place in the area of Belém, the event contributing to the redesign of this area and to give Monastery of Jerónimos and Torre de Belém the status of "national monuments". By the same time, the São Jorge castle was "rediscovered", and from the existing ruins was erected another "monument", which became a historical symbol of the city of Lisbon¹⁷.

linked to Campo Grande through Avenida da República, on the one hand; on the other hand, Avenida Almirante Reis connects Martim Moniz to Praça do Areeiro, and further on to the Airport.

¹² Pacheco managed to expropriate land as 'rural' (being aware that this land would be used later on for building purposes; this way, the compensations for landowners were not too high (Matias Ferreira 2013). Pacheco managed to expropriate about 1/3 of the area of the municipality (Barreiros 2013, 21).

¹³ www.cm-lisboa.pt/viver/urbanismo/planeamento-urbano/plano-diretor-municipal/enquadramento-do-pdm (accessed on 16.03.2016).

¹⁴ According to the architect Ana Tostões (Barreiros 2013, 21).

¹⁵ Both being projects of the architect Porfírio Pardal Monteiro and completed in 1936/7.

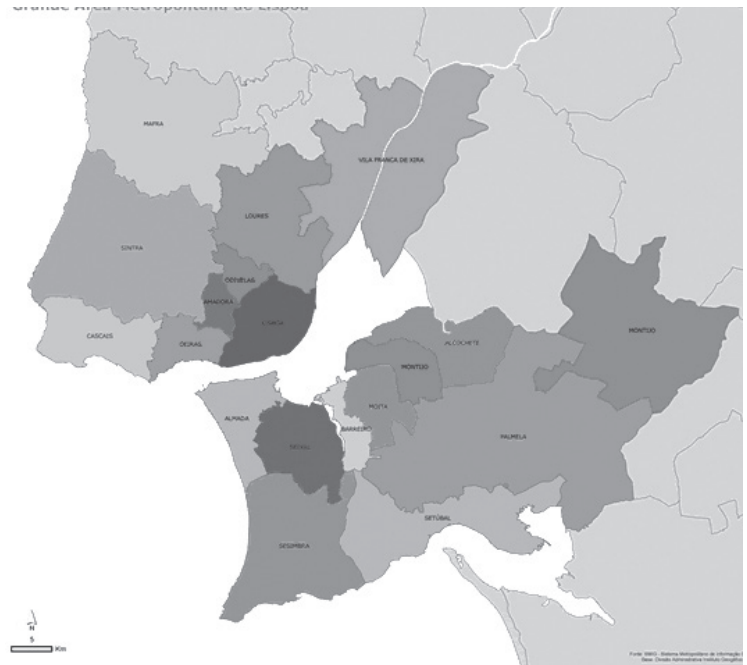
¹⁶ A plan for the city's expansion towards the site of Alvalade – comprising an area of 230 ha and anticipating a population of 45.000 inhabitants – was studied by the architect and urban planner João Faria da Costa. Dated from 1946, this plan, of Modernist influence, precedes the 1948 "Lisbon land use plan" (Sousa Lobo 1994).

¹⁷ The castle walls and battlements were restored in Violet-le-Duc's sense, this meaning that the castle's architecture renovation works were in part invented, and most of all magnified in order to make it look more glorious and worthy of respect.

The Metropolitan Area of Lisbon

Between 1960 and 1980 a very large expansion of Lisbon's metropolitan area occurred (img 38). The revision of De Groer's land use plan¹⁸ (1959) included a bridge over the Tagus River (opened in 1966), linking Lisboa and Almada, passing over the Alcântara area, and the creation of several circular and radial main roads in the city. Also during this period, the first subway lines were created (1960) (Toussaint 1994a, 310). The residential neighbourhood, Olivais Norte was built, having been considered to be the first to have followed the urban principles defined by the Chart of Athens (1933) in Portugal. Olivais Sul also, and later on Chelas, integrated some of those principles, having been built on the still available vast land municipalised in the sequence of the initiative of Duarte Pacheco (Barreiros 2013, 22; Toussaint 1994a, 310-11).

The increasing industrialisation¹⁹, taking place mostly after the end of World War II, gave origin to a huge rural exodus towards the cities and the coast line. It was a time when the country, from a mostly agrarian economy became more and more industrialised but not in a sufficient way to provide employments for those who wanted to leave their traditional occupations. The desire, first to escape poverty and, after 1961, to avoid the colonial wars led to a growing emigration towards the European countries (France, mostly), where much more dynamic economies were developing. The rural exodus towards the area of Lisbon was nevertheless enough to lead to the emergence of huge slums, an illegal construction that developed in an uncontrolled way. The tertiary sector of the economy also developed in this period, mainly in the more central axes of the city, having as a consequence, in particular, that most of the nicest cafés, restaurants and traditional shops started to be replaced by banks, and residential apartments by offices. So, the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon (AML) started to grow, giving place to new peripheral areas along the Cascais and Sintra railway lines, but also along the roads and the railway line to the North (Odivelas and Loures), and towards the Southern river bank (Almada, Barreiro and Seixal). In 1960, the Lisbon municipality reached a demographic peak with 802,230 inhabitants while the larger AML reached a figure of 1,505,982. In the following decades, the population of the Lisbon municipality, with the exception recorded in 1981, went progressively down²⁰ (1970 – 760,150; 1981 – 807,937; 1991 – 663,394; 2001 – 564,657; 2011 – 547,733) while the population of the larger AML increased markedly (1970 – 1,822,154; 1981 – 2,482,276; 1991 – 2,520,708; 2001 –



Img 38. Map of the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon (AML).
(source: http://regioes.blogspot.ch/2009_07_01_archive.html)

¹⁸ Review by Guimarães Lobato, 1959 (www.cm-lisboa.pt/viver/urbanismo/planeamento-urbano/plano-diretor-municipal/enquadramento-do-pdm).

¹⁹ Between 1952 and 1956 the average annual growth of the industrial sector was 5.8%, while in the period 1956-73 was 8.6%. With regard to the tertiary sector, the average annual growth rate was 5.7% in 1952-55, 4.9% in 1955-64 and 7.2% in 1964-73 (Lains 1994, 936).

²⁰ Data from INE (*Instituto Nacional de Estatística*).

2,661,850; 2011 – 2,821,876).

Another phenomenon that occurred at the end of the 1960s was the development of a first wave of immigration coming from Cape Verde as a result of a lack of manpower in the areas of public works and construction. This was also due to the rising wages that followed the growing scarcity of manpower that resulted from the increasing migration of rural youngsters to European countries. It also reinforced the trend, at least initially, to the multiplication of slums²¹.

In 1967, coordinated by the French urban planner Meyer-Heine, a new land use plan was created for the city, which was, nevertheless, only published in 1977²². This plan included Lisbon's Metropolitan Area, showing the new consciousness of the role of the city as the centre of an urban agglomeration. The most innovative aspect of this plan, according to the architect Michel Toussaint (1994, p. 314), may have been the juridical delimitation of historical areas (and not just the classification of monuments, as De Groer did) aiming at their physical and juridical protection, following the principles set a few years before (1962) in France by the so-called *Loi de Malraux*²³. The defined areas included the city centre, the area of Belém and some rural agglomerations that were in the meantime absorbed by the city (Toussaint 1994a, 314). However, during this period, the housing rental market almost disappeared²⁴ and the real estate transactions increased exponentially, exacerbating the trend to lead people to move out of the Lisbon's municipality delimited area. Furthermore, what Matias Ferreira calls "urban renovation"²⁵, began to take place when many buildings were indiscriminately destroyed in order to rebuild new ones, hosting new functions (Matias Ferreira 2013). These new functions – like offices and banks – are mostly included in the tertiary sector (good examples can be found in Avenida da República, where almost all villas – mostly designed in Art Nouveau or Art Deco styles – and iconic theatres and cinemas – e.g. *Monumental* – were destroyed and replaced by rather characterless buildings (img 39).

*

We have just seen the four main phases of the urban planning of the city of Lisbon since the earthquake until 1970s, defined according to Matias Ferreira. Specific relevant subjects, that allow to better understand the current research work, will now be addressed. Those subjects concern, namely:

- a particular architectural experience that occurred under the revolutionary context (SAAL);
- the legal frame of the housing rental market in Portugal and, specifically, its consequences on the built legacy of Lisbon;
- the urban planning tendencies, directives and policies of the last decades, of which I consider in particular those adopted since the arrival of the global economic crisis.

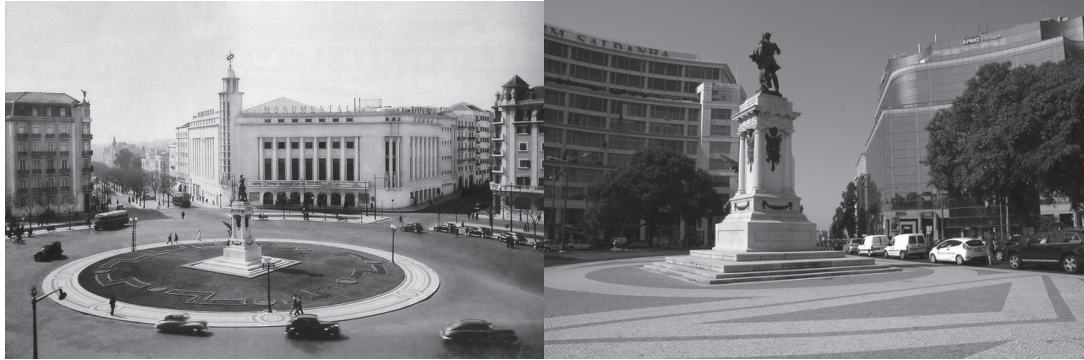
²¹ (Batalha 2008, 30–33).

²² *Plano Geral de Urbanização de Lisboa* - PGUCL (Plano de Meyer-Heine, 1967), published in 1977 by "Portaria n.º 274/77, de 19 de maio" (<http://www.cm-lisboa.pt/viver/urbanismo/planeamento-urbano/plano-diretor-municipal/enquadramento-do-pdm>, accessed on 16.03.2016).

²³ *Loi de Malraux* (1962).

²⁴ See more details about what provoked this situation in "Urban Rental Law", p. 116.

²⁵ A distinct concept from "urban rehabilitation" (see Chapter 1.3.).



Img 39. Square Marechal Saldanha, where we can see the cinema Monumental and other buildings, before and after the urban renovation.

(pictures found on the following websites, respectively: www.pinterest.com/pin/96686723223878088/;
www.guiadacidade.pt/pt/poi-monumento-da-praca-do-duque-de-saldanha-24520).

SAAL (1974-1976)

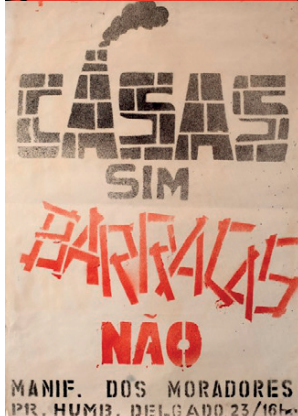
According to Michel Toussaint, during the second half of the 1970s, legal construction almost stopped and clandestine construction progressed, out of control. When the 1974 revolution occurred, Lisbon was going through deep changes. Born out of the revolution of 25 April – aiming at eradicating the slums, looking at solving the country’s housing shortage (that was provoking squatting movements all over the country - img 40) and having the will to give better living conditions to the marginal and poor – the provisory government created a program named SAAL (*Serviço Ambulatório de Apoio Local*, Service for Local Mobile Support), developed by the architect and secretary of state Nuno Portas. Having lasted two years, this program deployed technical teams in the terrain (known as *brigadas*, whose function was to mediate the dialogue between the population and the political institutions, and to offer technical support) and reinvented the practice of architecture across the country in different ways. This social housing process – having been influenced by some self-help Southern-American examples – developed solutions that included the involvement of local residents, promoting their direct participation and empowerment through collective processes of design, construction and management (img 41). Cooperatives or dweller associations were created that received a non-refundable subsidy from the government, the municipalities making then available the necessary land. “Simultaneously utopian and pragmatic, SAAL demonstrates the challenges and opportunities of a process that was mandated from the top down while intended to be developed and addressed from the bottom up”²⁶. SAAL developed some 170 projects involving more than forty thousand families²⁷ (Bandeirinha 2007; Mota 2015; Toussaint 1994a, 318-19).

²⁶ www.cca.qc.ca/en/exhibitions/2562-the-saal-process (accessed on 17.03.2016).

²⁷ The Lisbon SAAL neighbourhoods are Quinta do Bacalhau (project directed by Manuel Vicente), Quinta das Fonsecaas (by Raúl Hestnes Ferreira), Curraleira (by José António Paradela and Luís Gravata Filipe), and Quinta da Bela Flor (by Artur Rosa).



Img 40. (a, b, c): SAAL's posters claiming "the right to housing", where it is possible to see the colours and the aesthetics of MRPP (Movimento Revolucionário do Partido do Proletariado), one of the Maoist Political Parties of the time.



While in the south of Portugal (Algarve) SAAL's operations used self-help construction, in Oporto the brigades rejected this approach. For their part, in Lisbon the dwellers' associations considered the approach a "form of double exploitation (...) after a long day at work, filling the pockets of the capitalists" (Mota 2015). And, while in Algarve and Oporto self-help initiative of spatial transformation of the dwellings continued nevertheless over time, signs of appropriation and vernacularisation being visible today²⁸, in Lisbon the houses did not undergo regular maintenance and preservation works, due to the insufficient "symbolic membership fees" that the dwellers payed to the resident's associations to conduct those works. Furthermore, the residents do own their flats today, but not the land, which still belongs to the municipality, this way an ambiguous situation having been created (Mota 2015).

Although most SAAL projects were never brought to completion, mostly due to political conflict, the process itself generated, nevertheless, a wide debate on models of urban planning participation, and incited architects to re-examine their own social and political role.

1980s

In 1981, the Lisbon municipality counted almost 808,000 inhabitants and its Metropolitan Area almost 2.3 million. The city regained then some population, after the decrease in the 1960s. This fact was due, in part, to the arrival of many people (some estimates point to about 500 thousand) coming from the ex-colonies, mostly refugees of the civil wars that had erupted there (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea...). Consequently, the city (or rather the metropolitan area), attracting many of the refugees, became somehow an "African metropolis", the flux having been reinforced by the continuation of the immigration coming mainly from the Cape Verde Islands (Toussaint 1994b, 349). This immigration proceeded soon after the entry of Portugal in 1986 in the European Economic

²⁸ In Oporto the architect Álvaro Siza "designed schemes that suggested (...) possibilities for incremental growth and change over time" (Mota 2015).

< Img 41. Up: "Houses Yes, Slums No" - Poster announcing the protests against the dismantling of SAAL in 1976.

Source: Archive of Centro de Documentação 25 de Abril (Collection A. Alves Costa, University of Coimbra (source: <http://volumeproject.org/saal-sweat-and-tears/>, accessed on 17.03.2016).

< Down: Demonstration in Porto, 17 May 1975.

Source: Archive of Centro de Documentação 25 de Abril (Collection A. Alves Costa, University of Coimbra (source: <http://volumeproject.org/saal-sweat-and-tears/>, accessed on 17.03.2016).

Community (today European Union), these being years of economic development²⁹ resulting from the combination of the arrival of the European Funds with the favourable conjuncture of the world economy. New buildings rose, some reflecting the contemporary postmodernist aesthetics (e.g. *Amoreiras* Complex, designed by the architect Tomás Taveira, 1980/87) in “an Architecture of mirrored and colourful forms” (Toussaint 1994b, 351). Several municipal markets were built or renovated (e.g. Alcântara, Santos and Sapadores) and some museums were created (e.g. National Museum of *Azulejo*) or restored (e.g. National Museum of Ancient Art). Also massive large-scale buildings were built, like *Caixa Geral de Depósitos* (the state’s bank, 1985/9) and *Centro Cultural de Belém* (Belém Cultural Centre, 1988/1993), both conceived as mega-architectures³⁰. Also, during this period, the area of Chelas was transformed by the municipality into a kind of storage area for poor families (Toussaint 1994b, 353).

In 1988 there was a big fire in Chiado – the cultural heart of the city, a meeting point for intellectuals and artists – and seventeen buildings were totally or partially destroyed. The architect Álvaro Siza Vieira was called to make the reconstruction project of this area. Siza proposed to make the least possible modifications by recovering the elements that had not been heavily damaged and by not disturbing the façades’ harmony of the ensemble, while working discreetly in the interior of the blocks and revitalising them through the creation of paths that allow a public access (Toussaint 1994b, 355).

In 1991, Lisbon’s population decreased again, to about 663,000 inhabitants, while Lisbon’s Metropolitan Area rose to 2.52 million. Consequently, the city centre became more and more desolate and ageing concerning its residential population, many buildings being left to abandon or replaced by others in order to host offices, shopping centres, luxury apartments and hotels. This new construction occurred mainly in the Avenida da Liberdade/Campo Grande axis, but not only (Toussaint 1994b, 356).

1990s

During the 1990s, a new strategic plan for the City of Lisbon emerged, giving priority to rehabilitation works³¹. Under the presidency of the socialist Mayor Jorge Sampaio (1990-1995), public space started to be seen as a fundamental element of the quality of urban life. Citizens were encouraged to express their opinions and participate in city life. Urban culture and local identities became also, in a large sense, part of the cultural legacy. Furthermore, heritage preservation was not just contemplating monuments, but also buildings in general, streets and lifestyles. Apart from Alfama and Mouraria, the municipality was then including other historical neighbourhoods and old rural sites in its strategic plan and implementing ‘detail plans’ addressed to some other city areas, while revising the general land use plan for the city (Toussaint 1994b,

²⁹ According to Lains, the slower industrial growth in all industrialised countries after 1973 – which occurred also in Portugal – was partially offset in this country by a more stable growth of the tertiary sector (Lains 1994, 936-37).

³⁰ See more info: “About Three Cultural Institutions” on p. 142.

³¹ Several programs were created, from the end of the 1980s on, to encourage rehabilitation works on housing buildings – like RECRIA (1988), REHABITA and RECRIPH (1996) – and to support the revitalisation and requalification processes of degraded urban areas – like PRAUD (1988) and URBAN (1994, co-funded by FEDER (Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional) and FSE (Fundo Social Europeu)).

358). In 1994, Lisbon was the European Capital of Culture, which contributed to the assertion of Lisbon as a cultural pole.

The last large-scale urban plan designed for Lisbon results from the project created for the 1998 World Exposition of Parque das Nações, in the north-eastern part of the city. This plan included the conversion of an old industrial area and the adjoining slums into an exhibition area, while proposing to implement a new urban centre. Big pavilions were then built, along with large infrastructures, in particular a most varied urban furniture and a large and complex transportation system, including a new bridge over the Tagus. This event contributed also to the extension of the subway lines all over the city (img 42) and, once the exhibition finished, several areas were converted into residential neighbourhoods for an upper middle class, supported by diverse services (restaurants, schools, parks, docks, supermarkets, etc). However, this project operated only in the area closer to the riverfront, leaving the close-by interior area as a forgotten city (Matias Ferreira 2004, 60-61) – see img 43.

2000s

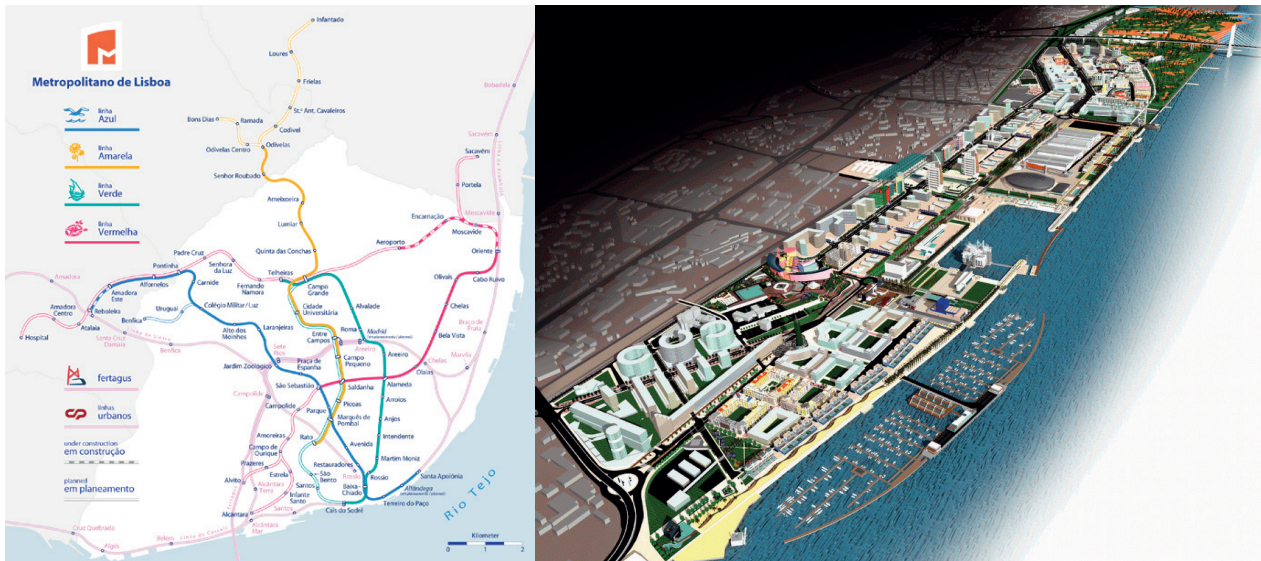
The new century brought along plenty of large-scale museum and housing projects signed by super-star architects to Lisbon: the revitalisation of *Parque Mayer* (by Frank Gehry), *Africa. Cont* (by David Adjaye), housing blocks and tower in Alcântara (by Jean Nouvel and Álvaro Siza, respectively), large residential blocks in Braço de Prata (by Renzo Piano), the new *Museu dos Coches* in Belém (by Paulo Mendes Rocha), the *EDP* headquarters in Cais do Sodré (by Aires Mateus), or the *Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology in Belém* (by Amanda Levete). From this extended list, only the last three were actually built (or are still being built).

Within a context of crisis and austerity, the construction rhythm of large urban projects slowed down. The socialist mayor António Costa (2007-2015) focused on urban rehabilitation and revitalisation of degraded areas of the city³² (with an emphasis on the public space, in areas like Intendente and Mouraria, for example, but also in a few squares³³, gardens, streets and *miradouros*³⁴). His strategy aimed at the strengthening of social communitarian ties, including the ethnic minorities and the immigrants. Lisbon has become a global and multicultural city, after the arrival of those coming from the ex-colonies (Cape Verde, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, Brazil), and also from Ukraine, Senegal, India, China or Pakistan. Costa refers to “multiculturalism as the DNA of the identity of the city” (Costa 2013, 46). The dialogue with citizens is encouraged, with

³² Following the programs created during the 1990s to encourage rehabilitation, revitalisation and requalification processes, new ones have been created more recently, adopting more complex approaches that also integrate environmental interventions, social cohesion or mobility, e.g. POLIS (2000-2006), POLIS XXI (2007-2015), PIPARU (2009), RE9 (2013) and Programa Reabilita Primeiro Paga Depois (2013).

³³ Like Terreiro do Paço for instance.

³⁴ *Miradouro* is the Portuguese word for Belvedere.



Img 42. Metro lines, existent and projected. (img source : <http://menos1carro.blogs.sapo.pt/tag/metro>).

Img 43. The post-Expo'98 plan - today known as Parque das Nações.

(img source: http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/1112/3438/1600/1_PUZI_EXPO98_cap_cgw50437-59.png).

municipal tools like the Participatory Budget³⁵ (*Orçamento Participativo*) or the BIP/ZIP program³⁶ (*Bairros de Intervenção Prioritária / Zonas de Intervenção Prioritária*)³⁷. The first one consists of municipal funds available for the implementation of projects proposed by citizens, who are then called to vote online in the selected projects, which are meant to be executed in the shortest possible time frame. The second one is addressed to neighbourhoods or areas where a “priority intervention”³⁸ is needed, aiming at the improvement of the inhabitants’ life conditions. With the help of social and cultural tools, two kinds of actions are offered: a “heavy” one, of top-down nature, concerning the regeneration of neighbourhoods, and a “light” one, of bottom-up nature, addressing buildings rehabilitation, events and social engagement. The projects proposed by citizens should have a hyperlocal focus of action, and should contribute – by encouraging the mixture of populations and the mutual respect – to reject and counteract social exclusion and segregation processes (Roseta 2013, 79-80). It is in this context that many ACS were created, developed or managed to improve the material conditions of their buildings (e.g. SOU – Largo Residências, Casa Independente, Mouradia), or were involved in specific events, as we will be able to see in the following chapters.

35 The available funds are about 5 million euros per year, meaning about 5% (2011) of the municipal annual budget (Fonseca 2013, 85-86). Lisbon was the first European capital to have a participatory budget (Allegretti et Antunes 2014, 1), in place since 2008. More details can be found on the official website: www.lisboaparticipa.pt/pages/orcamentoparticipativo.php.

36 Implemented in 2010, the available funds per year are of 1 million euros (Roseta 2013, 80), about 1% of the municipal annual budget (2011) (Fonseca 2013, 85-86). This program works with a partnership between at least two entities (*freguesias*, associations, NGO, informal groups, university associations...), and is often complemented by private partner subventions. The projects have to be executed within one year maximum.

37 The decentralisation effort is also present on the transfer of powers, and on the greatest autonomy given to the *freguesias* (a geographic and administrative subdivision of the city), by changing their yearly budget from 23 to 68 million € (Costa 2013, 47).

38 The selection is made using a wide range of socio-economic indicators, but the human dimension – unable to be captured by numbers – is also taken in consideration (Roseta 2013, 80).

An interesting fact to highlight is that of Lisbon being today classified as the safest European capital city³⁹, in particular when considering the context of a harsh economic crisis and a blind austerity and wondering about the role that those policies of social integration through the revitalisation of the urban environment might have.

Though Bip/Zip was meant particularly to address rather immaterial dimensions of the city, an increasing tendency of the candidate projects to incorporate professionals of architecture and urbanism as mentors of the projects, or as technical supporters of the inhabitants, has been registered (e.g. Artéria, AtelierMob). Helena Roseta wonders if this reveals a progressive repositioning of those professionals into the mechanisms of urban transformation (Roseta 2013, 84). Nevertheless, since the impact of the economic crisis strongly affected the construction sector, and particularly the working conditions for architects (their employment became very precarious in the last decade), Bip/Zip might as well be seen as a concrete opportunity and a possibility of a temporary job for the mentioned professionals.

Urban planning, architecture, social engagement and cultural action have become, in the last years, complementary urban policies and ways of intervention in the city. In this sense, the cultural context of Lisbon will now be discussed, seen from both an institutional and a grassroots perspective. However, in order to better understand the relationship between spatial urban matters and the cultural kinds of approaches in the city of Lisbon, the legal framework of the housing rental market must be referred beforehand.

Urban Rental Law

Spatial and Social Consequences

About 7,000 buildings⁴⁰ in ruins, or in a very precarious state, are located within the perimeter of Lisbon (see img 44). Lisbon's peeling walls, empty façades and walled-up doors and windows, are sometimes considered to hold a romantic decaying and "exotic" charm, "so typical" of Southern countries. Recently coloured with large-scale graffiti, these walls and façades have become a major attraction for tourists. Tourists, whose "invasion" in the last years is contributing to the removal of the traditional trade and of the residents from the city centre, which are replaced by multinational stores and hotels all over. Apart from the reality that the city is the victim of the consequences of the economic crisis and of the international competition to be the "coolest city ever", what explains this particular Lisbon phenomenon, the degradation of its buildings?

It is not possible to understand the contemporary urban situation of Lisbon, and the real estate market, without mentioning the successive rental laws and their intricate consequences. It is a

³⁹ According to the European Safety Observatory data, and confirmed by the Eurostat. (in *Lisboa*, Revista Municipal, nº 16, February 2016, pp. 1, 2).

⁴⁰ According to Margarida Acciaiuoli (2015, 668). According to Artérias' project *Agulha num Palheiro*, the data available in 2009 by CML announced that about 8% of the total of buildings existing in the city were vacant or derelict (www.agulhanumpalheiro.pt/quem-somos, accessed in 2016-03-27).

long and complex story, which began more than a century ago...

A 1990 law⁴¹, in its introduction, makes a historical overview of the successive changes occurred in the urban rental regime, referring in particular that during the First World War several laws that determined the freezing of the rents were approved. Normally, such situations could not last long since they were not compatible with the rapid evolution of prices in the periods that followed. Therefore, this type of situations went through several vicissitudes until June 1948, when an important law concerning tenancy⁴² was implemented under Salazar's dictatorship. This law ruled, in its article nº 47, the value of the rents taking as a basis the municipal value of the buildings or the gross income that was attributed to the corresponding dwellings. The housing rents could be adjusted under certain conditions but only outside Lisbon and Oporto. Thus, housing rents in Oporto and Lisbon remained frozen in practice, a situation that was likewise applied to new leases from the moment that they were negotiated. In 1966 a new civil code was published, the law that approved it⁴³ having maintained the freezing of rents in Oporto and Lisbon. At the time, the Salazar's Minister of Justice – seeking to explain why that situation should be temporary – declared that the benefit granted to the former tenants of the two cities was being, in practice, offset through the overpayment required from the new tenants. He also said that the new rents were excessive, considering the average standard of labour remuneration, which, according to some opinions, implied that the rental legislation was in fact an indirect way of implementing a policy of low salaries (this one being a policy that was the equivalent of the granting of subsidies to the corporate sector at the expense of landlords).

The democratic revolution of April 25, under the influence of popular pressure, had as an immediate consequence to put the housing problem at the centre of concern of the new powers established. A movement of house occupancy took place all over the country, plus demonstrations that led to the election of the first dwellers associations and that defended the rights of the ones who were squatting. The growing movement of squatting in the social neighbourhoods (the majority of which were empty), and the fear that private homes could be a target for uncontrolled speculation led to the maintenance of the freezing of urban rents by the first Provisional Government⁴⁴. Population mobilisation generalised, and between April 1974 and November 1975 – during the period of time known as PREC (*Processo Revolucionário em Curso*, Ongoing Revolutionary Process) –, in Lisbon alone, 21 dwellers associations and 38 “squatting committees” were set up, which were meant to strengthen and legitimise the occupancies (Acciaiuoli 2015, 643-44).

On the 31st of August 1974, SAAL⁴⁵ was created, intending to support and to implement some of the aspirations of the dwellers associations, this leading to the approval of the so called *Lei das Rendas* (the Urban Rental Law (URL)), promulgated on the 12th of September of that same

41 Decree-Law no. 321-B/90, of 15 October). See the link <https://dre.tretas.org/dre/21592/#anexos> (accessed in 2016-03-27).

42 Law no. 2030 of 22 July 1948 (see the link <https://dre.pt/application/file/386525>, accessed in 2016-03-27).

43 Decree-Law 47334 of November 25, 1966 (see some comments on it in the preamble to the Decree-Law no. 321-B/90, of 15 October, referred above).

44 The Decree-Law no. 217/74 of 27 May, in its article nº 9, established such a freezing for a period of 30 days. This legal provision was renovated successively for periods of 30 days until September of the same year.

45 *Serviço Ambulatório de Apoio Local* (Service for Local Mobile Support). See “SAAL (1970s)” (pp. 111-112).

year⁴⁶. In its article nº 1, this law extended the freezing regime previously applied to Lisbon and Oporto to the entire country, stating (article 15) that the monthly rental could not be above that of the previous contract if its setting up was later than 1970. The aim of this law was to justify the measures that were previously taken, concerning the legalisation of the occupied houses, and to regulate the housing free market, in an attempt to put an end to the real estate speculation that in the dictatorial regime had reached extremely abusive levels (Acciaiuoli 2015, 644-46). Other provisions of the law stated that the rental fee of a dwelling placed for the first time in the housing market should be the one resulting from the free play of supply and demand (article 17) provided that such situation did not last for more than 120 days (article 5). The law specified, nevertheless, that its provisions should be considered as transitory, given in particular the notorious differences existing in the various regions and in the age of the buildings (preamble).

In April 1975 another law was drawn up⁴⁷, trying to solve the problems aroused by squatting through the legalisation of these situations. At the same time, this document intended to penalise landlords abusive actions (e.g., not putting the dwellings opportunely in the market, as required by the legislation, and keeping the houses empty, no matter if they were old or newly built) (Acciaiuoli 2015, 646-48). A new law, published in 1977⁴⁸, highlighted the fact that “every owner of a housing building knows that he acquired a good that accomplishes a social function”, transmitting the idea that it was impossible to make business with housing renting. Furthermore, a law published in 1979⁴⁹ decreed that “the right of denouncement of the rent contract could not be exercised if the tenant was 65 years old or more, or in the case of having lived in the house for 20 years or more”. Even in January 2002, when Portugal joined the euro zone, no succeeding government dared to meddle with the rent law and changing rental fees which were calculated in the old currency (escudo) and were kept without any adjustment for almost four decades (Acciaiuoli 2015, 649).

According to the art historian Margarida Acciaiuoli, this law had the following consequences (Acciaiuoli 2015, 650-53, 668):

- almost no investment was made in the buildings to rent after April 1974 (there existed in 2015 about 7,000 buildings in precarious state or in ruins);
- the business of construction of properties for rental, and the existence of new houses for the same purpose, practically disappeared;
- Lisbon came to be a city of owners with debts (which had to be paid to the banks in a monthly fee, plus heavy municipal taxes and other charges).

The most recent Urban Rental Law, dated from 2012 – resulting from the impositions made by the “Troika” – and revised in 2014⁵⁰, searches to create rules for the renovation, so much needed

46 Decree-Law nº. 445/74 of 12 September.

47 Decree-Law nº 198 - A/75, in *Diário da República* Iª série, nº 57, of 14 Abril 1975.

48 Decree-Law nº 293/77, in *Diário da República* Iª série, nº 166, of 20 July 1977.

49 Decree-Law nº 55/79, in *Diário da República*, Iª série, nº 214, of 15 September 1979.

50 Law nº 31/12, in *Diário da República*, Iª série, nº 157, of 14 August 2012, reviewed and updated by Law nº 79/2014, in *Diário da República*, Iª série, nº 245, of 19 December 2014. The Troika “Memorandum of understanding on specific economic policy conditionality”, dated 3 May 2011, in its point 6 (Housing Market), specifies several

by the city. Such rules intend to promote the increase of the rents, seeing it as the solution to the abandonment which occurred during the last decades. Nevertheless, new solutions lead inevitably to new problems...

One of the problems is the speeding up that is taking place in the emptying of the historical centre of the city, pulling away traditional commerce and residents. The traditional commerce is being replaced by a flood of hotels whose appearance is warranted by a torrent of occasional tourists (img 45), both being often seen as answers to the problem of the Portuguese debt, on one side, and as the cause of an accelerated process of gentrification (img 46). Furthermore, the severe austerity, implemented in the sequence of the recent violent economic and financial crisis, emphasised the dramatic situation of the physical and social condition of the city leading to (Acciaiuoli 2015, 668):

- the bankruptcy of many condominiums;
- huge difficulties in getting funds to construct or rehabilitate.

Lisbon had become – due to the various constraints that had arisen with the different rent laws and other legislation that discouraged the construction of buildings for income – a city of small owners who acquired their own apartments. This situation had been developing since 1974, but encountered serious difficulties over the period up to the early 90s due to high interest rates. These high interest rates made the housing purchase extremely expensive in the years that immediately followed the acquisition, although later – since the monthly instalments remained unchanged – the financial effort could decrease substantially in real terms, given the rapid increase of inflation and the consequent rise in nominal wages. Especially after 1993, inflation, and then interest rates, came down substantially. This situation allowed – together with the persistence of a policy of interest subsidising – an increased recourse to bank credit and housing purchase. This in turn, given the increased demand and the development of real estate speculation, led to substantial increases in real prices of apartments (see Acciaiuoli 2015, 651-2). So that, when the economic and financial crisis of 2008 arrived, the new owners of the apartments were extremely indebted (and, in the aftermath of them, the banks, which financed themselves outside of the country). It was a difficult situation, nevertheless bearable, in most cases, if the economic situation of the country would not deteriorate. However, with the crisis, the development of precarious work and a very high unemployment ascended. In consequence, many indebted households could no longer meet their obligations. The banks then began to carry out the execution of mortgages made by debtors, who were expelled from their homes.

This is why Acciaiuoli (2015, 653) argues that the city of Lisbon suffered, along its history, two devastating seisms: the first in 1755, which destroyed great part of the city centre, and the second in the sequence of the 2008's economic and financial crisis, which provoked similar tragic consequences in the physical and social structure of the city (img 47). In fact, even if the problems of the degradation of Lisbon's housing buildings date from long ago, as we have seen, they have exploded in the present time with a deep dramatic dimension.

measures to be implemented by the Portuguese government (see http://economico.sapo.pt/public/uploads/memorandotroika_04-05-2011.pdf, accessed in 2016-03-28).

The genesis of the just mentioned process was the so called Urban Rental Law that set the most diverse constraints to prices updating, even when dealing with rents 20 or 30 years old. Such controls were maintained until present times, causing frozen rents for almost 40 years – at least until 2012 – and the consequent degradation of the residential areas of the city (since the landlords did not have the means to do the required maintenance works of their buildings).

The need for the revocation of the 2012 Urban Rental Law was recently raised by some municipal deputies (namely, from the Portuguese Communist Party) in the Lisbon City Hall Assembly in February 2016. The deputies argue that an urgent intervention is required in order to find protection mechanisms to the traditional local commerce, along with a legal frame interdicting new licences for the creation of new hotels in the historical centre, considering that the excess of tourism has a negative effect on the quality of life of the Lisbon residents (Boaventura 2016, 17).

Some initiatives of local collectives of architects have been engaged to fight the present situation, like *Artéria* or *Rés-do-Chão*, for instance. *Agulha num Palheiro* is an online platform created by *Artéria* that works as an interface between citizens and the old houses available in the real estate market for rehabilitation. This initiative aims to systematise, democratise and establish an easier access to these properties⁵¹. *Rés-do-Chão*⁵², as the name itself indicates (“Ground Floor”) aims to fight the increasingly emptiness of urban ground floors, through a mediation work between potential tenants or proprietors and the actual owners of ground floor spaces. Most of these spaces used to host shops for traditional commerce and, mostly due to situation described above in this chapter, many of them had been progressively abandoned in the last decades. *Rés-do-Chão* proposes to reactivate these spaces in order to revitalise the urban fabric at the street level. In this sense, they have been doing an important work in the area of Rua do Poço dos Negros and the nearby streets⁵³.

Lisbon residents got used to see decaying buildings and empty façades, an image that has been politically and commercially used in a romanticised way. We have been watching a sort of transmutation of some of the decaying buildings of the noblest parts of the city into a huge canvas, disguised with colourful mural paintings and graffiti (like Avenida Fontes Pereira de Melo, for example – see img 48). Acciaiuoli considers this to be the expression of abandonment and carelessness (Acciaiuoli 2015, 655), even if it pleases foreign tourists – who indicate street art as one of the most satisfying factors when visiting Portugal⁵⁴ – or Lisboners – who show sympathy for the initiatives supported by the municipality⁵⁵. Lisbon appears, paradoxically, as one of the street art capitals, where, according to Acciaiuoli, graffiti occupy a place that a long time ago should have been filled by politics of rehabilitation. She further highlights how the municipality has stated, in the current plan of rehabilitation of Lisbon, how it desires to become a partner of landlords instead of an intimidating policeman, concerning the degraded buildings issue (Acciaiuoli 2015, 667).

51 www.agulhanumpalheiro.pt/quem-somos.

52 <http://resdochao.org>.

53 See more information on Chapter 5.2.1.

54 In *Jornal I*, 9.06. 2015, mentioned in Acciaiuoli (2015, 655).

55 In this case implemented by the urban art department (*Galeria de Arte Urbana*, GAU, created in 2008, which considers that its actions bring joy to the streets of the city, in such hard times of austerity and lack of hope).



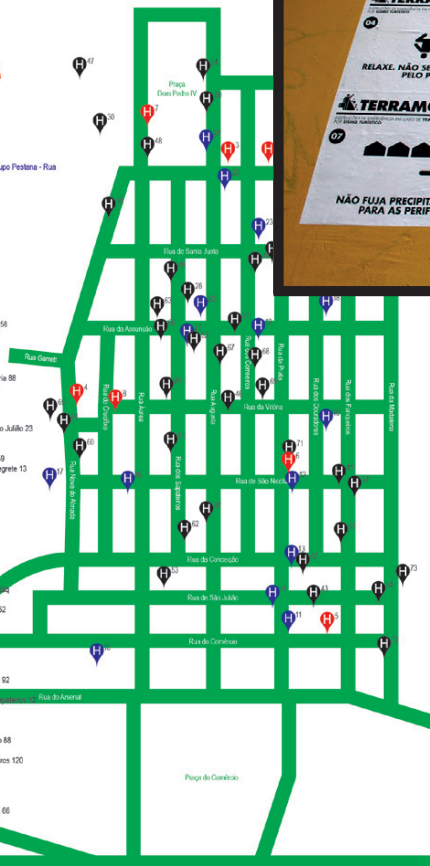
Decay

Img 44. Decaying buildings in Lisbon (Bairro Alto and Intendente, 2012, 2014, respectively).

Touristification



- 1 - HOTEL LISBOA TELCO - Rua Condes de Monteleão 2
- 2 - The Boutique Hotel Figure - Praça de Figueira 19
- 3 - Intentional Design Hotel - Rua Belonges 5
- 4 - Hotel do Chiado - Rua Nova do Almada 114
- 5 - Hotel Alcoa Beira - Rua do Conde de S. João 20/26
- 6 - Liboa Prata Boutique Hotel - Rua de Prata 116
- 7 - Hotel Metropole - Praça Dom Pedro IV 30
- 8 - Brown's Hotel & Apartments - Rua de Vitoria 88
- 9 - My Story Hotel Ours - Rua Azeite 100



- 10 - 2ª Esquadra PSP / Futuro Praça de Portugal / Grupo Pestana - Rua do Comércio
- 11 - #1 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 12 - Polycargo / Futuro Holiday Inn
- 14 - #2 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 15 - Corças Christi / Futuro Hotel Indigo
- 16 - #4 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 17 - #5 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 18 - #6 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 19 - #7 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 20 - #8 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 21 - #9 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 22 - #10 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 23 - #11 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 24 - #12 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 25 - #13 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 26 - #14 Hotel aprovado para construção
- 28 - Liboon Short Stay - Rua dos Sapateiros 158
- 29 - Riverside Beira Beira's Apartments - Rua de Vitoria 88
- 30 - Downtown Guest House - Rua 1ª de Dezembro 53
- 31 - Aljubeiro Guest House - Rua de Assurgão 53
- 32 - Travellers House - Rua Augusta 86
- 33 - Beira House - Rua dos Fanqueiros 51
- 34 - Casas de Beira - by Liboon & Madalena - Rua de São Julião 23
- 35 - Hotel 40 - Rua da Madalena, 80
- 36 - Orange Pensão Alcolha - Fogo do Serrador 15
- 37 - Pensão Residencial Norte - Rua dos Douradores 159
- 38 - Pensão Nova Goa - Rua do Arco do Marquês de Alegrete 13
- 39 - Dias Baetas & David Ltd - Fogo do Serrador 4
- 40 - Vila Ene Centre Turista - Rua dos Frenos 207
- 41 - Home Liboon Hotel, Rua São Nicolau 13
- 42 - HANDBART - Rua Conceição, 52, 2º Esc
- 43 - Auro Apartments, Rua de São Julião 51
- 44 - Voltes do Liboon Hotel, Rua Douradores 178
- 45 - Hotel Santa Justa Lisboa, Rua dos Conventos 204
- 46 - Duas Nogueiras Residence, Rua Vitoria 41
- 47 - Pensão Estágio Central, Calçada do Carmo 17
- 48 - Pensão Santo Inácio, Praça Dom Pedro IV 18
- 49 - Pensão Rossio, Rua dos Sapateiros 173
- 50 - Pensão P. Figueira 11, Nova de S. Domingos 10
- 51 - Brown's Downtown - Rua dos Sapateiros
- 52 - Abegarrat Residencial Insular, Rua de São Julião 52
- 53 - Hotel Liboon Hotel, Rua de São Julião
- 54 - Inn Possible - Rua de São Julião
- 56 - Madalena Blue - Rua de São Julião 23
- 57 - Estrela de Santa, Rua dos Conventos 204
- 58 - Chiado Apartments, Rua Garrett 28
- 59 - Design Chiado Flat, Rua do Carmo 16
- 60 - H-Sulões Chiado Apartments I, Rua Nova de Almeida 52
- 62 - SPRL Liboon - Rua de São Julião 23
- 63 - Liboon Serviced Apartments, Rua Assurgão 53
- 64 - Travelling Liboon - Praça Dom Pedro IV 74, 3º C
- 65 - Chiado Apartments - Rua Nova do Almada 81
- 66 - Liboon Serviced Apartments - Beira - Rua Assurgão 88
- 67 - Augusta Hotel - Rua Augusta 185
- 68 - Travelling To Liboon Beira Apartments - Rua Correioes 120
- 69 - Living Liboon Beira Apartments - Rua Vitoria 42
- 70 - Beira Copy - Rua Correioes 114
- 71 - Downtown Liboon - Rua de Prata 121
- 72 - Madalena Hotel - Rua de Madalena nº79
- 73 - Beira Deluxe - Rua de Madalena 66



Img 47. "Terremotourism: instructions to be used in case of emergency of urban transformation produced by a touristic seism". Action led by the collective Acciones Urbanas Absurdas, which makes a parallel between the 1755 earthquake and the consequences of the contemporary process of massive touristification. (www.lefthandrotation.com/terremotourism_lefthandrotation.pdf)

En esta primera acción, TERREMOTOURISM propone unas sencillas instrucciones que los habitantes y comerciantes de la zona podrán seguir si lo creen oportuno mientras se produce lo que hemos denominado Seismo turístico:

1. Agrupe e assegure o tecido social do bairro
2. Fixe móveis e objectos que possam cair. Uma vez perdidas a identidade e o património será impossível a sua reconstrução
3. Evite o abandono. Faça a revisão dos elementos estruturais da sua habitação
4. Relaxe. Não se deixe dominar pelo pânico
5. Se está dentro do edifício, fique dentro
6. Não usar elevadores
7. Não fuja precipitadamente para as periferias
8. Resista colectivamente no bairro que habita
9. Em cidades marca: alerta de tsunami turístico e gentrificação

Img 45. Map of Baixa, where about 80 hotels, existent or about to exist, have been identified by a public action investigation led by Observatório das Transformações XXXX da Cidade de Lisboa in February 2014. (more info, and image source found at <http://observatorioxxxx.com/index.php/contar-estrelas/>)

Gentrification



Img 46. "Gentrifica...quê?" (Gentrifica...what?). Graffiti in Martim Moniz, November 2014.

> Img 48. Mural done by the Italian artist Blu, representing a man crowned with petrol logos, drinking the world through a straw, Avenida Fontes Pereira de Melo (Project Cronos).



Within this context, ACSs started to pop up like mushrooms in Lisbon's city centre, contradicting the depressive ambiance of the city – just like the street art – and contributing to the exciting and dynamic cultural life of the capital. This recent urban phenomenon is the objects of study of this research, whose meaning will be explored and analysed in the following chapters.

*

5.1.2. Recent Protest and Resistance Movements

In order to better understand the context in which many of the ACS arose, some of its aspects of the last decades – in particular in the economic and political fields – must be studied, which, on its turn, requires some comments on the Carnation Revolution that took place in Portugal four decades ago.

The Carnation Revolution

The democratic revolution of the 25th April 1974 happened within a context of progressive decay of the authoritarian regime of *Estado Novo* (New State), created in 1933 by the dictator Salazar. Portugal was then (1974) a backward country in the European context, with high illiteracy and child mortality rates, great poverty, massive emigration to European countries (France and Germany), a ruthless political police and a ferocious censorship which maintained the country muzzled for 48 years. A bloody colonial war was going on since 14 years, killing thousands of young lives or making them crippled for ever. Portugal was then the last colonial empire, maintaining itself “proudly alone” (“orgulhosamente sós” was a slogan of the ancient political regime) among all nations, attached unwisely to its colonies (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, S. Tome and Principe, Cape Verde Islands and Timor), which were called “overseas provinces”.

So, when, on the dawn of the 25th April, the military coup led by Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho and Salgueiro Maia occurred, the people of Lisbon took without delay to the streets, supporting cheerfully the insurgents. It was this enthusiastic support of the people that changed the initial military coup into a revolution. The Revolution was extended to the whole country, pervading all aspects of the Portuguese daily life during the so-called PREC (*Processo Revolucionário Em Curso*, or On-Going Revolutionary Process – the period between 25 April 1974 and 25 November 1975). One of the results of this process was the nationalisation of the insurance and banking sectors. Other changes occurred – sometimes gradually but mostly in a sweeping way – in the health system (going through the implementation of a National Health Service), in the educational system (democratisation of the public school, adult literacy campaigns all over the country), in the land regime (occupations and agrarian reform), in the housing context (squattling of empty houses in the cities, eradication of slums and the SAAL Project)... It was a feverish process, dynamic and creative – including the rise of a strong trade union movement and a wave of factory occupations – which subverted hierarchies and created a democratic society, more equalitarian and fair. The so-called “April conquests” were remarkable, in what concerns health¹, education²,

¹ Evolution of child mortality rates in Portugal: 37.9 per thousand in 1974 and 2.5 per thousand in 2010 (just like nowadays Sweden, and better than Norway, Denmark and Holland). Available at: www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Taxa+bruta+de+mortalidade+e+taxa+de+mortalidade+infantil-528 and www.pordata.pt/Europa/Taxa+de+mortalidade+infantil-1589.

² Evolution of illiteracy rates in Portugal: 25.7% in 1970 and 5.2%, according to the Census in 1970 and 2011 (Available at: www.pordata.pt/en/Portugal/Illiteracy+rate++according+to+the+Census+total+and+by+sex-2517, accessed on 2016-04-13).

worker's rights and gender equality. The "conquests" changed ways of thinking, mentalities and behaviours, allowing the country to take a leap into the future.

However, on 25 November 1975, the dynamics of this revolutionary process was halted³. Nevertheless, many of these conquests were maintained until today, thanks to the prevalence the Portuguese Constitution, which consecrated them, despite all the changes and attacks it suffered over the last years.

Protest and resistance movements 2010s

The end of the colonial war was followed by the independence of the colonies and dramatic civil wars in Angola and Mozambique. Consequently, about 500,000 refugees came to Portugal. Despite the fact that the Portuguese social situation changed favourably in the immediate post-revolutionary period, the economic situation required two interventions of the IMF, in 1977 and in 1983, which imposed some setbacks in the social domain (and resulted also in a massive emigration, mostly to France, Switzerland and Luxembourg).

Portugal joined the European Union (back then called European Economic Community) in 1986, in the aftermath of which the availability of European funds helped the country to build new infrastructures and to improve in many aspects, namely the cultural, educational and healthy ones. Consequently, suddenly Portugal became also an immigration destination, receiving not only people coming from the ex-colonies but also from Brazil, Ukraine, Russia, Senegal, India, Pakistan or China, for instance. Lisbon in particular had become a multicultural city.

However, from the 2000s on, economic difficulties began to arise and when the worldwide financial crisis exploded, Portugal was taken in the turmoil and – mostly due to the combination of the crisis and of the country high external indebtedness – was harshly affected. Consequently, in 2011, the Portuguese Government was obliged to sign a Memorandum with the Troika⁴ in order to get a bail out. Austerity policies were implemented, having as consequences cuts in wages and in social benefits, a reversal in the social functions of the state, and the degeneration of the debt problem, which resulted from the transformation of a financial crisis into a crisis of sovereign debts (Soeiro, Estanque, and Costa 2013, 37). This led to a wave of massive demonstrations in the streets, from 2010 on, also inspired by the international global protests taking place all over the world.

Anyway what, most concretely, let Portuguese people to the streets? What was at the origin of most protests that occurred in the year 2012? First of all it was certainly the high rate of unemployment (30.2% in 2011 for the population less than 25 years) associated to the

³ Due to disagreements between different military tendencies, one of which headed by General Ramalho Eanes, the future President of the Republic of Portugal (1976-1986), which imposed itself to other tendencies (in particular, to the radical left).

⁴ IMF, ECB and European Commission.

Os Vampiros
Zeca Afonso

...
No céu cinzento sob o astro mudo
Batendo as asas pela noite calada
Vêm em bandos com pés de veludo
Chupar o sangue fresco da manada
...
Eles comem tudo, eles comem tudo
Eles comem tudo e não deixam nada
Eles comem tudo, eles comem tudo
Eles comem tudo e não deixam nada
...
No chão do medo tombam os vencidos
Ouvem-se os gritos na noite abafada
Jazem nos fossos Vítimas dum credo
E não se esgota o sangue da manada

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0yCcWxfBUw)

ENGLISH

*In the grey sky Below the silent star
In the still night
They come in bands With velvet feet
Sucking fresh blood From the herd.*

...
*They'll eat everything
They'll eat everything
They'll eat everything
And leave nothing.*

...
*From everywhere
The vampires arrive
They perch in buildings
They perch in the streets
They bring in their pouches
Old spoils
But nothing binds them
To their spent lives.*

...
*On the ground of fear The vanquished tumble
We hear the screams In the sweltry night.
They lie in the cesspools Victims of their beliefs
And nothing drains away The blood of the herd.*

...
(translated by Phil Meyler)

FMI
José Mário Branco

...
A produtividade, ora aí está, quer dizer
Há tanto nesta terra que ainda está por fazer
Entrar por aí a dentro, analisar, e então
Do meu 'attachi-case' sai a solução!

FMI Não há graça que não faça o FMI
FMI O bombástico de plástico para si
FMI Não há força que retorça o FMI

Discreto e ordenado mas nem por isso fraco
Eis a imagem 'on the rocks' do cancro do tabaco
Enfio uma gravata em cada fato-macaco
E meto o pessoal todo no mesmo saco
A produtividade, ora aí está, quer dizer
Não ando aqui a brincar, não há tempo a perder
Batendo o pé na casa, espanador na mão
É só desinfetar em superprodução!

...
Consolida filho, consolida, enfia-te a horas certas
no casarão da Gabriela que o malmequer vai-te
tratando do serviço nacional de saúde. Consolida
filho, consolida, que o trabalhinho é muito lindo,
o teu trabalhinho é muito lindo, é o mais lindo
de todos, como o astro, não é filho? O cabrão do
astro entra-te pela porta das traseiras, tu tens um
gozo do caraças, vais dormir entretido, não é? Pois
claro, ganhar forças, ganhar forças para consolidar,
para ver se a gente consegue num grande esforço
nacional estabilizar esta destabilização filha-da-puta,
não é filho?

...
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Adp77ivpT8&feature=youtu.be)

ENGLISH

...
*Productivity, sometimes there is, I mean
There is so much on this earth that still lies ahead
To come by in, analyze, and then
From my 'attach-case' out the solution!*

...
*IMF There is no grace that is not the IMF
The IMF itself to plastic bombastic
There is no force that IMF twist the IMF*

...
*Discreet and orderly but not so weak
Here is the image 'on the rocks' Cancer Tobacco
Shove one in each tie coveralls
And the entire staff meth in the same bag
Productivity, sometimes there is, I mean
Do not walk here playing, no time to lose
Stamping her foot in the house, mop in hand
Just disinfect in overproduction!*

...
*Consolidates son, consolidates, the handiwork is very
beautiful, your handiwork is very beautiful, is the
most beautiful of all, like star, is not it son? The fuck-
in 'star comes up through the back door, you have a
hell of enjoyment, fun going to sleep, right? Well of
course, gain strength, gain strength to consolidate,
to see if we can in a great national effort to stabilize
this destabilization daughter of a bitch, is not it son?*

...
(translation found at: [www.songcoleta.com/lyrics/fmi_\(jos%C3%A9_m%C3%A1rio_branco\)](http://www.songcoleta.com/lyrics/fmi_(jos%C3%A9_m%C3%A1rio_branco)))

Songs of protest

Que parva que sou
Deolinda

Sou da geração sem remuneração
E nem me incomoda esta condição.
Que parva que eu sou!

Porque isto está mal e vai continuar,
Já é uma sorte eu poder estagiar.
Que parva que eu sou!
E fico a pensar,
Que mundo tão parvo
Que para ser escravo é preciso estudar.

Sou da geração 'casinha dos pais',
Se já tenho tudo, para quê querer mais?
Que parva que eu sou!
Filhos, marido, estou sempre a adiar
E ainda me falta o carro pagar,
Que parva que eu sou!
E fico a pensar
Que mundo tão parvo
Onde para ser escravo é preciso estudar.

Sou da geração 'vou queixar-me para quê?'
Há alguém bem pior do que eu na TV.
Que parva que eu sou!
Sou da geração 'eu já não posso mais!'
Que esta situação dura há tempo demais
E parva não sou!
...
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGS7vAlijIjI)

ENGLISH

*I belong to the 'no pay' generation
And this condition does not even bother me.
What a fool I am!*

*Because this is bad and will continue, already
I'm lucky that I could intern.
What a fool I am!
And I think to myself,
What a fool world
Where you must study to become a slave.*

*I am from the generation 'house of parents', if I
already have everything, why to want more?
What a fool I am!
Sons, husband, I'm always postponing
And I still am failing to pay for the car.
What a fool I am!
And I think to myself,
What a fool world
Where you must study to become a slave.*

*I am from the generation 'complaining for
what?', there is someone worse than me on TV.
What a fool I am!
I am from the generation 'I can't do it anymore',
This situation lasts for far too long.
And I'm not a fool!*

...
(translation found at: <http://whotalking.com/flickr/No+Pay>)

precariousness of the working conditions⁵, the scarce social protection⁶ and the difficult access to housing⁷ (Soeiro, Estanque, et Costa 2013, 34-35). In second place, the imposition of heavy austerity measures in 2011, which deteriorated considerably the social situation: public servants salaries were cut by up to 10%, vacation subsidies cut in a half⁸, and taxes suffered a huge increase⁹ (Soeiro, Estanque, and Costa 2013, 35).

What was involved in the demonstrations was nevertheless not only the massive and repetitive nature or their causes but also the fact that they assumed forms that revealed – from the part of many demonstrators – a mistrust of traditional forms of organisation (such as trade unions and political parties) as well as the distrust of political institutions in general.

The demonstration that occurred in November 20, 2010, when a NATO summit happened in Lisbon, was followed, the same day, by a general strike. Four days later an “anti-capitalist” demonstration occurred in Largo Camões and Rossio. This event called about two thousand people, organised through the social networks by “unclear entities”. The particularity is that there was no spokesperson representing the crowd, as was the norm. This demonstration opened the way to more horizontal kinds of approaches and to more informal ways of organising events, without asking permission to the authorities¹⁰ (Collective anonymous author 2013, 5-7)

The first big demonstration, under the new context, took place on March 12, 2011, this time calling about half a million people in several cities all over the country. This happened after a concert by the group “Deolinda” that took place in Oporto, where they sang a song (*Que parva que sou*, meaning “How stupid I am”)¹¹ that motivated a public debate, at a national scale, about employment (after a video that was later on posted on *YouTube*). A call for a “non-religious, non-partisan and peaceful” demonstration was organised by four young people through a Facebook event, this leading an extremely heterogeneous group of people to the streets¹² (Soeiro, Estanque, and Costa 2013, 36), placed together against the austerity measures and the socialist government of José Sócrates. It was a diffuse oppositional movement, with a non-hierarchical logic of networking, that lacked an overall political coherence (Soeiro, Estanque, and Costa 2013,

5 The insecure and badly paid jobs, the short term contracts or the absence of contract, the illegal work and the unpaid internships. In 2011, half of the young employees earned a salary between 450-600 €/month (Soeiro, Estanque, and Costa 2013, 35).

6 Poverty risk rate of 20% amongst young people (Soeiro, Estanque, and Costa 2013, 34).

7 This resulting in the “parent’s house generation”, with 60% of young adults facing this situation of dependence on parents (who help to compensate the fragilities of the Portuguese welfare system), consequently always postponing their life projects (Soeiro, Estanque, et Costa 2013, 34–35). For further information about the hard conditions on access to housing, see chapter Real Estate and Urban Rental Law.

8 This particular measure was later on considered unconstitutional by the Constitution Court.

9 As laid down in the state budget law for 2013.

10 According to an anonymous collective paper, “Sobre a passagem de alguns milhares de pessoas por um breve período de tempo”, published by Edições Antipáticas (Available online : <https://f.hypotheses.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1140/files/2013/04/Sobre-a-Passagem-de-Alguns-Milhares-de-pessoas-por-um-breve-per%C3%ADodo-de-tempo.pdf>).

11 “I belong to the generation without remuneration ... I am already too lucky if I get an internship ... such a stupid world, where to be a slave you must study ... staying at parents’ home ... I am from the “parent’s home generation” ... always postponing my projects ...” (selected lyrics from Anaífa’s song).

12 As referred by Soeiro et al., young people affected by precarious jobs, an impoverished generation of older people, malcontents against the government, militants from the left-wing party Bloco de Esquerda (Left Bloc party), all kinds of people involved in social movements (like feminist, LGBT, Inflexible Precarious), militants from the Social Democratic Youth (of the right-wing Democratic Social Party), the leader of CGTP (General Confederation of Portuguese Workers, linked to the Communist Party) and even some skin heads.

35, 38). Just like David Harvey notices, when referring to the global contemporary protests, also the Portuguese demonstrations were based on spontaneity, rapidity and volatility, in opposition to traditional forms of left-wing organisation (e.g. political parties, labour unions and militant environmental or social movements) (Harvey 2012, 119).

This first big event generated, from then on, a collective mobilisation process, originating several other demonstrations. In May 2011 occurred “Occupy Rossio” (Rossio is one of the main squares of Lisbon), event inspired by the *acampadas* in Madrid and Barcelona on May 15 (the movement of *Democracia Real Ya* and the *Indignados*). However, this encampment was not able to create the “autonomous city” it was looking for. Nobody really understood what was happening there, but it was, nonetheless, a curious experience since it was composed mainly of rather curious people passing by, “alien to ideological partisan trenches” (Collective anonymous author 2013, 9-11).

In October 15, 2011, occurred the huge “Global Day of Action”¹³, a demonstration organised by *Plataforma 15.O* (Platform 15 October), to add force to the experiences occurred in the period of the Arab spring, the Spanish “*indignados*”, the Greek movement, the Icelandic revolution, Occupy Wall Street and the Portuguese March 12. In Europe, the biggest demonstrations were in Portugal, Spain and Italy (about a hundred thousand people attended in Portugal, and the stairs at the entrance of the National Assembly were occupied in that day (Collective anonymous author 2013, 11-13)). A wave of demonstrations and strikes followed: 24 November 2011 (general strike and demonstration), 21 January 2012 and 22 March 2012 (where confrontations between demonstrators and police occurred, resulting in police charges and arbitrary arrests).

Then followed the “hot autumn”¹⁴ of 2012. On September 15 took place the biggest demonstration since the PREC, where about a million people came out to the streets, the call having been made on Facebook with the slogan “Que se Lixe a Troika! Queremos as nossas vidas de volta!” (QSLT, “Fuck the Troika, We want our lives back”), after the government’s announcement of the intention to almost double (from 11% to 18%) the Social Security Contribution (TSU, *Taxa Social Única*) for the employees, and to reduce it for the employers. For once, the demonstration was full of young people¹⁵, and police had orders not to charge. It was a victory, as the change in TSU was dropped in the following days. From this moment on, there were demonstrations on the streets every week, as if the power of the street had at last been understood. On September 21, a 10,000 people demonstration took place, called by the same organisers (QSLT). CGTP, on its turn, called another demonstration for the September 29, which had thousands of people in Terreiro do Paço¹⁶. On October 5, five hundred people, after an anonymous call on the internet, tried to tear down the bars that blocked the access to the Parliament. And so the demonstrations went on with a short periodicity, sometimes in front of the Parliament, other times somewhere in the city or in the country, until November 14, when took place the European general strike with millions of people on the streets, in several cities, resulting in numerous clashes. In Lisbon,

¹³ A globalised protest that took place in 951 cities in 82 countries.

¹⁴ Reference to the “Hot Summer” of 1975, during the PREC, when the revolution was going on.

¹⁵ This was something not so common in Portuguese demonstrations, in part due to the mass emigration of young people, but also to the general lack of youth interest in politics, which was the rule in the previous years.

¹⁶ The Central Place of the city.

there were several wounded people, a few fire barricades were built, announcing – according to some militant eyewitnesses – the beginning of a small “territorialised guerrilla”.

The reactions of the media against those ‘troublemakers’, nevertheless, was so strong that, during all winter, the protests calmed down (Collective anonymous author 2013, 27-31). Somehow their nature changed and situations – as public meetings or other events – where members of the Government¹⁷ would appear and speak became occasions “to attack”, interrupting them with the revolutionary song *Grândola Vila Morena*, from Zeca Afonso¹⁸. A new Portuguese word appeared therefore during this period: “grandolar”, meaning “to protest”, showing the power of a song and how its lyrics could be used as a weapon, once again. This seems to have become a constant, or a particularity, of the Portuguese resistance movements.

On March 2, 2013, QSLT appealed for a new demonstration and a million and a half came on the streets¹⁹, quietly and orderly. For the first time, there was a peaceful alliance with traditional left parties, trade unions (CGTP) and militants. It was a kind of “institutionalisation” of the movement QSLT and other mentioned movements, as if the model (horizontality/informality/no leadership) had reached a certain point of exhaustion. It has been a huge demonstration but, nevertheless, there was a kind of sadness and lack of hope in the air²⁰. From March 2013 on there were no significant demonstrations in Lisbon, only a few ones organised by the CGTP and the Left-wing Parties, following the traditional model. Apparently, such a reflux of these new movements of protest has even been seen at an international level. People gave up direct action on the streets’ somehow, feeling that it was useless, since no positive changes had been acquired with the previous protests.

Nevertheless, another factor is likely to have also been behind such a demobilisation. It is the emigration, whose figures went up very fast in the period 2009-2014. The so-called “permanent emigration” has been of about 17 thousand in 2009, 24 thousand in 2010 and 44 thousand in 2011. In the following years, its values maintained a high profile: 52 (2012), 54 (2013) and 50 (2014) thousand. It is necessary however to take in consideration the “temporary emigration” (a temporary emigrant being an individual that left the country for a period of less than one year; this may correspond to a situation, at least in most cases, of a temporary work contract) which was of about 57 (2011), 69 (2012), 74 (2013) and 85 (2014) thousand²¹. As is well known, most emigrants are youngsters.

¹⁷ Since June 2011, a right wing Government had been ruling, led by Passos Coelho as PM.

¹⁸ This song, by Zeca Afonso, was the secret signal to initiate the revolutionary military coup on the dawn of the 25th April 1974. *Grândola* is the name of a city, in Alentejo, “inside which, the people had the power”, according to the song.

¹⁹ According to the article available online: www.esquerda.net/artigo/manifesta%C3%A7%C3%A3o-%E2%80%9CQue-se-lixe-troika%E2%80%9D-n%C3%BAmoros-da-ades%C3%A3o-em-todo-o-pa%C3%ADs/26924 (accessed on 14.03.2016).

²⁰ Many people told me about this feeling of despair during this demonstration, as if “things are worsening and we can do nothing about it” or “It’s just like fighting against a wall...”.

²¹ Data taken at INE – Statistics Portugal (figures of “temporary emigrants” for 2009 and 2010 are not available). [Available online:

www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_destaques&DESTAQUESdest_boui=224712736&DESTAQUESmodo=2, accessed in 2016-04-13].

What happened next was a kind of “institutionalisation” of the protest movements, some of their activists creating new radical left parties, as “Podemos” in Spain, or integrating radical parties already existing, like Syriza in Greece or the Left Bloc in Portugal (*Bloco de Esquerda*, BE, ideologically close to *Podemos* or *Syriza*).

Dissatisfaction and social unrest found again expression in the general elections of October 4, 2015, when the vote for BE rose significantly. Although the right-wing Social Democrat party (PSD) was the party that had the highest number of votes in the legislative elections, it had not the majority of deputies in the Parliament. Thus, an alliance between several left-wing parties brought to power a new government formed by the Socialist Party (with support of the Communist Party (PCP), the Left Bloc (BE) and the Ecological Party “Greens” (PEV)). The new PM is now the socialist António Costa, the former Mayor of Lisbon in 2008–2015, then the main driving personality behind the municipal policies mentioned above²².

We will see, in the following chapters, how some of Lisbon’s movements of resistance – like *Precários Inflexíveis* – used some ACS as a meeting space of debate or for logistics (like organisation of protest’s posters and actions). We will analyse the relationship between some ACS and these movements, regarding their role of active resistance in the context of this general political context (e.g. Casa de São Lázaro or Ministério, for instance, or even Mob, Fábrica do Braço de Prata and LxFactory).

*

²² See “Brief history of Lisbon’s urban planning and architecture”, years 2000s (Chapter 5.1.1., p. 114).

5.1.3. Street Art

Street Art and murals have become a major artistic scene of Lisbon in the last years. However, the coloured murals tradition goes back to the period of the Carnation revolution, when they held a strong political content. We will see how this “art of the streets” evolved until our days, how it reflected the *Zeitgeist* of the city, and what impact these wide canvas had as works of art or, instead, as a means of political expression.

Murals of the Revolution

On the course of PREC¹ – the period between April 25, 1974, and November 25, 1975 – a huge importance was suddenly given to culture, which exploded in multiple forms. First of all, some political meetings became cultural events (e.g. *Festa do Avante*, the annual festivity organised by the Portuguese Communist Party, still keeps this attitude today...). Then, the idea of revolution was present everywhere, as the historian Tiago Avó² highlights (Avó 2014):

- in music (e.g. Zeca Afonso, Sérgio Godinho, José Mário Branco, Fausto);
- on television (e.g. *Zip Zip*, documentaries, live reporting);
- in theatre (e.g. Comuna, Cornucópia, Barraca, O Bando. During the revolution all theatre groups played Brecht, in between other plays; in the factories, in the evening and after work time, workers also played theatre!);
- in literature³ (e.g. *Levantado do Chão* by José Saramago, among many other examples);
- in cinema⁴ (e.g. *Deus, Pátria, Autoridade* (1976) and *Bom Povo Português* (1981), directed by Rui Simões; *Torre Bela* (1975), directed by Thomas Harlan; *Povo e as Armas*, directed by *Colectivo de Trabalhadores da Actividade Cinematográfica* (1977));
- in plastic arts (e.g. murals on the streets and the painted walls in factories, bringing a new aesthetics to work places).

Political murals were everywhere, painted in vivid colours and in a naive style, conveying of course political propaganda but in a way where the aesthetics was an important element. Visual art was very much used to serve political purposes, the iconography frequently being addressed to Marx, Lenin or Mao, along with collective representations of the people (like the workers and the peasantry) (img 49), reminding those murals we can still see nowadays in Cuba (img 50). The city walls – as the people themselves – were then strongly politicised.

¹ *Período Revolucionário Em Curso* (Ongoing Revolutionary Period).

² Tiago Avó is a researcher on the cultural Portuguese situation during PREC's period.

³ For additional information about this period, check the Documental Centre of April 25 of Coimbra University (Centro Documental do 25 de Abril, available at: www1.ci.uc.pt/cd25a/wikka.php?wakka=th2).

⁴ Films produced more recently about this period: *Linha vermelha*, directed by José Filipe da Costa (2012); *Outro país*, directed by Sérgio Tréfaut (2008).

After the enthusiasm of the PREC, a period of counter-revolution came, although moderate. The self-management processes stopped, each person and each thing being put in their “proper” places (e.g. theatre in the theatre halls, not in the factory). When the 1990s arrived, a period of large events opened, in the context created by European directives and policies (e.g. Lisbon, European capital of culture, Expo’98...). Culture – or at least the “proper” culture – never again had the force it had during PREC, according to Tiago Avó.

2005-2015

As we know, one of the characteristics of street art is being ephemeral. As we can notice today, when wandering through Lisbon’s streets, most of the murals produced during the PREC’s period have been erased. Those existing in Av. 24 de Julho, for instance, have recently been erased to give place to giant publicity posters (img 51). This action, of course, was polemical, and people complained about. However, this matter was soon forgotten, and Lisboners meanwhile got used to see those otherwise aggressive advertising panels on their way to work...

According to Sara Eugénio – who made a Master thesis on Cultural Management⁵ and explored the relationship between urban art and the art market in the Portuguese field (Eugénio 2013) – *muralism* always has a message and a theme, just like we have seen in the case of PREC’s murals. *Murals* are often proposed by someone, or commissioned. Today they are often produced only with decorative purposes. Sara clarifies us, during an interview (Eugénio 2014), about the wide and complex contemporary world of painted walls. First of all, she makes clear that *urban art* is different from *street art*. *Street art* includes *urban art* and *graffiti*. *Graffiti* is “an improved” *tag*, and *tags* are only names (signatures), written by *writers*, having therefore purely territorial purposes (Sara clarifies that *writers* do not want/wish to be *artists*). Furthermore, *urban art* is different from *muralism*, and also different from *public art*. *Public art* is always commissioned, and therefore remunerated, always having a legal character. Sometimes *public art* can include *urban art*.

According to the sociologist Ricardo Campos (2014), *graffiti* is an anonymous way of communication done by the common citizen usually in the dark, and is often used as a satirical and protest way of vernacular expression. The fact of existing on the city’s walls means they are addressed to everyone and to no specific people at the same time. Campos mentions the two main traditions of *graffiti*, according to the Catalan academic Joan Gari:

- the European, of poetic, philosophic or politic nature (img 52);
- the North-American, linked to the mass culture and pop iconography, holding mostly a figurative and imagistic expression (img 53).

The North-American tradition has been the predominant one in the last years, worldwide and also in the Portuguese urban context (*graffiti* of big dimensions, using the *tag* and *throw-up*

⁵ *Arte Urbana no séc XXI – Rupturas, continuidades, vanguardas* (Eugénio 2013).



Img 49. Political murals painted in Lisbon during the Revolution.

(Images source: CML Photographic Archive and Centro de Documentação 25 de Abril, published online at <http://citizengrave.blogspot.ch/2011/12/coisas-do-prec-murais-politicos-1975.html> and <http://citizengrave.blogspot.ch/2012/10/murais-politicos-1977-1983.html>).

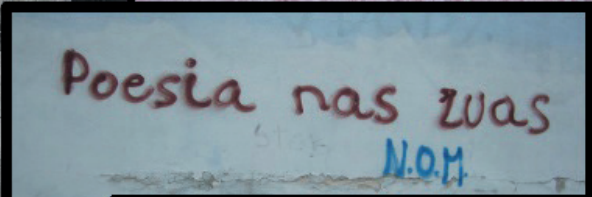
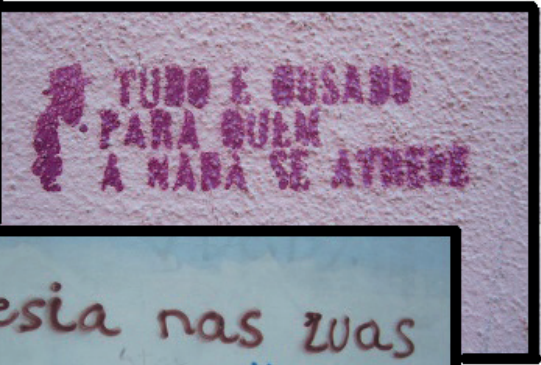
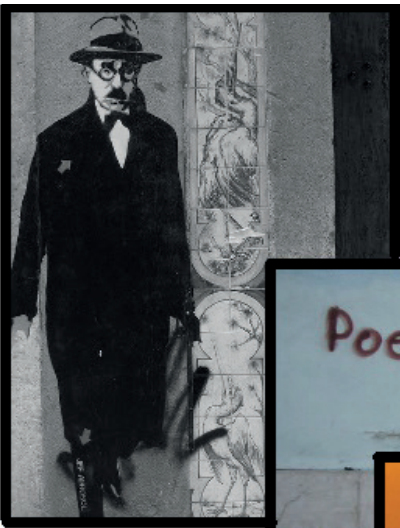


Img 50. Political murals in Cuba (2015).



Img 51. Avenida 24 de Julho, after the revolution (MES propaganda) and today (publicity panels).

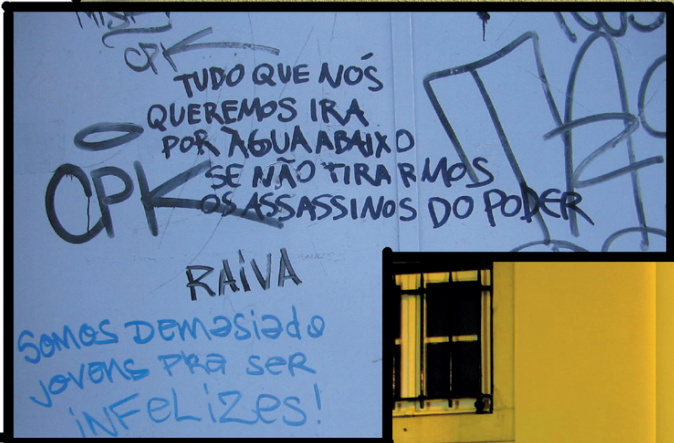
(Images source: CML Photographic Archive and the website <http://marketeer.pt/2011/02/09/optimus-comunica-em-outdoor-com-blacklight-de-266-metros/>).



< Img 52. Poetry on the walls of Lisbon in the 2000s.



Img 53. Graffiti of "North American tradition", on the walls of Lisbon in the 2000s.



Img 54. Political slogans tags and stencils on the streets of Lisbon, in the 2010s. >



technique). A common language can be found, using similar ways of production and aesthetic appreciation (Campos 2014).

Lisbon's walls underwent, after the period of the revolutionary murals, a process of depoliticisation. However, some years ago, a new popular desire of political communication has come back, just like the demonstrations came back on the streets of the capital as a result of the general alienation and precarious Portuguese social situation (img 54). The streets found again their resistance role of communication on their walls, seen as privileged and concrete physical places (complemented with the virtual space of social networks) to criticise and challenge existent social and political difficulties, through words, slogans and images (using the aerosol of stencil technique) (Campos 2014)⁶. But not only political issues are addressed. Some "commentaries" are also made about the decaying situation of the buildings of the city (img 55, 56).

More or less at the same time, Lisbon has become known as one of the capitals of street art⁷. Several organisations, projects and festivals are now welcoming and promoting 'the wall' as an artistic support *par excellence*: GAU⁸, Underdogs⁹ (the art gallery of the famous street artist known as Vhils), Projecto CRONOS¹⁰, APAURB (*Associação Portuguesa de Arte Urbana*, Portuguese Association of Urban Art), Festival *Wool* (Covilhã and **LxFactory**) or Festival *Walk'n'Talk* (Azores).

Galeria de Arte Urbana, or GAU (Gallery of Urban Art), is "an alternative model of cultural equipment" of the municipality, according to Sílvia Câmara (in charge for this department of cultural heritage), which exists since the mandate of António Costa. It was created to help the diffusion of the artistic expression in urban space, covering graffiti and tags, from the most subversive to the most artistic expression (Câmara 2013, 116). GAU's aim is, on the one hand, to fight vandalism acts that several classified buildings suffer and, on the other hand, to value street art, offering the graffitiers specific places to express themselves (e.g. Calçada da Glória, img 57). Sílvia Câmara realises that the graffiti has an important role of critique of the degraded conditions of the built heritage, since the tagging and painting in their walls contributes to mark those kinds of buildings, and therefore to identify them. She explains that this is one of the reasons why, before erasing the tagging and the painting¹¹, an inventory is made of them in an online site (called *Museu Efémero*). Behind the municipality's strategy is the consideration

6 Curiously, the article written by Campos mentioning this revival of the political protest on Lisbon's walls was victim of censorship (Available at: www.tvi24.iol.pt/sociedade/ics/revista-analise-social-suspensa-devido-a-linguagem-ofensiva. Accessed in 22.03.2016).

7 See more informations at the end of the "Urban Rental Law" (p. 116).

8 <https://issuu.com/galeriadearturbana> & www.facebook.com/galeriadearturbana.

9 www.under-dogs.net

10 <http://cargocollective.com/Crono/Manifesto>, responsible for the murals in Avenida Fontes Pereira de Melo, inviting international artists like Blu or Os Gémeos (2009), supported by CML, who provides the walls' authorisations (see "Urban Rental Law", p. 116).

11 The municipality has a service that does this job. One of the first actions done in this sense was the erasing process of Bairro Alto tags. These tags had, in the last years, become one of Bairro Alto's main visual identity characteristics. This action, along with the shortening of the opening schedules of the bars, radically changed the image and the night living experience of this place, which is now much calmer and more surveyed (see Chapter 5.2.1.). Its nightlife, which was known for its conviviality, the *botellon* and a big spontaneity, has almost been reduced to a touristic life. If previously inhabitants complained about noise and about all other problems that come with such an intense nightlife, today this neighbourhood suffers the same gentrification kind of process as Baixa, where the real estate market has rather been favouring the buildings renovation to host hotels than promoting housing. Nonetheless, it should be clear that the gentrification process of Bairro Alto actually started precisely due to the success of its nightlife.

Img 55. The critique to the degraded material conditions of Lisbon's edifications (2012-13). >



Img 57. Panel installed by GAU in Calçada da Glória (2013).



that Lisbon is becoming attractive for tourists and young creatives (Câmara 2013). It is therefore believed that the integration of urban art in the municipal policies, – under the form of workshops, awareness campaigns, guided tours and walls available on purpose for this practice – “allow inhabitants and artists to renew the way they look and behave” about this popular artistic heritage, an “expression that has, for a long time now, been controversial” (Câmara 2013, 117). Furthermore, Silvia Câmara highlights the existing parallel between graffiti and Portuguese tiles, understanding them as a

Img 56. Broken wall in Campo de Ourique, and a painting of a cartoon-style explosion. This painting was later replaced by a publicity mural.



different way of dealing with façades that varies according to a matter of generation and, of course, of the used techniques (Câmara 2013, 118).

However, two aspects seem contradictory in the municipality's approach. The first is related to the Law nº 61/2013 of 23 of August, which establishes the rules applicable to "graffiti, postings, pecking and other forms of alteration, even if temporary, of the original characteristics of exterior surfaces of buildings, floors, sidewalks, walls and other infrastructures.", which establishes fines that might vary between 100 euros and 25,000 euros¹². So, on the one hand, the municipality shows its tolerant attitude towards these kinds of practices, but on the other hand the state punishes them, by criminalising the practices and applying amazingly high fines to the "vandals". The second aspect is related precisely to what GAU calls "the integration of urban art": from the moment canvas are offered to artists to paint, in official and recognised walls, this art – whose basic principles are precisely based on illegality and subversion – is becomes absolved/acceptable, since it stops being transgressive to become a "work of art". Sílvia da Câmara is nonetheless aware of the limitations of this program (Câmara 2013, 118), saying that the institutionalisation of subversive forms of political protest and/or popular expression – which are supposed to resist to any idea of framing – is suspicious and might become susceptible of misappropriation by the market, through publicity panels or sale, in order to make profit out of it with no right.

This subject was addressed during an interview with two Portuguese street artists and illustrators – CorleOne and Kruella d'Enfer, to whom was asked if they did not feel used, or instrumentalised by GAU and/or their "clients" (CorleOne and Kruella d'Enfer 2014). They explain that often they are invited to develop a project, and in the end their work is used in a different way than the one they initially expected. They clarified that many times it is not possible to have total control over the final product, once the job is done. When this happens, they regret about that collaboration. They believe that certain brands or companies want to be identified with a concept of irreverence, youth and counterculture, because it is appealing to young people (who might even already know a few of the artist from the streets, creating therefore a much more immediate empathetic relationship). On the one hand, street art has become a fashion: you can find it in brands, films, series... It has actually become part of our daily life. On the other hand, it has also become a business, used by companies and art galleries. How is it then possible to make art for the streets as a way of life, and not only as a hobby? CorleOne says there exist two options: one can work at McDonalds during the day to gain a salary, and paint walls during the night (which means you need to be a superhero to be able to lead two different lives), or one can choose a "healthier" and more comfortable option, which combines work and pleasure together. However, CorleOne adds that the artists must learn how to filter their work, and understand what are their limits and how to separate what belongs to "business", to a "gallery" or to the "street" (i.e., illegal work). But of course, it often happens that they are accused by friends, who support more radical approaches, of "selling the soul to the devil".

Precisely on this matter, it is interesting to mention the recent action of the Italian artist Blu

¹² Available at: www.dn.pt/portugal/interior/lei-incapaz-de-combater-a-realizacao-ilegal-de-graffiti-4136792.html and <http://p3.publico.pt/actualidade/sociedade/9085/lei-portuguesa-estabelece-multas-anti-graffiti-ate-25-mil-euros> (both accessed on 22.03.2016).

(March 2016) protesting against the rich and powerful who make profit out of art which belongs to the streets. Blu decided to erase all the *graffiti* he had made the last twenty years in his hometown Bologna in the moment this city decided to host the exhibition *Banksy & Co.*. The show is composed of street art paintings which were removed from the streets by specialised technicians in order to exhibit them on a space where, to be able to see them, people have to pay. Blu accuses the organisers of misusing the work of others through an arrogant attitude, and transforming life and creativity into material goods, this happening in a city where painting graffiti can lead to 16 years in prison¹³.

Another curious event, this time taking place under a local context, is the one of the replica of the paintings that the National Museum of Ancient Art (Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (MNAA)) had exposed in Lisbon's downtown, under the frame of the exhibition called "Coming Out - e se o museu saísse à rua?" ("what if the museum would go out on the streets?"). The replica were 'robbed' but later on were found attached to the walls of the buildings of a peripheral social neighbourhood of Lisbon. The thieves, who became then known as "Robin-of-Arts", explain that they appreciated the initiative of the museum, but they think it should be spread to other parts of town. The direction of the museum, in turn, was positively surprised by the impact the exhibition had, not only due to the visibility given to the museum, but also to the way the city has interacted with the paintings and to the fact they had not been vandalised instead¹⁴.

We can see, in Lisbon as in many other cities, an interest in using the streets in a commercial or entertaining way. There has been a growing tendency for the commercialisation of public space. One example can be seen in the way street art has recently been adopted by the agents of the market, but there exist other examples, like the ones mentioned by Acciaiuoli. She refers a series of concrete situations where some of Lisbon's public spaces have been 'temporarily borrowed' for publicity campaigns and events with the support of the municipality. Some cases may be mentioned: Praça da Flores, borrowed for an event promoted by a brand of cars; Jardim da Estrela, taken temporarily by a supermarket chain; Avenida da Liberdade occupied by another supermarket chain and by the Confederation of Farmers, in order to promote the event named "Mega-Picnic" (which completely blocked the traffic). However, the predicted counterpart to be provided by those that developed such events – i.e., the funding for requalification and rehabilitation works – is unfortunately not visible (Acciaiuoli 2015, 669-73).

¹³ Available at: www.publico.pt/culturaipsilon/noticia/blu-apagou-todos-os-murais-de-bolonha-em-protesto-contra-exposicao-de-street-art-1726456 [accessed 17 March 2016] and www.wumingfoundation.com/giap/?p=24357 [accessed 12 March 2016].

¹⁴ Available at: <http://observador.pt/2015/12/06/robin-das-artes-tirou-quatro-quadros-do-chiado-e-deu-os-ao-mirantejo/> [accessed 06 December 2015].

This chapter allows us to frame a part of the context of the visual aesthetics that are connected to ACSs, as we will see in the following chapters. Politicised or purely artistic graffiti or other forms of street art, are all intrinsically linked to contemporary spaces of alternative culture. This kind of visual expression has been adopted by many of the ACSs, in different manners:

- in relation to the artistic practices these spaces develop;
- in order to create particular spatial ambiances (inspired on underground/grassroots contexts);
- as a means to express political ideological positions, based on aesthetics of resistance.

Street art is at the core of many resistance and compromise issues in what concerns urban and cultural aspects, these different kinds of approaches being firstly analysed in direct relation to each case-study, and further discussed as a potential source of inspiration, direct action or manipulation.

*

5.1.4. Official Culture

Municipal Cultural Strategies for Lisbon

The public speeches that arose in Portugal, while austerity measures were being implanted, often refer that the existence of limited resources may work as an encouragement to find alternative solutions in terms of creativity. Nevertheless, according to the cultural manager António Pinto Ribeiro, creativity requires interdisciplinarity and interchangeability among artists, art schools, universities, research centres and scientists, in order to be successful, and such ideology can only eventually work on a small-scale and short-term projects. In fact, conditions of poverty can only lead to the failure of innovation, impoverishment of the cities and also to a dramatic reduction of people's sense of belonging (Pinto Ribeiro 2013).

Being aware of the demanding requirements of this situation, the municipality of Lisbon (**CML** - Câmara Municipal de Lisboa) ordered in 2008 the execution of a cultural strategic plan, to be developed by a team of researchers of several professional backgrounds and linked to academic research platforms. In the resulting document (the Strategic Charter of Lisboa 2010-2024¹, which includes the "Cultural Strategies for Lisbon" (Costa 2009)) the relationship between 'creativity' and 'urban development' is stressed. It is a document that recognises the importance of cultural and creative activities in the economic development of the city, and where several elements can be found that prescribe the creation of the necessary conditions to attract a competitive "creative class", as inspired by Florida and Landry's approaches. It is also assumed that, through culture and multiculturalism, social integration may occur overcoming dichotomies and conflicts in specific areas and also in particular ways of acting, like economy vs. culture, public vs. private, ephemeral vs. permanent, local vs. global (Costa 2009, 27-29). Furthermore, the entire city of Lisbon is considered to be a "cultural object" (rather than focusing just on a few exceptional architectural icons), thereby ensuring the access to culture of populations usually excluded from that access (Honrado 2013, 58). This perspective of integration, in part, has been focused both on excluded and degraded areas of the city, which have been the target of revitalisation and regeneration initiatives and programmes (e.g. *BipZip* or *Orçamento Participativo*). These programmes appeal to active citizen participation, aiming at a stronger social inclusion.

Tools, programmes and facilities used to support CML cultural Strategies

Three relevant tools and programmes, in the context of this research – which curiously have a direct impact in the alternative cultural life spaces of Lisbon – are:

EGEAC – Empresa de Gestão de Equipamentos e Animação Cultural (Company for the Management of Cultural Equipment and Animation) – is the municipal management company responsible for the cultural animation and equipment, created (under a different name, however) in 1995.

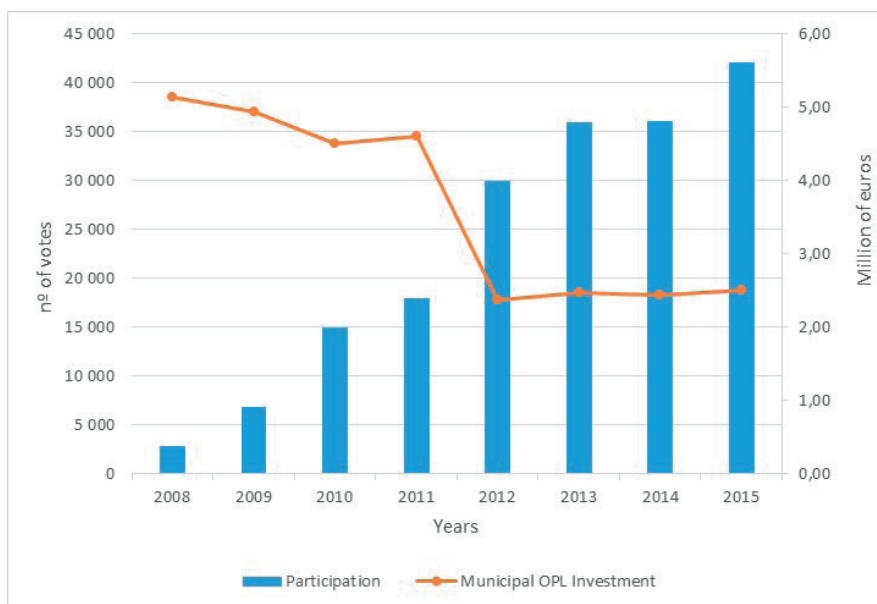
¹ Available at: www.cm-lisboa.pt/en/city-council/city-council/strategic-charter.

This company is responsible for the management of the main touristic sites², of several cultural equipments³ and for the activation of the public space through distinct initiatives and events⁴. The access (which is mostly free of charge) to the cultural events contributes – it is expected – to integrate varied sectors of the population (Honrado 2013).

OPL (*Orçamento Participativo de Lisboa*) is the Lisbon Participatory Budgeting programme, a democratic process approved by CML in 2009, through which people decide on how municipal resources are used⁵. This process intends to reduce the gap between the real needs of the population and their understanding by the public officials, as well as to stimulate the active and responsible participation of citizens.

The table 1 shows clearly the effects of “austerity” in the investment of the CML on the OPL program. There was a relatively high investment in the beginning of the (from 2008 to 2011, an average of 4.8 million euros/year), but there was a sudden decrease to 2.5 million in 2012 (which remained stable in the following years). On the other side, the citizens’ participation has increased steadily, revealing a growing public interest in this programme⁶.

Table 1 - Evolution (2008-2015) of Citizen Participation and Municipal OPL Investment



(Data source: www.lisboaparticipa.pt/#/edicoes-antiores)

2 e.g. Castelo de S. Jorge (S. Jorge Castle), Padrão dos Descobrimentos (Monument to the Discoveries). See www.egeac.pt/actividade.

3 e.g. Several theatres, museums and galleries.

4 e.g. *Festas de Lisboa* (the Festivities of the city occur during the month of June) and many others.

5 Resoluções dos Órgãos do Município in Boletim da Câmara de Lisboa, 2º Suplemento ao Boletim Municipal nº 791, p. 708 (16), Abril 2009.

6 According to the information available on the website Lisboa Participa (<http://www.lisboaparticipa.pt/projetos-vencedores>, accessed on 2016-05-07), of a total of 88 selected projects between 2009 and 2015, 34 had been concluded, 13 were work in progress, 18 were under contracting procedure and 23 still under study. In 2016 this program has been enhanced, in order to give a larger executing role to the parish councils and improve the territorial equity (Boaventura 2016).

*BIP/ZIP - Programa Bairros e Zonas de Intervenção Prioritária (Areas and Neighbourhoods of Priority Intervention Programme)*⁷ is one of the specific implementations of the above mentioned Strategic Charter of Lisboa, and was created in 2010 within the context of another municipal program (PLH - Programa Local de Habitação). The idea was to articulate the policy of building rehabilitation with other municipal policies, namely in the socio-economic, the environmental and the urbanistic-legal fields. The identification and classification of the selected areas and zones (67 BIP/ZIP domains, in 2010) was based on a set of social, urbanistic and environmental indicators. Two important aspects of BIP/ZIP, apart from the buildings-rehabilitation, are the promotion of local partnerships, based on strong social components of inclusion and participation, and the improvement of the living conditions of the population⁸.

As we will see next, Bip/Zip has been used as a tool to start many projects that are today part of Lisbon's alternative cultural life, having a major role in the ACS context, even if it is an institutional programme.

According to the Strategic Charter of Lisboa, apart from the big institutional cultural structures existing in Lisbon (**FCG** – Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, **CCB** – Centro Cultural de Belém, **Culturgest**, among others⁹), a boom has occurred in the last years in what concerns less formal cultural experiences, presenting diverse formats, scales and vocations. Two particular cases¹⁰, which are analysed in this dissertation as ACS, have been considered in this document as successful examples that should be supported by the municipality: **Fábrica do Braço de Prata** and **Lx Factory** (Costa 2009, 64, 86).

*

Before moving on to the analysis of the selected case studies of this thesis, 3 Cultural Institutions will be briefly addressed in order to highlight how influences have been received in both directions, between more 'informal' and more 'institutional' spheres. Exchanges and mutual influences might concern artistic and curatorial approaches, subjects of interest or spatial kinds of occupation and aesthetics.

⁷ Available at: <http://bipzip.cm-lisboa.pt/> and <http://habitacao.cm-lisboa.pt/documentos/1297367449H9pYN4dv1Mg00UU8.pdf>.

⁸ The responsible of the PLH department did an evaluation of the program in the end of its 4th edition in 2014 and pointed out that only 2 out of a total of 149 projects didn't achieve the expected results. This corresponds to an execution rate of 98.7%. (available at: www.publico.pt/local/noticia/com-o-programa-bipzip-as-organizacoes-emanciparamse-1666131 published on 12/08/2014).

⁹ e. g. Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Museu dos Coches, Museu do Oriente, Museu Coleção Berardo.

¹⁰ Some other ACS are mentioned though: Galeria Zé dos Bois, ZBD, Associação Bacalhoeiro, Filho Único or Associação Santiago Alquimista.

About 3 Cultural Institutions

Three important cultural institutions of the Lisbon's cultural scene are worth to mention in this context. Though distinct from ACS at several levels, these institutions' strategies are also oriented to present innovative proposals dealing with contemporary creation.

The Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian¹¹, **FCG** is a Portuguese private foundation of public utility created in 1956 by the petrol magnate Calouste Gulbenkian. The Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos – **Culturgest**¹² is a cultural organisation founded in 1993 by the Portuguese public bank *Caixa Geral dos Depósitos* (CGD). Centro Cultural de Belém, **CCB**¹³ is a public cultural institution that occupies a state building finished in 1998 and designed to host cultural and leisure activities.

Until the last decade of the 20th century, **FCG** has been the most important cultural institution in Lisbon and even in Portugal (Pinto Ribeiro, 2006, p. 327). Culturgest and CCB were built after the integration of Portugal into the European Union (in 1986) and were somehow associated with events of great magnitude, like Lisbon Capital of Culture (1994) or Expo 98. In a way, they resulted from a need of promotion and of expressing the cultural identity of the country¹⁴. The three institutions can be considered as important references in the context of the official cultural institutions.

The three institutions present and promote sometimes alternative and innovative projects (Falcón 2009, 19, 22, 24). For instance, **FCG** has organised “underground garage parties” in the car parking (img 58) (in a kind of a nostalgic attitude for the 1980-90s teenager punk/rock style parties), and exhibitions have been organised, presenting somehow subversive artistic approaches in connection with politically engaged subjects (e.g. “Artists engaged? Maybe”, img 59”).

Culturgest, on the other hand, has offered philosophical debate sessions about aesthetics, politics and art, addressing sometimes subversive themes¹⁵, in the context of which the *Rescaldo* Festival¹⁶ has presented some of the most promising genre-free music in Portugal through experimental and creative projects. This cultural institution has also paid attention to the contemporary trendy practice of urban gardening, which in the last years has gained force as a symbol of a sustainable urban resistance practice¹⁷ (imgs 60, 61).

CCB, in turn, has supported proposals of emergent creators presenting risky projects, especially in the fields of dance, theatre and multidisciplinary arts. These kinds of projects have their own space for presentation in the CCB, called the Black Box (Falcón 2009, 24).

¹¹ www.gulbenkian.org.

¹² culturgest.pt/info/fundacao.html.

¹³ www.ccb.org.

¹⁴ See “Brief history of Lisbon's urban planning and architecture”, years 1990s (Chapter 5.1.1., p. 113).

¹⁵ Available at: www.culturgest.pt/arquivo/2014/04/estetica politica.html (accessed on 20.06.2014).

¹⁶ Promotors: Culturgest and Trem Azul.

¹⁷ www.publico.pt/local/noticia/quem-quer-fazer-uma-horta-na-cidade-1660308 (accessed on 25.06.2014), www.culturgest.pt/arquivo/2014/06/veramantero.html and <https://sites.google.com/site/umahortaemcadaesquina/> (accessed on 30.03.2014).



Img 58. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian garage-party.



Img 59. FCG political engaged art exhibition theme.

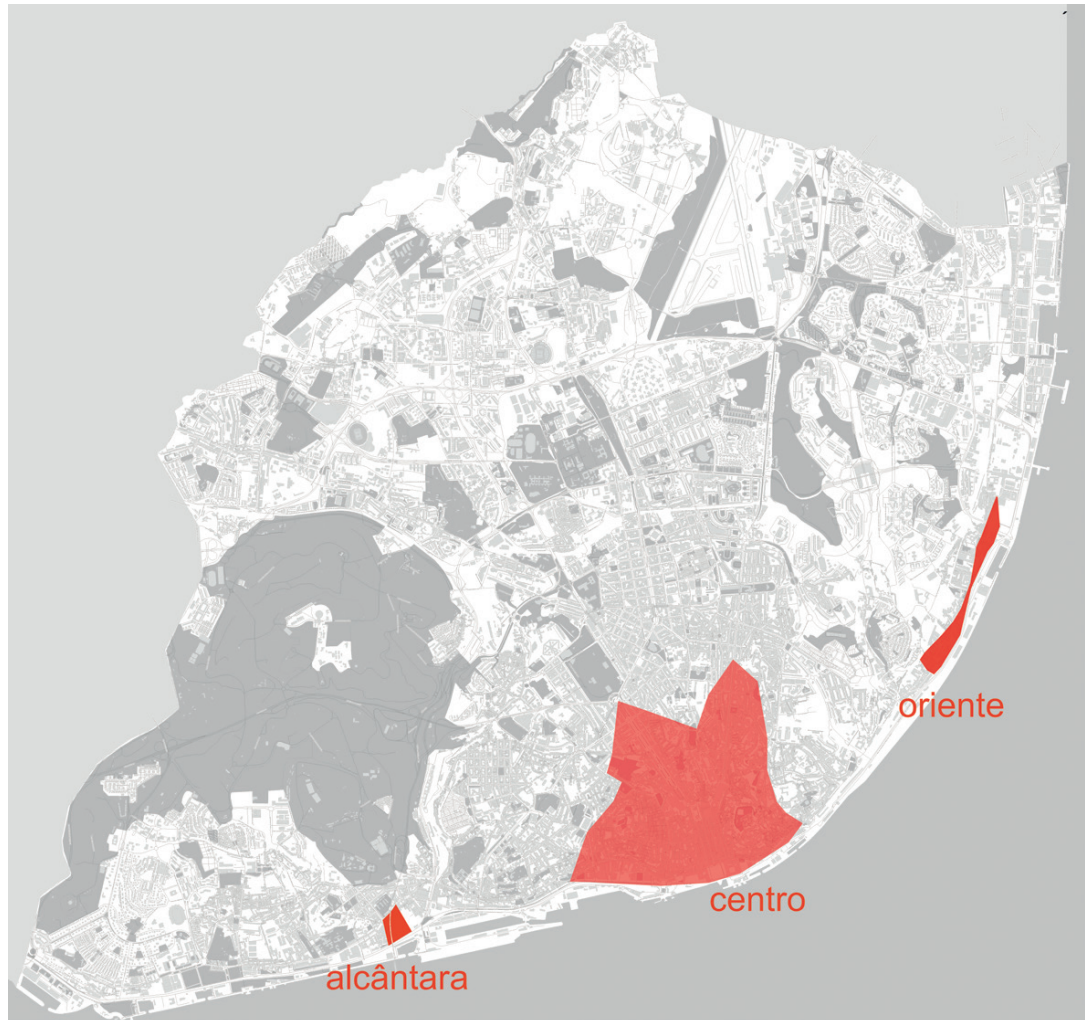


Img 60. Culturgest's debate session on "Aesthetics and Politics between the Arts"

Img 61. Urban gardening installation.



5.2. Mapping the Alternative Cultural Spaces in the City



Img 62. The three main poles of the contemporary alternative cultural life of Lisbon since, approximately, the year 2005.

We have seen the urban development of the city of Lisbon since the time of the big structural urban renovations that occurred after the destructive earthquake of 1755. We have also seen the progressive settling of Lisbon's contemporary physical and administrative limits and, afterwards, the successive land use plans for the city that were established since the middle of the 20th century. Then, the emancipatory-empowering experiences of the revolutionary SAAL process, in the 1970s, were highlighted. After that, we followed the urban strategies adopted in the most recent years, those which progressively included more and more elements of a cultural strategy, this reaching a peak at the turn of the 2010s decade (whose mixed intentions – social and cultural – have clearly been expressed in the Strategic Charter of Lisboa 2010-2024). Furthermore, it was important to expose the urban legal frame (the Urban Rental Law), whose adoption was the crucial factor that led to the decaying state of a large part of Lisbon's buildings

and, consequently, to the explosive development of the “street art” into an element that became part of the Lisbon’s environment. On the other side, the recent changes introduced in that legal frame help us to understand, at least partially, the growing touristification process that Lisbon has been suffering in the last years.

How are then all these issues linked, more concretely, to the alternative cultural life and to the spaces of Lisbon? We will start by presenting the focused areas of study, which correspond to the three main poles of the contemporary alternative cultural life of Lisbon (since, approximately, the year 2005 – img 62):

1. Central area (Bairro Alto, Cais do Sodré, Poço dos Negros, Boavista / Alfama, Graça / Anjos, Intendente, Martim Moniz, Mouraria, Colina de Santana);
2. Alcântara (Calvário, Junqueira, 24 de Julho);
3. Oriente (Marvila, Braço de Prata, Beato, Xabregas).

Lisbon, whose central area is a hilly urban space unfold through a quite irregular mesh, can be experienced wondering up and down, through labyrinthine streets. Its main road axes tend to follow the natural elements – the hills and the former stream courses – the points of reference of the walker are not always clear and straight. A particular aspect of this city concerns the way it seems constantly possible to find unknown paths over and over again. This walking experience being possible in the central area of the city, the sunlight and the visual contact with the river affect positively our experience. This is a distinctive aspect when one makes a comparison with the cities of Ljubljana or Geneva, mostly flat cities, and whose expressions of sunlight are scarcer.

These topographic and built elements, together, have also an important impact on Lisbon’s night walk and life experience. This combination is, curiously, somehow intrinsically linked to the cultural alternative life of the city, since many of the events proposed by the ACS happen in after-work schedules, and might last until early morning. There is, for instance, a good description of Lisbon’s nightlife published in the book *Le goût de Lisbonne*, wrote by the French writer Jean-Noël Mouret in 2002, where this nocturnal characteristic is quite clear:

Unquestionably, Lisbon is a city of night owls. Here, the sleepless nights do not imply any form of marginalisation, being a night owl is the norm, to such an extent that a well organised Lisbon native fits a little nap after dinner in order to stay in shape as long as possible (until 4 or 5 am or 7 am on weekends). And it is not obligatory to go to a dancing club at end the evening: a number of bars, particularly in Bairro Alto, have the same schedule. Anyway, rare are the establishments that close before 2am.¹

(Mouret 2002, 121-22)

¹ Translated from French by Filipe do Carmo: “Indiscutablement, Lisbonne est une vie de couche-tard. Ici, les nuit blanches ne sous-entendent aucune forme de marginalité, être noctambule est la norme, à tel point qu’un Lisboète bien organisé s’accorde une petite sieste après le dîner afin de rester en forme le plus longtemps possible (jusqu’à 4 ou 5 heures du matin, voire 7 heures le week-end). Et il n’est pas obligatoire de se rendre en discothèque pour finir la nuit : nombre de bars, en particulier dans le Bairro Alto, observent les mêmes horaires. De toute façon, rares sont les établissements qui ferment avant 2 heures du matin.” (Mouret 2002, 121-22).

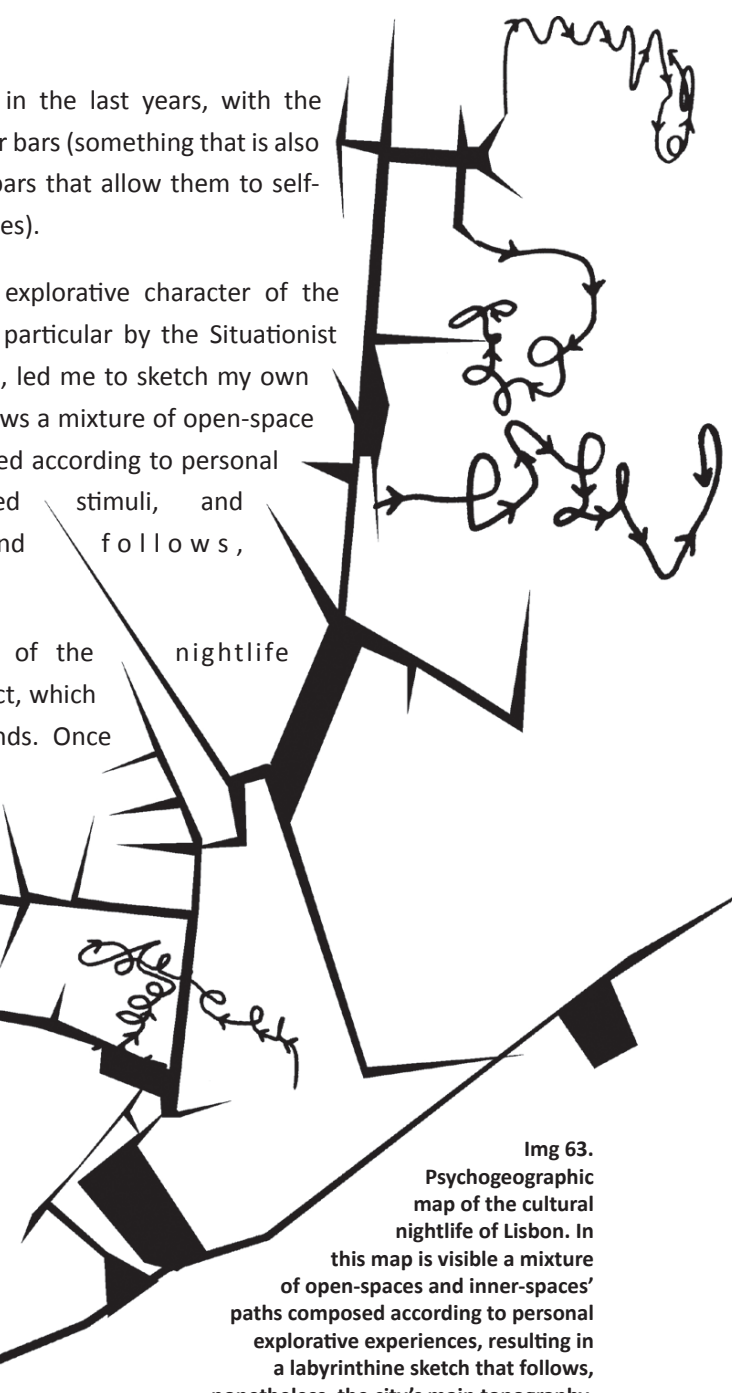
However, this experience changed a bit in the last years, with the tightening of the licensed opening hours for bars (something that is also applicable to most ACS, since they have bars that allow them to self-finance their cultural offer and other charges).

On the other side, the ephemeral and explorative character of the cultural nightlife experiences, inspired in particular by the Situationist approaches of psychogeographic mapping, led me to sketch my own version (img 63). This adapted version shows a mixture of open-space and inner-space paths, which are composed according to personal sensorial experiences and experienced stimuli, and results in a labyrinthine draw that in the end nonetheless, the city's main topography.

The ephemeral character of ACS, and of the spots, leads us to another important aspect, which is the strong changing character of trends. Once more, Mouret highlights this aspect, still based on his experience of the change of the millennium:

... the trendy places change at a tremendous speed, but some neighbourhoods are distinguished for their night animation: Bairro Alto, already mentioned, Chiado, the docks of Alcântara and Santo Amaro, continuing through Avenida 24 de Julho. The nearby Cais do Sodré neighbourhood, despite its bad reputation, has a few beer bars with a very 'british' atmosphere.²

(Mouret 2002, 121-22)



Img 63.
Psychogeographic map of the cultural nightlife of Lisbon. In this map is visible a mixture of open-spaces and inner-spaces' paths composed according to personal explorative experiences, resulting in a labyrinthine sketch that follows, nonetheless, the city's main topography.

² Translated from French by Filipe do Carmo: "...les lieux à la mode changent à une vitesse vertigineuse, mais quelques quartiers se distinguent pour leur animation nocturne : le Bairro Alto, déjà cité, le Chiado, les docks d'Alcântara et de Santo Amaro et, dans leur prolongement, l'avenue 24 de Julho. Tout proche, le quartier de Cais do Sodré, malgré sa mauvaise réputation, recèle quelques bars à bière à l'ambiance très 'british'." (Mouret 2002, 121-22).

All these places continue today to be nightlife areas, somehow less trendy, however. Bairro Alto, for instance, lost his usual users and success to the area of Cais do Sodré, which consequently contributed to a decreased attendance of the other users. So, in the blink of an eye, both areas have become invaded by tourists. Nonetheless, these nightlife areas have always been somehow the preferred places of the alternative cultural life of the city, as we will see.

When focusing on the success of the ACS and on the cultural life of Lisbon, it can be said that both are often presented these days as mandatory places to visit, being mentioned in several international websites, blogs and magazines. The *New York Times* or *Time Out* magazine are two of those that have a part of the responsibility for launching trends and decide about the success or failure of cities and of their ACS. This had already happened with the cities of Berlin or Barcelona, for instance, leading us to have an idea of the power of the role of media in such kinds of processes. Just like Ljubljana, Lisbon has been identified as “the new Berlin” in some blogs, which characterise Lisbon by “Affordable rent, low-cost living and a growing startup scene are attracting young creatives to the Portuguese capital”³.

Furthermore, this process was also triggered by the municipality of Lisbon, who in 2012 still aspired to transform Lisbon into a “competitive, innovative and creative” city, according to its website slogan⁴. Probably aware of the negative consequences that this process was driving the capital to, the mayor’s tone in an online publication, changed a few years later. We notice that the word “creative” was replaced by “internationalised”⁵, and that the main slogan of the website is now “Lisbon, a city for the people”. But Florida’s, Landry’s and Peck’s lessons are not totally forgotten: “...a tolerant urban atmosphere⁶, opportunities for self-realisation, and a rich offer of cultural and leisure activities”⁷ (Holm 2010) seems to define the environment of the “Creative City” desired for Lisbon (Carmo 2013).

According to Pinto Ribeiro, “In times like the present, solutions come up from the purportedly alternative area, proposing a return to an economic system of barter (...). These are episodic solutions for small scale projects, whose longevity is rather short.”⁸ (Pinto Ribeiro 2013). This statement is probably referring to the ACS, those polyvalent and interactive places of culture and of creativity, available for art production and exchange of *savoir faire*, but also identified as spaces of thought and action (Carmo 2013).

³ *Is Lisbon the next Berlin?* (Available at: <http://thespaces.com/2015/08/28/is-lisbon-the-next-berlin/> published on 28.08.15). Other examples are more assertive – *Lisbon is the new Berlin* (Available at <http://brandondonnely.com/post/116910459503/lisbon-is-the-new-berlin>, published in 2015) – and others more embracing to the all European context – *7 reasons Lisbon could be Europe’s coolest city* (Available at http://edition.cnn.com/2014/01/25/travel/lisbon-coolest-city/index.html?hpt=ieu_c2, published on 26.01.2014).

⁴ “Lisboa : Competitiva, Inovadora, Criativa”, in www.cm-lisboa.pt, accessed in March 2012.

⁵ “Cidade competitiva, inovadora e internacionalizada”, in http://issuu.com/camara_municipal_lisboa/docs/af_publicacao_antcosta_web_short/5?e=6409185/3071069, accessed in June 2013.

⁶ Like a multicultural population.

⁷ Like ACS, restaurants, coffee-shops, shops, corresponding to a street level culture.

⁸ My translation of : “Em tempos como os de hoje aparecem soluções do campo supostamente alternativo propondo o regresso a um sistema económico de trocas directas (...). São soluções episódicas, para projectos de pequena escala, cujo tempo de duração é curto.”

Another particular aspect of these ACS is how they work in network logics. Apart from the two mentioned areas of Alcântara and Marvila (which are more independent from this central network, and where one must go on purpose, using a car or one of the scarce public transports of the city, particularly in what concerns the area of Marvila), most of the ACS are elements which are somehow interconnected. Their interactions (intentionally or not) reveal the complexity and richness of Lisbon's urban tissue. As we will see, not all ACS will be studied with the same detail. Some will simply be mentioned, others explored in detail. Anyway, all are, for some reason, relevant in a wider context, relative to their specific nearby area, or to the city.

ACS life stories actually reflect wider urban movements. According to the Professor Chris Pickvance, expert on urban studies, an 'urban movement' is an organisation and/or a collective action which has already lasted a certain period of time (Pickvance 1989, 74). And I believe that the attitude of ACS has evolved in time and a growing participation in the life of the city is visible, which reflects signs of something wider than just individual desires focused solely on self-interest (Carmo 2013):

1. On the one hand, the organisation of events based on principles of spatial proximity or interests affinities (e.g. building occupations⁹, urban gardening, communitarian kitchens, ateliers of bicycle repair, knowledge exchange workshops, debates, legal support, language courses, etc.);
2. On the other hand, the organisation of events outdoors, happening on the public space. Largo do Intendente, for instance, has been the stage of many of such events, promoted by ACS. Several festivals have also reflected this desired of collaboration and visibility of the mentioned spaces, projects and actions.

Festivalisation

Actually, festivals have been increasing exponentially in Lisbon in the last years, different styles being available for all tastes – mass interest and alternative culture. We can basically find three kinds of festivals in Lisbon in the last years (if we exclude the mass festivals like *Rock in Rio* or those sponsored by multinational companies):

1. The festivals promoted by the municipality (or EGEAC, related with the festivities of the city, occurring in large squares, but also in historical neighbourhoods, e.g. Festas de Lisboa) or public-private partnerships (e.g. Mercado de Fusão¹⁰, Lisboa em si¹¹, Lisboa

⁹ See *(Very) Ephemeral Squats*, p. 256.

¹⁰ <http://ncs.pt/mercadodefusao.php>.

¹¹ www.cm-lisboa.pt/en/news/detail/article/lisboa-em-si-concert-with-the-sounds-of-the-city.

mistura¹², Outjazz¹³, FIMFA¹⁴, Monstra¹⁵, DocLisboa¹⁶, Alkantara¹⁷, Temps d'Images¹⁸ etc.);

2. Festivals supported by the municipality, but with a strong participation of local associations and actors (e.g. Festival Todos¹⁹ – happening since 2009 in different areas: Intendente/Mouraria, Poço dos Negros/São Bento, Colina de Santana –, Festival Imigrarte²⁰, Festival AoGosto²¹ (SOU), Festival Largo²²;
3. Festivals and/or performances happening in the interstitial zones of the city, promoted by local actors and the joint action of local associations, self-initiative of ACS, individuals, sometimes in collaboration with cultural organisations Faz-me festas nos Anjos²³, LIS+Bú²⁴, ManPower²⁵, FICA²⁶ – Feira Imaginária da Cultura Alternativa, Festival Condomínio²⁷, Festival Zona Não Viglada²⁸).

The following map (img 64) reflects how these festivals (particularly the last two) coincide with the areas where there is a bigger concentration of ACS, as we will see in the next chapters.

*

At last, another map is presented, which highlights the ensemble of the analysed ACS in Lisbon, reflecting the existence a wide urban and cultural movement that developed in the last years (img 65). It makes us aware that a movement of some relevance appeared and subsists in this city, leading to a profusion of projects, spaces and urban transformations.

12 www.sonsdalousofonia.com/projectos.php?cd_projecto=1.

13 www.ncs.pt/outjazz.php.

14 <http://fimfalx.blogspot.pt/search/label/01%20Apresenta%C3%A7%C3%A3o>.

15 <http://monstrafestival.com/>.

16 www.doclisboa.org/.

17 www.alkantarafestival.pt/.

18 www.tempsdimages.eu/pt/editions/41/events.

19 <http://festivaltodos.com/intro/home>.

20 www.festival-imigrarte.com/.

21 <https://soumovimentoarte.wordpress.com/programacao-2/festival-aogosto/>.

22 www.agendalx.pt/evento/festival-ao-largo#.VzWt1fkrLIU.

23 <http://fazmefestasnosanjos.blogspot.pt/p/blog-page.html>. The festival took place in May 2013 and proposed: a set of debates about mobility; occupying actions; urban gardening; closing down of streets to car traffic for a marathon (while creating a temporary pedestrian path to connect the spaces); mural painting; social and street games; itinerant concerts; urban sound hiking (passeios sonoros); shared kitchen; theatre; flea market; bicycle repair workshops; *photopaper*; etc. .

24 www.agendalx.pt/evento/lis-bu#.VzWvyfkrLIU.

25 <http://culturadeborla.blogs.sapo.pt/manpower-19-dez-rua-poco-dos-negros-2192159>. The festival, in its version of 2014, took place in small local shops. It included underground concerts (japanese pink-punk @destroyed restaurant – casa do monte –, a guy playing an electric piano behind a showcase...), video+photo instalations in bakeries, old electronic radio+tv shops, people selling porno calendars to taxi drivers on the street, Party @Atelier Real (bar, up the stairs, corridor, room, bigger room, kitchen, corridor-patio, left, covered-patio dance floor).

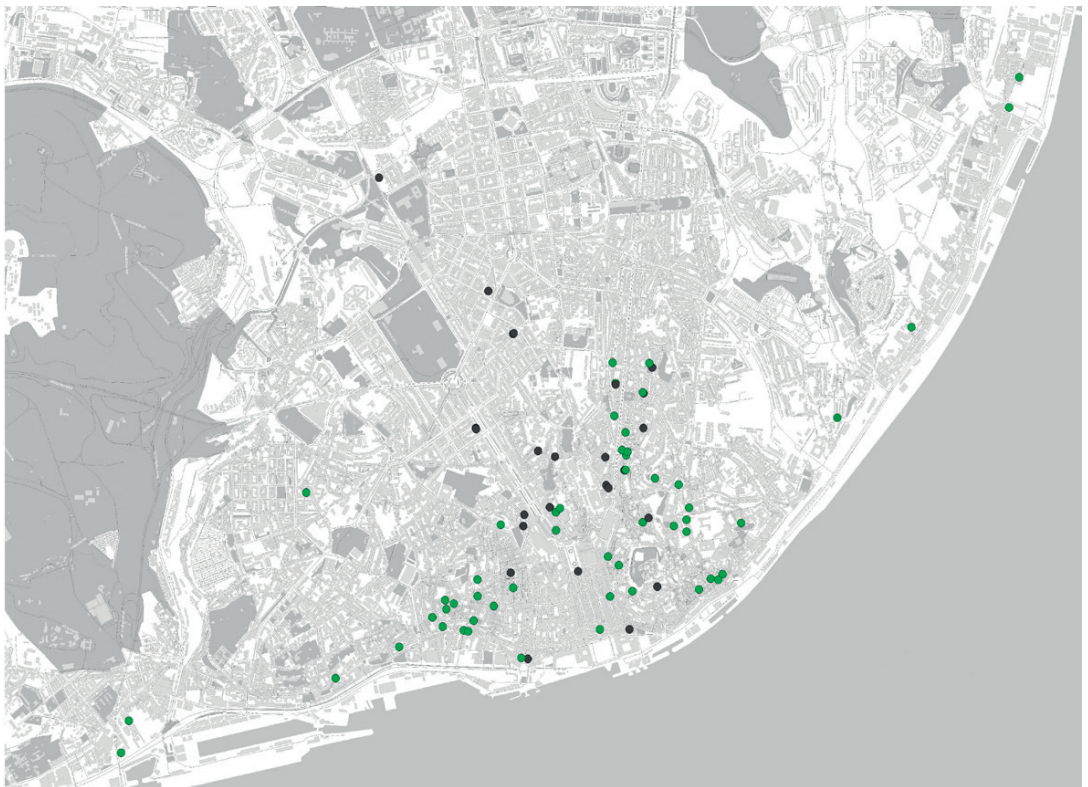
26 <http://ficanocombro.blogspot.ch/>

27 <https://condominiofestival.wordpress.com/>

28 <http://gerador.eu/festival-zona-nao-vigliada/>. The festival occurred at Zona J, Chelas in 2015. See also www.publico.pt/culturaipilon/noticia/lisboa-foi-so-uma-no-festival-zona-nao-vigliada-1709251.



Img 64. Lisbon central area, and a few overlaped maps of festivals that occurred since 2009 (e.g. Todos, Faz-me Festas nos Anjos, FICA).



Img 65. ACS in Lisbon [2008-2015]. The green dots represent the spaces that were still active in 2015, and the black ones those which no longer exist.

The following chapter will address areas of the city where the alternative cultural life of the city was taking place in the last 10 years [2005-2015], identifying the changes that affected it and the movements that were part of it. The mapping described on that chapter addresses the areas affected by urban transformations in the last years, in particular in what concerns the urban processes involved (e.g. revitalisation, gentrification, touristification) or large-scale embargoed urban projects (that did not go forward for several reasons, like economic ones mainly...), in between others.

We will start with the neighbourhood of Bairro Alto, the hotspot of Lisbon's nightlife during the 1990s and 2000s, as an area that has been suffering successive processes (of popularisation, gentrification, normalisation, touristification). Then, the other areas will follow:

1. *Going down... going underground? [Bairro Alto, down the hill]*, explores the areas that were victims of big transformations and excess of success (Bairro Alto + Cais do Sodré & São Paulo + Intendente + Mouraria & Martim Moniz), but also Colina de Santana and some others engaged in public-space/street-level reactivation by bottom-up approaches and citizen initiative (Calçada do Combro, Poço dos Negros, São Paulo, Boavista); most of the areas presented in this chapter follow temporal and geographic rhizome logics;
2. *An underground stream [flowing from Anjos, Regueirão to Mouraria]*, follows the course of an old stream parallel to the main axis road (Av. Almirante Reis) where a more underground alternative cultural life occurs;
3. *De-centralising [Intellectual central peripheries]*, confirming that not all the alternative cultural life of the city takes place in the central area (even though the concerned areas are not really peripheries anymore, despite having been in such a position in the past as former industrial areas), and revealing how cultural/creative projects have replaced commercial-oriented large-scale urban revitalisation projects designed by star-architects.

*

5.2.1. Going Down... Going Underground ?

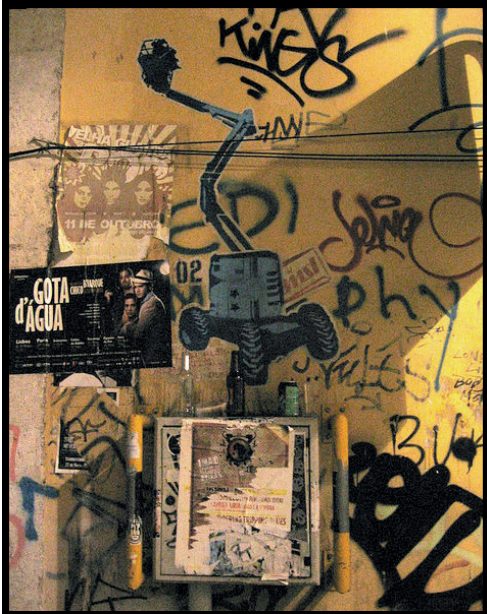
[Bairro Alto, down the hill]

Bairro Alto

This neighbourhood used to have two different kinds of lives: a very popular one, during the day time (with traditional commerce, where neighbours customarily knew each other quite well), and a city scale nightlife meeting point and party place. The “place to be”, if you would want to “go out at night” in Lisbon in the 80s, 90s and 2000s, would be in general Bairro Alto. This trend attracted bohemians from very different generations into the several bars that this neighbourhood offered, or just gathered these people randomly on the streets, somehow everywhere. This would quickly be transformed into a huge crowd practicing the so-called *botellon* at the scale of the neighbourhood itself, this frequently triggering spontaneous meetings and unexpected happenings, which could last until the early morning. Before its nightlife popularity, the neighbourhood was known for its bad reputation (prostitutes) and for being a press centre. Step by step a very rich social mixture was stimulated, along with a large variety of shops and restaurants. These “street level culture” (Florida 2002, 182) characteristics, along with a multitude of small cultural places integrated in the existent urban fabric (like **Galeria Zé dos Bois** or the bookshop **Ler Devagar**), is precisely what Richard Florida considers to be essential in order that a neighbourhood becomes “cool and attractive”. That is why, along these last decades, Bairro Alto has suffered a strong gentrification process.

Bairro Alto’s walls became progressively covered with tags, until this became somehow part of the visual identity of this neighbourhood (img 66). As a central historical neighbourhood, Bairro Alto¹ started to be built around 500 years ago. The particular characteristic of its narrow streets, along with its settlement on an irregular landscape surface, creates nevertheless the idea of having an irregular plan, which is a wrong impression since its plan is actually orthogonal. Probably the night light (and life) experience contributes to originate this labyrinthine feeling.

¹ Galeria Zé dos Bois, or simply ZDB, is one of the best known and one of the oldest ACS existing in Lisbon. It was created in 1994 as a non-profit organisation by a civic initiative. It is focused on research and investigation work by artists involved with visual and performing arts, as well as with films and music. Furthermore it produces and presents exhibitions, promotes artistic residencies, educational programs, theatre, dance performances, lectures, and music concerts (www.zedosbois.org/zdb/informacao). ZDB is not deeply studied in this research due to a misunderstanding I faced when trying to interview their responsible people (a refusal to the interview explained by the fact they felt they were not an “alternative” space but an “independent” one).



Img 66. Tags, paste ups and stickers on the walls of Bairro Alto (2009).

Img 67. Spontaneous live concert of the group *Farra Fanfarra* at Bairro Alto (2008).

Img 68. Bairro Alto today.
(image source: www.joggingroutes.org/2012/06/lisbon-bairro-alto-running-route.html)

Img 69. CCTV in Bairro Alto, working since May 2014.



In the early 2000s Bairro Alto became the nightlife hotspot of the city, somehow out of control: it was overcrowded on weekends, the noise and the smell starting to be unbearable for many of the inhabitants. So, all of a sudden a law came out that limited the opening time of the bars: at first, they would have to close at 4 am, then at 2 am. The bar managers and the nightlife people in general complained, and today bars can be open until 2 am on weekdays and until 3 am on the weekends². Nevertheless, concomitantly with this stringency, the success of Bairro Alto as a social gathering place led to:

- a process of *touristification* (more and more hostels, “typical” restaurants and mainstream bars, open air terraces and souvenir shops);
- a normalisation of its spaces in general (pedestrian streets, several measures to prevent wild car parking, restaurant terraces occupying the street pavements, stronger public lighting and the complete erasure of the tags, for instance, img 68);
- an increasing control and surveillance by the authorities (a panel, at the entrance of the neighbourhood, warning us of the use of CCTV; frequent police shifts) (img 69);
- a displacement of the bohemians into other parts of town (down the hill to Cais do Sodré, São Paulo or Poço dos Negros, and farther away towards Intendente, Martim Moniz and Mouraria, as we will see) (see img 70 and 104).

These latter neighbourhoods - Cais do Sodré, São Paulo, Poço dos Negros, Intendente, Martim Moniz and Mouraria - were also already nightlife spots, though some of them could be identified with the hard-core underground scene, known for prostitution and drugs, somehow forgotten or tolerated by the authorities. For this reason, and also maybe because they exist in between Lisbon’s hills (which means the streets are darker), they were somehow less appealing areas. Many of the buildings did not undertake renovation works. However, these happen to be geographically very central areas, and once the urban rental law changed³, the estate market started to be interested, and this situation quickly changed.

² Available at www.ionline.pt/271278, accessed on 15 November 2015.

³ See “Urban Rental Law” (p. 116).



Img 70. Map and schema of the urban movements that happened in Lisbon since the end of the last decade, related with cultural trends (late 2000s).

Based on the analysis of the previous spatial and urban movements, I will now briefly mention the changes that occurred in those areas where to *la movida* of Bairro Alto seems to have been displaced to.

Cais do Sodré

In order to better understand the following lines, attention should be paid to the img 71. This map presents the zone of Cais do Sodré and São Paulo, and the ACS existing in this area, which will be mentioned in the text.



Img 71. Map of ACS in the area of Cais do Sodré.



Img 72. Bar Copenhagen and its neon lights contrasting with the surrounding dark street - the old ambiance of Cais do Sodré. (image source: www.nuok.it/lizbona/pensao-amor-tirar-tardi-in-un-ex-bordello-lisboeta/attachment/bar-copenhagen-cais-do-sodre-lisboa-4)

Img 73. The names of the bars at Cais do Sodré, as references to big ports of distant countries. (image source: www.dinheirovivo.pt/fazedores/ha-nova-vida-no-cais-do-sodre/)



Underworld: /

It is not necessary to go down to the depths of Casal Ventoso to find the ugly face of crime, prostitution and drugs. (...) police raids, shooting, stabbing, scoundrel scenes ... from Intendente to Cais do Sodré, the enthusiast of strong emotions has plenty of options to be entertained. And dark business happens on the streets, in sophisticated places, accompanied by the best Scotch whisky. (...) more or less gloomy places, attended by some dubious characters. (...) If you want to spend a really heavy night, you have enough choice: from the relatively safe Cais do Sodré to the sinister Intendente. But think twice before leaving the car in those places; there, life is really ugly, dirty and bad.

Texas:

"A sad picture. It is one of the clearest symbols of Texas Bar. The nights are sad. There are no happy people. The ambiance is heavy, tense. Everyone has a worried face, miserable. The smiles, very few, sound false. Desperation sits in the air and can be seen in the eyes of people who are at Texas Bar. There is no sense of ambition. The strippers are in late career. Prostitutes also. Employees are no exception. (...) A house symbol does not exist."

(Rainha and al. 2000, 134, 130)

(my translation from Portuguese)





Img 74. (Up, left) Painting the street in pink

(image source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/83035186854466383/>, from "Fugas", *Jornal Público*).

Img 75. The "Pink Street", in Cais do Sodré (2013) >

Img 76. (Up, in the middle) Absolut Vodka MUPI street gallery.

Pensão Amor⁴ opened on the 17th November 2011, and the next month the street Rua Nova do Carvalho, located in Cais do Sodré, was painted in pink. This used to be a dark and insalubrious street, known for its prostitution, neon lights and lap dancing bars that welcomed the sailors arriving to the port from all over the world (the reason why all bars of that street had names of big cities and distant countries, like Roterdão, Tokyo, Jamaica, Texas, Oslo and Liverpool – img 72, 73). The renovation action that this street suffered was called the *ReHab* project, referring to the rehabilitation of the whole street. It was a conjoint action from *Associação Cais Sodré* (which gathers several private companies like bars, clubs and restaurants), that proposed a tendering process to the municipality; this suggestion was accepted, and later on a public contest was launched, giving therefore a new visual aesthetics to the street. These changes consisted in banishing the car traffic, installing open-air terraces for cafés and painting the street in pink (img 74, 75).

To paint the street in pink was an idea of **Pensão Amor** (Gomes 2013). They painted it but the colour quickly disappeared. Then *Absolut Vodka* sponsored the rest of the works, by repainting the street in pink (again, but this time applying a very resistant ink that could last) and by creating an open air gallery of MUPIS along the street where artists could expose (Gomes 2013) (img 76).

⁴ See "Franchising [Mainside]" Chapter 5.3.3. (p. 238).

Img 77. Cartoon representing the change of ambiance of Rua Nova do Carvalho, through the use of colour (pink, step by step invading the whole scene) and the replacement of the habitués.



This fresh “Pink Street” soon became an icon in the city, and almost instantaneously the hotspot where to go out for a drink in Lisbon. It was suddenly so crowded that the phenomena started to spread to the contiguous streets (imagine trying to fit whole of the previous nightlife users of Bairro Alto into a single street. Obviously soon it became too tight for so many people). Since **Mercado da Ribeira** re-opened in 2014 with a new look (gourmet food, managed now by the *Time Out* magazine), its huge success also contributed to the success of this area as the new “cool” nightlife (and day life) spot: the old bars and shops started to be replaced by new trendy ones (like Sol e Pesca, A Velha Senhora, Povo, etc); entire buildings were renovated and transformed into hostels; the old kiosk re-opened at Praça de São Paulo, attracting new kinds of people; the previous CTT headquarters (Post Office) was transformed into a coworking building, hosting some events (it is now called **Central Station**).



Img 78. Photos posted online by the inhabitants association “Aqui mora gente”, denouncing the excesses of the night partying at Rua Nova do Carvalho, Cais do Sodré.

This mutation had a first sign when **Music Box** moved under the arch of Rua Nova do Carvalho (2005), with its rock music offer it started to attract a new kind of population into this street and somehow opening a way to a new generation of bars. But it was after the street became pink in colour that the ambiance changed completely (img 77), bringing consequently with it a lot of conflicts, particularly with the inhabitants. The civic association “Aqui mora gente” (“People live here”) started to denounce the new situations happening in Cais do Sodré by complaining to the municipality and demanding the re-establishment of the ancient “order” and “peace”. Their proposals included the limitation of the closing time of the bars and convenience stores, the cleaning of the streets, and the control of the youngsters drinking behaviour⁵. Hundreds of pictures and videos are posted on facebook⁶, through which, somehow paradoxically, the inhabitants seem, all of a sudden, to have become much stauncher supporters of public order than the authorities themselves (img 78). Recently the above mentioned civic association managed to convince the municipality to issue an ordinance limiting the closing time of bars

⁵ More information available at www.publico.pt/local/noticia/o-cais-do-sodre-mudou-e-os-moradores-nao-estao-agostar-1541135.

⁶ Available at www.facebook.com/AquiMoraGente?fref=ts.

in all *historic neighbourhoods*, following the example of the regulated opening hours in Bairro Alto⁷.

A reminiscent action of the one led by the mentioned civic association is the one of the campaign of the public transports company (Carris + Metro), which suggests users to spy on each other (but somehow reversing the actors), to make sure they buy their ticket (img 79). Of course there is a difference between the campaigns: the first example is a self-promoted action, once it affects directly the daily life of the inhabitants; the second, attempts to transform the solidarity habits of the inhabitants into intolerance and suspicion behaviour (this happening since the crisis is affecting many of the public transports users, that no longer can allow themselves to buy a ticket).

A curious story about the street Rua Nova do Carvalho is the one of **Casa Conveniente**. The dramaturge Mónica Calle and her theatre group moved into Cais do Sodré in 1992, where they occupied two different spaces until 2013. Then, since the previously mentioned transformations occurred in the street, she realised it no longer made sense to continue using in this place her usual working methods: “to break obstacles and borders” by “mixing the local marginal people with the artistic stimuli”⁸, or “take over the place and recreate a new space and new scenographies” by subverting the centre and the margins. Monica Calle argues that “this place is becoming more and more standardised” (Calle 2013)⁹. She is therefore planning to move to another part of town¹⁰.



Img 79. Carris and Metro (Lisbon public transports) campaign against fraud: “Open your eyes and fight fraud” (Jun 2014).

⁷ More information available at <http://www.publico.pt/local/noticia/bares-do-cais-do-sodre-santos-e-bica-fecham-mais-cedo-a-partir-de-sextafeira-1682933> (published on 21.01.2015).

⁸ She often works with non-professional artists.

⁹ According to Mónica Calle: “The truth is that Cais do Sodré at this moment no longer makes sense. (37’30’’) [...] For example, something that confuses me a lot at this point in Cais do Sodré, concerns the way how the barriers stay in fact so powerful, and how there still exists a mark on that arch (where you can find the Music Box), that divides that part of the street and the other part. And during the day things still do not mix. And Cais do Sodré, to me, looks today like Bairro Alto. The reasons that made me go there – the idea of mixing people, mixing environments, creating flows between this idea of centre and margin, and to mix and blur those barriers (which is what interests me in my work) – is not possible anymore. It no longer makes sense (104’49’’, Ground Session # 7).

¹⁰ Zona J in Chelas, more concretely. For more information about Casa Conveniente future, see the following sources: www.publico.pt/culturaipilon/noticia/o-amor-como-gesto-politico-1708929?page=-1
www.publico.pt/culturaipilon/noticia/lisboa-foi-so-uma-no-festival-zona-nao-vigiada-1709251
www.publico.pt/culturaipilon/noticia/a-zona-j-quer-sair-da-redoma-1708678

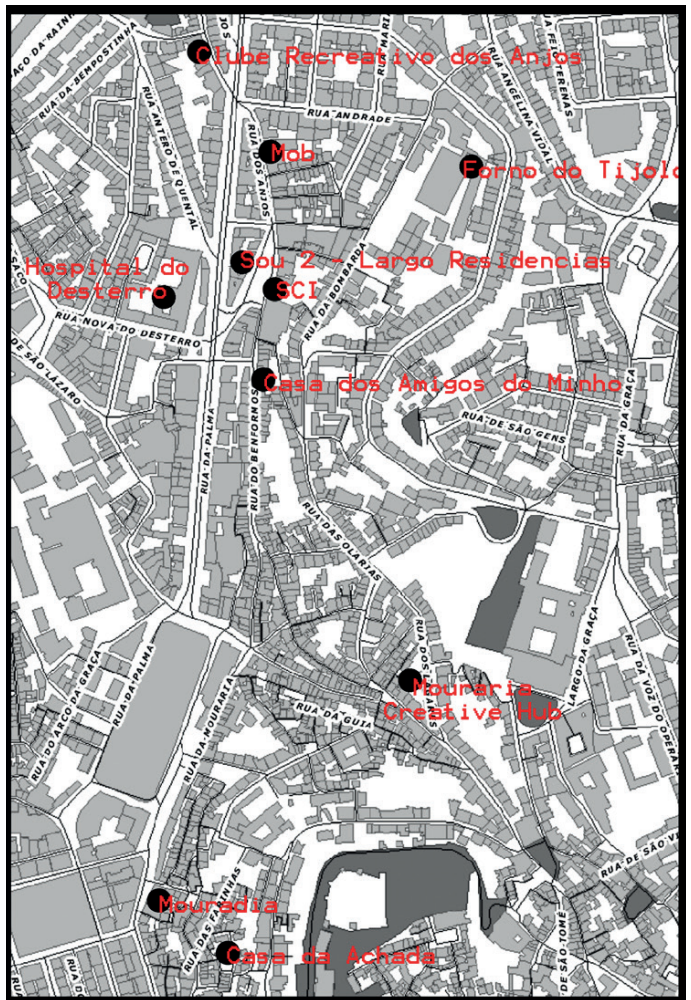
Intendente and Mouraria

In April 2011 the mayor António Costa transferred his office from Praça do Município to Largo do Intendente¹¹ (img 80). It was a strategical plan aimed at the renovation of this area, considered to be problematic and decaying (img 81). This action led to the creation of a spatial central node between the Mouraria quarter and the Anjos quarter, which has been acting since then as a linking element (img 82). Intendente, considered previously as almost and “inaccessible” area due to its activities related with drugs and prostitution¹², was then subject to a human and urban cleaning process. The previous

¹¹ The new office of António Costa at Intendente square has a monthly rental of 5,600 euros. This building of 700 square meters is composed of three levels and housed previously the ceramics factory Viúva Lamego.

(Available at www.dn.pt/inicio/portugal/interior.aspx?content_id=1831715&seccao=Sul).

¹² After the drug traffic has been chased from Casal Ventoso, people got used to say “don’t go out in metro stop Intendente”.



Img 88. Map of ACS existing at Intendente and Mouraria area.



Img 84. Largo do Intendente - summer festival.

(Photo found at: www.filiperaimundo.com/blog/2013/11/02/fotografias-concerto-de-homenagem-lou-reed-largo-intendente-em-lisboa-1-novembro-2013/)



< Img 82



Img 85 >

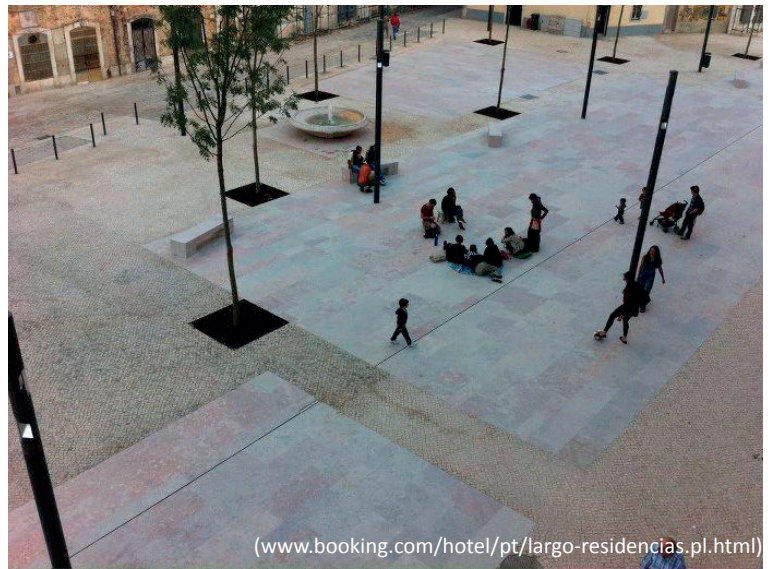
(www.dn.pt/inicio/portugal/interior.aspx?content_id=1831715&seccao=Sul)

Img 80. Mayor António Costa whose office was located at Largo do Intendente (2011).

Img 81. Decaying building in Largo do Intendente.

Img 82. Bird's view over Intendente square.

Img 83. Poster of the right-wing party CDS-PP: "Intendente. More surveillance, less fear. We can make it!" (2010).

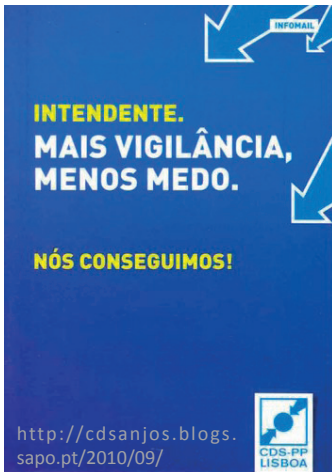


(www.booking.com/hotel/pt/largo-residencias.pl.html)



Img 81 >

Img 87 >



Img 85. The new outlook of Intendente (new pavement, trees, benches, lighting).

Img 87. Orchestra *Todos*, a multicultural group of musicians that live or work in Intendente area.

< Img 83



Img 86. Urban art and furniture. Designed by the artist Joana Vasconcelos.



(<http://todoscaminhadadeculturas.blogspot.ch/2012/08/orquestra-todos-e-orquestra-di-piazza.html>)

users of the space are still around, though more discreet, since police now controls more closely the area (img 83). Artists have been arriving, and the buildings are being renovated. Charming coffee-shops and *vintage* products shops start to open their doors, cohabiting with the old ones (which still keep their “underground” ambiance, with their neon lighting and television on all night and day). Summer festivals take place in the renovated *public space* that has been created since then (img 84). Night lighting and modern urban furniture have been installed (img 85), along with a brand new sculpture placed right in the middle of the square, signed by the famous artist Joana Vasconcelos (img 86). Since then, Intendente has become one of the new hotspots in Lisbon, “the right place to be” if you are/feel cool, young, and creative. Its low rents (still lower than Bairro Alto, at least¹³), the mix of its population (marginal and immigrants), and finally its growing cultural life, have been attracting more and more people (img 87).

This context and environment started then to attract several new cultural associations and/or ACS (img 88). A few examples are: **Largo Residências** (which belongs to **SOU** association¹⁴), **Casa Independente**¹⁵ or **Mob**¹⁶. However, the pre-existing “recreational associations” also regained a new burst of life. Many of them had been forced to close their doors, or closely survey them, since the drug scene moved in this zone, but are now opening again to the “exterior world”, i.e., the streets and new people who wander in the area. This is the case of **Sport Club Intendente**¹⁷ (SCI), **Casa dos Amigos do Minho**¹⁸ or **Clube Recreativo dos Anjos** (CRA), for instance. Another phenomena is the appearance of coworking spaces, like the one in the ancient slaughterhouse of **Mercado do Forno do Tijolo**, or the **Mouraria Creative Hub**, and soon one will open at the new Mainside’s project for **Hospital do Desterro**¹⁹.

One curious fact is that suddenly this whole area started to be called as “Mouraria”, this happening since the above mentioned urban changes started. What previously was confined to a quite narrow area between Martim Moniz and Graça, is now extended as far as Largo do Intendente on the one side, and São Cristovão on the other one. The reason for the “spatial extension” of the name “Mouraria”, according to Eduarda Dionísio (Dionísio 2013), is due to the European financing that the municipality of Lisbon received to renovate this area, since Mouraria is considered to be the place where *fado* was born. So, if we realise that *fado* was recently elected as “immaterial heritage of culture” (application submitted in 2010²⁰, accepted in 2011²¹), we understand that it coincides with the beginning of the development of *Programa de Desenvolvimento Comunitário da Mouraria*²² (PDCM), in 2010. This coincidence looks therefore like a strategy from CML to obtain a bigger amount of European funding, envisioning rehabilitation works for a larger area

¹³ According to Ana Feijão, who heads the association Mob (Feijão 2015).

¹⁴ See “I am everywhere [SOU, por todo o lado]” Chapter 5.3.1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ See “Activ(ist) merge and split [Crew Hassan and Mob] chapter.5.3.2.

¹⁷ See “I am everywhere [SOU, por todo o lado]” Chapter 5.3.1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ See “Franchising [Mainside]” chapter 5.3.3.

²⁰ “Candidatura do Fado a Lista Representativa do Património Cultural Imaterial da Humanidade” (Available at www.candidaturadofado.com/wp-content/themes/candidatura/docs/brochura_apresentacao_candidatura_fado.pdf).

²¹ Accepted on 26 November 2011, approved by UNESCO and distinguished as “tradition and expression of identity of the culture of the country” of Portugal (Available at www.rtp.pt/noticias/index.php?article=503874&tm=4&layout=121&visual=49).

²² www.aimouraria.cm-lisboa.pt/pdcm.html.

than simply the one confined to the older official Mouraria geographic limits. PDCM was created by the municipality of Lisbon to support financially the much degraded neighbourhood of Mouraria (and Intendente) through an assortment of different measures that included cultural and social interventions and also urban regeneration²³. This package of measures is an example of a classical political strategy to renew a central area of a city, which is frequently associated with a kind of a touristic promotion based in traditional motifs.

As a consequence, all this area is becoming less and less marginal, and more accessible to non-local people. Guided tours are now organised by Associação Renovar a Mouraria²⁴, which occupies a small renovated house called **Mouradia**²⁵. Moreover, the pavement of all this area has been replaced by a new one, the streets are being enlightened, and the small alleys more accessible and monitored. And also new *Fado* houses are being created (e.g.: Casa da Severa).

Mouraria and Martim Moniz are presently very mixed areas in terms of population. There, the percentage of immigrated people is one of the highest in Lisbon, which means that we can find in place both a traditional local population and commerce, and a very multicultural one. In the last years, this multicultural aspect has been used to strengthen the identity of the area in a positive way. The main square of Martim Moniz went through an urban renovation process, which invested in leisurely use its public space²⁶ (now one can find there food-kiosks, benches, fountains, etc).

Colina de Santana

This hill, located right in the centre of the city (see img 70), is somehow paradoxically isolated from its surroundings due to its slopes and arduous accessibility (pedestrian and transports). The hill has a peculiar organic structure, filled as it is with noble buildings as monasteries, palaces and villas. In the book dedicated to Lisbon, coordinated by the architect and urbanist Ariella Masbouni, it is written that this “neighbourhood life and its local economy managed to develop almost independently from the rest of the city for centuries” and connected this assertion with a “remarkable endogenous capacity of regeneration of its huge facilities and public spaces (the leprosia became slaughterhouses, then convents, and finally hospitals...)” (Masbouni 2013, 112). Some of these hospitals (São José, Capuchos, Miguel Bombarda, Santa Marta and Desterro) are now being deactivated and moved to other places in town. The rehabilitation project led by the architect Inês Lobo consists of (amongst other things) destroying the surrounding walls of these ancient convents in order to give them public access to new paths and panoramic lookouts. The municipality’s idea, of replacing the hill distinctiveness from “health” to “knowledge”, would evolve through the assignment of new functions to these buildings – for instance, those

²³ See “Brief history of urban planning and architecture – 2000s” (p. 114).

²⁴ www.renovaramouraria.pt.

²⁵ See “An underground stream [flowing from Anjos, Regueirão to Mouraria]” chapter 5.2.2.

²⁶ Several researches have been made about the changes that have recently occurred in this square. For more information about the polemic new uses and transformation process of Martim Moniz, see Rodrigues (2014), <http://transicoesurbanas.stress.fm/post/99410085299/as-batalhas-do-martim-moniz> and www.buala.org/pt/cidade/interacoes-reflexivas-sobre-o-novo-plano-martim-moniz.

of research centres or historical municipal archives (Masbounji 2013, 112-15). One example is **Hospital do Desterro**, whose renovation is being taken care of by Estamo and Mainside²⁷. Another one is **Carpintaria de São Lázaro**, a building owned by the municipality, which launched two public tenders (the first in 2012, the other in 2013) for the development of a pole dedicated to culture and creativity²⁸.

Nevertheless, this hill has also been welcoming more subversive spatial occupations. This is the case of the squatted buildings of **Casa de São Lázaro**, **Passadiço** and **Ministério**²⁹. Also, it hosted the *Festival TODOS* in 2015, following the previous versions that happened in Mouraria-Intendente and São-Bento³⁰.

Calçada do Combro and Poço dos Negros

Down the hill towards Santos when coming from Bairro Alto, the two bifurcating streets (Rua do Poço dos Negros and Rua dos Poiais de São Bento) were aging fast, contrasting with the bursting life of Bairro Alto (img 89). The old and decaying buildings were not being renovated and the traditional commerce was shutting down. The streets kept their role of connecting passage between Santos and Largo do Camões, but were not really a place to go. At night, only the club **Incógnito** (with its mythic moustached security-guard controlling the main door) seemed to resist, remaining as the only place where to go with some purpose (apart from some ephemeral clandestine curious experiences as the late night restaurant Cachupa).

In 2013, the **Atelier-Museu Júlio Pomar**³¹ opened and, at the end of the same year, an event gathered some spaces along Calçada do Combro and Rua dos Poiais de São Bento. This event was called **FICA no Combro** (*Feira Imaginária da Cultura Alternativa*), and the spaces were: Biblioteca Municipal Camões (the municipal library); **Park** (a lounge bar on the top of a parking silo – img 90); **Livraria Letra Livre** (a bookshop which sells new, old and depleted books, specialised in small editions, social sciences and Portuguese literature, known for its libertarian sympathy); **Centro InterculturaCidade**³² (a cultural association dedicated to migrant communities); **Casa Raphael Baldaya** (a space dedicated to the cult of words, the name having been given by one of the semi-heteronyms of Fernando Pessoa, linked to astrology and esoteric power – img 91, 92); Apaixonarte (a design shop that sells products made in Portugal). As we can see, this association of such different projects (in its essence) is rather surprising, even most when gathered under “the same roof” in an event dedicated to “alternative culture”. This event opened therefore

²⁷ See “Franchising [Mainside]” chapter 5.3.3.

²⁸ The reasons for the launching of the second tender was the lack of competitors in the first one, probably due to the high value of the demanded rent (which became half of the value in the second tender, 1000€) and the short time of concession (which changed from 6 years to 30), since relevant expenses for renovation works were still needed to transform this place in a livable one. (Available at: www.cm-lisboa.pt/noticias/detalhe/artigo/arrendamento-carpintaria-sao-lazaro-concurso-ate-4-de-abril, accessed on 13.11.2015).

²⁹ See “(Very) Ephemeral Squats” chapter 5.3.4.

³⁰ See “Festivalisation” (p. 149).

³¹ <http://ateliermuseujuliopomar.pt>.

³² <https://interculturacidade.wordpress.com>.

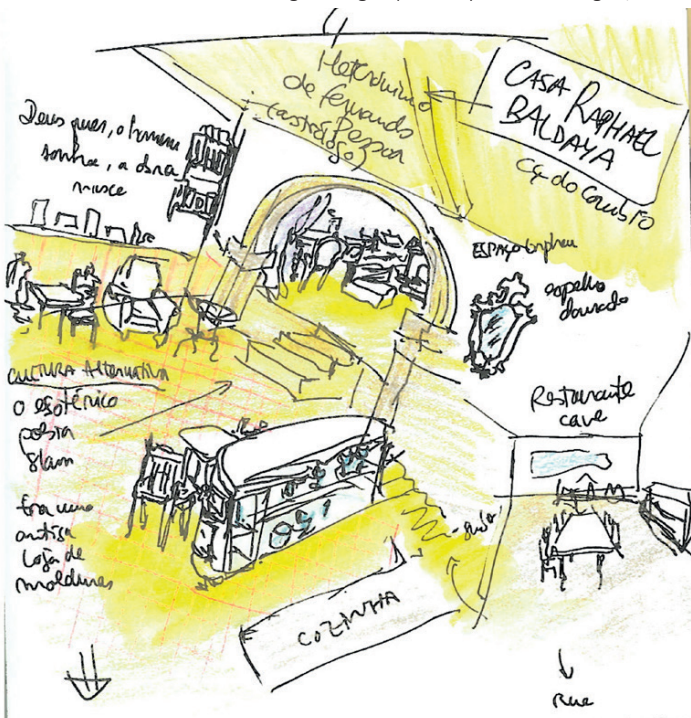


Img 89. Mr. João (fictitious name) walking up Calçada do Combro (December 2014).



Img 90. Park lounge bar on the top of a car parking silo in Calçada do Combro.

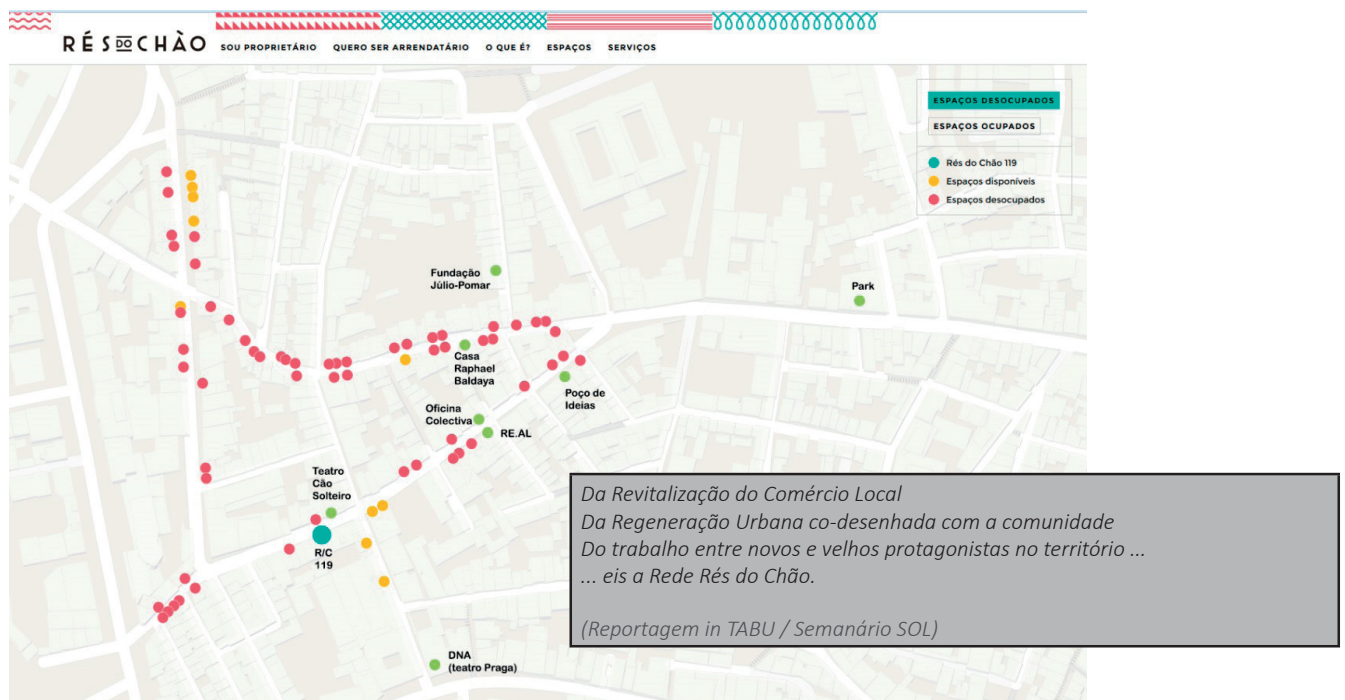
(sources: left image <http://acidadenapontadosdedos.com/2013/07/12/um-park-com-vista-sobre-a-cidade/>
 right image: photo by André Barragon, available at [www.panoramio.com/user/833635/tags/Lisboa%20-](http://www.panoramio.com/user/833635/tags/Lisboa%20))



Img 91, 92. Casa Raphael Baldaya.

a whole new perspective on the *meaning* possibilities of an “alternative culture”, making one person wonder which parameters might have been considered in such choice of selection.

From 2014 onwards, was now time for Rua do Poço dos Negros to wake up: the project *Rés-do-Chão*³³, gathering four young architects, opened an office on a previously vacant ground floor of Rua do Poço dos Negros³⁴, with the aim of giving a second life to the commercial abandoned ground-floors existing in this area and reactivate the contiguous public space³⁵. The architects won an award from **Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian** under the initiative “FAZ - Ideias de Origem Portuguesa” and then applied for a municipal programme called *BipZip*³⁶ to be able to continue the project. *Rés-do-Chão* completed a survey and created a database of all the vacant and available ground floors, and then acts as an intermediary between the owners and eventual clients interested in renting spaces in the neighbourhood (img 93). This project’s concern is linked to the disappearance of the traditional commerce, which is strongly affecting this particular area – but also the whole city in general – and mostly due to the abrupt increase of rents provoked by the “new urban rental law”³⁷.



Img 93. Mapping and database of available and vacant spaces in the nearby area of R/C 119 (mostly located in Rua do Poço dos Negros and R. Poiais de São Bento). [map available at: resdochao.org]. In this map are also located some other cultural and creative spaces, like: Teatro Cão Solteiro, Oficina Colectiva, RE.AL, Poço de Ideias, Fundação Júlio Pomar, Park and DNA (Teatro Praga).

33 resdochao.org.

34 It was a grocery store ten years before.

35 In 2013 they realized that more than 50% of the ground floor commercial spaces were vacant. (www.idealista.pt/news/imobiliario/habitacao/2014/10/28/24043-lisboa-res-do-chao-o-projeto-que-visa-reabilitar-pisos-terreos-de-espacos-comerciais).

36 It started in 2014 and lasted until August 2015. See p. 114.

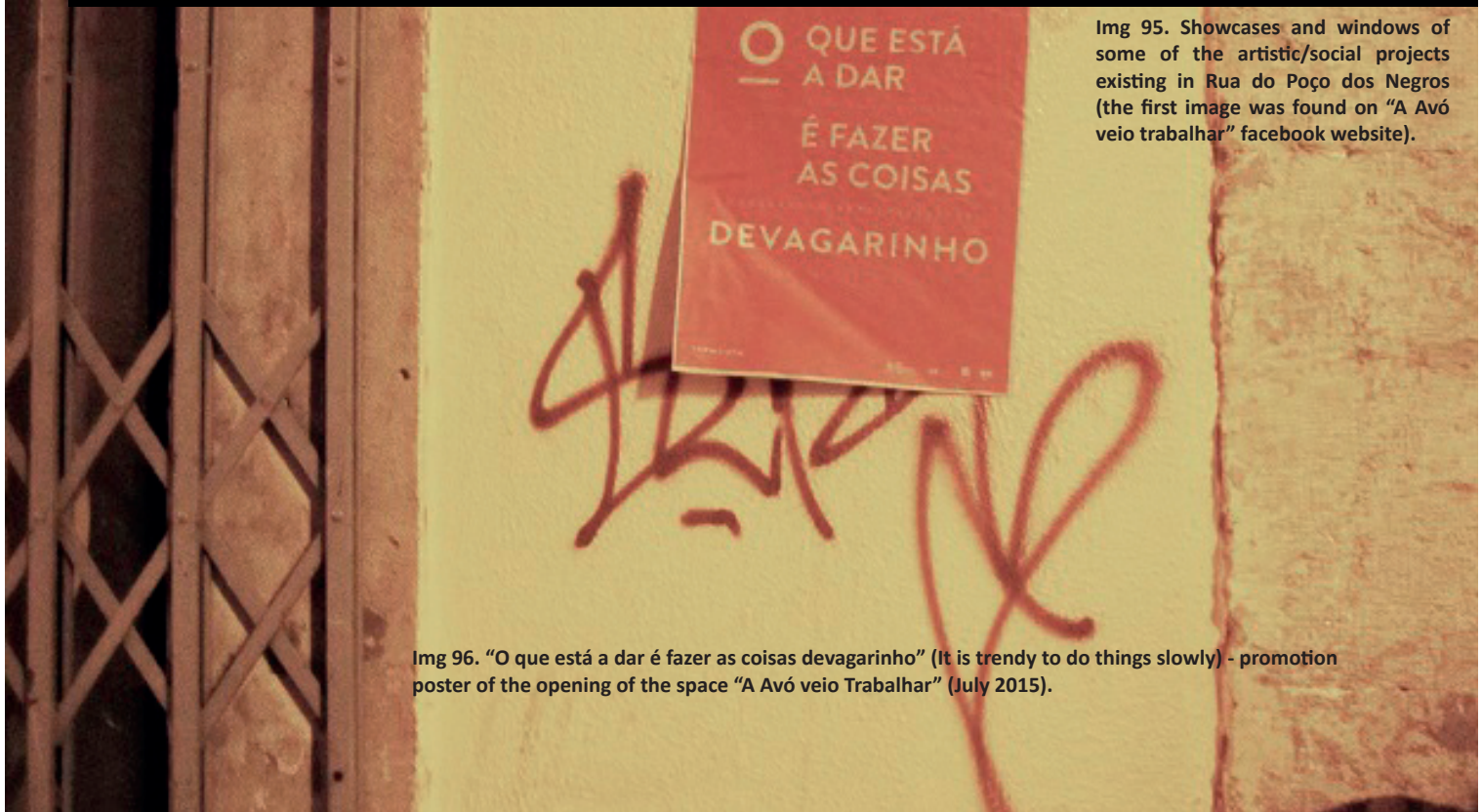
37 See chapter 5.1.1. and 5.1.2.



Img 94. Newspaper article about the changes occurring in the area of Rua do Poço dos Negros, showing images of the spaces Rés-do-Chão 119 and “A Avó Veio Trabalhar” (Jornal SOL, p.44-45, 26.08.2015).



Img 95. Showcases and windows of some of the artistic/social projects existing in Rua do Poço dos Negros (the first image was found on “A Avó veio trabalhar” facebook website).



Img 96. “O que está a dar é fazer as coisas devagarinho” (It is trendy to do things slowly) - promotion poster of the opening of the space “A Avó veio Trabalhar” (July 2015).

We wonder if the development of this project had some influence in the territorial choice of the new cultural and/or creative projects that very recently opened new premises in this street (img 94, 95). It was the case of **Oficina Colectiva**³⁸ (a coworking space for creative activities) and **A Avó Veio trabalhar** (“Grandmother came to work”, a learning project based on sharing and empowerment of seniors in society through traditional handcrafts and design. One of the particularities of this project is the desire of slowing down the rhythm of production, adapting it more to the ‘old times’ of our grandmothers – img 96).

Also, through the adoption of a critical perspective and aiming at arousing some social impact, the atelier **Poço de Ideias** had the idea of promoting the *Manpower Festival*³⁹. This festival consists of events where all the interested commercial businesses may participate and open their shops afterhours to welcome the most diverse artistic works (plastic and visual arts, music and other performances), the idea being to promote interaction between them. Of course, the events are meant to attract new clients (or a public) whom they usually do not receive. The events have also used vacant buildings and public spaces, and of course the new born creative spaces (studios of design and architecture, like **Rés-do-Chão**, for example) and artistic platforms (the theatre collective **Cão Solteiro**, **DNA**⁴⁰ and the dancing company **RE.AL**) (img 97, 98).

All commercial businesses and coworking places have a direct relationship with the street through a showcase – and this even happens with the theatre collective – fact which implies a direct influence and provides stimuli (sometimes disturbances) coming from that outside world (the streets). However, only **RE.AL**⁴¹ offers a permanent conviviality space – the bar – although the others may also, sporadically, offer something similar. **RE.AL**, founded in 1990, is the most complex project; this complexity is revealed not only by workspaces, performance studios and accommodation for artists – distributed along a quite labyrinthine inner path on the upper levels – but also by the existence on the ground floor of a space that is of public access: the bar. This bar, which opened in the end of 2014 and was named **Bar Real**, changed its name soon afterwards (in the following Summer) to **Bar Irreal**. This change occurred as a consequence and a reaction to the absence of financial support from DGA (*Direcção Geral das Artes*⁴²), an income that the dancing company was used to have until then; so, they were forced to transfer the management of the bar to another collective of people⁴³. However, the cultural offer of the bar is maintained: films, concerts, poetry, debates and art installations. But, in what concerns the free rooms that Atelier Real used to offer to the artists they hosted, since they no longer have the DGA financial support, those rooms are now for rent.

Img 97. Façades of the artistic/social projects existing in Rua do Poço dos Negros (the last two pictures were found on “Poço de Ideias” and “A Avó veio trabalhar” facebook respective websites) >

Img 98. Interior spaces of Oficina Colectiva, Bar RE.AL, an old shop of used household electric appliances and of a hairdresser. All of have participated in ManPower Festival 2014, in Rua do Poço dos Negros >

³⁸ <https://oficinacolectiva.wordpress.com/contactos>.

³⁹ www.manpowerfestival.com/. This festival had two editions until now, one in 2008 and another in 2014.

⁴⁰ **District of New Art (DNA)**, in Rua das Gaivotas.

⁴¹ www.re-al.org/en/

⁴² See chapter 5.1.4., p. 142.

⁴³ More information on the subject available at www.publico.pt/culturaipsilon/noticia/ninguem-lhes-tira-a-rua-1699221.



One more, but quite different experience, located nearby in Rua de O Século (Bairro Alto), is also worth to mention: **Carpe Diem – Arte e Pesquisa** (Art and Research, CDAP)⁴⁴. **Carpe Diem** is a palace, a curatorial project, and an educational project. This project is led by the art historian and curator Lourenço Egreja and is meant to be a meeting point for curators, critics, historians, artists, scenographers, etc. This non-profit curatorial project works with very low

presented artistic artists' work is *site specific* – or rather, as Lourenço Egreja says, '*palace specific*' (img 99) –, always developed on site, which is actually a great challenge for the artists, if we consider that the palace's walls are not straight, the floor is bent and the propagation of sound is hard to control (it spreads through the palace in an incredible way because the walls are made of plaster, not concrete). Just like the building itself, the curatorial project is quite organic, and far from the conventional model of the "white cube" (Egreja 2013).

This palace of 3000 m2 belonged to the family of Marquês de Pombal⁴⁶. It is a seventeenth-century style building (in the Portuguese "chão" style), but its

resources, and most of the projects are individual⁴⁵. The

Carpe Diem Arte e Pesquisa



Img 99. Carpe Diem - Arte e Pesquisa (2014).

⁴⁴ <http://carpe.pt>.

⁴⁵ <http://carpe.pt/pt-pt/gallery/cdap-no-pal%C3%A1cio>.

⁴⁶ <http://carpe.pt/pt-pt/content/o-palacio-pombal>.

interior decoration is quite rococo (painted ceilings and walls, the chosen materials, etc). It has a labyrinthine plan and a monumental interior scale (6m of ceiling high, very large rooms and staircases). It belongs now to the municipality, and before being lent to **Carpe Diem** in 2009 by EGEAC⁴⁷, it was vacant and left to abandonment. A few restoration works have been done by the engineer João Appleton (who is an expert in Pombaline buildings⁴⁸) before the palace host this project. Due to the fact that this building is classified as ‘heritage’ by IGESPAR⁴⁹ (the national institute of management of architectonic and archeologic heritage), **Carpe Diem** should not start any kind of restoration activity without their agreement, but should take care of the maintenance of the building⁵⁰.

As the architect, curator and researcher Inês Moreira highlights, in the latest years, CML has been experimenting cultural uses on a few of its property owned palaces, which had been left vacant and degraded for many years (Moreira 2014). Many have also been recently sold, but some others have become the headquarters of interesting projects, like Palácio Sinel de Cordes (which hosts the event Trienal de Arquitectura and a few coworking spaces) or Palácio Alarcão (where the **DNA** project, developed by Teatro Praga, is now hosted⁵¹). These cultural (mostly artistic and curatorial) experiences have, at last, allowed to give a second life to some of the remarkable built heritage of the city, and have been exploring and working with the great spatial and visual characteristics of such places, by highlighting its aesthetics and being influenced by them in its working methods or kinds of spatial occupation, as we have seen in the example of Carpe Diem.

Boavista

Boavista is another street that was getting darker and marginal. This street links Cais do Sodré to Santos, which are two of the most famous nightlife areas of the city (img 100). Rua da Boavista used to be known for its traditional commercial businesses linked to construction and *bricolage*. However, just like in Poço dos Negros, these businesses started shutting down, and those spaces are now being reactivated with new bars, the process being most probably linked somehow to Cais do Sodré success. Nonetheless, this street hosts also a few particular cultural projects, some of which actually existed before the mentioned recent changes, like **Transboavista VPF Art Edifício**, for instance.

Transboavista VPF Art Edifício works basically as a cultural agent: it includes two art galleries – **VPF cream art** and **Plataforma Revólver** – and also artists’ studios, cultural enterprises (“that go from the production and business associated to the culture and intellect, like design and communication”) and a contemporary art magazine (Artecapital.net). Besides, it accomodates artists. The themes of its exhibitions are often linked to critique art and social resistance.

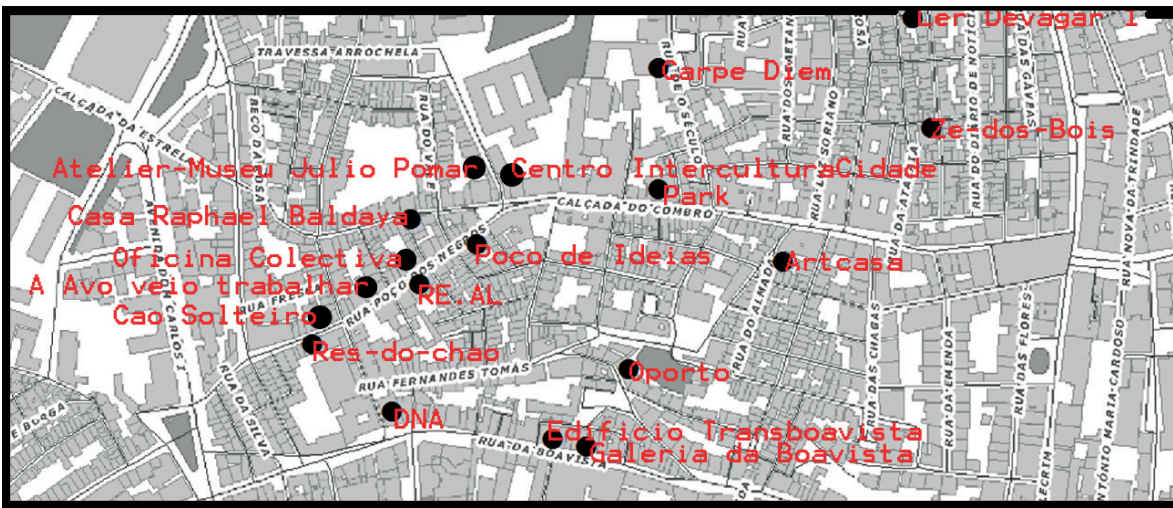
⁴⁷ EGEAC is a municipal equipement responsible for the management of cultural events and a few cultural premisses of the city of Lisbon.

⁴⁸ <http://carpe.pt/pt-pt/gallery/cdap-no-pal%C3%A1cio>.

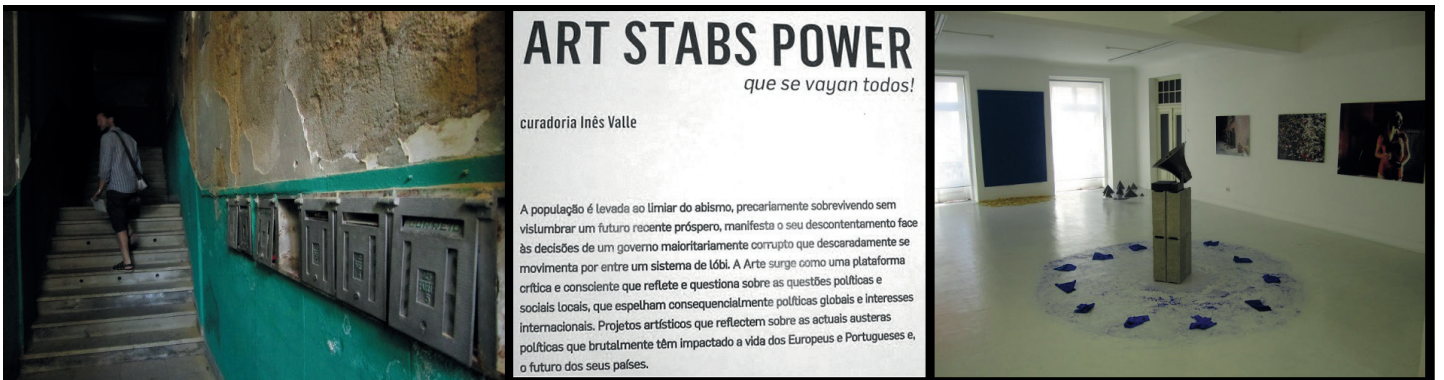
⁴⁹ *Instituto de Gestão do Património Arquitectónico e Arqueológico*.

⁵⁰ <http://carpe.pt/pt-pt/gallery/cdap-no-pal%C3%A1cio>.

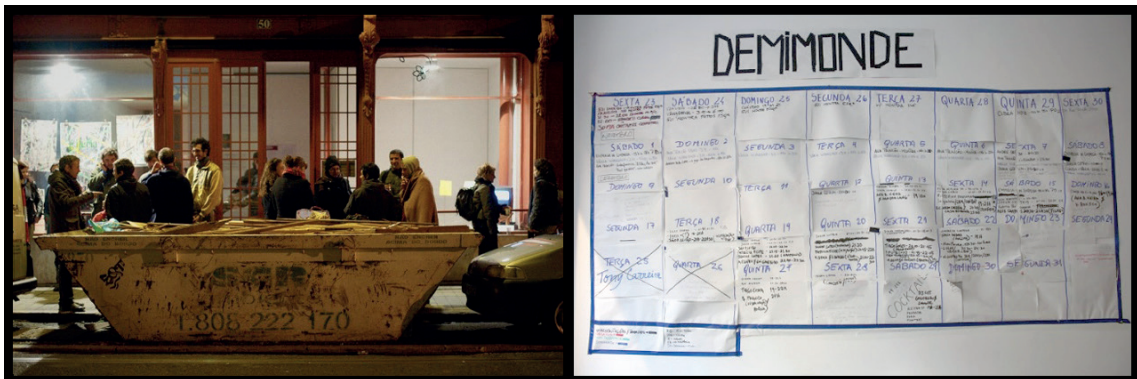
⁵¹ See next chapter: Boavista and São Paulo.



Img 100. Map of ACS in the area of Boavista, Santa Catarina, Calçada do Combro and Poço dos Negros.



Img 101. Transboavista building and Plataforma Revólver: entrance hall and staircase (decaying yellowish walls and old post boxes), the current exhibition explanation panel (dedicated to the subject of art as a weapon of critique) and an overview of one of the rooms of the exhibition (neutral white walls, contrasting with the staircase environment).



Img 102. Façade of Galeria da Boavista during the event "Ora bolas, há espaço, vamos usá-lo!" (photo found on Demimonde website: <http://demimonde.weebly.com/open-call.html>), and Demimonde's flexible handmade events planning for a month.



Img 103. DNA's projection room and mural by the street artist Vhils.



Transboavista is located in an old building, and when walking through the street, one does not really notice the existence of a gallery. The building door is usually closed and you have to ring the bell so that you may go in. No direct visual relationship exists between the gallery and the street. The only sign of its existence is a very discreet board, next to the ringing bell, with the logotype of the gallery. Once you get inside the building, the look of the staircase is as decaying as its façade. The paint in the walls barely sticks to them, the ambiance is very dark (even if a strong greenish/yellowish colour prevails), and a musty smell is present in the air. To access the gallery, one must climb to the upper floors. There, the visitor finds, on the first floor that belongs to the gallery, several spaces where the art works are exposed. On the one hand, the space is a bit labyrinthine (since it exists in an old buildings, and was probably adapted from a housing apartment), but on the other hand, the walls are white and clean, contrasting with the previous environment of the staircase (looking almost like a classic gallery). The second level of the gallery, however, is less conventional, the exhibition being distributed along several irregular rooms (img 101).

On the same street, and right next to **Transboavista** buildingm we can find the municipal art gallery **Galeria Boavista**, which sometimes hosts projects with unusual formats for art galleries like “Ora bolas, há espaço!” developed by *Demimonde*. The latter is a project related to the management of a space dedicated to creativity and artistic experimentation⁵² which proposed a flexible and adaptable calendar of events that lasted a whole month (img 102).

Up the hill, on the way to the belvedere of Santa Catarina, exists **Oporto**, another place dedicated to contemporary art, more specifically to experimental video or film, and where “the program is extremely slow”⁵³. Once more, and just like the project **A Avó Veio Trabalhar**, the topic of “slowing down” the rhythm of production (and, in this case, also of cultural consumption) is addressed, aligned with the ideas of “shrinking cities” and “degrowth” (Philipp Oswalt and Kulturstiftung des Bundes 2005; Bayon, Flipo, and Schneider 2010).

Oporto is a studio and a non-profit screening room located in Lisboa. Occupying the headquarters of a former Merchant Sailors Union, Oporto projects from time to time a single unique experimental video or film. The program is extremely slow as the selection of the pieces screened is made on an overall idea of an exquisite corpse . The space is programed by artist Alexandre Estrela and sponsored by GAU- Gestão de Audiovisuais

(text transposed from <http://oportolisboa.blogspot.pt>)

At last, **DNA (District of New Art)**, “a space looking to gather artists, the local community, students and art lovers, attract tourists”, as described in their website⁵⁴. It is actually an artistic platform, who claims to be a “district” rather than just a “place”, due to its strong relationship with local artists and the local community (img 103). **DNA** is Teatro Praga’s proposal for *Escola das Gaivotas*, who rents this space to the municipality for a quite symbolic price (Guimarães 2013b) for a fairly large space. Teatro Praga used to rent an expensive rent for a place in a peripheral area, this

⁵² Initiated by two independent structures: *Nice Machine* (Lisbon) and *AADK – Architecture Current Culture* (Berlin, Portugal and Spain) as well as a number of individual artists.

⁵³ <http://oportolisboa.blogspot.pt>.

⁵⁴ www.dnalisboa.pt/en.

being the reason why they applied for a public tender promoted by CML (Lisbon's municipality), who grants this space for a period of, at least, 5 years. However, the conditions of the locale are quite precarious – the building is very old and had only had minor renovation works by the time they had the key to use the space. So, together with the architects from *Artéria* studio, they applied for *Bip Zip* programme to finance the necessary construction works, in order to have the minimum conditions to be able to use that space (Guimarães 2013a)⁵⁵.

Other curious cultural experiences used to happen here, right next to **DNA** and when Rua da Boavista was still out of the trendy cultural and nightlife networks. One was the Cape-Verdean night club **B.Leza**, a very decaying palace where a real melting pot of people could be found dancing African rhythms on live concerts or dj sets, and where a particular ambiance could be found, as described on a book wrote about the nightlife of Lisbon in the change of the millennium:

B.Leza: The parties' room of the palace Almada Carvalhais (later of Casa Pia Atlético Club) seem to have been meant for this kind of life. Two centuries ago, the bon-vivant marquis transformed the room of the club into a party salon. Its tendency for warm rhythms was marked by Noite Longas and then O Baile. Since five years ago it is simply B.Leza, a name chosen to pay a tribute to the composer that most marked Cape Verdean music. But if the Cape Verdean mark seems to be present everywhere, a weird feeling cannot be helped at B.Leza. In everything it is different from the African clubs. Starting by the stairs, at the entrance, which are so dark that frighten, and surrounded by walls that are so grey that unsettle. These probably match with the doorkeepers that charge the entrances, according to the faces and their taste. Hidden corners are missing, just like the light or the sound columns everywhere. And colour. What is left is the saloon-ball ambiance of the 1930s. (...) some people dance, other jump, some just step on each other, in a weird ball where white bodies mix folklore and tango with the swaying of mornas, coladeras and funana. Races and colours get mixed.

(Rainha and al. 2000, 104) Translated from the Portuguese by myself.

We have just seen how, in the downtown areas of Cais do Sodré, Boavista and Poço dos Negros, is growing a network of more experimental artistic projects, collectives and platforms. Apart from Cais do Sodré, which has completely and quickly been transformed in the last few years, Boavista and Poço dos Negros are still half-decadent areas, though it is visible how it rapidly is following Cais do Sodré “success” of gentrification and touristification.

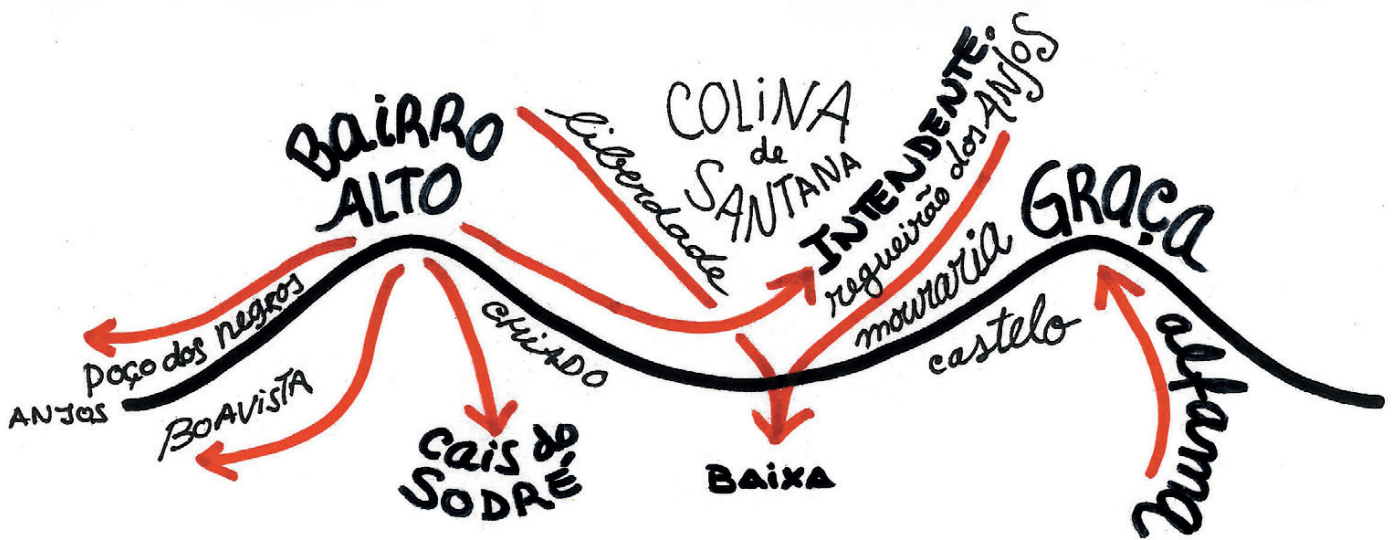
If we now consider all examples mentioned in this chapter, we realise that there was an explosion of the artistic/cultural scene, which previously was mainly concentrated in the Bairro Alto area. This explosion tended to go down the hill (of Bairro Alto) through diverse arteries, flowing down (img 104):

- Rua do Alecrim until to Cais do Sodré;
- Calçada do Combro until to Rua do Poço dos Negros;
- Chiado until Intendente and Mouraria.

⁵⁵ For more information about the project DNA, see the following address: www.dn.pt/inicio/artes/interior.aspx?-content_id=4778081#.VglYwwA5ONc.facebook .

We were able to see how most of these new spaces and projects are located in areas that previously used to be decaying and related with the prostitution and drugs, and how they have gone through urban policies changes and a spatial and visual aesthetics transformative process. Yet, this process contributed to the spreading of the artists and creatives through the central part of the city of Lisbon, while before mostly Bairro Alto used to have a strong presence of an artistic ambiance. This led to the creation of new projects that started to occupy existing vacant spaces, establishing a cultural and artistic network, alternative to the existing mainstream and rather institutional offer (i.e., of those larger cultural infrastructures supported by the municipality or the State, for instance).

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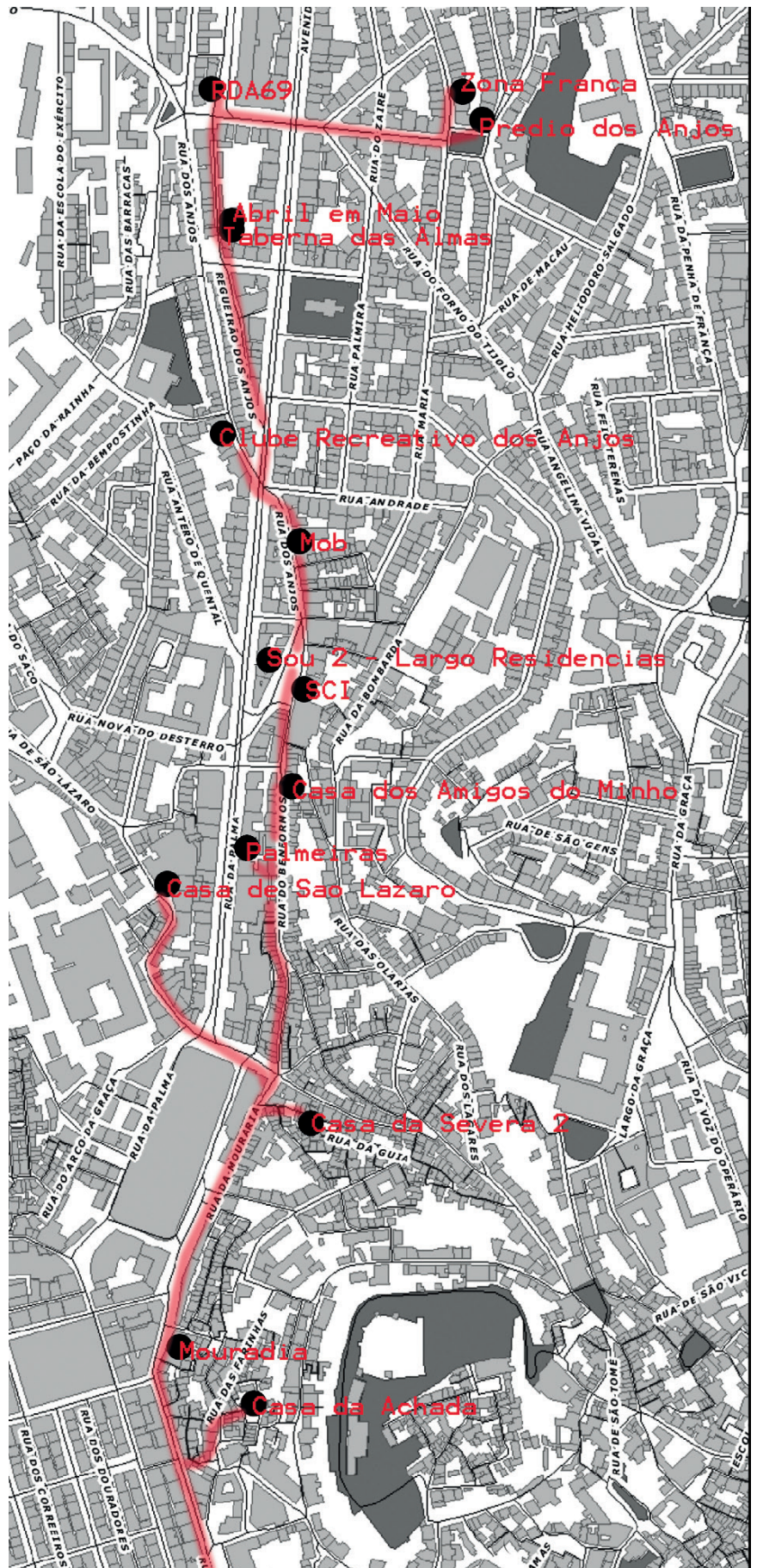
Img 104. Down the hill of Bairro Alto, through diverse arteries, the cultural and artistic movements “flow down” to lower lands.

5.2.2. An underground stream

[flowing from Anjos, Regueirão to Mouraria]

Back to lower lands, and following the course of a previous water stream, this chapter tells the story of Regueirão dos Anjos – the “little big stream of the angels”¹. Regueirão dos Anjos is a dark and narrow (often stinky) street, lower than the neighbouring ones, but is also a street that hosts a particular kind of life (img 105): it is a curious combination of underground, intellectual and activist life, located in Lisbon’s central area. ACS like RDA69 (Regueirão dos Anjos nº 69) or Abril em Maio contribute (or have contributed) to this reputation, but this is also expressed in the tags, stencils and graffiti we come across when walking down this street, many of them addressing politically engaged topics (img 106).

¹ Regueirão is formed with the augmentative suffix -ão and the word **regueiro** ou **regueira** (= rego: a stream; a watercourse; a rivulet; a brook). [Translated from *Dicionário Onomástico Etimológico da Língua Portuguesa*, by José Pedro Machado, Livros Horizonte, Lisboa + *Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa*, Vol. VI, edição Sociedade da Língua Portuguesa] In, <https://ciberduvidas.iscte-iul.pt/consultorio/perguntas/o-significado-da-palavra-regueirao/25586>.



Img 105. Regueirão dos Anjos and the course of the stream >

Img 106. (next page) Regueirão dos Anjos, a dark and narrow street that hosts a particular combination of an underground, intellectual and activist life. This character is expressed in the tags, stencils and graffiti we come across when walking down this street, many addressing politically engaged topics.



In order to start telling the story of the stream of Regueirão dos Anjos, we should go up to the geographic source – Praça das Novas Nações, in the neighbouring Bairro das Colónias. There we can find **Prédio dos Anjos**.

The entire structure of **Prédio dos Anjos** is presently a building of shared flats. Artists, musicians and Erasmus students live there, and communicate among themselves through the exterior metallic “security” staircase (which does not look very safe) that connects their balconies through the different floors (img 107). These balconies are a kind of a shared space for the whole building, and there the residents share meals, discussions or music in frequent jam sessions (img 108). It is a strong social space, that continues down onto the patio, or up into the roof terrace (img 109). This building was never a public space open to strangers – it belongs to a private owner who simply rents rooms to people. But somehow the people who lived there organised themselves and started inviting friends. And then friends of friends came. The access to these events was made through a small backdoor, where someone from the building could be found to guide you through a dark and narrow corridor with a flashlight, to help you crossing it to the other side (courtyard) and overcome one or two steps. And all these invited people started to join the miscellaneous convivial building activities. So, for instance, one day, a quite successful event started taking place on the roof terrace every Tuesday night: open-air film sessions projected onto a wall (img 110), accompanied by cheap vegetarian meals. Once these events were over, the ‘party’ would continue on one of the lower balconies or on the ground-floor patio or even in the former brothel located on that same level². Anyway, all of this began in the same way that it ended. The landlord disliked it and consequently forbade those activities and the intrusions from non-tenants. **Prédio dos Anjos**, as part of the Lisbon alternative cultural life, was very spontaneous, but also very ephemeral. So the need for an alternative was somehow spatialised in **RDA69** (though both spaces were already coexistent before the interdiction), that works still as a meeting point open to all people wishing to discuss and share ideas, and have a meal or a drink in a convivial atmosphere.

There was a time when interesting programmes of film sessions were shared between both spaces: up at the top of the roof-terrace of **Prédio dos Anjos** in good weather, or down at the garage of **RDA69** in bad weather. Also some of the workshops would take place in one place or another³.

RDA69 was founded in 2009 and is a politically and socially engaged communal space and a non-profit association, which has no real “president”⁴. The usual political position of the frequent users of this place tends to be amongst leftist or even anarchist ideals. The space consists of one main room (the garage) intended for the all-purpose activities, and two other smaller interior rooms (a library and a bicycle repair workshop) (img 111). Often, its social activity or bicycle workshops are extended to the street, somehow being used as its backyard. Also some

² This was an underground space when we consider it from the street; the now empty apartment was squatted by the upper level residents at one time.

³ The text relative to RDA69 and Prédio dos Anjos, presented in this story, has been published in (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016).

⁴ A random name of one of the most assiduous members is chosen for the official document that assures that the place is legal, a name that nevertheless changes as often as possible (information based on an informal talk with the current president in August 2014).



Img 107. The metallic staircase that connects the different floors and balconies of Prédio dos Anjos, leading to the roof terrace through the backyard patio.



Img 109. Roof terrace of Prédio dos Anjos and the nightview over Lisbon.

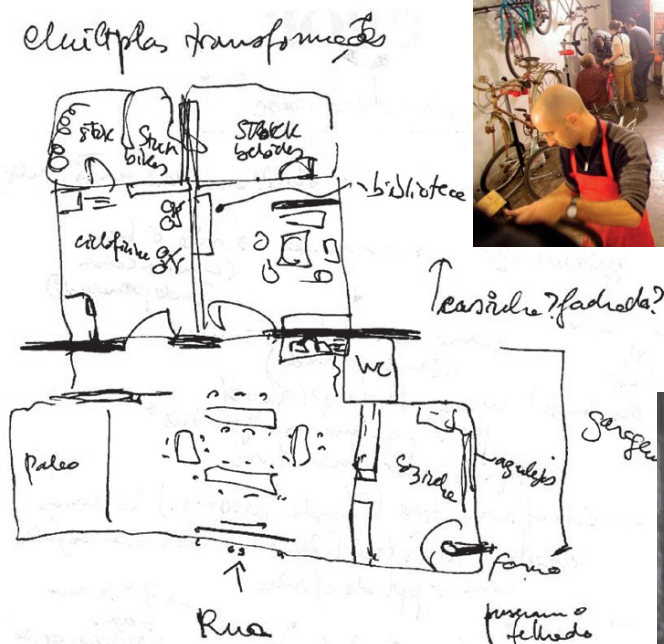
(photo by Hannelore, source: www.aupaysdesmerveillesblog.be/2012/10/20/cinema-la-em-cima/)



Img 108. Jam session at Prédio dos Anjos (2011).



Img 110. "Cinema lá em cima" - Films projected at Prédio dos Anjos.



Img 111. RDA69 plan.



Img 114, 115, 116. Bicycle repair workshop having place on one of RDA69 inner spaces and on the street (the second picture was found on <https://cicloficina.pt/fotos-da-ciclo-ocina-3-no-rda69/>), and Cooperative Canteen (picture found at <http://www.pt.indymedia.org/conteudo/agenda/11891>).

Img 113. Regueirão dos Anjos street by night, next to the Bank of Portugal headquarters >



furniture (like chairs or couches) is often placed on the sidewalk in front of the door, in a kind of convivial welcoming attitude (img 112). The quiet character of this street allows its occasional appropriation, even if this garage is located right next to the Bank of Portugal (a place which is constantly monitored by policemen, img 113).

RDA69 hosts very different collectives that animate the space: Cicloficina, a workshop for bicycle repairs (img 114, 115); the Cooperative Canteen, which takes care of the communal oven and vegetarian meals (img 116); Associação Terapêutica do Ruído (ATR), which promotes musical evenings by inviting artists to participate in “concerts, sound performances and auditory experiences”⁵; Bookblock, which promotes debates on different subjects (social movements, art and politics, the city, work, culture, education or feminist and queer matters, for instance) based on a previously chosen and shared text; 1000101, whose goal is to share knowledge about computers and IT skills, and to provide information about free software options⁶. Apart from these collectives, RDA69 also proposes other activities like boxing, yoga and ping-pong, but also films and parties⁷. The name RDA is certainly not naïve: a game of words between the name of the street where they stand, but also possibly a sympathetic ideological reference to the German Democratic Republic



Img 112. Regueirão dos Anjos 69
(in Portuguese, *República Democrática da Alemanha*).

Prédio dos Anjos and **RDA69**, due to their physical conditions (interstices, in what concerns the territorial insertion and architectural characteristics) but also to the content of their initiatives (cultural offer and political perspective), are part of almost invisible layers of the city often accessible only through word-of-mouth. Nonetheless, these ephemeral and semi-legal “places of resistance”, together with other local associations, decided once to organise a festival called

5 www.terapiadoruido.pt.vu/ (post of September 14th, 2015).

6 <http://colectivo1000101.wix.com/colectivo1000101>.

7 <https://rda69.wordpress.com/category/programacao-mensal>.

“Faz-me Festas nos Anjos”⁸ (a Portuguese play on words meaning something between “cuddle me” and “organise a party for me at Anjos”). We wonder if the main reason for creating it was a search for the greater visibility of the associations, the need to reach some unity in order to grow stronger, or simply the intention of having a convivial party as an important aspect of social and daily life. Maybe it was for all of these reasons.

Before continuing this story down the stream, we should mention the association **Zona Franca dos Anjos (ZFA)**, (img 117, 118), located right around the corner of **Prédio dos Anjos**. Of course, many of the people that lived in the previously mentioned building, simply and naturally started to come down and use this space as a kind of extension of what was going on there (as a matter of fact, they share the same inner court, though there is no connection between **Prédio dos Anjos** and **ZFA**). However, this “free zone of Anjos” (whose blog is called “zonafrancazonalibertada”⁹)



was created by another group of people (who, apparently, were previously in charge of the musical program of **Bartô**¹⁰) who took care of the events happening there at the beginning (2013), but today is mostly used by other groups and collectives of people (though some of the people currently running it also run **RDA69**). These groups and collectives include immigrants (Cape-Vert and Guinea) or students (of visual anthropology and gender studies) who promote activities like shared meals, film projections, debates or

chess meetings¹¹.

Moving back to Regueirão dos Anjos, not far from RDA69, we could once find the cultural association **Abril em Maio** – whose the name, just like the previous examples, is not meaningless. It was created in 1994, 20 years having passed since the Portuguese revolution, which occurred in *April (Abril) 1974. May (Maio)*, furthermore, is necessarily the reference to hope, the celebration

⁸ This festival took place in 2013 (<http://fazmefestasnosanjos.blogspot.pt>).

⁹ <https://zonafrancazonalibertada.wordpress.com>.

¹⁰ The bar of the circus school Chapitô, located near the castle.

¹¹ Information based on informal talks with users of the ZFA.

of spring and obviously the worker's day¹². 1994 was also the year when Lisbon was the Capital of Culture, which probably also seemed a good reason to motivate the creation of an alternative cultural association. The first space the association had was in the neighbourhood of Graça, and only in 2000 did they move to Regueirão dos Anjos to an amazing wide inner space, which before housed a small company working in the industrial area (img 119, 120).

This non-profit association stood against the liberal market and wild consumption, defending that we have an active role on the choice of the products we buy; its main goal was to support the distribution of alternative cultural productions coming from the most diverse fields (agriculture, music and theater, cinema, books, crafts, etc.) "which, through its mode of production, its formal research or content, convey ideals of solidarity, cooperation and innovation, aiming to change and standing against authoritarianism and competitiveness, the *status quo* ideology and the market domination".¹³

It used to have book and disc fairs, crafts and biological agriculture ones too. **Abril em Maio** promoted: debates and discussions about films, books and music; theatre and concerts, photography exhibitions and films; workshops and guided tours to events and exhibitions; a bookshop and a bar. They owned their independent editions of books and booklets. Later on, a publication called PREC ("Põe, Rapa, Empurra, Cai", in English "Put, Shave, Push, Fall", but actually a reference to "Processo Revolucionário Em Curso", the two-year period of the History of Portugal after the Carnation Revolution) was also edited (img 121).

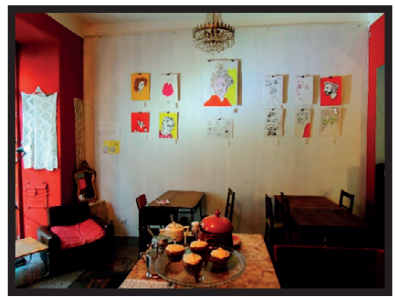
The association closed its doors in 2005. Nevertheless its *project* had somehow a following and the *space* a different utilisation by another ACS:

- The *project* mutated somehow into **Casa da Achada** (or, **Centro Mário Dionísio**), since some of the people reused some of the old ideals of resistance, by promoting discussions around art and politics, or through their choir, which sings revolutionary songs, or even through their film cycles about particular subjects, usually politically and socially engaged (img 122, 123, 124). Also, some of the publications edited by **Abril em Maio** are still on sale in the new bookshop, or are used as support for their discussions. Nevertheless, **Casa da Achada** has quite different goals – it is now a space mainly dedicated to host the works of the painter, writer and professor Mário Dionísio (1916-1993); it has a documentation centre, an exhibition space and a library. It was founded in 2008 and opened its doors in 2009; it is located in São Cristóvão, Mouraria, in the building of an old forge, whose inner space was completely renovated by the members themselves¹⁴ (no architects were involved);

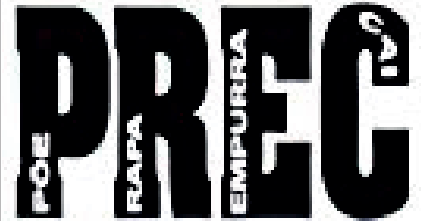
¹² According to Eduarda Dionísio, for common people, the revolution only had an effect in May: "Before that, we did not really know what was going on, but in May we could feel something had changed."

¹³ Available at <http://abrilemmaio.no.sapo.pt/Carta%20de%20Principios1.htm> (accessed on 27.11.2015).

¹⁴ Unlike Abril em Maio, where everyone could be a member and be elected for its structures, Casa da Achada is a closed association for invited associates only (since it has responsibility over the inheritance of Mário Dionísio, whose surviving family is behind of both the foundation of AEM and this new project). However, anyone can participate in the planning of the activities and become a "friend" of Casa da Achada.



Img 117, 118. Zona Franca dos Anjos: logotype and room (photo by Elena Sanmiguel Urbina).



Img 119, 120, 121. Abril em Maio (left photo by Keiko Uenishi; middle photo by Mário Tomé). Logo of Abril m Maio's publication called PREC.



Img 122, 123, 124. Casa da Achada (Centro Mário Dionísio).



Img 125 - 130. Taberna das Almas.





Img 131, 132, 133. Clube Recreativo dos Anjos (pinkish neon-lit corridor, the main salon and to the bar, where there are no windows).



Img 134. The building where Associação Renovar a Mouraria is today installed - Mouradia (before and after).

29 de Março 11h >>> 19h
 Ven vender, comprar ou trocar, Sábado, no Beco do Rosendo!!
 com a acordionista SANDRINE CLEMENTE

MERCADINHO DO BECO
 PARA TODOS.

A cada último sábado do mês na Mouradia - Casa Comunitária da Mouraria. Vender n No interior custa 5 euros. Podes abanclar no chão ou sobre tempos. Alugamos os no Reserva o teu espaço inscrevendo-te até à véspera. Para comprares, basta aparece

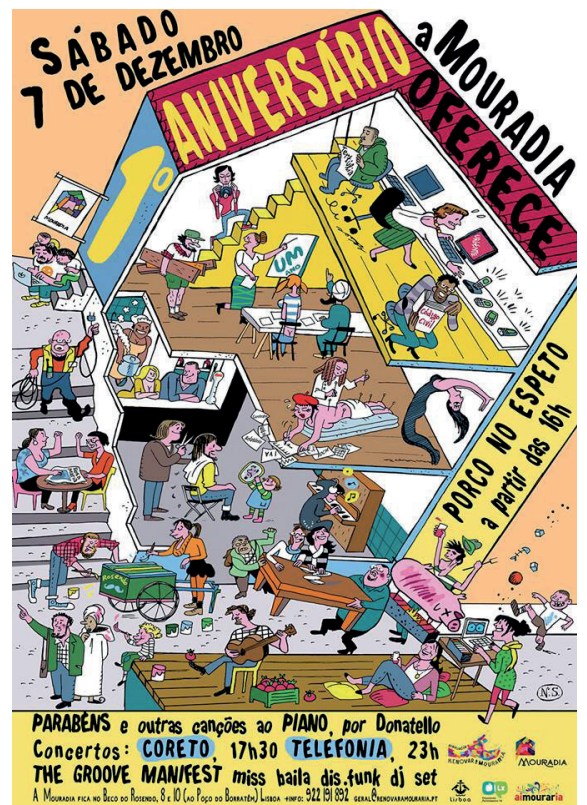
*As nossas receitas com o Mercadinho revertent integralmente para as obras em curso, de expansão da Mouradia



PARA ASSINALAR A PRIMEIRA SEMANA DA EXPOSIÇÃO "A PIOR BANDA DO MUNDO" DE JOSÉ CARLOS FERNANDES VAMOS TER A MELHOR PLAYLIST DE:

MÚSICA XUNGA
 4ª FEIRA - 15 DE OUTUBRO - 19h00

SE TENS UM PECADO MUSICAL QUE NÃO CONFESSAS A NINGUÉM, VEM À MOURADIA REDIMIR-TE!
 E AINDA E AINDA
 VAMOS TER PETISCOS INTRIGÁVEIS E BEBIDAS A MARTELO!



Img 135, 136, 137. Mouradia's posters of diverse events and activities.

- The *space* became **Taberna das Almas**, which was founded in 2011 (img 125-130). It is a project that is known for its strong connection with the world of crafts, namely its fair, **Feira das Almas**, and workshops of ceramics and pottery, sewing, jewelry, sculpture and restoration of wood, woodwork and carpentry, dance, music and theater¹⁵. **Taberna das Almas** also hosts several random events. Besides, it is also the rehearsal room for the group “Sambacção - Ritmos de Resistência” (connected with an international movement called Rhythms of Resistance) who play drums in political events.

If we keep on going down the stream, we find some “tributary brooks” where other political or/ and social experiments happened or still happen. It is the case of **Clube Recreativo dos Anjos (CRA)**, **Palmeiras**, **Casa de São Lázaro** and **Mouradia**.

Just like **Casa dos Amigos do Minho (CAM)**¹⁶, **CRA** hosts events proposed by the many associations and collectives that exist in this area. The associations and collectives circulate between all the mentioned ACS in this chapter, and also among others in different parts of town. **CRA** and **CAM** are ‘traditional’ recreation associations, where people gather around to play chess, watch football matches and drink a glass of wine. The people who traditionally come to these associations belong to another generation and most of the corresponding spaces are today decadent. Some rooms seem to be locked up in time, with no windows to keep contact with the street outside; they have neon and television lights instead as if replacing the natural light (img 131-133). The activities become scarce, so do the users. However, recently, as just mentioned, a new burst of life took over these decrepit places, thanks to sporadic invasions of younger people who come there for a concert, a meal or a workshop. I wonder, nevertheless, whether these two generations really coexist and share some moments together, or if they simply use the same space in “parallel realities”. Do they simply tolerate each other, being curious and suspicious about each other at the same time?

Palmeiras, located in Rua da Palma, used to be the headquarters of Partido Socialista Revolucionário (PSR) and more recently of Bloco de Esquerda (BE). It is a space with a strong and distinctively left wing character, which in the 80s used to host many rock and punk concerts by still quite unknown bands¹⁷. It closed in 1989 due to the murder of the bar manager by a group of skinheads¹⁸, and then reopened in 1999 for a few years.

The nearby municipal building **Casa de São Lázaro** was squatted twice, in 2011 and 2012, an occupation that lasted no more than a couple of months, until the eviction by the police. It was a very social and political engaged space, which offered several activities¹⁹.

At last, **Mouradia** is a game of words between *Mouraria* (the name of the neighbourhood) and *moradia* (which means *villa*). The association “Renovar a Mouraria” (“Renew Mouraria”) was

¹⁵ <http://mestresdoregueirao.pt/oficinas>.

¹⁶ See the chapter “I am” everywhere [SOU, por todo o lado]”, pp. 211.

¹⁷ The image of Ernesto Che Guevara was placed at the centre of the room. (...) He is the leader. The example to follow for the young people using the bar (...). On each table can be found a small candlestick with a lighting fire” (Rainha and al. 2000, 36), my translation.

¹⁸ Information available at <http://altamont.pt/86-91-os-anos-de-ouro-punk-portugues/> (accessed on 27.11.2015).

¹⁹ See chapter “(Very) Ephemeral Squats”, pp. 256.

created in 2008 to alert to the decay of the neighbourhood and its buildings and to work with the community at a cultural, social, economic and touristic level, aiming at improvements in the local life conditions²⁰. The association then found a dark alley where an almost abandoned little house was standing, which belonged to the municipality and was in need of critical rehabilitation (img 134). So, in 2011, the association applied for the *BipZip* programme²¹, got in contact with the architecture office Artéria and then created the “Building Manifesto”, proving wrong the pre-conceived notion of “destroying and rebuilding being cheaper than renovating an old building” and often considered as being economically unsustainable. Since Mouradia opened its doors by the end of 2012, it has been working with the local and immigrant communities, offering in particular (img 135-137):

- Free support in legal matters to citizens, educational support to children, and Portuguese and literacy courses to immigrants;
- Activities and workshops for everyone (yoga, dance, guitar, tapestry or alternative therapies, for example), the payment being adapted to the income available to each person;
- A convivial structure which promotes meetings, events and exchange of know-how, which includes the café, an open stage for concerts and a room for exhibitions and other activities. In this house take place international and vegetarian meals, karaoke with live guitar, film projections, a street market or a “bank of time” (where people share their know-how), in between other things;
- Informational and touristy services: the editing of a newspaper about the local community and neighbourhood and outdoor guided tours about cultural traditions, heritage or intercultural issues.

*

The story of this stream traverses the story of several areas, which intersect each other: Anjos, Arroios, Intendente and Mouraria.

According to the journalist António Henriques, when commenting about a few of these projects during one of the Ground Sessions (RadioZero and Artéria 2013), some of the projects that exist in this area are mostly “invisible”, and that for several reasons:

- the place where they are located (rather in small streets than in the main roads);
- the kinds of spatial support they occupy (which are mostly interstitial and/or had been abandoned before);
- the absence of economic greed.

²⁰ www.renovaramouraria.pt/associacao.

²¹ See the chapter *Official Culture* (in Lisbon context chapter) for more details about this municipal programme.

Henriques refers other two important characteristics of these projects:

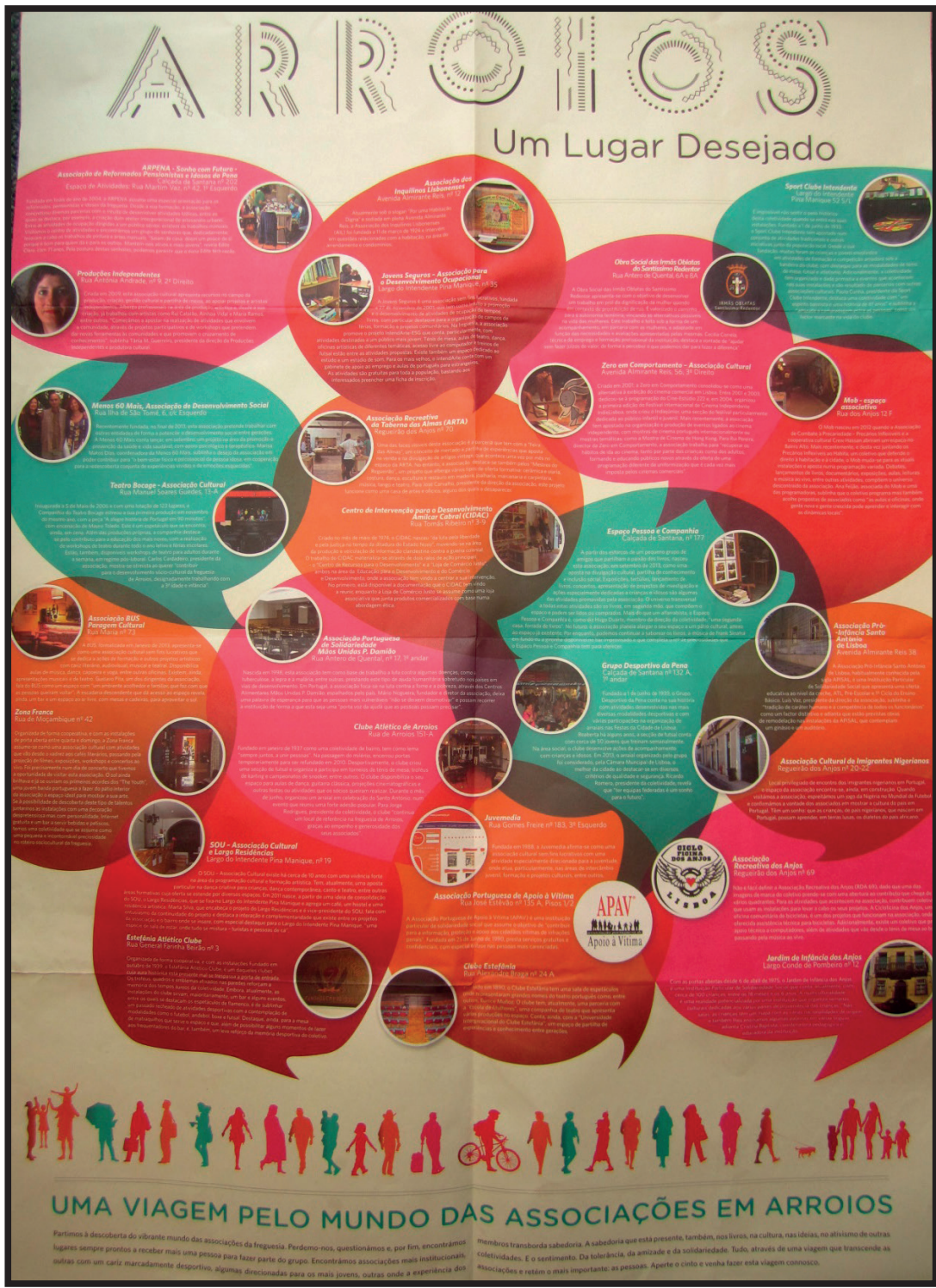
- the engagement with the local community;
- the proposal of exercise of democratic practices (and an important focus on knowledge exchange).

On this matter, and particularly referring to the case of **RDA69**, the sociologist Bruno Monteiro highlights furthermore the desire these associations have to update a militant tradition sustained by a collective project able to reinvent and propose alternative modes of political engagement. These militant roots recover anarchist, mutualist or cooperativist approaches that, even if not having a continuous and linear history in Portugal, had a significant historical implementation (Monteiro and Neves 2015). The book *Lisboa revolucionária: roteiro dos confrontos armados no século XX*, wrote by the historian Fernando Rosas, for instance, explains these militant and revolutionary roots analysed through a geographical perspective, highlighting the importance many associations had in that context (Rosas 2007). It becomes clear, through these kinds of projects, the desire to create spaces that are not managed by the logics that follow the rules of the market, the State or the Church, being instead invested by emotional and intellectual efforts that aim to recreate social ties. It is curious how this happens precisely in a period of economic crisis, when community relations are exposed to heavy erosion processes, and when the social functions of the state seem to be reevaluated. On the one hand, this condition reveals an urgent need to formulate responses, but on the other hand it fosters the precarious and fragile condition of these projects, leading many to close their doors sooner that they would have expected (Monteiro and Neves 2015). Nonetheless, Monteiro believes that the people who have passed by those spaces and participated in the most diverse initiatives of these projects are surely not immune to the experience they have acquired in such process, and will eventually convert it into new political practices.

We must, nonetheless, be aware that this area has been going through a period of big transformations, at a social and an institutional level, and it is important to refer how this “associative tissue” has being perceived by the institutional services. The parish (*freguesia*) of Arroios realised the importance these associations have in its administrative area, deciding therefore to promote these projects triggered by citizen initiative as one of the attractive characteristics of the area, as we can see in the poster published and released in the area, during the summer of 2014 (img 138). In this map I have mentioned some of the ACS that have been studied in this research, for instance, **RDA69**, **Zona Franca dos Anjos**, **Taberna das Almas**, **SOU**, **BUS – paragem cultural** or **SCI**.

Since the present story addresses spaces that have a more marginal character, the references to the other areas’ institutional framework, related with more “trendy” areas like Intendente (or even Mouraria), will be mentioned in the chapter of “*I am*” everywhere [SOU, por todo o lado], since this case study – the cultural association SOU – is more directly linked to that context.

*



Img 138. “Arroios, a desired place – a trip throughout the world of the associations in Arroios” – poster edited by Freguesia de Arroios in the Summer of 2014: “We set off to discover the vibrant world of associations (...) We found some associations with a more institutional delineation, others with a distinctly sportive nature, some others directed towards young people, and at last some where the gathered knowledge of the members overflows into wisdom. The wisdom that is present also in the books, culture, ideas and activism of other communities. And the feeling of tolerance, friendship and solidarity (...)”.

5.2.3. De-centralising

[Intellectual and Creative Central Peripheries]

Traditionally, bookshops used to exist in the city centre of Lisbon, in Bairro Alto and Chiado. Then, progressively, many of them disappeared. Recently, around the mid-2000s, two of these bookshops – Ler Devagar¹ (*Reading Slowly*) and Eterno Retorno (*Eternal Return*) – reopened their doors in the Eastern and Western areas of the city. Curiously, these bookshops are, as we will see, intimately connected with some ACS studied in this dissertation, being in part responsible for the decentralisation process of the alternative cultural life of Lisbon.

The story of these bookshops began in Bairro Alto by the end of the 1990s. Both of them were located close to each other back then. The first one, Ler Devagar, is a project of José Pinho, and it used to occupy a huge and beautiful space that had once been a Lithography workshop: “We rented it to the owners for a symbolic value, but we did all necessary works and were taking care of the place” (Pinho 2012). Some sofas and lamps could be found on site, creating comfortable, cosy corners that invited the visitor to take a sit and read a book. A small bar, some chairs and a few tables welcomed people to meet and have a drink, this usually lasting until 2 a.m. (or later). Behind some big shelves full of books – of Social Sciences, Radical Politics (Anarchism, Marxism), Architecture, Arts, Cartoons, Poetry and Literature – there was a large room used for cinema sessions, theatre performances, exhibitions, conferences and concerts (Rainha and al. 2000, 92–93). It was a lively place, where people often discussed about politics and arts.

Eterno Retorno, instead, was a small place, crowded with books mainly focused on Philosophy. It was a project led by the Professor and Philosopher Nuno Nabais and a place where second hand books were also sold. According to him, this was something not so common in Portugal back then. He justifies this choice of selling second hand books by stating that philosophy is always a second hand process. Furthermore, he explains the name he gave to the bookshop with the experience of the acquisition of knowledge: “I think through what has already been thought (...), no direct process of knowledge is possible” (Nabais 2008), an explanation which looks like a reference to Nietzsche’s concept of “eternal return”. Apart from the selling of books, conferences had place in there, the space being too tiny for other kinds of events. Nonetheless, one could also have a drink, listen or play the piano. Both bookshops shared more or less the same public, organising many events together, using the street during the summer, inviting people to move from one place to another (Nabais 2012).

These two entities created a new concept of bookshop, as a dynamic and convivial place where one could not only buy books, but also read them on site, meet friends, share ideas, have a drink and access different cultural events in the evenings. These bookshops managed to have a considerable impact in Bairro Alto life style, according to Nabais (Nabais 2012, 188).

1 www.lerdevagar.com.

Then one day a real estate agency wanted to buy the space where Ler Devagar was, so the owners forced José Pinho to leave. For a period of two years (2006/7) both bookshops occupied two small places in Bairro Alto. However, the spaces were small and narrow, and in 2007 Nabais found a new space to host Eterno Retorno. This space was the ancient **Fábrica do Braço de Prata (FBP)**, and a few months later Ler Devagar joined the bookshop of the philosopher. The joint project of the two bookshops went out of the city centre towards East. According to Nabais, it was the combined effort of these two bookshops that managed to attract people to this abandoned area of the city (Nabais 2012, 188).

Nevertheless, this partnership did not last long – only one year – due to internal disagreements. From then onwards, the two bookshops took different paths, but kept on having a very strong impact on the cultural alternative life of Lisbon. An important particularity of the new situation was however that the location area was no longer central. But if Eterno Retorno remained since 2007 – and still stays there – at **FBP** located in Marvila (in the Eastern part of Lisbon), and Ler Devagar found some months later a new home at **Lx Factory² (LXF)**, in Alcântara (in the Western part of the city). Both areas are former industrial zones. One may ask, nevertheless, which were the conditions that made possible the existence of these projects at these new locations. Large projects for urban revitalisation had been planned for those areas, and in both cases something happened that caused their stoppage, or that forced them to take a different form. This, consequently, allowed the extension of the life span of the projects linked to the bookshops (**FBP** and **LXF**).

Marvila [Fábrica do Braço de Prata]

Let us then start with the story of Eterno Retorno and **Fábrica do Braço de Prata³**. According to Nabais, he occupied **FBP**. In fact, Nabais found this place through his brother, who was at the time a member of the administration of Somague, the company that owned the building (together with another company named Obriverca⁴). But what is the history of this building? It was first built as a summer house of the family Moreira Rato, in the 19th century. In 1908 it was borrowed by the state for a period of a hundred years and became the headquarters of the factory “Braço de Prata”, which produced war material, more specifically firearms to be used in particular during the colonial war (Nabais 2013c) (img 139, 140). It was an important factory with different buildings, that hired about 12,000 workers, occupying an area of 9 ha (Nabais 2013b). Most of the surrounding this area became, along the 20th century, the industrial Eastern part of the city⁵, which was extended to Cabo Ruivo and Moscavide, where later on the EXPO’98 was built.

² www.bracodeprata.com/a-fabrica/o-que-e-afinal.

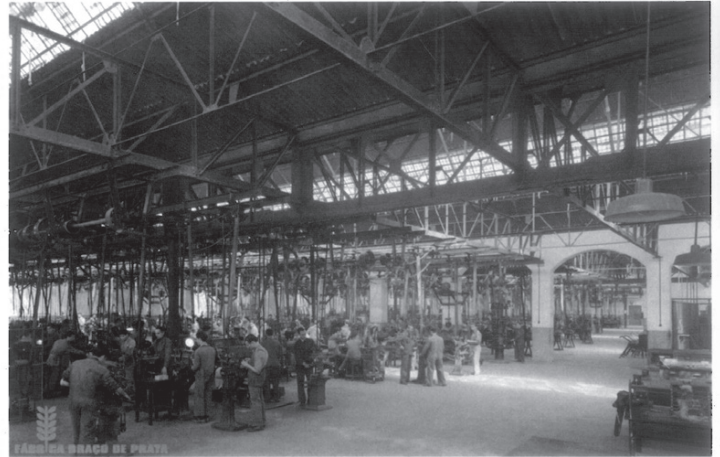
³ This name means “Silver Arm”, and it was the nickname of the owner of Quinta da Matinha, Antonio de Sousa Meneses, who was a former Governor-General of Brazil (1686-1694) and lost his right arm in the battle of Paraíba. Consequently he used a silver arm, and that was the origin of his nickname and also the origin of the name, until now, of all the land that belonged to him (Available at: <http://jf-marvila.pt/index.php/historia-da-freguesia/historia/marvila-e-a-nossa-historia-2/braco-de-prata>, accessed on 30.03.2016).

⁴ www.obriverca.pt.

⁵ This area used to be a lively place, many people coming to work in the factories. This bustling life is only a memory nowadays, since the factories no longer exist. The place is calm and many establishments closed too (almost no grocery stores or taverns exist now, which contrasts with what happened before). There is a feeling of loneliness and abandonment when we walk on the streets.



Fábrica de Material de Guerra, Lisboa, Portugal, s.d., produzida durante a atividade do Estúdio Mário Novais: 1933-1983 [CFT003 006381.ic]
FCG - Biblioteca de Arte



Fábrica de Material de Guerra, Lisboa, Portugal, s.d., produzida durante a atividade do Estúdio Mário Novais: 1933-1983 [CFT003 006384.ic]
FCG - Biblioteca de Arte

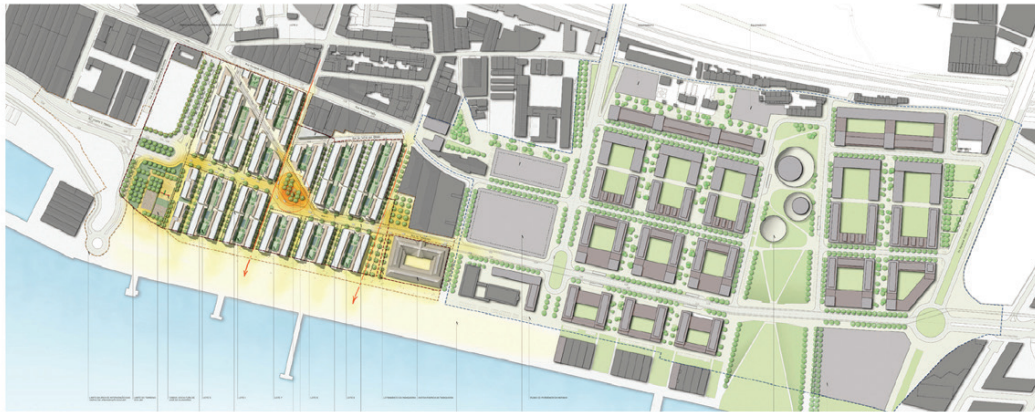
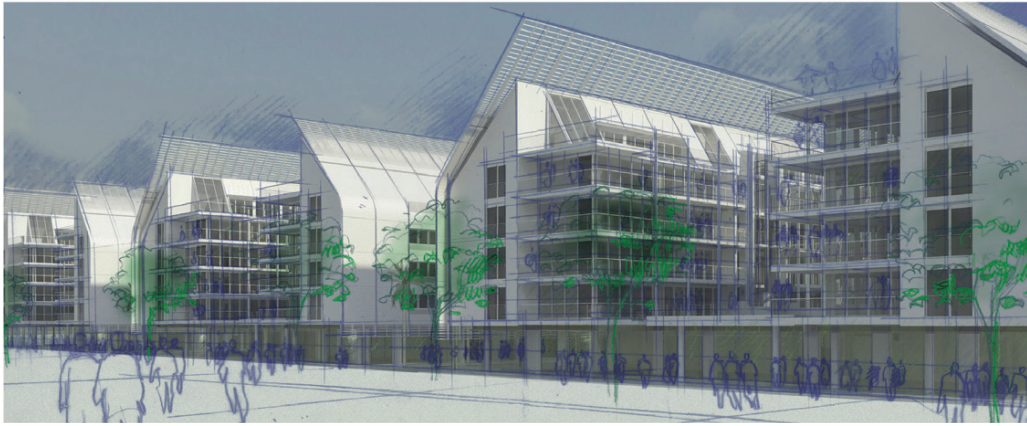
mg 139, 140. Photographies of Braço de Prata, when it was still being used as a factory. (image source: FB's archive).

In 1995 the land was sold by the Government to the two civil construction companies already mentioned (Nabais 2008) and, by the end of the 1990s, a large scale luxurious urban project was designed for the whole area that belonged to the factory. All buildings were demolished at the time, except the one where the cultural project has been implemented (and this because it is classified as being of “municipal interest”, therefore it cannot be demolished) (Nabais 2013c). The new project, called “Jardins de Braço de Prata” (img 141-143), had the signature of the Italian superstar architect Renzo Piano⁶. However, the project was embargoed when it was discovered that actually the land could not have been sold since it did not belong to the state, but rather to the family Moreira Rato (the date of the lending contract was due to expire next) (Nabais 2013c). While this complicated situation was being solved, a void was created, a condition that allowed Nabais to move there (in June 2007), and have the access to a lending contract⁷ (*contrato comodato*) that granted him the use of the building (Nabais 2013c). The contract made between Eterno Retorno and Obriverca, established that Nabais could use the building until the embargo was over and the construction works could begin. Then, he should leave within a month. This is how the story of Eterno Retorno starts at **FBP**, “the best bookshop on Human and Social Sciences titles ever published in Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique and Angola” as Nabais proudly announces (Nabais 2013a).

When Nabais moved in, he came with 50 of his students (from the Faculty of Philosophy and Scenic Arts), and for seven days they “worked enthusiastically over the spaces, painting, putting walls up and down, cleaning, repairing the roofs, making their spatial and aesthetics choices... giving life to the place, just like in Genesis”, as he explains (Nabais 2013c). Four rooms were occupied with books, and the other eight “became a challenge for the imagination”, hosting concerts of all kinds of music, painting and photography exhibitions, performances, conferences, film projections, workshops, shops... everything seemed to be possible. This is the moment when José Pinho comes in, bringing along *Ler Devagar*.

⁶ www.jardinsdebracodeprata.com.

⁷ The contract was made between Eterno Retorno (*Sociedade Unipessoal Limitada*) and Obriverca.

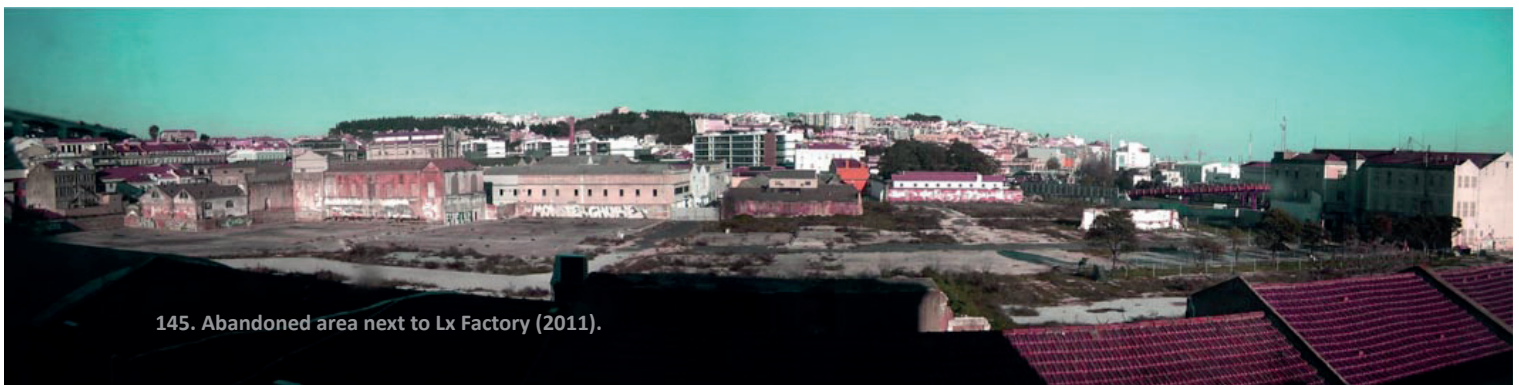


Concelto por RPBW

141, 142, 143. Project for “Jardins do Braço de Prata”, by Renzo Piano. (img source: www.jardinsdebracodeprata.com)



144. Model of the *Alcântara XXI* urban project. This project proposed the reconversion of the old industrial area of Alcântara into a housing and offices neighbourhood. It was presented in 1999 by João Soares, the president of Lisbon’s Municipality - CML. (image source: Ordem dos Arquitectos – Secção Regional Sul, OASRS).



145. Abandoned area next to Lx Factory (2011).

The day the embargo ended arrives at last (in June 2008), and Nabais receives instructions to leave the building. This building should from then on host the sales office of the apartment being built next door. However, meanwhile the project in development at **FBP** had become an extraordinary case of success in the context of the cultural life of Lisbon, and had not been unnoticed, even at an international level⁸. Furthermore, an agreement existed – between the municipality and the owners – that established that this building would become municipal property once the construction works would ultimately have finished. CML realised then how it could be a mistake to end with such a successful cultural project – considering, particularly, that all this success did not cost a cent to the municipality – and decided to support the idea of maintaining Nabais’ cultural project at this exact place (Nabais 2013c), by offering new locals for the apartments’ sales office.

According to Nabais, projects like this are a gift to the municipality, because the city manages to have a cultural centre at “zero cost”. **FBP** produces “more cultural events than all the rest of the city” (about 9 concerts took place at FBP in just one night, in 2008). “Everything goes on well, nobody complains, everybody loves this...”; basically, this is “a miracle”, says Nabais (Nabais 2013c).

One may ask how this project manages to survive, economically, if no public funding is allocated, neither is it receiving any kind of subsidy. Since this project has something of illegal, it is impossible to ask for subsidies. On the other side, the fact that they pay no rent could be considered as a kind of a subsidy. Anyway, the project has to sustain itself. The bar and the restaurant assure the sustainability of the project since the beginning: with this money all expenses are paid, including salaries (cleaning personnel, sound technicians, tickets’ seller...) and charges (water, electricity), and the renting of the rooms for private parties also gives some extra money. Musicians are paid according to the entrance tickets that are sold on that same day (**FBP** does not get any percentage of it, the money being divided equally by all musicians; if that day no public comes, there is no payment, it is the rule), and the artists who expose their works on the factory receive 100% of the *oeuvres* they manage to sell (Nabais 2012, 192).

Alcântara [Lx Factory]

And what happened to Ler Devagar since it moved out from **Fábrica do Braço de Prata**? A year after it moved out, Ler Devagar starts another phase: a curious partnership with the company **Mainside**⁹, which takes Ler Devagar, from then onwards, into a journey around the city. Its new story starts at **Lx Factory**, a former industrial area located at Alcântara¹⁰ in the occidental part of the city close to the river and the railway line¹¹, situated under the red bridge crossing the river

⁸ E.g. *Lisbon comes alive*, an article published by The New York Times (Sherwood 2008) or the one published by the Spanish newspaper El País: *Magia okupa en la fábrica de metralletas* (Jiménez Barca 2013).

⁹ See the chapter “Franchising [Mainside]” (p. 238).

¹⁰ Alcântara is a transliteration of the Arabic word *al qantara* (قنطرة), meaning “the bridge”, referring to the bridge that was crossing the water stream since the Muslim period. The water stream was subjected to piping in the mid-20th century and is no longer visible.

¹¹ Built at the end of the 19th century, connecting Cais do Sodré and Cascais.

Tagus¹². This area, occupied by the industrial sector in the 18th-19th century, has a renowned reputation linked to powerful proletarian syndicates and anarchist tendencies. Just like the area of Marvila, Alcântara underwent a large scale revitalisation urban project in 1999. This project – called *Alcântara XXI* – had an intervention area of 400,500 m² (img 144) (Henriques 2005). It was an impressive real estate project signed by superstar architects like Álvaro Siza Vieira, Aires Mateus, or Jean Nouvel, the idea being to erase most of the remains from the late 19th century industrial life. At the time, a passionate controversy was originated due to the fact that the project was violating the rules of the Municipal Master Plan (PDM)¹³, and in the end only a small part of the whole plan went forward¹⁴; in addition, a big area intended to host part of *Alcântara XXI*'s project was demolished and left to abandonment¹⁵ (img 145).

The regulations enacted as the result of the referred controversy, along with the effects provoked by the economic crisis led to a curious phenomenon: specifically, that of **Lx Factory**. Taking advantage of the void created by this context, a company called **Mainside** became interested in a parcel of the available land and tried to make some profit out of it. Contrarily to the other investors of the *Alcântara XXI*'s project, **Mainside** decided to adopt a different strategy: not to demolish the existent buildings and build new ones, but instead to re-use those pre-existent buildings and rent them. **LXF** project, which at the beginning had an ephemeral character due to the contract conditions specified above, started gradually to settle down. Today, the new urbanisation plan for Alcântara, published in 2015¹⁶, no longer expresses the intention to destroy the buildings already existing on site.

The bookshop Ler Devagar (**LD**) is one of the most successful firms installed at **Lx Factory**. It occupies a very wide pavilion where once newspapers were printed. The three floors built around the printing press machine have created an amazing inner space, which is considered by the media as one of the most beautiful bookshops in the world¹⁷. Apart from selling books and music discs, Ler Devagar has two bar areas, a room for exhibitions, some artworks suspended on the ceiling and some strange mechanical objects placed on the big printing machine. And, just like at its previous locations, many cultural events happen in here (conferences, seminars, debates, workshops, photography exhibitions, concerts, etc), having also a very convivial character.

But the story of Ler Devagar does not end at **Lx Factory**. Thanks to Mainside, José Pinho has been opening new stores all over the city – the moment the company decides to open a new place, then an invitation comes to Ler Devagar for joining it. This way, Ler Devagar followed **Mainside** to Cais do Sodré, and soon will do the same vis-à-vis Intendente/Colina de Santana¹⁸, adapting

¹² “Ponte 25 de Abril” (called “Ponte Salazar” before 1974), opened in 1966.

¹³ The towers proposed by the architect Siza Vieira did not meet the current height limits (105m) imposed by the PDM.

¹⁴ The projects designed by Frederico Valssassina and Aires Mateus.

¹⁵ That area hosts a lunapark from time to time.

¹⁶ *Plano de Urbanização de Alcântara* (PUA) was approved in Diário da República (2a série - n°37 - 23 de Fevereiro 2015). We can find the applicable regulations in the CML website (www.cm-lisboa.pt/viver/urbanismo/planeamento-urbano/planos-eficazes/plano-de-urbanizacao-de-alcantara).

¹⁷ “The most beautiful bookshop of the world”, according to skyscanner.net. (available at www.skyscanner.net/news/22-most-beautiful-bookshops-world, published on 01.07.2014). Also The New York Times describes this bookshop as an exceptional place (available at www.nytimes.com/2012/05/27/travel/how-i-fell-for-lisbon.html?_r=0, accessed on 17.05.2016).

¹⁸ For detailed information about these projects, see chapter “Mainside”.

its name and/or concept according to each place:

- Ler Devagar com Amor (“Reading Slowly with Love”) opened at Cais do Sodré, at **Pensão Amor (PA)**, the concept being inspired on the **PA** project’s own concept (it was a former brothel¹⁹), and from then on developing its own project, consisting on renting erotic literature, instead of selling the books;
- At the location of the former **Hospital do Desterro** a new project is still being developed and, as part of the renovation concept of the wellness centre, a “bibliotherapy” is being conceived, where books can be used for treatment (Tomás 2015).

After visiting more peripheral areas of Lisbon, Ler Devagar is back in the city centre (but its “headquarters” remain at Alcântara). Ler Devagar is having the capacity to be on the right place on the right time, from its former times at Bairro Alto onwards: since **Pensão Amor** opened at Cais do Sodré, this area became one of the hotspots of Lisbon’s nightlife, as we have already seen and will see²⁰, and Intendente is also one of the areas that has been passing through a big revitalisation process²¹.

*

Before moving on to the next story, I would just like to mention the importance books have in most of the analysed ACS through this research. This is an element which is constantly present, in different forms, and sometimes in a very modest, a very discreet way. Sometimes these books can be bought, but most often they exist in bookshelves just to be read on site, or to be borrowed. In most cases, the books we can find are old, dusty and in second hand, these libraries being created with the good will of people who pass by. This reveals the importance that knowledge sharing has in the alternative cultural life not only of Lisbon but also of the other cities, confirming the relevance of mentioning the stories of Ler Devagar and Eterno Retorno. However, this knowledge is not only shared through books: conferences, seminars, courses, workshops and debates also have a major role in this process, as we will be able to verify.

*

This chapter, until here, has focused particularly on aspects related with urban planning revitalisation processes that are linked to the life course of the two bookshops *Ler Devagar* and *Eterno Retorno*, and consequently linked to the life stories of two ACS: **Fábrica do Braço de Prata** and **Lx Factory**. We will then proceed here with the analysis of the aesthetic and formal aspects of these two case studies. However, once we are analysing examples that exist in post-industrial sites, we believe we should also mention the story of a third post-industrial and creative cluster: **Village Underground Lisbon**.

¹⁹ See more information at “Franchising [Mainside]” chapter. (p. 238).

²⁰ See the following chapters for more information about *Pensão Amor*, Cais do Sodré and Intendente: 5.2.1, 5.3.1., 5.3.3.

²¹ For further details, see Lisbon chapters: 5.2.1., 5.3.2. and 5.3.1.

We will this way start with a brief analysis of the spatial occupation of these three case-studies, highlighting its relationship with the surrounding territory. Then, we will analyse the particular spatial and visual aesthetics of each case. We must nevertheless warn the reader that most details about the case **Lx Factory** will be developed on the **Mainside** chapter further on.

Post-industrials Clusters Fábrica do Braço de Prata, Lx Factory and Village Underground

Spatial Occupation

These three post-industrial clusters, **FBP** (in the Eastern part of Lisbon) and **LXF** and **VU** (in the Western part of the city), have in common the fact of being separated from their surrounding environment by walls. The interaction with their neighbourhoods (Marvila and Alcântara) is scarce, and so is with the traditional working class historical background. These walls separate two different worlds: the outside world, of the retired proletarians, does not mix very much with the one of those people who come to enjoy **FBP**, **LXF** and **VU** cultural projects. The previously existing locals feel in part suspicious about these new projects. In Alcântara, there was even a letter sent to the parish council, by the neighbour residents, complaining about the noise of **Lx Factory**'s night life, despite the arguments put forward by José Pinho (from the bookshop *Ler Devagar*) that they had no reasons for that, since the walls isolate Lx Factory, functioning this space as a walled city inside the city" (Pinho 2012). However, this complaint reflects the neighbours' rejection of this "strange body" that "landed" in their territory²².

Descending from the old industrial communities, many of the residents of Alcântara and Marvila were proletarian. Their disapproving attitude vis-à-vis the users of these new creative/cultural spaces (including the nightlife visitors) is further justified by their different sociological background. These post-industrial cultural projects have their backs turned to the existent urban fabric and its community, and they do not promote common or shared activities with the neighbourhood.

Spatial and Visual Aesthetics

Fábrica do Braço de Prata

Aesthetic Choices related with the Cultural Programme: The **FBP** cultural programme has always been very diversified and intense. Every weekday has different and simultaneous events: theatre, performances, balls, several exhibitions (sculpture, drawing, photography, video, painting, installations, etc.), sometimes four, five, even nine concerts through the night. One needs to buy

²² Mentioned by José Pinho. He adds that this letter made no sense, considering that nightlife happens inside those big walls, not being possible that such noise may impact outside. He argues that this was just the way people found to complain about something that was new and they were not used to, not knowing how to deal with the situation.

a ticket and may participate in all the activities. In the afternoon, regular courses and debates about radical thinking tends to be crowded. The patio is also a place where many events take place in the summer time (there used to be a circus tent there in the first years of existence of **FBP**). **FBP** became suddenly the cultural hotspot of the capital.

But which are the selection criteria of the cultural programme? Who decides about the quality and interest of so many and different musical and artistic offer? “Our choices define our identity. As we have no subsidies we cannot allow ourselves having a very strong identity. We don’t want to create a style, we don’t want to be a school. We just try to give a chance to artists we trust and admire, and try to balance it with the necessity of having a public. It is not always easy ... Concerning the plastic artists, we value a rebellious attitude vis-à-vis the institutions, like museums and art galleries... We also look for the possibility of having access to different aesthetic registers simultaneously” (Nabais 2012, 194-95)²³. There is no pre-defined agenda, and different proposals arrive and events are selected according to Nabais interests and tastes. “We would like that this place would be a house of the people, where everybody feel they can also make things happen. That is why we have here so many different tribes – underground, gothic, world music, jazz, fado, electronic and experimental music...” (Nabais 2008)²⁴.

Visual and Spatial Aesthetic: The big wall outside is usually covered with graffiti from different street artists. Artistic contributions and exhibitions are always welcome and stimulating. The influence of the architecture of the building is quite powerful: it is very curious to see how each art piece adapts to the building and is generally conceived to adapt to the space and form of each room or even corridor (*site-specific* art). According to Nabais, “It is a poetic and troubling spatial experience to walk along this ruined building and feel its beautiful decay” (Nabais, 2013)²⁵. Objects and furniture are usually recycled and random furniture is disposed in the different spaces in a careless and often surprising way, creating spaces where you would like to stay and enjoy (img 146).

The legal status of **FBP** is precarious, as we have already mentioned. It is not a squat, there is no rental contract. There is instead a lending contract. “Everything is illegal here. The building was open to the public with no permission of the Municipality, neither the civil protection, nor the firemen...” (Nabais 2013)²⁶. It was a risk, but Nabais decided to take it, he had no money to make the necessary rehabilitation works. Nabais went even to Court several times due to this, he had to pay fines sometimes, and some other times indulgent judges absolved him. However, **FBP** pays taxes. **FBP** is a big paradox: “a legal enterprise that functions illegally in a building that will belong one day to the Municipality, which now protects it” (Nabais 2012, 190)²⁷. However, *illegality* can also be synonymous and a guarantee of independence, in what concerns interior design and the choice of the cultural programme: “For instance, we have books inside the bar

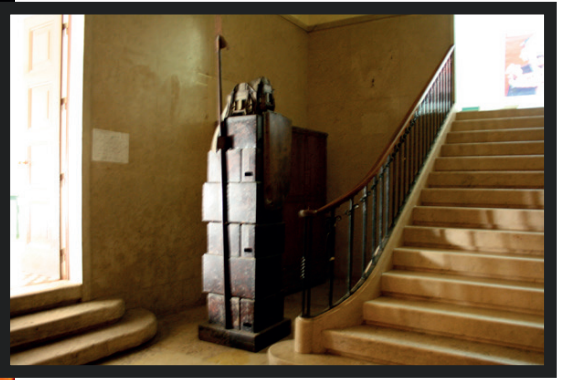
²³ My translation.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*



Img 146. Fábrica do Braço de Prata.



(which is forbidden), and we should have a washable surface of plastic or tiles in the bar. Instead we have wood, what is more agreeable and nice. So law creates ugliness... there is a connection between *beauty* and *illegality*" (Nabais 2013)²⁸. *Illegality* is this way, for **FBP**, a guarantee of freedom, in what concerns the musical and artistic agenda, which allows them "to build a small communist territory with capitalist instruments" (Nabais 2012, 194)²⁹. Furthermore, Nabais argues that there is in Portugal a strong tradition of illegality, of transgression, of black market and civil disobedience, and this would also be a reason why people feel attraction for the spatial environment of **FBP** (Nabais 2013).

Nonetheless, one thing is certain: **FBP** was a pioneer in what concerns the temporary recovery of abandoned industrial buildings in Lisbon, this being confirmed by the municipal document "Strategies for Cultural Policies in Lisbon" (Costa 2009). Nabais believes that this example inspired the emergence of **LXF**, the Western post-industrial cluster, also a strong pole of the alternative cultural life of Lisbon, which we will analyse next.

Lx Factory

Industrial Architecture: The **Lx Factory (LXF)** industrial complex is composed of several buildings (img 147, 148) that used to host, apart from the main industrial building, the machinery house, a school and the workers' neighbourhood³⁰. However, a particular attention will be given to 2 of these buildings – A and B (where the bookshop **Ler Devagar** is now installed) – the idea being to highlight the way the corresponding spaces changed (in terms of materials and architectural design).

The first 4 floors of the building A – a remarkable one – could be characterised, before the **LXF** reconversion, by their bright huge open spaces with many circular metal columns and wide windows oriented East-West in order to have sunlight most of the day (img 149, 150). The masonry walls have between 1,1 and 1,6 meters (Carvalho, 2009, p. 94), and two big freight elevators (img 151-153) were installed later on in the 1960s (Dabraio da Silva, 2013, p. 77). This building is listed as a "valuable cultural and historical good" in the Municipal Chart of the Heritage of Lisbon (Diário da República, 2015).

Lx Factory managed to create a production unity, by adding to that space (full of histories of Portuguese industry) a new industrial reality, the creative industry of 21st century. A business centre which provides the transaction of cultural products.

Carvalho (2009, p. 109)³¹

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Branco, Fernando Castelo [coord.] - O Vale de Alcântara. Lisboa: Centro Nacional de Cultura, 1983 - reference found in Dabraio da Silva (2013, p. 76.)

³¹ My translation from Portuguese: "A Lx Factory criou uma unidade de produção, conseguindo naquele espaço cheio de histórias da indústria portuguesa, juntar uma nova realidade industrial - a indústria criativa do século XXI. Um centro empresarial que proporciona a transacção de produtos culturais".



< Img 147. Lx Factory buildings complex (bird's view).



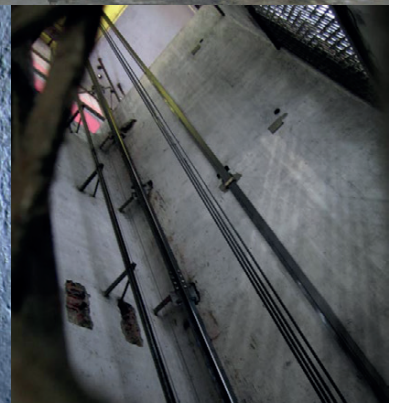
< Img 148. Lx Factory and the bridge 25 de Abril.
(source: <http://www.travelling-productions.com/locations.html>)

Img 149, 150. LxFactory - the inner open space, before space was rented
(sources: www.lxfactory.com; <https://www.flickr.com/photos/12606740@N02/3001251554>)

Img 151-153. Freight elevators.



moshimoshij.blogspot.com



This building (A) is a polyvalent open space (as mentioned above) which, due to its inner spatial free composition, could be adapted to any kind of machinery and activity (img 149). Today, each floor is segmented into as many parts as there are companies in it; we were able to watch a progressive spatial subdivision with dividing walls, which actually might change in order to adapt to new guests (img 154). *Mainside's* architects designed all the floors of the building in order to have in each one a different ambiance: the first was planned to be all white, the second to have recycled *pombaline* style doors³², the third long white walls with round windows (reminding those on boats), and the fourth black painted walls. Joana believes this strategy might foster closer ties among the occupants of each floor, because of their visual identity differences (Gomes 2013).

Furthermore, we can find artistically decorated toilets (part of an organised art exhibition³³, img 155), and old industrial machines spread a bit everywhere in the corridors (kept as decoration, used as furniture or exposed just like museum objects, img 156-158). Also, apart from those previously mentioned changes, the pre-existent materials and the original structure are still visible in some places. In particular, the façade is generally being left untreated, in a very rough manner (inclusively there exists a big hole made, back then, to allow a big machine to pass through (img 159-161) (at LXF, “Even holes have style” (Ferreira 2009, 19)), contrasting with punctual colourful graffiti existing on some walls. These graffiti, on their side, were previously selected by *Wool*³⁴, known for organising the *Covilhã Urban Art Festival*³⁵, who invited to paint at **LXF's** walls renowned Portuguese artists such as Tãmara Alves, CorleOne, Kruella d'Enfer or MaisMenos (img 161-168).

Lx Factory [Ler Devagar]

The B building – is where the **LXF's** most successful company is installed: the bookshop **Ler Devagar (LD)**, considered by the media as being one of the most beautiful bookshops in the world³⁶ (img 169-171). When asked about what kind of works had to be done in LD's building to make it safe, accessible or comfortable, the manager José Pinho answered that LD's space is not comfortable at all, adding that no adaptive works were made to achieve comfort and safety. Pinho left the space exactly how it was before, doing only the minimum necessary changes like, for instance, the creation of an access to the first floor, and some crosswalks in order to be able to circulate around the old newspaper printing machine. Pinho himself designed the stairs and some colleagues helped him to build and install them on the spot. They had only a small collaboration with a team of architects (sons of co-owners of LD) who designed the entrance door. Pinho tried to change the less possible the space, keeping almost everything in its original condition (Pinho 2012).

³² Which were recovered from a building in Restauradores, demolished to give place to a hotel (Ferreira 2009, 20).

³³ www.artbuilding.eu/inst4_master.html.

³⁴ www.woolfest.org.

³⁵ Wool is one of the most renowned Urban Art festivals of Portugal, having invited artists such as Vhils, Bordalo II, Hugo Makarov, Mário Belém, in between others.

³⁶ The most beautiful bookshop of the world, according to *skyscanner.net*. (www.skyscanner.net/news/22-most-beautiful-bookshops-world, accessed on 01.07.2014).



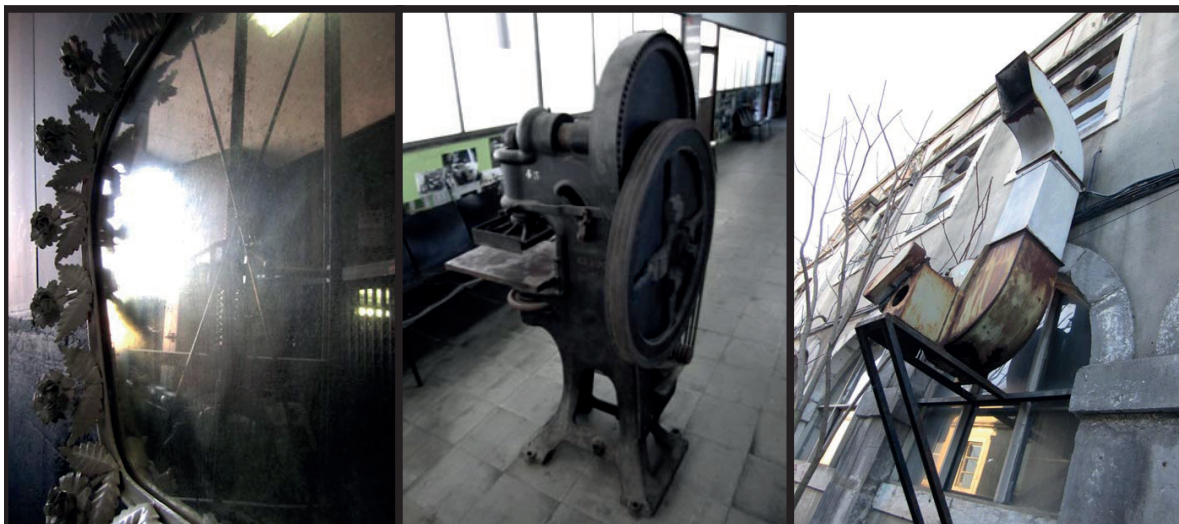
Img 159, 160, 161.
Lx Factory industrial
façades >

< Img 154. Lx Factory:
subdivision of building
A with dividing walls.

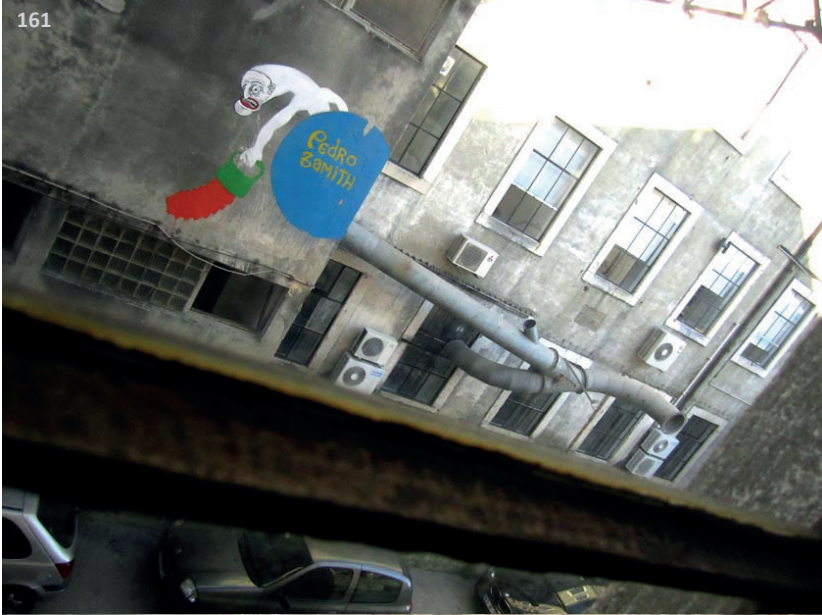


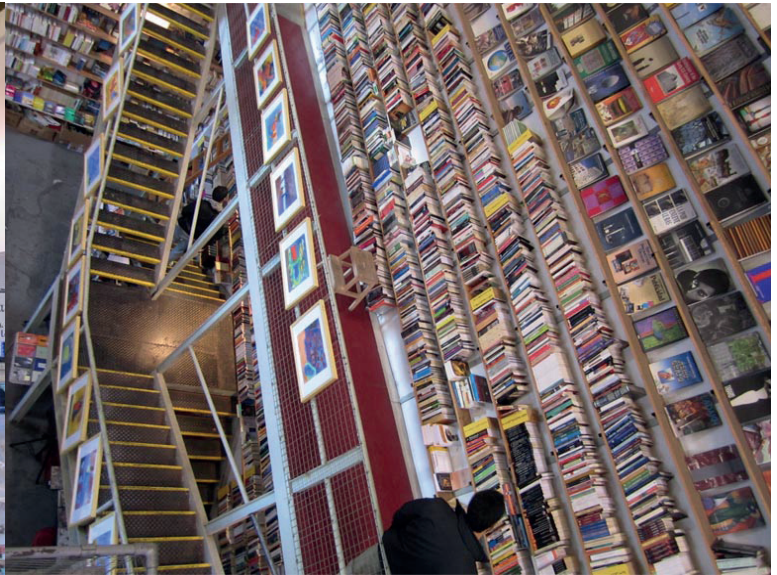
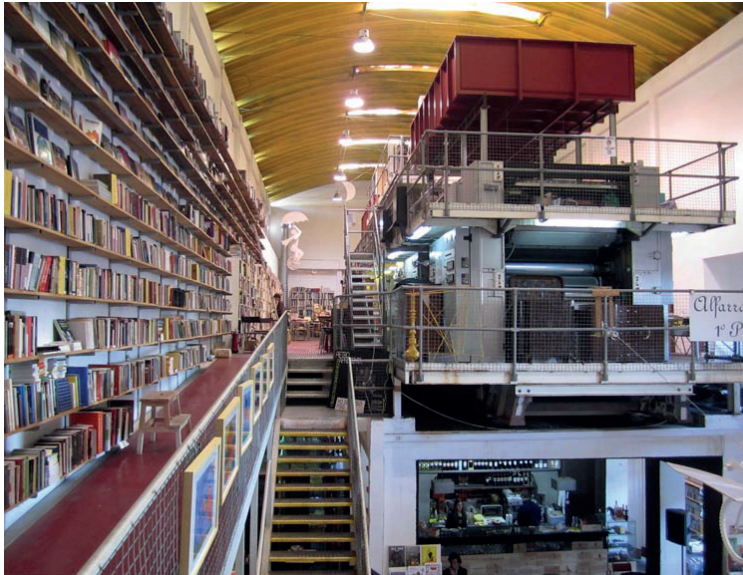
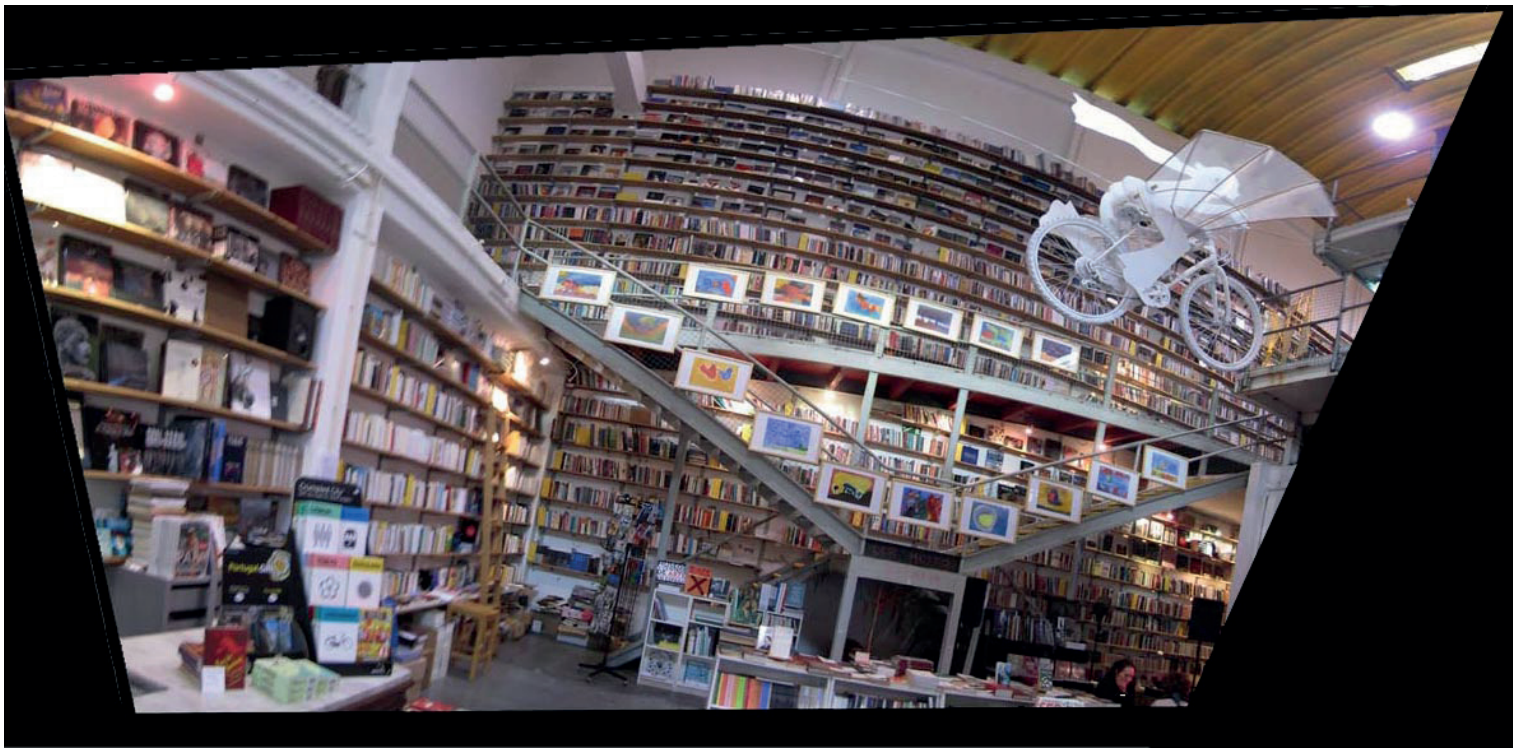
Img 161 - 168.
Graffiti and murals at
Lx Factory >

< Img 155. LxFactory's
toilets decorated by
artists. "Water Closet"
art exhibition:
a) Ir à casa de banho é
como andar de bicileta – Jorge Maciel.
b) Word closet – Maria
Moinhos.
c) Exibicionismo – im-
pulse patológico para
se despir ou exhibir
órgãos genitais – Inês
Amaro.



< Img 156-158. Lx
Factory: industrial
objects exposed.





Img 169-171. The spectacular visual impact of the bookshop *Ler Devagar*, with its improvised shelves full of books covering the walls until the very high ceiling, and the old obsolete newspaper machine working as furniture and as decoration. *Ler Devagar* is one of the leaseholders of Lx Factory.

Img 172, 173. Village Underground Lisbon.



But this store, Ler Devagar, doesn't look like any other. It's in an enormous, multistoried space once devoted to a printing press that's still there. A series of staircases and ramps and catwalks have been created to lead you to and through shelves and more shelves of titles popular and obscure. It's a library cum Escher print, with a few bars tucked in.

The New York Times³⁷

Lx Factory [Other leaseholders]

Two cases of leaseholders are worth mentioning for the investment they made on the creation of specific ambiances: the restaurant *Cantina* and the club *Impossible Funky*. The first is held by the architect and owner Henrique Vaz Pato who recovered the furniture belonging previously to the old graphic company; the intention was to make his restaurant look like the old canteen of the workers (from where the name *Cantina* comes from). The second, no longer existing, was a club decorated with film scenarios from the 50s/60s along with leopard skin chairs, purple curtains, red maples, feathers on the ceiling and disco globes, posters from the mythical *007* and *Barbarella* films; the bar was decorated with vinyl covers of Aretha Franklin, Miles Davis and Diana Ross³⁸.

Thomas Probosch, one of the first leaseholders, resumes **LXF's** ambiance as "the perfect marriage between luxury and decadence" (Ferreira, 33), saying that this is the reason that convinced him to come there.

Village Underground Lisboa

Village Underground Lisboa (VU) is a post-industrial wasteland that belongs to the local transport company (*Carris*) located in Alcântara, right next to **Lx Factory**. The access to **VU** is unclear, as one needs to pass by a guard to enter the site surrounded by walls. The guard works for *Carris* which maintains the tram depot on this site. Nevertheless, the entrance door is controlled for any random guest who decides to enter the site. Afterwards, in order to reach the **VU**, the visitor has to cross the entire complex. When reaching our destination, we face an audacious structure of apparently chaotically disposed colourful containers and suspended buses (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016).

VU is described as being "a cultural centre" that offers workspaces for artists, creative industry professionals and start-ups. This "creative community" also offers events (like dj set parties, for example) and a coffee shop³⁹. **VU** opened in Lisbon in 2014, but the original project was created in London in 2007, and some additional plans were made to expand the project to Berlin

³⁷ www.nytimes.com/2012/05/27/travel/how-i-fell-for-lisbon.html?_r=0.

³⁸ <http://p3.publico.pt/vicios/gula/9843/lx-factory-uma-vida-mais-funky>.

³⁹ <http://vulisboa.com>.

and New York⁴⁰. Furthermore, **VU** is “a proud member” (as specified on their website)⁴¹ of the European network of cultural centres called *Trans Europe Halles*⁴² (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016). **VU** is financed by the London Rebuilding Society, Triodos Bank, Fair Finance and GLE One London, we also received a grant from UnLtd, The Foundation For Social Entrepreneurs⁴³.

Looking into the containers, the tight working space is shared by four to six people. These spaces, however, are in a clean and carefully designed interior ambiance, which is in contrast to the surrounding careless environment of the post-industrial site. The architectural concept – an apparently aleatory disposition of piled containers and buses connected by metallic passages and stairways – was designed to “encourage interaction through its central courtyard” by ensuring a “people flow” that forces the passage by “your neighbour’s door and terrace to reach your own”⁴⁴. The labyrinthine path looks rather like a playground that we can explore as if we were kids (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016).

In this example of **VU Lisboa**, we can observe an assemblage of elements that have been recovered from diverse counter-cultural practices and movements, put together in the same place just like a patchwork (action which, necessarily, implied a change of the original meaning of those elements) (Carmo and al. 2014):

- the graffiti painting⁴⁵, originally a symbol of a “spatial” resistance, and here used as a *work of art*, and scenography of the overall scene;
- rusty and old containers (and buses) used as the architectural support, based on the grassroots’ *Do It Yourself* (DIY) principles of *reusing* and *recycling*, as well as on Dadaists’ use of *readymade* objects (clearly contrasting with their interior design and furnishing, normalised and standardised); the use of shipping containers became, in recent years, representative of an architectural trend that claims to be grounded on ecological principles;
- the choice of the territorial location in a post-industrial wasteland, areas once considered as places of freedom for artists, outsiders and urban explorers, (representative of the failure of capitalism along with its ruins) are today the favourite sites of the creative industries business, fancy art fairs and “alternative” tourism;
- the labyrinth, appealing to a ludic behaviour by the creation of a playful path, recalls the Situationists’ *dérive* (Debord 1958); however, the fact of having being *designed* for that purpose, it automatically frames that careless, and somehow adventurous attitude, into *entertainment* – the pleasure of the unpredictable spontaneity provoked by the multiple senses and stimuli of the urbanity is gone.

⁴⁰ <http://madame-management.com/o-village-underground-esta-a-chegar-a-lisboa/> (website visited on the 4th of March 2013).

⁴¹ www.villageunderground.co.uk/international.

⁴² <http://teh.net>.

⁴³ Available at: www.villageunderground.co.uk/international. Triodos Bank finances companies which it thinks add cultural value and benefit both people and the environment. That includes companies in the fields of solar energy, organic farming or culture. Sustainable banking. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triodos_Bank).

⁴⁴ <http://vulisboa.com>.

⁴⁵ The graffiti work was done by the artist *Corleone*, as part of the exhibition of the *Underdogs* gallery in Lisbon streets.

This “total alternative design” is the result of a *creative management* process inspired by the “Creative Cities” ideology (Florida 2002; Landry 1995). In this context, **VU** works almost like a kind of “universal fair” dedicated to the *alternative* and *creative world* – a kind of a gallery, or a “passage”, where people come to *flâner*, whether to see (the work of art) or to be seen (during the events, in the middle of the crowd, sponsored by renowned brands of alcohol). This is “the last promenade for the *flâneur*” ... (Benjamin 1935, p. 10).

*

5.3. Lisbon Stories

We have already seen a few stories about Lisbon, all addressing large areas of the city. We will now focus on more concrete cases, this way exploring a few particularities and details concerned with 5 selected case-studies (although this does not mean that the stories concern necessarily single entities). Several stories were collected during my visits to the fieldwork, these “intersecting narratives” allowing me to write a bigger story about each case. These are stories that address also the spatial and visual aesthetic characteristics of some ACS.

The selected stories are:

1. *“I am” everywhere [SOU, por todo o lado]*, which tells the story of the association SOU, how it moves through the city occupying very different spatial supports, such changes affecting SOU’s direct relationship with the street and/or the neighbourhood each time their members move; this restless (and expansive) condition of SOU makes us wonder about an eventual necessity of adaptation to the adverse circumstances linked to the way the city evolves (its politics, trends, economic situation...), or, alternatively, about its own strategy of economic survival;
2. *Activ(ist) merge and split [Crew Hassan & Mob]*, placing together two of the most politically engaged ACS, which once decided to pool their resources in common projects; a particular attention is given to the movements generated by the successive displacements that each project had in the city, linking them to the city’s wider dynamics; furthermore, it is quite interesting to understand the relationship between their spatial supports, visual aesthetics and political engagement; at last, it is important to highlight their relevant participation, as physical platforms for debate on the protest and resistance movements of the 2010s, between other struggles;
3. *Franchising [Mainside]*, revealing the important role that a real estate company had in the creation of several “alternative cultural and creative” spaces, and the relevance these cases had in launching “hotspot” trends within the context of the city of Lisbon; furthermore, its business approach based on a “franchising” strategy – started with a first case of success and whose recipe was adopted and tested in other parts of town – will be addressed;

4. *(Very) ephemeral squats*, a very brief reference being made to the most recent publicly assumed squats that occurred in the central area of the city, in order to make a link with the recent protest movements, as well as with the Carnation Revolution; the idea is also to assess the possibility of establishing a link with the squat movements that occurred in the two other analysed cities.

Before moving on, it is interesting to highlight the particularity of the importance of the associative fabric in the context of the city of Lisbon, and also the nature of the individuals engaged in these associations, who are to a great extent qualified (artists, professors, researchers, creatives, intellectuals). According to the sociologist Estela Gonçalves (Gonçalves 2013, 4)¹, these people admire popular cultures and propose and introduce aesthetic contributions coming from ancient cultural traditions. Once more, this is a point that highlights the importance of popular and hybrid influences in the alternative cultural life of the city.

To be able to tell these stories, several interviews and informal talks were made, recorded and transcribed. The “Ground Sessions” – debate sessions organised by the atelier *Artéria* within the context of the event *Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa 2013*, dedicated to the “projects that ‘activated’ Lisbon in the last years” – had a particular importance as a source of analysis, since the organisation invited many of the people engaged in the ACS I had selected as case studies in order to present and discuss their projects. The idea was to tell the history of the project processes, the relationship with their environments and to reflect about the way each project has been planned for its specific space. These debates necessarily raised many interesting questions².

We will now start telling the first story...

*

¹ Mentioned in (Perestrelo de Lemos, 2014, p. 131).

² www.arteria.pt/portfolio/ground-sessions-trienal-de-arquitectura-de-lisboa_41.html.

5.3.1. “I am” everywhere [SOU, por todo o lado]

In this story, the particular emphasis is given by a specific ACS which interferes in the destinies of many others. I will now tell the story of **SOU** – which means, in Portuguese, “I am” – and how this association is, in a way, “everywhere” (around the areas of Anjos and Intendente, img 174).

SOU moves through the city in a restive way, showing, at the same time, an impressive capacity of mutation. This fact is symbolised by its logo – a chameleon¹. The curious thing is that this logo was designed before all the changes that **SOU** underwent later on, making us wonder why this symbol was chosen at the time.

SOU – movimento e arte (its full name) is a title that refers to the core of the project that is based in the performative arts. Founded in 2004 by Vanda Melo and José Dias, this non-profit cultural association pursues an activity focused on artistic creation, artistic offer and educational training (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016). Today, Marta Silva runs the project. Its main objectives are: to provide training in the areas of performing arts; to promote and foster cultural activities; to welcome creators from various artistic fields, in order to enrich the local and national artistic cultural fabric.

Having had, until today, three “headquarters” and a few “extensions”, SOU seems to have the capacity to infiltrate the territory in a tender way, by welcoming local people and inviting them to participate in its projects (img 174). SOU aims at creating local networks, looking for the reinforcement of existing ties, this resulting in having a significant impact on the territory and the dynamics of the city.

From a shop on the ground-floor of a street to a building directly exposed to a main square, and residing in the meantime in a basement, SOU went through multiple and varied spatial experiences, as if it were dancing through the urban space. This kind of “spatial performing act” goes even further, by using the streets and the square, as well as the salons of some neighbouring associations, as stages for practicing and performing events. Acting in this way, SOU’s space of action constantly grows and shrinks.

¹ Interestingly, the logo was designed before SOU underwent all these changes.



"SOU is a lot of things and lives in constant mutation"
 (André Marques Vidal)

"O SOU é muitas coisas e vive em constante mutação"
 (André Marques Vidal)



SOU, 2 - R. Forno do Tijolo
 (2008-2012)



Taberna das Almas



(photo found on SOU's facebook wall)

SOU 1 - R. Maria Andrade
 (2004-2008)



SOU 3, Largo Residências,
 Largo do Intendente (2011 - ...)



(photo: CML's website)

Casa Independente



(photo: Eleonore Pigaille)

Sport Clube do Intendente (SCI)



Largo do Intendente

(photo: Miguel Manso in Jornal Público)



(photo: Eleonore Pigaille)

Casa dos Amigos do Minho

SOU 1

At its first address in R. Maria Andrade, where **SOU** was located from 2004 until 2008, its relationship with the street and the neighbourhood was very close. It was a half-rounded ground-floor space² that had large windows all around at the front, permitting a direct visual contact with the street (somehow becoming part of the street itself).

People who passed by were curious and friendly about what was going on inside that space (at that time mostly dance and theatre). It was a space better suited for workshops than for educational training. However, the space was very small (even though an equivalent underground area existed), therefore very limited for **SOU's** needs and desires, so **SOU** moved to a place nearby.

SOU 2

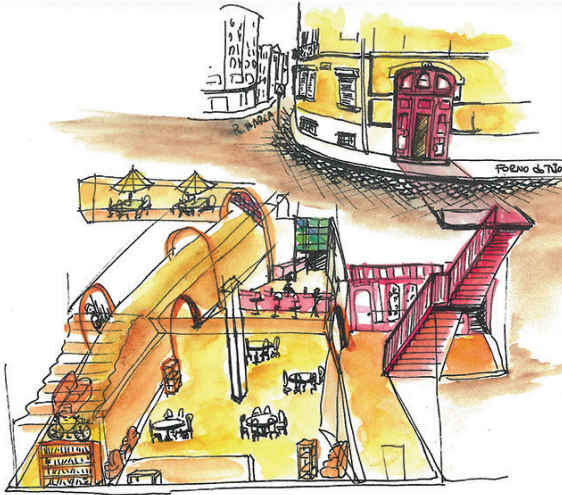
The new location of about 400 square metres was a basement accessible only through a big red door facing Forno do Tijolo street. **SOU** suddenly had enough space for studios, a café and a multifunctional space, and an open-air terrace. The basement, which had been closed during the previous ten years, was then where the association was developing its activities, all of a sudden allowing the members and visitors to discern a “whole new world” (Silva 2013, img 175). The space had previously hosted quite different occupants, of which first a textile factory and storage, and later on a fashion show room. A plan of activities was defined, centred on some artistic and professional goals, such as: the encouragement of qualified artistic projects; cultural events; the promotion of the quality of life of the local population; experience sharing and exchange with artists and other professionals, in order to support interdisciplinary projects and develop a resident artistic collective³. Therefore, **SOU** started to host several activities and events (cultural events offered to the general public: films, concerts, theatre performances, storytelling and poetry, a crafts market or social dancing) which were distributed along a winding path through the most dissimilar (and quite irregularly shaped) rooms.

From the street to the underground, this move necessarily affected **SOU's** relationship with the neighbourhood, the immediate visibility and access having been undeniably changed. When entering the red door, a whole new underground world could be found: by going down the entrance hall by way of a staircase, some (usually closed) doors and an arch could be found; by turning left and going through the arch, one had access to quite an irregular spacious room that worked as a bar and a multifunctional space; then, by traversing straight across this space, another arch would lead the visitor to a kind of transversal wide corridor where some artworks were exhibited, as well as a few books and sofas; by turning right, we could follow this corridor to the end, while encountering the other side of the bar we had already crossed (in the multifunctional room, now seen from this new location), an access door to a big studio, the toilets and an exterior courtyard; this patio, which was L-shaped around the back of the building,

² There was also a basement, the same size as the ground-floor space.

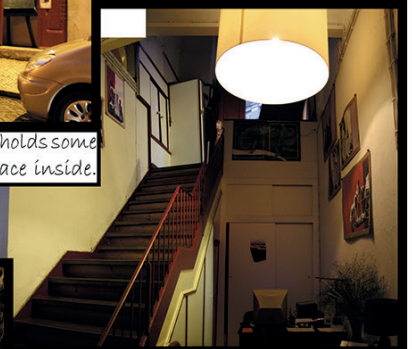
³ Available at: <http://soumovimentoarte.wordpress.com/o-sou-2/historial> (seen on the 16th Oct 2014).

SOU 2 ... Rua do Forno do Tijolo



THE ENTRANCE AND ACCESS TO THE BASEMENT

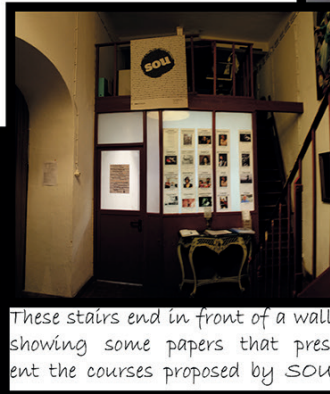
Rua do Forno do Tijolo. An open big red door holds some posters telling us which activities take place inside.



Unexpected entrance. We go down. The stairs lead us to a basement. Some kind of an enlightened corridor.



Another perspective of the main SOU's space is this one, the same space, where the bar is and where happen the public cultural events. It is colourful and has a relaxed atmosphere given by its cosy furniture and expressive works of art.



These stairs end in front of a wall, showing some papers that present the courses proposed by SOU.

BAR



We continue our path by crossing this room. Then we find another corridor, very segmented by arches and full of little cosy corners.

AN ORGANIC IRREGULAR SPACE



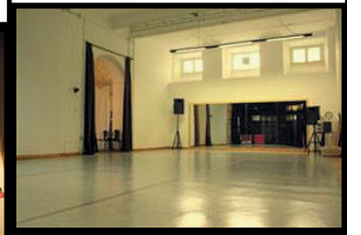
One of those little corner holds a small library, some couches and a bike, under a ceiling of inverted stairs.



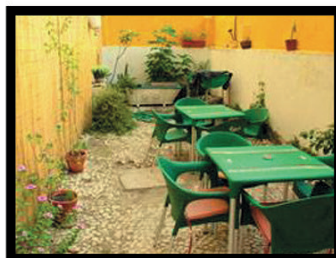
Handmade-like porters and paintings, coloured glasses and old singer machines take us until the yard. But on the way, we sneak into the bar again.

DANCE STUDIO

The formation courses happen in this studio (one of the three existing ones).



TERRACE



The yard is stretched and long in both senses, vertical and horizontal. Not very harmonious in its proportions, but nice and lively somehow.



Img 175. The labyrinthine path of SOU 2.

was quite narrow (like another corridor), offering the visitor some tables and chairs placed in line.

SOU also proposed an important educational programme that included protocols with local kindergartens, schools and parish councils. Coming to this place in 2008, SOU only formalised its juridical status as an association in 2009 (meaning it had had an informal existence until then⁴).

According to Marta Silva, **SOU** became a kind of a “space of culture of the neighbourhood” and also a meeting place, since some people got used to come there only to have a coffee in the terrace. Coming to this place in 2008, **SOU** only formalised its juridical status as an association in 2009, which means that it had had five years of informal existence until then (Silva 2015). In 2009/10 the CAP (Curso de Artes Performativas) is born. Instead of simply learning how to dance, sing or paint, people here are rather encouraged to learn how to *create*⁵.

Until 2010, courses organised by **SOU** – each one involving about 60 students – contributed to sustain the project. Including protocols with kindergartens, schools and the parish councils, this means that an annual average of 200 students were reached. Later on, cultural events started to be offered to the general public. Among the several activities promoted at **SOU** in Forno do Tijolo, one could watch films, enjoy concerts, see theatre performances, listen to stories and poetry, and participate in a crafts market or dance in thematic balls.

In the meantime came the economic crisis and SOU was badly affected: it became harder for the students to pay for the courses (Silva 2013)⁶, and people preferred to attend the cultural and convivial events which were mostly free⁷. Eventually the project became unsustainable (Silva 2015)⁸, this being the reason why the next move took place in 2011.

SOU 3 – Largo Residências

In order to solve its problem of sustainability, in this new building of four floors, SOU (as an association) decided to create a new project called “Largo Residências” (a cooperative)⁹, which now includes: a hostel for tourists, a guest-house for artists (who come here to develop an artistic work together with the local community), a café-studio (where exhibitions, events and performances are welcomed), a studio (where the resident artists can develop their work), a shop (where we can find the products



Residências Artísticas . Hostel & Suites . Estúdio . Café . Loja . Bike I

⁴ Information based on an interview with Marta Silva (Jan 2015).

⁵ Available at: <http://soumovimentoarte.wordpress.com/o-sou-2/historial/> (seen on the 16.10.2014).

⁶ According to Marta Silva, the director of SOU (information collected from a debate in which Marta participated. This event was organised by the studio Artéria for the Architecture Trienal of Lisbon - Ground Session # 5 (25.10. 2013).

⁷ Or max 3€ to help with paying the artist.

⁸ Information based on an interview with Marta Silva (Jan 2015).

⁹ Information based on an interview with Marta Silva (Jan 2015). To boost this new project, SOU applied for the municipal socio-urbanistic funding programme called Bip/Zip (<http://bipzip.cm-lisboa.pt>), which was created to support projects having a local and social focus in “priority areas of intervention”.

made by the artists), a bike shop called BIKE POP (a project of the POST Cooperative). However, a space to practice and perform was now missing.

In 2010 **SOU**'s project was no longer economically sustainable. It was therefore realised that it was time to look for external funding. Having applied for funds from *DGA* (Direcção Geral das Artes), *Gulbenkian*, and some other institutions in the field of art, the association was unsuccessful, its project being considered as having a too local scope. "The social engagement being not yet fashionable back then", argues Marta (Silva 2015).

The opportunity came while wandering around the neighbourhood: the mayor had recently moved his office to Largo do Intendente, so the members of **SOU** were told that the building next door – the property of the heirs of the ceramics house Viúva Lamego – was available¹⁰. This appeared like a good challenge for **SOU**, at a moment when Intendente was being affected by a large-scale operation of urban regeneration¹¹ that had as one of its main goals the banishing of the drugs market from this area. This way, **SOU** intended to contribute to this regeneration, as well as to change the bad reputation this square had acquired during recent years, and finally (as if it were already predicted) helping to "control the gentrification process"¹² (Silva 2013). This process of rehabilitation consisted of the redesign of the pavement of the square (including the use of new pavement materials), new urban furniture and trees, the rehabilitation of the decaying buildings (sometimes just the façade), urban art (like a sculpture from the renowned artist Joana Vasconcelos and graffiti work from Tâmara Alves), followed by the arrival of new bars and associations, and police control. All this implied a big responsibility for **SOU**: Intendente, this "non-place", had become a kind of a "very private public space" (Silva 2013) due to the bad reputation it got with drugs and prostitution affairs, and **SOU** wanted to contribute to change that reputation.

At the same time, Marta Silva heard about the new Bip/Zip programme which was then being developed and decided to apply, together with a working group of *Pelouro da Habitação e do Desenvolvimento Social* (Area of responsibility for Housing and Social Development) for its first edition, in 2011.

Though this program had not directly the purpose of funding artistic projects, it was nevertheless designed to support projects having a local focus, compatible with the kind of strategy **SOU** was developing in the last few years. The link that **SOU** had created with the local community and wished to maintain seemed a good and valid argument to use in order to apply for this

¹⁰ An area where they wanted to remain since they had become quite attached to it due to its lively, welcoming, multi-cultural and accessible in monetary terms, and where **SOU** had stayed already for a few years.

¹¹ The regeneration of the area of Intendente was included in a larger plan called *Plano de Acção* (PA) *da Mouraria*, approved by Quadro de Referência Estratégico Nacional (QREN, the organism that constitutes the framework for the implementation in Portugal of the European Community policy on economic and social cohesion (<http://www.qren.pt/np4/qren>)). On the whole, PA QREN envisaged an investment of about 8 million euros, of which half co-financed by the municipality. Framed by PA, a more specific plan was also created in 2010, called *Plano de Desenvolvimento Comunitário da Mouraria* (PDMC - community-based development plan for Mouraria). PDMC had a total funding amount of 1 million euros (www.aimouraria.cm-lisboa.pt/pdcm.html), which acted along with local partners (CML, the parishes, Associação Renovar a Mouraria and other local associations) in order to improve the quality of life of the local community and decrease poverty and social exclusion (www.aimouraria.cm-lisboa.pt/mensagem-do-presidente.html).

¹² According to Marta Silva, in Ground Session # 5 (25.10. 2013).

program. Marta believed that **SOU** could present itself as a “bridge” between an artistic and a social project.

The application for the *Bip/Zip* fund called **Largo Residências** was successful, so the rehabilitation works of the new building at Largo do Intendente started, directed by the architects *Atelier Mob*.

Nonetheless, while the previously mentioned works were occurring in the building, it was realised that it was structurally impossible to tear down its interior walls to create dancing studios. This meant that all those little rooms had to remain as they were, not being in fact fit for a crew of dancers. So finally **SOU** had a building which, nevertheless, due to its structure, was inadequate to what had been planned.

Consequently, for a while the association decided to keep both spaces – the new one in Largo do Intendente, and the previous one at Rua do Forno do Tijolo – while the renovation and rehabilitation works in the building and in the square were occurring. In the course of this period, the projects in both spaces developed simultaneously like “twin projects”. But then it became unsustainable to keep both spaces, and the space at Rua do Forno do Tijolo had to be dropped.

While trying to find a solution to solve the problem of the lack of an appropriate space to dance and perform, it was realised that two things were important to keep in mind:

- The project had to be self-sufficient in the sense that it should guarantee the economic survival of the association in the following years (since *Bip/Zip* was only contributing with a financial input to “start the engine”, i.e., to help paying a part of the renovation works of the building);
- It had to be based on a strong relationship with the square, the neighbourhood and its people.

The first point implied to have, from then on, a profitable activity, like a bar for instance. This meant that it was necessary to have a commercial project and change the status of **SOU**. It could no longer be an association, otherwise the bar would have to be exclusively for the use of the members and would make no profit. So the **Largo Residências’** project had to rest on a different juridical status – in the case, a cooperative – into which it should change itself once the contract with *Bip/Zip* was over. **SOU**, as an association, could be maintained, but as an associate of the cooperative (1/3) (Silva 2015). A bar was then created (the café-studio), as well as a hostel for tourists¹³.

Considering the second point, since **SOU** could not solve for the moment its problem of space limitation, its members decided to use the *largo* (square) as their main stage, mixing this way their work with life outdoors “while helping to transform the negative character of Intendente through the social engagement of the association” (Silva 2015).

¹³ Largo Residências is now a complete project that includes: a hostel for tourists, a guest-house for artists (who come here to develop an artistic work together with the local community), a café-studio (where exhibitions, events and performances are welcomed), a studio (where the resident artists can develop their work), a shop (where we can find the products made by the artists), a bike shop called BIKE POP (a project of the POST Cooperative).

The rehabilitation works lasted only five months to accomplish, and all the furniture chosen was recovered from somewhere else or made out of recycled materials (Silva 2013).

The core of **SOU**'s activities changed therefore, if we compare them with those developed at their previous space in Rua do Forno do Tijolo. **Largo Residências** hosts now 2 types of projects:

- *Permanent projects*, like *Companhia Limitada* (performative art project, directed by Madalena Victorino and Pedro Salvador), *Lugar da Cerâmica* (together with **Casa dos Amigos do Minho**¹⁴), *Apel* (a local development project) and *Experiência do Lugar* (held in the form of performance, training and discussion, with the aim of joining different realities);
- *Projects proposed by artists*.

Both kinds of projects are intended to host - and lead to production - works of artistic nature rooted in the most diverse areas like, among others, dance, theatre, literature, visual and plastic arts and photography. However, works from the creative sector in general are also welcome, as research projects or academic works from different areas like anthropology, sociology, psychology and architecture. Anyway, the projects should take place at several levels in those priority areas of intervention and be based at least on one of the following points of inspiration: location, heritage, history, people, communities and institutions¹⁵ (Silva 2015).

SOU is everywhere - Extensions

SOU – sê o que quiseres! – the slogan of **SOU**, meaning “be whatever you want”, could maybe be replaced, according to the perspective of this story, by “*sê onde quiseres!*”, which means “be wherever you want!”. We have seen, until now, how in the last decade **SOU** has been moving in the city, changing place and adapting to new spatial conditions every time it was needed. Now we will see how, having set up its ‘headquarters’ at a very central place, **SOU** spreads and mutates whenever it is needed, creating synergetic relationships with the surroundings.

In order to solve the problem of limited space”, **SOU**'s members decided to use the *largo* (square) as their main stage, in this way mixing their work with life outdoors “while helping to transform the negative character of Intendente through the social engagement of the association”¹⁶. Also, the big salons of the ancient “recreation associations” (amongst others) of the surrounding area started to be used, with their agreement. This would turn up, in **SOU**'s perspective, to be a win-win situation, for it would bring along a renewed breath of fresh air to these ancient houses (which were in certain cases in a very decayed state, physically and socially), with young people curious to discover them. Some collaboration was held with SCI (Sport Club do Intendente¹⁷) and

¹⁴ See further on more details about this project.

¹⁵ www.facebook.com/LARGOResidencias/info.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ **SCI** is a hybrid sports club that tries to please all supporters of the three main Lisbon soccer clubs simultaneously. The Pina Manique palace, where it is located, is in a quite decayed condition today, having one of the few façades in Largo do Intendente which, until now, did not suffer any restoration works.

Casa dos Amigos do Minho¹⁸, the ceramics factory Viúva Lamego¹⁹, Taberna das Almas and STAS (Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Actividades Seguras)²⁰. Furthermore, some ideological conflicts between some of the members resulted in a spatial split, and therefore multiplication, of the SOU's original project, like the case of the association Casa Independente²¹ for instance.

Largo do Intendente

SOU's outdoors space of action is in fact the square right in front of the building where they settled – **Largo do Intendente**. This is the meeting point of Intendente area *par excellence*. As previously mentioned, Intendente gained a bad reputation with the transference to there of the market of drugs from the area of Casal Ventoso, where it had set ground for more than a decade. This change occurred in the turn of the millennium²² and since then Intendente (already known for its prostitution affairs and whose buildings were already in a very degraded state) became suddenly Lisbon's main stage for drug business. The impact these new activities had, provoked a bad reputation at the city's scale and therefore a kind of a virtual increase of its geographical limits. What had been until then known as only a *square (largo)* became then the "criminal interdicted *area*" of Intendente – a "zone"²³ where small children (and even their big brothers) were no longer allowed by their parents to get close.

I knew very well the neighborhood of Anjos, and the Intendente was a square that was also part of this neighborhood – it lies between Anjos and Mouraria. If we see it properly, Intendente is just a square! But a square that acquired a particular reputation, becoming associated with a "zone" (the area of the Intendente), thus gaining a bigger dimension than it really has! When I came to live here, people used to say: Do not walk through Intendente! And no one did²⁴.

Marta Silva (2015)

In 2008, trying to solve the problem, the municipality started to collaborate with local associations that were working in programs of rehabilitation of toxic dependency²⁵, but organised also a few

18 A *dérive* throughout this space was previously mentioned in this paper.

19 In the space where the shop "Vida Portuguesa" is located today.

20 Located on the other side of Largo do Intendente.

21 Casa Independente is located as well, on the other side of Largo do Intendente. Opened in October 2012 with the support of a Bip/Zip funding, Casa Independente occupies the ancient apartment of Casa da Comarca de Figueiró dos Vinhos. Their concept was to create a "contemporary guild" (in Portuguese it is called *Grémio*) inspired by the "entertainment and hospitality" attributes of the old recreational collectives (Information collected from Ground Session # 7, where two of the girls who heading this project - Joana Nóbrega and Patrícia Craveiro Lopes - participated. Part of the information was also found on Casa Independente's Facebook homepage).

22 Available at www.ionline.pt/artigos/portugal/casal-ventoso-ha-15-anos-lisboa-exterminou-hipermercado-da-droga and <http://ipsilon.publico.pt/artes/texto.aspx?id=335095> (seen on 30.05.2014).

23 A reference to the "zone" of Andrej Tarkovsky's film "Stalker" (1979), representing, in this case, an area where visitors could feel aggressed.

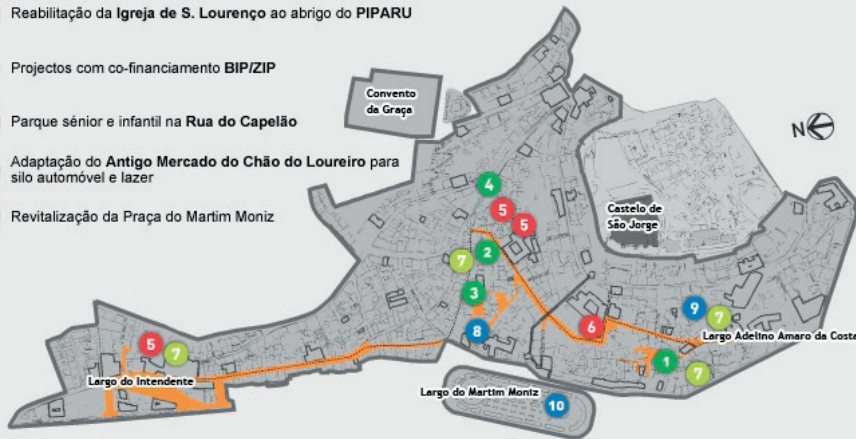
24 My translation from Portuguese: "Eu conhecia muito bem o bairro dos Anjos, e o Intendente era um largo que fazia também parte desse bairro – encontra-se ali entre os Anjos e a Mouraria.. Se formos a ver, o Intendente é apenas um largo! Mas que ganhou "nome", e passou a ser associado a "zona" (a zona do Intendente), ganhando assim uma dimensão maior do que o que ele realmente tem! Quando eu vim morar para cá, dizia-se: Não passes no Intendente! E não se passava." (interview with Marta Silva, 2015).

25 Like the NGO GAT (Grupo de Ativistas em Tratamento, www.gatportugal.org).

Plano de Intervenção

- Intervenção em vários espaços públicos entre o Largo Adelino Amaro da Costa e o Largo do Intendente
- 1 Equipamento social no Largo dos Trigueiros para actividades com jovens e idosos
- 2 Equipamento social na Rua da Guia para actividades com jovens e idosos
- 3 Sítio do Fado na Casa da Severa onde funcionará um café/bar com actividades ligadas ao fado
- 4 Edifício multifuncional que funcionará no Quarteirão dos Lagares como centro de inovação da Mouraria
- 5 Reabilitação de edifícios de habitação da CML (36 fogos) ao abrigo do PIPARU
- 6 Reabilitação da Igreja de S. Lourenço ao abrigo do PIPARU
- 7 Projectos com co-financiamento BIP/ZIP
- 8 Parque sénior e infantil na Rua do Capelão
- 9 Adaptação do Antigo Mercado do Chão do Loureiro para silo automóvel e lazer
- 10 Revitalização da Praça do Martin Moniz

Veja aqui o que vai mudar na Mouraria!



Img 176. My translation from Portuguese: “We intend to transform Mouraria into a more inclusive territory, more attractive and safer for everyone. The Mouraria will definitely change for better!”, António Costa, September 2011 (www.aimouraria.cm-lisboa.pt/mensagem-do-presidente.html: “Pretende-se tornar a Mouraria um território mais inclusivo, mais atractivo e mais seguro para todos. A Mouraria vai mesmo mudar para melhor!”).



Img 177. Sport Club Intendente, façade (2014).

massive police raids to Intendente and Martim Moniz. Three years later the Lisbon's mayor António Costa moved his office right into Largo do Intendente, occupying one of the buildings of the old factory of ceramics Viúva Lamego²⁶. He expected with this last action to gain the necessary trust to bring about other initiatives to invest and contribute to the social requalification of the neighbourhood (according to the mayor's words²⁷).

The requalification of the "area" of Intendente started then, being included in a larger plan called *Plano de Acção (PA) da Mouraria* (approved by *Quadro de Referência Estratégico Nacional - QREN*²⁸). Furthermore, Mouraria gained new geographic limits, now adapted to the mentioned plan (img 176). Framed by PA, a more specific plan was also created in 2010, called *Plano de Desenvolvimento Comunitário da Mouraria (PDMC* – plan of communitarian development of Mouraria²⁹), which acted along with local partners³⁰ in order to improve the quality of life of the local community and decrease poverty and social exclusion³¹.

As a result, Intendente changed, in soul and image. The works started at the end of 2011 and ended in 2012. Apart from **SOU**, several cafés came here, as well as the successful chain store *A Vida Portuguesa* (installed in the beautiful building of *Viúva Lamego*), and other cultural associations like **Casa Independente** and **Mob**. The pavement in the square is now shining of white limestone (*liao* marble) – better suited for handicapped people³² (as well as for tourist trolleys!) – and illuminated by slim and elegant public lighting to assure a secure environment at night. There one can find benches and garbage bins spread (apparently) randomly all over³³, and young trees growing³⁴. The previously dark and dirty fountain is now clean and bright, and right at the centre of the square we can find an art installation made by Joana Vasconcelos called "Kit garden"³⁵. This "Kit garden" reminds a small version of the garden of the Queen of Hearts from *Alice in Wonderland*, designed in a kind of a "ludic-romantic imaginary" (Perestrelo de Lemos 2014, 106) (where one can come to sit, take a rest, admire the *oeuvre* and take a breath of fresh air in the middle of the urban chaos). In the summer season, a stage is set in the southern part of the *Largo*, hosting the most varied events, including the *Intendente Festival*.

²⁶ Which curiously was called, by the time of its foundation in 1849, "Fábrica de Produtos Cerâmicos António da Costa Lamego", as if the mayor António Costa was returning to his family home after a century and a half.

²⁷ www.aimouraria.cm-lisboa.pt/mensagem-do-presidente.html.

²⁸ QREN constitutes the framework for the implementation in Portugal of the European Community policy on economic and social cohesion (www.qren.pt/np4/qren). On the whole, PA QREN envisaged an investment of about 8 million euros, of which half co-financed by the municipality.

²⁹ PDCM had a total funding amount of 1 million euros (www.aimouraria.cm-lisboa.pt/pdcm.html).

³⁰ CML, the parishes, *Associação Renovar a Mouraria* and other local associations.

³¹ In www.aimouraria.cm-lisboa.pt/mensagem-do-presidente.html.

³² DL n^o 163/2006 de 8 de Agosto –The physical and morphological characteristics of Mouraria, as well as its classification as a historical area, requires some preservation of the image of the area. Therefore, this reason forces a compromise between the architectural design and the law that looks after a good accessibility for all.

³³ My translation from Portuguese: "The benches existing in Largo, in limestone, were designed by the architects and are disposed randomly, in order to provide the users different perspectives and points of view of the Largo" (Perestrelo de Lemos 2014, 105).

³⁴ These trees replaced the big old ones, which seem to have been attacked by a disease (Perestrelo de Lemos 2014, 104).

³⁵ The *Kit garden* was firstly meant to be placed in the "Largo da Academia das Belas Artes de Lisboa", developed within a public art competition launched in 2003, which called for a functional and lively urban furnishing. It is composed by three elements: vegetable (the myrtle, known for its aromatic qualities), architectural (wrought iron, shaped in a way to stimulate an intimate red ambiance) and furniture (wooden benches, which encourage people to spend some time here). (Perestrelo de Lemos 2014, 106).

We will now see the link between **SOU** and other spaces in the neighbourhood.

Sport Club do Intendente (SCI)

In front of **SOU**, on the other side of the *largo*, there exists one of those old recreational clubs called **Sport Club do Intendente (SCI)**, founded in 1933. However, the building is much older, being the ancient palace of the superintendent of police Diogo Inácio de Pina Manique, who lived in the 18th century and gave the name *Intendente* to the *largo*. Curiously, the superintendent's duty at the time was not only the one of imposing order on the streets, but also of the supply and cleaning the city, taking care of the public health, transports and leisure (Tavares 2015). The accomplishment of these operations reminds somehow what is happening in the current transformation of Largo do Intendente, along with the social "cleansing" of delinquents and prostitutes – which was also one task accomplished by Pina Manique, when of the setting up of *Casa Pia*³⁶ in Castelo de São Jorge.

Installed on the first floor, **SCI** opens its doors to the old members but also to the new generation who attends Intendente. It is somehow a hybrid sports club who desires to please at the same time to all supporters of the three main Lisbon soccer clubs, which is done in first place through its logo that includes Benfica's eagle, the colors of the original equipment of Sporting (green and black) and the Belenenses' cross of Christ. **SCI** has a "game room" that offers snooker, billiards, darts (arrows), dominoes and card games, and hosts concerts and other events. Many of these activities are provided by **SOU**, which also uses the saloons for its dancing practices during the day.

The *Pina Manique* palace is in a quite decaying condition today, having one of the few façades in the *largo* which, until now, didn't suffer any rehabilitation works. Nonetheless, it did not escape the changes of the time: together with APF (Associação para o Planeamento da Família) and the support of GAU (the municipal office for urban art³⁷), the street artists Fidel Évora and Tamara Alves have created a mural in four bricked doors willing to help raise awareness against female genital mutilation. Strategically placed at Largo do Intendente, APF sees muralism as a privileged expression of public awareness which, through art and urban space sets the ideal context to share social causes³⁸.

FESTIVAL EMIGRANTE
(DIVULGAÇÃO)
24 OUT 2015

EMENTA DE ESQUERDA
NUMA EUROPA DE PRATO
ÚNICO?
(MONDE DIPLOMATIQUE
- ED. PORT. CONVIDA
DEPUTADOS PCP, PS, BE),
12 DEZ 2015

FESTA DA SOBERANIA
ALIMENTAR
E SEMENTES LIVRES
18 OUT 2014

³⁶ *Casa Pia* is an institution dedicated to host orphan and unprotected children from the streets, and that at the epoch of Pina Manique extended as well that function towards delinquents and prostitutes.

³⁷ See chapter *Street Art*.

³⁸ Available at: www.facebook.com/mediaset/?set=a.765174586837001.1073741954.221215817899550&type=1.



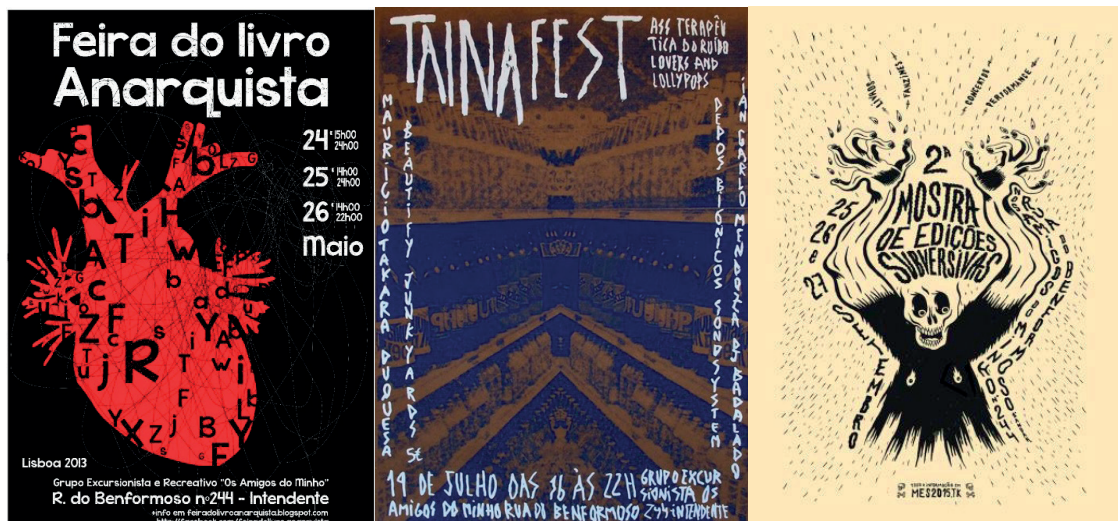
FEIRA DO LIVRO
ANARQUISTA
24,25,26 MAIO 2013

2ª MOSTRA DE EDIÇÕES
SUBVERSIVAS
25,26, 27 SETEMBRO 2015

TAINAFEST
(ASSOCIAÇÃO TERAPÉUTICA DO
RUÍDO)
19 JULHO 2014

PENSAMENTO CRÍTICO
CONTEMPORÂNEO E NATUREZA
15, 22, 29 OUT, 5 NOV 2015

Img 178. Labyrinthine path through Casa dos Amigos do Minho (photos taken by Leticia Carmo, Fernando Aranda and Éléonore Pigalle)



Img 179. Some posters of events taking place at Casa dos Amigos do Minho.

Casa dos Amigos do Minho (CAM)

Somehow, a similar collaboration to that one between **SOU** and **SCI** is the one that **SOU** created with **Casa dos Amigos do Minho**³⁹ (**CAM**). **CAM** is an old recreational association founded in 1950 by people who came from Minho, a northern region of Portugal.

In the course of August 2014 **SOU** used **CAM**'s terrace to host events (img 178). Their relationship started to settle when **SOU** moved to Intendente, the *largo* was still looking like a construction site and **SOU** could not yet use its own space. **SOU** needed a space for practicing, so it was asked to **CAM** to provide temporarily some of its own, which was agreed. They established good relationships with each other, and slowly this positive experience led **CAM** to regain confidence to reopen its doors and start to welcome other people apart from their own members. To this kind of rebirth of the association (after a long period of more careful openness to the exterior provoked by the drug scene occurring right in front of **CAM**'s door) contributed also, no doubt, the transformation of Intendente. It may happen, nevertheless, that, these days, some members of **CAM** are still somehow suspicious about people who stand too long at the entrance door.

SOU is no longer the only partnership **CAM** has.

Casa dos Amigos do Minho's⁴⁰ (**CAM**) building is located in Rua do Benfornoso, one of the oldest, most lively and culturally underground streets of Lisbon, and frequented mostly by immigrants in a precarious situation (mostly coming from India, China, Africa, Pakistan or Eastern Europe), drug dealers and prostitutes. In this street, many curious small shops, bars with neon lights, illegal restaurants and many degraded buildings can be found. **CAM** is an old recreational association founded in 1950 by people who came from Minho, a northern region of Portugal. However, the building is much older.

Its decaying façade⁴¹ represents the suspicious and introverted attitude towards the exterior world that the old members of **CAM** adopted as the area of Intendente started to be the main stage of Lisbon's drug scene. Aiming not to be part of this process, **CAM**'s door has been increasingly found closed over the past decades, until the recent revitalisation of the area, pushing away the so undesired population and attracting 'young and healthy' people. Slowly, **CAM** started to welcome the new people, projects and events.

What can also be very unexpected and surprising is that – if we happen to repeat the visit – we may find today the most diverse events and people. This rebirth of **CAM**'s space brought along the most alternative cultural and political events, such as (img 179):

³⁹ The full name of **CAM** is "Grupo Excursionista e Recreativo Os Amigos do Minho", but in order to simplify the lecture it will be used the short version "Casa dos Amigos do Minho", name which is mostly used by the users.

⁴⁰ The full name of **CAM** is "Grupo Excursionista e Recreativo Os Amigos do Minho", but in order to simplify the reading we refer to the more common expression "Casa dos Amigos do Minho".

⁴¹ **CAM**'s façade is being rehabilitated with the aid of the association **SOU**. Together they created a mutual project named "O Lugar da Cerâmica" ("the place of the ceramics"), which consists of workshops for the creation of replica tiles (inspired by the pottery tradition of the area), that later will be applied to the façade.

- meetings of left wing parties, like *Livre/Tempo de Avançar*, *Ag!r* or even the Spanish party *Podemos*;
- book fairs, like “the anarchist book” and “subversive editions”;
- concerts and music festivals organised by the association *SOU* and *ATR* (Associação Terapêutica do Ruído);
- benefit parties for “food sovereignty and free seeds” or in solidarity with people who are lacking food to cover their basic needs (organised by Centro de Cultura Libertária and Biblioteca Boesg⁴²);
- *Unipop*⁴³ “Critical Contemporary Thought” seminars;
- preparatory meetings for the festival *ImigrArte*⁴⁴ (festival for activism, interculturalism, art, culture and cuisine of the world).

However, the former activities proposed by CAM – such as the bar and the restaurant, the members’ reunion, the TV room and card games, and evening social dancing for old people – can still be found.

Other collaborations

(Viúva Lamego, Taberna das Almas, STAS and Intendente area in general)

In the end, **SOU** has become a much more complex project (than just *one space related to one project*, like most of ACS we have described). We have seen its close relationship with the *largo*, **SCI** and **CAM**, but other places also welcomed some of **SOU**’s projects (even if more sporadically):

- The building of *Viúva Lamego* (where the chain store *A Casa Portuguesa* is installed nowadays) hosted once an exhibition of models of several ideal projects for “Largos do Intendente” (Silva 2013);
- One of the artists **SOU** welcomed did not have enough space to do his sculptures, so he used the space of **Taberna das Almas**; in exchange for its service (**TA**’s), **SOU** organised also some events at the same place (Silva 2013);
- One of the rooms of *STAS* (Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Actividades Seguras) – located on the other side of Largo do Intendente and where the IntendentArt project is settled – is used for rehearsals.
- Together with the dancing company *Companhia Limitada*, several shows were created. One of them is called *LIS+BÚ* (which took place in its first version in December 2014 and later on in September 2015), consisting of an itinerant spectacle on the streets and urban interstices of the Intendente area and Colina da Santana.

As we have seen, **SOU** is a somehow everywhere in the neighbourhood, its actions occurring all around and the collaborations being multiple.

⁴² BOESG: Biblioteca e Observatório dos Estragos da Sociedade Globalizada (Library and Observatory of the Damage of Globalised Society).

⁴³ “Unipop is a Lisbon collective set up in 2007 to disseminate critical theory and militant practice beyond the narrow confines of the academic circuit, and to open up spaces where contemporary capitalism can be subject to analysis and political intervention” (in www.unipop.info/unipop.html).

⁴⁴ www.festival-imigrarte.com.

Casa Independente

One of **Largo Residências'** initial collaborators were the three artists who later on created the project **Casa Independente (CI)**, located in a palace in front of **SOU**, close to **SCI**. A divergence in the itineraries of both associations most probably happened due to conflicting ideas of the corresponding leaders. This can be inferred from the actual experience of both projects. While **SOU's** coffee shop is open towards the *largo*, **CI's** one is hidden on the inside first floor court and its entrance door is often controlled by a security guard in order to select the guests and keep away trouble from undesired people.

Open in October 2012, also with the support of a *Bip/Zip* funding, **Casa Independente** occupies the ancient apartment of Casa da Comarca de Figueiró dos Vinhos⁴⁵. It is a project managed by the association *Ironia Tropical (Tropical Irony)* and run by the three girls who opened **CI's** project (Inês Valdez, Patrícia Craveiro Lopes e Joana Nóbrega). According to them, their concept was to create a 'contemporary guild' (in Portuguese is called *Grémio*) (Nóbrega and Craveiro Lopes 2013) inspired on the "entertainment and hospitality" attributes⁴⁶ of the previously mentioned recreational associations. And even if **CI** has among its members a more restricted selection of people, it has nevertheless established contacts and collaborations with some of those recreational associations, like the next door neighbours **SCI** or even **Taberna das Almas** (Craveiro Lopes 2013).

CI proposes concerts, dj sets, gastronomic meetings, workshops, exhibitions, conferences or debates. It gained a reputation of being rather a kind of a nightclub, but the bar is actually open everyday as soon as 11 am to receive people and some activities. **CI** has also hosted a few more militant activities, like the "ugly fruit" market⁴⁷, conferences about the climatic changes and workshops on urban gardening.

When getting to know **CI's** inner space, we realise there has been a lot of investment in its carefully chosen decoration. It is worth mentioning the *vintage* style furniture, some curious objects, many bibelots (probably found on some flea market or in the attic of the grandmother), and still ravishing flowers on jars spread over the tables. There must also be recorded as well the arty exhibits on the toilet room (named "Galeria dos Fundos", a title overflowing with irony not translatable in English), the bathtub used as a flower bed, the tiger image behind the stage, or even the way the food comes prepared in the dish served to you (*nouvelle cuisine* gourmet style). All this undoubtedly grants to **Casa Independente** a lot of wilful charm. This feeling is even more intense when allied to the previously existing conditions of the space, meaning the decaying walls and high ceilings decorated with beautiful stucco motifs (typical of this kind of noble and ancient apartments), the tiled and wooden floor, the charming court covered with vine leaves, or even the way the apartment is organised around the building's staircase (img

⁴⁵ In the 19th century and until 1938, before hosting Casa da Comarca de Figueiró dos Vinhos, this palace hosted the Civil Registry Association, "the most emblematic para-Masonic institution active in the advent of the Republic." (www.facebook.com/CasaIndependente/info/?tab=overview).

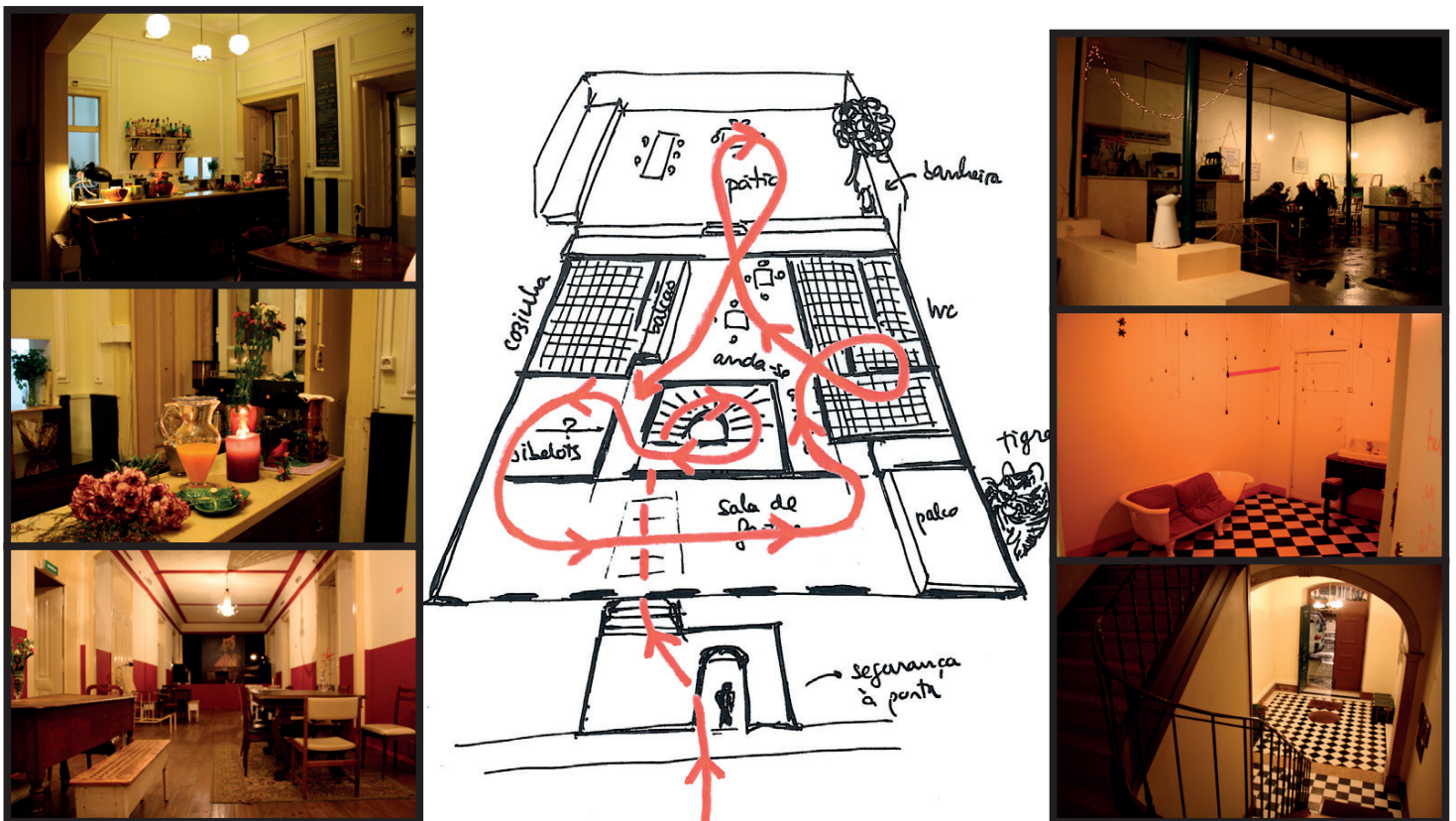
⁴⁶ www.facebook.com/CasaIndependente/info/?tab=overview (seen on Jan 2013).

⁴⁷ The market of the Cooperative Fruta Feia (Ugly Fruit)'s slogan is: "beautiful people eat ugly fruit" ("O mercado da Cooperativa Fruta Feia tem como lema "gente bonita come fruta feia", www.frutafeia.pt/pt/projecto).

180). As was written on CI's facebook page⁴⁸ "In our world does not exist perfection, but rather a philosophy of recycling, incorporating the sense of a project capable of assimilating diverse influences and preserving traditions".

The three girls who hold this project obviously care about their space attracting people with contemporary and cosmopolite lifestyles, linked to music and visual arts. "All the scenography of these spaces is meant for people who are sensible to quality as a style"⁴⁹. In this sense, the bar/restaurant named "Tasca Tropical" offers brunches, 5 o'clock tea, *tapas* and *gourmet* style food, and the spaces are "always designed around music, delicacies and visual aesthetics"⁵⁰.

Considering all this, it is impossible not to think about how CI's inner space matches with the *oeuvre d'art* of Joana Vasconcelos standing in the middle of Largo, just in front of CI's balcony. *Bobo* style, cosy, arty... a kind of a beautiful fairy tale. Besides, it is also not surprising to hear how CI established a close relationship with their neighbours *Bureau A*, a Swiss architecture office (whose affiliate is located in Geneva) who recently moved into Rua dos Anjos (somehow following the European trend of the moment: "Is Lisbon the next Berlin?"⁵¹



Img 180. Labyrinthine path around the central staircase of Casa Independente and the general ambiance.

48 www.facebook.com/CasaIndependente/info/?tab=overview (seen on Jan 2013).

49 *Ibid.*

50 *Ibid.*

51 <http://thespaces.com/2015/08/28/is-lisbon-the-next-berlin>.

BUS , Paragem cultural

The last space whose destiny is linked to **SOU**'s project in this story is called **BUS | Paragem cultural** (meaning, "BUS, cultural stop" in English), which is currently installed in the space where **SOU 2** used to work, in Rua do Forno do Tijolo (since February 2013). The curious coincidence is that this new organisation is also a cultural association and, besides, it actually proposes a very similar program to the one **SOU** did when using that same space. The same way, it proposes "to strengthen the neighbourhood's social and urban structure through art, culture and citizenship"⁵². The association coordinates the activities but is "open to all kinds of ideas or anyone who wants or feel the need to participate, say something, show something, protest or support"⁵³.

SOU festivals

As we have seen, **SOU** has become a very complex project. It is much more than just *one space related to one project*, like the other *dérives* proposed in this paper. It is a project that wanders in the city itself, if we try to personify its essence. And this *flânerie* goes to an extreme when we realise how many events **SOU** organises and in which it participates. After all, it seems to be attracted by the crowd... The best examples are **SOU**'s participation in "Festival TODOS" and "LARGO DA MOURARIA"⁵⁴, both events promoted by the municipality of Lisbon. These festivals, created as part of the regeneration plan for the area, were intended to create a "dialogue between cultures, religions and people from the most diverse origins and generations"⁵⁵ (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016).

Another curious case is one particular itinerant performance called "LIS+Bú", which took place in the streets and in the urban interstices of the surrounding area, created together with the dance company *Companhia Limitada*⁵⁶. The performance took place only twice (the first version in December 2014 around Largo do Intendente, and the second in September 2015 at Colina de Santana). Concerning the first performance, it consisted of a dancing and theatrical performance on which one could follow the marginal people (the crowd) of *Bú* on a poetical *flânerie* through the dark, narrow and stinking streets of Lisbon. This somehow melancholic *dérive* – addressing the thematic of solitude – happened in those streets and corners, and also in other multiple interstitial places found on the way, like abandoned garages, storehouses, or supermarkets.

So far we have seen how in the last decade **SOU** has been moving in the city, changing place and adapting to new spatial conditions every time it was needed. We have also seen how **SOU** spreads and mutates, creating synergetic relationships with the surroundings and ties with the local community. **SOU**'s multifaceted stance is evident through the following aspects:

52 www.buspc.pt/?page_id=6.

53 *Ibid.*

54 www.largoresidencias.com/largo_residencias.pdf.

55 <http://festivaltodos.com/intro/home>.

56 Funded by the programme PARTIS (Práticas Artísticas de Inclusão Social) of Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.

- Location (interstices vs. main square);
- Collaborations (local community vs. municipality / institutions);
- Movement (restive, jumping from one place to another), Mutation (the project changes each time it moves, like a chameleon) and Expansion (it uses the spaces of other associations);
- Visibility (solitude vs. the crowd).

Just like a “flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite...” (Benjamin).

*

5.3.2. Activist merge and split [Crew Hassan and Mob]

In this section, I intend to tell the story of two projects that crossed their destinies once or twice, named **Crew Hassan & MOB** (img 181).

Crew Hassan 1

In the year 2004, a non-profit cultural cooperative named **Crew Hassan**¹ (spelled “croissant”, in Portuguese) was founded. It defended political, ecological, environmental and libertarian principles, aiming at being out of the commercial circuit. **Crew Hassan (CH)** was looking for a physical place to settle, and while contacting with the people in charge for the Portuguese *Fair Trade*² section it was found there was a free apartment to rent right under that organisation’s space³. So **CH** opened a space in 2006 in Rua das Portas de Santo Antão, next to **Coliseu dos Recreios**, in Lisbon’s downtown. These two places could not be more contrasting realities: while to **Coliseu** only renowned artists came to play, to **CH** only less known artists went there.

So, back then, **CH** became one of the few alternative cultural spaces existing in a privileged place of the city, though a quite decadent one. This decadence became as a result part of the atmosphere of the space and part of its charm. The old decrepit and bourgeois first floor apartment, with high-ceilings decorated with beautiful stucco motives, was then painted with exuberant colourful murals (graffiti) in a very “roots” style. Back then it was not so common to see a place ornamented in this way, at least in Lisbon. The décor, along with the chosen mismatched furniture and particular lighting, was a good match with the musical selection proposed (mostly of a reggae and hip-hop genre) and the hosted artists. Flyers, stencils, handwriting political sentences written on walls, crafted art works (photography, drawings, paintings...) complete the “squat model” inspiration of the place⁴. Apart from the concerts, there were several other events going on in this space – sometimes simultaneously – like activist meetings against economic precariousness, bull-fighting, bullying in academic initiation rituals, discrimination, and so on; according to Renato Rodrigues “sometimes it seemed like a place of several conspiracies!” (Rodrigues 2013). For instance, the restaurant is vegetarian because the animal’s rights are defended. Also *Coca Cola* is not sold there because **CH**’s members are against the multinational corporations and defend the fair trade. They believe that “if we don’t buy certain products, we can make the difference.”⁵ Even if they had a lot of “inoffensive” cultural offer (like exhibitions, art installations, cinema, VJ sets, workshops, etc), they believe that their activist dimension was

1 www.facebook.com/ccrewhassan/info?tab=page_info.

2 www.fairtrade.net/what-is-fairtrade.html.

3 According to Renato Rodrigues (Rodrigues 2013).

4 “I have proudly been a squatter for many years in Portugal!” (Rodrigues 2013).

5 www.facebook.com/ccrewhassan/info?tab=page_info.

affecting the presence of the public. “What we really wanted was a space dedicated to music, to do what we like and a space provided with a positive consciousness towards the world”, says Renato⁶. Within this logic, they also promoted a “Social Christmas”, by gathering products to offer to charity institutions. Their 6 months rental contract eventually lasted 6 years, and in the end they managed to open a second space on the ground floor of the same building – having this time a direct contact with the street, through a vitrine – where they installed a disc shop.

The advantage of being a *cooperative* instead of a *squat*, according to Renato, is that, even “if the police was still coming to keep an eye on the place, it wouldn’t come to beat us up”, since **Crew Hassan** has “one foot on ideology and another in legality ... [and that] allowed us to have stability enough to keep our music material (...) without being robbed or destroyed.” The disadvantage, on the other side, was the obligation of paying a lot of taxes just for being a cultural cooperative⁷.

MOB 1

As mentioned before, **Crew Hassan** was also a place for activist meetings. According to Ana Feijão⁸, some of the groups who frequented the space were student collectives like MOVE (MOVimento aberto para outra vida na Escola – Open movement for another life in school) or MATA (Movimento Anti Tradição Académica – movement against academic tradition), the former refusing “the ‘inevitability’ of a school where technocracy wins”⁹ and the latter being against the academic tradition – namely the bullying in academic initiation rituals – which illustrates, according to MATA’s point of view, some of the most conservative, sexist and authoritarian values¹⁰. Also at **CH** the first MayDay in Portugal (2007) was organised, which led to the creation of the association *Precários Inflexíveis* (*PI* - Inflexible Precarious Ones) – it is an association that defends the worker’s rights and fights against the contemporary precarious job conditions and the contemporary austerity, which is seen as a threat to democracy¹¹. As a consequence, the precarious ones started to meet every year at May 1st at **CH**.

Later on, *PI* realised it needed its own space for the meetings, so a ground-floor in Santos (Rua Silva), not far from Rua do Poço dos Negros, was found to where the association moved in, in 2010. But the locale was dark and humid, *PI* had trouble with the neighbours, and so, after 2 years, it was decided to look for another place. About that time, **CH** had closed their doors, so both associations united and created a common project called **Mob** (word that originates from

⁶ My translation from Portuguese: “We really wanted a music space, to do what we like to do, and a space of positive awareness for the world” (“Nós queríamos mesmo um espaço de música, de fazer o que gostamos e um espaço de consciência positiva para o mundo.” Rodrigues 2013).

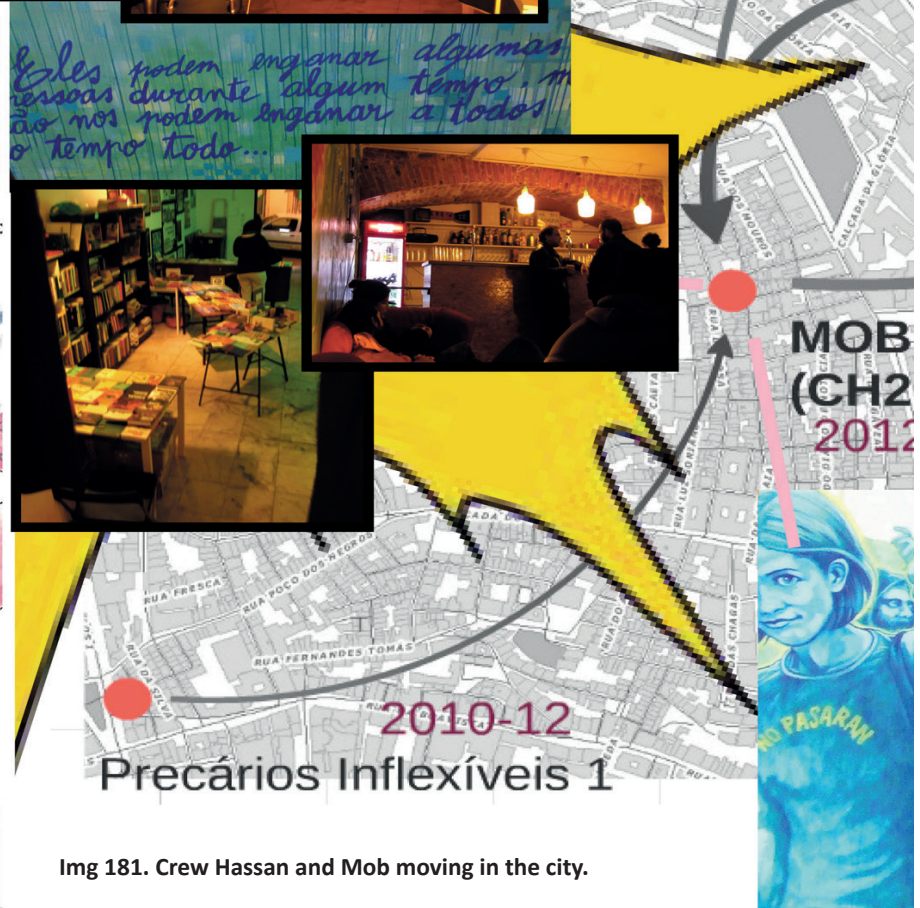
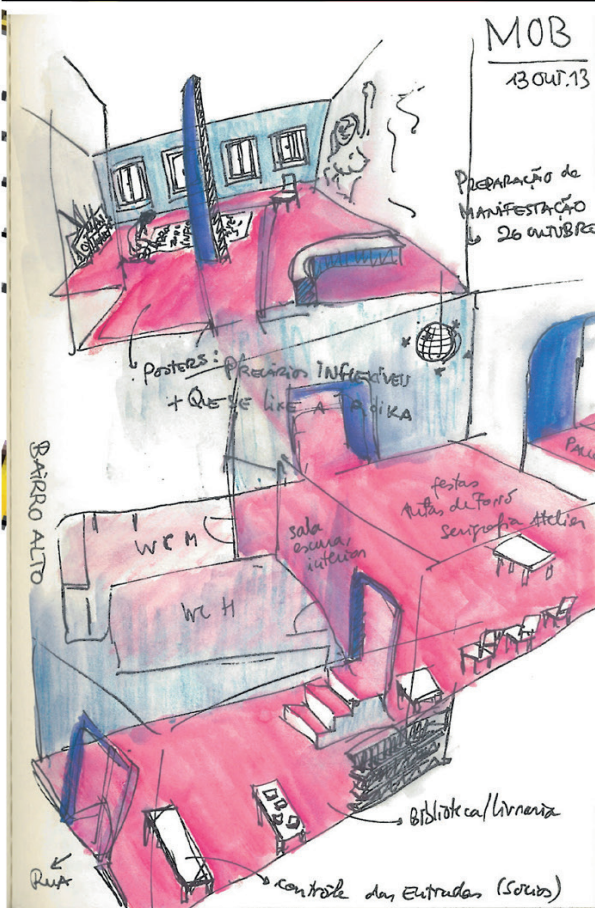
⁷ My translation from Portuguese: “One foot in ideology, one foot in legality. The difference, with respect to a squat, was that the police was going there but not to beat us. Rather to ask for licenses and things like that - and this gave us stability to have our music material there etc. without being stealed or broken” (Rodrigues 2013). (“Um pé na ideologia, um pé na legalidade. A diferença em relação a um squat era que a polícia ia lá, mas não era para nos bater! Era para pedir licenças e tal - e isso dava-nos estabilidade para termos lá o nosso material de música etc, sem que o roubassem ou partissem”).

⁸ Based on an interview with Ana Filipe Feijão, on the 21st June of 2015 at Largo do Intendente (by LC and MP).

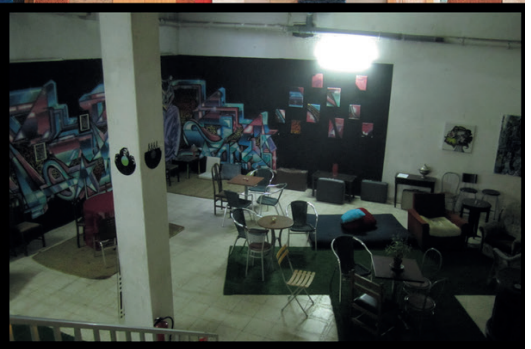
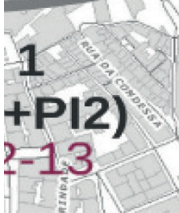
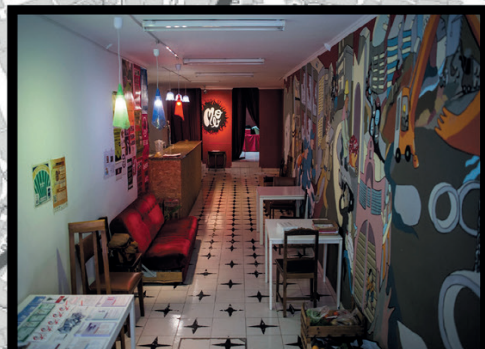
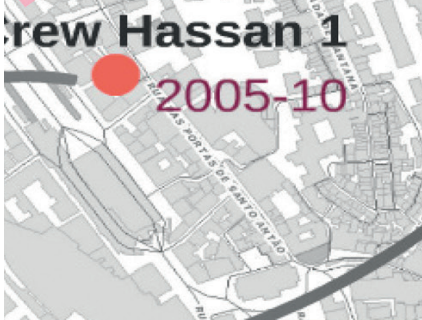
⁹ http://move-aberto.blogspot.ch/2006_04_01_archive.html.

¹⁰ <http://sitiodomata.jimdo.com> & <http://blogdomata.blogspot.pt>.

¹¹ www.precarios.net/?page_id=3977.



Img 181. Crew Hassan and Mob moving in the city.



“mobilisation”).

Mob opened its doors in Bairro Alto – right after the big demonstration of the 15th September 2012, organised by *QSLT (Que Se Lixe a Troika)* – as an associative, political and social space. It was aimed as a meeting point for activists, but also as a place for alternative non-commercial/mainstream culture, according to Ana Feijão. It hosted diverse projects like theatre, concerts, djs, exhibitions, courses or workshops (dance, martial arts, serigraphy, etc), accessible to members who contribute with an annual fee of 3€).

Bairro Alto, as a neighbourhood, gathered some of the prerequisites that **Mob** set as spatial and geographical conditions: good accessibility (close to the metro station) and noise tolerance by the neighbours (due to the concerts). On the other hand, the new association had to let go its idea of having a sound studio and a bicycle’s repair workshop. The location – an old storage place of a bookshop – was then converted and adapted to **Mob**’s needs. In a first phase that was done by the property owner, in a second phase by *CH* and *PI* (the bar, the stage, etc). The rent was afterwards on the rise: it started being 800 €, then 1500-1800 € and finally, when the owner demanded 2800 €, **Mob** left (Feijão 2015).

The space consisted of 3 main rooms, distributed along a rather sinuous path: the entrance was at a small ground-floor door, then a quite narrow space (where the bookshop could be found) leading to a few stairs should be crossed; once the stairs were climbed, an interior space with no windows was accessed (there, some of the workshops and the concerts took place); then, going left, a bigger space with many windows could be found. It was in this space that the bar was installed and was also there that most activities occurred (debates, parties, fairs, etc). All along these spaces the ceilings are quite low giving the general impression this is a confined space. The unclear distribution of spaces is the result of the junction of two different spaces (a storage room and a bookshop).

The windows’ room has large coloured murals with references to the French Revolution and leftist activist icons, like the Pussy Riot’s Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, for example, painted by the artist Pedro Feijão (who had also painted some walls on **CH**’s space). It was in this political engaged space that many of the demonstrations that occurred in Lisbon against the Troika and the way the country was being governed (like the 2nd March, for instance) were prepared: meetings, for example, to discuss about how to fight austerity and to make hand-paint posters. It was also in this space that the most diverse groups having some social and political activity used to gather: feminists, LGBT, anti-racism, climatic changes, retirees and pensioners, the right to housing, etc...

Back then **Mob** had three part-time salaried employees, one taking care of the bar, the other in charge of the shopping and the last one being the door-guard. The fact that a woman took the door’s responsibility helped to calm down the frequent tensions existing during the night shift. The tensions occurred quite often, since people tended to drink a lot at the end of the evening or also because the police used to come in to disturb. After all, according to Ana Feijão (the person in charge for this job), a man has, in general, less courage to beat a woman than another man¹².

¹² Based on an interview with Ana Filipe Feijão, on the 21st June of 2015 at Largo do Intendente (by LC & MP).

Apart from this issue, other problems existed. **Mob** was not a bar, although some of the users and neighbours thought so. For instance, other bars could not understand why **Mob** did not have to pay taxes for the alcohol if it also had a bar. Those people believed that having the status of an “association” was just an excuse to make profit; the difference was, nevertheless, that **Mob** was open during the whole day for the most diverse activities, and that bars do not usually promote debates like **Mob** did¹³.

In December 2013 **Mob** closed its doors at Bairro Alto. *PI* and *CH* broke up because the **Mob** project was becoming unsustainable, at least according to Renato. Furthermore, while Ana believes that “it is needed a lot of militancy in order to support this kind of projects” (Feijão 2013), Renato wills to make out of this project his *way of life*, proudly announcing that, in the space existing in Rua das Portas de Santo Antão, voluntary work at the bar was never accepted it being instead a well payed job¹⁴.

MOB 2 & CH2

Hence, the destinies of these two entities – *PI* and *CH* – were since then following separate paths, though ironically the corresponding spaces ended up just a few meters away from each other, in a hotspot called Intendente. *PI* decided this time to join with the collective *Habita* and keep the name **Mob** for their common space, while *CH* recovered its old identity, calling its new space **Crew Hassan** (in order to clarify this matter and distinguish the new entities from the previous projects, I will refer from now on to them as **Mob2** and **CH2**).

Nevertheless, while the **Mob2** space – consisting in a single narrow space that resembles a corridor in a L shape, plus an annex space with direct contact to the street through a vitrine, where the bookshop is – is now more confined than the previous **Mob** space in Bairro Alto, the **CH2** space is wider, having very high ceilings and huge vitrines, allowing a contact with the street’s life; besides it has an underground floor, twice bigger than the ground floor, where the courses and workshops take place.

The previous tenant of the space where **Mob2** is now installed was a Chinese evangelic church. The property owner made the needed renovation works before the association moved there.

13 “We had discussions with Fernando Rosas and Acancio... the other bars did not understand why we did not pay taxes as they did (alcohol), if we had a bar anyway. They did not understand that we were an association, for them that was just a cover in order to make profit. But we opened at 2 pm, we had activities all day! We projected films, we had discussions with Fernando Rosas etc. Does any bar has political debates usually?!” (“Tínhamos debates com o Fernando Rosas e o Acancio...os outros bares não entendiam porque não pagávamos taxas como eles (álcool), se tínhamos um bar na mesma. Não entendiam que éramos um associação, para eles isso era só uma capa para podermos fazer lucro. Mas nós abríamos às 2 da tarde, tínhamos actividades o dia todo! Projectávamos filmes, tínhamos debates com o Fernando Rosas etc - algum bar tem debates políticos?!”) (Feijão 2015). My translation from Portuguese.

14 MOB: “These kinds of spaces have to live a lot from militant work, each person makes a big effort”. (“Estes espaços têm de viver muito de militância, cada um dá muito de si.”) (Feijão 2013).

Crew Hassan: “Exactly, that is what we did when we create Crew Hassan: we wanted that project to be part of our daily life! We have never accepted volunteering work at the bar, we always payed [employees] and well, and we are proud of it” (“Exacto, foi isso que fizemos ao criar a Crew Hassan: queríamos fazer daquilo a nossa vida! Nós nunca aceitámos voluntariado no bar, sempre pagámos e bem, e orgulhamo-nos disso” (Rodrigues 2013). Translated from Portuguese by myself.

Apart from *PI*, there is now, as referred above, a new collective who is part of the **Mob** project: *Habita*. This collective defends “the right to the city” and “the right to housing”, these principles being founded on the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic¹⁵. *Habita* wishes to fight real estate speculation and claims dwelling conditions “compatible with people’s incomes, adequate and integrated in the city, with access to mobility, culture, equipment and services”¹⁶.

Though the general decoration of the space, or the furniture style (pretty much “Ikea” style), have no real intention of creating a particular kind of ambiance, the activist spirit of **Mob** remains present. Many activist collectives propose activities and events at **Mob**, like for instance: *GAT*¹⁷ (portuguese group of activists on HIV / AIDS Treatments), *Bichas Cobardes*¹⁸ (in English, “Cowardly Queer” – a group focused on educating and “empowering” the feminist LGBTQ community), *Panteras Rosa*¹⁹ (in English, “Pink Panthers”, a movement to fight LesBiGayTransphobia), *Comité Palestina*²⁰ (Information about the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian resistance and international solidarity), among others. The only relevant visual sign of their political and social engagement is a large mural painted by José Smith Vargas, in a cartoon style, which covers the wall along the entrance path and addresses some themes like precarious labour (like call centres), police control and abuse, manipulation of the media, etc.

Since April 2014 **Mob**’s new space is located in Rua dos Anjos, right next to Largo do Intendente, this allowing the members of the association to be also actors of the new process of regeneration of this area. Intendente was chosen because: a cheap rent (two spaces for 600€) could be found there; the nocturnal character of this quarter; and the fact that the direct neighbours (a short-stay guest-house) do not pose problems connected to the eventual noise provoked by the events underway. From Ana’s perspective, Intendente has a stronger neighbourhood identity than Bairro Alto: at **MOB**, people feel more like “at home” at their new address; for instance, if the barrel of beer at the bar is finished, they feel comfortable to knock on another bar’s door to borrow some more (something that did not happen in Bairro Alto). Nevertheless, when asking Ana to whom they usually ask for a barrel, the answer was “rather to the new ‘houses’/ACS than the previously existing ones” (before Intendente’s urban regeneration)(Feijão 2015).

Affected by the economic crisis and the quarter’s influence, the membership fee was down from 3€ to 1€, since many users started to complain it was too expensive. And this despite the fact that this fee had more of a symbolic character than of a heavy disbursement; this fee also allows the association to select the people who come inside, using it as an excuse at the door (arguing that **Mob** is a place only accessible to members and trying in this way to avoid troubles) (Feijão 2015). Anyway, most of the public who frequent the space come most of the time from a network composed of friends of friends and not really from the local people.

¹⁵ Article 65 of CPR: “Everyone has the right, for himself and his family, to a dwelling of an adequate size, with hygienic and comfort conditions, and that preserves personal and family privacy” (“Todos têm direito, para si e para a sua família, a uma habitação de dimensão adequada, em condições de higiene e conforto e que preserve a intimidade pessoal e a privacidade familiar”). Translated from Portuguese from: www.parlamento.pt/Legislacao/Paginas/ConstituicaoRepublicaPortuguesa.aspx.

¹⁶ Objectives of *Habita*, stated in www.habita.info.

¹⁷ www.gatportugal.org.

¹⁸ www.bichascobardes.org/p/sobre-nos-contacto.html.

¹⁹ <http://panterasrosa.blogspot.pt>.

²⁰ <http://palestinavence.blogs.sapo.pt>.

As mentioned above, at Bairro Alto **MOB** had three salaried employees, while nowadays its daily running operation is based exclusively in militancy work.

Crew Hassan 2 is now located in a perpendicular street to **Mob2's**, close to **Mercado do Forno do Tijolo**. It occupies a corner building with huge front windows, something that gives the impression of being at the same time inside a living room and on the street, this being a kind of a paradoxical feeling. The charm of the old stucco ceilings and decayed walls present in **CH1** is gone, but some kind of retro-vintage-60s style is now the main ambiance of the new **CH2's** space. The wallpaper motives are in a deco-pattern style, an installation made of shelves and plants stands in front of one of the front windows, and comfortable vintage maples, sofas and chairs are randomly disposed on the ground floor space. At the open space in the ground-floor there is a bar, a vinyl shop and a few retro-clothes to sell. Contrastingly, the underground floor is decorated in a much more hip-hop style, and random at the same time; there, we can find wall-boards exposing graffiti, and also a kind of a kindergarten.

CH2 hosts leisure and cultural activities. It has a vegetarian bar, its food offer still being founded on the principles of fair trade and social equity. Nevertheless, while all the previous spaces (**CH1** and **Mob1**) used to close their doors around 3-4 am, these new ones are only allowed to be open until 2 am (**Mob2**) or even midnight (**CH2**), which naturally changes a bit the fundamental nature of both projects. This is in particular the **CH2's** case, because it is very rare that a party in Portugal starts before 11pm.

*

5.3.3. Franchising [Mainside]

We have seen, previously, the recent popularity of the area of Cais do Sodré. This phenomenon is intrinsically linked to one of the case studies presented in this story: **Pensão Amor (PA)**. But to be able to tell the story of **PA**, we have first to go a little bit back in time and travel to Alcântara, the old industrial area where the bookshop **Ler Devagar**¹ is located, more precisely in one of the old factories, today known as **Lx Factory (LXF)**.

What is the relationship between these two spaces, we wonder? As a matter of fact, **LXF** and **PA** were created by the same people. So they did, moreover, with other spaces, like **Casa de Pasto** or the ongoing project of **Hospital do Desterro** (img 182). What do these spaces consist of? And who are the people responsible for these projects?

Mainside

What is Mainside Investments – SGPS S.A. after all? Mainside is the holding company² of several affiliated companies. One of them – Catumbel, a real estate company – acquired the control of the land, and another one – LxFactory, another real estate company, affiliated to Catumbel – does the daily management of LXF (img 183). All the other companies are real estate agencies mainly dedicated to “facilities management” and “urban rehabilitation works” (Baptista 2013a). We can see, in the Mainside’s website³, that the concerned buildings are all located in the central area of Lisbon: they are bought in a decaying condition and – after the necessary rehabilitation works are done – resold as housing, hotels or offices.

Lx Factory

Context and History

Before *Catumbel* bought the huge area of land (23 000 m²) where **LXF** is today installed in Rua Rodrigues Faria, this complex of buildings belonged to *Gráfica de Mirandela*⁴, which maintained its activity in this locale for a while in parallel with the **LXF** project (img 184). But before it hosted the printing press company, those buildings had many other multiple hosts⁵ and uses, one of

¹ See chapter *Mapping the Alternative Cultural Spaces in the City: “De-centralising [Intellectual and Creative central peripheries]”* - chapter.5.2.3. (p. 189).

² The equivalent of “holding company” in Portuguese is “sociedade gestora de participações sociais”.

³ <http://mainside.pt>.

⁴ *Gráfica de Mirandela* printed many of the Portuguese newspapers until it was bankrupted in 2012.

⁵ *Companhia Industrial Portugal e Colónias* (1888) and the *Anuário Comercial de Portugal* typography, for example.

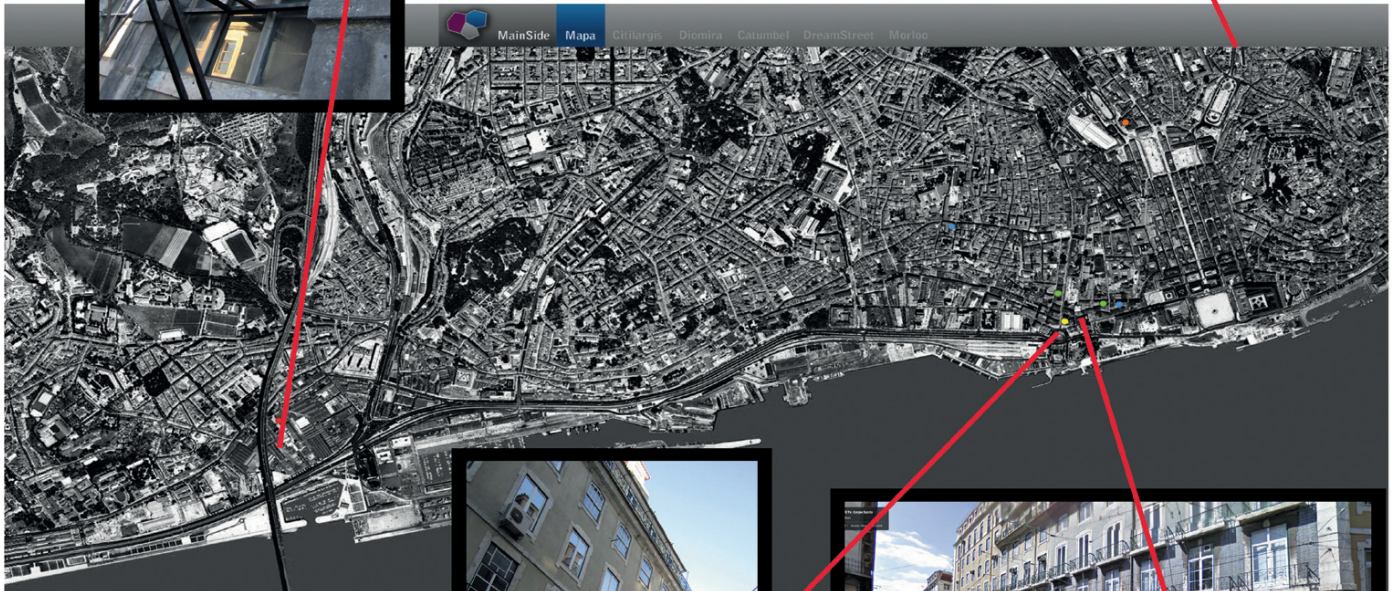
Mainside case-studies



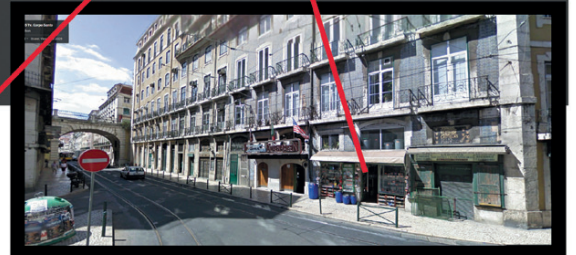
Hospital do Desterro,
Colina de Santana (Intendente)
(work in progress)



Lx Factory, Alcântara
(2007)



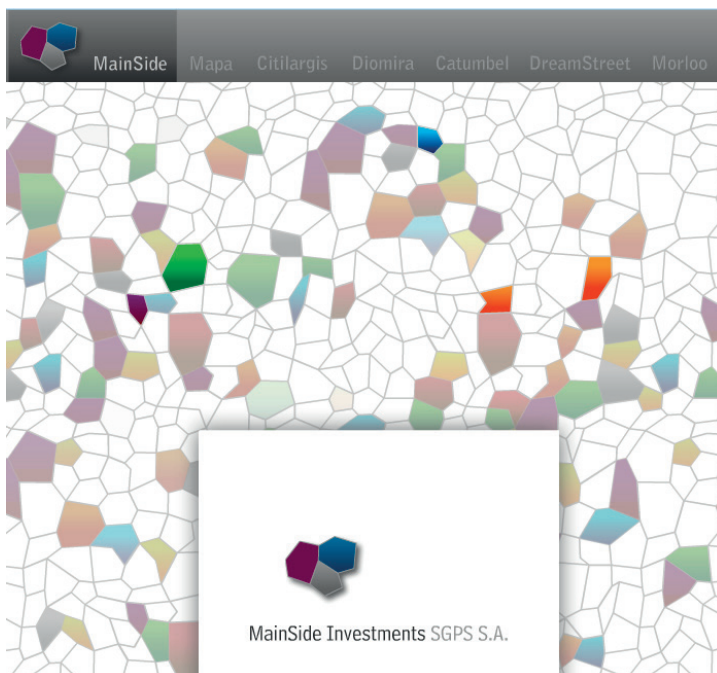
Pensão Amor
Cais do Sodré
(2011)



(google images)

Casa de Pasto, Cais do Sodré (2013)

Img 182. Mainside case-studies: Factory, Pensão Amor, Casa de Pasto, Hospital do Desterro.



< Img 183. Mainside's website, presenting the real estate agencies linked with Mainside. The background image is interactive, and when the visitor moves the mouse, the "broken tiles" get coloured.

them being the *Companhia de Fiação e Tecidos Lisbonense* (the spinning and textiles company of Lisbon), which was on the origin of the construction – between 1846 and 1849 – of the major 5 floor industrial building of the area (Dabraio da Silva 2013, 76).

Legal status

LXF was formally constituted in 2007 (Carvalho 2009, 115). In order to secure a return on its investment while awaiting the approval of the project *Alcântara XXI*, **Mainside** decided to rehabilitate the buildings and the surrounding space, and adapted them for subletting spaces for shops and offices on a temporary basis. According to **Mainside's** actual owner, the engineer José Carlos Carvalho⁶, the initiative would involve a concept revolving around a *lifestyle* based on a creative and entrepreneurial ambiance, in the sense of merging leisure and work activities. In order to have that happening it would be necessary to create a “cluster” able to promote a closer relationship between the individuals, the companies and the events (Carvalho 2009, 179).

The aggregate rent of the whole complex was € 160 000 per month, which meant initially an average of 7 €/m². However this figure increased to 8,6 €/m² in 2009, according to Gonçalo Carvalho, still lower nevertheless than the average rent we can find for an office space in Lisbon's downtown. **LXF** had then a total monthly income of 112 206 € (Carvalho 2009, 119, 179).

In view of the uncertainties concerning the future of the project when it was conceived, **LXF** created a special type of contract intended to be used in the place of a formal leasing contract. It was designated “contrato de cedência de espaço”, meaning “contract providing access to the space” and whose main provision was the precariousness of the leasing: in case of need or of unexpected circumstances it would be possible to evict, at any moment, the leaseholders. According to José Carvalho and his son, in order to make this work in practice, it would be necessary to circumvent some legal issues: the area being classified as a “mixed urban reconversion area”, it was just allowed an industrial use but not a dining place or a commercial one. Carvalho says “If we had requested the necessary permits to the municipality, we would still be waiting.”⁷



Img 184. Lx Factory's main street.

⁶ As interviewed by his son Gonçalo Carvalho in the context of his master thesis (Carvalho 2009).

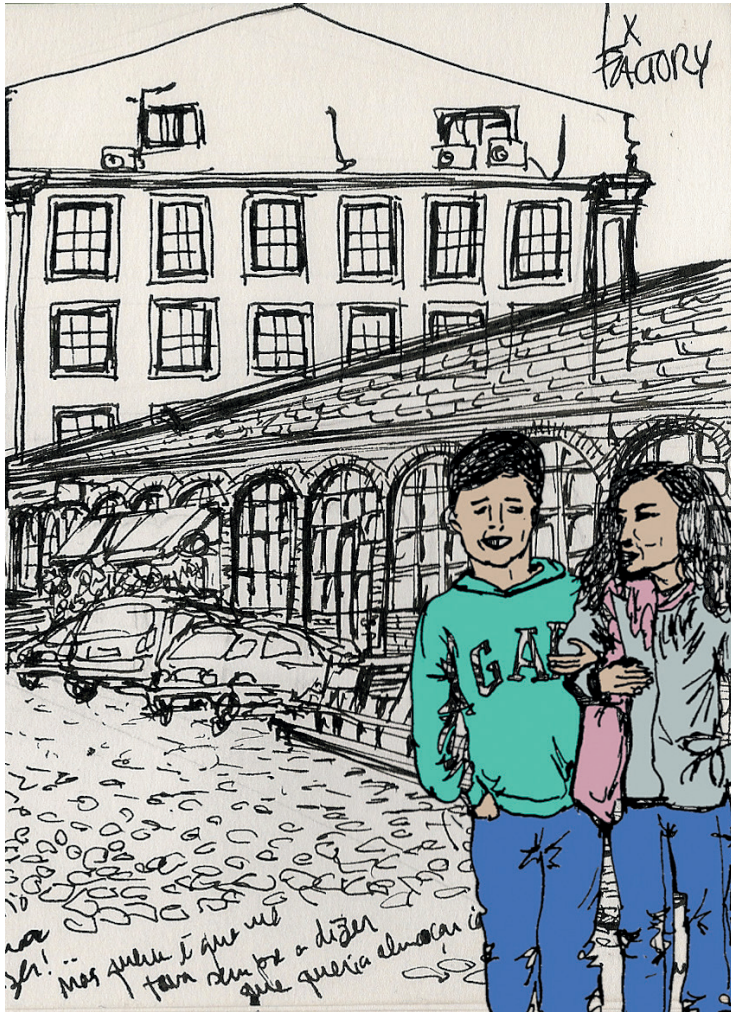
⁷ My translation from Portuguese: “Se tivéssemos pedido as licenças necessárias à câmara, estaríamos ainda hoje à espera. Depois de inúmeras reprovações”.

(Carvalho 2009, 118).

Cultural and commercial offer and public

Diversified small and young enterprises started therefore to rent spaces at **LXF**, consisting mostly of architecture and design studios, shops and restaurants, as well as other business activities including, for example, massagers, osteopaths, yoga and dance teachers, a biological

food market, tattooers, photographers, and coworking, fashioning, advertising and casting companies. Even an accountant and a lawyer! The whole process took a while to gain visibility; **LXF** only opened its doors to the public in 2008. Nowadays there exist about two hundred business activities in **LXF** which hire more than a thousand people and attract about a million visitors a year⁸. **LXF** does not look for a particular kind of public, but rather to have a maximum of people (Gomes 2013).



Public Space and Lifestyles

According to LXF's website, this area is:

*An urban fragment, kept hidden for years, is now returned to the city in the form of LXFactory. A creative island occupied by corporations and professionals of the industry serves also as stage for a diverse set of happenings related to fashion, publicity, communication, fine arts, architecture, music, etc., attracting numerous visitors to rediscover Alcântara through an engaged dynamics. At LXF you can actually breathe the industrial environment at every step. A factory of experiences where intervention, thought, production is made possible. Staging ideas and products in a place belonging to everyone, for everyone.*⁹

The "shopping mall" concept

According to José Carvalho, in the beginning the idea was to make this space work like a shopping mall in order to attract the maximum possible number of people, being necessary first to attract particular *brands* that would work as "anchor companies"¹⁰. Carvalho explains that these companies have privileged rental conditions (location and visibility, for instance)

⁸ Data based of the latest online post found about the LXF, on the 02/06/2015 (<http://elestimulo.com/blog/lx-factory-la-fabrica-de-ideas-y-experiencias-artisticas-de-lisboa>).

⁹ www.lxfactory.com/en/lxfactory.

¹⁰ José Carvalho mentions the following companies as "anchors": the bookshop *Ler Devagar* and the school *Fórum de Dança*. They are followed in a second plan by *NCS*, *Lollipop*, *Cantina*, *ACT* and *Crowd*.

because they contribute to establish the “image” of the whole project, being their showcases of great importance (img 185). The engineer refers to the work of Jeffrey Hardwick on American shopping malls¹¹, highlighting the importance of the architectural details of a store: “lighting, signage, materials, decoration, storage and many other elements are able to change a traditional and banal store (...) into a selling machine” (Carvalho 2009, 115–16). Carvalho proceeds with his reasoning saying that he would classify **LXF** as a “fashion manipulator” because, such as any other commercial establishment, its success “depends on the creation of an original image”.

Spatial and Architectural Transformations

According to Joana Gomes, one of the big advantages of **Mainside’s** strategy is that each company can create a space “at its own image” inside **LXF** (img 186). *Mainside* architects take care of the major works, like the design of the common spaces, the division of the inner spaces, and technical works related to electricity, etc. (Gomes 2013); then each company transforms its own space according to its own needs or desires. The *Mainside’s* architects, nevertheless, always have suggestions, constraints and a final word to say on the matter, framing the companies’ spatial transformations.

The actual uses of the premises are not previously set, yet there exist functional dissimilarities among the different buildings, and even the different levels. On the ground floor, we can mainly find companies having a more likely direct commercial approach (like restaurants and shops) and, in the upper levels, we can mostly find offices¹².

Days of success

Joana considers that one of the big advantages of **LXF**, when comparing it with other creative clusters, is that it is open 24h/7days. She adds that most of the other cases she knows are excessively focused on culture, and that **LXF** is “more than just culture”, including also business and social constituents and having therefore a particular kind of life (Gomes 2013).

Apart from its uninterrupted daily life, **LXF** often rents spaces for events, fairs, shows (all occurring mostly in building C), workshops and debates. *Espaço Brasil* is a good example of a very dynamic leaseholder. Furthermore, every Sunday the *Lx Market* takes place in the streets of **LXF**. But one of the most emblematic happenings are the *Open Days*, which happen twice a year, allowing visitors to know what is going on at **LXF**, get in contact with their companies and people working there, and attend exhibitions, a series of concerts, music and theatre performances, and other activities connected with fashion or live painting.

In *Time Out* magazine we can see a reference to **LXF** as a kind of a “Silicon Valley for the industry of culture” (Salazar and Loureiro 2009, 32), referring to its success as connected with its emergence in the middle of the international crisis and the chaos of bureaucracy (relating to the Alcântara’s urban plan).

¹¹ M. Jeffrey Hardwick, “Mall Maker - Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream”, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2010.

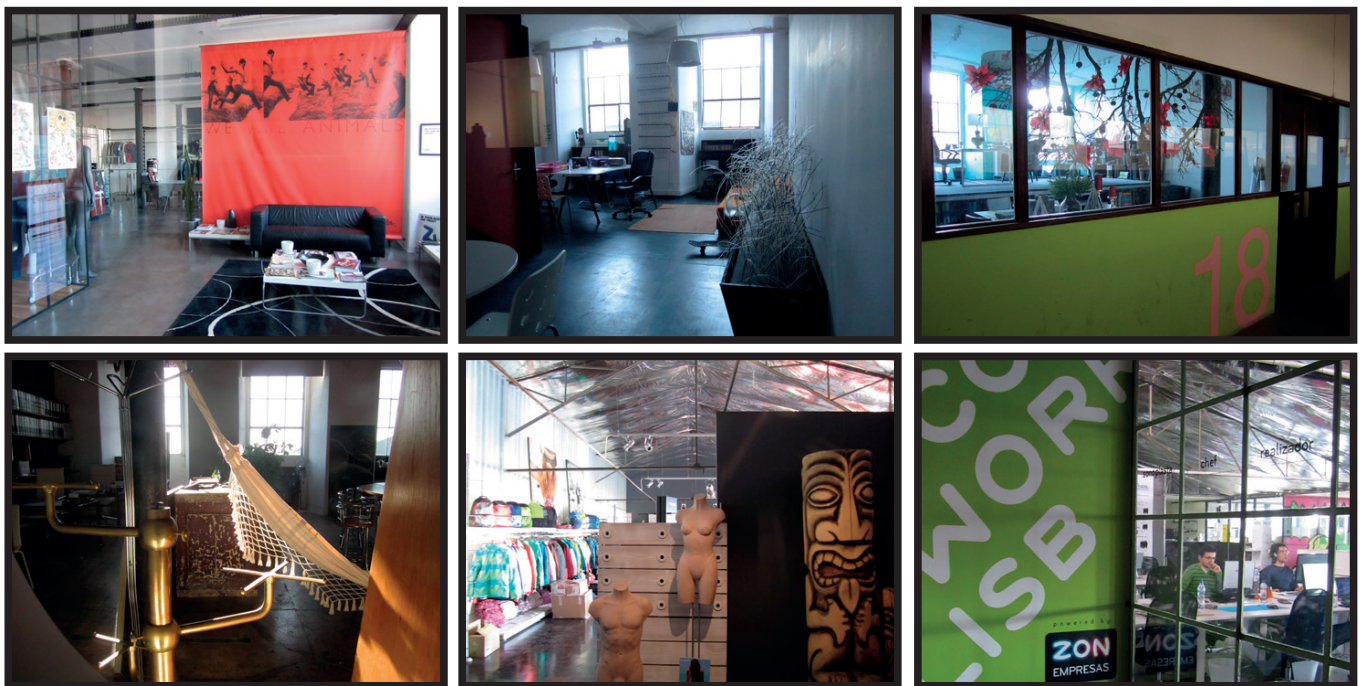
¹² For more details on the *Spatial and Visual aesthetics* of Lx Factory, see chapter 5.2.3.



Img 185. Some of Lx Factory's "anchor" companies'.

José Queiroz [Carvalho] says a funny sentence (...), which is: "LX was born during the crisis, that is why we always felt it".¹³

Joana Gomes



Img 186. Inside LXF each company can create a space at its own image.

13 My translation from Portuguese: "O José Queiroz [Carvalho] por acaso diz uma frase (...) que é engraçada, que é: 'a LX nasceu na crise, por isso nós sempre a sentimos'."

We can find at **LXF** a parallel with Andy Warhol's *Factory* in Manhattan, New York (1963): first of all, it was most probably where **LXF** took the inspiration to get its name from; secondly, its daily working model, as well as all the events occurring there, remind us somehow about what was going on during the great days of the *Factory*¹⁴.

Sponsoring VS Resistance

Curiously, **LXF** appears as a space of contradictions:

- on the one hand, it promotes activist debates about the "Graffiti and the Political Wall"¹⁵, organised by *Precários Inflexíveis*¹⁶, for example;
- on the other hand, *Absolut Vodka* offers free cocktails at the *Open Days*¹⁷, and *Red Bull* hosts artists in its *House of Art* located in one of **LXF**'s buildings.

The *Mainside*'s story is continued with the following case study.

Pensão Amor

Following the success of **LXF**, **Mainside** decided to create another promising project: **Pensão Amor (PA)**. Located this time in the city centre (Cais do Sodré, Rua do Alecrim and Rua Nova do Carvalho) this project had a big impact in the city of Lisbon. However, **PA**'s street neighbours – the *Associação de Comerciantes do Cais do Sodré* – were also responsible for this impact, in a conjoint action called the *ReHab* project¹⁸.

While **LXF** reached shape as it was growing, **PA** instead organised an "official" pompous opening, along with a very well planned marketing strategy.

History. Spatial and Aesthetical choices

PA had since the very beginning a clear defined aesthetic directly associated with its name and recent history. In this 6 floor *pombaline* style¹⁹ building there was a prostitution house, so the thematic of its decoration turns around love, prostitutes, sailors, burlesque and cabaret, where a cosy, kitsch and underground ambiance is created reflected by its furniture and fittings. No

¹⁴ The **Factory** used to be the working place and home of Andy Warhol, being at the same time the meeting point of young artists, painters, dancers, actors, musicians and poets. Judy Garland, Mick Jagger, Muhammad Ali, Velvet Underground (Lou Reed), Muhammad Ali or Jack Kerouac are just some examples of the personalities who used to pass by.

¹⁵ "Graffiti e Mural Político", happened the 26.03.2011 at **LXF** (www.precariosinflexiveis.org/2011/03/graffiti-e-mural-politico-debate-26-de.html#more).

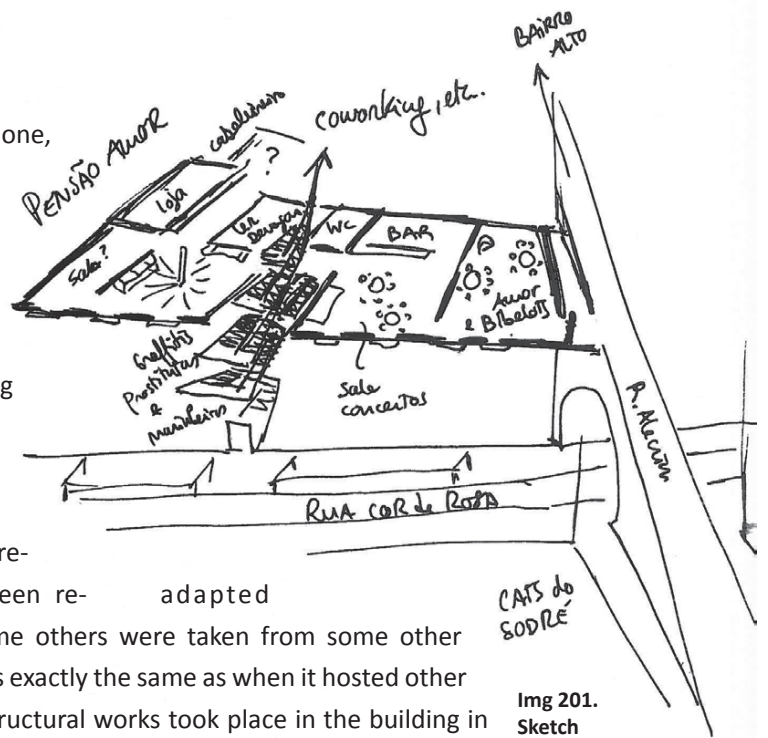
¹⁶ See the following chapters, for more information: *Lisbon Movements of Resistance* (p. 124) and the story of *Mob & Crew Hassan*. (p. 230).

¹⁷ Mentioned in *Lisbon Time Out* magazine (Ferreira 2009, 25).

¹⁸ See chapter 5.2.3.

¹⁹ A Portuguese architectural style named after Marquês de Pombal, which introduced an anti-seismic design and prefabricated building methods after the Lisbon's earthquake of 1755.

big architectural works²⁰ were actually done, everything having been almost kept as before. But in fact this whole new atmosphere was recreated by using gradients of red, curtains and neon lights, reminding the neighbouring underground clubs' decoration, along with African patterns and wild hairy textures, erotic pictures, bibelots and comfortable "old granny style" sofas (img 188). Many of these elements pre-



existed in the place, some having been re-adapted and placed in other rooms, while some others were taken from some other place. The cheap-looking hostel appears exactly the same as when it hosted other kind of clients. Only some small infrastructural works took place in the building in order to allow its habitability, like providing water and electricity to every floor. Furthermore, two artists (Hugo 'Makarov' Martins and Mario Belém) were invited to illustrate the old staircase (img 189), using a street-art influenced style with spicy and hot girls demanding the visitor's attention²¹. A real "wild-life" of the previously existing environment was recreated (even the dancing pole is there!) making us wonder if it is not a kind of theatrical scenario we are watching after all. A good example that supports this perspective is the plastic canvas with naked nymphs placed on the ceiling of one of the rooms, becoming quite clear that it has not its origin in any process of recycling (img 190).

Img 201. Sketch of Pensão Amor's inner space and the surrounding streets.

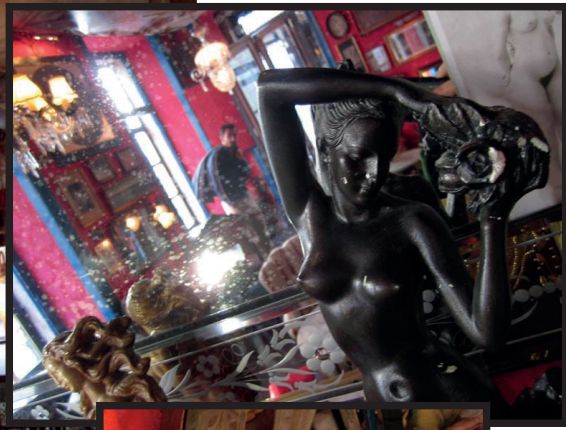
The **Mainside's** architect Filipa Baptista explains that what was done in **PA** was mostly "a decoration work": "we proceeded with the cleaning and rehabilitation of the infrastructure. [...] Not being a major intervention, no licensing was need. We accomplished the project and then waited to see if it was going to be well accepted by the city or the institutions." (Baptista 2013b).

Concept and business

This building being used in the past to host a kind of service paid per hour (as mentioned before, it has been a prostitution house), **Mainside** deemed it could be fun to keep the same business model – to offer the choice of renting a room per hour, per day or per month – adapting it nevertheless to more "convenient" activities, like offices of shops run by creative people. As Filipa Baptista explains, "we grabbed this concept and transformed its negative part into something positive" (Baptista 2013b). Of course her opinion of "positivity" and "negativity" can be questioned, but at least it makes us understand better how unpleasant actually was the recent past of this building for **Mainside**, who managed anyhow to accord an almost cute, humorous or fashionable identity to this house, out of its previous nature. And, then, create a new business

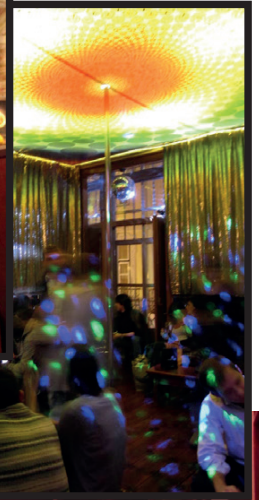
²⁰ The architect in charge for **PA's** rehabilitation project was Gonçalo Esteves (Gomes 2013).

²¹ See the artists painting the staircase of **PA** on video: <http://vimeo.com/32267083> (or the description of the project on www.artbuilding.eu/onde.htm).



Pensão Amor

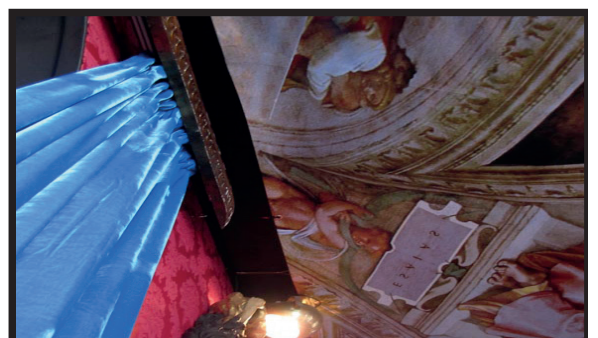
Img 188. Warm and cosy thematic decoration turns around love, prostitutes, sailors, burlesque, kitsch, dirty and underground: gradients of red, curtains, neon lights reminding red districts discos decoration, African patterns and wild hairy textures, erotic pictures and bibelots and comfortable "old granny style" sofas.



Img 191. Bookshop "Ler Devagar com Amor".

< Img 189. The staircase's street-art influenced style paintings by the artists Hugo 'Makarov' Martins and Mario Belém, with spicy and hot girls demanding the visitor's attention.

Img 190. The plastic canvas with naked nymphs placed on the ceiling of one of the rooms of Pensão Amor.



somehow inspired on the earlier one. Filipa Baptista adds that **Mainside** tried to “show all the history of the building and add a new one” (Baptista 2013b).

Even the bookshop **Ler Devagar** started a new business model here, creating a chain store called **Ler Devagar com Amor**, whose concept is based on renting erotic literature, instead of selling the books (img 191).

On the ground floor of the same building in Rua Nova do Carvalho two bars opened – **Velha Senhora** and **Povo** – their advertising campaign being also focused on the thematic of the brothel and, furthermore, *fado*, respectively. Right next door, a small bar called **Sol & Pesca** decided to be evocative of other kind of historical roots and businesses related to this street, also through its decoration – the fishing and fisherman –, its walls being covered with old sardine or tuna cans, fishing nets, rods and hooks. Henrique Vaz Pato, the same person who runs the restaurant *A Cantina* at **LXF**, runs this bar.

Mediatization, popularity and polemics

PA was already popular even before it opened its doors to the public in November 2011²²! Magazines and newspapers wrote about it²³. I knew about its existence on my email box, in Switzerland, some days before the official opening²⁴ through friends sending me promotional videos. In three weeks Facebook counted about 3’000 fans while today²⁵ it has almost 77’000 and the afflux of people to the place was so big on the opening day that they had to appoint security staff to limit the number of people inside, afraid of some eventual collapse of the old wooden structure of the pavement.

Just in the middle of the global economic and financial crisis, this space seemed to appear as a kind of hope, promising a more bright future to people, who might see this phenomenon as a case of success that dares to move forward creatively and vigorously. How is this space seen today, 4 years after the opening of its doors? As we have seen, this street is now called “Pink Street” and has become the nightlife hotspot of Lisbon. The local residents and the previous habitués turned out to be pushed away, even chased by a new mass of young, foreigner and drunken people, provoking some polemic debates on what really meant this new life that **PA** managed to generate in Cais do Sodré²⁶. According to Joana Gomes, it is not possible to please everyone: “but if we can please the majority of people that is what we look for” (Gomes 2013)²⁷. Apparently, a kind of a similar situation had already occurred in **PA**’s building itself with the previous residents; as Carvalho explains, **Mainside** had to evict them because “They were squatters, or something like that. Some left immediately, others were more complicated [to evict] and we had to use legal methods.” (Silva 2011).

²² The opening day, on Vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/34031050>.

²³ “Cais do Sodré. Os novos inquilinos chegam à Pensão Amor e ao Bar da Velha Senhora” (Silva 2011), and “A Pensão Amor vai revolucionar o Cais do Sodré” (Prado Coelho 2011).

²⁴ The 17th November 2011 (the Facebook page was created on October 24th).

²⁵ The 30.10.2015.

²⁶ This issue was previously discussed in Lisbon chapter 5.2.1.

²⁷ My translation from Portuguese.

The desired revitalisation for this area, as mentioned by Fernando Pereira (the manager-member of the club **Jamaica**), did not seem to happen exactly as predicted. “We do not want [this street] to be just a leisure night space, but rather an area where other spaces, galleries, grocery stores, will open, [a place where] people can live”. According to the civic association “Aqui mora gente” (“People live here”), this does no longer seem to be a “liveable” street²⁸, and is apparently less safe than it used to be before²⁹, contrarily to what **Mainside**’s members believe. Joana Gomes, for instance, believes that the fact of having a street full of people and cafés is an added value because it allows people to meet and feel good, considering that in the past this used to be a street that people were afraid to cross (Gomes 2013). On the other hand, the manager of **Liverpool** bar António Veiga, who works in the area for 36 years, contradicts the former idea, by saying that the violence and criminality reputation associated to this street is pure “fantasy” (Pereira Carvalho 2011).

Casa de Pasto

Another *Mainside* project is a restaurant whose name is **Casa de Pasto (CP)**³⁰, which opened in December 2013. Located at the end of the Pink Street, at the bifurcation with Rua de São Paulo, this first floor restaurant has a *pombaline* style and is the same building where **Mainside**’s office is settled. “Casa de Pasto” was the designation of a traditional Portuguese eating-house of the late nineteenth century, this being the inspiration behind the name of the present restaurant.

Though this place is not at all an ACS, I believe it is worth mentioning it because I think **CP** contributes greatly to explain **Mainside**’s work of creation of particular ambiances. We have seen it at **LXF** and even better at **PA**. But at **Casa de Pasto** this aspect becomes exponential, carried through the smallest detail:

- we can find a “revivalist charm”³¹ ambiance in the dining halls, seeking to recreate the atmosphere of a secluded family home environment (refurbished old chairs and tables, lace curtains, wall paper and kitsch bibelots, Bordallo Pinheiro’s dishes³², glassware, ceramic animals); in this dining halls there is also a retro-style bar and a kind of a black-golden plastic canvas that covers the ceiling (img 192, 193), just like in **Pensão Amor** (img 190).
- the previous ambiance is contrasted with the “cool trash” ambiance of the toilets (“After

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ In August 2014, a young man was stabbed in this street (<http://sicnoticias.sapo.pt/pais/2014-08-23-jovem-esfaqueado-no-cais-do-sodre>). Some nights there are about 20 to 30 thousand people in this area, cars are vandalized, glasses are broken, drunken people pee everywhere, and the inhabitants say they never felt as unsafe as now. Criminality increased about 49%, theft and robbery as well (from 2012 to 2013, 390 to 688 and 43 to 50 cases, respectively). These values are directly linked to the people massification of the area, because it became a hot spot (Graça 2014).

³⁰ www.casadepasto.com.

³¹ Expression used by Nelson Jerónimo Rodrigues, when mentioning **Casa de Pasto** in his article “Charme revivalista com sabores intemporais” (www.lifecooler.com/artigo/comer/restaurante-casa-de-pasto/440204/reportagem).

³² www.bordallopinheiro.com

the sacred, the profane”, comments the journalist Rodrigues³³), where one can play in a slot machine before entering into the jungle of the toilets’ weird noises and of “spicy” toilet paper (img 194); here all the senses are required almost at the same time, just as if one had just entered a *magic* Disneyworld. As the journalist Fortunato da Câmara notices, “sometimes the obsession of desiring to surprise becomes absurd” (Câmara 2014).

This “*nouvelle tasca*” (a mixture between *nouvelle cuisine* restaurant with a cheap lousy one) offers a kind of an exquisite “traditional-gourmet” food prepared by Chef Diogo Noronha. However, due to their prices, these dishes may sometimes become indigestible for some people. **CP** is not a modest restaurant, as its name claims to be, but instead a quite ambitious one.

Though **Casa de Pasto** has such an eccentric interior scenario and is located right at the Cais do Sodré busiest area, the access and entrance to the restaurant is quite discreet. During the summer of 2014, a bar belonging to **CP** was placed in the middle of the bifurcation of the two streets - Rua Nova do Carvalho and Rua de São Paulo. This rounded shaped structure reminded a kind of a traditional kiosk prepared for the popular “saints” Lisbon’s celebration, built with cheap prefab materials. It not only occupied the public space with a private business, but it also had one of the most expensive price lists of the area!

A good description of Casa de Pasto’s environment, done by a journalist:

...style retrochique ad nauseum, to have the alibi to justify them placing dishes directly on the top of wobbly tables, serving drinks in jam jars (!) and bringing the customers to endure sitting on wooden stools or uncomfortable chairs — but under the implicit promise to stay as an urban cool. Everybody behaving well and enjoying the “cool ambiance”, because in these spots only prices are barbaric.¹

A mini corridor for smoking where there is a “mini line” with three chairs from an old movie theatre, or an employee stamping the menus in situ in an old ink press (...) these are “details” which reveal the minutia of turning the visit into an experience to remember.²

...bathroom. Apart from groping in the twilight, derived from the faint light panels of carrots and radishes, it is convenient not making too much noise to avoid disturbing the vicinity situated (at the knees level) across the short cloth panel that separates the women’s and male’s compartments. Almost guttural jungle sounds, easily confusable with some other...³

Fortunato da Câmara (2014)

1 Translation from Portuguese by Filipe do Carmo: “...estilo retrochique ad nauseum para terem o alibi que lhes justifique depositar pratos directamente sobre o tampo de mesas bambas, servir bebidas em frascos de compota (!) e fazer aguentar os clientes sentados num banquinho de pau ou em cadeiras desconfortáveis- mas sob a promessa implícita de se estar a ser um urbano cool. Tudo bem comportado e a curtir a “onda”, pois nestes spots só os preços é que são bárbaros.”

2 Translation from Portuguese by Filipe do Carmo: “Um mini corredor para fumadores onde há uma “mini fila” de três cadeiras de um antigo cinema, ou um dos empregados a estampar os menus in situ numa velha prensa de tinta a valer de imediato a foto da praxe para “postar”, são “detalhes” com a minúcia de fazerem da visita uma experiência para recordar.”

3 Translation from Portuguese by Filipe do Carmo: “...casa de banho. Além de se andar às apalpadelas no lusco-fusco dado por ténues painéis luminosos de cenouras e rabanetes, convém não fazer muito barulho para não incomodar a vizinhança do outro lado do curto painel de pano (ao nível dos joelhos) que separa os compartimentos feminino e masculino. Sons da selva quase guturais, facilmente confundíveis com outros.”

33 www.lifecooler.com/artigo/comer/restaurante-casa-de-pasto/440204/reportagem.



Img 196. Hospital do Desterro.

(Infography: Jaime Figueiredo. source: <http://expresso.sapo.pt/sociedade/2015-09-21-A-futura-vida-do-Desterro>).

Img 197. Hospital do Desterro.

(photo: José Carlos Carvalho)

Img 198, 199. The interior halls of Hospital do Desterro >
(photos by: José Carlos Carvalho)

Img 200. Habitable capsules projected for Hospital do Desterro.

(image source: Gonçalo Pelágio, Mainside)



Img 192, 193. Ambiances of the restaurant Casa de Pasto.
Img 194, 195. The particular toilets of Casa de Pasto.

Hospital do Desterro

The Municipality of Lisbon (CML), *Estamo* (company that manages real estate assets of the State) and *Mainside* signed in May 2013 a protocol for the rehabilitation and reuse of the **Hospital do Desterro (HD)**, for which an “experimental territory open to the world” is being designed. According to *Estamo*, who owns the building, this project is an innovative way of enhance the value of its assets, preventing their sale in very unfavourable conditions, and keeping them without profitability³⁴. *Mainside* designs the new project and takes over the concession for the next 10 years, and CML supports the project. The initiative came from *Invest Lisboa*, the agency in charge of the economic promotion of Lisbon³⁵. This space of 11'000 m²³⁶ has at its disposal an amount of 3 million € for investment and will host several activities inspired on the 500 years of history of the building (Tomás 2015).

Built initially to host the monastery of *Nossa Senhora do Desterro* in 1591 (Order of Cistercians), the building passed through several uses over the centuries, hosting for example monks, a pilgrim's hospice, an orphanage³⁷, military barracks and a hospital (img 196-199). The latter closed its doors in 2006, and the **Mainside's** new project is scheduled to open in 2016 (Tomás 2015). When asked about the possibility of this project becoming a replica of **LXF**, Filipa Baptista answers: “this is a completely different concept when compared to LXF”³⁸. The **Mainside's** project for **HD** includes a new concept of accommodation based on “habitable capsules” (img 200) inspired on the monastic cells, a communitarian kitchen and a canteen placed around a big fireplace and a “wellness centre” of alternative medicine (naturopathy, acupuncture, ayurveda medicine, massages or wellness and healthy eating workshops, for example). The wellness centre will have complements derived from an idea of José Pinho (mentor of **Ler Devagar**) and Joana Teixeira: bibliotherapy and cinetherapy, where books and movies help in treatments (Tomás 2015).

Não é um hostel, não é um hotel, é uma coisa diferente.

José Queirós Carvalho (in Tomás 2015)

Being part of the requalification plan of Mouraria and Intendente, the **HD** is also part of the hospital's reconversion plan for Colina de Santana³⁹. Known as the “hill of the hospitals”, Colina de Santana is meant to be known in a near future (by CML) as “the hill of the knowledge”, this being a reason why **Mainside** decided to reconvert **HD** in a “big school, a campus of knowledge”, targeted at lisboners and foreigners (Soares 2013).

³⁴ www.diarioimobiliario.pt/actualidade/hospital-do-desterro-o-futuro-espaco-alternativo-de-lisboa/#prettyPhoto.

³⁵ *Invest Lisboa* is the investment promotion agency whose targets are companies, investors and entrepreneurs looking to setup their business in Lisbon (www.investlisboa.com/site/en).

³⁶ Another source refers an area of 12'500 m² (Correia 2014).

³⁷ *Casa Pia*, an institution that occupied the building from 1812 to 1833.

³⁸ Available at: <http://ocorvo.pt/2015/03/25/polo-criativo-no-antigo-hospital-do-desterro-so-abre-ao-publico-em-2016>.

³⁹ See chapter 5.2.1.

The achievement of the rehabilitation works is taking longer than the initially forecasted. This is due to the fact that the entity in charge for the cultural heritage protection (*DGPC, Direcção Geral do Património Cultural*⁴⁰) rejected **Mainside's** first plan for **HD**. This first plan had envisaged the modification of the window apertures and the replacement of the wooden window frames of the building with modern (probably metallic) ones. This necessarily led to a major change of the plan⁴¹.

Final Remarks

Just like what happens with **LXF**, when first wandering in **PA** space, we may get the feeling that we are entering some kind of a squat. It is however possible that we also have a different feeling, that of entering a bar, or a shop, or a company with many offices. Thus, there is some hybridity in what we feel and this maybe is due to the “careful” design that was put on the by the architects of **Mainside**. That means that the careless aspect of the walls was in fact premeditated. And we may conclude that **LXF** and **PA** are not, as one might be induced to think so at first sight, the result of an occupation of old and abandoned industrial buildings done by artists or anarchists in search of a place where they could freely express their ideas or art.

What then makes these spaces alternative and attractive to people? It looks like there exists some contradiction between this popularity and the concept of alternative culture or life in these examples... nevertheless wholly “mainstream”. We consider that aesthetical and architectural options are determinant to create the “right image” in order to attract a certain kind of people. Therefore, the creation of a certain ambiance is mandatory for the success of the “recipe”, this corresponding to the design of a particular visual result. The existence of certain elements – like street art, namely graffiti, or old industrial machinery – are not placed there just by accident. And one or other of those elements are present in **LXF** and **PA**.

At **Lx Factory**, the type of resident artists and the way they use, transform and decorate the space are also definitely determinant to convince us about the *alternative* atmosphere of the place, the same happening with the experimental concerts or the big parties lasting all night long. These factors convince us that these are *alternative cultural places*, the name “Factory” reminding us of the 60s and of what was going on in Andy Warhol’s **Factory** in New York. Bohemian life and the burlesque are now funny things (did they become the new circus?). In addition, street art, industrial buildings that are architectural unfinished-like, re-used and refurbished, as well as a rough and underground aspect of a space in the city, have found an audience that now considers those aspects as charming.

Pensão Amor, on the other side, was conceived to promote intimacy, forcing that aspect through the decoration concept that was applied: vintage granny’s furniture, bibelots, cosy, house of seduction... And the past: the underground references – the graffiti – in the staircases cover

⁴⁰ www.patrimoniocultural.pt/en.

⁴¹ Available at: <http://ocorvo.pt/2014/10/29/obras-vetadas-obrigam-a-repensar-reabilitacao-do-antigo-hospital-do-desterro>.

not only the girls but also the sailors, the pension itself. The paintings, the colours, give us the comfort but also a revival connected with our history (Gomes 2013).

We have seen that in both spaces a particular attention was given to the preservation of the memory of the place at the moment when a decision should be made about possible space transformations – their past and their history explain the vigour of their present success, and to have decided to preserve them was a clear and smart strategy. As a matter of fact, the strategy of Mainside involves a special attention to urban rehabilitation, to rebuilding, to reutilisation. The History of the place plays a crucial role in the selection of the visual and spatial elements. **Lx Factory** and **Pensão Amor** have a strong identity after all, mostly defined by their relation to History, to their own past, and they add to their identity by the cultural interchange proposed by their activities. In all this, the importance of the architecture needs not to be underlined. And, of course, the crucial role that is assumed by the “urban aesthetics” (Gomes 2013). However, Mainside clearly understood the trend of the market of present days related with the recuperation of a certain memory of a particular space as a formula of success for business purposes. By highlighting the underground/marginal or industrial past of these two examples, and updating their function to our days – culture and leisure/bohemia – they were sure to attract a certain kind of people (the so-called “creative class” (Florida 2002)), and surely make some profit out of it.

So, considering **LXF** and **PA**, we may say that, while “playing” with the past – somehow reinventing it - by bringing it to the present, the functions of both places were adapted to the uses of our 21st century. In the case of **LXF**, from *industry* to *culture*, the space being now part of renowned networks of European and worldwide “cultural industries/clusters” (like TEH, Trans Europe Halls). As for **PA**, from *prostitution* to *bohemia*, keeping its “night” character although the nature of “consumption” has been changed.

Considering now **HD** and **CP**, something similar can be observed. **HD**, from *monastery/hospital* to *knowledge, culture, hostel and wellness*, adapting some of the previous uses to contemporary means of exploitation. And, in the case of **CP**, from a conceptual⁴² “*familiar*” restaurant to a “*gourmet style*” one, keeping the same activity and the memory of a concept, while transforming its status into a mixture of luxury with a Luna park.

All in all, we are led to analyse these spaces from an urban perspective. Did actually the re-use of those abandoned or degraded buildings, and the way their potential was explored, contribute to the regeneration of the neighbourhoods around or of the city in a wider scale? We can find positive aspects, the re-use of obsolete or abandoned buildings having the capacity to revitalise urban wastelands. One can speak of sustainable development but also of the preservation of the memory of the history of the city and even, according to some people, of a creative and stimulating second life. But, can “regeneration” be an adequate word to characterise this process?

⁴² The real previous use of the space where **CP** is now installed is not known, so the analysis here concerns only the “concept” of “Casa de Pasto” as a restaurant in general.

Nevertheless, there is something more. On its side, **LxFactory** has just a restricted relationship with the inhabitants and the communities of its nearby neighbourhood (which live in a parallel reality vis-à-vis the activity in **LXF**⁴³) and exists in the middle of walls with one single entrance or exit to the whole area⁴⁴. **Pensão Amor**, on the other side, by trying to emphasise the social memory of the surrounding area, rejects in fact the resident people and the previous regulars of the zone⁴⁵. And it has a completely different kind of insertion in the urban fabric. It is a five-floor construction located right in the heart of the city centre, it is contiguous to other buildings and is on the corner of two very lively streets⁴⁶ (the two streets are lively for different reasons: Rua do Alecrim for its day and night constant traffic of people and cars, working as an important circulation axis of the city; Rua Nova do Carvalho for its nightlife). We can therefore conclude that these *alternative cultural spaces* have no social role with respect to the inhabitants nearby and that their target public is not concerned about or based on values of proximity. We need another word for the process and that word is *gentrification*.

Lx Factory and **Pensão Amor** offer a large range of cultural program and interests, from visual arts to music, dance, theatre, cinema, literature, open debates, workshops and gastronomy, among others. They have day life and nightlife, public and private spaces. Their nightlife attracts visitors since they propose bars, concerts and djs, and their daily life is mostly the realm of creatives or people who have businesses in those spaces. The spaces are used as meeting-points and cultural crossroads, those aspects being their strength. Their cultural approaches are not funded by governmental institutions or others and are solely promoted by those living and working on place.

Is the present economic crisis permitting this *alternative* projects to have a place in the life of the city, knowing that their re-use strategy can be helpful in the current times? Does that mean they are likely to last just as long as the crisis hangs around, sinking with it once the recovery comes?

The economic crisis of 2008 and its spill-over effects are something that can be believed to help to the success of these *alternative* projects. On the one hand, some of the places where we can find the alternative spaces would be hardly available to them if the economic situation had not been subjected to a relative stop. The reason is of course the existence of other projects that would have been implemented over those spaces had the crisis not occurred. The strategy of re-use would not be of course so successful if everything went on as before. On the other hand, nevertheless, there are other factors that, in a postmodern world, it is necessary to take into account. First of all, from the observation made on site (**LXF** and **PA**) it is possible to say that the users are mainly creatives, professionals and tourists (despite Mainside defends that its public is “the widest possible” (Gomes 2013)). These people have a large choice of shopping malls, commercial centres, to go and buy many articles they need. They go there, certainly very often. But they also need something different – Kitsch, popular, underground, retro-chic – which, in

⁴³ Mainside admits that it was not its intention to conceive the space for the neighbourhood, in spite of saying that it is possible to verify that some of the people nearby go there.

⁴⁴ When analysing its situation on a map or when we become aware of the distribution of the activities and of the traffic (both pedestrian and motor locomotion) in the outside neighbourhood we corroborate that it actually has a marginal position.

⁴⁵ Sobral (2011, p. 21).

⁴⁶ Img 201.

particular, is at the root of the rise of the “cool tourism” (Câmara 2014). The fact is that Lisbon is described in the international media as an attractive and dynamic city of alternative bustling creativity. Media talk about and it is sure that residents and visitors like the *alternative* and live this experience.

Before closing this chapter, we must make a last remark about the Mainside action in the city of Lisbon. As we try to understand the growth process of two of the most attractive, creative and original places of Lisbon (**LXF** and **PA**), we should show nevertheless our hesitation in considering them as being, in any sense, alternative. It seems that **LxFactory**'s success led somehow to the expansion of a business finding a kind of a “franchising” strategy. By definition, franchising is a business that explores a product, a brand or a service. Could we maybe consider that Mainside explores *urban rehabilitation*, the *aesthetics of the alternative culture* and multiple *services inspired by “funny” stories* (that belong to the past of each space) in “branch spots”, converting the success that comes out from it into profit?

*

5.3.4. (Very) ephemeral squats

Right in the following days of the 1974 military coup d'état that defeated the Portuguese dictatorship, uninhabited houses in the cities of Porto, Lisbon and Setubal were taken by the people that lived in adjacent slums. This was conceivably the first radical gesture in which several self-organised actions in the squatting realm were endeavoured. These actions played a significant role in the process that shaped the "Carnation Revolution", as it was celebrated in the subsequent years. In order to give a legal framework to such actions (and to keep them into control), the first government of the new regime (Governo Provisório) acted out rapidly, providing support to the squatting campaigns (and new houses construction) through the Programme SAAL¹. This programme made available technical and legal expertise for projects involving housing needs, facilitating the relationship between population and authorities. New laws led to the legalisation of the squatted houses but, on the other hand, interdicted the occupation of additional houses². Meanwhile the population auto-organised in homeowners and, to a certain point, a fair collaboration with technical teams was established, since the latter adopted a bottom-up attitude adjusted case by case, instead of providing strict rules to the organisational process. By 1976, the SAAL movement was extinguished by law and its functions were assigned by the government to local municipalities, which nevertheless had no means to perform the job. Furthermore, it should be said that the SAAL programme was rather important in terms of development of structures of local organisation and in citizenship formation. In fact, people got used to discuss their own problems and propose solutions for matters as health, schools, culture, sports and global urban policy. Also, it is worth emphasising the crucial role played by women along that process (Santos 2014, 231).

In the 1990s some squatting actions came back on the scene, this time emphasising the cultural concerns of their actors. And this is an important difference vis-à-vis the occupations that occurred in the course of the revolution. The most recent actions were not squats looking for accommodation, being most of all dedicated to culture, solidarity, conviviality. And also to the critique of the decaying state of buildings, and to the protest against the passivity of the celebrations of the anniversary of the Revolution, which had lost its subversive character.

These squatting actions of the 1990s show a geographic predilection for occupations on Colina de Santana, maybe because this hill is close to Avenida da Liberdade, an indispensable point of passage for the demonstrations of the 25 April. Since the hill is easily reachable and recruiting activists in the demonstrations is not complicated, the occurrence of squatting on that date is easily explainable³ (img 202).

¹ See SAAL (1970s) in *Brief history of urban planning and architecture* of Lisbon's chapter.

² See *Urban Rental Law – Spatial and Social Consequences*, in Lisbon's chapter.

³ We must be aware that most sources relative to this subject are neither based on scientific papers nor on direct or participant observation, the corresponding information having been collected mostly through online blogs, newspaper articles, fanzines-kind-of publications or informants. This way, the description of those places will be made under the form of more or less random or anonymous citations, collected in the mentioned sources.

Kasa Enkantada

However, before jumping to the cases connected with the area of the city around Colina de Santana, I will just refer an isolated squat that took place close to Praça de Espanha, a locale where an intersection of major urban routes exists. There, in 1996, a group of youngsters seized a municipal owned house that stood vacant, it seems benefiting from the tolerance of the local authorities⁴. This house was called **Kasa Enkantada** (Enchanted House – the “k” stands surely for “oKupa”⁵). During 6 years the squatters developed a cultural program based on anarchic ideals and encompassing mainly musical underground events (and dancing parties), which had a relevant role in the alternative artistic scene of Lisbon. Even if the occupation remained effective for a long period (six years), the squatters turned out to be evicted – and this under strong protests (including barricade clash) – in the sequence of a compulsory mandate emitted by/emanated from a right wing Mayor⁶ (img 203, 204). There, many concerts and parties took place, but there were also a workshop of serigraphy, a small library and a bar (Falcón 2009; Rainha and al. 2000, 38).

*

Back in Colina de Santana, the first case concerns a mansion, including a big yard and a garden, that was occupied in 2004 in Rua do Passadiço, (nearby Av. Liberdade) being aimed at a social-cultural interchange with the neighbourhood, in particular with children and teenagers. This house, called **Paradiso**, offered: workshops, yoga and kung-fu practice, choir training and juggling. The nature of these constructive activities was of course not a sufficient reason for the owner, and the police was called 6 months later to expel the squatters⁷.

Casa de São Lázaro

The second case was the so-called **Casa de S. Lázaro**⁸, located in Rua de S. Lázaro (between Martim Moniz and Campo Mártires da Pátria), which was squatted twice (img 205-210). The first time was in 24 November 2010, four days after a NATO summit and a general strike. In the sequence of an “anticapitalistic” demonstration (about two thousand people) in Largo Camões and Rossio⁹. From this resulted the occupation of **Casa de São Lázaro**, in Rua de São Lázaro, lasting only about 24 hours. Under the slogan “A greve não pára aqui” - “The strike does not stop now” – this event opened the way to “horizontal approaches in the process of decision taking and informality as a principle of organisation” (Collective anonymous author 2013, 5-7).

⁴ Available at: <https://spectrumzx.wordpress.com/2012/03/06/occupied-lisbon> (accessed on 24.09.2015).

⁵ The squat movement in Portugal or Spain is called *Okupa*.

⁶ Available at:

www.publico.pt/local/noticia/demolicao-de-casa-ocupada-na-praca-de-espanha-vai-mesmo-ser-executada-172180 (published on 26/08/2002).

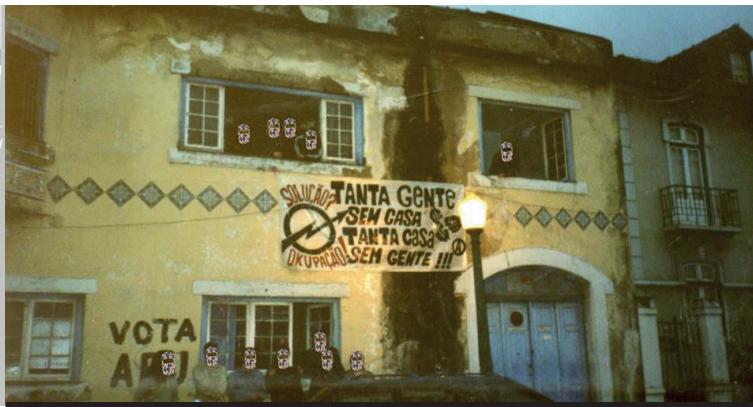
⁷ Information available at: <https://spectrumzx.wordpress.com/2012/03/06/occupied-lisbon> (accessed on 24.09.2015).

⁸ <http://saolazaro94.blogspot.pt>.

⁹ Called by “unclear” entities and by Bloco de Esquerda, the particularity of the demonstration was that there was no spokesperson representing the crowd (as it was usual).



Img 202. The hill of the squats.



< Img 203. Kasa Enkantada.

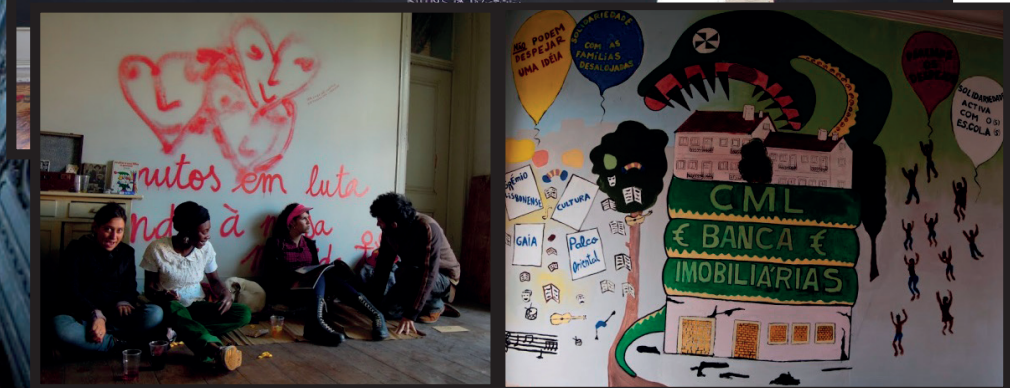
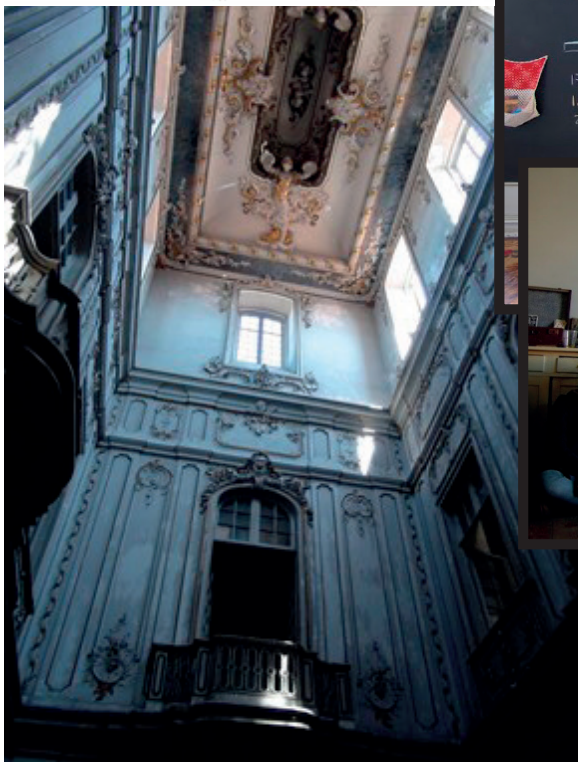
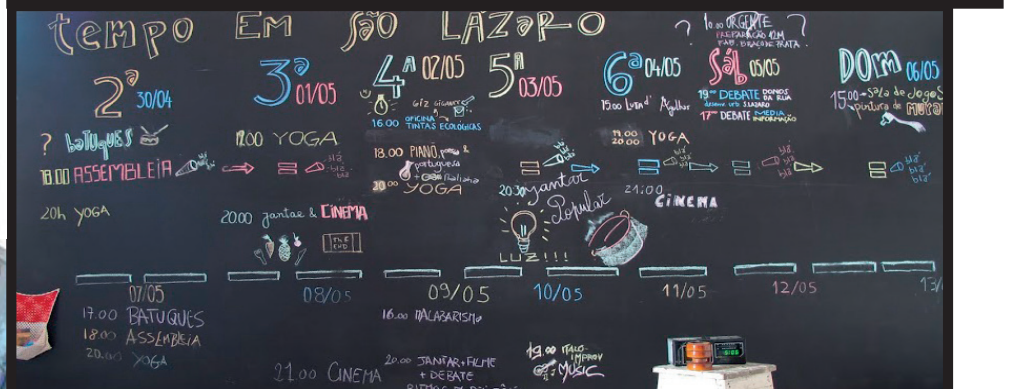


< Img 204. "Buraco Encantado" (Enchanted Hole), a graffiti done on site after the destruction of Casa Enkantada.

(image source: <http://lx-files.blogspot.ch/2008/03/47-casa-enkantada.html>)



São Lázaro 94



Img 205-210. Casa de São Lázaro.

(Images source: <https://plus.google.com/photos/102950021742742336495/albums/5739123503866690513?banner=pwa> and <http://saolazaro94.blogspot.ch/>)

< Img 211. Ministério. (Photography: Catarina Cruz / JN)

The second time **Casa de S. Lázaro** was squatted was in 2012 and this was during the commemorations evoking the 25 April revolution. “Tanta gente sem casa, tanta casa sem gente” - “So many people without houses, so many houses without people” (a slogan taken by SAAL in the seventies). This was also the critique of an environmental association (GAIA) which called the attention for the fact that “several hundreds of municipal buildings were empty in the city ... depriving the Lisbon inhabitants of a set of equipments that should be available to them for cultural, social and educational goals”¹⁰. The occupation occurred after the usual ‘procession’ of commemoration of the Carnation Revolution, as a gesture of critique to the “rotten” peaceful institutional celebration of an event whose memory evokes such an example of a hard struggle. This squatting was also a gesture of solidarity with the Oporto experience with ES.COL.A da Fontinha¹¹. The squatters cleaned the building inside and made a few renovations, and developed several actions under a libertarian perspective: debates, exhibitions, concerts, performances and workshops... Besides, meals and books were offered. The assemblies in Casa de S. Lázaro were “open to everybody” and were a place where a critique was made to “the urban policies of the municipality and to the speculative interests behind them”. After an occupation of more than one month, and taking into account that the municipality had approved changes to a municipal regulation that consisted in decreasing from 90 to 10 days the authorisation for the eviction of squatted buildings¹², the squatters were evicted on the 31 May (Collective anonymous author 2013, 16-19). The argument used by the municipality to evict the squatters was grounded on the unsafe physical conditions of the building, which was risking ruin. In the sequel of the eviction, a solidarity expressive demonstration took place, calling for direct democracy. Several sit-ins, including street dancing and ironic actions were then carried out.

Ministério

The third case of squatting in the area of Colina de Santana was the 18th century decaying palace “Silva Amado”, located in Campo Mártires da Pátria, which had housed the headquarters of the Ministry for Education at the time of the old regime (img 211). Vacant and left to abandonment for several years, it was occupied on the 25 April 2013, who named it **Ministério**¹³, inspired by the former functions it held in the past. This was a symbolic squat operation against real estate speculation. The construction of a five star hotel at this location was being planned, the squat action being intended to call attention to real estate speculation, involving housing matters: many uninhabited houses (the occupiers emphasised the fact that 4.7 thousand buildings – 8%

¹⁰ Available at: <http://revolta1000.blogspot.pt/2012/05/tanta-gente-sem-casa-tanta-casa-sem.html> (accessed on 24.09.2015).

¹¹ ES.COL.A stands for Espaço Colectivo Autogestionado. This school, located in the neighbourhood of Fontinha, was also re-squatted on April 25, 2012, by about two thousand people. This space had been evicted a few days before by the police, after one year of collective work done in the neighbourhood.

¹² The nature of the changes to that municipal regulation and the reasons claimed by the squatters against the legality of those changes are described in <https://spectrumzx.wordpress.com/2012/05/14/lazaro94-e-agora-helena>. One of the reactions to the municipality’s attitude, full of irony, consisted of a notice posted in a vacant municipal building, which “gives ten days the municipality ‘to rehabilitate or give some public utility’ to the property, deadline after which the house can be ‘occupied at any time’ by those who wish so “ (Available at <http://cidadaniaix.blogspot.pt/2012/06/indignados-imitam-aviso-camarario-de.html>).

¹³ <http://todasaoministerio.blogspot.pt>.

of a total of 60 thousand in Lisbon – were empty), too high rents and bank loans. Furthermore, the action was at least intended to last the whole week between the date of the revolution commemoration and the 1st May (at the time of the occupation, a program of activities from April 25th through May 1st – including meals, debates, workshops and other activities – was published, img 212). As a matter of fact the occupation was very ephemeral since the squatters have been evicted on April 27th, but the reality is that it was extremely ambitious due to the size of the building and to the impact it had on the media¹⁴.

*

Apart from these examples, many other squats happened in Lisbon area, only most of them are mainly related with a real accommodation necessity of those who occupy the houses. Nevertheless, given the intolerance of the authorities, the existing examples keep the maximum of discretion in order to be able to last longer.

When comparing recent squat operations in Portugal and in other countries in European cities, it is clear that the Portuguese ephemeral feature is the main characteristic that differentiates them.


Many European cities have now already a long tradition of squatting movements, whose background history comes from the 1960-70s. Maybe the new forms of capitalism that are more present in the more “advanced” countries of Europe encompass aesthetic components and take profit from them, as opposed to more inflexible Portuguese rules, stemming from a less refined form of economy.

*

¹⁴ Some examples are:

www.publico.pt/local-lisboa/jornal/grupo-ocupa-imovel-contra-especulacao-imobiliaria-26449067; www.jn.pt/local/noticias/lisboa/lisboa/interior/grupo-ocupa-antigo-edificio-do-ministerio-da-educacao-3187604.html?id=3187604; <https://vimeo.com/64968733>; http://brandnewvideo.net/ocupa_lisboa/; and <http://pt.indymedia.org/conteudo/destacada/25045>. These were also some of the information sources used in this text.

TODAS AO MINISTÉRIO



Neste preciso momento, o MINISTÉRIO encontra-se ocupado por uma série de pessoas que, primeiro com vassouras e esfregonas, e depois com várias ideias e força para as pôr em prática, pretendem retirar este imóvel aos ratos, às baratas, aos cadáveres dos pombos e à especulação imobiliária. O programa de austeridade que nos foi imposto não dispensa o ataque ao direito de habitação. Neste âmbito, é por de mais óbvio o fosso que separa a proteção concedida aos grandes proprietários e investidores imobiliários, os principais responsáveis pelos milhares de casas abandonadas existentes na cidade de Lisboa, e quem se vê confrontado com o aumento do valor de empréstimos ou rendas.

O que nos move não é, contudo, a mera vontade de sabotar o jogo do mercado imobiliário. Se bem que só isso já é razão suficiente para ocupar uma, dez, mil casas devolutas.

As manifestações de rua são sem dúvida importantes. Mas se incluídas na agenda de cada um, não farão mais que constituir um ponto na agenda e no calendário de cada um. Entre a rotina que nos leva a percorrer a cidade da casa para o trabalho e do trabalho para a casa e a rotina que nos leva a percorrer a cidade da casa para o trabalho e do trabalho para casa com uma manifestação pelo meio não existe uma grande diferença. Produzir a «secessão» com este dia-a-dia, quebrando deste modo o círculo de impotência e frustração em que nos encontramos, implica reforçar as nossas vidas das "vontades" e "necessidades" que se levam para as manifestações, dando-lhes uma expressão concreta, real, diária.

Este espaço não surge como modelo ou resposta tipificada para esta questão. A sua base é a da experimentação - limitada, cheia de contradições, com muitos problemas com que lidar. Mas é experimentando e voltando a experimentar, errando e voltando a errar (mas fazendo-o cada vez com mais estilo e swag) que construímos o nosso caminho. Com jeitinho, a coisa vai.

TODAS AO MINISTÉRIO!

CAMPO MÁRTIRES DA PÁTRIA, Nº1
[JUNTO À FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS MÉDICAS DA UNL]

PROGRAMA

QUINTA, 25 DE ABRIL ↻

20H00
Jantar pela Cantina Cooperativa

SEGUNDA, 29 DE ABRIL ↻

18H00
Ensaio dos Ritmos de Resistência

20H00
Jantar pelos Ritmos de Resistência

21H00
Debate 'Falamos de Casas pela Salganhada

SEXTA, 26 DE ABRIL ↻

16H00
Cerimónia de Inauguração

18H00
Debate pela Unipop "Abril e Abriheiros"

SÁBADO, 27 DE ABRIL ↻

16H00
Oficina de Serigrafia e Stencil
Workshop de Subvertising pelo Exército de Dumbledore

18H30
Conversa com Anselm Jappe (a confirmar)

20H00
Jantar pelo Exército de Dumbledore

DOMINGO, 28 DE ABRIL ↻

17H00
Workshop de Hortas Urbanas

TERÇA, 30 DE ABRIL ↻

18H30
Debate a partir do texto:
"Sobre a passagem de alguns milhares de pessoas por um breve período de tempo" pelas Edições Antipáticas

Oficina de Serigrafia

20H00
Jantar pelas Edições Antipáticas

22H30
Festa do Colete Reflector

QUARTA, 1 DE MAIO ↻

20H00
Jantar pela Cantina Cooperativa

21H30
Debate sobre os movimentos contra a base da Nato na Sicília

WWW.TODASADMINISTERIO.BLOGSPOT.COM

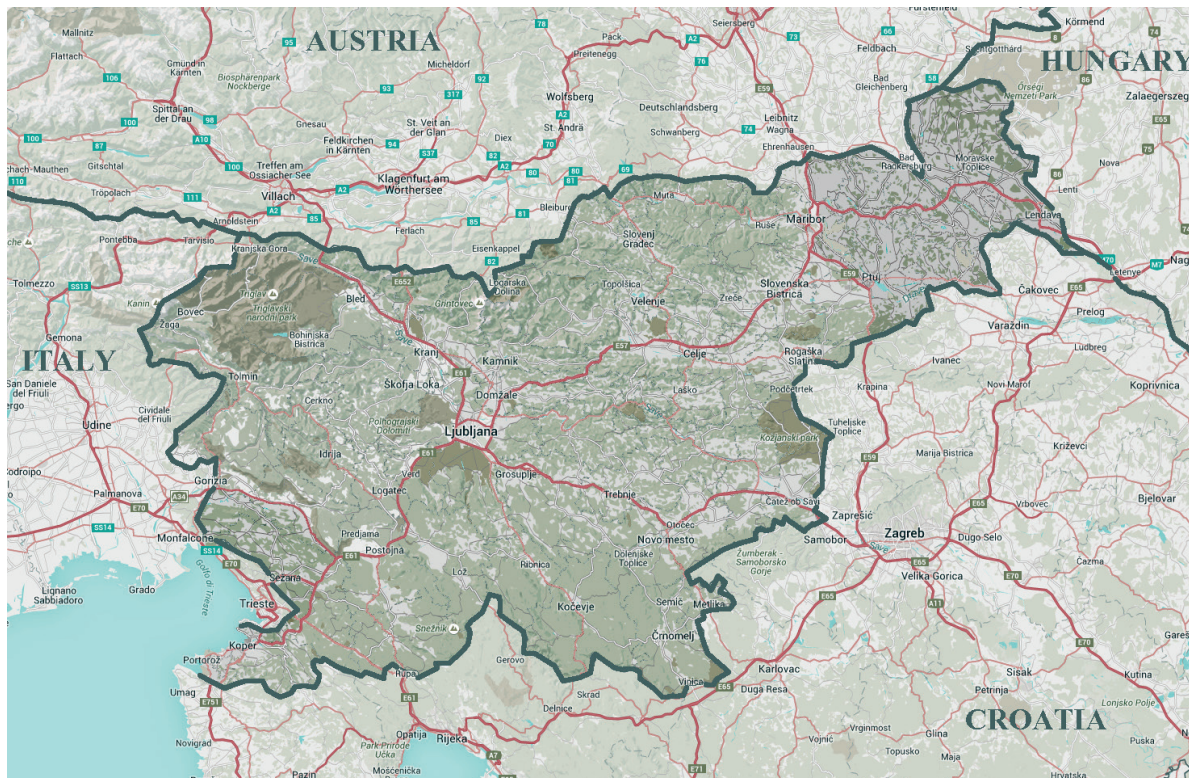
Img 212. Programme of the activities planned for the week between April 25 and May 1, at Ministério. (image source: <http://todasaoministerio.blogspot.ch/2013/04/panfleto-254.html>)

6. LJUBLJANA

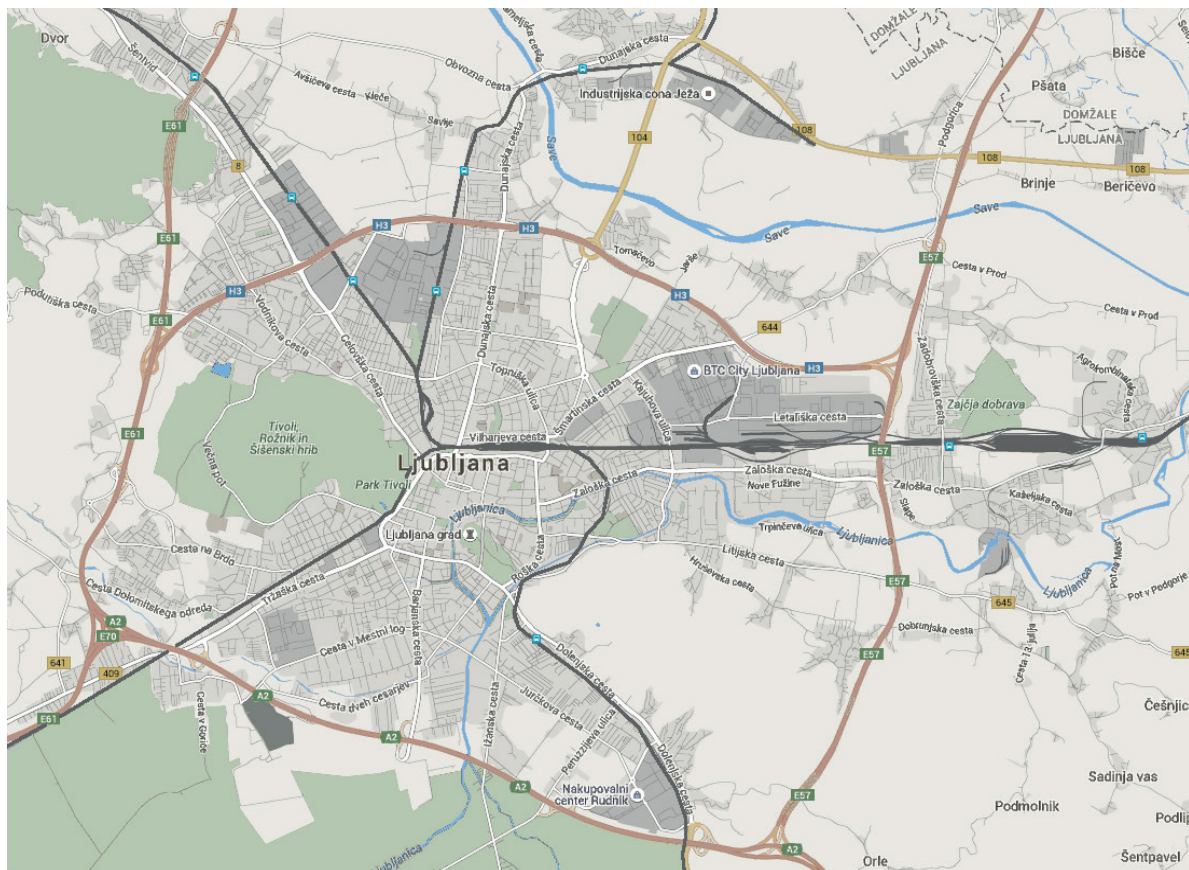
A Counter-Cultural Significant Presence



Tromostovje (Triple Bridge), Prešeren Trg and the Ljubljanica river.



img 213. Map of Slovenia, highlighting the borders with four countries (Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia) and a few Kms with the Adriatic Sea. It is also possible to see the main roads, all leading to Ljubljana, following the same concentric structure as in the city of Ljubljana itself.



214. Map of Ljubljana: the irregular shape of the city, as well as the way the countryside and the city (with blurred limits) interpenetrate each other, are visible. The radial road structure can also be seen, along with the rail tracks and the hills (e.g., the castle, in the middle, and Rožnik on the left side), which cut the city in several parts.

6.1. General Context

Short history of Urban Planning and Architecture

Ljubljana has been a strategic location in several periods of its history. The links with its wider geographical area are at the root of this strategic position (img 213), situated at the hub of routes between north and south (first in pre-historic times, when it was an intermediate point in the amber commerce with North Europe, and later on when it was on the way between Vienna and the Adriatic Sea) and between east and west (from Rome to Byzantium). *Julia Emona* was the name of the settlement established by the Romans next to Ljubljanica River. Named *Laibach* by the Germans in the middle of the 12th century, it became later called *Luwigana* in Slovenian. From 1335 to 1918, the town was under the Habsburgs, the strong influence of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire being evident in its architecture. Victim of two major earthquakes (1511 and 1895), the city was often rebuilt, but it kept nevertheless its medieval spatial layout while acquiring new visual looks along time – firstly, Baroque, and then the Viennese Secession style. After the second earthquake, Vienna offered help to rebuild the city. The famous Austrian urban planner Camillo Sitte (1843-1903) offered his service, but in the end the City preferred that Slavic architects do the job (Koželj and Hrausky 2004, 11-14).

After the World War One, the Habsburg Empire collapsed, Ljubljana becoming then part of the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, known as Yugoslavia. Between the two world wars, the architect Jože Plečnik became the “godfather” of Ljubljana’s architecture and urbanism, leaving a vast legacy of projects – e.g. the National Library, Žale cemetery, Bežigrad Stadium, and the projects along Ljubljanica River (e.g. Triple Bridge¹, the Central Market, river embankments, etc). Plečnik ignored trends in contemporary world architecture, and rather used a classical architectural language, though in a very original manner. “His urban schemes were fragmentary but linked to a wider vision” (Koželj and Hrausky 2004, 15-16), developed along three different periods of life and work – in the first one, Plečnik’s interventions are rather “subtle additions to the already existing characteristics of the city” (1920s); during the second period he brought “the large gestures of the metropolis into the mid-size city of Ljubljana” (1930s), and at last, in the third period he focused on “a number of important builds” (1940s) (Havik 2013, 55).

After World War Two, Slovenia became part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia but, because of the Tito–Stalin split² in 1948, economic and personal freedoms were greater than in the rest of the Eastern Bloc. Even if Tito rejected the socialist realism, architecture had an important role within the regime, being an affair of the state (who used to manage the architectural competitions) (Koželj and Hrausky 2004, 16-18). The most significant architectural

¹ *Tromostovje*, in Slovenian.

² Or the Yugoslav-URSS relationship split in 1948.

contributions were made by the architect Edvard Ravnikar (who was a student of Plečnik and also of Le Corbusier, mixing influences of both his masters³), the one who significantly contributed for the so-called Ljubljana architectural school. Contrarily to the uniform socialist city, different typologies and urban planning schemes have been tested in the city (Koželj and Hrausky 2004, 16-18). Since Slovenia's independence in 1991, the city's development shifted to periphery, even if it kept its concentric logic based in the historical centre⁴, where all the main roads lead to⁵. The strong presence of these long main roads – along with the multiple railway tracks⁶, the low density of the most recent peripheral areas and the unclear line division between rural and urban areas – results in a rather dispersed and fragmented urban mesh (img 214).

The capitalist system brought along a new generation of talented architects (e.g. Ofis, Sadar & Vuga, etc.), but also several processes of privatisation. Contemporary architectural production is very different from the old one controlled by the socialist state. Furthermore, the management of the public space became a central issue, people mattering about who is now taking that responsibility. Some initiatives arose, like for instance those proposed by ProstoRož (a NGO that combines architects, sociologists, jurists and designers), which look to the examination and exploration of new possibilities of public space use, based on local communities' active involvement in issues of the urban environment (Korenjak 2014). Their interventions in Trubarjeva Cesta or Park Tabor were quite popular, but have also been a target of critique of some more politically radical people, accusing them of being responsible for gentrifying public space. This item of gentrification has also been addressed in relation to the neighbouring **Metelkova**, most concretely in what concerns the bar's area of the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum (SEM) and the Hostel Celica, as we will see further on⁷. Furthermore, the Northern Šiška area has also suffered a small-scale gentrification process since the reopening of Kino Šiška – Centre for Urban Culture⁸ – in 2009. Before that, the Southern neighbourhood of Krakovo (Trnovo) had already been targeted as an attractive residential area, a village-like ambiance located right by the city centre.

³ Ravnikar made the project of the famous towers of the congress centre, *Cankarjev Dom*.

⁴ Most specifically the Prešeren Trg (square), which used to work as a traffic node before the pedestrianisation works of the city centre, from 2007 on. Several bus lines used to traverse the space, and there existed a taxis' parking.

⁵ The main roads, named after the cities' direction to which they were pointing to - e.g. Dunajska (Vienna) and Tržaška (Trieste) – connect to the main road Slovenska Cesta, which is actually undergoing a revitalization project of pedestrianisation led by the architecture firms Dekleva Gregorič Arhitekti, Katušič Kocbek Arhitekti, Sadar+Vuga and Scapelab (www.rtvsl.si/news-in-english/the-reconstruction-of-slovenska-cesta-from-a-main-traffic-artery-into-a-comfortable-living-room/365906, website visited on the 25 May 2015).

⁶ The railways were built in 1848, first from Vienna to Ljubljana, and nine years later extended to Trieste (Koželj and Hrausky 2004, 14). From this tracks' network result several underground pedestrian and car passages that allow to cross from one side of the city to the other.

⁷ See *Metelkova*, in the *Alternative-Culture mapping of Ljubljana* chapter.

⁸ www.kinosiska.si/en.

Identity issues and population

According to the architect and artist Jože Barši, Ravnikar once said that “Slovenia was too small to be a country, but a good size to be a town! (...) The forests of the country were like the parks in town.”⁹ The architect and artist Marjetica Potrč¹⁰ supports somehow the same idea, by saying that “...Slovenia is very much a border state, (...) it’s so small that it’s actually a border itself, just a border between north and the Mediterranean or East and West. It has always been a border territory.”

Slovenia, only achieved independence about 20 years ago. This unstable territory is marked by a very complex history. Its capital, Ljubljana, was for 600 years under the Austrian Habsburg rule and, in the meantime, was for a short period the capital of the French Illyrian provinces. Between the two world wars it became part of the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, being then occupied by Italy and later on, during the WW2, by Germany¹¹. Afterwards, Ljubljana became part of the socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, and finally became capital of the Republic of Slovenia, since 1991. Today it is a member of EU (since 2004).

The influence exercised by the Austrian empire over Ljubljana – despite the fact of it being part of the Balkans – is still very strong and visible. Contrarily to Serbia or Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia was never under the Ottoman Empire’s rule, this fact contributing to substantial cultural differences, like for instance religion¹². Language is also likely to be a reflex of this complex history and of the hilly Slovenian geography, which kept villages separated from one another due to the hard access between them. Under the short period of French occupation, during the Napoleonic wars against the Austrian monarchy, Slovenian language was taught in schools for the first time (Koželj and Hrausky 2004, 14). In other periods, specifically under the Habsburgs’ occupation, German has been the official language. Today, the official language is Slovene but, in this country of only two million people (img 215) and of twenty thousand square kilometres¹³, there exist about 7 to 9 main dialects, which in turn are subdivided into about 50 dialects¹⁴. Some of the Slovenian dialects are so different that often people hardly understand each other. In addition, due to this reason, the so called Slovenian standard language is practically only spoken or written in the public media and in book form. Besides, Italian and Hungarian are also official languages spoken by minorities.

9 Interview with Jože Barši in August 2006, made by Stephen Diskin (Diskin 2008, 191).

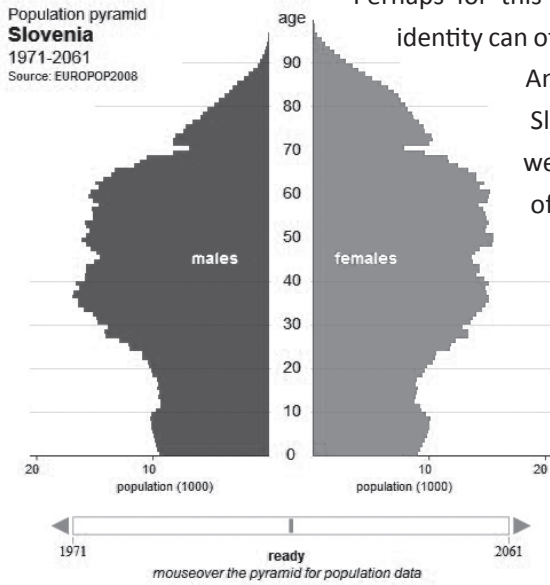
10 Interview with Marjetica Potrč in December 2006, made by Stephen Diskin (Diskin 2008, 230).

11 The curious work of the American architect Stephen Diskin highlights the traces of the 33 km barbed wire fence that surrounded the city during WW2, built to isolate the city from the partisan resistance, consequently imprisoning the city and controlling the travellers during 1171 days. After the war, the path became a green ring used for recreational and memorial purposes (celebration of the communist liberation of Ljubljana) and called from then on Path of Remembrance and Comradeship (PST – *Pot Spominov Tovarištva*). Today it is known as POT, which simply means “path”, and is a part of the city’s landscape designed green spaces (Diskin 2008, 81).

12 In Slovenia, Roman Catholics are the majority, while in the other Balkan countries the most important religions are rather Orthodox Christianity or Islam.

13 www.vlada.si/en/about_slovenia.

14 These numbers vary according to the sources, but the following source explains very well the diversity of dialects in Slovenia: www2.arnes.si/~gljsentvid10/oseb_stran/slovenska_narecja_v1.html.

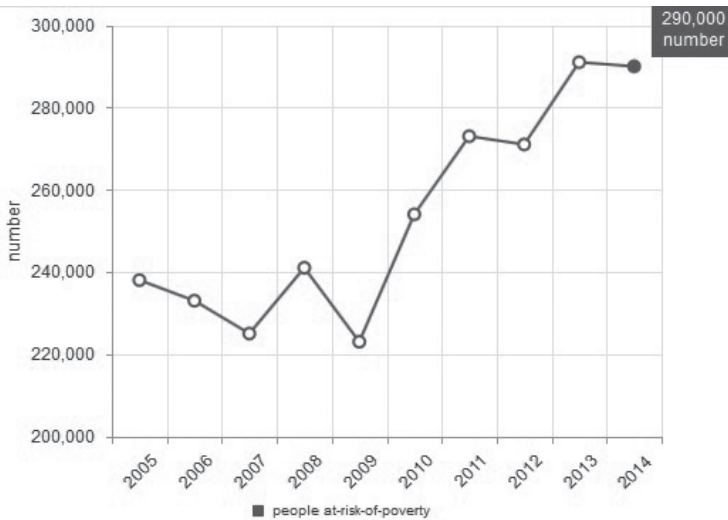


Perhaps for this reason, a strong need for affirmation of a national identity can often be observed. According to the landscape architect Ana Kučan, the elements of the national identity of Slovenia “are deeply integrated in the capital city as well”: green spaces, “views of the surrounding landscape of mountains, churches, open grass plains and relatively low density of commons housing types”¹⁵. Slovenia borders and historical links with Italy, Austria, Hungary and ex-Yugoslavia, along with Ljubljana’s proximity of the Alps and the Adriatic Sea, are attractive characteristics that often come highlighted in touristic blogs and websites¹⁶.

Img 215. Population pyramid of Slovenian population.
(source: www.stat.si/PopPiramida/eng/Piramida2.asp).

Slovenian national identity tends to be deeply cherished in tourist tours and websites. However, the bright hope that came along with independence is sometimes losing its strength today, when it faces the real consequences of the neo-liberalisation and economic crisis of the recently adopted capitalist system, raising some nostalgia for the ‘good old times’. For instance, the

architect Urša Vrhunc refers that during the socialist times “we travelled and had vacations. (...) our parents took us to the seaside. We had two cars. I had shoes from Italy. (...) It was not an Iron Curtain. What I remember clearly is that if you said you were from Yugoslavia, you were always respected – it was a positive fact in the eyes of foreigners. Tito was great. Great people. You felt comfortable with that. Saying you are from Slovenia sounds worse, because nobody knows it and it’s so small.”¹⁷



Img 216. People at risk of poverty in Slovenia.
(source: www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/field-overview?idp=39&headerbar=15)

¹⁵ Kučan, Ana, The Modern Social conception of Slovene Space, Geografski Zbornik, XXXVII, Ljubljana, 1997, in (Diskin 2008, 24).

¹⁶ www.fodors.com/world/europe/slovenia;
www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g274873-d8073271-r320078735-Slovenia_Getaway_Tours-Ljubljana_Upper_Carniola_Region.html;
www.neverendingvoyage.com/slovenia-europes-best-kept-secret.

¹⁷ Interview with Urša Vrhunc, in October 2006, made by Stephen Diskin (Diskin 2008, 222).

A few more data about Slovenian population can be found in the next table:

Data about Slovenian population

Inhabitants	2.062.455 (September 2014)
Population density	101.2 inhabitants per square kilometre (1 July 2011)
Nationalities	Slovenian 83%; Italian 0,1%; Hungarian 0,3%; Croat 1,8%; Serbian 2,0%; Muslim (including Bosniacs) 1,6%; others 2,2%; unknown: 8,9% (2002 census)
Births	On average 1,58 children per woman (2012)
Life expectancy	76.96 for men and 82.89 for women (2012)
Urbanisation	Approximately one third of the population live in towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants, the rest live in nearly six thousand smaller towns and villages.

(source: www.vlada.si/en/about_slovenia/)

In what concerns the municipality of Ljubljana, in 2011 about 280 thousand people were living there, and the population density was 1,018 people/Km². The municipality area measures 275 km², and the mean age of people in Ljubljana was 42 years¹⁸, with a very high number of student population (36,439). Ljubljana Urban Region (LUR) has 500,000 residents and an area of: 2,555 km².

Economy and Politics

After 45 years under the communist regime of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – the only country in the Eastern Bloc not part of the Warsaw Pact¹⁹ –, led by the partisan leader and president Josip Broz Tito²⁰, a democratic republic has been established. Since 1991 Slovenia is a democratic republic. The independent candidate Borut Pahor is the President of the Republic since 2012 (though affiliated to the Social Democratic Party when Prime Minister between 2008 and 2012), following the also independent candidate Danilo Türk. Miro Cerar (leader of the centrist Modern Centre Party) is the Prime Minister since 2014, following the short mandate of Alenka Bratušek (Positive Slovenia), and previously the double mandate of Janez Janša (Slovenian Democratic Party) and the one of Borut Pahor in the middle (Social Democrats).

¹⁸ Data collected from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (www.ljubljana.si/en/about-ljubljana/ljubljana-in-numbers).

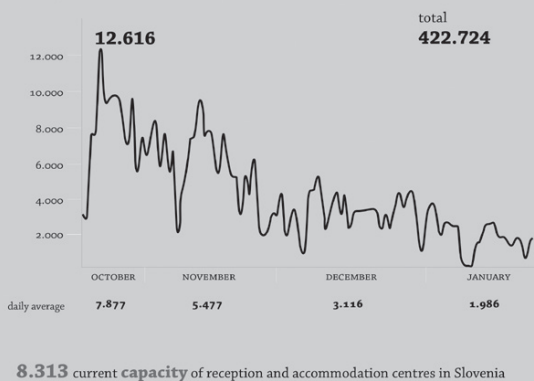
¹⁹ A collective defence treaty existent during the Cold War between the Soviet Union and other communist states of the Central and Eastern Europe.

²⁰ Tito died in 1980 in Ljubljana.

MIGRATION IN NUMBERS

Migrants crossing Slovenia

in the period between 17 Oct 2015 and 25 Jan 2016



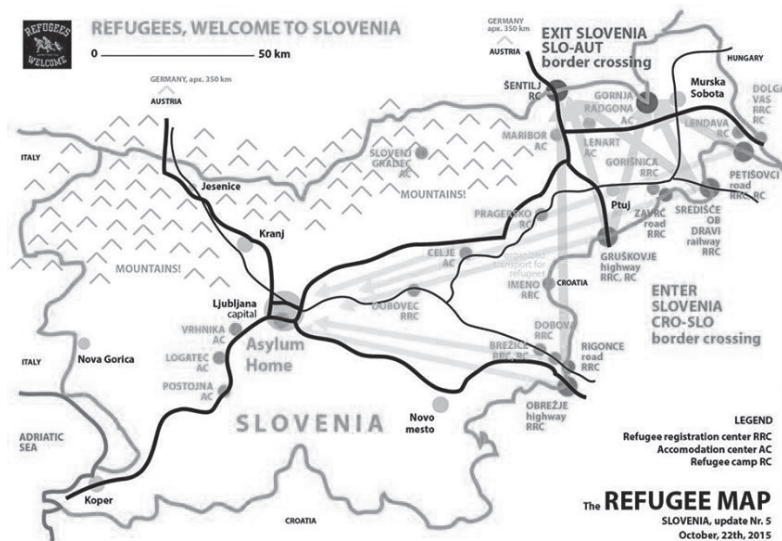
Img 218. Refugee Map of the main roads leading to registration and accommodation centres, and to refugee camps.

(published on Rog's Facebook website on 22.10.2015)

Affected by the recent economic global economic crisis, which increased the poverty level (img 216)²¹ and the unemployment rate (12% in 2012²² and 9.7% in 2014²³), Slovenia has been subject, since it became a member of the UE, to processes of privatisation of the assets of the State. Despite the European pressure, the country had nevertheless managed to keep an important public service: the National Health Service known as one of the best in the world, and free education including university studies. But this is now being threatened. These facts, in part linked with several corruption affairs of the political elite (most specifically, the mayor of Maribor, M. Franc Kangler, and the Prime Minister Janez Janša, resulted in mass civil protests on the streets, in 2012 and 2013²⁴. As far as it concerns the city of Ljubljana,

Zoran Janković (Positive Slovenia) has been the Mayor of Ljubljana for almost ten years now²⁵, which reveals some surprising political stability²⁶.

Since the Fall of 2015, Slovenia has been facing a massive refugees crisis, most of them war victims from Syria and Iraq. Just like in so many other periods in the history of this country, Slovenia is geographically



Img 217. Refugees migrants crossing Slovenia between October 2015 and Jan 2016.

(source: www.vlada.si/en/helping_refugees)

placed on the way to go somewhere else, being today a passage from the Mediterranean to the EU, the final desired destination of so many refugees. Registering a peak of reception of refugees in October 2015, Slovenia (and most specifically, **Rog Social Centre** in Ljubljana²⁷) has presently an important welcoming role in this matter (img 217). The latest news show that the borders control has become stricter, first with the fence built on the border with Austria by its army²⁸, and now with the shutting down of the Balkan route, with the official announcement of Slovenia's and Croatia's borders closure²⁹.

²¹ The average monthly gross salary is 1540€.

²² Vitkine 2013.

²³ www.vlada.si/en/about_slovenia.

²⁴ Clashes occurred between police and anti-corruption protesters in Maribor on December 3 (Mekina 2012), and afterwards there were 20000 people on the streets of Ljubljana, the 8th February 2013, according to the police (Vitkine 2013).

²⁵ Available at: www.ljubljana.si/en/municipality/mayor (accessed on 15.02.2016).

²⁶ Even though Janković, a businessman who once managed the supermarket chain *Mercator*, has also been involved in corruption affairs found by the Committee Against Corruption (Dérans 2013), (www.pecob.eu/Madness-Zoran-Jankovic, accessed on 22.05.2014).

²⁷ See *Rog* chapter 6.3.2.

²⁸ Available at: www.dw.com/en/austria-begins-erecting-fence-on-border-with-slovenia/a-18900764 (accessed on 28.02.2016).

²⁹ Available at: www.rt.com/news/334996-slovenia-croatia-refugees-eu (posted on 09.03.2016).

Real Estate, Tourism and Culture

In parallel with this growing hostility, Ljubljana has known an increasing interest, in the latest years, as a tourist destination. Awarded with the title of *World Book Capital 2010* by the UNESCO commission³⁰, and placed as the 5th 'Europe's Most Idyllic Places to Live' on Forbes magazine's list³¹, Ljubljana is also considered as one of the safest cities in Europe (img 218-222). These awards also probably contributed to the tourist popularity of Ljubljana of the last years (with a peak in the growth rate of visitors observed in 2012³², but still increasing nonetheless every year³³). However, even if this is a rather small city, the capital city effect is reflected on the rental price of the dwellings (today, the corresponding average monthly value is about 8 € per square metre in the city centre³⁴), even if it follows the international decreasing trend linked with the global economic crisis³⁵.

The capital effect can also be observed in the number of festivals taking place in this city³⁶. The curious aspect, as already mentioned, is that the amount of the alternative cultural offer in the city, when comparing with the institutional cultural offer, is quite impressive. This capital city, which holds the main characteristics of most medium-sized cities, has actually, since several decades, been hosting a strong counter-cultural offer, related with some social movements.

*

30 Available at: portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=37484&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

31 Available at: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/5166611/Forbes-ranks-Burford-one-of-the-most-idyllic-places-to-live-in-Europe.html (posted on 16 Apr 2009).

32 "From January to the end of May 2012, Ljubljana was visited by 9.3% more tourists than in the same period last year, while the number of overnights in the period went up by 8.6%. Given that 2011 was a record year, this is a fantastic result." (www.ljubljana.si/en/municipality/news/78646/detail.html).

33 Data from the Statistical Office of Republic of Slovenia (www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/show-news?id=5400&idp=24&headerbar=19), Slovenia Info (www.slovenia.info) and the Municipality of Ljubljana website (www.ljubljana.si/en/about-ljubljana/ljubljana-in-numbers).

34 Available at: www.numbeo.com/property-investment/city_result.jsp?country=Slovenia&city=Ljubljana (accessed on 10.03.2016).

35 We can compare with the data of 2010 of about 10,5€/m² (www.slonep.net/slonep/english/apartments-901, accessed on 11.03.2016) and the info of 2014, announcing that "Apartment Prices continue to Fall" (<http://www.sloveniatimes.com/apartment-prices-continue-to-fall>).

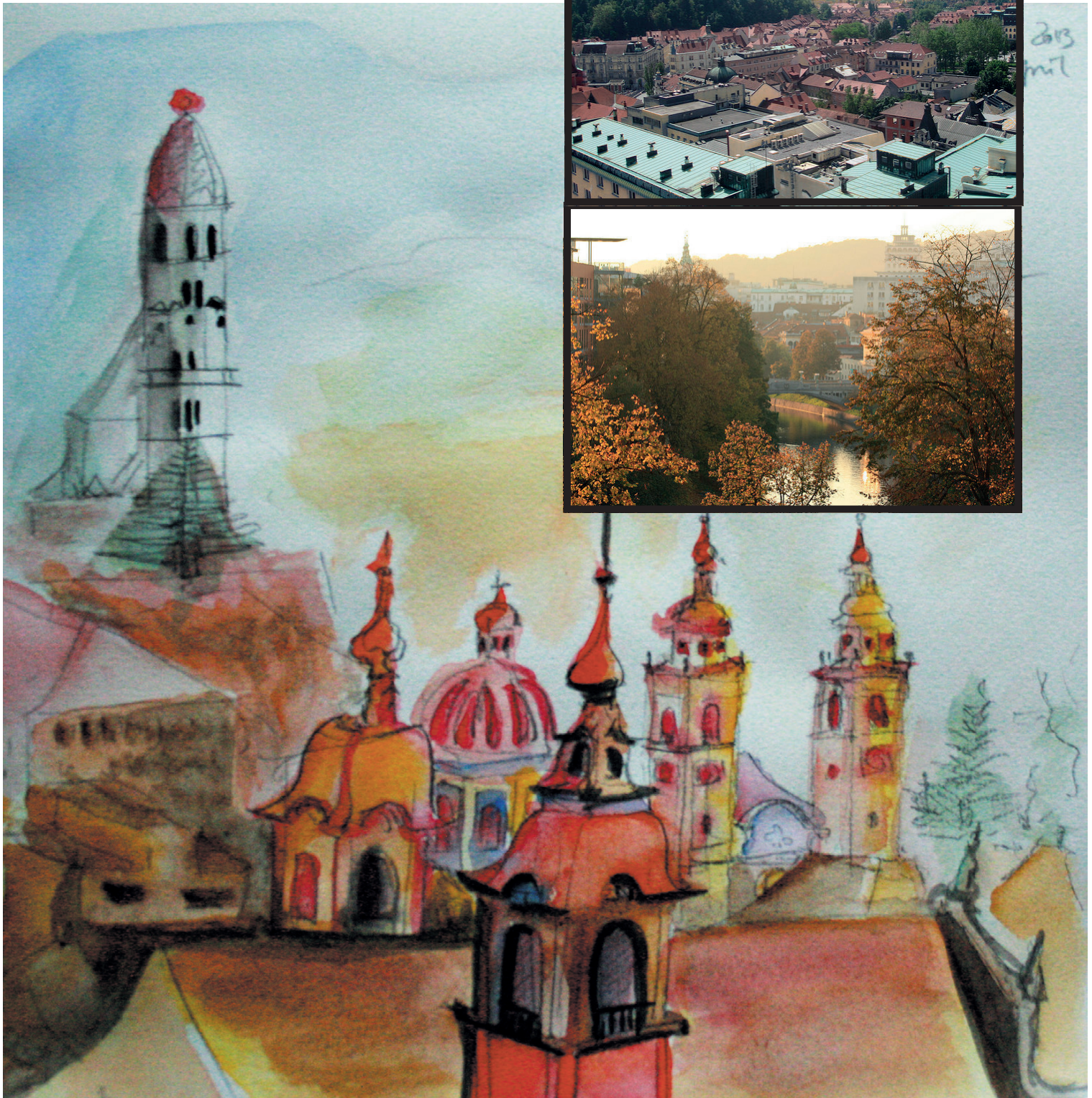
36 Available at: www.ljubljana.si/en/about-ljubljana/ljubljana-in-numbers (accessed on 10.03.2016).



218- 221. Ljubljana city centre, the castle and Ljubljanica River > (photos taken between 2005-2014).
Img 222. Drawing of Ljubljana's churches roofs.



2013
mit



6.1.1. Social and artistic movements

As mentioned before¹, one of the aspects that drew my attention the most when returning to Ljubljana in the 2010s was how the Slovenian trust and hope in the capitalist system had changed. The social rights and services, inherited from the socialist times, are today being threatened, particularly since heavy austerity measures were enacted in the aftermath of the global economic crisis. Some resistance actions have been organised and, when considered in retrospect, it is important to realise the role that Ljubljana's alternative cultural spaces – at different levels – have been having on different resistance movements along time. We should particularly mention:

- Ljubljana alternative movement of the 80s, which gathered artists, punks, squatters and philosophers, whose impact reached our days, particularly through **Metelkova Mesto**, but also through the **Škuc**² gallery, **Rog** or **MSUM** (see “Philosophical and Artistic Alternative Ljubljana Movement”, p. 274, and “MSUM”, p. 322);
- the punk and anarchist tendencies and struggles, reflected in some of Ljubljana's modes of knowledge share (e.g. The Punk's University, info-point and anarchist library at **Metelkova**), or in spatial kinds of occupation and organisation (e.g. **Rog** and its spatial chaos; see “Metelkova: infopoint”, p. 299, and “Rog: Spatial Analysis”, p. 340);
- the contemporary uprising movements against austerity and the Occupy Slovenia movement, and the way these movements are also linked with **Metelkova Mesto** and **Rog** (see “Rog: Social Centre”, p. 335, and “Slovenia Uprisings and Recent Social Movements”, p. 283);
- the work that has been done in the last decade with social minorities, such as the immigrants and the “erased”, developed mostly by the Social Centre located in **Rog**.

We will now take a closer look at these movements of resistance, from the 1980s onwards, in order to link them to the present day visual and spatial aesthetics, and logics of spatial occupation of Ljubljana's places of counter-culture.

Nonetheless, before proceeding, we must have in mind that Slovenia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire during 600 years and that German was its official written language. This deeply distinguished Slovenia from the other Yugoslavian Republics, the impact of Vienna's vibrant artistic scene on the country having been very strong. The construction of the Vienna-Trieste railway (completed in 1857) brought renewed cultural influences to the Slovenian capital, especially the iconoclastic spirit of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna and the Secession movement, founded by Gustav Klimt in April 1897. The Secession movement (the *Jugendstil*), that explored possibilities of art outside the confines of academic tradition, influenced a few art-nouveau buildings that

¹ See *Preface*.

² Študentski Kulturni Center (Student Cultural Center).

can be found in Ljubljana historic left river bank. Jose Plečnik and other Slovenian architects³ studied under the architect Otto Wagner, an influent member of the Vienna Secession and a key figure in the emergence of Modernism.

These cultural influences were not limited to architecture, of course, but reached all forms of artistic expression, including literature and music. Philosophy and Freud's writings had also a considerable impact in Ljubljana's intellectual scene, which may help to give us a better understanding of the importance and resistance role played by Psycho Analysis and Philosophy during the socialist period.

The Ljubljana Artistic and Philosophic Alternative Movement

In the 1950s and early 1960s, Yugoslavia had a period of economic prosperity, and of considerable political liberalisation. However, this prosperity met its end in the mid-1960s, when an economic crisis began to emerge, leading to inflation, to increasing unemployment and to a series of strikes. International events, like May'68 and the Prague Spring, influenced criticism against Yugoslavia's regime. The students took the streets and occupied universities, especially in Zagreb and Belgrade, where they created the Praxis movement⁴ against the "red bourgeoisie" and emergent nationalisms (Dolar, Irwin, and Motoh 2014; Irwin and Motoh 2014, 15, 16). Ethnic tensions started to increase by the end of the 1960s and, in the beginning of the 1970s, the politics of the party⁵ shifted towards a centralised model, converging to a bigger state control and censorship. This measures led, for instance, to a stricter penal code against "hostile propaganda" and "counterrevolutionary activity", which was used to persecute political opponents throughout the 1980s (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 15–18).

At the same time, problems started to emerge at an international level: not only the Yugoslavian relations with URSS and USA started to deteriorate, but also inside the Non-Aligned Movement itself, where a rivalry started to grow between Tito and Fidel Castro. In 1980, with the death of Tito, the problems escalated, and the system became hyperbureaucratized and hyperpoliticized (Alexei Monroe 2005, 6). Then came the IMF package of loans and demands and, in the early 1980s, tensions started to grow in Kosovo, Albania and Serbia. Serbian nationalism started to be very strong and, in February 1986, when Milosevič took the leadership of the Serbian League of Communists, tensions increased even further (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 18–19).

So, within this context, political opposition started to emerge (new parties were created at the time), and this is when the alternative cultural movements started to rise. In 1991 Slovenia proclaimed independence, so the political tension was attenuated. Nonetheless, this was also the year severe ethnic conflicts started to occur all over the SFRY, leading to long years of war in

³ Maks Fabiani and Ivan Vurnik, for instance.

⁴ See the interview with Mladen Dolar for more details on the Praxis group (Dolar, Irwin, and Motoh 2014).

⁵ League of Communists of Yugoslavia.

the Balkans, that started with the Ten-Day War in Slovenia (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 20–22, 30).

Unlike the citizens of other Yugoslav republics and of most of the Eastern bloc countries, Slovenians were allowed to travel, so many moved to Paris for their studies in the 1970s and 1980s. This fact allowed them to have a clearer perspective and no illusions about SFRY (Žižek, Irwin, and Motoh 2014, 125). The fact that they chose to return to Slovenia afterwards contributed to establish a particular intellectual scene (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 2). This, together with the fact that Ljubljana was a relatively small city, meant that this intellectual scene easily got in touch with the “alternative culture” movements that had started to appear mostly from the end of the 1970s (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 2; Žižek, Irwin, and Motoh 2014, 125, 140).

In the 1980s, an underground movement emerged in Ljubljana, witnessing an exceptional convergence of art, culture and politics, building a surprising and unique bridge between alternatives and intellectuals (Dolar, Irwin, and Motoh 2014, 113). It was that relationship between the “alternative culture” and the young intellectuals – the dialogue established between theory and culture, and their reciprocal influence – that allowed for the central place of Lacanianism as the distinctive aspect of Ljubljana’s philosophical scene. Moreover, the artistic alternative scene connected art with major radical postmodern activities, from mass-media culture to technology-based image productions. It was something larger than a marginal movement (Dolar, Irwin, and Motoh 2014, 113; Gržinić 2006, 322, 323).

The Slovenian alternative culture was shaped by a strange mix of liberal and repressive politics, born from the kind of “soft totalitarianism” represented by Tito’s Yugoslavia⁶ – a proof that, according to the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, “ideology critique” must be “context-specific” (Žižek, Irwin, and Motoh 2014, 137). Three main movements were born within this context – punk, NSK (*Neue Slowenische Kunst*) and the Ljubljana School of Psychoanalysis – all of them engaged in the opposition to the socialist state of Tito. According to the Slovenian artist and philosopher Marina Gržinić, the particularity of these movements lays in their common strategy of “not searching for alternatives to the communist system, but rather finding alternatives within it” (Gržinić 2006, 322). Somehow, they all influenced the political process related to the quest for Slovenian national independence.

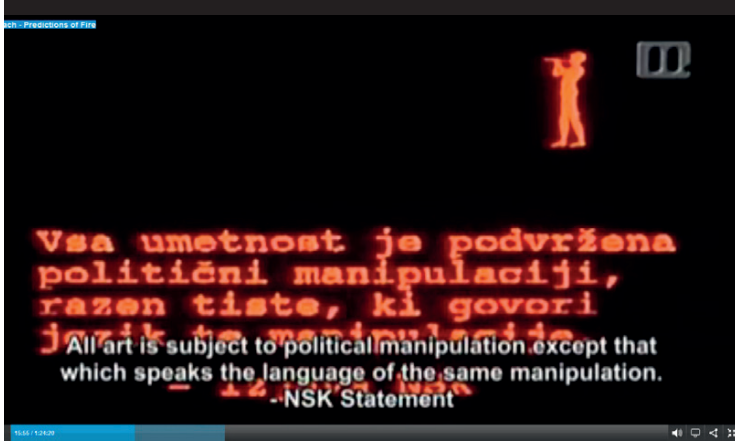
*

The first movement originated in the punk music in the late 1970s, and it was subversive for its youth rebellion. Pankrti (*Bastards*) was the first Slovenian punk band⁷, known for their openly critical songs, such as “Comrades, I don’t believe you” or “Total Revolution (...is not a solution)”. Punk was “judged as an anti-cultural phenomenon by the right-wing opposition and as a fascist and destructionist tendency by the left wing pro-regime” (Motoh 2012, 288). According to Gržinić, unlike parallel scenes in Western Europe and North America, Slovenian punk is “more than just a style or a fashion” (as discussed by Dick Hebdige⁸), since the practice of “never-ending surplus

⁶ The music group Laibach (in their film *Predictions of Fire*, for instance), in between other sources, address to the SFRY as a “soft totalitarian” system.

⁷ Their first concert happened in 1977.

⁸ Hebdige, 1979.



Img 223. NSK statement (in the film *Predictions of Fire*).

PREDICTIONS OF FIRE

Was this a politicised art or an aestheticised politics? (narrator, 6'25'')

"The immune system must be provoked" (NSK Statement, 6'36'')

Were they warning that if you repress history it will eventually boil over?

How better then to trigger the defence mechanisms of the state than to hold a mirror up to that state? (6'40'')

"All art is subject to political manipulation except that which speaks the language of the same manipulation" (NSK, 15'55'')

People love parades. The concept of politics as entertainment was one of the great inventions of mass propaganda (...). Although the fascist states had been defeated, the aestheticization of politics lived in communist rituals (...). Traditions had to be invented and well documented. (28'51'')

"Every new order presupposes the existence of a disorder and is already infected with an inherent virus of future disorder." (Laibach, 31'15'')

[Fascism and communism] – Each [one], in their own way, transformed the utopian premise of the "state as a work of art" into "an art at the service of the state (...). Hitler and Stalin (...) transformed their societies into vast ritualistic "dystopias" (45'55'').

IRWIN represented fascism and socialism as two sides of the same totalitarian canvas (...) expos[ing] the domination codes. (...) Placing quotations from Western modernist art and consumer culture side by side with symbols of both totalitarian and religious art, they revealed their essential similarity within the world ideological constellation" (narrator, 46'31'').

Politics would now be at the service of Art... this is the hidden transgression at the core of NSK art movement (52'29'')

(available at <http://videa.hu/video/kreativ/laibach-predictions-of-fire-xvtdK1x3dXuVdi6A>)



Img 225. *Red-District-Sower*, Irwin (1989). This painting shows a visual contradiction between industrialism and pastoralism, by presenting a primitive sower figure walking not through the fields but through a stylized image of the heavy industry of the city of Trbovlje. The original painting source here referred to is the *The Sower* (Sower with Setting Sun, by Vincent van Gogh (1888), which in turn is a variation of *The Sower*, by Jean François Millet.

MIT TOTALITARISMUS
UND MIT DEMOKRATIE
WIR TANZEN MIT FASCHISMUS
UND ROTER ANARCHIE

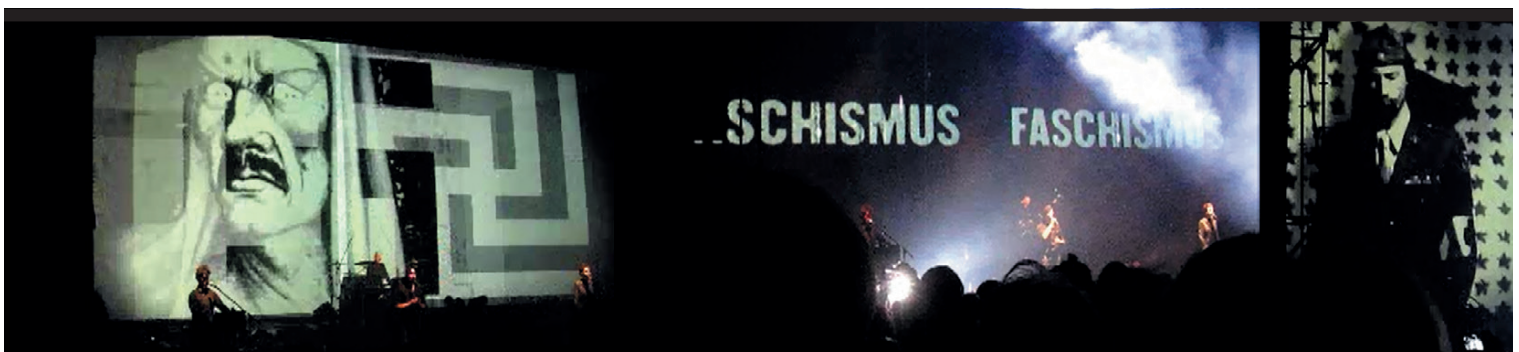
Laibach, *Tanz mit Laibach*

(Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Glu2wA4HjE0)

Img 224. Laibach's concert at Križanke, Ljubljana (May 2014).



Img 226. *Two Stags*, IRWIN (1988). The stag is one of the symbols of the alpine culture, and the black cross, just like in Laibach's works, has particular disturbing visual-historical associations and is used here in a provocative way. The original painting source here referred to is the *Monarch of the Glen*, by Sir Edwin Landseer (1851).





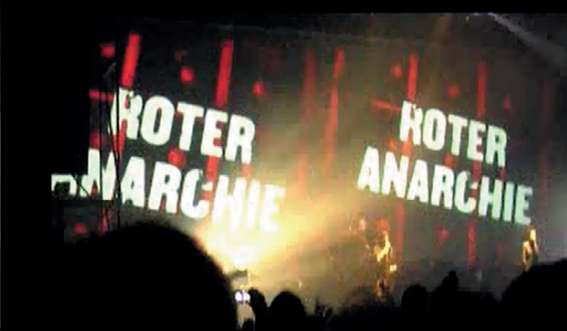
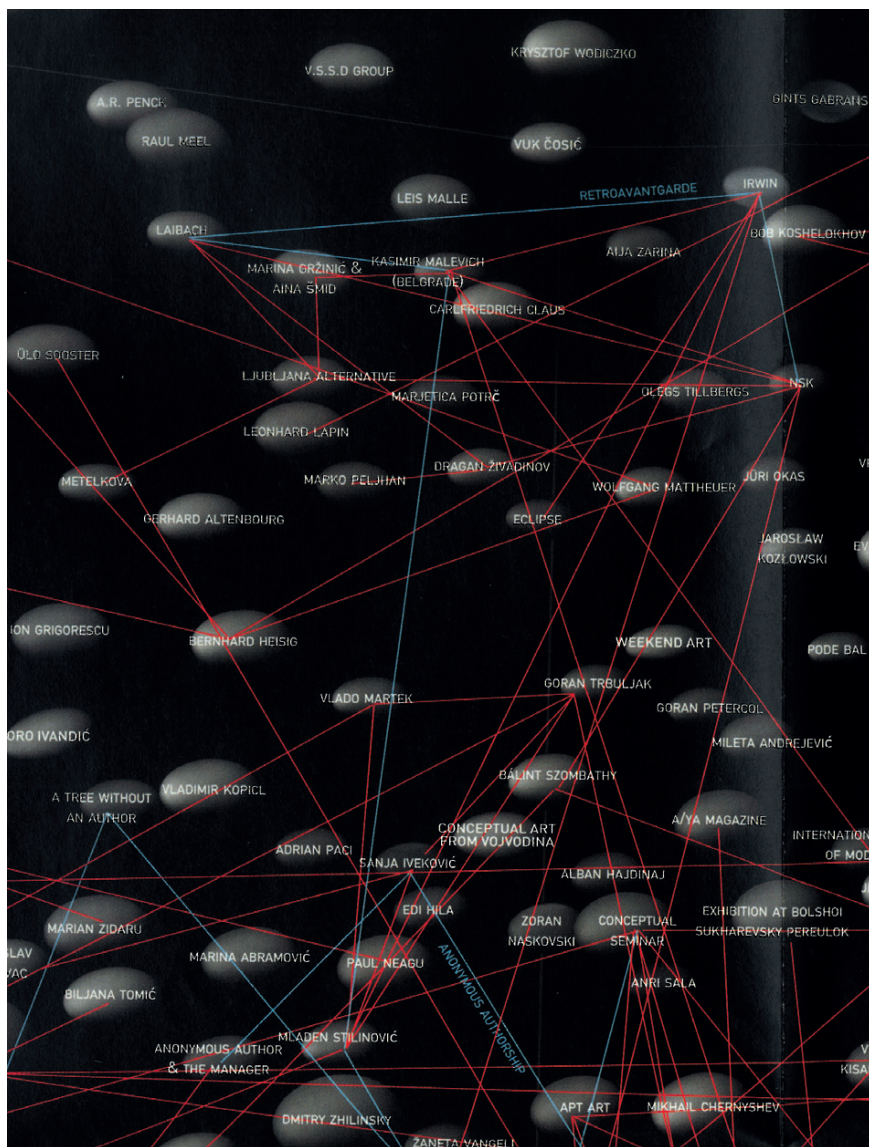
Img 227-229. NSK project "State in Time" (1992).



Img 231. *Dan Mladosti*, by Novi Kolektivizem (1987).



Img 230. EAST ART MAP (detail), IRWIN (2005).



production was, after all, unknown under socialism". She believe it was rather a reconfiguration of the social and artistic scenes (Gržinić 2006, 322). In turn, the Slovenian philosopher Mladen Dolar understands punk as a movement that rejects "the notions of traditional Slovene culture and the paradigm of a national poetry or aesthetic" (Dolar, Irwin, and Motoh 2014, 102).

*

While punks rejected the aesthetics of Slovenian traditional culture, the artistic movement NSK played with those kinds of aesthetics instead, by using them in a repetitive way, as we will see. But this movement arose within a particular alternative cultural context, whose first steps were made in ŠKUC (Student and Culture Arts Centre), Radio Študent and the critical weekly newspaper *Mladina* (Dolar, Irwin, and Motoh 2014, 113; Gržinić 2006, 322, 323). Also the FV 112/15⁹ group (of Neven Korda, Marina Gržinić and others) has been crucial to the construction of the alternative scene of Ljubljana, subversive for its popularity, the way they used video for their artistic projects, use of pornography and affiliation with the gay movement (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 31; Motoh 2012, 288). They started as an alternative theatre, but became known mostly for their mixing of music and video, especially during the time they partially run a students' disco club in Ljubljana. FV 112/15 introduced video, graffiti and pornography in Slovenian art, and used VHS, Xerox collage and graffiti, being frequently subversive in their works, both in form and content. Different alternative movements started to appear in connection with this group, such as the gay and lesbian, feminist, etc. (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 30–31).

Neue Slowenische Kunst [NSK]

NSK was composed by several groups of artists: the music group Laibach, the visual artists IRWIN, the 'retro-garde' theatre group Sestre Scipion Nasice¹⁰, the design group Novi Kolektivizem (New Collectivism), and the Department of Practical Philosophy (Gržinić 2006, 324). On the one hand, Žižek highlights the way NSK exploited the "state of decay" of the last years of socialism, in its desperate period of ideological maintenance, by using a profoundly unsettling Nazi imagery. By taking the ideology seriously, NSK "enacted the truth of what ideology claimed itself to be", demonstrating that it was empty, a mere hypocrisy (Žižek, Irwin, and Motoh 2014, 141). But on the other hand, Dolar defends that NSK was a transgressive, direct and "brilliant manifestation of the critique of fascist ideology" (Dolar, Irwin, and Motoh 2014, 103), that emerged as a development of the original punk logic (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 148). Furthermore, "in its structure it resembles one of capitalism's demoniacal machines, namely, the corporate system", but "thanks to its socialist heritage, NSK was able to develop on purely ideological foundations", states Gržinić (Gržinić 2006, 324). As we can see from these observations, NSK spread an ideological chaos, clearly present in Laibach's song *Tanz mit Laibach (Dance with Laibach)*.

⁹ Their name came from a random choice among slogans from the dictionary of loan words, known by the name of its author, France Verbinc (FV). On page 112, line 15, it can be found »c'est la guerre« (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 30–31).

¹⁰ Later renamed the *Red Pilot Cosmokinetic Theatre*, and then, in the 1990s, *Noordung Cosmokinetic Theatre* (Gržinić 2006, 324).

By using the classic methods of the avant-garde (manifestos, collective performances, public provocations and political interventions), NSK “contributed to the rapid disintegration of the aesthetics of communist and post-communist culture and identity” (Gržinić 2006, 324). They explored the relationship between art and ideology by playing with old symbols in completely new contexts, and they invented the alleged new art movement called *retrogradim* (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 31–32; Motoh 2012, 288). By using the ‘retro principle’ as a working method - a special process of montage of iconographic and symbolic elements from the history of Slovene and world art, constructed and deconstructed –, NSK explored and stressed the relationship between art and politics. This approach is well exposed in the documentary film that was made about this movement, named *Predictions of Fire* (1996), where the film directors and a few art critics comment on NKS’ approaches, and where NSK presents their own perspectives on the subject (img 223).

We will now examine the ways in which the retro-principle was concretely used by some of the groups of NSK, and take a look at their particular approaches to art and politics.

Laibach

Laibach, the post-punk music group born in the industrial town Trbovlje¹¹, played an “industrial punk” kind of music (Gržinić 2006, 324). They were truly successful in becoming “unbearable” with their provocative performances¹² and “strategies of dissidence”, by taking the “ruling ideology more seriously/literally than it took itself”, leaving a traumatic impact in Yugoslavia during the 1980s (Žižek 2005, xi–xii; Žižek, Irwin, and Motoh 2014). As Laibach stated: “Our mission is to make evil loose its nerves” (18’22, *Predictions of Fire*). They were considered particularly dangerous due to their deliberate use of Nazi symbolism and German words¹³, being immediately linked with fascism¹⁴. The use of the cross (any kind of cross) as a symbol was constant. The cross’ particular disturbing visual-historical associations was used in a provocative way by Laibach (Alexei Monroe 2005, 6) (img 224). This attitude resulted in the group’s interdiction to perform in public (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 31–32; Motoh 2012, 288). Laibach’s subversion of the totalitarian ritual through the use of an over-identification, repeated with irony and sarcasm in all its obscene ambiguity, was definitely not a classical direct critique of the system (Gržinić 2006, 323) (Motoh 2012, 294).

Laibach’s texts, for example, “sample” a host of theorists, such as Tito’s ideologist Edvard Kardelj, Theodor Adorno or Jacques Attali. The “authorial assemblage” of artists, politicians, and musicians appropriated by Laibach is known as the “retroquotation” (Alexei Monroe 2005, 4).

¹¹ This is a proletarian town, known for the several strikes the mine workers did due to the poor social/working conditions, becoming known for the leftist movement and communist agitation.

¹² Their performances used (and still use), amongst other provocations: flags, horns, a light show, background film projections, forbidden symbols, German phrases, or army smoke bombs (in Belgrade 1982). In a Laibach’s concert, the performance form was repeated almost in an obsessive way, and it looked like a totalitarian ritual (Gržinić 2006, 323; Motoh 2012, 289).

¹³ The choice of the name “Laibach” is not inoffensive: this is the name used for “Ljubljana” during the German occupation in WW2.

¹⁴ Tomaž Hostnik, Laibach's first lead singer, »performed with lips and blood on his face and insisted on adopting the costume (a pseudo-military uniform) and posture of Mussolini« (Gržinić 2006, 323).

IRWIN

The visual artists IRWIN criticised Slovenian traditional culture, as punk had done. But, just like Laibach, they favoured a strategy of *overidentification* with the dominant ideology (Dolar, Irwin, and Motoh 2014, 103), by making use of their symbols. In fact, IRWIN used several image sources from the work of other artists (e.g. Beuys, Kiefer, Malevich) and from different styles, e.g. constructivist, Stalinist, Nazi, impressionist, romantic, Renaissance, medieval ages, Catholic popular iconography, pop art, industrial design or Slovenian folklore. IRWIN borrows images and reuses them to reinvest them with their own meaning, confronting ideologies (Alexei Monroe 2005, 83, 84) (img 225, 226).

After the independence of Slovenia, IRWIN pursued their *overidentification* approach with the *overbureocratisation* of state affairs, by carrying out the project “NKS – STATE IN TIME” (1992). For that, they created Embassies and Consulates (e.g. in Moscow 1992, and in Berlin, 1994) where, to get in, one needed a special passport¹⁵ (img 227-229). The Embassy was seen as “a return to the interior of a claustrophobically ‘virtual’ space”, but actually these specific social installations “operated through the virtualisation and transfer of national elements in a wholly temporal form, in which cause and effect were not spatial but linked through information.” (Gržinić 2006, 327–28). However, Žižek believes that NSK stopped being alternative, or an underground culture, since the independence of Slovenia, considering that the subversive power of NSK’s art resulted from a contextual moment; afterwards they were not effective anymore (Žižek, Irwin, and Motoh 2014, 141). Nonetheless, the passports of the “State in Time” project proved their potential after the event *NSK Država Sarajevo*¹⁶: many of them were used to cross borders in order to escape from Sarajevo during the war, taking advantage of the proliferation of new states existing in Europe since 1989 (Alexei Monroe 2005, 255).

Besides the provocative character of their works, IRWIN have also been responsible for the project *EAST ART MAP*¹⁷ (IRWIN 2006), which consists in an attempt to map the territory once known as Yugoslavia, in a re-articulation of the *retro-avant-garde* movement from the 1980s (Gržinić 2006, 328) (img 230).

Novi Kolektivizem (NK)

The designers Novi Kolektivizem are better known for a scandal that happened in 1987, when they won the competition for the poster of the *Day of Youth* ceremonies (that commemorated the birth of the late President Tito). “Acclaimed for its graphics and ‘politically’ appropriate design” (img 231), NK’s poster was chosen as “the most appropriate representation”, and was adopted all over Yugoslavia. The scandal broke when the reference was revealed: it was remade version of a Nazi propaganda poster by Richard Klein (*A Heroic Allegory of the Third Reich*, 1936). NK had replaced the Nazi symbols with socialist ones: “a star was now where a swastika had

¹⁵ Available at www.passport.nsk.si/en/faq.

¹⁶ During this event, the National Theatre in Sarajevo was declared NSK state territory for two days, offering Laibach performances, exhibitions, speeches and passports (Alexei Monroe 2005, 255).

¹⁷ www.eastartmap.org.

been in the original poster” (Gržinić 2006, 324) and the blazing torch had been replaced by the cone of Plečnik’s unbuilt project for a Slovene parliament (1947) (Alexei Monroe 2005, 96). The jury’s identification with the visual ideology revealed to be an embarrassing affair for the Yugoslav Youth organisation “which, by choosing the design, revealed its latent sympathies for propagandist imagery”¹⁸. Victims of state persecution, NK justified themselves later, explaining that their design “stresses the democratizing effects of dealing with past trauma”, concluding with the slogan “Long Live the Day of Youth – Free Artistic Creativity”. This was the moment when they formulated their ‘retro principle’ as a working method (Alexei Monroe 2005, 98):

The retrogradist is an artist guided by the desire and ability to analyse with an unerring eye the relations of the beautiful, the raw, the exalted, the holy and the terrible in the current events throughout the world. The retrogradist combats using design and all the means at his disposal. He applies the method of the retro principle, the way an automobile designer assembles the parts of a car [...]. The creative process of reversed perspective, metaphors, hyperboles, time and space wrap, unite and link everything that mankind has squeezed from its veins until now. Content and form are only tools which combine themes and symbols into dynamics, tension, excitement and drama.

Novi Kolektivizem, Izhodišca in zahteve Studia NK (Novi Kolektivizem) ob plakatu dan mladosti (Platforms and Demands of Studio NK [New Collectivism] on Youth Day Poster), Mladina, March 6 (mentioned in Alexei Monroe, 2005, 98).

‘Repetition’ became the “principal strategy of a variety of groups and projects originating in the former socialist East” (Gržinić 2006, 323), and we will see below how the **Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova (MSUM)** captured this quite well, adopting this same attitude under an institutional framework.

Ljubljana School of Psychoanalysis

Finally, the intellectual-philosophical scene of Ljubljana’s alternative movement resulted in the Ljubljana School of Psychoanalysis, influenced by Lacan. The leading figures were Slavoj Žižek, Mladen Dolar and Alenka Zupančič (known as the “Slovenian troika”). Their “non-dogmatic” approach to Marxism – due to the use of the Lacanian method and French structuralism –, was seen as dangerously heterodox by the State and the Party (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 24).

These authors, amongst others, have been responsible for several translations into Slovenian of avant-garde literature trends and controversial existentialist authors (e.g. Sartre, Camus, Marcuse, Heidegger, Derrida, Nietzsche, Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari, Adorno, Gramsci, Freud or Lacan), for the publication of several polemical articles in journals of the opposition to the regime (such as *Perpektive, Problemi, Tribuna, Časopis za Kritiko Znanosti, Domišljijo in Novo Antropologijo*¹⁹, some of them edited by the authors mentioned above), and for the creation of courses at the university that introduced ideas of existentialism, critical theory, structuralism

¹⁸ Monroe believes that this affair resulted in the demise of the Youth Day festival, that was not held again after 1987 (Alexei Monroe 2005, 98).

¹⁹ Journal for the Critique of Science, Imagination and the New Anthropology.

and psychoanalysis. The philosophical scene offered a complex and wide reflection on the contemporary Yugoslav political, economic and social problems (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 26–29; Motoh 2012, 286), contributing in this way to influence the artistic scene as well (though this was a reciprocal influence).

Two of the articles that marked the beginning of a different relationship between the socio-political reality, the art scene and the critical journals, were:

- Mladen Dolar's BA thesis *Contradictions and Alternatives in Marxist Analysis of Fascism* (1982)²⁰, and its chapter on "Ideology, Cynism, Punk" (edited by Žižek in *Problemi*), which interpreted punk as a reaction to the cynicism of the system (Motoh 2012, 292). Dolar asks "How does fascism continue today with different means?"²¹, wondering if "fascism is a metaphor for capitalist society, what metaphor is socialism reflected in?" (Motoh 2012:292). The Slovene philosopher Helena Motoh argues that these remain the key political questions for the Ljubljana School of Psychoanalysis (Irwin and Motoh 2014, 38);
- Žižek's editorial *Punk is a Symptom* (1981), published in the journal *Problemi* (then directed by Mladen Dolar), and dedicated to the punk movement, mentions that "(...) their diagnosis was that punk warns us of an alarming danger of 'nihilist', 'foreign' or even 'anarchist and fascist' tendencies among the young generation, a spreading disease that needs to be 'cured', thereby also taking care of the symptom"²². Understanding punk as a symptom "enables us to see the 'normality' of the social reality from a distance, in order to expose what has been suppressed for this reality to function." (Motoh 2012, 291). This affair became known as the "Punk Problemi" (1981–83), and was followed by accusations and charges of propagandising for "Neo-Nazi" ideology.

*

This very rich cultural and intellectual scene was only possible under a very particular context of political resistance and opposition to an authoritarian regime. These alternative movements clearly influenced the spaces of resistance of the counter-culture like **Metelkova Mesto** – whose methods of material assemblage are clearly inspired by this particular context – or even the most recent **Tovarna Rog** – whose chaotic spatial aesthetics and logics of occupation inherit the NSK's aggressive kind of visual style – as we will see in the following chapters. But first, we will now turn to what happened in a more recent context of resistance and opposition, this time in the context of a more global frame.

²⁰ Mladen Dolar, *Struktura fašističnega gospostva. Marksistične analize fašizma in problemi teorije ideologije*, DDU Univerzum, Ljubljana, 1982.

²¹ Dolar 1982, p. 31, *op. cit.*

²² Slavoj Žižek (1981), Editorial in: *Problemi*, year 19, n^o. 205/206, Ljubljana, p. 26, mentioned in (Dolar, Irwin, and Motoh 2014, 114). Furthermore, Žižek editorial interpreted "symptom" in psychoanalytic terms, as "a phenomenon that (...) seems 'foreign', 'irrational', 'an invasion of immorality'. The symptom, however, reveals an intrusion of the suppressed 'truth' of the most calm, most normal everyday life, of exactly that life that is so shocked and annoyed by it. (...) punk literally enacts the suppressed aspect of 'normality' and thereby 'liberates', it introduces a defamiliarizing distance" (Motoh 2012, 291).

Slovenia uprisings and recent social movements

As we have seen, Slovenia has been occupied by foreign countries almost continuously alongside its troubled history. Consequently, the region has a very strong tradition of resistance to oppression. One of the most dramatic experiences took place in the course of World War II, when Slovenia was officially annexed to Italy on April 1941. A resistance movement was then created, with partisan units operating in the countryside while their headquarters were established in Ljubljana. It was in this occupied city that equipment, clothes and arms were produced, and into where wounded partisans were brought to recover. In order to isolate and capture the leaders of resistance, the Italians encircled the city overnight with a fence of barbed wire 2m high through nearly 30 km, that being designed in a such perfect way (as general Robotti ordered) that “even a mouse could not get out” (Diskin 2008, 83). Nevertheless, despite the wire and the surveillance exercised from numerous bunkers with fortified machine gun positions in some areas (and the issue of a decree proclaiming that people would be shot if they tried to cross the fence), the OF Liberation Front succeeded to transport food and weapons to partisans into the outlying area surrounding Ljubljana (Omersa 1980)¹. In September 1943, Italy capitulated and Germany occupied the city and took over the fence and the bunkers. On May 9, 1945, with the aid of British forces, Slovene partisans were joined by troops of the Yugoslav Army and liberated Ljubljana. The city had been imprisoned by barbed wire for 1171 days, out of a total period of occupation of 1490 days (Omersa 1980)². More than ten years later, in 1957, the first “march” (marathon style), in memory of the communist liberation of Ljubljana after the war, followed the path of the former wire fence, around the “hero city”, a title awarded by Tito (the charismatic leader of the Yugoslavian Communist Party) for its enduring long imprisonment and for the combined efforts of its resistance (Diskin 2008, 86).

We mention this in order to remember that some dramatic historic events may help us to have in mind the heritage of resistance and yearning for freedom of Slovenian people, contributing this way to a better understanding of the recent uprisings and social movements within a wider context and “tradition” of resistance struggle.

In the 1980s, after Tito’s death (1980), in Yugoslavia, the civil society “played a key role in undermining the authoritarian” Milošević’s regime in Serbia, while facing simultaneously a profound debt crisis which led to austerity politics imposed by the IMF. Today, despite the relatively small public debts and deficits, Slovenia is again being affected by austerity measures resulting from the global economic crisis. If in the 1980s the whole crisis resulted in military conflict, in our days austerity, according to the Slovenian activist and professor of political theory Andrej Kurnik (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 249,252), has been taking the “form of social war”. This time the crisis is affecting “a highly educated generation whose capacities to produce, to network, to express themselves are completely blocked.” (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 244). As the American ethnographer Maple Razsa noticed, during his experience in Croatia in the post-socialist context,

¹ Quoted by Diskin (2008, 84).

² Quoted by Diskin (2008, 85).

any “criticism of capitalism was immediately associated with the discredited communist legacy of using repressive means to pursue nominally utopian ends” (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 251). But the arrival of the economic crisis and of the major corruption scandals at the end of the last two decades of economic liberalisation, European integration and democratic consolidation, is changing the idea and the hope ex-Yugoslavian people had about capitalism.

The year of 2011 was signalled by a cycle of global protests, like the Arab Spring in Tunis and Cairo, Syntagma Square in Athens, the *Indignados*’ encampments in Puerta del Sol in Madrid, or the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) encampments in New York. Furthermore, October 15 – the Global Day of Action – was marked by protests in a thousand cities in 82 countries³. The Occupy Slovenia (OS) movement came out of this global protest environment and, inspired by OWS, occupied the foyer of Slovenia’s largest bank – Nova Ljubljanska Banka (NLB) – in October 14. While the guards insisted that the place was private, OS activists claimed NLB was property of the state, therefore public property (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 238). Thus, OS decided to avoid the attack to political institutions and the state, and to directly confront financial institutions, like the banks or the stock exchange. During this period, banks had been evicting people from houses they could no longer pay. OS challenged this action by squatting the then vacant bank-owned properties and redistributing them to those who needed the most, “assuring that empty homes don’t go unused.” (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 250). Another action done by OS was the occupation of the square in front of the Stock Exchange (*Borza*). During the encampment, OS knocked off the letter “R” from the word *Borza* and replaced by a “J”, becoming *Boj za*, meaning in Slovenian, “The struggle for...” (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 242) (img 232).

The importance of these events in relation to the present research is their relationship with the two most important case studies of my research: **Metelkova**, and most of all, **Rog**. Occupy Slovenia is composed by antimilitarist, environmental and radical social work activists, queers and feminists (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 252), many of which having their roots in the 1980s alternative movements, the links between those people and Metelkova being, still today, quite strong. Nowadays, the range of the population that has motives to be disgusted with the current state of affairs is large, including “social workers and users, precariously employed researchers and migrant labours, students, professors, rent-striking construction workers, outsourced Bosnian dockworkers, and (...) waiters” (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 252). The OS movement was grounded on a previous intense work that had been done, in the last years, with some of the activists (including some of the just-mentioned spectre of affected population) from the **Social Centre**, in the squatted old bicycle factory named **Rog**. While the NLB and the *Borza* experiences were ephemeral occupations – with very specific targets of critique that were part of a more global context (though acting against specific local problems) – the occupations of **Metelkova** and **Rog** address more general experiences, lasting longer in time, and that focus rather on the critique of problems of the everyday life in the city, as we will see further on.

³ Available at: www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/oct/17/occupy-protests-world-list-map (accessed on 13.03.2016).

Taking part in the initial squatting process of **Rog**, and staying until today located in this place, the Social Centre had – and still has⁴ – a major role in fighting social injustices related with migration and minorities in Slovenia during the 2000s, actions which one must be aware of in order to better understand the OS movement. Apart from participating in globalisation campaigns against elite summit meetings in several European cities, the involved activists have been dealing with refugees, asylum seekers, undocumented migrants or workers on temporary visas objecting to labour abuses. They have been doing a particularly important work with the self-described *Erased* – those whose identity has been “erased” from the official records when Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia⁵. Those individuals were transformed into “illegal migrants” in a territory where they had been born or living legally for decades⁶. The population in general being unaware of such a huge scale of exclusion, the Erased have been denigrated in the national media, portrayed as dangerous and disloyal to Slovenia. Activists from the Social Centre encouraged the active participation of migrants in defending their rights, in order to give them prominence instead of emphasising them as marginal or helpless victims; they tried to empower them, instead of simply mediating their relationship with the State⁷ (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 238, 246-47).

Defending the minorities (the 1%), and moreover considering the historical context of violent nationalist attitude that resulted from the hope in independence in the end of the 1980s, the struggles led by these activists in the 2000s revealed a very peculiar stance. Instead of claiming “We are the 99%” (like the worldwide Occupy Movement did), the activists engaged in the Occupy Slovenia movement simply shouted “We will not pay for your crisis!” or “No one represents us!” (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 239). In this circumstance, they tried to avoid nationalist attitudes through the use of an expression that might be, nevertheless, misunderstood within the local context. Furthermore, despite the fact that both OWS and OS opposition and critique were addressed to Finance Corporations and to the political elite, and that both defended the development of an autonomous movement and of solidarity (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 245), a few ways of doing things were different. While in OWS a general consensus had to exist in order to approve proposals at the assembly, OS encouraged a relative autonomy of the proposed workshops, being more focused on the empowerment of minorities through action, innovation and diversity (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 244, 248). In this sense, the “democracy of direct action” developed by OS was based on a politics of small steps, defending rights “produced collectively” (built together with others), its initiatives aiming “not freedom itself”, but rather “processes of liberalization”. This “grounded critique” (not abstract) encouraged “resistance” (more than simply “protest”), expressing “hope based on difference” (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 249-50, 252).

⁴ Since the massive refugees have started to take the so-called Balkan Route, Rog has been engaged in supporting them in several ways (welcoming, information, encampments, integration...), as it can be seen in the map of img 217.

⁵ More than 25,000 people have been “erased”, which means, “more than 1 percent of the overall population of two million” (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 246).

⁶ In this process, the Erased lost the right to legal residence, “medical care, working permits, pensions, even the ability to obtain a driving license or to travel outside Slovenia” (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 246).

⁷ The mediation approach between the Erased and the state was the strategy that the Peace Institute apparently decided to adopt, which was lamented by Kurnik (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 247).



Img 232. The 'Borza' (Stock Exchange) becomes 'boj za' (The Struggle for...), during the Occupy Slovenia's encampment, Fall 2011.

(image source: www.radiokaos.info/komentar/occupy-borza-boj-za/)

After these first initiatives led by OS, done in the context of the global economic crisis, a wave of protests arose in Slovenia, with the already mentioned events initiated in Maribor, November 2012, which quickly spread to other cities. The "fairy tale of the free market society" and the success story of the "Switzerland of the Balkans" felt apart with the arrival of the consequences of the austerity measures imposed by the European Union (Stability and Growth Pact) at the end of 2009⁸. In addition, evidence had been found by the Committee Against Corruption (Kirn 2013), implicating PM Janez Janša and Ljubljana's mayor Zoran Jankovič in major corruption scandals, leading to riots and mass demonstrations on the streets⁹.

And, while the OS movement had always tried to avoid the rise of nationalist feelings during their struggles, during these mass demonstrations nationalist and moralist attitudes could often be found. On the other hand, many cultural and political groups have called for engagement in civil disobedience, like for instance, "university trade unions, the student organization Iskra, Workers-Punks University, the Federation of Anarchist Organizing, and others" (Kirn 2013). We can see, once more, the anarchists and punks presence, constant in resistance movements in Slovenia since the 1980s. A particularity of the Slovenian Uprisings is that they have been marked by numerous public performances, cultural events, popular councils and multiple other initiatives, like the artful "Protestivals"¹⁰, for instance, which made use of art and culture to protest¹¹ (Novak 2013) (img 233).



mg 233. "Zombies" protesting in front of Slovenia's parliament. "After PM Jansa's party called the protesters "communist zombies" in a tweet on December 21, 2013, protesters came to the subsequent protestival masked as zombies, and masks have been a presence throughout the movement ever since." Photo taken by WNV/Jang Man.

(Available at: <http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/slovenia-rises-in-artful-protest/>, accessed on 13.03.2016).

⁸ These measures included the privatisation of banks and drastic cuts in the social budget (research in universities about 10-20%; culture about 50%, in some fields; ...). This contributed to the rise of the unemployment rate (see Chapter 4).

⁹ In 2013, January 23, a general strike put 20 000 workers on the streets; on February 8 (the Day of Culture in Slovenia), 25 000 people came out on the streets of Ljubljana, after a pro-government demonstration organised by the Party of Slovene Democrats (headed by the prime-minister) (Kirn 2013).

¹⁰ Protest Festivals.

¹¹ The publisher Rok Zavrtanik and the artist Matija Solce, who are at the center of the protestival movement, explain what is a 'Protestival': "It is connecting people through their cultural expression, via musical performances, physical theatre, puppets, poetry, as well as giving a voice to the protesters themselves, thus creating a unique people's forum." (Novak 2013).

6.2. Alternative Culture Mapping

We have seen some social and artistic movements that have influenced and/or contributed to the appearance of some ACS in Ljubljana, namely **Metelkova**. We will now see, in detail, how this process happened, and also in which way ACS have contributed to the wider resistance of the political and social movements:

- On the one hand, the alternative and artistic philosophic movements of the 1980s have established the conditions that possibly allowed the existence of **ACC Metelkova** and produced also the initial claim for a basic workspace of artists and activists that became a wide political struggle at a larger urban scale;
- On the other hand, **Metelkova**, and mostly **Rog**, have been committed in the 2010s Slovenian uprisings as spatial “headquarters” of the movements.

We will subsequently see how the occupation history of these spaces had a strong political meaning, inspired by Hackim Bey (1985), Toni Negri (2004) and Henri Lefebvre’s (1968) approaches (Bey 1985; Lefebvre 1968; Negri et Hardt 2004). The importance of the multidisciplinary backgrounds of the social actors in such processes (architects, visual and plastic artists, performers, musicians, activists, academics, punks, philosophers, social and political sciences, hackers, etc) will also have our attention. In particular, the following stories will show us how large institutional and commercial projects for both sites have been dropped due to the communities pressure or left in stand-by due to economic reasons.

Nonetheless, a curious aspect is how both places – **Rog** and **Metelkova** – are today part of official touristic maps, presented as mandatory places to visit, and described as “centres for alternative culture” existing in “autonomous cultural zones” (img 234, 235). This reveals the will of integration and the spirit of tolerance of the authorities concerning these kinds of projects, which actually started as projects defying the authorities. Besides, this mapping reflects the way the City has welcomed and integrated the Creative Cities ideology in its cultural policies, being aware of the potentiality of the places of “alternative culture” to attract a kind of population that is interested in consuming culture (Florida 2002; Landry 1995).

Moreover, just like Lisbon has been identified as “the new Berlin”, so a few travelling blogs did the same about Ljubljana, supporting the expectations of the recent cultural policies adopted by the municipality:

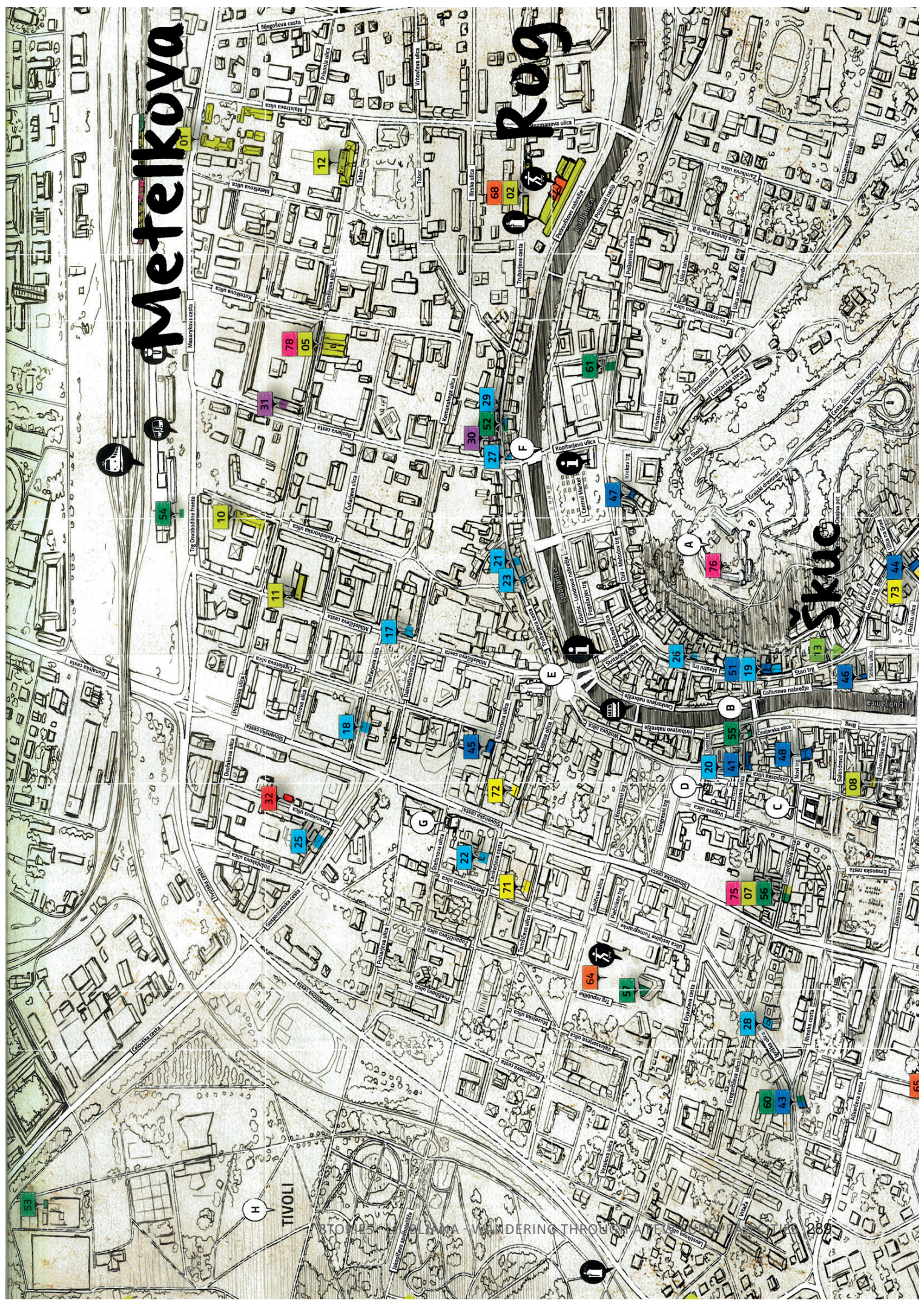
Ljubljana is one of those surprising European cities (...) I even went so far as to compare it to arguably the world’s most “hipster” city: Berlin. With Ljubljana’s charming city centre, its alternative scene and its many cafes, bars and restaurants, there’s little doubt in my mind: Ljubljana is cool. Add in the fact that it’s a bit more difficult than other cities to reach and you’ve suddenly got all the makings for a cool, hipster city in Europe.¹

1 Available at: <http://travelsfadam.com/ljubljana-travel-guide/> (posted in 1 October 2014). This blog identifies several “cool” places to visit and hang around in Ljubljana.

Metelkova

ROG

ŠKUC



Unlike what was done with Lisbon, in Ljubljana I decided to focus only on two case-studies, the main reason for that being linked with the extreme complexity of these two examples, composed of several stories built over countless different narratives. I should nevertheless mention that other places have been visited during the fieldwork, which could also tell interesting stories about the alternative cultural life of this city, but which will, unfortunately, not be discussed in this dissertation (e.g. Škuc gallery, Kud France Prešern, Kino Šiška, Kreativna Cona Šiška, Pop Up Dom, Ljudmila, Polygon, Tobačna Tovarna, Cukrarna Tovarna or Zlati Zob).

Img 235. Ljubljana's ACS mentioned in a tourist city guide. (City Visions - Selected Spots, 2013-2014)

*
CULTURE

01 Metelkova mesto → E / 1
Autonomous social centre | concerts | parties | exhibitions | artist studios
Masarykova cesta 24
www.metelkovamesto.org

02 Tovarna ROG → E / 2-3
Alternative culture centre – former bicycle factory
concerts | exhibitions | improvised studios | skate spot
Trubarjeva cesta 72
www.tovarna.org

03 KUD France Prešeren → G / 6
Cultural centre | one of the most important locations of Ljubljana's alternative scene
Karunova ulica 14
www.kud.si

04 Kino Šiška → G / 5
Centre for urban culture
music | theatre | film
Trg prekomorskih brigad 3
T: +386 (0)30 310 110
www.kinosiska.si

05 Stara mestna Elektrarna → D / 2
An energetic space for contemporary performing arts
»power on the stage«
Slomškova ulica 18
T: +386 (0)51 269 906
www.bunker.si

06 Španski borci cultural centre → H / 5
Performing and visual arts | music | literature
gallery space | media centre | coffee shop
Zaloška cesta 61
T: +386 (0)1 620 87 84 | E: info@spanskiborci.si
www.spanskiborci.si

07 Glej Theatre → B / 3
Slovenia's oldest experimental theatre gives you an unique experience of its independent production - from cabarets to theatrical experiments
Gregorčičeva ulica 3
E: info@glej.si | www.glej.si

08 Mini teater → B / 4
Mini teater - theatre for all. Children, youths and adults!
In the centre of the city and on Ljubljana's Castle!
Križevniška ulica 1
T: +386 (0)1 425 60 60
www.mini-teater.si

09 Plesni Teater Ljubljana → C / 4
Theatre for Contemporary Dance
»Always surprising«
Prijeteljeva ulica 2
www.pti.si

10 Kinodvor → C / 1
»Arthouse Cinema - Café with Free Wi-Fi - Bookshop - Gallery - Events - Open-Air Cinema«
Miklošičeva cesta 28
T: +386 (0)1 239 22 13 | E: info@kinodvor.org
www.kinodvor.org

11 Kinoteka → C / 2
Non-Hollywood, art house and European films
»never too commercial«
Miklošičeva cesta 28
T: +386 (0)1 434 25 20
www.kinoteka.si

12 Slovenski etnografski muzej → E / 2
Central museum of ethnology »about people, for people«
museum of cultural identities, the link between the past and the present, between nature and civilisation
Metelkova ulica 2
Open: Tuesday - Sunday 10:00 - 18:00 | Closed: Monday
T: +386 (0)1 3008 700 | E: etnomuz@etno-muzej.si
www.etno-muzej.si

20 DIVAS Vintage → C / 3
First true vintage store in Ljubljana | large selection of men's and women's clothing, fashion accessories and much more!
Gosposka ulica 3
T: +386 (0)41 641 759 | facebook: Vintage-Divas-Store
www.vintagekdivas.com

21 Urban Stop → C / 2
Handmade designs for women!
fashion | bags | accessories
Trubarjeva cesta 20
T: +386 (0)31 625 940
facebook.com/UrbanStopp

22 Pri Klari V Omari → B / 2
A second hand shop which offers beautiful things
handbags, fashion accessories, clothing and shoes are selected pieces that are as good as new
Cankarjeva cesta 4a
T: +386 (0)513 36 464
www.klara-trgovina.si

23 Atelje Dobrovolec → C / 2
Rock 'n' roll and fashion
unique clothing | handbags | fashion accessories
Trubarjeva cesta 19
T: +386 (0)513 36 464
facebook: Atelje Dobrovolec | www.atelje-jerneja.si

24 Smetumet Zibka → G / 5
Cultural ecological association
»local recycled goods«
Čalovška cesta 53
E: smetumet.info@gmail.com
www.smetumet.com

25 Babushka Boutique → B / 2
One of the most popular concept stores in Ljubljana!
Gospodsvetska cesta 8
E: info@babushkaboutique.com
www.babushkaboutique.com

26 Behemot → C / 3
Independent bookshop located inside the City Art Gallery
unique selection of books at reduced prices and locally sourced art & craft
Mestni trg 5
E: info@behemot.si
www.behemot.si

27 OBSESSION 92 → D / 2
SKATE-SNOW-BMX SHOP
»skateboarding since 1992«
Trubarjeva cesta 34
T: +386 (0)1 430 5860
www.obsession.si

28 OBSESSION 07 → B / 3
SKATE-SNOW-SURF SHOP
»new fresh skate & surf brands«
Gregorčičeva ulica 13
T: +386 (0)1 425 6013
www.obsession.si

29 Jazz & Blues Records → D / 2
LP | CD | DVD distribution,
wholesale and retail
Trubarjeva cesta 40
T: +386 (0)1 60 01 040
www.jazzandbluesweb.com

39 Klub Gromka → M / 7
Individual concert events | experimental music
ska and street punk | monthly African nights
occasional theatre plays and performances
Masarykova cesta 24 (AKC Metelkova mesto)
www.klubgromka.org

40 Etno Klub Zlati Zob → H / 5
Stylish ambience | international selection of artists
concerts | workshops | dance performances
Zaloška cesta 69
www.zlatizob.si

A O I R C G

30 Red Cat Tattoo → D / 2
Tattoos | custom design and fashion
Trubarjeva cesta 45
T: +386 (0)41 738 573
E: info@redcat-tattoo.com
www.redcat-tattoo.com

31 Cult - Tattoo & Piercing → D / 2
Top Tattoo and Piercing Studio | an exceptional selection of jewellery | fair prices
Resljeva cesta 24
T: +386 (0)70 772 277
www.piercing-cult.si

Bi-Ko-Fe → C / 3
A very relaxed location | venue of local artists
stylish interior | live DJs | exhibitions
Zidovska steza 2
E: bikofe@gmail.com
www.bikofe.com

Sax Pub → C / 4
Legendary jazz pub | big concerts on a small stage
»don't miss the Sax pub«
Eipprova ulica 7
facebook.com/saxpublj
www.saxhostelljubljana.com

Zmauc → A / 3
»Ljubljana's famous bar since 1996«
groove music | cocktails | draft beer | sandwiches
really nice terrace outside
Rimska cesta 21
T: +386 (0)1 25 10 324 | E: zmauc@siol.net

Pri Zelenem Zajcu → C / 4
Green rabbit »expect the unexpected but at the same time expect nothing and you'll get the most. Come in peace.«
Rožna ulica 3
facebook.com/prizelenemzajcu
www.prizelenemzajcu.si

Brooklyn → C / 2
A cosy hanging & party concept cafe-bar-club
hip & indie music | artcinema | exhibitions | vintage shop
games | vintage fairs
Open: Mo-Thu 20:00-01:00 | Fr-Sa 20:00-05:00
Nazorjeva ulica 6a
facebook.com/brooklynhengarnica.ljubljana

TOZD bar → C / 4
»micro coffee roastery - wine bar«
Gallusovo nabrežje 27
T: +386 (0)40 699 453
facebook - TOZD bar

Daktari klub → D / 3
Ljubljana's finest living room. Feel like home!
Krekov trg 7
T: +386 (0)64 166 212
facebook.com/KlubDaktari | www.daktari.si

LP Bar → C / 3
Designers bar in academy lobby
Novi trg 2
facebook.com/lp.bar.1
www.lpbar.si

Hostel Celica → M / 7
A funky cocktail of food, drinks, live concerts & art events
Metelkova 8
T: +386 (0)1 230 97 00
www.hostelcelica.com

Café Open → C / 4
Gay and lesbian café
live concerts | literature evenings | cultural events | art
Hrenova ulica 19
www.open.si

CHA Teahouse & Teashop → C / 3
»live simple - drink tea«
Stari trg 3
T: +386 (0)1 252 70 10 | E: cha@siol.net
www.cha.si

03 → G / 6

04 → G / 5

05 → D / 2

06 → H / 5

07 → B / 3

08 → B / 4

09 → C / 4

10 → C / 1

11 → C / 2

12 → E / 2

13 Društvo Škuc → C / 4
International art centre for exhibitions, art events,
publishing and documentation | since 1978
Stari trg 21
E: galerija.skuc@guest.arnes.si
www.galerija.skuc-drustvo.si

GALLERIES

290 PART II

6.3. Two stories

Ljubljana – being mostly a flat town in its urbanised areas, and a city which has a quite regular urban mesh – cannot really be experienced the same way as Lisbon: wandering up and down through labyrinthine streets. Besides, in Ljubljana the strong roads and railway axes clearly define directions, contributing for a rather clear and straight orientation of the walker. In there, one can easily find himself/herself repeating the same paths over and over. This tendency to follow repeated paths is referred somehow in the fictional texts of Ljubljana’s architect master Jože Plečnik, which were written by the architect and researcher Klaske Havik:

Every day, I walk the path I paved with red stones, around the corner, and I enter the church through its heavy front door. It is always pleasantly cold in here (...). My eyes follow the slender curve in the ceiling, and meet the light above. (...) down the road (...) I follow (...) I cross (...) I take the steep path, with its steps grown from tree trunks (...). After (...) I descend (...). Walking, I am the reader of my town, I take the same routes over and over (...). I stop more often to look at the water front, to smell the wet stones and hear the wind playing with the trees. (...) I cross the stream and walk towards the city centre. (...) I pass old Roman walls. Porous stone, in shades of grey, yellow and brown.

Fragment of “Ljubljana 1921” (Havik 2013, 56)

It is curious to see how Havik links the conception of Plečnik’s projects to possible daily experiences the architect might have had in Ljubljana, imagining how he observes the city and pays attention to the details with all his senses, adopting a *flâneur* kind of style. This text’s description – mentioning how Plečnik repeatedly takes the same routes, apparently exhaustively – exemplifies how it is easy to be caught in a circular kind of time when inhabiting the city of Ljubljana (even if this town’s history is quite the contrary, all but stagnant!), a situation that might be provoked by the just-mentioned city plan structure. Another reason is the city’s small scale (particularly when coming from a bigger city like Lisbon, for instance), or even the weather conditions (which tend often to be grey – the sky covered with clouds accumulated in the valley that exists between the mountains which surround the city – and affects this city’s everyday experience in a psychological way).

In Havik’s text, Plečnik describes, on the one hand, his daily activities and paths and, on the other hand, his experiences in a very detailed way using a phenomenological kind of analysis. This kind of methodology is used in the analysis of my Ljubljana case-studies (as well as in the other cities, as mentioned before²). For instance, **Metelkova**’s space has been explored through the perspective of a user of its common spaces as someone who passes by on the way to somewhere else and of a user that comes on purpose to enjoy its activities, or simply to hang out for a drink or a talk. During these activities, the general ambiance and details are extensively analysed resorting to the help of photography, sketching or written hand notes. The visual fragments resulting from this analysis was therefore assembled and, when put together with other people’s

² See Chapter 3.

experiences, contributed to create a larger story composed from many different inputs and based on different perspectives and living experiences, linking different times and places and the most varied people:

...I make connections visible, but I do not unveil the mask entirely. My game is to discover fragments and bring them to life, slowly, one by one (...). All of a sudden, one fragment leads to another – I tie them together to form a story, more stories, uncountable stories (...). I do not make the story, I make its parts...

Fragment of “Ljubljana 1933”

(a fictional story written by Jože Plečnik, through the hand of Klaske Havik (2013, 58-59)

My methodology can find a parallelism in Havik’s description of the own methodology of Jože Plečnik: while his “connections” are spatialised and revealed through architectural objects – and then revealed under the form of text through the words of Havik –, the links I make concern fragments of oral stories, written papers and images. This kind of approach has also been used in **Rog**’s analysis. Though this is an example quite different from the one of Metelkova – as an experience that has a more recent past (and therefore is closer to my personal living experience of the city³), but also as a more disconnected object from the surrounding city (due to the big walls around the concerned area) – the countless connections that can be made between so many different fragments are quite amazing. It is furthermore important to highlight how actually both case studies are so deeply connected, and how their stories and users are so intermingled.

Just like the “writer of this city” (Plečnik, according to Havik (2013, 61)), I like to pay attention to “intersecting narratives” present in the details of architectural objects, in the urban environment and in peoples’ experiences, in order to assemble them into a new layout, seen from a new perspective, and therefore create a new story...

I will this way start to tell the first story...

*

³ Rog was squatted in 2006, precisely when I was studying in this city, having known a few people involved in the operation back then.

6.3.1. Metelkova

Metelkova is the name of a street, in Ljubljana, located not far from the train station (img 236). It was in this street that the Yugoslav People's Army had its barracks ("Fourth of July" Military Barracks – img 237) until the Ten-Day War, in June 1991, when Slovenia became independent.

This complex of buildings has 5 hectares and dates from 1888¹. The site was named after the priest and philologist Professor Franc Serafin Metelko (1789-1860), known for having proposed a new script for the Slovene which aggravated an existing language conflict – named as *the Alphabet War*² (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 156-57). These barracks have always been under the command of foreign cities – like Vienna, Belgrade, Rome, Berlin and Belgrade again –, a situation that changed after the independence.

Metelkova complex is divided into two parts³ (img 258):

- Metelkova North, whose buildings are owned by the municipality of Ljubljana, and where we can find **ACC Metelkova Mesto** (img 238);
- Metelkova South, owned by the State and attributed to the Ministry of Culture since 1994, the moment when the "museum's quarter" began to be progressively built (img 258).

The story of Metelkova's site is made of multiple personal stories, a fact which might lead to some different perspectives or distinct realities. In that sense, the lines below, that describe this complex case study correspond to selected accounts based mostly – apart from literature inputs – on the sources I established contact with during my fieldwork.

The contrast between Metelkova North and Metelkova South will be addressed, spatially and ideologically. The borderline entities (and their buildings and interventions) will also be discussed, as well as a few internal conflicts on each side. I will start by presenting each part separately, and then discuss the resulting tensions that might exist.

¹ Some parts were added later.

² The *Alphabet War* resulted in part from a work that Metelko published, where he combined Latin, Cyrillic and Greek characters.

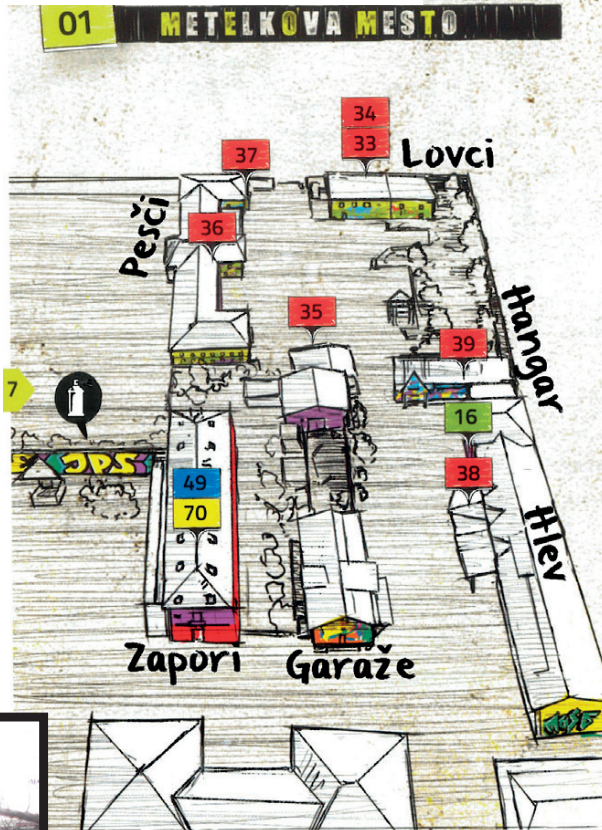
³ Information collected from the archive of KUD Mreža (Available at http://kudmreza.org/?page_id=270, accessed 8 December 2013).

Metelkova



Img 237. Metelkova's barracks (original façades).

Img 236. Geographic location of Metelkova in the city of Ljubljana



Img 238. AKC Metelkova Mesto¹ (Avtonomni Kulturni Center) or ACC Metelkova City in English (ACC stands for Autonomous Cultural Centre). AKC MM is composed of six buildings: Pesči (Infantry), Lovci (Hunters), Hangar, Hlev (Stable), Garaže (Garages) and (Prison) >

(image source: Ljubljana tourist guide *City Visions - Selected Spots 2013-2014*)

Lovci (Hunters)
SOT-24 Club (youth handicapped club), Monokel Club (lesbian club), Tiffany Club (gay club)

Pesči (Infantry)
Cultural Association KUD Mreža, Gala Hall (concerts, parties), Channel Zero (concerts, parties and Mizzart gallery), KUD Anarhiv ...

Garaže (Garages)
artists' studios

Jalla Jalla (35) (wooden house: daily open bar, music)

Hangar
Club Gromka, Črna Kuhinja (the Black Kitchen)

Hlev (Stable)
Galerija Alkatraz, Menza pri koritu, A-Infoshop, Bizarnica at Mariča (a bar, occasionally open), Atelje Azil (Asylum Studio, Artist-in-Residence project)

Zapori (Prison)
Youth Hostel Celica

Exterior public spaces
"Square with no Historic Memory",
"Hall of fame" (open air graffiti gallery)
Bibliobus

[all of these buildings host artists' studios]



Bibliobus.

"Hall of fame" (open air graffiti gallery)



"Square with no Historic Memory".

AKC Metelkova Mesto

History

AKC MM, or simply **Metelkova**⁴, was born out of the context of the alternative movements that happened in Ljubljana in the 1980s⁵, and from the necessity artists had of places where to work. The housing situation was becoming problematic in Ljubljana, since the construction of new houses almost ceased in the 1980s, which resulted in a serious housing shortage. Consequently, artists had also trouble in finding studios⁶. These two factors have been determinant for the future of **Metelkova**.

The story of Metelkova (img 239) is made of two different groups of people:

- one composed by some people who wanted to negotiate with the State and the City (Peace Institute, 1988, and Retina, 1994-8);
- the second composed by squatters (who came in 1993).

Demilitarisation campaign and the Metelkova Network

In the course of its existence, Metelkova acquired a rather negative connotation, since it has been the place where many people were imprisoned, particularly during the WW2. At the end of the 1980s, Yugoslavia started to disintegrate, and popular resistance against the regime was growing. In 1988, a few political opponents were sent to Metelkova's prison (including, for instance, Janez Janša, who later became president of Slovenia), which triggered a strong popular protest. Meanwhile, a committee for the protection of human rights was being set up, organised by the Slovenian Peace Movement, which was led by Marko Hren⁷. The Peace Movement fought for the disappearance of military infrastructures in general, and most specifically, for the disappearance of the military premises from the city centre, namely from Metelkova. "The order to wage war in Slovenia was issued from here. "The whole war in the Balkans began here in a manner of speaking" says Janko Rozi, a member of the artists group Sestava. That common will of getting rid of such heavy and unpleasant memories resulted in the Metelkova Network (*Mreža za Metelkovo, MzM*), founded in 1990. Its aim was to transform "a place of repression

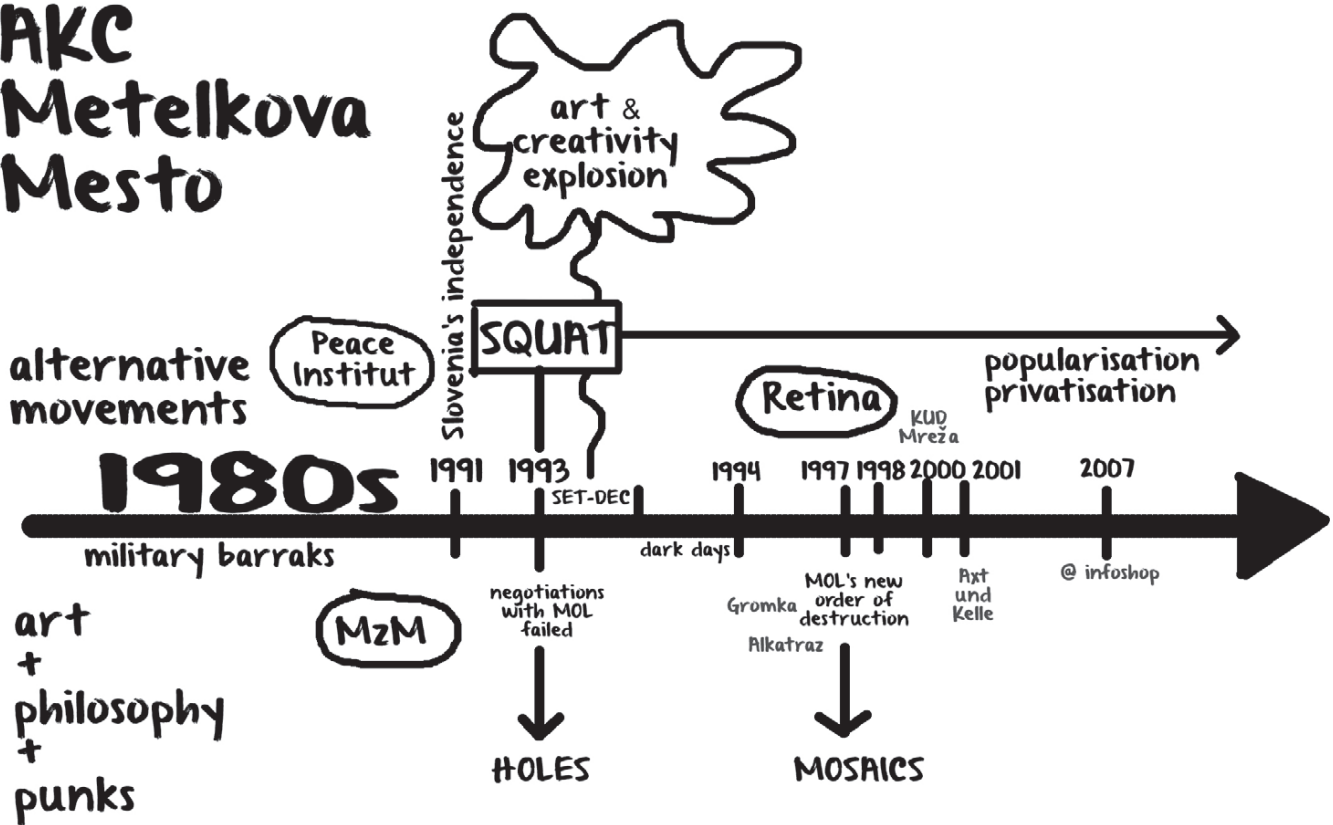
⁴ From now on, **ACC Metelkova Mesto** will be referred as **Metelkova**, **Metelkova Mesto** or **ACC**, while **Metelkova South** will be addressed as **Metelkova South**.

⁵ See »Philosophical and Artistic Alternative Movement", in chapter.6.1.1.

⁶ According to information provided by Galerija Alkatraz (Available at http://galerijalkatraz.org/?page_id=15, accessed on 1 April 2013).

⁷ Marko Hren, who studied mathematics, anthropology and sociology, first got in touch with *War Resisters International League* in Switzerland in 1975, whose slogan was "War is a crime against humanity". Hren worked for the International Peace Movement, which brought him to political opposition movements in Eastern Europe, and then created the *Slovenian Peace Movement*, which became strong in a relatively short period of time, becoming quite influential at the end of the 1980s / beginning of 1990s (Hren 2013). Hren ran the Peace Institute until 1993 (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 163).

AKC Metelkova Mesto



Img 239. Timeline of the history of Metelkova.

and uniformity into a place of diversity and freedom”, where artists and workers of the cultural sector would be involved in a demilitarisation campaign, inspired by the model of the cultural centre **Rote Fabrik**, in Zürich, (where the headquarters of the *Group for a Switzerland Without an Army* were located (Hren 2013)). To achieve this, MzM held negotiations first with the army and then with the municipality and state, who had become the new owners of the premises after the army left (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 163).

Soon MzM had a membership of about two hundred institutions and cultural workers (including, for instance, ŠKUC gallery, Radio Študent, and of course, the Movement for a Culture of Peace

and Non-Violence⁸), having Hren as president. One of their slogans was “with the heat of creativity we can melt the iron of the military” (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 158-59, 163). They demanded changes both in the urban plan and in the social and cultural life of Ljubljana. The municipality at first agreed. However the authorisation process took too long and meanwhile the mayor changed. Apparently, the new elected right-wing mayor had started to draw other plans for Metelkova (in particular, the



Img 240. The squatting of Metelkova Mesto

⁸ According to the text about Metelkova’s history exposed at MSUM’s exhibition on the ground floor (2013).

destruction of the complex in order to build a commercial centre (Gržinić 2006, 326; Nabergoj 2014)). In 1993, MzM called a press conference to put pressure on authorities, but their response was brutal, by sending construction machines onto the site to demolish the buildings, damaging a few of them (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 160-61).

The squatting

As a reaction to the building's destruction, and to prevent that, in September 1993, and in a non-violent act of civil disobedience, Metelkova was squatted by about 200 cultural activists, independent artists, intellectuals, punks, etc (Gržinić 2006, 326) (img 240). One of the main characters who triggered this action was the artist and writer Andrej Morovič, who had previously been squatting in Berlin, bringing along his experiences and ideas to Ljubljana.

A week after the squatting, the city council cut water and electricity supplies to the Metelkova squat, in an attempt to force the squatters to leave (Gržinić 2006, 326). Nonetheless, from September to December, Metelkova developed an extremely rich cultural program that included events, debates, concerts, art exhibitions, theatre performances, etc. Metelkova became a "cultural rebellion" (Korda 2014), a space available for alternatives: art, culture and peace (Bibič 2003).

However, the initial enthusiasm lost energy when the winter came. The working and living conditions became too hard (it was cold and dark, because there was neither water nor electricity; furthermore, some vandalism acts, burglaries and robberies occurred⁹). Only a few people remained, mostly the younger ones, students of the Fine Arts Academy, who managed to resist better to such conditions. These became known as the "dark days" of Metelkova.

Retina

A few of those who remained, organised themselves in an association, and in 1994, Marko Hren together with Bratko Bibič, founded *Retina*, whose aim was to help settling the situation at Metelkova in order to host non-governmental organisations, and to raise funds for artists. In 1995, Retina signed a protocol with the mayor that agreed on rental contracts and acceptable conditions for the artists to work. In 1997, the municipality assigned a small budget for renovation works of some damaged buildings, and the artists signed contracts with the Municipality for a period of five years¹⁰.

Meanwhile, the MzM dissolved in 1998. "...Once the goal has been achieved, the community that existed for that specific purpose breaks up...", notices Hren (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 165). Moreover, still in 1998 and due to sparse financing, the same happened with Retina, bringing down, along with it, all the cooperatives (which employed about 50 artists, socially disadvantaged individuals and their mentors).

⁹ This was also the time when a fire occurred, destroying Šola's building, in 1994 (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 165).

¹⁰ According to the text about Metelkova's history exposed at MSUM's exhibition on the ground floor (2013).

From this moment on, Marko Hren anticipated a phase of internal conflict, where a very demanding task would follow. This new challenge would then be “to find the commitment to form an organisational structure that will ensure the continued existence of Metelkova, but without the emotionally binding force of resistance against a third party.” (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 165).

As Marko Hren reminds, “the artists have faced the Yugoslav Army, the municipality, the street violence [and] the construction lobby...” (Hren 2008, 244). The name Metelkova Mesto works today as a reminder of those battles, and as an “ironic statement of the area’s autonomy”. This city (Mesto) within the city is actually a subversion of the city itself, or rather its negative structure (Gržinić 2006, 326; Gržinić 2001). According to Gržinić, during the 1990s the history of the Ljubljana alternative movement of the 1980s was silenced. But this subcultural account still has the power to provoke within the parallel city of Metelkova. Gržinić understands Metelkova as a “movement in time”¹¹, a lived environment that redefines the following categories: public / agents / actors / survivors (Gržinić 2001).

Today

Metelkova managed to survive, and according to Nataša Serec (the president of one of KUD Mreža, somehow the successor entity of MzM), quite successfully¹²: “When Slovenia entered the UE, all newspapers showed Metelkova as a good example of an alternative place”. Metelkova hosts today about 150 artists and activists, who develop projects and workshops in the most diverse artistic fields (visual and plastic arts, music, dance, theatre, circus, radio, multimedia, video, cinema...). There are several NGOs, artist studios, night clubs, an art gallery, a youth hostel, an anarchist centre and a library (see box on next page for more details). They promote several events like concerts, theatre performances, films, DJ nights or festivals. There is “no time for boredom!” says Nataša, adding that at the same time Metelkova “contributes significantly to the growth of social (political) awareness” of the dwellers and visitors¹³.

It is the policy of Metelkova’s community to be run as a non-profit, non-governmental, multi-cultural, urban venue open to all, aimed at sustaining art, culture, social and humanitarian work, at helping social integration and at benefiting the community. As Metelkova keeps on being an “autonomous” space, users do not pay a rent, just the charges (water, electricity). The difference from the former days is that today the municipality tolerates Metelkova’s situation and even supports it, having understood its economic value as a booster of cultural and tourist attraction. MOL would nevertheless see the situation of Metelkova legalised, but this does not seem to please Metelkova’s community, since with legalisation comes several “inconvenient” responsibilities (Batić 2013). Therefore, Metelkova has today a hybrid status, since the city and the

¹¹ A reference to NSK project “State in Time”, developed by IRWIN in the beginning of the 1990s (see Philosophical and Artistic Alternative Movement, in Chapter 6.1.1.).

¹² “Nataša Serec Metelkova mesto Ljubljana” (Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnEECxOaTUo, published in 2011 and accessed on 9 April 2013).

¹³ *Ibid.*

A SELECTION OF A FEW SPACES AND PROJECTS ON METELKOVA

Galerija Alkatraz opened its doors in 1996, starting as a project run by the young artists who were squatting Metelkova, because they felt as though they had a place where they could exhibit their works. Since 1998 this gallery is run by the art historian Jadranka Plut, who opened it to the international market⁶. The name Alkatraz comes from the renowned American military prison. According to Jadranka Plut, the gallery focus on critical/politically engaged art which reflects what is happening today in society (Plut 2013). Alkatraz has been sponsored initially by the Soros Foundation, and later also by the city of Ljubljana and the Ministry of Culture.⁷

KUD Mreža (*Kulturno-Umetniško Društvo*, Cultural-Artistic Society Network)⁸ is somehow the successor of The Network for Metelkova, run by Nataša Serec, and is responsible for the organisation of festivals and cultural events. It is also responsible for the publications related to Metelkova, the photographic archive and fund raising. Furthermore, KUD Mreža has a word to say on what concerns the urban furniture projects and large-scale artistic installations planned for the common outside spaces. KUD Mreža is also responsible to establish some formal links, like the one set with Trans Europe Halls.

A-Infoshop is a space for research and development of anarchist theory and practice, run in part by anthropology students. This collective was previously squatting another building, and was known as the Kolektiv AC Molotov. They were invited to come to Metelkova and occupy the vacant space existing over Menza pri Koritu.

THE CLUBS

Gromka: initially founded as a theatre company (focused on circus, pyrotechnic activities and other), led by Andrej Morovič, it hosts today (apart from a theatre group and theatre performances) also concerts, parties, movies and talks. Besides, it hosts the programme of the Workers' Punk University (Delavsko-punkerska univerza). This educational project has started in 1998, is affiliated with the Peace Institute and is run by the Institute of Labour Studies since 2012. It provides lectures, debates and reading seminars on "pertinent political topics tacitly ignored by most of the established academia" and its slogan is *Nasvidenje v naslednji revoluciji!* ("See you in the next revolution!"). This university seeks to provide an "alternative to the established production of knowledge, not merely on the level of content but also in terms of its organisational structure". Consequently, "the students themselves organise and lead it." Some of the discussed topics are: "Revolution, Neo-Conservatism, The New Right, The Left, Utopistics, May '68: reVISION, Post-Fordism, Totalitarianism, Stupidity, School as Economy's Ideological Apparatus, The Class Struggle after the Class Struggle, Financialisation and The Double Crisis of European Integration", but also Psychoanalysis, Theory of Art, Philosophy or Transformations in Art⁹.

Menza pri Koritu: Apart from its curious roof construction (made by Axt und Kelle) and the façade decorated with troubling figures/characters/monsters, this project offers concerts, movies, talks, theatre performances and youth activities.

Gala Hall: a club run by KAPA¹⁰ and offers concerts and parties

Channel Zero: is particularly known for its trance music parties. The latter hosts also a very small art gallery named Mizzart.

Monokel and **Tiffany** are dedicated to the homosexual community (lesbian and gay, respectively), offering also night parties and dj sets and performances.

state are funding the “autonomous” cultural centre (Plut 2013). Considering itself as a producer of “alternative” or “independent” art and culture, today, nevertheless, most of its production is indeed not “autonomous”, because it is subsidised by the Ministry of Culture (Nabergoj 2014; Korda 2014). So, in 2002, the sponsors of Metelkova were: the city council (23%), the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Sport (39%), the European Cultural Foundation, the Soros Foundation and the Kulturkontakt (33%), besides a few local entities (5%) (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 169).

Nonetheless, Metelkova is still characterised by its horizontal structure and keeps a democratic organisation. Once a month there are assemblies to discuss Metelkova’s main problems. The Metelkova’s community acts both as creator and as user. Most of all, Metelkova is an extraordinary example of collective production of space, art and conviviality, as we will see. On this subject, the philosopher and artist Marina Gržinić recalls the words of Mary Jane Jacob, which she finds adequate to express the case of Metelkova, as a good example of “culture in action” (Gržinić 2006, 326). Marko Hren sees Metelkova as a very concrete project involving urban reality and young people, that being the reason why he ran MzM for eight years (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 163).

We were not able to stop the war nor were we able to fulfil our ambition of demilitarizing the country. For me, personally, Metelkova was a sort of compensation.

Hren (2013)

However, Metelkova has acquired a bad reputation on some strata of Ljubljana’s population: “Elderly people suspect the presence of vice and drugs and find the graffiti on the walls particularly threatening. In the hospital opposite, methadone is issued to drug users. Popular opinion identifies these addicts with the Metelkova”, which, according to Trans Europe Halls and Bordage (2002, 168) transmits a false image.

Reputation, economic sustainability and internal conflicts

The long years of struggle and negotiation changed Marko Hren into “a realist” (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 165). In an interview published by the TransEurope Halls in 2002, he expresses his frustration when asked about the Northern part of Metelkova, which he considers to be an “organisational chaos” due to the lack of consistent policies behind it. The different social groups, a wide range of generations and diverse political orientations actually contribute to the big heterogeneous character of Metelkova. However, Hren complains that no common structure exists, which places Metelkova in a weak position.

Ten years later, Hren confirms his disappointment, noting that Metelkova failed at the economic sustainability level. “If you’re only sustained by public funds, you’ll only last as long as those funds last” (Hren 2013). He explains that, in order to sustain autonomy, people should invest and create profit. Following these logics, the initial plan for Metelkova considered a three-part funding model: one third being the result of the activity of MzM, another third coming from direct input by Metelkova’s members, and the last third being based on external-funding. Hren

believed this could have worked well, since Metelkova's project was placed on public land, and located in a good geographic place (central and close to the train station) (Hren 2013). But Hren accuses Metelkova's community for this failure. These individuals, who "call themselves 'marginals'" and pretend to be proletarians and grassroots, are instead "the sons of the elite of Ljubljana". These "bobos" "have an empty sense of business and should not be claiming for free spaces". He states that elite should invest and not apply for funding (Hren 2014). When people create an autonomous space, they should administer it themselves, thus being able to create true independence, which is not happening at Metelkova, defends Hren. He worked out in 1995, together with the architect Kevin Kaufman, an "ambitious development plan", which he would have liked to see accomplished. Nevertheless, the architectural plan – which included a plan of economic sustainability – never saw the daylight (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 165).

According to the British psychologist Ian Parker, the famous philosopher Žižek also blames Metelkova's anarchists of being "spoilt children of the old apparatus, that [...] unfairly [use] local authority land." On the other hand, the activists from Metelkova contest that it is possible to make the same charge against Žižek himself, condemning him for supporting the authorities while "looking down on them from his expensive apartment building which is right next to Metelkova site." (Parker 2012).

Privatisation and Stagnation

While Metelkova was under threat and pressured by external elements, their people were unified by a common struggle. Today Metelkova is relatively pacified, despite being consumed by internal conflicts. These conflicts, struggles and several other multiple dimensions are precisely the features that expose the complexity of Metelkova's universe, well illustrating the idea of Metelkova being a "city within the city". Neven Korda understands Metelkova rather as "a picture of the whole society" condensed in a "small laboratory" (Korda 2014).

Today, at Metelkova, things change very slowly. There is no rotation of artists, some having studios there since about 20 years. According to Sebastjan Krawczyk, who works at Galerija Alkatraz, this is a controversial issue, because Metelkova is a squat, therefore space should be common. At the same time no one has the power to throw people out (Krawczyk 2014). A kind of a public competition for a vacant studio at Metelkova had place, at last, in 2011 (the sociologist Andrej Pezelj got the place), but in general new people do not enter Metelkova unless under informal exchange agreements between friends, or temporary "subleasing" (Pezelj 2014).

Both artists Neven Korda¹⁴ and the curator and art historian Miha Colner¹⁵ are harsh critics of the "privatisation" process Metelkova has underwent (Korda 2014; Colner 2012). Colner, for instance, stresses the hypocrisy of the squatting, where people arrive and occupy spaces that quickly start to call "their own", the ones they lock to prevent the access to other people, keeping them this

¹⁴ Neven Korda was a member of the group FV 112/15 and of the music band Borghesia during the 1980s (See "Philosophical and Artistic Alternative Movements" in 6.1.1. chapter). Korda squatted his studio at AKC Metelkova Mesto in 2004.

¹⁵ Miha Colner is an art curator for Photon Gallery. He works also for SCCA and Radio Študent.

way for decades. He complains most spaces at Metelkova are not common, being instead only accessible to 'certain' people.

Popularisation and Entertainment

Furthermore, the growing "popularisation" of Metelkova is also a subject of critique by the previously mentioned two artists, who assert that Metelkova serves rather for entertainment than for a real artistic alternative production (Korda 2014; Colner 2012). People who run the clubs today have, according to Colner, 100% profit, since they don't pay rent nor taxes. Colner highlights that these places have a doorman, and that one must generally pay to access the events the clubs organise. The managers of the clubs changed in the course of the years, but the spaces and the names of the places remain the same. They claim they are anti-capitalist and anti-neoliberal, but Korda thinks these people are not aware of the social situation that is behind the history of Metelkova and made it possible, i.e. the history of the movements of contestation existing under the communist regime. He refers the thinking of Rastko Močnik as the basis of the intellectual background that made the alternative movements, and Metelkova, possible. The mentioned managers believe they are the heroes and the ones to whom Metelkova owes what it is today, but in fact they are only taking the credits for the results of the past (Korda 2014).

Metelkova is one of the historic achievements of alternative social, political and cultural practices in the eighties¹¹.

Močnik (2006)¹⁶

Metelkova's cultural production

In his dissertation about "Alternative Culture Production", in which Metelkova is the main case study, Neven Korda stresses the relationship between "independent culture" and "dominant culture", defending that, from an economic point of view, both produce in the same way; which is confirmed by the process of production, the way of employing people, the used technology and the diffusion of the product (culture, in this case). "Autonomous" culture instead (what Korda identifies as "praxis") used to be produced by the "counter-culture", "subcultures" or "underground" movements. But, in this particular social context, just the name "alternative" remains today. These movements and the approaches that thrive on them evolve, suffer transformations along time, becoming more organised, normalised, and often become institutions. This way, Korda concludes that Metelkova is just a reproduction of the dominant model (Korda 2014; Korda 2008).

However, one may ask: is the "dominant model" also inspired by Metelkova? I.e., "dominant culture" is it inspired by "counter-culture", the "alternative" cultural production, or not? These

¹⁶ Močnik, Rastko, 2006. *Zakaj je Metelkova pomembna*. (Accessible at: www.kudmreza.org/teksti/zakaj%20je%20metelkova%20pomembna.pdf, accessed on 25.08.2008. Quoted by Korda, 2008).

exchanges actually occur in both senses, copying and influencing each other. Nonetheless, while Metelkova, for instance, seems to absorb the faults and vices of the institutional and bureaucratic society, the latter seems ultimately to be using and taking advantage of the originality and joyful creativity produced by this kind of spaces, while instrumentalising them at the same time for its own profit.

If in the past the alternative movements in Ljubljana were engaged in a common struggle against the communist system, today Metelkova and its people seem to have adapted, or even adhered, to the new market laws (e.g. club managing and private businesses). However, these laws seem to be less tolerant than the ones Metelkova's community used to fight in the past (imposed by the City or the State). Consequently, and in order to survive in such a competitive world, people have no other choice but to change and adapt. That is what Korda refers to, in the abstract of his article written for the ČKZ journal, written to commemorate the 20 years of Metelkova. In this article, he mentions that the ACC exists today under the conditions of the present neoliberal market-oriented time and services in an era essentially characterised by the creative industries (Korda 2013).

Spatial analysis

Metelkova Mesto includes 6 buildings inside an area of more than 12,000 m². In order to better understand its visual and spatial atmosphere, it is important to understand the conditions that underlie them.

After the partial destruction of some of the buildings of Metelkova, they have been rebuilt by the community under the politics of "all for one and one for all" (Plut 2013). In the beginning the artists were not looking for temporary spaces to work, but rather for permanent ones. That is why they decided to try the legal way, through the establishment of an agreement with the municipality (Nabergoj 2014). They were looking for private studios, which meant that the initial idea was to proceed to a space division. But the squat took place and Metelkova's space became then "common". And, as the future of this space was uncertain, Metelkova North became a kind of a Temporary Autonomous Zone – TAZ (Bey 1985) – though, after all the situation has lasted many years. According to the musician Bratko Bibič, a squat is a form of resistance, through spatial occupation, to the "ruthless abuse of power" of authorities. Therefore, these authorities started to consider this place dangerous, because it was autonomous and out of their control (Bibič 2003).

After the initial enthusiasm concerning the common space and the project, the studios started, step by step, to be privatised. With lockers being placed on the doors, the project acquired a kind of a "territorial" nature, and there were almost no rotation of artists in the studios for the next 20 years¹⁷.

¹⁷ Except for one or two exceptions, in which studios were left empty for long moments, being therefore "re-squatted". It is the case of the studio of Neven Korda, who defends his cause by stating that "this is the law of the strongest" (Korda 2014).

Architecture is war. War is architecture.

Architecture and war are not incompatible. (...) I am at war with my time, with history, with all authority that resides in fixed and frightened forms. (...) I know only moments, and lifetimes that are as moments, and forms that appear with infinite strength, then "melt into air." I am an architect, a constructor of worlds, a sensualist who worships the flesh, the melody, a silhouette against the darkening sky. I cannot know your name. Nor you can know mine. Tomorrow, we begin together the construction of a city.

Lebbeus Woods (2002, 1)

When mentioning the ideological clash between activists, artists and the military officials, Bratko Bibič defines the first steps of the history of Metelkova as an "urbicide" (Bibič 2003). Bibič addresses the work of the American architect Lebbeus Woods, while highlighting the role that Metelkova's space had in process of changing of functions. He sees the process Metelkova followed as "a war against the existing war" (the existing war being represented by the military barracks); the difference is that the new war was a peaceful and an "artistic" one, which took the shape of a utopia through a symbolical transformation of the function of space. Furthermore, Bibič draws a parallel between the 1993 destruction of Metelkova's buildings and the almost inevitable association with the escalating destruction of Bosnia that was occurring at the same time (and whose images of ruins were arriving to Ljubljana through the media¹⁸) (Bibič 2003).

A few holes were left as scars of this "Metelkova's war" on the walls of its buildings. Instead of erasing these scars, Metelkova's community decided to restore the buildings and leave those marks (img 241). This decision was recorded in the Metelkova's Development Plan (1994-95), which defined the principles of "community architecture", headed by K. Kaufman, a New York architect seasoned in the squats of Brooklyn and Manhattan. According to this plan, "the holes [made in the process of demolition] will be incorporated into the façade design [through a spontaneous recycling of space] as an object or even as a 'material' manipulated by the language of art." (Bibič 2003). Just like it is possible to find today, written everywhere in Mostar (Bosnia), for instances "We can forgive, but never forget", so the users of Metelkova did not want to forget the signs of their struggle. Curiously, the most emblematic transformation of those walls that is today visible at Metelkova – the wall of Alkatraz gallery – is located in the "Square with no Historic Memory"¹⁹.

In 1997, a new decision was "issued by the (new) municipality authorities to complete the demolition work". The reaction of Metelkova's community this time was to cover the façades with mosaics, with the help of an international group of young artists: "Art will protect the building", the idea being that this would become a never-ending work-in-progress. It started in the Stable building (where some festivals and workshops of creation of mosaics have been organised by Andrej Morovič²⁰ (Krawczyk 2014)), then it spread everywhere around Metelkova, becoming somehow its "trademark", the visual aesthetic element of "unity" of ACC, or simply one of the main elements of the "Metelkova Style" (img 242). What happened in the Stable's wall

¹⁸ At this time, Celica hosted the exhibition "Urbicide", presenting large-format black and white photographs documenting the destruction of Mostar, simultaneous as it occurred (Bibič 2003).

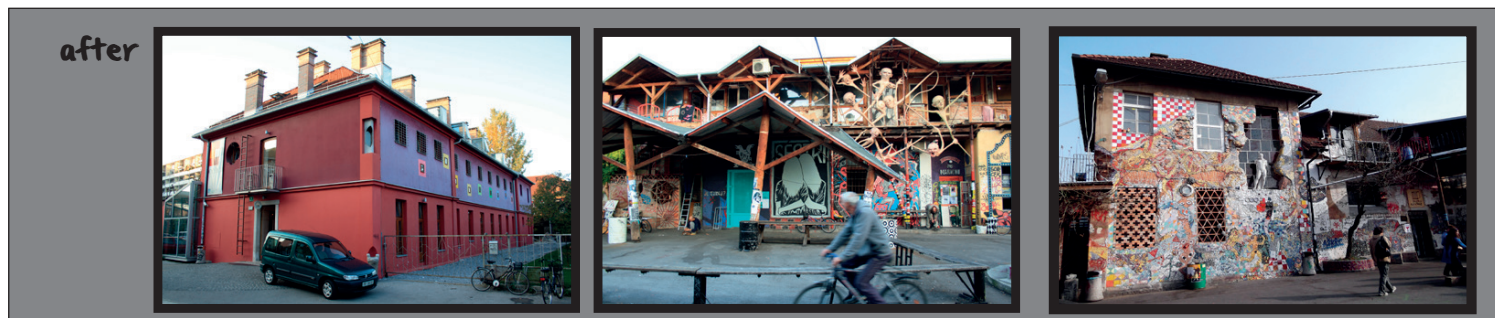
¹⁹ www.culture.si/en/Metelkova_mesto_Autonomous_Cultural_Zone.

²⁰ This was a sponsored project (Plut 2013).

The holes



The buildings (Zapori and Hlev) destroyed after the machines came (1993, archive pictures found at the website of KUD Mreža).



The same buildings, today (2012-2014).

Img 241. The holes as memorials of the destruction (1993) and part of the design process of renovation. (source: archive pictures found at the website of KUD Mreža)

translates the “traditions of avant-garde”, “contemporary artistic practices” and the “aesthetics of subcultures” (Bibič 2003): the collage/assemblage used by the Slovenian artistic movements of the 1980s NSK, a probable reference to Gaudí and Hundertwasser (Plut 2013) and the punk/hippie recycling and DIY practices, respectively.

Hence, the holes have remained as a symbol of resistance to demolition and destruction, working as a memorial that reminds the history of the occupation, a proof of how damaged buildings can become a public architectural installation through the use of “bricolage of recycled waste, ready-made objects and cheap materials” (Bibič 2003).

Mosaics have also been applied to some of the street furniture that can be found at Metelkova. This street furniture and, in addition, some other done with metallic structures or wood, are also curious and significant elements of Metelkova’s aesthetics (and ambiance). On the one hand, they are a work-in-progress produced by the community – one artist starts, and others continue the work –, therefore a mix of styles and skills (arts + architecture + crafts); on the other hand, they contribute to welcome visitors and trigger the conviviality of the community. At last, these objects contribute to the appropriation of the public space and to mark the territory (img 242). These objects work therefore both as practical and artistic projects. In the present day, the new street furniture proposed for Metelkova’s space are discussed in the first place in the assemblies, KUD Mreža having nevertheless a final word to say before its execution.

Some of this street furniture was made by the voluntary work of the travelling German artists and craftsman *Axt und Kelle* (“Ax and Trowel”). This group also helped to rebuild the Hangar building and *Črna Kuhinja* (img 243), as well as the curious roof of *Menza pri Koritu* (img 244), greatly contributing to the new image of Metelkova.

Something unexpected, however, is the gentrification process that nowadays seems to take place at Metelkova Mesto which, according to Neven Korda, comes rather from the inside than being

triggered from the outside (municipality or the state). Korda refers, for instance, the cleaning and security team that has been hired by the ACC (on Friday and Saturday nights) as a sign of that process. He finds it weird, and claims it is a kind of a “hidden ideology” (Korda 2014).

Visual Aesthetics

For the last twenty years the protagonists of the AAC Metelkova City have been transforming its public space and the façades of the buildings by architectural, constructional, artistic and handcraft interventions. This entire area must be perceived as a work-in-progress: some segments often disappear or are gradually overlapped with other interventions. According to Saša Nabergoj, art historian, curator and critic, and assistant director of SCCA, the failure of Metelkova’s initial master plan ended up, in this perspective, to be a success, because it allowed Metelkova to develop organically and acquire an “unitary” aesthetics that was built along time (Nabergoj 2014). In the same line of ideas, Jadranka Plut also believes that, if Metelkova hadn’t been squatted it would look completely different, “more boring, more institutional” (Plut 2013).

Something very important at Metelkova is the art that can be found in the outside spaces. Most of it comes and goes, being transformed all the time (Plut 2013). It is somehow agreed, inside the community, that not everything (in this case, works of art) should be preserved at Metelkova (Nabergoj 2014). Here, art often has a functional character, apart from an aesthetical one. Most importantly, however, is the fact that the art produced and exposed at Metelkova’s public spaces is usually a cooperation work between artists and craftsmen. Another particularity is its spontaneity: there is no curator, and artists are allowed to continue the work of others, though showing some respect for the existing work. For instance, if the colours of a mural start to fade away, the remaining elements can be used as a starting point (Krawczyk 2014). The street furniture also, as we have seen, has this evolutionary character.

According to the sociologist Andrej Peselj, an alternative practice cannot be considered autonomous without doing away with the concepts of *authorship* and *work of art*. At Metelkova, for instance, nobody claims the authorship of the artistic works that are exposed there (Pezelj 2014). In this sense Metelkova should be seen as a “total work of art” (*Gesamtkunstwerk*), according to Saša Nabergoj: a *whole* that includes visual arts, crafts, sculpture and architecture (img 242-247), resulting in a “modern cabinet of wonders²¹, where tradition is combined with modernity, art with crafts”. These heterogeneous practices result in a hybrid, nevertheless homogenous, general environment, which leads to the *recycling* process and to the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) – or rather “Do-It-With-Others” – approaches, two of the creative ruling principles of Metelkova²². Ingenuity, commitment and willingness to collaborate are the key ingredients of Metelkova’s community creation process (Nabergoj 2013, 33, 39; Nabergoj 2014).

²¹ According to Sebastjan Krawczyk, Metelkova holds the aesthetics of a “cabinet of a circus” because it has a lot of “freaky stuff” (Krawczyk 2014).

²² In the several interviews that were made with different people, during the 20th anniversary of Metelkova Mesto, the issue of “Metelkova’s art” is discussed: the most common idea is that Metelkova is made of recycled art, and some artists claim that Metelkova’s artistic production is *arte povera*.” (Krawczyk 2014).

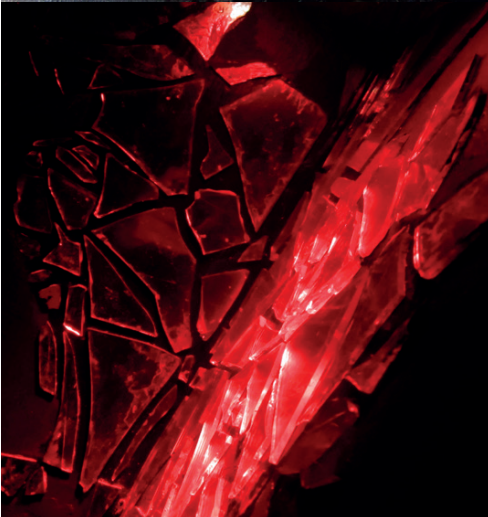
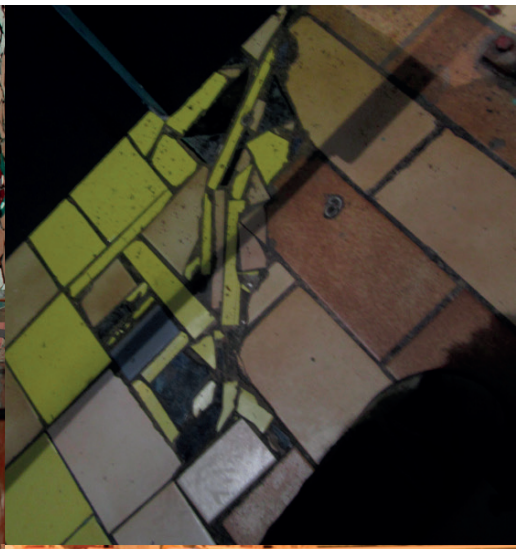
According to Bratko Bibič, “Contemporary (public) art (...) does not wish to represent the power of the state, the success of a well-managed city” policy and/or the spectacular power of the capital”, being far more interested in “critical, analytical, also subversive attitudes to the complexities, contradictions and conflicts of urban space and life” (Bibič 2003). After participating in a guided tour with Jadranka Plut and Sebastian Krawczyk through Metelkova, one gets the impression that most of the existing artwork has a political meaning and a symbology of resistance: anti-repression, anti-war, anti-corruption... For instance, the big graffiti of the rats on the wall of Metelkova 6 reminds the people who were squatting Metelkova during the Dark Days, considered like rats. A few other examples are (img 244):

- a granite obelisk, erected the day after police swooped Metelkova looking for evidence of conspiracy, suspected to be made by anti-globalists against the New World Order (Bibič 2003);
- a big sculpture of a cocktail Molotov holding an image of the former prime minister of Slovenia, Janez Janša, made when the corruption affairs were found out;
- a sculpture representing the eternal fire;
- sculptures used as barricades, built to prevent the destruction of the building Mala šola;
- even the street furniture has a political engagement, as we have seen.

However, Saša Nabergoj believes that the art today produced at Metelkova is no longer subversive, even if it addresses the subject of resistance. Though it has inherited a particular historical background, the most recent artwork is no longer produced within such a context, reflecting only nostalgia for the revolution period (Nabergoj 2014; Nabergoj 2013, 30). Furthermore, many of this “subversive” art projects are actually financed by MOL (Krawczyk 2014).

As far as what concerns Metelkova seen as an attractive visual and spatial environment, it is interesting to realise that a few commercials were filmed there (e.g. Opel, Telecom, fashion pub...). The advertisers assert they do like this environment (the colours, the graffiti and the sculptures), using it as a background scenography, desiring this way to attract the attention of young people (Pezelj 2014). In principle, KUD Mreža says no to commercial proposals, but sometimes cannot control the process, since Metelkova is precisely a “free” space, open to everyone.

The aestheticisation process of the “Metelkova-style” is also visible at its website, where the logotype, for example, has cut-out letters (as if they had been cut from a newspaper) reminding a handmade punk-style *collage* (img 248). Yet, a contradictory element can be found next to it, at this same webpage: rules of how Metelkova’s users should use the space, and how to respect it (img 249). This unexpected element reveals the previously mentioned “bottom-up gentrification process” of ACC, referred by Neven Korda.



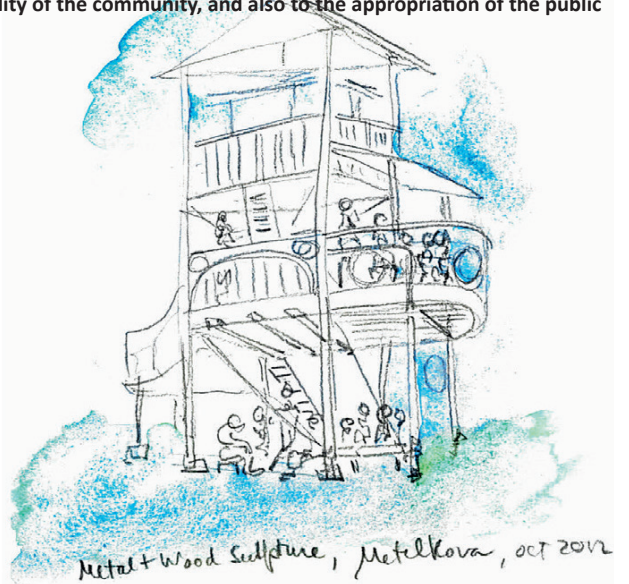
< Img 242. Mosaics as the element of unity of Metelkova's visual and aes



Img 244. The curious roof of Menza pri Koritu, made by Axt und Kelle (ource: Kud Mreza 2001)



Img 243. Črna Kuhinja and street furniture (metallic structures, wood, brick + painting, mosaics). A work-in-progress produced by the community in a mix of styles and skills (arts + architecture + crafts). These objects work both as practical and artistic projects, contributing to welcome visitors and trigger the conviviality of the community, and also the appropriation of the public space.



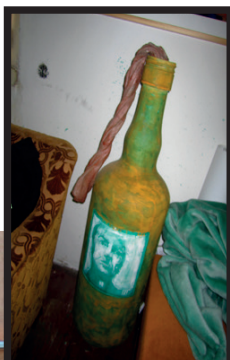
Cocktail Molotov with the picture of Janez Janša >

Img 244. Political engaged art of Metelkova Mesto.

Sculptures as barricades.



Rat : the symbol of Metelkova Mesto



Granite obelisk.





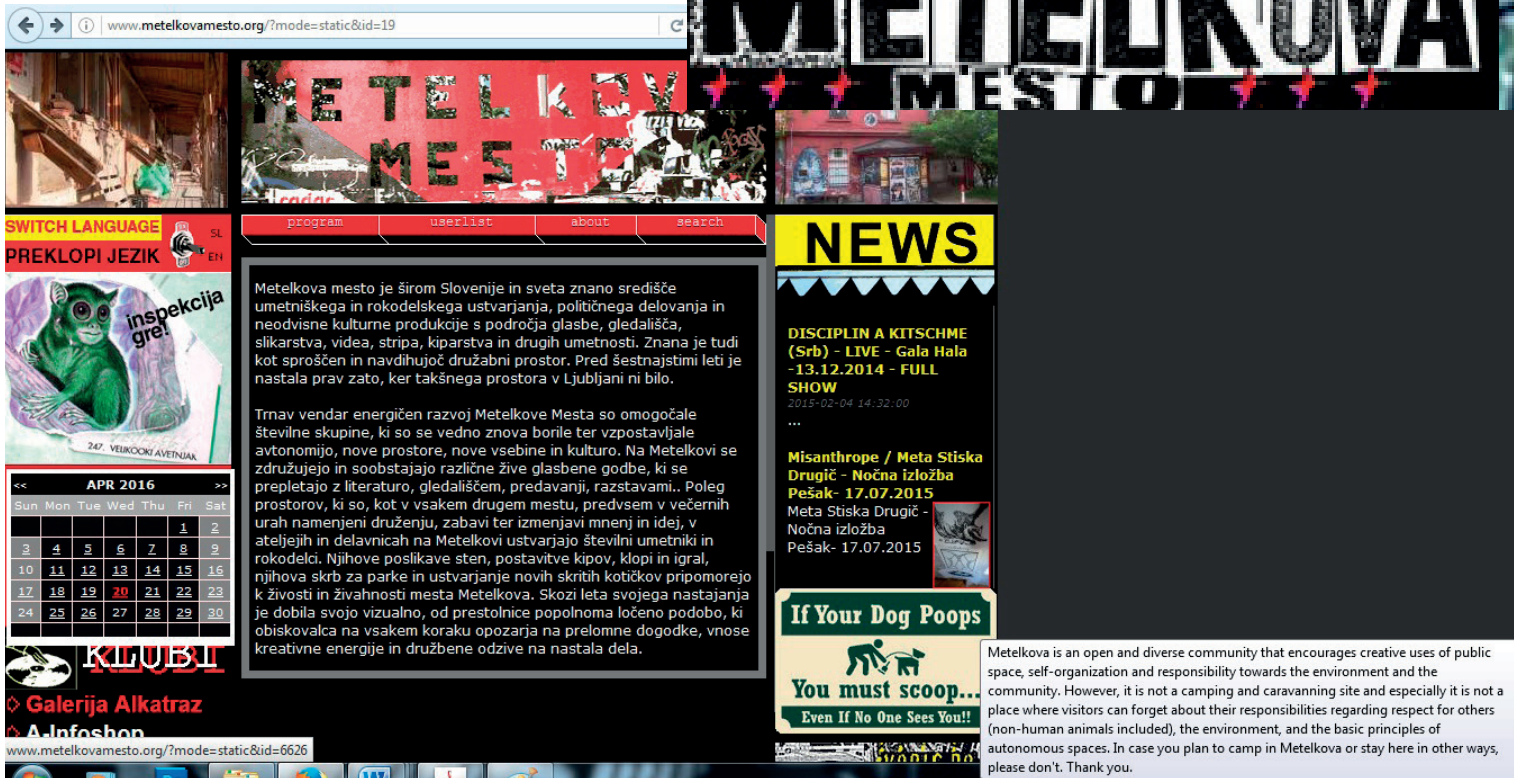


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247

Img 248. Metelkova Mesto's website (April 2016).



Img 249. Rules of how to use Metelkova's space, on the main webpage of ACC Metelkova:

1. collect your dog's shit;
 2. "Metelkova is an open and diverse community that encourages creative uses of public space, self-organization and responsibility towards the environment and the community. However, it is not a camping and caravanning site and especially it is not a place where visitors can forget about their responsibilities regarding respect for others (non-human animals included), the environment, and the basic principles of autonomous spaces. In case you plan to camp in Metelkova or stay here in other ways, please don't. Thank you."
- (available at www.metelkovamesto.org/?mode=static&id=6626 , accessed on 20.04.2016)

< Img 245-247 (p. 305-306). Details of Metelkova Mesto that show how this space is a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or a Total Work of Art. Visual arts, crafts, sculpture, architecture, urban furniture... this hybrid general environment mixes tradition and modernity, by recycling the most diverse objects through a DIY and "Do-It-With-Others" approach.

< Img 246-247 (p. 306). General ambiances of Metelkova Mesto. Continuous work-in-progress objects: art and urban furniture; beautiful and useful.

Img 250. Comics by Andrej Štular, published in Stripburger >



Borderline buildings between North and South

Metelkova 6

Though this building belongs to the Ministry of Culture – therefore “officially” part of Metelkova South – its users and the activities they promote stand close to the spirit of Metelkova North. It is here that we can find the offices of the Slovenian Peace Institute²³, but also many others NGOs related with culture, research and social issues, like the SCCA-Ljubljana Centre for Contemporary Arts²⁴, the Maska Institute²⁵, the Forum Ljubljana²⁶, the City of Women²⁷, the Ekran magazine²⁸ and the Strip Core (the responsible for the publishing of the comics magazine *Stripburger*²⁹ - img 250).

This building represents, in a way, Metelkova’s border between the two different worlds (Metelkova North and Metelkova South), but also works as a link between the squat world and the institutions.

23 The Peace Institute was founded in 1991 by a group of independent intellectuals, in which Marko Hren participated. Its initial focus was on peace studies and issues of violence, war, and security. Currently the Institute leads an interdisciplinary research focused on five thematic fields: human rights, cultural policy, media, gender, and politics. “In 2010, the institute published *The Scars of the Erasure*, a research monograph on the erased people in Slovenia.” In 1998, the educational project *Workers’ Punk University* was created (see *Gromka Club* for more details and www.culture.si/en/Peace_Institute_-_Institute_for_Contemporary_Social_and_Political_Studies).

24 Established in 2000, SCCA-Ljubljana Centre for Contemporary Arts is a successor of the Soros Centre for Contemporary Arts (1993–1999). It focuses on the documentation, presentation and reflexion on contemporary arts practices, and functions as a public platform that enables debates and presentations. It offers practical skills and theoretical education in the field of contemporary arts and curatorial expertise, area in which its activities are addressed to artists, curators, theorists, and critics in the fields of visual and new media arts. SCCA proposes alternative ways of display and public presentations organised under the “No Nails, No Pedestals” and “Studio 6” programmes, and often collaborates and/or prepares exhibitions in Škuc Gallery or Alkatraz Gallery, for example. It also cooperates with other entities, like for instance Ljudmila (Ljubljana Digital Media Lab). Furthermore, SCCA has a library and videotheque. (Available at www.culture.si/en/SCCA-Ljubljana_Centre_for_Contemporary_Arts).

25 Maska Institute is an organisation for publishing, production, education, and research, founded in 1993. According to the site www.culture.si/en/Maska_Institute: “It is divided into three departments: Maska Productions (performances, interdisciplinary and visual artworks), Maska Publishing (the performing arts journal Maska as well as books and other publications on contemporary performance and society), and Maska Symposium (an ongoing seminar about contemporary stage arts). Its activities engage in contemporary art and theory, research, experimental performing practices, interdisciplinary art, and critical theory, all with a strong emphasis on international cooperation, especially throughout the entire space of Europe.”

26 Forum Ljubljana is a production company that covers diverse forms of contemporary art, multimedia and new media. One of its sections is the multimedia art group Strip Core (the *Stripburger* comic magazine). Another one is a film production unit (initially meant for art video films). One of its media projects is the Nebo Puppet Theatre, which links comics’ producers, puppeteers and new technologies. (Available at www.culture.si/en/Forum_Ljubljana).

27 The “City of Women International Festival of Contemporary Arts” is an international festival of contemporary arts, first organised in 1995 “as an initiative of the Governmental Women’s Policy Office (later renamed as the “Equal Opportunities Office”) in order to draw attention to the relative lack of participation and presentation of women in the arts.” (Available at www.culture.si/en/City_of_Women).

28 *Ekran* is a magazine that provides a general overview of the contemporary film production (mainstream and independent, Slovenian and foreigner). It was established in 1962 and has always “followed current tendencies in film criticism, analysis and debates”, like for instance “in its most influential period – when Slavoj Žižek, Mladen Dolar, Zdenko Vrdlovec, and others introduced Lacanian concepts into film theory” (Available at www.culture.si/en/Ekran,_Magazine_for_Film_and_Television).

29 Launched in 1992 by Strip Core, *Stripburger* is a multilingual alternative comics’ magazine. It became quite renowned on the international (especially European) comics scene. Apart from the comics’ magazine *Stripburger*, Strip Core is publishing stand-alone comics’ books, original works and translations, and focus on comics exhibitions in Slovenia and abroad. (Available at www.culture.si/en/Stripburger and www.culture.si/en/Strip_Core). The editorial body visits and participates in several festivals, book fairs and galleries and, in January 2001, the magazine won an award at the International Festival of Comic Art in Angoulême in the category for the best fanzine. (Available at www.stripburger.org/language/en/stripburger/about/).

Celica

Celica was the former prison of Metelkova's barracks. When Metelkova was squatted, a group of artists named Sestava (*Composition*) started gradually transforming the prison into a youth hostel as a symbol of freedom by through the gathering of the themes of "art" and "travel", "creativity" and "motion". Instead of prisoners, this building should from then on welcome guests in a "lively (...) and colourful environment born out of (...) culture of conflict" (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 168–69).

This "nice hostel with an innovative concept and a nice history", and "very well designed" (Hren 2013), turned out to be a disillusion to Hren, who criticises Celica to be today a public enterprise instead of the autonomous space he had imagined for that building (img 251).

Sestava worked on the design and decoration of the cells during nine years, "purifying the space" into something "positive", "cleaning the space from bad energy" – a new age ideology, according to Sebastien Krawczyk and Saša Nabergoj (Krawczyk 2014; Nabergoj 2014). It was supposed to be a permanent work in progress (Hren 2008, 245), but today the artistic transformations seem to have stopped. This youth hostel has actually become a "cultural object" (Nabergoj 2014) and today it is probably the coolest place where young people can stay as tourists while visiting Ljubljana. It was, since the beginning, created with a profit orientation, but meant to be an independent project. Today it is, instead (after a contract made with MOL), run by ŠOU³⁰ (the Students Organisation of Ljubljana).

Spatial Analysis

As previously mentioned, Celica has a particular status inside Metelkova Mesto. This fact is reflected on its architectural details and art. The painting of its façade walls is colourful but homogeneous, constantly looking as being freshly made (img 252). Then, the interior walls and general environment are also very clean and bright, on the one hand, and very arty and cool on the other hand. It is a hotspot for hipsters, which offers nice meals and a varied 'world music' style offer (img 253). At Celica, on the other side, it is possible to find surveillance cameras, information plates and all the necessary fire safety tools (extinguishers, alarms, etc) (img 254).

Apart from its thematic chambers (the ancient prison cells) – each one having been designed by one Sestava artist (img 255) –, in one of the common rooms one can only enter with no shoes and has to sit down on the floor over some carpets or pillows (img 256). The desire of creating specific ambiance styles is evident. Besides, in this same room it is possible to find elements from the "exterior world" of Metelkova Mesto, like the mosaics, for example (img 257). These mosaics were made more or less at the same time as those that can be found on the other walls and furniture at Metelkova. However, Celica's ones are clearly distinct, since they have been

³⁰ According to Marko Hren, ŠOU is one of the most corrupted organisations of Slovenia (Hren 2014), which gets financed with a percentage of the students' work. This organisation did not imagine Celica would become such a profitable business. With the income from the hostel, ŠOU was initially supposed to invest in the improvement of students infrastructures (canteens, housing, libraries...), but invested instead in hostels and restaurants (like in K4, for instance) (Pezelj 2014). Nonetheless, Sestava gets a part of the income of the hostel (Nabergoj 2014).



Ljubljana Youth Hostel ← Art Gallery ← Former Prison



Img 251. Flyer to promote Youth Hostel Celica.

touristification



Img 252. Fresh painted walls and tourist invasion.

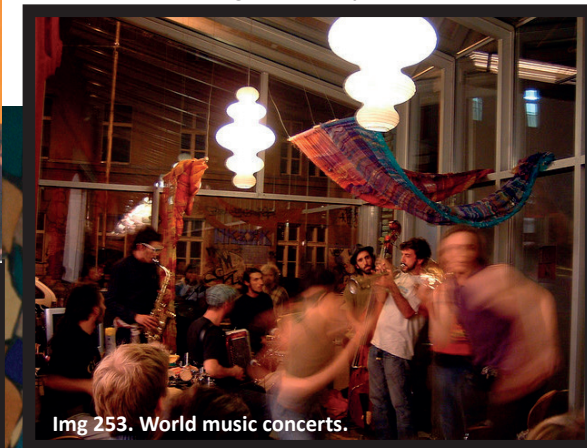
WWW.HOSTELCELICA.COM
Metelkova 8, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija



Art exposed in the corridors.

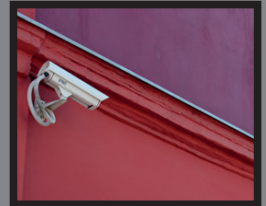
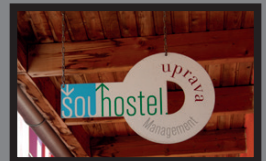


Img 256. Eating room with mosaics



Img 253. World music concerts.

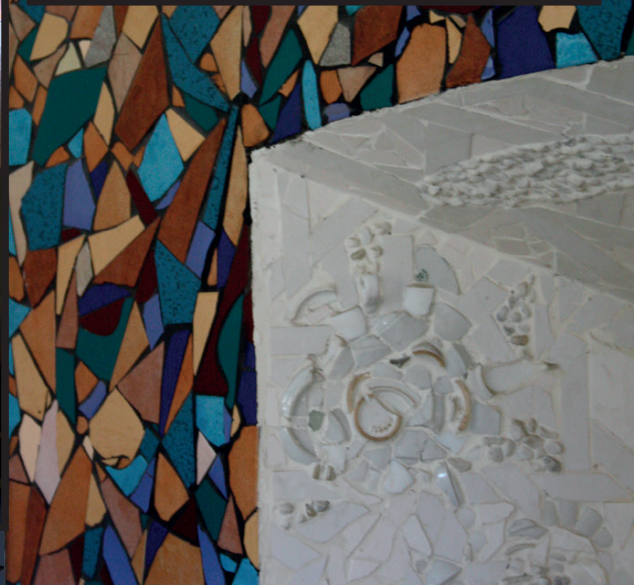
normalisation



Img 254. Surveillance cameras and fire extinguishers and alarms.



< Img 257. Mosaics at Celica Hostel (homogeneous, uniform, stylised, clean, polished).



Img 255 - The cells/rooms designed by artists (Sestava)



Corridor that accesses the cells.

displayed in a homogeneous way. This means that – even if they look like being aleatory placed, and its colours are varied – their size is rather uniform, they are stylised, their aspect is clean, and they are carefully polished so that no unpleasant accidents might occur (like cutting a hand in an irregular edge, for instance, something that actually could eventually occur with the Alkatraz’s walls).

This youth hostel, as part of an international touristic network, has necessarily to follow some rules of safety and hygiene. Although being placed on an “autonomous” territory – a squat – it is actually not part of it, since it is managed by an institutional organisation (ŠOU). Furthermore – and this is a big difference – when comparing it with the surrounding exterior environment, when visiting the building one gets informed that the art exposed in its rooms has an author.

Nonetheless, something contradictory happened in what concerns *Alkatraz’s* wall: once it became “pretty”, it acquired architectonic and artist value, becoming therefore a “cultural heritage”. Once it acquires this status the wall becomes somehow protected, consequently “frozen” (it is no longer possible to destroy it or edit it), and part of the dominant system (Nabergoj 2013, 40). This process is more evident, and also more contradictory at *Alkatraz’s* walls than at *Celica’s* because of the autonomy the first one claims vis-à-vis the prevailing system.



*



Façade of Infantry



Façade of Hunters



Façade of Stable



Façade of Garages (of an artist's studio)



Façade of Garages

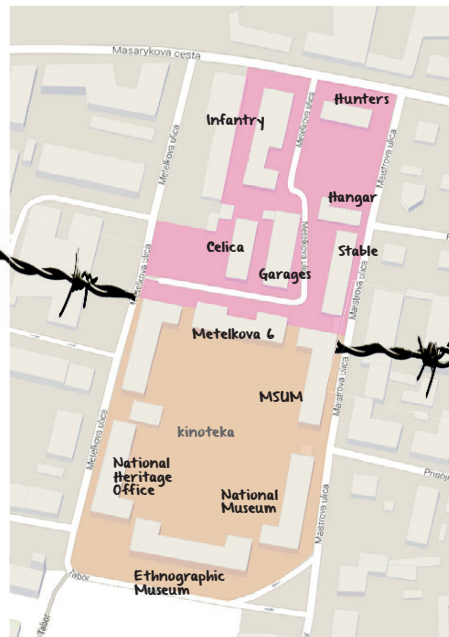


Façade of Metelkova 6 (facing Metelkova North)



Img 261. The border between Metelkova North and Metelkova South is clear: the white and «clean» pavement of MS contrasting with the dark, «dirty» and cahotic ambiance of MN (2013). This is also the place where the graffiti «Umetnost / Kreativnost» can be found (see image on the right side >).

Metelkova South



Img 258. Map of Metelkova (North & South).

Metelkova North



Img 262. «Umetnost / Kreativnost» (Art / Creativity) - a graffiti made at the border of the two Metelkova worlds (2013). «Art» stands for Metelkova South, and «Creativity» for Metelkova North (Mesto).



MSUM's façade



National Heritage Office's façade



National Museum's façade



Access to Cinematheque (Kinoteka)



Ethnographic Museum's façade



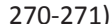



Uneven square




Metelkova South

Metelkova South has been at the centre of a typical European official cultural strategy, a place where a “museum island” has been planned. The six buildings (that have been empty until the end of 1996) host today the Ethnography museum (SEM), the Museum of Contemporary Art (MSUM), the National Museum, the Rectorate for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage, and the already mentioned NGOs building (Metelkova 6). Besides, on the underground level that can be accessed by the unlevelled platform located in the middle of the square, is located the Kinoteka (the *Cinematheque*). Metelkova South is in this way “a cultural arena, institutionalised, clean and conventional.” (Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002, 160-61).

The SEM’s terrace success, together with the popular activities that have been developed by the architects/artists collective ProstoRoz at Park Tabor³¹, have often been criticised as responsible for the gentrification process occurring in the area. This process is occurring in parallel with the growing touristification of Ljubljana’s downtown, and the opening of MSUM. However, I believe it might be exaggerated to call a ‘gentrification’ to what is happening around Metelkova, and to the city in general. It is rather a mix between a ‘centralisation’ and a ‘Europeanisation’ process: the museum’s quarter, the pedestrianisation of the streets around river Ljubljanica, the lighting design work that has been made in the ‘historical area’ of the city, for instance, are elements that can be found in most of European cities nowadays. So is a certain kind of aesthetics that it is possible to find at the buildings’ façades. On the one hand, the renovated historic buildings (which often, before the European funds arrived, were not so carefully maintained) and, on the other hand, the standardised façades of new buildings, which show a preference for glass surfaces and metal structures. This is precisely the new “face” of Metelkova South: even though the museums happen on the existing buildings – the military barracks –, new façades have been “glued” to the existing ones (most specifically, on the façades facing the square, , , ).

The public space existing in the middle of the Southern barracks has a levelled soft floor that allows full mobility to disabled or low mobility people (it actually seems to have been planned only for people moving on wheels, who are almost the only ones using this space in an assiduous manner: skates, bicycles, scooters, roller-skates, baby trolleys and wheelchairs – ). The absurdity of the square’s design, however, is present in some weird volumes – glass boxes, metal cylinders (exhausters?) – that have randomly been placed all around the place, disturbing the passage and the harmony of the square and adding absolutely no functional value to the ground-floor level. Furthermore, there exists an unlevelled hole in the middle of the square, probably designed to create a dynamic tension on the landscape, giving it a playful character. However, this

³¹ See “Short history of urban planning and architecture” on Ljubljana’s chapter (p.265).

< . Details of Metelkova South that show the industrial materials of construction that have been used (concrete, steel, glass, etc.), reflecting control and application of norms, present from the design process to the real use of the space and buildings (advertisement and information signs, security measures, etc.).



unlevelled plan, covered with grass and apparently suggesting an open air auditorium, has no stage at the bottom. It leads instead to the Kinoteka, whose entrance is not clear at all, looking actually rather abandoned. Once again, this hole in the middle of the square breaks/disturbs the unity of the whole, fragmenting the space (img 258). This is actually a square which is not really “a square”.



Just like in the new façades, the selected materials added to the square are glass, concrete, metal, grass... The favourite colours are grey, white, black, “pale” yellow, blue and green... However, some of the new materials are getting old too fast, like those of the pavement of the kindergarten, for instance (img 259).



The public lighting and the street furniture are clearly designed by professionals, resulting in “proper” and orthogonal finishing details. A landscape-architecture project is clearly present in the colourful flower patters that follow a wave-style design (img 259), but which are planned just as something to look at, and not really to use in a convivial and relaxed manner (to walk on, to lie down, to do a picnic).



Furthermore, several signs reminding us of the institutional character of this zone can be found on the site, like surveillance cameras, official informative plates and several “attention calls”, warning people to take care and behave properly (img 259).



At last, SEM’s terrace – the most successful space of Metelkova South, which is always crowded in the sunny days – is actually quite welcoming. Nonetheless, it is separated from the street and Tabor Park with a fence, clearly assuming its ‘private’ space, contrasting territories in an arrogant attitude.

*

< Img 260. Levelled soft floor that allows full mobility to disabled or low mobility people (it actually seems to have been planned only for people moving on wheels, who are almost the only ones using this space in an assiduous manner: skates, bicycles, scooters, roller-skates, baby trolleys and wheelchairs).

Creativity or Art?

Tensions and contrasts between Metelkova North and South

The tension between the institution (Metelkova South) and opposition (Metelkova Mesto) puts the antagonistic nature of the two political approaches up for debate.

Trans Europe Halls and Bordage (2002, 168-69)

The spatial occupation and aesthetics of Metelkova North and Metelkova South, as we have seen, are contrastingly different. In addition, when looking at the pictures of the two areas, we can see that the resulting visual impact between them is also very strong (img 245, 258, 259, 261).

The tensions between the two sides are clear, and some signs of them arise in the public space. The first that caught my attention was a small graffiti on the borderline between the two territories, where someone wrote “Umetnost/Kreativnost”: “Art” on the Southern side, and “Creativity” on the Northern side (img 262). At the same place, apparently, a wall was built one day, preventing the access from the North to the South. The same day, or the next, someone from the North destroyed it and built some stairs (Krawczyk 2014). In any of these actions, it is clear who exactly did what, and why “art” and “creativity” belong to separate universes. However, they definitely highlight the contrast between the ‘autonomous’ area and the ‘institutional’ one.

Most obvious is the visual impact of the façades of the two areas, which are both extremely aestheticised, though in almost opposite ways (img 258). While the façades of Metelkova South are all uniform, disciplined, ordered and “family friendly”, those of the North side are an explosion of colours, very expressive and uncontrolled.

In the South, all façades have been “glued” to the old ones: there is a clear desire to aestheticise, and the “obedience to institutional requirements” is visible, revealing a vertical (top-down) approach, where every intervention needs to be licensed. This controlled process, the result of a competition, triggers and increases the competitiveness of the architecture offices and their employees. It is carried out in a relatively short period of time, and only the final product makes sense (Pezelj 2013, 49; Pezelj 2014).

In contrast, ACC rejects disciplinary authorities and safety conditions. The uncontrolled development of its façades was carried out in the course of a long period of time and, according to Andrej Pezelj, their colours and assemblages are not the result of a purpose, but instead a side effect (Pezelj 2013, 49–50). However, Pezelj believes that the qualitative aspect of the final product of the façades is irrelevant, i.e., an inappropriate element to analyse and understand the conditions of production. He considers that we must instead analyse the conditions of production (Pezelj 2013, 48–49). I consider that those ‘conditions of production’ are precisely exposed, or expressed, in what Pezelj calls the ‘final product’. I argument, instead, that the façades as they

exist and look today, allow us precisely – and this through the used materials, the general aspect of the whole, the finishing details and the later interventions – to identify and understand which were their conditions of production.

Consequently, in which sense are the aesthetics of the façades of Metelkova North a sign of emancipation or autonomy? How do they address the issue of *resistance*? And what details or elements allow us to identify it? A table has been made of the contrasting elements that clearly allow to identify the autonomous v.s. institutional world of Metelkova North and Metelkova South:

Metelkova	North	South
Display	Cahotic	Organised
Colours	Strong, vivid, many	Neutral, pale, monochrome
Materials	Old, recycled	New
Techniques	Collage/assemblage	Standardised objects
Inspiration	Punk, artistic retro-avantgardes	European norms
Production	Handmade	Industrial
Finishing details	Unfinished, incomplete	Proper, clean, orthogonal
Attitude	Spontaneous	Reflected / designed
General approach	Work-in-progress	Finished product

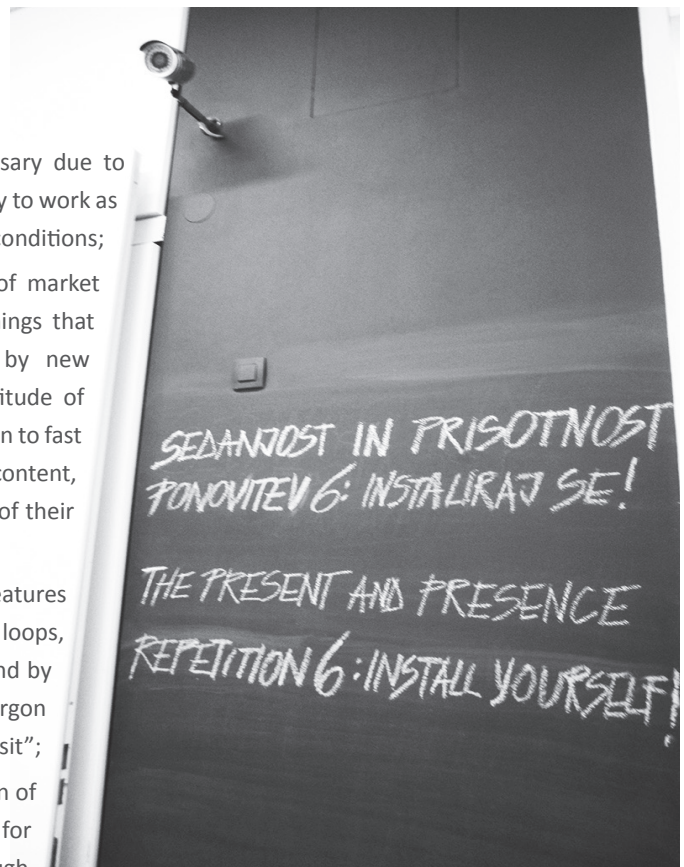
The case of MSUM will now be addressed as an interesting institutional example which tries to establish a bridge with the other side of the border, by flirting with the alternative artistic past of Slovenia, and proposing hybrid approaches based on radical or subversive topics. MSUM's approach has become a controversial issue, criticised by the Metelkova Mesto's community, who claims that MSUM uses the name of Metelkova like a trademark, just willing to take advantage of alternative culture (Pezelj 2014).

Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova [MSUM]

The **Muzej Sodobne Umetnosti Metelkova**³² (MSUM) opened in 2011, under the same direction as **Moderna Galerija** (MG+MSUM). MSUM faces a complex situation. First, it addresses the question of how to align the art it presents within its historical cultural ties between Eastern/Western Europe, Italy, Austria and Yugoslavia, and secondly, as a museum which was born in and with the economic crisis. It thus exposes its fragile situation by showing what can be done in an art institution in such conditions of tight funding (the one the government allocated for Culture). One year after the opening, the museum suffered cuts in funding due to the austerity measures issued by the new neoliberal government. As a response and a form of protest, MSUM came out with a series of *Repetitions* of its exhibitions (img 263, 266), justifying it in a manifesto (img 264):

³² www.mg-lj.si/en.

1. Recycling the previous exhibition is necessary due to budget cuts, presenting an "ecological" way to work as a reaction to the existing (local and global) conditions;
2. Rather than succumbing to the pressure of market and the capital to give consumers new things that quickly become obsolete and replaced by new content, MSUM challenges the "bore" attitude of repeating, aiming at drawing critical attention to fast and superficial consumption of intellectual content, offering the possibility of a second reading of their exhibitions;
3. Repetition is one of the fundamental features of contemporary art and time (video loops, history revisited by artistic performances and by politicians), the international curatorial jargon being full of words as "redefine, rethink, revisit";
4. Repetition has a key role on the construction of narratives, the retroactive effect allowing for artistic responses and critical readings (through research, publications, collections, and the art market);
5. Repetition is driven by trauma, twice present in Ljubljana due to the absence of a contemporary art system and the unrealised emancipatory ideals of communism.



img 263. "The Present and Presence - Repetition 6: Install Yourself!" (MSUM, Mai 2014)

We have decided to repeat The Present and Presence exhibition for the following reasons:

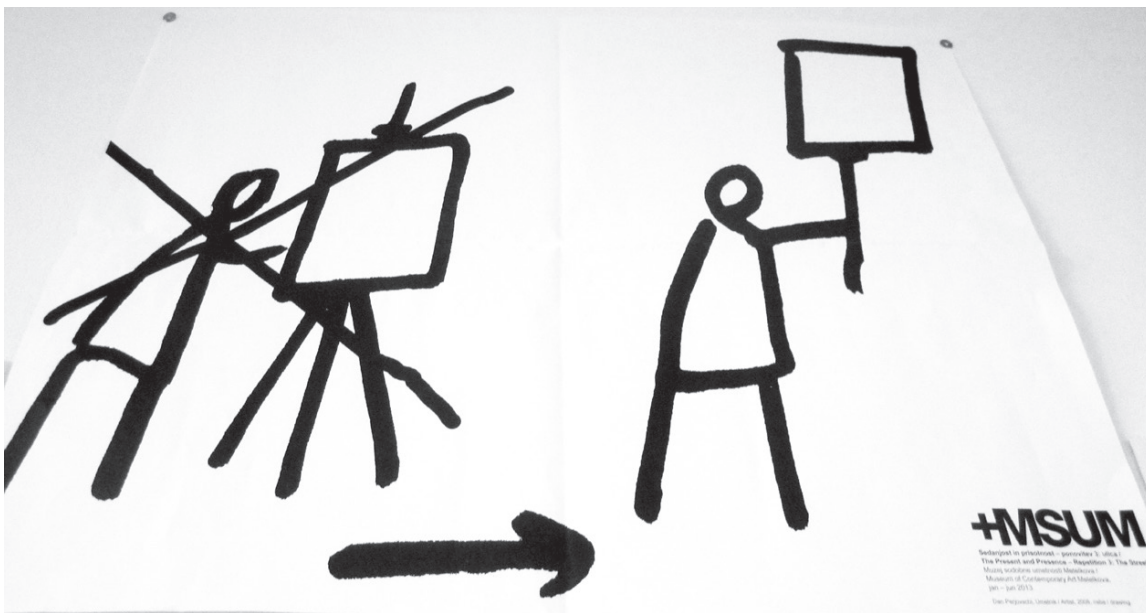
1 – Moderna galerija and its new unit, the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, have had their exhibitions program budget so drastically cut that it now hardly allows for a new exhibition and catalogue to be produced. Repeating an exhibition is thus some kind of recycling in a crisis, the revamping of an existing product. It aims to maximize the potential of the preceding exhibition, to re-examine its contents and, basically, fashion a new product. This recycling builds on the foundations of past work (including a few other exhibitions staged by the Moderna galerija), bringing to the fore – at the same time – the potential of the conditions of crisis. In our case, recycling has become the only way we can work, "ecologically" for a reason rather than under the pressures of the market, a critical reaction to the existing (local and global) conditions.

2 – We live in a time when culture and art are succumbing to the dictate of capital, which continues to drive consumers to crave forever new things. The market is flooded with content that must rapidly become obsolete to be replaced by new content; repeating what already exists is boring, and if something old does get repeated, it is done just for effect, as a fad, and not to articulate some complex relations. Our repetition, on the other hand, aims to draw critical attention to the excessively fast and superficial consumption of intellectual content and underscore the significance of rereading.

3 – Repetition is one of the fundamental features of contemporary art and of the time and place we live in. For example, the usual method of showing video art in a gallery is the video loop – repetition par excellence. Apart from this, what we are largely dealing with in contemporary art exhibitions is the documentation of a particular art process, which is in itself a kind of repetition and which can also serve as the basis for possible later repetitions. Also, one of the popular art genres today is re-enactment, in which, in most cases, artists are repeating important historic performances. International curatorial jargon is full of such words as redefine, rethink, revisit. Particularly in spaces that have recently undergone great historic change, local history is something that needs to be revisited. Everybody does this – from politicians, for whom history is an instrument in their games of power; to historians, who must constantly redefine it; to contemporary artists, who seek in it the points of trauma that are important for an understanding of their own practices.

4 – Repetition is one of the crucial principles by which history is created. There is far too little emphasis placed on the key role repetition plays in the construction of narratives. As Hal Foster has noted, no work becomes historic at the moment of its creation but only later, through the "retroactive effect of countless artistic responses and critical readings". In order for this kind of repetition to even be possible, a developed art system must exist, which enables continual reference to art practices through research, publications, collections, and, not least of all, the art market. Today, for spaces outside the dominant system, it is important to analyze the traumas of local histories in this light as well.

5 – Repetition is driven by trauma, the same kind of trauma that led Moderna galerija to found, in 2000, its collection Artest 2000+, now one of the conceptual cornerstones of the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova. Here our interest rests principally with two traumas associated with the territory of Eastern European art: the trauma of the absence of a developed art system and the trauma of the unrealised emancipatory ideals of communism. Many of the key thinkers who shaped today's understanding of the world, from Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Freud to Lacan and Deleuze, have seen the repeating of some unrealised past potential as a way for the subject to be free. Repetition, as Mladen Dolar writes, "concerns some piece of the past which troubles us and drives us to act it out (Agieren, says Freud), to re-enact it, to perform it."



Img 265, 266. MSUM: The Museum in the Streets – poster and archives' informative text ("Repetition 3", April 2013).

**Arhiv Muzeja na cesti /
The Museum in the Streets archive**

Ker ministristvo leta 2008 v času obnove muzejske stavbe Moderni galeriji ni odobrilo niti prostorov niti sredstev za naš javni program, smo se odločili, da naredimo projekt Muzej na cesti in tako opozorimo na situacijo, v kateri je bila osrednja nacionalna institucija za moderno in sodobno umetnost tri leta zaprta in bi bila brez tovrstnih, skorajda protestnih projektov tako rekoč brez programa. Situacija se po odprtju Muzeja sodobne umetnosti Metelkova že drugo leto ponavlja. Zdaj, ko delamo na še enkrat večjih površinah, nismo dobili nobenega novega zaposlenega več, obenem pa so programska sredstva manjša, kot so bila takrat, ko smo delali le v eni stavbi. In prav zgodovina ulične umetnosti nam lahko pri tem pomaga razvijati potenciala svobodne kreativnosti v pogojih, ko kultura in umetnost izgubljata zaščito, ki bi jima omogočala izvrševanje svojega javnega poslanstva.

During the renovation of the Moderna galerija's main (and then only) building, the Ministry of Culture did not provide a venue or funding for our public program. For this reason we decided to organize the Museum in the Streets project, to draw attention to our situation: the central national institution for modern and contemporary art was closed for three years and would have remained virtually without program if not for such near-protest projects. That (unsupported) situation has again repeated itself over the past two years since our Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova opened. We now have twice the exhibition space to work in, but not a single additional employee, while our program funds have been reduced to less than the total we were allotted while working in just a single building. The history of street art helps us develop our potential of free creativity under conditions in which art and culture are losing the support and protection that would (otherwise) enable them to carry out their vital public mission.

Img 267. MSUM's presentation panel of its exhibition "Repetition 3" (April 2013)

This exhibition (again) focuses on lived time, this time limiting the presentation to the works made in public space – more specifically, in the streets. Included in this new display of works largely from the Moderna galerija national collection and the Artest 2000+ collection is the archive of the project Museum in the Streets, organized by Moderna galerija in 2008, during the renovation of our main museum building, when no funding was allotted for the exhibitions program.

The reason Repetition 3 is so focused on art in the streets is quite plain. Over the last two years, the streets have, once again, become our other physical body, not only in Slovenia, but all over the world: a physical space where we breathe the same air as the others, where we are relearning to shout, where we write our own placards and pick out favorites among those written by others. After we had, it seemed, teetered on the brink of losing the streets and the squares, when we seemed to have moved into virtual worlds, the physical world has again started to recoup its value. The good old streets are accessible to the poor and the rich alike, to the old and the young, to those on Facebook and those without profiles. Everyone can bring their body, their voice, their thought, and their anger to the streets and the squares; and it works like group therapy, where every gesture, at least momentarily, seems to be effective and to serve some common goal. We have almost forgotten how important it is to express ourselves, and express ourselves with our entire bodies. We are relearning participation, endurance, and repetition. With every demonstration it is becoming increasingly clear that what we are seeing happening in the streets in Slovenia is not merely a revolt against the politics of austerity measures and cuts in public funding, most acutely felt in education, healthcare, and culture. The people in the streets are rebelling against neoliberal autocrats and corrupt(ed) powers that be, and merging into a forum demanding the preservation of the fundamental basis of the democratic state: the rule of law and equality in access to education, healthcare, and culture for all.

Img 268. "Punk Museum", about the Slovenian punk scene (1977 to 1987), and open to donation from the public, following the DIY punk attitude (information pannel and poster exposed at MSUM).

PUNK MUZEJ??? / A PUNK MUSEUM???

In to v »muzeju sodobne umetnosti«? »Le kaj hudiča se dogaja«? Je punk »umetnost«? Hej, zakaj pa ne; ampak ali ni bilo rečeno: »Mi ne bomo (muzejska) zgodovina«? Tako je! In tudi ne bo. »Punk muzej v Muzeju sodobne umetnosti na Metelkovi bo avtonomen, delo samih protagonistov – punkerjev 77-87: bendov, publike, grafitarjev ... Ne bo analogno negibna zbirka starin, ampak digitalno, spremljivo, interaktivno, »naredi sam«/v-nastajanju dogajanje/Ideje/Ideje punka tukaj in zdaj. Tudi za nazaj. Vabljeno! »Up museum, up yours!«**

And in a "museum of contemporary art" to boot? "What the hell is going on"? Is punk "art"? Hey, why not; but – haven't we heard: "We're not going to be (museum) history?" That's right! And it won't be. The "Punk Museum" in the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova will be autonomous, a work of the protagonist-punkers of 77-87 themselves: the bands, the audience, the graffiti writers ... It won't be an analogously static collection of oldies, but a digitally, changeably, interactively do-it-yourself/in-progress happening of the idea/s of punk here and now. Also retroactively. Welcome! "Up museum, up yours!"** Igor Vidmar

1977

* Pankrti 77
** X-Ray Specs 77

MSUM's manifesto ends with Mladen Dolar's definition of *repetition*: "[it] concerns some piece of the past which troubles us and drives us to act it out (Agieren, says Freud), to re-enact it, to perform it."

Following this line of protest, and strongly inspired by the recent Slovenian uprisings³³, one of the museums' repetitions is taken to the streets (Repetition 3 – see img 265-267), by arguing that the common place of revolt is accessible to everyone (rich, poor, young and old alike), where people can express themselves with their entire bodies against the politics of austerity, to demanding the preservation of the fundamental basis of the democratic state. Inspired also by DIY approaches – which have become trendy since the crisis arrived – MSUM's 6th repetition proposes to "Install yourself!" (img 263). On one hand, it appeals to the visitors' contribution (though it is not very clear in which manner that would be possible due to the classic museum structure that remains nevertheless expressed in the museum's space), and on the other hand, it works as a critique directed to the state (by ironically addressing the problem of the impossibility to create and organise exhibitions without funding).

The exhibition, which has been repeated frequently, is called "Present and Presence": *Present* is considered as the period Slovenia is experiencing now (since it became an independent country after the fall of communism), and *Presence* addressing the museum's task of self-reflection (in opposition to both capitalism and future oriented communism, and commitment to take "the side of traditions that have historically proven to have emancipatory social potential."³⁴). Following this idea, the display of the museum is organised around thematic categories related to overlapped temporalities (Bishop 2013, 48–49): "Ideological Time (the socialist time), "Future Time" (unrealised modernist utopias), "Time without a future" (subcultures of the 1980s³⁵, see img 268), "The Time of the Absent Museum" (approximately the 1980s-1990s, when artists compensated for the absence of a developed art system by self-organising and self-criticising³⁶), "War Time" (anonymous documentary photograph of the occupation of Metelkova in 1993), "Retro-Time" (the 1990s, the NSK and Irwin's Retro-Avant-Garde³⁷), "Time of Transitions" (from socialism into capitalism) and "Dominant Time" (present-day global neoliberalism).³⁸

According to the art historian and critique Claire Bishop, the art content exposed at MSUM shows a clear desire to connect art to political activism, in an assumed struggling position against commercialisation, creative industries, and increasing ideologisation of the local space, considering MSUM as an example of a "Radical Museum", in her essay with the same name (img 269). Bishop also highlights this museum's suggestion of an alternative to a privatised contemporary museum and "blockbusters exhibitions designed to attract corporate investors, philanthropists and mass audiences", and points out the museum's effort to establish local ties with present day activists, by borrowing one of their rooms to the activist group Anarhiv for political theory discussions, for instance (Bishop 2013, 53, 55).

³³ See p. 283.

³⁴ www.arteeast.org/pages/artnews/article/1551/, mentioned in Bishop (2013, 49).

³⁵ See pp. 274-282

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ The list continues: "Lived Time" (body and performance art) and "Quantitative Time" (individual systems founded on the autonomous forms of logic) (Bishop 2013, 49, 75).

Here, we discuss the MSUM as a container for art and politics. But what about MSUM as a space itself? Is its architecture, spatial ambiance or occupation radical in some way? Is it able to transmit the visitor some autonomous or interactive approaches? Does it call for the visitors' participation, or any kind of active posture?

MSUM is a project of the Slovenian firm Groleger Arhitekti. The museum's architecture is somehow disturbing due to the existence of a double façade (img 270-271), which is revealed once we enter the main hall, whose space – that rather looks like a corridor – is precisely defined by the old building's façade (that looks like the other military barracks). But its role remains somehow unclear, since no other traces of the old building seem to exist. A completely new layout covers the whole space with an international museum-style and a whole institutional arsenal (white walls, large open spaces, normalised details, safety and emergency objects and dispositive, surveillance cameras, orientation and information signs transforming this space in a clean and silent environment).

It is therefore curious to observe the contrast between this kind of ambiance and the radical content of the exhibited art (political activism), revealing the gap between the spatial envelope – an impersonal commission demanded to the architect – and the everyday users of the building – the museum's employees. Of course, due to the function of this building, these users (who take care of the museum's content and maintenance, in this case, and not the museum's visitors) do not own the building, and probably change frequently due to determined contracts. However, as the building is state property, consequently it should be common property, therefore able to be transformed by the [local] people in general. But this institutional rigid/strict envelope is the main difference between the flexible and spontaneous spatial (and aesthetical) approach taken next door at Metelkova North.





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When talking with some of the interviewed people, this divergence between ways of doing and producing things was discussed precisely, claiming that MSUM did not have the right to use the name “Metelkova” by arguing that the state was using (and abusing) the memory of a history of a name that was not part of the new born museum (alguma réf de entrevistas?). Thus, we may wonder if the new MSUM’s façade “decoration” (see img 272-273) is a result of this tension between the “real grassroots” neighbour, or if it is endogenous, coming from the museum itself, assumed as a political activist, overflowing to the exterior.

According to Saša Nabergoj, the fact that museums want to be “alternative” is problematic. They are not alternative because they are the institution, and their new position weakens the one from people of Metelkova Mesto. For instance, MSUM’s bookstore sells books that seem to have been written by the people of AKC Metelkova, which is confusing somehow.

However, Nabergoj believes this museum also has positive things. Mostly the fight between both sides is rather unconstructive (Nabergoj 2014).

*

Img 269. MSUM’s emergency door (drawings by Dan Perjovschi, April 2013).

Img 270-271. The double façade of MSUM.

Img 272. “Stop Gentrifikaciji! Kva d fük je Gentrifikacija?” (Stop gentrification! What the fuck is gentrification?). Graffiti and surveillance camera at MSUM’s wall, facing Metelkova Mesto (Mai 2014).

Img 273. MSUM’s façade and some critical graffiti written “interventions” saying: “Europa voljo mojo zatira ovira da ne svobodno živim!” (Europe is an obstacle to freedom of life) (May 2014).



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6.3.2. ROG

Rog is a former industrial complex located right in the city centre of Ljubljana, existing in the noblest part of the city, facing the River Ljubljanica and very close to Plečnik's market and bridges (map 274). This huge space of 7,000 m² is composed of several volumes, surrounded by walls, and its main building consists of 4 floors.

Tovarna Rog

It was first built to host the Pollak tannery in the 19th century (1870s). Its most significant buildings was demolished, and rebuilt in reinforced concrete, one of the first examples in Slovenia, this being the reason why this building is listed as a cultural monument of local importance (img 275). Then the leather production was replaced by a bicycle factory in 1952, lasting until 1990s. In 2002 the municipality signed a leasing contract for the area of the Rog Factory¹

The squatting

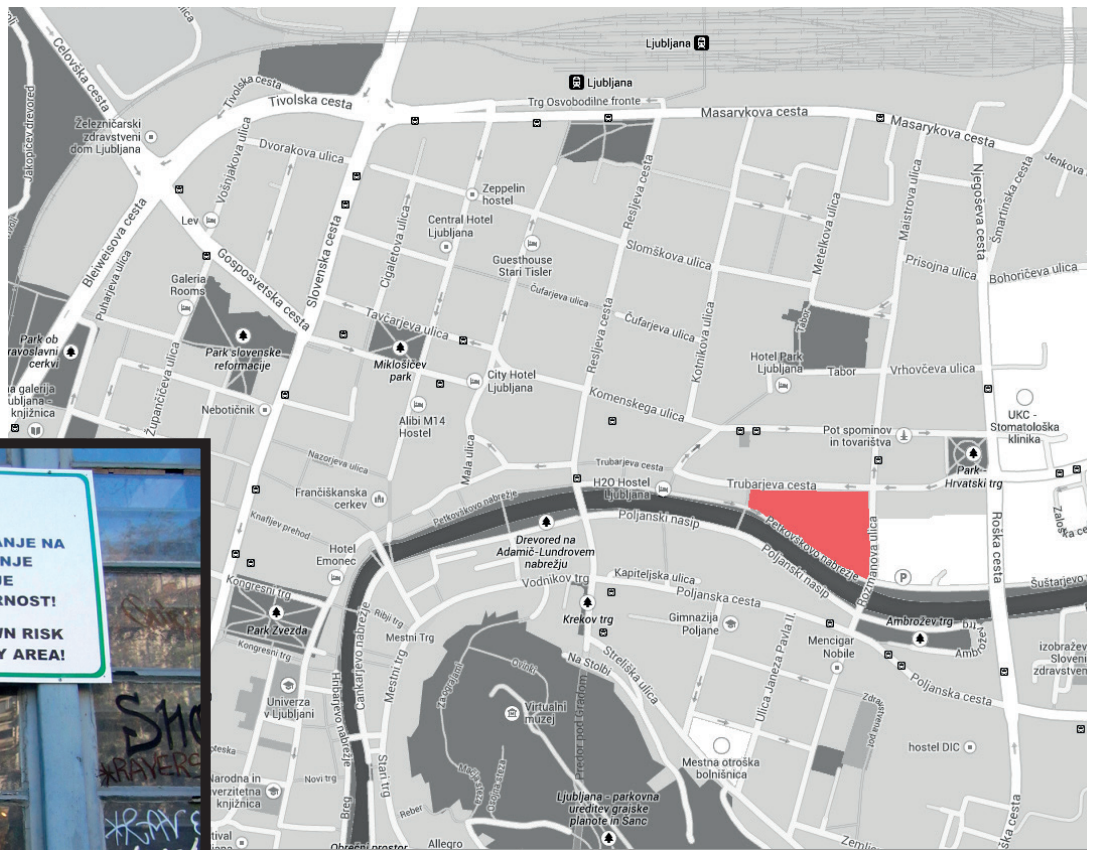
In March 2006, group TEMP (a multidisciplinary collective group of young people, in particular many students of the Faculty of Architecture²) – with the support of Professor Janez Koželj³ (Faculty of Architecture) asked the municipality to have the temporary use of Rog's space during two weeks, in order to make an exhibition of all existing projects of Architecture from the last 20 years (Jerih 2013). MOL then gave them the permission and the keys of the gate (img 276). Many artists, musicians and social activists expressed the wish to join the project (since it was an open project) because they needed space and supported the ideas of TEMP. As the factory was full of garbage, they all began a cleaning work. Meanwhile, however, the municipality regretted its permission, claiming that the buildings had not enough conditions to host such an event, their physical condition being in a dangerous state. But then, about 200 people were already enthusiastically committed with the project, and decided to enter the space anyway, this time illegally. After this collective action, TEMP decided to occupy Rog. Right after the squatting operation, the Italian radical philosopher Antonio Negri gave a lecture at Rog, an event that contributed to officially open the factory as the new autonomous space of Ljubljana (Jerih 2013) (img 277).

TEMP had then the chance, with the help of a network, to put into practice ideas and convictions at ROG. Their aim was to “activate space”, encouraging interaction in the public domain. For

1 Rog means “horn”. *Tovarna* means “factory”.

2 For more details see below the part of the text dedicated to Group TEMP.

3 Professor Koželj would also become, after the elections of October of the same year, one of the deputy mayors of the municipality.



Img 274. Geographic location of Metelkova in the city of Ljubljana

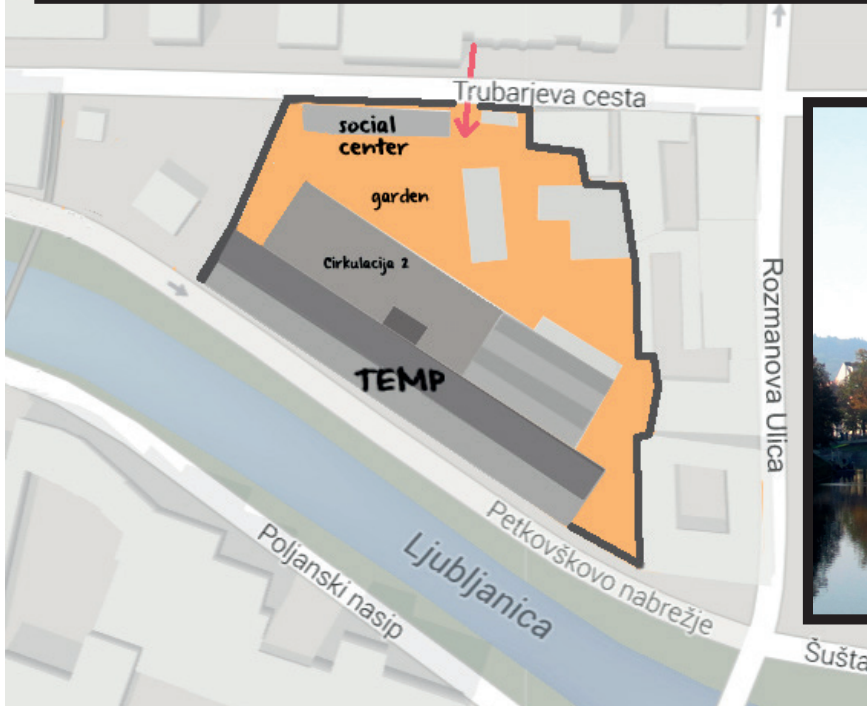


Img 279. Municipality of Ljubljana's advertisement sign: "Staying at your own risk".

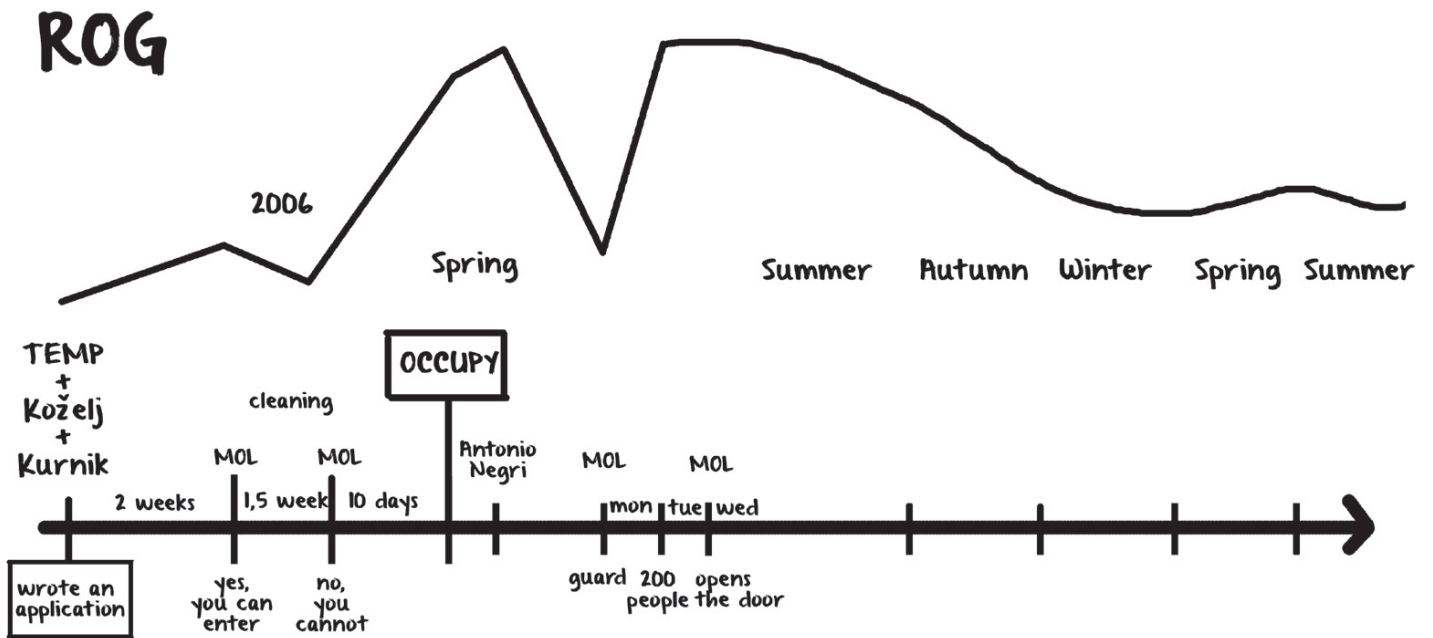


Img 278. Sign in front of Rog's gate.

Img 276. Entrance gate and guard. Tovarna Rog.



Img 275. Tovarna Rog's façade over Ljubljanica River.



Img 277. Scheme drawn by Jeriha describing the evolution of the squatting process.

TEMP, Rog represented a “model of an open space, free and available to non-profit activities” – a space to work, self-organised, “space as necessary means of production”. Only “time, people and action” matters (TEMP 2006). TEMP’s idea was to create a new autonomous space, and their action consisted of a protest against “the loss of the public realm through privatisation”, “the authoritarian management of populations and practices” and “the reduction of diversity (...) for the logic of profit” (Kurnik and Beznec 2009, 51).

This was apparently the moment when the political scientist Andrej Kurnik and the group of activists connected to him entered this process. This group would have, in the immediate future, an essential role in the squatting of the building, constituting the so-called *Social Center Rog*, which holds a specific concern with minorities such as “erased, asylum seekers, *sans papiers*, precarious and migrant workers”.⁴

According to Barbara Beznec and Andrej Kurnik, the mass production of bicycles in the Rog factory – such a huge space located right in the centre of Ljubljana, and empty for such a long time, for reasons linked to property speculation – came to a halt in the beginning of the 1990s, and soon this halt became a symbol of corruption associated to the so-called “transition to the market economy”. What had once been social ownership⁵ was then nationalised (after the independence) in order to be privatised. The activists understood the way this process was conducted as being a political attack against workers co-ownership and self-management, as it was accomplished through the destruction of their political and economic power. The factory complex, after going private, was the object of other transactions until the Municipality of

⁴ For more details see below the part of the text dedicated to *Social Center Rog (SCR)*.

⁵ “A perusal of the Yugoslav legislation might lead one to conclude that social ownership during that period was of a cooperative type, that workers of a particular firm collectively own that firm subject to rules set by society.” (Hillman and Milanović 1992, 121). Of course, the concept of “social ownership” and the realities of the social life do not necessarily coincide but despite the unquestionable interest of this subject, it is not among the objectives of this study.

Ljubljana (MOL) bought it again (Kurnik and Beznec 2009, 51-52). The occupation of Rog was this way intended by the activists to be an act of re-appropriation and a critique of the process of privatisation.

Rog's experience was a huge success during eight months, the enthusiasm lasting the whole summer, even if some internal tensions existed. "We were there everyday, cleaning, doing fences, working all the time... it was like giving birth to a baby" says Urban Jeriha, architect and an activist of the group TEMP⁶. "We had some funding, about 5,000 euros, from the European Project 'Youth in Action'. We spent it in the publishing of a booklet and bought some material for Rog. But the funding was over and soon TEMP was over as well. We were tired... motivation does not last for ever", he adds. "In retrospective, I think it was a mistake refusing leadership and organisation, but the Assembly of Users did not want that, and to use a common space with no rules is not easy. There were also lots of problems with water, electricity, heating, toilets... even legal problems". So he quitted Rog: "May be we did not share the same values/ideas", he concludes (Jeriha 2013).

It can be said that, on the one side, the position of TEMP began to formalise, but that, on the other side, individuals felt exhausted and the group began to disintegrate, having not lasted more than two years. Which is understandable since anyway the group had always been defined as a temporary movement (TEMP 2009, 153).

In fact, a while after the disintegration of group TEMP, the users of the Rog (artists, mostly) started to be victims of robberies, and a process of "marginalisation" and "ghettoisation" of Rog has started. Therefore, due to security reasons they started to put lockers on the doors. "The factory is a huge surface, distributed in several floors, too wide and open to everyone, hard to control, to survey" explains Saša Nabergoj, curator at SCCA-Ljubljana (in Metelkova 6). "Rog follows the model of Metelkova. The way it develops just goes faster. It is just a matter of different generations" (Nabergoj 2014).

In more recent times, Rog still resists as a social centre, a venue for concerts, a production space with improvised studios and DIY infrastructures (img 280). Most of the production in Rog is independent, although some projects involve public funding. It also hosts a dance studio and a famous skate park, which was built only by hand, with the motivation of many skaters. There are concerts quite often and artists still use the space for working (Tiefenthaler 2014).

However, according to Urška Jurman, the coordinator of Second Chance Project in Ljubljana⁷, Rog's working conditions are really bad, especially in winter: water exists in just one building and electricity is produced by a single generator, which is used for the whole building, for instance. The municipality does not want to support these working conditions (Jurman 2012) (img 279).

In order to better understand the Rog's experience of squatting, a particular attention should be given to two different relevant movements: the *Group TEMP* and the *Social Center Rog*.

⁶ See the short documentary "Smo Začasni / We_are_temporary" made by TEMP about this process, where is visible the idealism of the first months. (Available at: https://archive.org/details/ROG_-_smo_zacasni_-_we_are_temporary_-_documentary).

⁷ See the end of this chapter more details about this project.

ROG



The exterior space of Rog, in between buildings.





Img 280. General ambiance of Rog.



Panoramic view from the entrance gate (2012).

Group TEMP

In October 2004, a group of students at the Faculty of Architecture decided to erect a Pavilion inside the University Campus, without permission of the authorities. It was the beginning of an informal multidisciplinary group known as TEMP, whose aim was to bring to the public knowledge the problem of the disappearing public space in Ljubljana. This group got the support of students from other disciplines, and the support of their Professor Janez Koželj. Workshops and several exhibitions had place in this Pavilion, until it was dismantled by order of the university authorities.

TEMP, however, did not stop its activities, and the Pavilion moved to the city of Maribor during the summer 2005 (Jerih 2013). In February 2006 the group was invited by the artist and curator Bojana Piskur to participate in an exhibition at the Gallery Škuc, in Ljubljana, whose space they used for one month, proposing different artistic activities like concerts, workshops, video, etc. This was the moment when the group drew a map where the abandoned buildings existing in the city were indicated.

TEMP defined itself as an informal temporary multidisciplinary activist movement: “our main concern was to ‘make’ relationships; ‘space’ was just the field where we lived them. Whether that space be geographical, capital, psychological or ideological, theoretical questions are solved only through praxis” (TEMP 2009, 145). The forced entry into the Faculty of Architecture parking lot was just an act of “questioning the usage of the urban space” and a way to prove that “it is possible to intervene from the margins and disturb the balance of political power” (TEMP 2009, 149). During the squatting of Rog, TEMP “articulated the concepts, communicated them, established new relations between individuals who did not know each other before” and brought together, in continuous action, people “with different trajectories and from different scenes” (TEMP 2009, 146-49). This way, they “created a window of opportunities to transform the various investigation techniques into a physical occupation of the space” (TEMP 2009, 149).

According to one of the few TEMP written texts (TEMP 2009, 151-52), the group was:

- Informal: organised horizontally: “full self-initiative and self-organisation were paramount, [the group giving up] authorship and (...) intellectual property [being converted] into public knowledge”.
- Multidisciplinary: individuals who composed the group “had very different educational training and experiences”, what “enabled [them] to have a very wide spectre of production (activating spaces, organising and starting events, publishing, graffiti art, sculpture works and space installations)”. “[A] large human ‘platform’ (...) [was] established when (...) the abandoned Rog Factory” was reactivated (TEMP 2009, 152);
- Temporary: they were not interested in creating art and a cultural centre for artists (this was the municipal plan for the future of Rog⁸). “Art as a neutral field of criticism and creation does not represent a real threat to existing political system and has shown to be a compromising form of activity. The very moment the Temp group was about artistic meaning instead of political it stopped to exist” (TEMP 2009, 153).

⁸ For more details see below the part of the text dedicated to *Second Chance & RogLab* (p.338).

This “organic and dynamic structure cooperated on the basis of desire, not necessity” (TEMP 2009, 152).

Even if it was a movement that lasted no more than two years, we must stress the relevance of TEMP on the Rog squatting and experience as well as on raising public awareness about the crucial value of public space in Ljubljana. “The work itself focused on creating public space in a form of spaces suitable for non-profitable work by different parties” (TEMP 2009, 158). And “how strongly can we motivate the public to demand back its space?” (TEMP 2009, 154).

Social Centre Rog

The Social Centre Rog (SCR)⁹, whose group participated in the initial occupation of Rog, occupies today a small building at the entrance of the complex (img 281). The main objective of the Social Centre Rog was “bringing to light and communicating different struggles.” The project was based on “a critique of the segmentation and verticality of the relationship between civil society and the state, identity politics and the (re)presentation of independent cultural centres as traditionally protected islands of difference” (Kurnik and Beznec 2009, 58).

The SCR gives support to erased, asylum seekers, *sans-papiers*, precarious and migrant workers, gay and lesbian activists and mentally disturbed people. SCR tries to help them to solve problems within a perspective of “empowerment”, seeking ways to value them as protagonists, rather than emphasise their victimisation. “The movement of self-organised asylum seekers, that has been ‘territorialised’¹⁰ in the Social Centre, called against authoritarian management and control of migration, and articulated an alternative way to claim the right to territory.”¹¹ Meanwhile, a set of neo liberal economic reforms had been implemented, mobilising against “erased” people and other minorities and tightening the grip of cultural production. In this context, “the opening of the former factory Rog offered a new space of encounter, *métissage* and visibility” (Kurnik and Beznec 2009, 51-52).

“Practices of organisation and communication, such as an assembly of users and a decision-making process based on active participation, openness and self-management were set up in order to strengthen a common identity and self-valorisation” (Kurnik and Beznec 2009, 52). According to Andrej Kurnik and Barbara Beznec, “the role of the assembly of temporary users was to ensure that Rog remained open (against the municipality’s attempt to evict users), to organise it on the notion of “commons” (to defend it from attempts of privatisation) and to contribute to the concept of New Rog”¹². The idea was that “the programme, activities and forms

⁹ www.facebook.com/SocialCenterRog/?fref=ts.

¹⁰ Apparently this means that the referred movement found in Rog a space to develop its activity and express itself.

¹¹ “During the campaign for migrant workers’ rights that started in the framework of Invisible Workers of the World (in 2007), activists based in Social Centre Rog established a cooperation with a network of activists and researchers from Bosnia and Herzegovina”. Other networks were established with the “so-called new generation of social centres [that] connected Slovenian, Italian and Spanish social centres” (Razsa and Kurnik 2012, 254 note 22). One of the SCR important actions, in this context, is the work they have been doing with the erased when, after the independence of Slovenia, more than 1% of the population was erased from the register of permanent residence.

¹² The New Rog was “a kind of a centre for contemporary art”, “a new public institution that was starting to be



Img 281. Social Centre at Rog, during a meeting (2013).



Img 282. Activist stickers in Social Center's space.

Img 286. Rog's barricades in June 2016.

(img source: <http://dgrnewsservice.org/resistance/direct-action/occupation/slovenia-defending-anti-capitalist-autonomous-rog-factory/>)



Img 283. Cirkulacija 2's studio.



of self-management produced during the temporary use period would find continuity in the future projects of the municipality [enabling] the development of alternative institutions beyond bureaucratic control of the public and/or profit orientation of the private". And "temporary use was not only a tactic used in a context of extremely unfavourable power relations. It was [also] a mechanism of defence of the public realm through its reconstruction into a common space" (Kurnik and Beznec 2009, 53).

New ways of doing politics are being experimented in the Social Centre Rog, "arising from the rejection of the paternalism of the 'social partnership' and its focus on the balancing of the wage system" (Kurnik and Beznec 2009, 59). The movement Occupy Slovenia¹³ had many of its meetings inside **SCR** benefited from the experience and active participation of their self-organised militant researchers. This project continues today very active, welcoming war refugees from Syria and other Mediterranean countries. They support them in what concerns legal matters, cultural integration (language courses, social meetings, debates...) and information (e.g. mapping the roads of the Balkans to access Austria, for instance¹⁴).

Rejecting "the status of exceptionalness", frequently used "to legitimate the existence of alternative spaces as a kind of a multicultural reservoir for different minorities within society", SCR defends that "one needs a community of resistance (...) a spatial consciousness and geographical imagination shaped in the region of resistance beyond the established centres of power"¹⁵. That is precisely what the SCR tries to build, through encounter, convergence and hybridisation (img 282).

Post-utopia

The utopia of the "common space" project has failed (Jeriha, 2013) being followed, as referred above, by the privatisation of the spaces/studios occupied by young artists and musicians, already using lockers on their doors, by security reasons. And winter has always been a disincentive, as it is too cold and there is no heating, just a generator for all these huge spaces. Therefore, it is not easy to inhabit these spaces. However a few resisting projects deserve to be mentioned, like:

Cirkulacija 2

Cirkulacija 2 is a transdisciplinary artists' collective dedicated to contemporary technological art and doing research on intelligent social behaviour. They use different media approaches (radio, television, video, robots, mechanisms, devices...), visual elements and sound for an artistic expression. The name Cirkulacija 2 comes from the hall they are currently occupying at Rog: the "heath circulation station number 2".

developed" by MOL, after the squatting. For more details see below the part of the text dedicated to *Second Chance & RogLab*.

¹³ See p. 283.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Hooks, 1990, quoted by (Kurnik and Beznec 2009, 60-61).

The artists squatted Rog in 2007 and registered as a NGO since 2009, which allows them to apply for public funds and do “relatively independent productions”. They disagree with the so-called model of “open spaces” for artists, this being the reason why they chose this hall to work, a studio they can lock (img 283). Borut Savski and Stefan Doepner, two of the artists, occupied Rog “to satisfy [their basic] needs for working space”. They stand for artists’ run spaces, claiming to have a socially active position, based on the “non-consume identity”: DIY, open source code and creative commons¹⁶. They have tried to propose a semi-public space of discourse on art at Rog, putting the focus on the process and not on the finished product – in “opposition to the lifeless exhibitions”, proposing an anti-gallery, anti-museum situation (Savski 2009). Cirkulacija 2 received the Golden Bird award in 2009, which was granted for “their specific type of independent artistic production, uncompromising activist and artistic posture and positive influence on the Slovene art space”¹⁷. In 2014, Cirkulacija 2 moved to larger premises in the former wholesale shop of the late Tobacco Company complex (Tovarna Tobačna).

Borut Savski complains that “the social activists were trying to use the artists in a circus-like manner – for entertainment – to fill up their social issue’s events with some cultural program” (Savski 2009). He also refers the existence of a certain competitive attitude between **Rog** and Metelkova’s people, criticising the municipal strategy which avoids to find working studios for artists. Savski believes that the squatting of both places was most of all an answer to real needs of workspace of the local artists (Savski, 2009).

Second Chance & Rog Lab

As we have seen, the working conditions of the squatters were extremely precarious: there was no water and no electricity, one generator being not enough for so many people and making it very hard to spend the winter working on site. Besides, buildings were in a dangerous state and offered no security.

In 2008, MOL launched an architectural competition and published a document (Strategy for Cultural Development 2008-2011) that would define the future of Rog: its revitalisation and renovation would be based on the concept of the “creative city” (Landry 1995; Florida 2002). Accordingly, Rog should be reconverted into a Centre of Contemporary Arts (CCA) dedicated to architecture, design and visual arts (img 284). The idea was to establish a public-private partnership in which the private investors would contribute to finance part of the project. The project consisted of (Second Chance 2011, II):

- Renovation of the main building into the CCA (8,260 m²);
- Construction of a new extension for a large exhibition venue (CCA 1800 m²);
- An underground car park;
- A hotel;
- Apartments;

¹⁶ www.cirkulacija2.org/?page_id=247 (Accessed on 14 April 2013).

¹⁷ culture.si Blog/ Ministry of Culture.

- Offices;
- Business premises (located on the ground floors – shops, cafes, etc.).

In 2010 the City of Ljubljana joined the City Museum (Mestni Muzej) and *Second Chance*, a European project which connects five cities – Nuremberg, Leipzig, Venice, Krakow and Ljubljana – and is focused on the transformation of former industrial zones into cultural and creative spaces¹⁸.

In the framework of this project, a pilot project was built right between Rog and the river: a 30 m2 container named *RogLab* (img 285). The aim of this project was to establish partnerships and raise funds, willing to test contents and the development of programmes (Second Chance 2011 IX.). This project is focused on 3D technologies – a “research and innovation-oriented creativity”¹⁹, and is planned to operate at least until 2018.

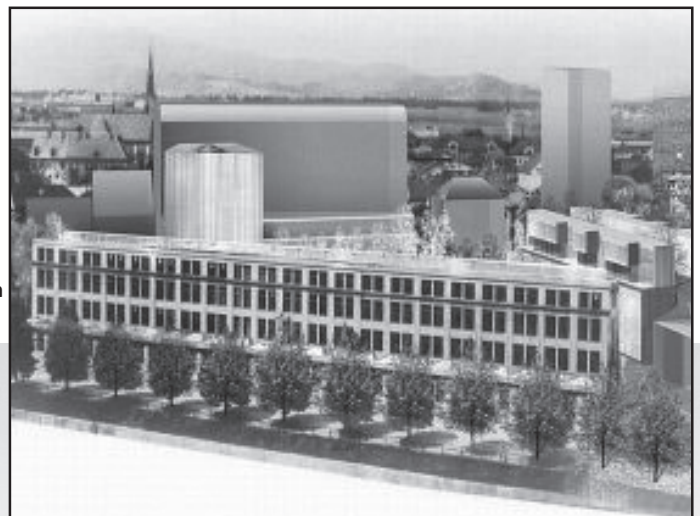
The project of the Centre of Contemporary Art was planned to start in 2012-13, but apparently it did not go forward due to the occurrence of the economic crisis.

¹⁸ <http://roglab.si/en/about> (Accessed on 15 October 2012).

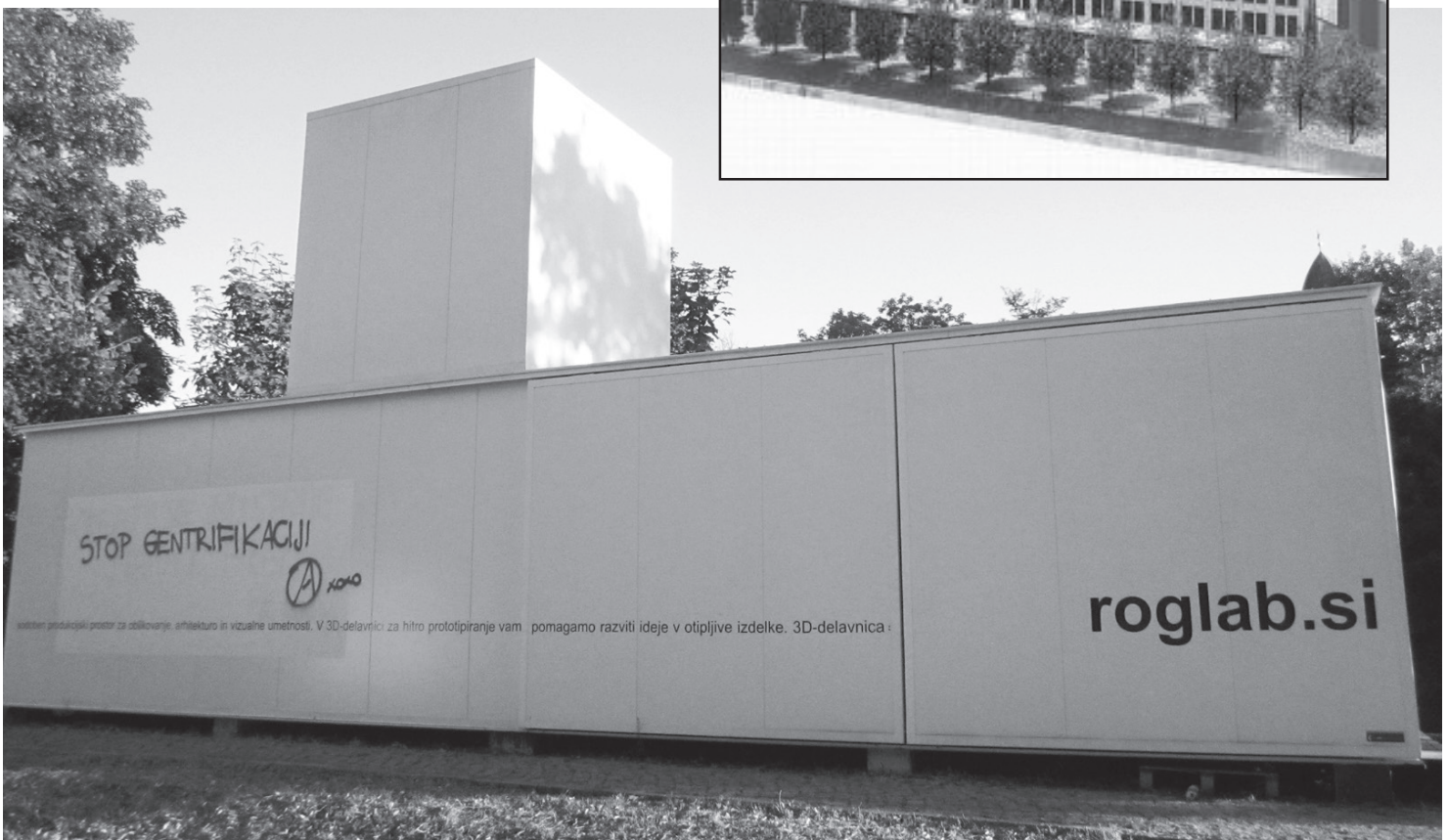
¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Img 284. Project for the Centre of Contemporary Arts (CCA) at Rog's place >

(image source: MOL, according to: www.rtvsllo.si/kultura/drugo/tovarna-rog-v-prenovljeni-obliki-in-sklopu-projekta-second-chance/24683, accessed the 16.10.2012)



Img 285. Pilot project RogLab, placed by the riverside, in front of Rog's main façade, which offers services for 3D technologies (2013).



Barricades

6th June 2016: ten years after, MOL gave orders once more for the squatters to leave ROG. Security forces came to evacuate the people occupying the venues. Nonetheless, a wide and strong movement of solidarity arose (coming from Ljubljana citizens, and other parts of the country or even from Europe), supporting the squatters, this leading to the construction of barricades to prevent being evacuated (img 286). Autonomous Centre Rog, which had until then been accused by Ljubljana citizens of being a “ghetto”, ignoring the city behind its big walls, has known a burst of energy since the end of Spring. By proposing a very dynamic and continuous programme of cultural activities²⁰, artists and squatters have been inviting outsiders to participate and use Rog’s space, desiring to prove the role and relevance of their critical (and stubborn) position towards the city. According to Rog’s community, in the past Rog “took over some of the social functions which should be, by the Constitution, provided by the state (...). Rog stands and works where the state failed”, proposing activities that “oppose the capitalist ideas of gentrification of the centre of Ljubljana”²¹. This way, the community of Rog is assuring the continuity of Rog’s project, as a radical autonomous socio-cultural centre located in the heart of the city, claiming that the Rog Factory is a political matter and an example of the struggle for a better anti-capitalist society.

Spatial and Visual Aesthetics

The mark of the abandonment is, when visiting the place, the most visible trait of Rog’s built environment (img 287, 288). Though TEMP, the Social Centre, the art students and other people have spent endless hours cleaning the space, the vastness of the space requires constant maintenance and perseverance.

Contrarily to Metelkova, Rog’s area is surrounded by walls, and to access the area you need to pass through a gate which has a guard (img 276). This guard, however, does not really prevent people to come in. Hired by the municipality, his function is most of all symbolical, his duties being mainly limited to the opening of the gate and informing people. Above the gate, a plate was placed, where one can read “Ghetto Sculpture” (img 278). The first impact is therefore a confused feeling provoked by a double reference: on the one hand, the “gated community”, and on the other hand, the “ghetto”. Having these references as the welcoming pass, one would probably quit the idea of entering such a place, or at least hesitate a moment before deciding to “trespass”. Actually, this first impact is not welcoming at all, and most people who came to this place know what they come here for in advance.

²⁰ “...presence of approximately one hundred people on the premises — with a couple of hundred more on a constant stand-by — willing to defend the cause. There are two dozen various daily activities in Rog, from exercise, language courses and radio station to music, theatre, art exhibitions and lectures.” (<http://dgrnewsservice.org/resistance/direct-action/occupation/slovenia-defending-anti-capitalist-autonomous-rog-factory/>). The activities are shared on the very active Facebook page Ohranimo Tovarno Rog (Let’s protect the Rog Factory).

²¹ Quoted in: <http://dgrnewsservice.org/resistance/direct-action/occupation/slovenia-defending-anti-capitalist-autonomous-rog-factory/> (posted in June 12, 2016).





289

Img 289. The main staircase (2012).



290

Img 290. A corridor in the main building.



291

Img 291. Detail of a mural painting (2013).



Img 292-294. Windows' glasses covered with coloured graffiti, creating a modern stained glass effect (2012).



Img 295-296. Some spaces that have undergone a cleaning process and basic renovation works (2013). We can compare the evolution of the same room between Img 287, in 2012, and Img 296.

Once inside the area, plates can be found spread all over the area, warning the visitor he might be in danger, but that no one (in this case, the municipality of Ljubljana) will take the responsibility in case something goes wrong: “Staying at your own risk on the Rog Factory area!” (img 279). MOL, as the owner of the property, authorises therefore people’s access on the site, but does not want to be found responsible in case some accident happens. However, Rog comes referenced on the touristic map of Ljubljana as an “autonomous cultural zone”, inviting people to visit the place and use the skatepark (img 234, 235).

When entering the gate one can face the big main factory building right in front of the eyes. However, the main factory building is somehow hidden by a range smaller pre-fabricated style buildings. Other small buildings can be found around this patio, as well as a small garden and a few trees. One of these buildings seems to be or to have been inhabited by squatters, and the other one is occupied by the Social Centre (img 280). When wandering around in the exterior area graffiti can be found, as well as a few paintings that reveal the former existence of a night club or two.

In order to access the main building of the factory, one must pass through a hall in the smaller buildings, which gives us access to the main staircase. This staircase is covered with graffiti, and I remember, when visiting Rog for the first time in 2006, the existence of broken glass found all over the stairs, and the lack of a handrail or a balustrade. Meanwhile a very clumsy protection had been installed on place to prevent people from falling into the central hole (img 289). All along these stairs and the rest of the building, the windows’ glasses that still exist on their frames have been covered with coloured graffiti, creating somehow a curious modern stained glass effect (img 292-294).

This is the building that was the first to be occupied in 2006, during the squat operation by the group TEMP and others. Its impressive open spaces, high ceilings, large windows and thick walls are characteristic of a factory’s building of a certain historical period, revealing particularly the nobility of the construction. However, when visiting the space today, one cannot avoid feeling shocked and amazed at the same time by the combination of the vastness of its inner spaces with the chaos of broken, abandoned and tagged walls and windows. The “raw” ambience of this “punk-space” and its beautiful decay have somehow the power to attract the look, and the capacity to invite visitors to explore the space in an adventurous way, in an UrbEx-style (img 287-288).

The main building of Tovarna Rog has actually passed through many phases, since it was once a bicycle factory. Subsequent to 15 years of abandonment and after being squatted, the building was first cleaned. Some interventions and some basic renovation work have then been done with the purpose of providing diverse workplaces, performance spaces and make it publicly accessible²² (img 295-296). According to TEMP, the idea was to transform it into “a public space in becoming”. Nevertheless, the project was quickly labelled as a utopia. The initial enthusiasm and effort did not last longer than a few months. “Maybe we were being too serious... maybe we

²² This process was recorded in a documentary video made by TEMP, named *Smo Začasni (We are temporary)*. This video shows a few moments of the initial enthusiasm right after the squatting, and the renovation works made on the site (Accessible at https://archive.org/details/ROG_-_smo_zacasni_-_we_are_temporary_-_documentary).

Artists Studios



299



300

Img 299-300. Artists' studios.



297

Img 297, 298. Colourful doors of artists' studios with lockers.



301

Img 301. Artists' studios furniture arranged in a convivial manner.



298



302

Img 302-303. Stage set design installations.



303

should have taken more time to have fun” (group TEMP 2009).

As Borut Savski mentioned, in 2007 the situation inverted: the main space was left empty while the smaller peripheral spaces started being used for individual initiatives (Savski 2009) – like the Cirkulacija 2 studio or the Social Centre house. Meanwhile, in the main building some of the huge open spaces have been “privatised” with lockers and divisor walls (img 297-298), this happening mostly after the occurrence of a few burglaries and a fire, between 2007 and 2010 (San Juan 2013). When revisiting the place in 2012-2013, many spaces were actually occupied by Fine Art students in a very colourful and messy way (img 297-300). Stage set design installations could be found, including sculptures, installations, painting cans, old bicycles (or parts of bicycles), furniture and all kinds of collected random objects (img 301-303). On the roof terrace, a group of cinema students were shooting a film. When asked why they came to shoot the film here, they replied: “Because it is the best scenario. It is just perfect, beautiful and without people. We can work without being bothered. Look around...! The City, the mountains...!” (img 221, 304-305). This roof terrace, with its panoramic view over the city, the castle, the river and the Alps was one of the places that impressed me the most already back in 2006. It is placed right at the centre of the city but far from it at the same time. A calm place “above the clouds”, a belvedere with an infinite sight view where a “PACE” flag had been placed, promising hopes, dreams and freedom (img 306).

The rough spatial aesthetics of this “temporary autonomous zone” reveals a clear resistance to normalisation processes, this being a place where no aestheticisation effort seems to have been made. The space seems to be occupied purely in a functional careless way. Only the graffiti have a more adorning character, but even them are mostly just tags, having very likely more a territorial nature than an intentional embellishing one. This attitude is also present at Cirkulacija 2’s studios, where a very strong hacker aesthetics is present, reminding us of science-fiction films addressing decaying-apocalyptic scenarios, like Matrix, Blade Runner or Total Recall (img 283).

Contrasting with these apocalyptic aesthetics is that of the Social Centre. The almost absent decoration is solely broken with a few activist-theme stickers placed on a door. Nonetheless, the chairs, tables and small kitchen existing on site allow quite convivial events to occur, in a very relax and welcoming ambiance (img 281-282).

At last, the **RogLab** project located in the outskirts of the main **Rog**’s area, right next to the river, must be mentioned. This completely opposite architectural approach consists of a modular container project conceived by the Slovenian architect Jure Kotnik. It was meant to represent symbolically the beginning of the renovation of the entire zone of the former bicycle factory²³. However, this white and clean architectural object has been victim of a critique action in the shape of a red (!) tag saying “STOP Gentrifikaciji” (*Stop Gentrification*) (img 285), and this the same way MSUM’s walls did once²⁴.

*

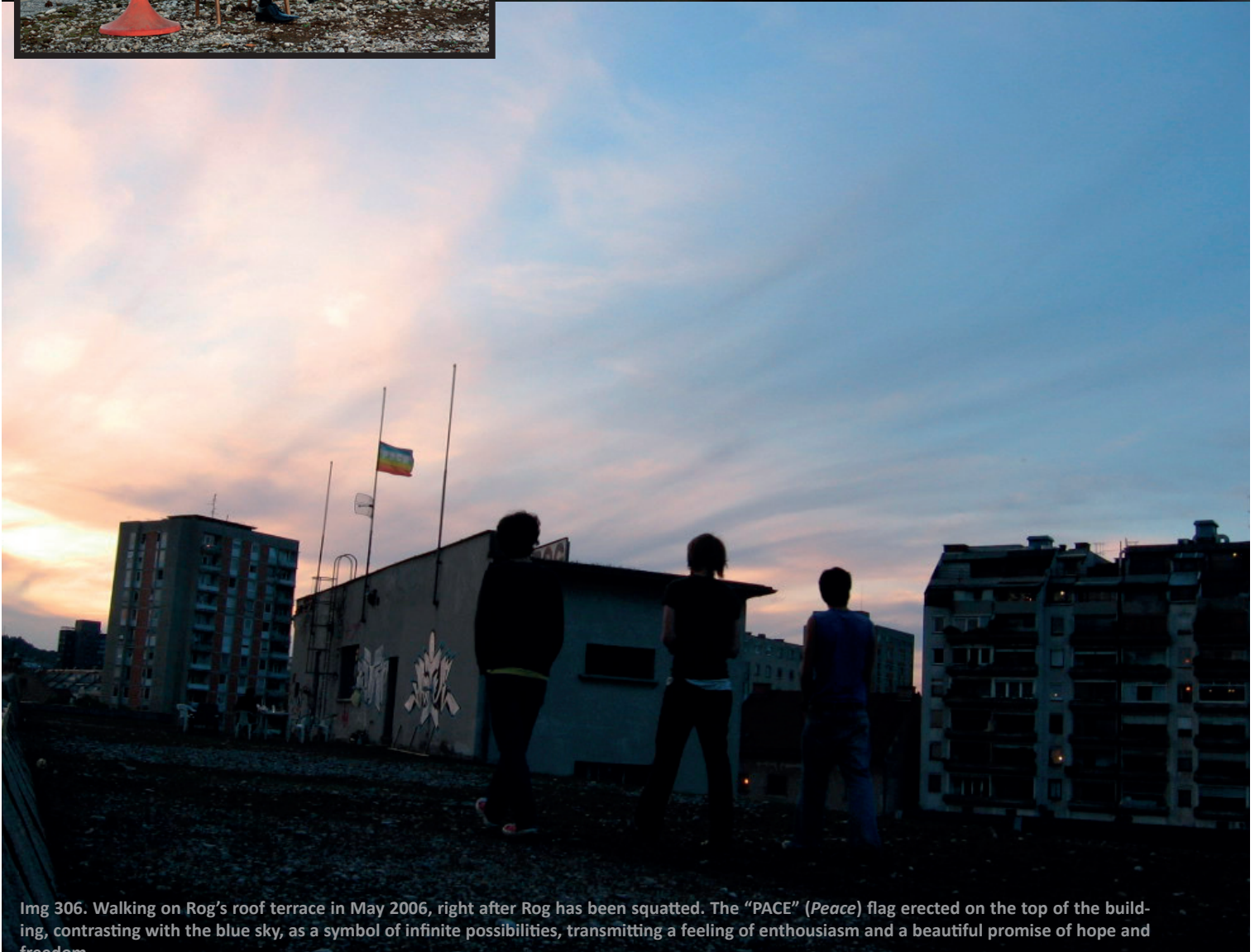
²³ <http://roglab.si/en/about> (Accessed on 15 October 2012).

²⁴ See “MSUM” on p. 322.

“Because it is the best scenario. It is just perfect, beautiful and without people. We can work without being bothered. Look around...! The City, the mountains...!”



Img 304, 305. Cinema student's shooting a film on Rog's roof terrace (2012).



Img 306. Walking on Rog's roof terrace in May 2006, right after Rog has been squatted. The "PACE" (Peace) flag erected on the top of the building, contrasting with the blue sky, as a symbol of infinite possibilities, transmitting a feeling of enthusiasm and a beautiful promise of hope and freedom

7. GENEVA

The Struggle of the Shrinking Alternative Scene



"Hôtel de la Paix" (Cottage Café), Genève, 2015

7.1. General Context

The City of Geneva (15.93 Km²) is part of the Canton of Geneva (282 km²) – the Canton being an enclave surrounded by French territories (department of Haute-Savoie in the south, Ain in the north) (img 307) – which in turn is part of *Suisse Romande* (French speaking Switzerland), a linguistic region of the Helvetic Confederation (Switzerland). The city of Geneva itself is located at the proximity of the Alps, and built at the extremity of the Lake *Léman* (better known in English as *Lake Geneva*) where the second sector of the River Rhône has its beginning. The Arve River, an affluent of the Rhône, traverses Geneva and joins up this river in the part of the city called “La Jonction”.

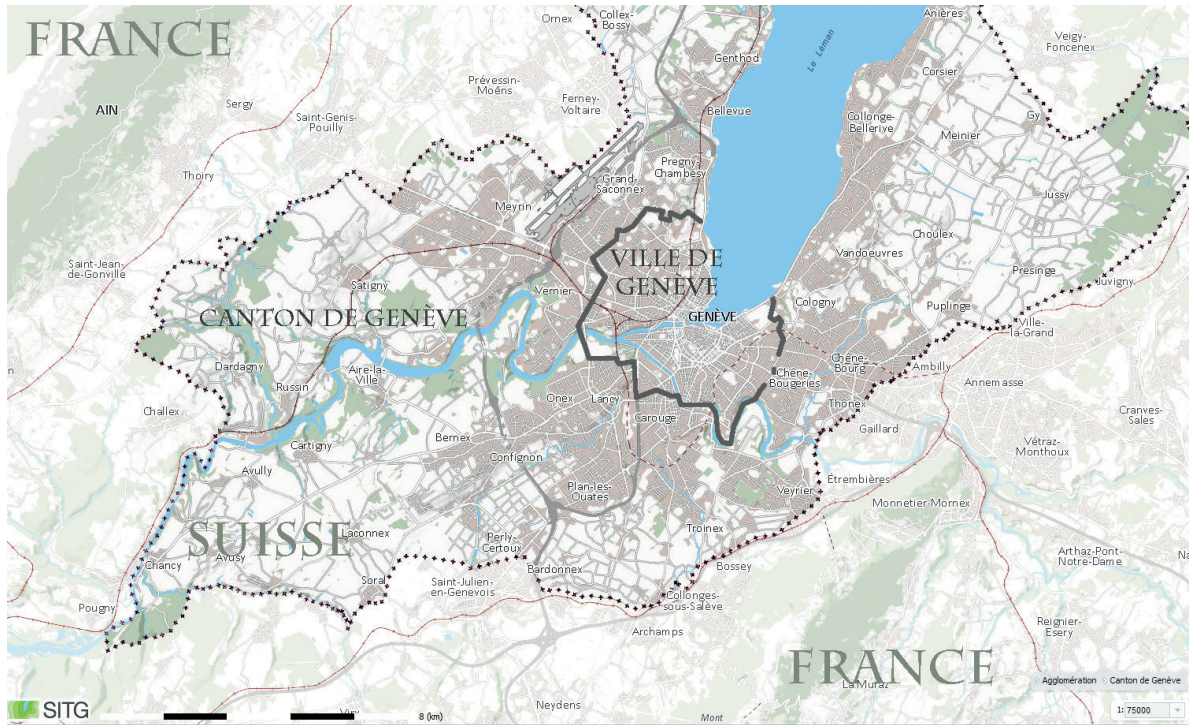
However, Geneva is only part of Switzerland since the *Congress of Vienna* that took place in 1814-15 (Bruemmer Bozeman 1949, 113-46). Before, after alternating between a self-governing status and a political situation subjected to influences from neighbouring potentates, the city had been annexed by revolutionary France in 1798. French has been since long time the main language spoken in Geneva (influence from the neighbour France) and Calvinism influenced profoundly the city life since the 16th century, not only from a religious, but also from a political point of view.

Switzerland is part of the European Shengen space, but not part of the UE (like an island in the middle of Europe). In Switzerland there exist 4 official languages (German, French, Italian and Romansh), and English is often used as *lingua franca* between French- and German-speaking Swiss in business settings¹. The influence of the official languages varies according to the cantons, the same happening with religions and the political tendencies. Switzerland has borders with France, Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein and Italy. Just like Slovenia, Switzerland “is very much a border state”. In this sense, there is some proximity with Slovenia but, respecting the composition of the population, it is clearly a more international melting pot.

A political specificity of Geneva is that, contrarily to the other Swiss cantons, there exists a single city, which means that the city and the canton superpose each other in terms of administration.

The following information about Geneva’s context has been based in part on the data produced by the “Creative Cities and Counter-culture” project led by the C4 research group of the Laboratory of Urban Sociology of EPFL.

¹ Despite the fact that it seems that public opinion does not support the idea of introducing English officially as a lingua franca into multilingual Switzerland (<http://duermueller.tripod.com/ECH.html> and www.swissinfo.ch/eng/languages/29177618).



Img 307. Map of Geneva - the limits of the "city" and the *canton".

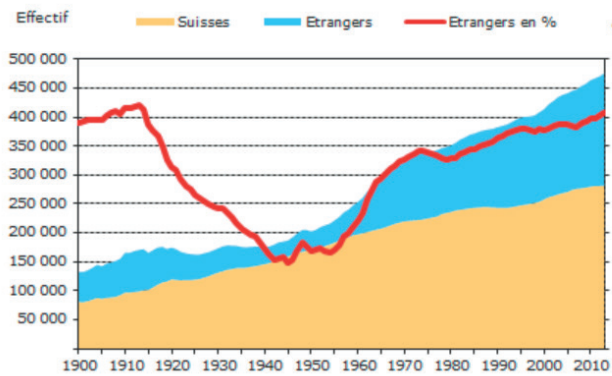


Chart Y1 - Canton of Geneva: Evolution of the resident population, by origin, since 1900 (Source : OCSTAT - Statistique cantonale de la population, 01.2014).

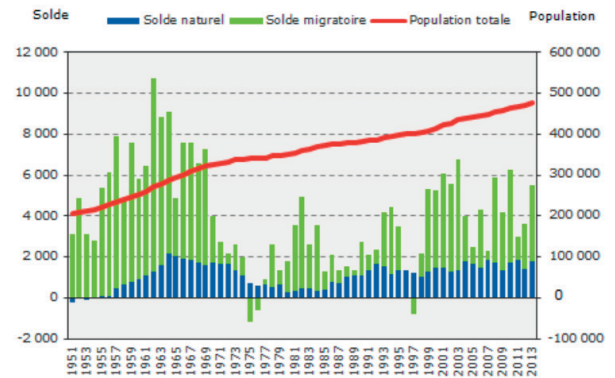


Chart Y2 - Canton of Geneva: Evolution of the resident population, the migration and the natural balances since 1951 (Source : OCSTAT - Statistique cantonale de la population, 01.2014)

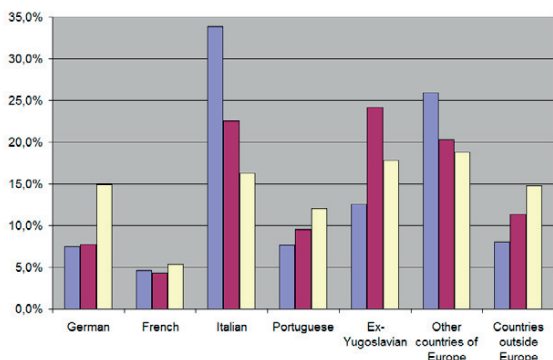


Chart Y3 - Switzerland: Foreign residents in percentage of total population

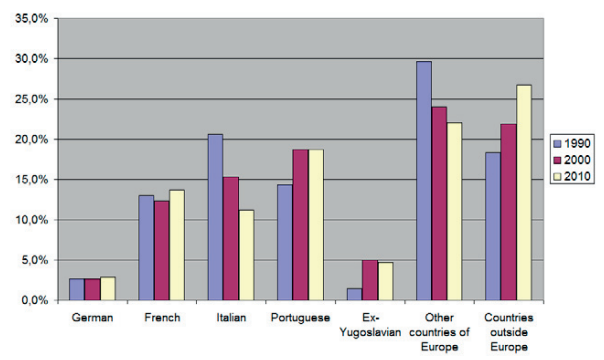


Chart Y4 – Canton of Geneva: Foreign residents in percentage of total population

Population

The population of the Geneva canton was about 490 thousand in 2015, while the city itself had about 201 thousand inhabitants in the same year (the total population of the country was about 8.3 millions). This reflects significant population increases, particularly from the mid-19th century (38 thousand estimated in 1850 for the city and 64 thousand for the canton)². Afterwards the city population increased rapidly, reaching about 172 thousands in 1960 (from 1850 to 1960, the corresponding average annual growth was 1.4%), as did the other communes of the canton (which together had 26 thousands inhabitants in 1850 and about 81 thousands in 1960, with an average annual growth of 1.0%)³.

However, a major change would take place from 1960 to 1980. At the end of this period, the populations – in the city and in the other communes of the canton – were, respectively, 157 thousands and 194 thousands⁴, which means that the corresponding AAG (Average Annual Growth) were -0.5% and 4.5%. As we can see, the population growth in these 20 years was negative in the city and explosive in the other communes of the canton taken together. The city of Geneva went back to growth rates in the following periods (AAG of 0.6% in 1980-2000 and 0.8% in 2000-2015⁵) and the other communes maintained positive growth rates, but much more moderate (AAG rates of 1.0% and 1.4%, respectively)⁶. The reasons behind such evolutions are manifold and complex but only some of them will be considered in this text.

The figures above – not only those for Geneva but also those concerning the whole Switzerland – include a significant segment of residents who do not have Swiss nationality. They may be recent immigrants but it must be kept in mind that there is, in Switzerland, a long history of immigration and that many descendants of former immigrants have been unable to acquire the Swiss nationality. As the Chart Y1 shows, the relative proportion of the foreign elements in the total population of the canton of Geneva was very high in the beginning of the twentieth century (around 40%). It decayed sharply from the start of the WWI onwards, resuming growth only in the fifties. The growth of that relative proportion was particularly strong until the beginning of the seventies (about 35%, from about 16% in 1956), a connection with the intense economic growth of that period being obvious. On the other hand, the intense economic growth is also behind the high AAG rate (4.5% in the period 1960-1980) in the total population of the other communes of the canton taken together (as referred above).

² The total for the country was 2.4 million (1850).

³ The whole country population was, respectively (1850 and 1960), 2.4 and 5.36 million (a correspondent average annual growth of 0.7%).

⁴ The country had 6.34 millions and (in 1960-1980) an AAG (Average Annual Growth) of 0.8%.

⁵ Which is very close to the national average for the correspondent period.

⁶ The populations, in 2000, were 177.7 thousands for the city and 235.9 for the other communes. The national total was 7.2 millions. The data about populations was taken in (city and canton) *Office cantonal de la statistique - OCSTAT - République et Canton de Genève* (www.ge.ch/statistique/population_residante) and in (Switzerland) *Statistique suisse - Confédération suisse* (www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/fr/index/themen/01/02/blank/data/01.html). AAG values have been calculated from the figures taken in OCSTAT and *Statistique suisse*.

In the following period (through the present day), the relative proportion of the foreign population kept growing, but not so sharply as in the preceding 20 years. The influence of immigration on this evolution is, as could be expected, essential, the Chart Y2 giving a yearly approach of the phenomenon.

As seen in Chart Y1, the foreign population in the Canton of Geneva is more than 40 in 100 residents. In the whole country, the concentration of foreigners is not so high (it is “only” 25 in 100) but the corresponding evolution since 1990 is faster than in the canton of Geneva; from 16.7% in that year, the rate of foreigners in the country rose to 22.4% in 2010, while in the canton the percentages were, respectively, 36.4% and 39.7%. On the other hand, the distribution of the foreign nationalities in the country and in the canton of Geneva is rather different in the two cases. Two of the most significant aspects to highlight are the importance of the German nationality in Switzerland (but not in Geneva) and of the Portuguese nationality in Geneva (though its weight, being lesser in the whole country, is nevertheless progressing faster). Another aspect to keep hold of is the larger representation of the Countries outside Europe in Geneva (which is very likely due to the fact that many international organisations have headquarters in the city⁷). The charts Chart Y3 and Y4 give some other details of those distributions, in particular their evolutions from 1990 to 2010⁸.

Such an increasingly higher proportion of foreign people in the canton of Geneva is possible because the net migration from foreign countries is itself a phenomenon in constant progression. The statistics available do not distinguish migration flows by nationality but – given the significant and growing proportion of foreigners in the canton – one cannot escape the conclusion that the majority of the migrants come from outside countries.

Housing Shortage

The cross-border metropolitan area of Geneva⁹ has one of the largest population growths in Europe (with a rate of more than 1% since 1999¹⁰), mainly because of the strong economic attractiveness of the Lake Geneva region in general and of the city of Geneva in particular (Thomas, Marie-Paule 2011)¹¹. The fact that Geneva hosts over twenty international organizations, gives this small city worldwide prestige and a considerable economic prosperity (Adly, Hossam 2014, 20). According to an article published by some of the Lasur’s research team, there is a large imbalance in the distribution of jobs and housing in the territory that includes not only the Canton of Geneva but also the French neighbouring departments of the Ain and of the Haute-Savoie. About 75% of

⁷ Geneva is the siege for the headquarters of several international companies, multinational enterprises, and NGOs (e.g. ONU, CERN).

⁸ All percentages have been calculated from data taken in OCSTAT - Statistique cantonale de la population (http://www.ge.ch/statistique/population_residante/welcome.asp#5) and Statistique suisse - Confédération Suisse (www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/fr/index/themen/01/07/blank/data/01.html).

⁹ Composed of 208 communes distributed in between two countries (two Swiss cantons and two French departments).

¹⁰ Pattaroni (2011, 44).

¹¹ Quoted in Hossam (2014, 220).

jobs are located in the Canton of Geneva, but this one concentrates only 50% of the residents¹². Apart from the fact that the housing is cheaper in the French side (since this region is not so close to jobs location and belongs to a country where the cost of living is not so high), there are also less and less available dwellings to host this growing number of people in the Swiss part. For instance, the housing vacancy rate of the Canton of Geneva was 0.33% in 2012, which is very low (the national average showing in comparison a less unfavourable figure¹³: 0.94%).

This situation is reflected in an indicator calculated by the OCSTAT office for the period 1980-2015, which shows that the ratio between the number of residents and the number of rooms in the dwellings goes from 0.73 in 1980 to 0.67 in 2000 (revealing ameliorating conditions of habitability) but regresses to 0.70 through 2015¹⁴. One essential reason behind this evolution is the population growth in the Canton of Geneva, that has been, in particular, stronger in the period 2000-2015 (an AAG of 1.14%) than in the previous 20 years (0.82%).



Chart Y5 - Canton of Geneva: Ratio “number of residents”/”number of rooms in the dwellings”, from 1980 until 2015.

The detailed evolution of the indicator is shown in the graphic Y5. From the year 2000 on, the “number of residents” is progressing faster than the “number of rooms” which is demonstrably a reason to see that a housing shortage is a reality. Even if the construction of new dwellings did not stop¹⁵, it is still insufficient to assure good living conditions to the people arriving to the canton of Geneva in the most recent years.

*

¹² Thomas and al. (2011), quoted by (Adly, Hossam 2014, 39).

¹³ Ocstat, “Logements vacants, vides et surfaces d’activité vacantes, à Genève, en 2012”, Informations statistiques n° 56, octobre 2012 – quoted by (Adly, Hossam 2014, 38 n.26).

¹⁴ OCSTAT, Statistique cantonale de la population (Available at: www.ge.ch/statistique/domaines/09/09_03/tableaux.asp#8).

¹⁵ There were 206 thousand dwellings in 2000 and 227 thousands in 2015. Nevertheless, in order to cover the populations’ needs in a satisfying way, a number between 240 and 260 thousand dwellings would probably be necessary.

7.2. From the Squat movement to the “Emergent” Culture

The alternative culture has been part of Geneva inhabitants’ lives for about a quarter of century. Particularly in the 1990s, the city of Geneva hosted one of the biggest squat movements in Europe (Pattaroni 2007), comparable to those in Berlin or Amsterdam, all of them inspired by the urban struggles of the 1970s. In 1996, there were about 160 occupied places and about 2000 squatters (Pattaroni 2011, 43).

The squat movement in Geneva is linked to the resistance movement (of residents and activists) against the destruction project of the popular neighbourhood Les Grottes (located behind the train station), that was planned back in the 1970s. A “modern” neighbourhood of towers (housing and offices), inspired by the contemporary rationalist and functionalist urbanism, had been planned for this area to replace the existing popular neighbourhood (img 308). The resistance movement began with the occupation of several buildings and apartments which were abandoned at the time in this area (Pattaroni 2011, 44). Squatters proposed values and ways of life other than the mainstream ones, based on participation, self-management, autonomy, free access, social diversity and creativity (Pattaroni and al. 2007).



Img 308. A group of buildings in the neighbourhood Les Grottes (2012). Img 309. A scene of the squat life in Geneva (photo by Julien Gregorio).

The movement gained a larger visibility in the public realm and in political debate, due to its fight against property speculation and its clear stance on the right to housing and community spaces (Becerra 2012, 34-35). Thanks to an organised and strong counter-power (*contre-pouvoir*) of squatters, syndicates and left parties, which defended the “right to the city” (Lefebvre 1968), it was possible to stop the evictions and establish “usage contracts” (*contrats de confiance*) which allowed the squatters to remain in the buildings while no destruction, renovation or reoccupation project was approved. During the time the squatters used those buildings, they took care of the maintenance of the building, doing the necessary renovation works in order to keep the spaces in useable and habitable conditions (img 309). The squatting became this way tolerated, this situation lasting until the middle of the 2000s.

During this period, plenty of improvised and festive places existed. Nonetheless, this scene changed drastically within a period of ten years, these spaces of freedom having completely been dismantled by the tightening of local politics and increasing technical restrictions. Today, security rules are so many that opening such a place, under this specific legal frame, becomes just too complicated (Herzog 2016). Moreover, while previously the squats used to have public support, now they are criminalised, a rather negative image resulting from a campaign orchestrated by a hostile right-wing politics. Squatters are now accused of provoking disorders and many nuisances like “noise, dirt, graffiti and other forms of territorial marking, night activities, gatherings ...” (Vivant 2006, 60)¹. They became targeted as undesirable, wild, immoral, profiteers, lazy, idlers and parasites (Becerra 2012, 36-38). Repression followed, with the “zero risk” policies and the creation of aseptic environments that have meanwhile been adopted, leading to an impoverishment of the imaginary and to the extinction of the critical debate (Herzog 2016). According to Pattaroni, politics is the work of establishing a common order, but that necessarily implies creating new fragmentations and conflicts within the inhabitants of the city (Pattaroni 2007).

The causes of the disappearance of the Geneva squats are multiple. It is true that the squatters have demobilised, becoming less organised and politicised, more spontaneous and individualistic. But the increasing of population due to the growth of the Geneva economy, and the consequent insufficient available dwellings to host all these new people provoked or increased the housing shortage situation. Therefore, the destruction of decaying houses (in order to replace it with new buildings) became a faster process due to the bigger demand, and the offer of dwellings that could have been considered until then not eligible to be placed on the rental market (due to its poor material conditions or simply because the owners did not care to rent it, leaving it to abandonment) was now under pressure of such demand. This, together with the increasing of social and political repression, reduced the possibility of spaces being occupied by squatters. These are a few explanations for the decline of the squat movement (Becerra 2012, 36-38), during the 2000s on (the period of transition on the urban dynamics of Geneva, as we have seen before). Besides, the quantity of banks, insurance companies and international organisations that this city hosts today, encourage the closure and demolition of the squats, “to benefit

¹ Mentioned in Becerra (2012, 36-38).

reconstruction” and the urban development (Sanchez, 2009 65)². This resulted therefore in a crisis of spaces for experimentation, freedom, conviviality and cultural creation.

“The increase in population derived from economic growth” associated with the “degradation of living conditions” led to more rapid destruction of dilapidated housing to replace it with new buildings and / or occupation, also faster, the abandoned property (given there is much more demand); then the possibility of being occupied by squatters is more remote. But there is another explanation: the social and political repression.

What happened meanwhile to some of the emblematic squats and spaces of Geneva’s alternative scene? (img 310).

L’Usine: opened in 1989, and is still open today. But its space and activities have progressively been framed by the increasingly imposed norms. Usine has recently been a victim of several attacks related to the licensing required to its bars. Its community has refused to accept, declaring this licensing was contrary to the principles of the self-management. This resulted in a violent street protest support demonstration for Usine’s position, causing several material damages (Herzog 2016; Raffin 2007; Trans Europe Halls and Bordage 2002) (img 311, 312).

Rhino (*Retour des Habitants dans les Immeubles Non Occupés*, Return of Inhabitants in the Unoccupied Buildings): located in Plainpalais, this squat hosted several parties and concerts, like Cave12 and Bistr’OK, having a period of existence of about 20 years. It closed in 2007. Cave 12 has been saved, and is now supported by the State (Herzog 2016).

Artamis (Art+amis = friends of arts): it was an ancient industrial wasteland of 12 000 m² located in the city centre, whose buildings the Industrial Services of the City had previously occupied. It hosted crafts and art studios, bars, clubs... About 250 people used to work here. It was occupied in 1996 and closed in 2007, the excuse for the eviction being the need to decontaminate the soil, that was polluted due to its previous industrial affectation. An eco-quartier is today being built in this place. Some new spaces have been created – with the financial support of Foundation Wilsdorf – to reallocate the artists, after the closure, like Motel Campo, Picto or Vélodrome and later on La Gravière (img 316).

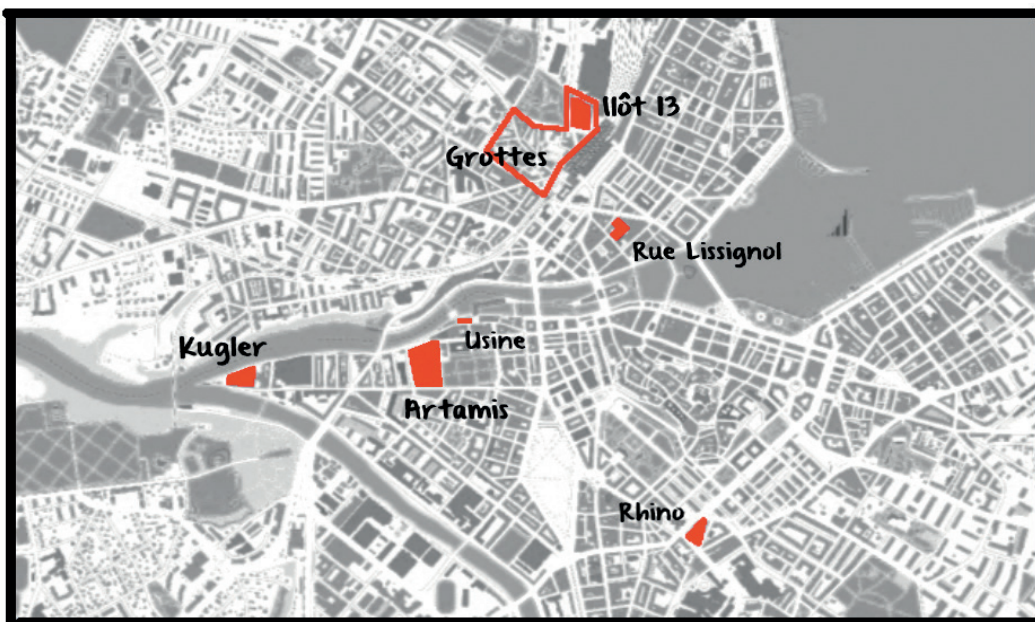
In a few of the places that have survived the evictions, some signs of alternative ways of spatial transformation and alternative spatial aesthetics are still visible, as we can see in the images 311-315. Nonetheless, these signs tend to disappear gradually.

Since the countless evacuations took place, several negotiations occurred, and some groups of actors of Geneva’s alternative scene organised themselves to fight for their rights and survival.

RAAC (*Rassemblement Des Artistes et Acteurs Culturels*, Gathering of Artistes and Cultural Actors), for instance³, was created in February 2007 to fight for the preservation of Geneva’s cultural scene and to demand the development of new spaces dedicated to culture, art and creation. The creation of RAAC occurred with the awareness that “the State of Geneva planned to abandon all support for culture” (RAAC 2009, 11). RAAC highlights the real “crisis of cultural

² Referred in Becerra (2012, 36-38).

³ This gathers cultural actors, professionals, associations, institutions, companies and artists.

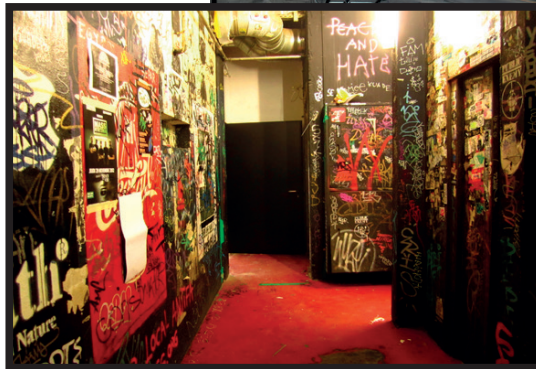
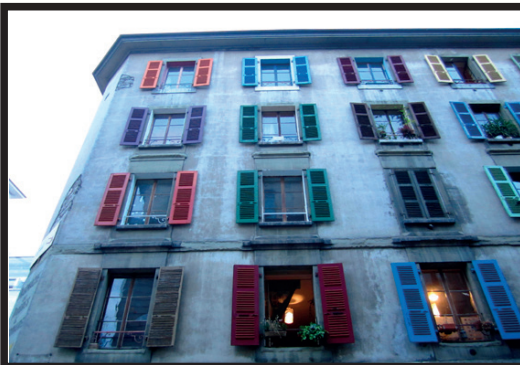


Img 310. Mapping the squat movement of Geneva - some emblematic squats are indicated in this map. In 1996, there were about 160 occupied places in Geneva.

Img 311-315. The visual and spatial aesthetics of a few spaces of Geneva's alternative scene that resisted until today in Geneva (pictures taken between 2012-13).



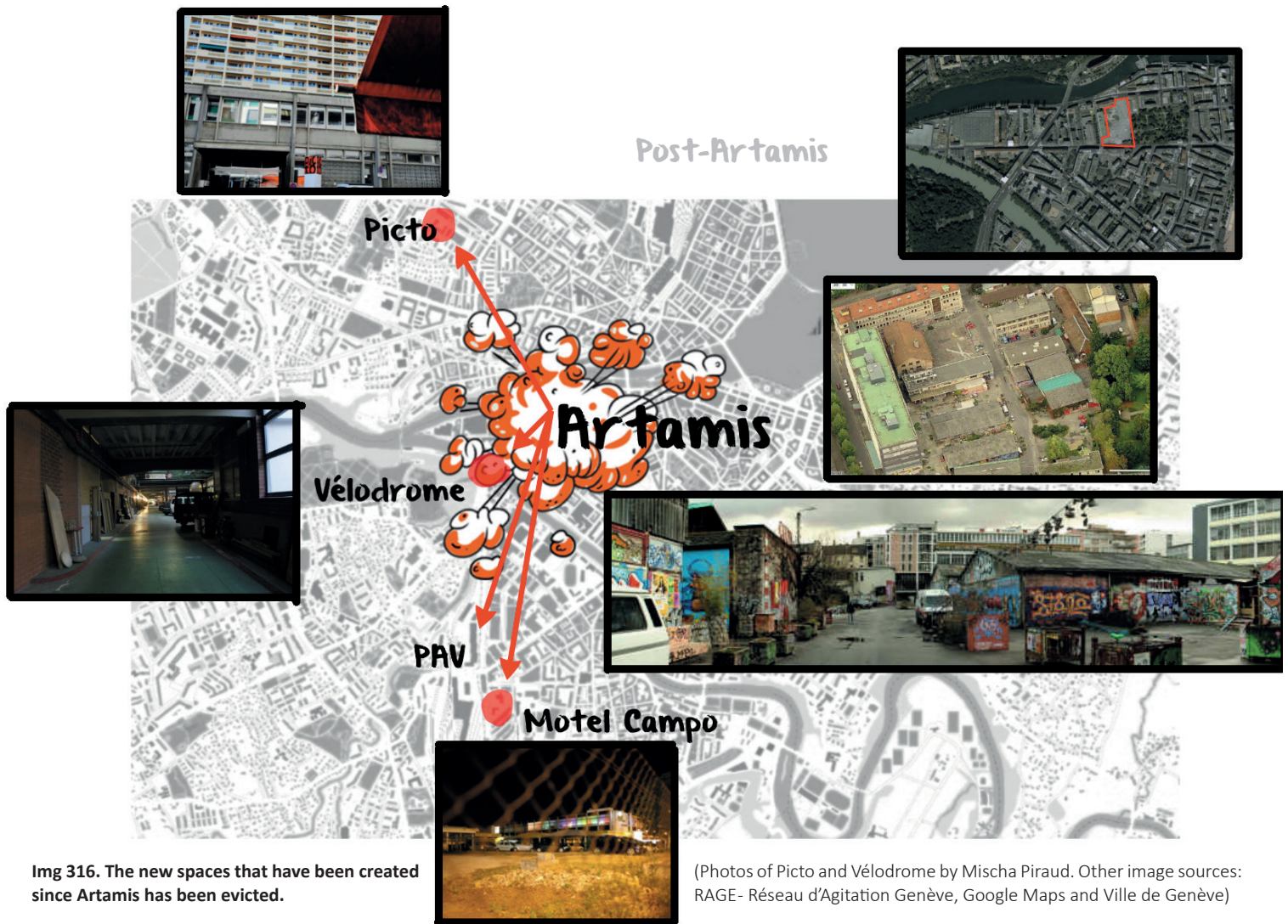
Img 311, 312. Usine. We can see the contrast between the "clean" industrial façade and the tags existing on its inner space (though existing nowadays only in very restricted areas).



< Img 313, 314. Rue du Lissignol. There can be seen coloured shutters (which still nowadays contrast with the nearby grey buildings) and an interior mural (spread through several walls and doors, appropriating the space and giving it a special ambiance).



Img 315. Îlot13. A housing bloc located in the neighbourhood of Grottes. We can see how the vegetation invaded the walls of the buildings in an informal way. We can also see a new building that was built next to the old ones, and a few graffiti.



Img 316. The new spaces that have been created since Artamis has been evicted.

(Photos of Picto and Vélodrome by Mischa Piraud. Other image sources: RAGE- Réseau d'Agitation Genève, Google Maps and Ville de Genève)

sites in Geneva” and the risks associated to the eviction creators and artists from the city-centre, and particularly from “its alternative spaces” (RAAC 2009). In this context, it intends to fight the loss of cultural dynamism of the Geneva area (Becerra 2012, 77-79).

Another group that was created was UECA (*Union des Espaces Autogérés*, Union of the Self-Managed Spaces), whose aim is to protect places which are, precisely, partially out of the market’s constrains and of a strict state control (Piraud and Pattaroni 2016, 5) – those “places of self-managed culture” (so-called *alternative*, non-institutional) – and to look for new available spaces. UECA is “composed of associations that develop their activities in alternative places: outside the “mainstream” and non-commercial” (Becerra 2012, 77-79).

However, one of the stories that better represents the evolution of Geneva’s alternative scene is that of the **Artamis** squat, which no longer exists today, but whose artists have been reallocated to other spaces through a long process of negotiation (img 316). This story refers the different mechanisms that have been created since the squat movement started to decline, and how the alternative artistic and cultural scene has spatially been recomposed and transformed. Another story that helps us to understand Geneva’s situation, though through a very different perspective, is that of **Usine Kugler** – a place that has only been partially a squat for a certain period of time, and that still exists today. The lifetime span of almost 20 years of Kugler allows us to see how its space and status have changed, and which compromises have been made to adapt to the multiple constraints imposed by the authorities.

Post-Artamis

As mentioned before, the industrial wasteland **Artamis** used to host many activities related to all kinds of artistic expression and was a convivial meeting place. Occupied in 1996, it closed in 2008 by the city authorities in order to decontaminate the soil, polluted by its previous industrial affectation (Industrial Services). After the squatters have been evicted from Artamis' site, a set of demonstrations and negotiations with the City and the Canton authorities followed. As a consequence, part of its community has been reallocated to some of the buildings owned by the City and by the Canton (img 316). **Vélodrome**¹, a 4,000 m² City owned building located just a few streets away from the old place, in the Jonction area², welcomed about one hundred artists and craftsmen³, and has been available to Artamis' association through a rental contract subsidised by the City of Geneva, who determined an annual rent of about 50 CHF/m²⁴. However, the number of studios was not enough, so the Canton of Geneva proposed to offer some studios available in one of its owned buildings – **Picto**⁵, located in Rue Ernest-Pictet – to the remaining members of the association who still had not find a place to work (in particular those who need less space for their activities, like designers, illustrators, photographers. But the rent of this last place was 3 times higher than those established for the buildings that belonged to the City⁶. Therefore, in order to cope with this dissymmetry, a public-private partnership was established with the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation (the owner of Rolex watches), this meaning that a rather curious source of money was now being used to sustain “alternative culture” (Piraud and Pattaroni 2016, 5-6). This public-private partnership became a sort of a private foundation (*La Fondation pour la Promotion de Lieux pour la Culture Emergente*, FPLCE), which aims to “contribute to the enhancement of the emergent culture in the Canton of Geneva, providing the access to adequate sites for its activities”⁷. FPLCE is meant to formalise the relocation plan and establish the link between (1) the state of Geneva (*Département des constructions et des techniques de l'information et département de l'instruction publique, de la culture et du sport*), (2) the City of Geneva (Department of Culture), (3) the Association of the Communes of Geneva (ACG) and (4) Picto Association (the forthcoming lodgers). Furthermore, the foundation board includes also a Wilsdorf Foundation member. Even if FPLCE was essentially created to manage the rehousing of the artists at Picto, this foundation has today a larger scope of action, supporting more than 20 projects in other areas (Piraud and Pattaroni 2016, 6-7).

1 www.levelodrome.org.

2 More recently, Usine Kugler also hosted some of the artists that had previously been at Artamis (See “Usine Kugler”, pp. 366).

3 In these big studios can be found artists working on plastic arts, music, theatre, dance or video (Becerra 2012, 58).

4 Equivalent to ~45€.

5 www.pictonet.ch

6 Given that cantonal authorities are obliged by law to establish a rent similar to the market's standard price.

7 www.fplce.ch.

From “alternative” to “emergent”

The soft lexical shift from “autonomous” to “emergent” spaces is significant of the change from the ‘squat’ model – as a place that reassembled many different activities in just one space – to unifunctional spaces, like artist studios, galleries or clubs – meant solely for art production or solely “entertainment”. “Unitary” places, like Artamis, were not only an exception to the market housing regime, but also to the normalised management of buildings (Piraud and Pattaroni 2016, 7). The rental contracts formalised at **Picto** and **Vélodrome** impose the activities that can take place at those spaces⁸, which exclude any kind of public events (e.g. exhibitions, openings or parties). This restriction consequently narrows the range of possibilities. The visitor’s access is limited, if not forbidden, and the security rules are quite strict. The spaces for art creation are today separated from those existing for art diffusion, arts are separated from crafts and visual arts separated from plastic arts, which are allocated to different buildings. Furthermore, visual and plastic arts have also become spatially separated from the leisure dimension. This dimension can precisely be found today at **Motel Campo**, for instance, which is a space that has a financial support from the State, and is located over an old garage existing in the industrial area of Praille-Acacias-Vernets (PAV) (Becerra 2012, 58). This “entrepreneurial venture” has a private funding and support from the State (and the FPLCE), and was created to develop a “pluralistic art space” (that includes ateliers and a concert room). Due to financial reasons the place ended up to dedicate itself to music oriented activities, and more recently it also rents the space for private events.

The particularity of Geneva regulatory system is that the party dimension was forced to be separated from the cultural dimension, since the law applied to drinking consumption states that “all activities happening after 2 am are not considered to be cultural” (Piraud and Pattaroni 2016). These regulations and the resulting partitioning have necessarily destroyed the joyful dimension that the artistic scene once existed at Geneva. The present division between work and non-work activities encompass dominant forms of production of the urban space, leading not only to a change of their spatial arrangements but also to a growing lessening of possible experiences in anthropological terms (Piraud and Pattaroni 2016, 7-8).

The most recent model of Geneva’s artistic/alternative scene contributes to format the artists under an institutional frame, reducing this way the distinctiveness of Geneva’s scene (Piraud and Pattaroni 2016, 7). The recomposition of this scene gave place to new spaces, but the subversive dimension is now gone, since these new spaces actually make compromises following the logics of the market (Pattaroni 2011, 47). Spaces that are simply occupied, with no profit aim, seem no longer to exist (Herzog 2016). Geneva has become a global city, where a marketing logics reigns (Pattaroni 2011, 44).

⁸ They are regulated by the occupation regime meant for ‘industrial buildings’.

The eco-quartier at Artamis site

The architecture competition launched for the *Eco-quartier Jonction*⁹ was won by the Swiss architectural office Dreier & Frenzel (img 319). Initially this was planned to be a low density area, where 1/3 of the dwellings should consist of classic social housing. Furthermore, the project was supposed to have a strong self-management dimension. However, these conditions became “unrealistic” in the eyes of the market, which was far more interested in addressing the housing shortage crisis and the need of economic profitability. Furthermore, several administrative and technical constraints came up, restricting even more the initial agreed conditions. Consequently, the most militant collective part of this process moved away (Pattaroni 2011, 52).

According to the sociologist Luca Pattaroni, the Eco-quartier holds a few principles inherited from the urban struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, while trying at the same time to make compromises accepting the marketing logics. The Eco-quartier is a good example of “the new spirit of the city” (Pattaroni 2011), inspired by the “New Spirit of Capitalism” (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999), as a model that is able to integrate some of the critiques of the counter-cultures addressed to capitalism, made back in 1968. A few specific approaches, based on those critiques, that have been integrated in these kinds of urban planning are (Pattaroni 2011, 43, 47, 49):

- “social participation” in the building process (increasing the feeling of belonging);
- “social mixing” (achieved through a variety of dimensions of the dwellings, inhabitants ages and their socio-cultural origins/environment);
- “conviviality”;
- “mixed functions” (housing, work, leisure, culture);
- and, of course, the application of “sustainable principles”¹⁰.

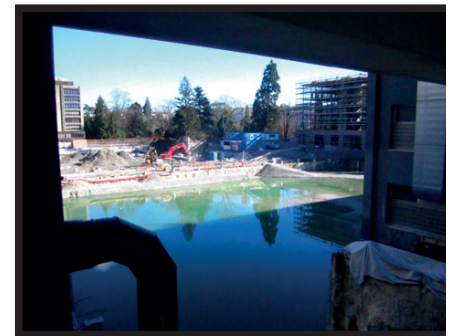
This latter example that concerns the ecological dimension – which includes the degrowth or the shrinking cities discourse and the urban gardening, for instance – has been today integrated in the urban planning and architectural lexicon, and is sometimes used in a distorted way (like through the usage of unsustainable high-tech means to achieve certain results, for instance). One of the main risks is that the eco-quartier becomes only an harmonious “pacified utopia”, just another marketing tool to attract “creative elites”, as Luca Pattaroni highlights (Pattaroni 2011, 53-55).

⁹ www.ecoquartierjonction.ch/histoire.

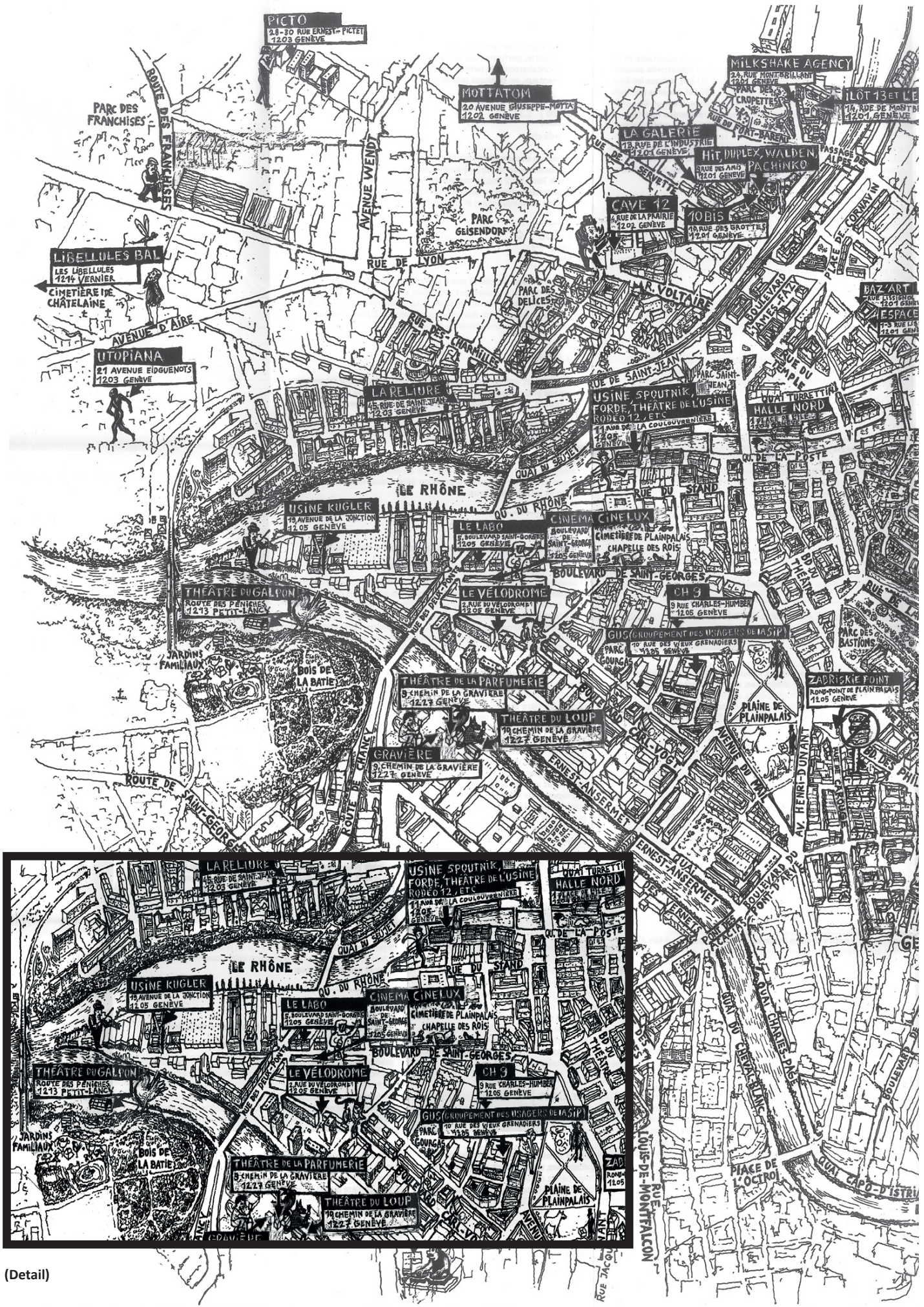
¹⁰ www.ecoquartiers-geneve.ch, mentioned by Pattaroni (2011, 51).



Img 317, 318. The site of Artamis in 2014 (Graffiti and construction site).



Img 319. Eco-Quartier Jonction: the project for the future site of Artamis (3D image and project designed by Dreier Frenzel architecture).



(Detail)



Img 320. Map of independent artistic places in Geneva (published during the event BIG, 2015). The map's visual aesthetics are inspired on a cartoon-fanzine style.

**CARTE DES LIEUX CULTURELS
INDÉPENDANTS À GENÈVE**
NON EXHAUSTIVE DESSIN BAILLIE OSCAR

Mapping the contemporary alternative scene

The “places of independent culture” have been mapped for an event that occurred in June 2015 at Plainpalais – the Biennale of the Independent Art Spaces of Geneva (*Biennale des espaces d’art Indépendants de Genève*), better known as BIG (img 320).

This event, that lasted one weekend, gathered many of the artists and associations that once used the spaces of Artamis or Rhino, for instance. Gathered in an architectural installation placed in the middle of the dusty and arid “square” of Plainpalais and composed of shipping containers disposed in circle (inspired by Stonehenge, img 321, 322)¹¹, each collective or group of artists used one of those containers to expose their art. Our C4 group of research¹² collaborated in this event with the artists’ collective *Espace Temporaire*, presenting the installation “The office for the Complaint about the Capitalist City” (*Bureau Des Doléances De La Ville Capitaliste*, img 323). Some notes of the general ambiance have been taken that might help to describe the strange mix that was felt on the site.

Plainpalais, due to its wide open surface and dusty floor, it looks like a kind of no-man’s land. Besides, because it is a wide and quite empty square (lozenge shaped), it is often adaptable to the most diverse activities. The event BIG establishes a dialogue with the inherent characteristic of “freedom” that is necessarily linked with such a kind of “common space” (the streets, or, in this case, the square) and the “alternative/independent/emergent culture”. Using this opportunity as kind of a temporary memorial dedicated to the “golden times” of the squat movement, this short event allowed reviving the bustling cultural environment of the latest decades, even if for a short moment. We could find on site, on the one hand, a very lively and cheerful atmosphere, transmitted precisely by the effect of a joyful memory (the squat movement) and, on the other hand, a pacified mood that seemed to result from the contemporary imposed constraints. BIG’s potential is after all, mostly closed up inside a few blue container boxes where too many rules restrict a real spontaneous artistic intervention (as it normally happens in the squat environments).

During the events, several parallel anonymous actions occurred in the nearby area, like the posting of texts looking to raise the awareness for the gentrification process that is occurring at the Rue des Bains (img 324, 325), or a few sprayed activist slogans on banks’ showcases.

*

¹¹ It was designed specifically for this event by the Geneva based architectural office *Bureau A*.

¹² See “Preface: support and funding” (p. 10).



BIG

Img 321. The architectural installation of BIG made of blue shipping containers disposed in circle, inspired by Stonehenge.
(Photo: Sophie Le Meillour. Source: www.pinterest.com/pin/175992297915305183)

Dans la chaleur étouffante d'un désert ocre entouré de tonnes de métal brulant, Esprit échauffés, odeurs corporelles et poussière ont servi d'écrin à un espace-temps parallèle. Cela aura duré l'éternité d'un souvenir, qui reviendra quelquefois étinceler dans nos existences schizophréniques...

(www.bigbiennale.ch/edito/12)



Img 322. The blue containers of BIG, some past-up's and an improvised bar (2015).

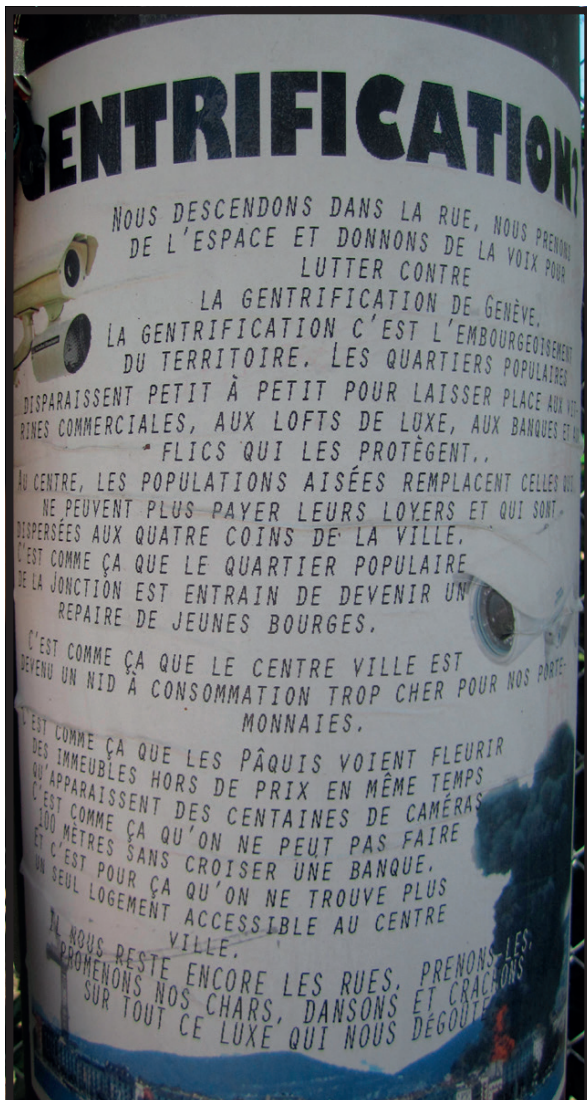
Biennale des espaces d'art indépendants

Ce vendredi a été ouverte la première biennale des espaces d'art indépendants sur la plaine de Plainpalais



16 | 24 Genève le 27.06.2015, Plaine de Plainpalais, BIG, Biennale des espaces d'art indépendants de Genève © Georges Cabrera [► Un article est lié à cette galerie BIG, agora éphémère de conteneurs](#)

Img 323. BIG 2015: "The office for the Complaint about the Capitalist City" (Bureau Des Doléances De La Ville Capitaliste). Artistic project of C4 group of research, in collaboration with the artists' collective *Espace Temporaire*. (img. source: "BIG, agora éphémère de conteneurs". *Tribune de Genève* online, le 29.06.2015).



Img 324. "Burn the borders", sprayed on a bank's showcase, during the event BIG.

Img 325. Paste-up raising awareness about the gentrification process that is happening at Quartier des Bains, posted during BIG (2015).

7.3. Usine Kugler

History

Kugler used to be a tap factory since 1934 (img 326). But the story of Kugler that interests us starts in 1997. The State of Geneva bought the building one year before, which was supposed to host the School of Architecture. However, this decision ended up to be altered. The State decided then to lend a part of the space to the association of artists Action Studio (1997), and later also to Agir 21 (1999). This situation was initially to be provisory for one or two years, on the course of which the rent and the charges would be assumed by the Canton (these conditions actually lasted until 2001). In the beginning there were 10 studios, and it was also used, for a while, by HEAD (*Haute École d'Art et de Design*, Geneva University of Art and Design¹) (Becerra 2012, 69-71; Janka 2016).

In 1999, the part of Kugler that was still vacant was squatted by groups of hip hop, roots and techno (img 331). No major problems arose between the squatters and the artists, because the limits of each group – the courtyard – had been defined since the beginning and this agreement was always respected. Then, parties started to be organised, attracting sometimes about 500 people. These parties occurred in a place with no escape exit (the basement, but also on the first floor), which was actually very dangerous, according to Harry Janka². A lot of quarrels happened during these parties as well, bringing along problems and accidents. The artists tried to manage the situation, but without success. The 2002 fire brought an end to this situation, the State evicting all residents. Harry believes the squatters had never really understood the value of the place (Janka 2016). Nevertheless, after the evacuation, and with the intermediation of ASLOCA³, a limited access to the recognised associations was granted (from 7a.m. until 7 p.m.) (Becerra 2012, 69-71), using as an argument that it was better to let the space be used by artists than to let the buildings be squatted again – which would give the owner many more problems (Janka 2016).

In 2005 these associations managed to sign individual rental contracts, renewable every 3 years, not very expensive, but progressive though. At the time, a few works were done by the State in the building in order to insure a minimum of security. But the most part of the renovation works have been done afterwards by the artists themselves⁴ (Becerra 2012, 69-71).

In 2009, these associations decided to create the FAK (*Fédération des Artistes de Kugler*), an entity that would work from then on as representative to negotiate with the State⁵, and applied

1 www.hesge.ch/head.

2 Harry Janka is one of the Kugler's residents since the beginning.

3 ASLOCA is the Swiss Tenants' Association, which is responsible for defending the rights of tenants (www.asloca.ch).

4 www.usinekugler.ch/accueil/usine-kugler/historique (accessed 07.04.2016).

5 FAK's committee meet whenever is needed and have a general assembly once a year (Prizreni 2016).

for funding support for more rehabilitation works of the former foundry. 50,000 CHF is how much the State paid for the renovation of this space, in 2011. Furthermore, FAK had to prepare a dossier for the insurance, an architect and a foreman (Prizreni 2016).

Today, FAK groups 8 artists' associations, about 220 people working in the areas of creative industries, research, design, sound, visual and applied arts, and crafts⁶. Since 2012, the artists' associations managed to have a longer lasting contract, for a period of ten years and able to be renewed, giving them more security in terms of stability (Janka 2016; Prizreni 2016). Today, Kugler is an artistic and cultural space of 400 m² for multidisciplinary cultural projects, open to research-based projects, art production and experimentation. Its cultural offer and programme consists of residences, new music concerts, evenings of support to several associations, contemporary art exhibitions, festivals and workshops for children⁷. Since 2012, a part of the 2nd floor is being renovated to host *Database59*, one of the associations evicted from **Artamis**.

Kugler does not have subsidies⁸ and exists mainly thanks to volunteer work and management effort of its active members. Therefore, a cheap rent is essential to FAK's survival (Becerra 2012, 69-71). "We pay the material and the rent". In addition, "every time we need material, we must justify why we want all that" explains Prizreni, the president of FAK. Furthermore, before each event, FAK needs to ask for an authorisation for the bar (to be able to sell alcohol), which costs 120 CHF, if the events lasts until midnight, and 60 CHF more, if it is a party lasting until 5 am ("cabaret", this name coming from an ancient law) (Prizreni 2016). But these events are what allow the artists to gain visibility and, apart from the exhibitions, also what assures each an income of 100-150 CHF/month. If they would have subsidies, they would do fewer parties, but they have to face those parties as a "cultural funding". Nonetheless, they all agreed not to accept subventions from Nestlé or Coca-Cola⁹.

The associations payed about 50 CHF/m², plus an amount of charges of about 20 CHF, in 2013¹⁰. This cheap rent is only possible, however, because of the bad conditions existing in the building: several problems related to infiltrations, thermic isolation and old pipes. Nonetheless, the Canton and the City demand FAK to be "professional", willing to be sure that Kugler organises a cultural programme and events assured for the entire year. Prizreni complains: "We are artists, but we have also to be managers. It is very heavy to manage all the administrative tasks, for someone who is doing it for free. We asked 5,000 CHF to support this task" (Prizreni 2016).

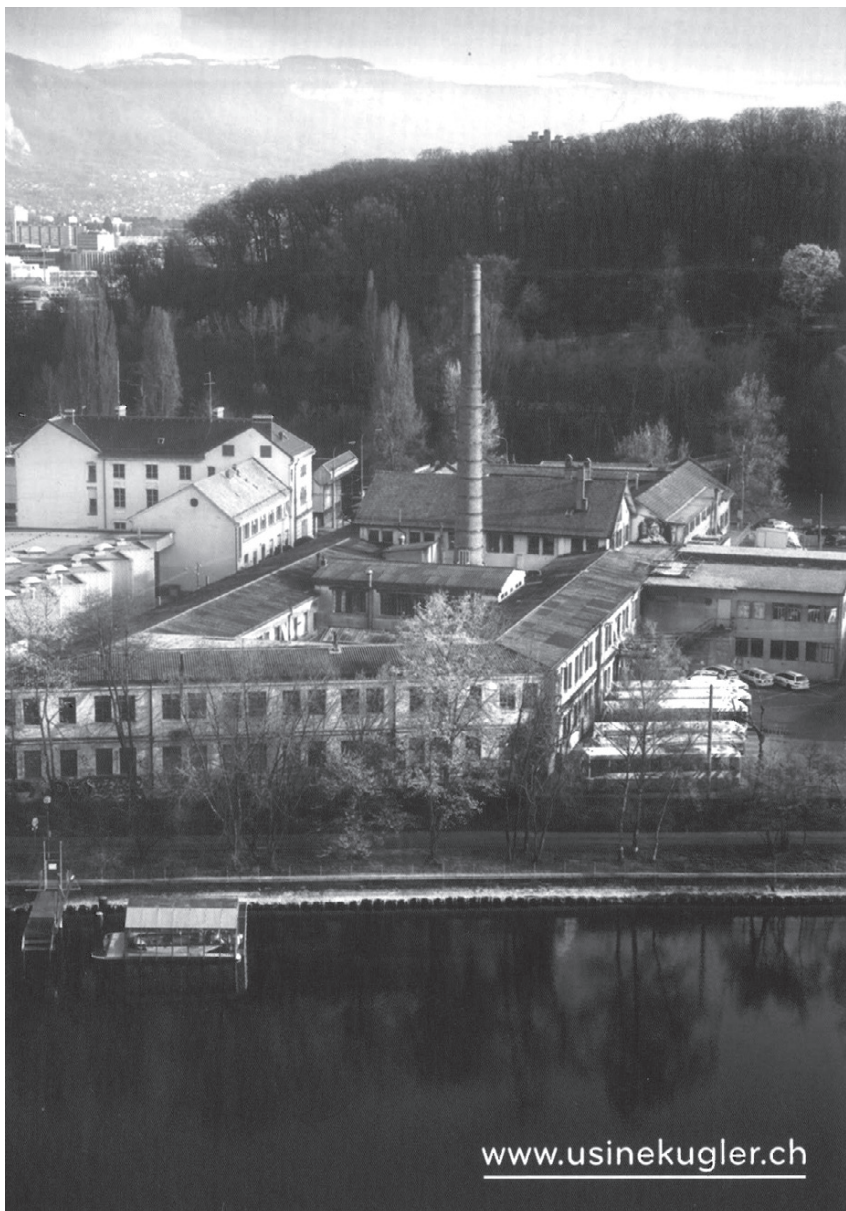
6 www.usinekugler.ch/accueil/federation-fak (accessed 07.04.2016).

7 *Ibid.*

8 However, we can consider the cheap price of the rent as a form of subsidy, and must be aware that most of the artists receive subventions.

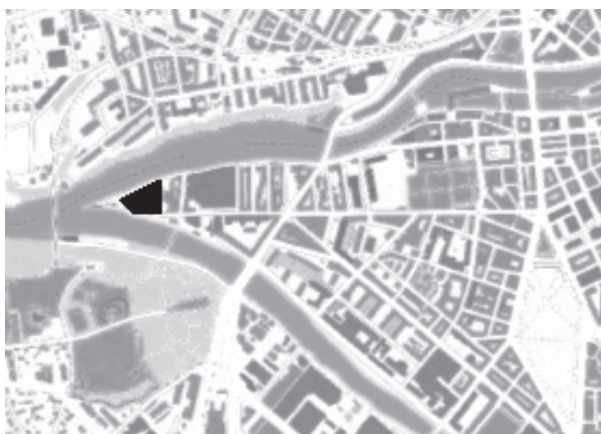
9 Sometimes they accept LGBT evenings that are sponsored by Red Bull.

10 The price of the m² in this part of the town is about 120 CHF. All these data relative to the costs is taken from a written work done about Usine Kugler by a group of master students of the Faculty of Architecture (EFPL, Fall semester 2013), under the context of the course "Urban Sociology", directed by Prof. Luca Pattaroni. The students' work was based on two interviews with Harry Janka and Stéphanie Prizreni (Clément Coquillat, Chloé Klein, Paul Kohli and Maxime Legros-Lefeuve, *La place de la créativité dans la ville de Genève: L'Usine Kugler*, p.15).



Img 326. Usine Kugler - panorama.
(Postcard published and distributed by Usine Kugler)

Img 327. Usine Kugler's location in Geneva (in black).



Img 328. Usine Kugler's façade.



Spatial and Urban Analysis

Kugler is located in an urban wasteland in the neighbourhood of Jonction (where both rivers meet together, img 326-328). It is a quiet place, quite central though, having as neighbours the Geneva's public transports depots. These geographic conditions are likely to have contributed to give a protective effect to the Kugler's building. So, it managed to resist, instead of being replaced by new buildings, like it happened to Artamis¹¹.

Just like Geneva's history of eradication of its informal social and architectural fabric, Kugler's own history has also been witnessing the city's tightening urban policies. For example, because the future of Usine Kugler is uncertain, FAK founded together with two other associations - Eco-Quartier de Genève and the association of residents of the neighborhood – the *Forum Pointe de la Jonction*¹². Though nothing is yet settled or defined, the associations are aware that the City of Geneva has several urban development projects planned for this area. A specific platform – the *Forum* "Pointe de la Jonction" – was this way created to defend the idea of the integration of culture in the future urban projects, willing to be involved in the decision making processes. Under this context, the associations proposed to establish a land use plan based on similar principles than those mentioned previously, defined for the eco-quartier of Artamis' site¹³, hoping this would become a way to include culture as an integrated element of urban planning. They believe, this way, that alternative culture could survive to the speculative market in order to continue enriching Geneva's cultural life (Becerra 2012, 69-71).

The architecture and structure of the building played an important role in the way the artists experienced this place. As the factory had been vacant for a while, when the artists moved in the building was quite degraded. There was no electricity, no toilets on the first floor... "In 1997 it was not up to the norms, it was very dangerous. We did everything", says Harry, who has since the beginning been the technical coordinator: "In the interior courtyard we built a permaculture system, where the plants are irrigated automatically. We built the balcony and the garden. Ville de Genève gave a small subvention to people who were in reintegration programs, to give us a hand." The residents have done several other renovation works, since the owner (the state) did not really care to rehabilitate this building¹⁴. This demanded a lot of energy, time and motivation to rebuilt studios with a minimum of working conditions. The occupation of the building was progressive, but the rehabilitation of the place had a major role on reinforcing the appropriation of the place by the artists (Janka 2016) (img 335-340).

The space of each association can be transformed according to their needs, in open or divided spaces (img 336, 341-344). Several facilities and common spaces – like the bar, the canteen, the courtyard or the exhibitions' rooms – facilitate encounters, and different events, exhibitions and "open-days" that take place regularly also contribute to trigger the conviviality character of Usine Kugler.

11 See the several reasons for Artamis' eviction, explained previously (p. 359).

12 www.usinekugler.ch/accueil/usine-kugler/historique (accessed 07.04.2016).

13 See "The eco-quartier at Artamis site" chapter, p. 361.

14 *Ibid.*

Nevertheless, the space was still not adapted according to the rules. So, in 2012 big works occurred, with the help of an architect and 1 million CHF of subventions. Emergency doors and columns (anti-fire, resistance of 30 minutes) were installed. 2,500 m² of Kugler's building were then adapted to security norms. With these works, some artists lost half of their spaces, in order to install the emergency doors and concrete walled staircases (Janka 2016; Prizreni 2016) (img 346-350).

Still today, the access to the basement is forbidden by the State due to the infiltrations resulting from the proximity to the rivers, this underground place being considered as a non-liveable place (Prizreni 2016). This interdiction had a weird effect in Kugler's inner spatial environment, resulting in a series of passages abruptly cut by walls. This action left uncomplete parts of architectural objects as if they were "suspended" in time and in space: what previously used to have a clear function has now become handicapped and useless. A concrete example of these architectural transformations is the access staircase to the basement that now leads to a wall. The resulting hole has later on been covered by a platform, probably to avoid accidents and also to allow this space becoming useful again (it is now available to host artistic projects). The corresponding stairs' handrails, which were not removed in its entirety, have therefore become quite unexpected, but mostly incomprehensible/perplexing objects (img 345-347). This ambiguous situation, where the property owner needs to be satisfied about the compliance of certain rules but where, at the same time, he does not really care about its general physical maintenance, results in some absurd spatial details. Another example is the dividing walls that were built inside each studio, which were allowed to have a maximum of 2.20 metres high. In order to avoid bureaucratic processes of license's authorisations, the residents built chipboard walls that do not reach the ceiling, leaving a hole in between. The residents call them "furniture walls" (img 336, 341-342).

Harry believes all these rules tighten the capacity of creation. However, the residents themselves were forced to establish some internal rules as well. For instance, every time there is a party the organisers are asked to clean it in the end (sometimes people break doors, make tags on the walls or mark them with shoes; so the organisers have to repaint the walls and fix the damaged objects). "We are not the Usine!", says Prinzeri (Prizreni 2016), a place which is well known precisely for its tagged interior walls. Furthermore, Harry repaint the exterior walls of Kugler every two months to clean up the tags that appear along time – only one wall is not clean, the one on the side of Rhone, while waiting for a street art project to come (Janka 2016).

Kugler's survival process and spatial transformations witness all the resistance and compromise practices this "artist factory" has been up to along the last two decades, from an anarchic spatial kind of occupation to a more institutionalised form. This process took place in several dimensions, through:

- the evolution of the lending contract / squat into an official rental contract;
- the establishment of an institutional formal entity – the FAK;
- the spatial transformations and architectural details progressively adapted to the norms.

The photos made on the site also reveal us the history of the building and its different phases and functions: the factory (img 334), the squatting (img 331-333), the working spaces (337, 343-344), the common places and the event halls (img 339-340, 350). Furthermore, several traces of the way the building was used are visible: negligence, abandonment, rules constraints, spatial transformations or the brutal interventions to prevent the access to restricted areas. The ambiances, in each studio, vary mostly according to the working supports of each artist, and those of the common spaces are rather left the most neutral possible (img 342, 350), except for the courtyard, whose ambiance has a stronger character due to the plants, balcony and chimney (img 339-340).



Img 329. Sketch from the shared room of Cheminée Nord (one of the collective of artists) >



Img 330. Sketches from the shared room of Cheminée Nord (one of the collective of artists), and the bar/parties room.

Usine Kugler

Img 331-333. Traces of the squatting of Kugler in the 1990s (graffiti, photographs, furniture).



traces of the past



Img 334. traces of the industrial past (pipes and chimney).



DIY approaches and appropriation of the place

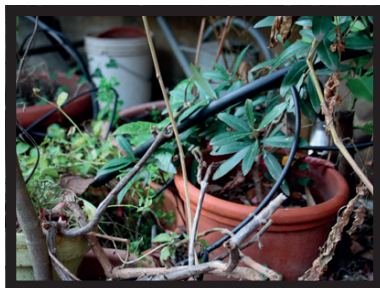
Img 336. plastic "ceilings", to keep the heat of the studios, or protect from infiltrations >



Img 335. DIY adaptations to the needs of the users: wires and pipes along walls and ceilings.



Img 337. Handmade built mezzanine.



Img 338. Permaculture.

Img 339. Terrace.

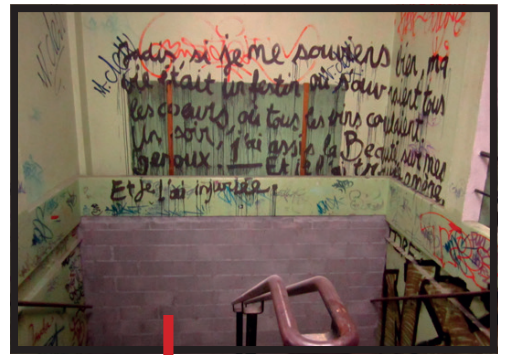
Img 340. Courtyard and diverse spatial transformations.



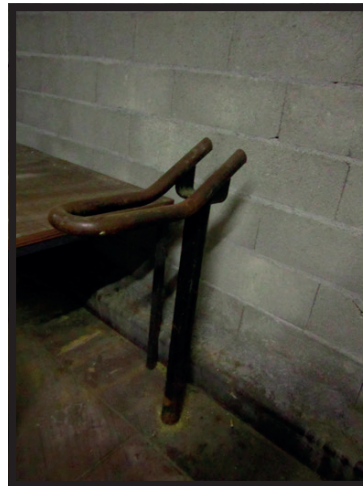


spatial transformations

< Img 341, 342. Dividing walls (of "furniture walls") built by the residents inside each studio with a max. of 2.20 m high to avoid bureaucratic processes of authorisation.

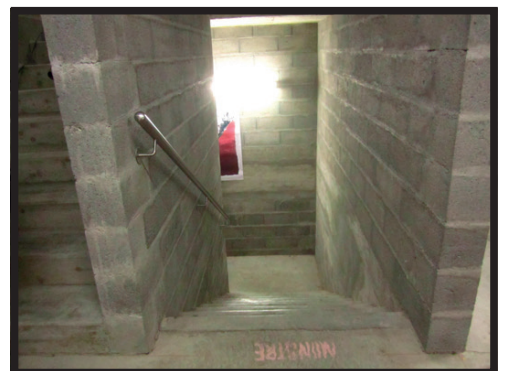


Img 345-347. Blocked (walled) access of the stairs to the basement. The space has later become an exhibition space. Detail of the handrail that was cut >



normalisation and safety

Img 348, 349. Concrete staircases, fire doors & extinguishers >



Img 350. The clean and white walls of the bar / parties' hall >

< Img 343, 344. Associations' and artists' studios



**AESTHETICS OF RECYCLING
AND THE RECYCLING OF
THE AESTHETICS OF
RECYCLING**

PART III

As we have mentioned in the beginning of this dissertation, Alternative Cultural Spaces have an active role of political resistance in the urban context of European cities today. The signs of this resistance are present on their visual and spatial aesthetics, which arise from specific kinds of practices. These practices (DIY, collage/assemblage, site-specific, Re-Architecture, darning) have been used by different counter-cultures, generally linked to social movements, which inspire the visual and spatial approaches, and consequently the ambiances of contemporary ACS.

We decided to designate the visual and spatial aesthetics that are produced out of this context of resistance by the expression “aesthetics of recycling”. On the other side, when considering the other aesthetics that is inspired by the first one, but whose contextual background is somehow “distorted” by the logics of the market, we used the expression “the recycling of the aesthetics of recycling”. That “distortion” comes from a “misuse” of the ideas, methods and practices developed and exposed by the examples which we consider that hold the original “aesthetics of recycling”, since the conditions of production and the way the “final” object is exposed have now changed. The “aesthetics of recycling” become this way “recycled”, serving the market’s interests, the way Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiappello explain us in their ouvrage dedicated to the “new spirit of capitalism”¹ (1999). Different specific examples of these kinds of aesthetics are analysed in this chapter, where often the word “aestheticisation” is used as a surrogate for the expression “recycling the aesthetics of recycling”.

One of the main characteristics of the ACS examples we have seen is the hybridity. These case studies have shown us the ambiguous world where they stand, in terms of practices and content. The ACS type of behaviour between a radical and subversive position and that of the institutionalised world (undergoing a keener influence of the market) has been analysed under the theme of the *Creative Cities and Counter-Culture* by the FNS project. This analysis is made in this chapter – *Aesthetics of Recycling and the Recycling of the Aesthetics of Recycling* –, which focuses more specifically on the visual and spatial aspects of the ACS. Both of these titles express opposite ideas, which will be working as the main guidelines of this chapter. The dialectical analysis is present inside each of the next sub-chapters, whose structure is organised in the following way:

1. Visual aesthetics
2. Spatial Aesthetics
3. Logics of spatial occupation

In all these three topics exists necessarily a relationship between the content and the “container”, i.e., the project and the space where this same project is developed.

¹ See chapter 1.4.

Inspiration

As mentioned in the *Alternative Cultural Spaces* chapter, counter-cultures have worked as a big influence in the creation of several of these kinds of projects. The artistic avant-gardes of the 20th century had also this role, in terms of techniques, use of space and materials. However, many of these ways of production and kinds of aesthetics are now being used out of any provocative or struggling context. Such *aestheticised* spatial environments *recycle*, this way, the “aesthetics of recycling”, i.e. those aesthetics that resulted from counter-cultural and avant-garde artistic production, which “recycled” materials and spaces (by re-using them).

Before moving on to the analysis of the visual aesthetics of the ACS, we will briefly remind – and this through a historical perspective – the counter-cultures, the social movements and events, and the artistic and architectural approaches that influenced in a general way the visual aesthetics of the contemporary ACS:

- The punk and the hippie movement, particularly;
- Marginal “underground” environments (like “red light districts” where prostitutes, sailors and drug dealers wander);
- The Arts & Crafts movement (end of 19th century), the artistic-avant-gardes of the beginning of the 20th century (e.g. dada, ready-mades), the Situationist approaches of the 1960s and the New York alternative artistic movements of the 1970s (e.g. site-specific, pop art...);
- The architectural postmodernist approaches of the 1960s-70s (e.g. “Learning from Las Vegas” (Venturi, Brown, and Izenour 1972), “Collage City” (Rowe and Koetter 1986));
- the students’ revolts of the 1960s and the squat movements of the 1970-80s-90s;
- the street art.

As we have seen through the analysis of the fieldwork, some specific local movements and historical events also played a big role, such as:

- the April Carnation Revolution, in Lisbon, and the murals that have been produced during this period;
- the punk and the alternative artistic movement of Ljubljana of the 1980s;
- the squat movement of the 1990s in Geneva.

What is common in all these movements, counter-cultures and artistic/spatial approaches?



- the critique and the struggle against repressive social conditions;
- their provocative and challenging nature;
- the praxis approaches;
- self-management, horizontality, participation, solidarity;
- the action within the context of the everyday life and within exceptional political circumstances;
- the use of practices of recycling, reuse, rehabilitation, darn;
- handmade and grassroots approaches, following the DIY ethics, participative and communitarian production;
- the organic logics of production (composition, addition, recomposition, collage, assemblage), following an “open access” logics, being always possible to change, transform or keep the existing conditions.


These we consider as multiple forms of resistance – to repressive, intolerant, authoritarian, standardising practices and policies –, a kind of an aesthetical engagement composed by our sensible ambiance that results in what we call “the aesthetics of resistance”. How are these influences expressed today in the ACS we have analysed?

8. VISUAL AESTHETICS




We have previously discussed the meaning of the word “aesthetics” under the context of this research. What we understand as the “visual aesthetics” of a space is everything produced in a two-dimensional support that has an impact on our visual perception, related to visual arts (or crafts), and usually exposed on walls, i.e. posters, slogans, murals and street art (graffiti, paste-ups, stencils...). The way these elements are displayed (composition, organisation), the materials that have been used and the techniques of production (conditions, aspect, finishing touches), and the content, the message and other written elements (tags, poetry, phrases, political slogans...) contribute to the overall experience of each space. However, one thing must be clear: all the elements that are directly more linked to the architecture of the space, i.e. concerned with volume, dimension, structure and transformation, will be discussed in the “spatial aesthetics” part, further on.

Street Art

Street art as an underground and grassroots movements was at first mostly non-professionalised. But slowly, along its recognition as a legitimate art and an interesting input for the quality of urban environment (as a form of *urban creativity*), *street art* has evolved and became more and more professionalised and institutionalised to the point that its techniques are nowadays part of the academic education. Graffiti, for instance, has become framed by institutional services like GAU (in Lisbon²) and extremely popularised by superstar artists like Banksy or exclusively dedicated projects and events (e.g. project Cronos, Wool, ). Not only the technique and the support of street art have become more institutionalised, but so did the themes of the painted walls. Even if sometimes they use marginal “underground” subjects (like drugs or prostitution), or subversive kinds of slogans, some examples show us that the original content has been diverted, favouring inclusively commercial purposes, like the staircase murals of Pensão Amor, in Lisboa, for example ().

However, the several sentences that can be found today on Lisbon walls, for instance, continue to be spontaneous illegal approaches, not only using strong political slogans but also poetry (), inherited from the Portuguese traditional literary culture, reacting this way to the “White walls, mute people” (“Muros brancos, povo mudo”).

Handmade posters

Inspired by the aesthetics of counter-culture and squatting movements, large scale canvas are posted on walls of buildings, working as manifestos or claims. Some examples keep the political struggle present, expressed in their words (, ). Others just play with the visual impact that large designed fonts may have on people, not really caring about any political content (). As we can see from the examples shown below, this social and political engagement is also expressed on the material support that has been chosen (fabric, plastic canvas), and the way it is posted/fixed on the wall.

² See “Street Art” in Lisbon’s chapter (p. 5.1.3.)



^ Street art in Lisbon:

Img 351. “Until Debt Tear us Apart”, written on a wall at Lx Factory (by the artist + -).

Img 352. “Prostitutes” at the staircase of Pensão Amor, in Lisbon (by the artists Hugo Marakov and Mário Belém).

Img 353. A stencil inspired by the poetry of Fernando Pessoa: “Everything is bold to the one who dares nothing”.



^ Posters:

Img 354. “Self-organization now! Solidarity against capital” (*Samoorganizacija zdaj! Solidarno proti kapitalu*). Handmade poster made by the anarchists of the A-Infoshop at ACC Metekova Mesto, in Ljubljana (2013).

Img 355. Handmade poster made by the artists of the “independent art scene” of Geneva, posted on one of the containers of BIG festival in Geneva (2015), showing solidarity with emigrants and refugees, welcoming them. Within the very normalised and controlled context of Geneva, this poster works as a challenging example.

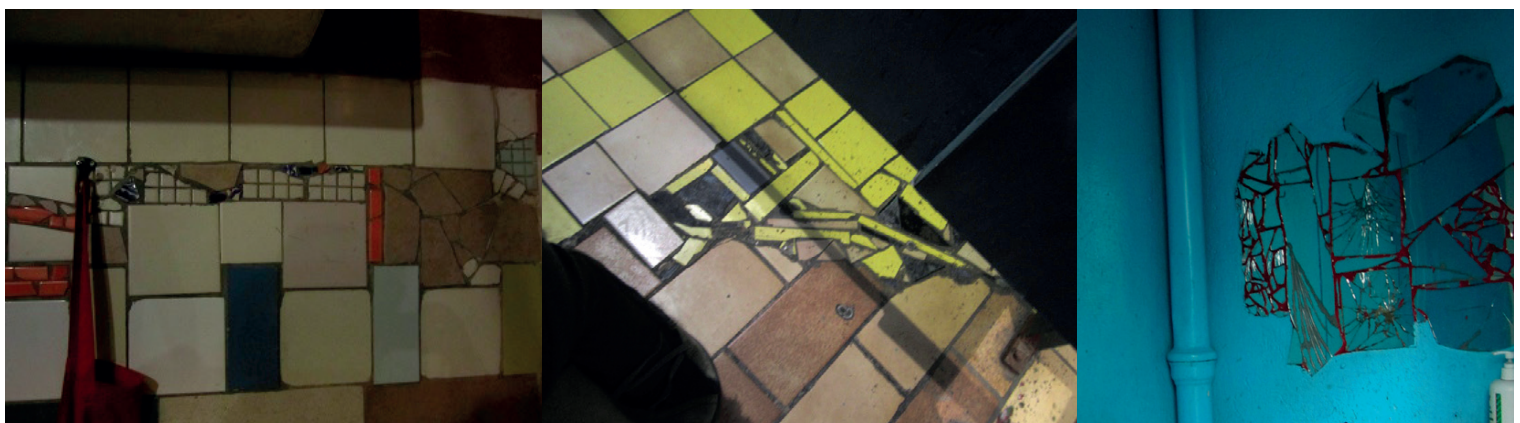
Img 356. “We are what we feel” (*Somos aquilo que sentimos*): canvas painted by the artist JaSinto (Filipa Jacinto) named “Manifesto”. Lx Factory, Lisbon (8 March 2016, photo by Andre Mata). This “poster” claims to express somekind of a radical content, but being actually empty in that sense. Furthermore, the extremely designed fonts reveal a less spontaneous approach than it would be if made under a grassroots context, i.e. participative and communitarian work.

v Broken mosaics decorating walls:

Img 357. RDA69 kitchen wall, Lisbon.

Img 358. Menza Pri Koritu’s wc floor, Metelkova, Ljubljana.

Img 359. Maison Baron’ toilet wall, Geneva.



Broken tiles

Broken tiles and mosaics used to decorate walls, pavements or street furniture are elements that can constantly be found in an underground and alternative milieu (img 357-359). Irregularly shaped and disposed, this compositive technique of *collage* of multiple fragments is used as decoration but also as a tool to protect certain buildings meant to be destroyed, as we have seen with the Alkatraz Gallery at Metelkova, in Ljubljana. Usually these walls, built of communitarian processes recycle random ceramics of multiple shapes and colours.

However, this pattern seems to please less participative kinds of approaches as well. In the examples shown in the next image (img 360-362) we can see the variation of a theme (the mosaics) in three different walls or other mediums, each one of them allowing us to tell a different story, based on the evolution of one single pattern. They reveal different modes of production and reflect different intentions: protection and adorn, adorn and profit, respectively. This example allows us to highlight how the “alternative culture” tends to become a mere aesthetic motif of the contemporary “creative city”, loosing its subversive dimension. This shift is not only a matter of ideological transformation, but it reveals the way how *alternative culture* and the various artistic practices have been institutionalised (towards a *productive-creativity*) (Carmo and al. 2014). This same logics applies to the posters we have previously seen.

While the first example – the wall of Alkatraz Gallery (img 360) – can be considered as a “raw gesture” (almost spontaneous and full of meaning, representing the struggle against the destruction of Metelkova), the second is already a professionalised example accomplished by a group of artists (Sestava) looking for recognition in a space that has later become the most popular youth hostel of Ljubljana (Hostel Celica, img 361). The visual and material expression and the final result of these walls are cleaner and less chaotic than the corresponding characteristics of the first example. Considering the composition of the whole wall, it must be said that the colours seem also to have a bigger harmony. Celica walls transform the first “object” into an “idea” by stylising it. Celica’s mosaics become a representation of Alkatraz’s, having no longer a resistance purpose, but mainly a decorative one. At last, the third example is the last stage of the evolution: a virtual mosaics’ wall used as the background of the website of a real estate agency (Mainside) that dedicates its projects to the rehabilitation of degraded and abandoned built heritage and that is specialised in their reconversion into “alternative cultural spaces”. Having behind it the profit as its main objective, the “image” has lost, in this third stage of the evolution, all of its subversive character (img 362). No longer being influenced by the idea of resistance that was first at the origin of the pattern with such a shape (a broken mosaic), the original meaning has been completely altered and corrupted.

Creativity and Work

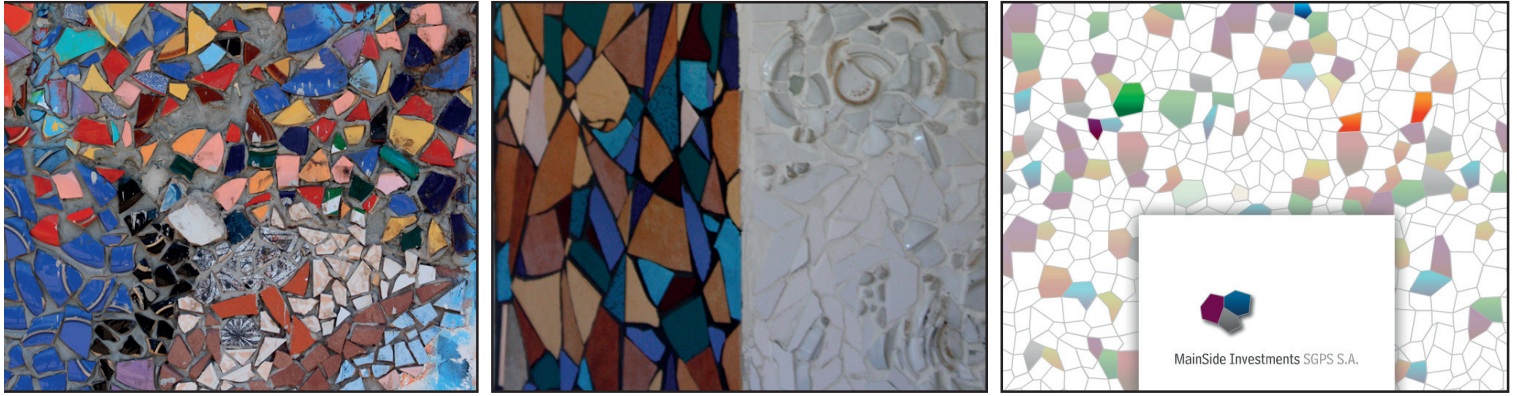
The Andy Warhol's Factory and a partying culture associated to work are used by contemporary coworking spaces. It is the case of Lx Factory, where a painting highlighting the "joy at work", can be seen over a mural, recovering the aesthetics (mostly the colours, but also in part the composition) of the murals of the Carnation Revolution (img 363). This idea, to associate creativity to work in a joyful and cool ambiance, has become the specific business of *coworking spaces*, which contradictorily announce "avoid working" while proposing a service that is based exactly on that same "work" (img 364).

Grassroots appropriations of small fragments of the city, representing interesting forms of a lively usage of the common space, produce stimulating affordances and enable a more intense urban experience and eventual feelings of belonging. The micro-scale re-appropriation of the city, which may act just over a small detail, can actually be very powerful, because it reinvests the city in order to transform it into a non-ordinary place. It is at this level of action, that we can find a parallelism with the Situationist approaches, according to Philippe Simay, when they invite us to consider the city as the place "of a revolutionary transformation of the existence, achieved through the participation of the citizens and the reintegration of the poetic into the ordinary life"³ (Simay 2008). And this "participation" and "appropriation" is present in the kinds of details we have just seen. However, they have suffered also other kind of "appropriation", this time not by the people themselves, but by the market and/or the authorities.

The "aestheticisation of the alternative culture" – against its *aesthetics* – occurs when the *percepts* of this culture starts losing the link with the project of the *everyday appropriation of the urban environment*. More broadly, this "aestheticisation" hinders the creation of practical alternative possibilities to the capitalist dominant urban order. Once aestheticised, the perceptual affordances lose their role of support for re-appropriation (and their emancipatory situationist potential), playing only a visual and consumerist role, as if the "alternative" had become a decorative motif, an architectural style (as *gothic*, or *baroque*, for example). In other words, in this context of advanced capitalism, the term "alternative" seems to have become autonomous from its original *signified* form and functions as a "floating signifier" (Levi Strauss 1950). The term is drifted from its original meaning and evolves away from the departing point. Therefore, the visual "aesthetics of the alternative culture" no longer designates a non-hegemonic cultural system, but just a *style* that can be commodified, fully integrated in the ideology of the "creative cities" (Carmo and al. 2014).

*

³ My translation of : "le lieu (...) d'une transformation révolutionnaire de l'existence, à travers la participation des citoyens et la réintégration du poétique dans l'ordinaire."



Img 360-362. Irregular broken ceramics pattern, their finishing details (and support) varying according to the way of production.

Img 360. Wall of Galeria Alkatraz, at Metelkova Mesto, Ljubljana (2012): the result of an organic and communitarian work.

Img 361. Wall of a dining room of Youth Hostel Celica at Metelkova Mesto, Ljubljana (2012): the result of a design by the group of artists Sestava.

Img 362. The Lisbon's real estate agency Mainside's website background image: design by a webmaster.



Img 363. "Happiness at Work" (*Alegria no Trabalho*). Artwork of Hugo Canoilas "transmitting a positive message" (Ferreira 2009, 18). This painting at the water reservoir at LxFactory replicates the strong colours used in the revolutionary murals of the 1970s. Today, this revolutionary context is gone, and the message is empty of any political content, rather working as an appealing panel to call new users and clients, advertising this place as a joyful working environment, where such *work* can become a *pleasure*.

Central Station: do Cais do Sodré para o Mundo

Assagar Luz

VERA MOUTINHO 23/05/2013 - 13:49



Img 364. "Avoid working anyhow!" (*Evita trabalhar a todo o custo*), poster of the coworking space "Central Station" in Cais do Sodré, Lisboa. It appeals new users to rent a desk in a shared open space, expressing a reference to the contemporary way of life, where the private life and work become one single way of living.

9. SPATIAL AESTHETICS

While the “visual aesthetics” analysis concerns mostly two-dimensional or flat surfaces, the “spatial aesthetics” concerns instead all the architectural and sensorial elements that affect our experience when living or using a certain space, contributing therefore to its overall ambiance. This concerns, on the one hand, the volume and dimensions of the space and the way both are combined, involving also, on the other hand, certain elements or properties that affect the space itself, like natural light, lighting, materials, colours, furniture, decoration... These elements can be present on site the same way they did before the project moved to the space, but can also be added or transformed, recreating therefore a new ambiance.

The act of (re)creation of ambiances can be grassroots, communitarian and organic (e.g. Metelkova, which transformed the previous military barracks into an autonomous cultural centre) or institutional (which includes necessarily the design of a professional). Both approaches may lead to aestheticised objects, but necessarily with different final results in terms of finishing details, expression and materiality.

Just as we have seen in the “visual aesthetics” analysis, the methods and practices of counter-cultures and artistic avant-gardes had a major influence on the ACS ways of maintaining, transforming or decorating spaces. The same way, these processes of transformation and recreation of spatial ambiances are, in most of the analysed case studies, object of instrumentalisation by institutional or commercial approaches.

It is important to refer that this “spatial aesthetics” analysis lies between the two-dimensional sphere previously mentioned and the three-dimensional one, being actually the mixture of them both and resulting from the elements that compose each of them. These elements contribute to the creation of a particular ambiance, triggering particular experiences, feelings and social behaviours. Furthermore, the 3-dimensional experience in a space includes also the possibility of motion, as “A real architecture experience is not simply a series of retinal images; a building is encountered – it is approached, confronted, encountered, related to one’s body, moved about, utilised as a condition for other things, etc.. (...) A building (...) frames, articulates, restructures, gives significance, relates, separates and unites, facilitates and prohibits.” (Pallasmaa 1994, 35).

This way, we have distinguished five different kinds of “spatial aesthetics”, where some of the references that probably inspired their ambiances will be mentioned: *Punkspace*, *Total Work of Art*, *Recreation of Ambiances* and *Total Design*. Before analysing each one of them separately, we must consider the great impact that the references previously mentioned in the “visual aesthetics” also have in terms of space and general ambiance of a certain cultural/creative project, as we will see.

Punkspace

Not many examples of buildings or spaces that serve daily use activities can be found that have almost been untouched after their period of abandonment and decay. **Tovarna Rog** is, to a great extent, one of the few examples where people work and participate in activities or events in a very chaotic and “punk” spatial environment. Some parts of this big post-industrial complex have in fact been slightly rehabilitated, after the squatting. Nevertheless, when we visit this complex and consider the space as a whole, the impression one gets is that this space has suffered some catastrophe. This “catastrophe” is actually the abandonment, the result of many years of negligence. This way, we probably cannot refer this example (in the condition it is found today), as having been influenced by a concrete specific artistic or architectural reference. However, the chaotic and almost apocalyptic environment that is present in this “raw” space, might remind us of some science-fiction dystopias suggested by some films or even some real events (e.g. the post-Chernobyl nuclear accident, *img 365*). Furthermore, we could also, to some extent, associate the “brutal” rough aesthetics used by the Slovenian artistic movement of the 1980s (particularly Laibach’s) to the Rog’s spatial environment, if we consider the aggressive visual impact this space provokes, in a sensorial way, on the visitor. Rog’s space is definitely not a peaceful and calm environment, the crisis and violence of the urban environment being expressed through the multiple broken glasses, the graffiti and the careless abandoned objects that can be found on site, for example. Could we eventually understand this space as a political provocation, in the same sense as Laibach proposed? Even if Rog is not struggling against a totalitarian regime, its squat operation was and still is certainly a reaction to the present economic system and also to the negligence of the contemporary public authorities. During the occupation process led by group TEMP in 2006, the spatial practices of rehabilitation and transformation have certainly been inspired by the “right to the city” slogan (Lefebvre 1968) used during the squat movements that have occurred since the 1970s. We could also eventually compare those practices to the Situationist approaches, since TEMP’s subversive attitude intended only to challenge the established power, and not actually to exercise that power, as mentioned in some of their statements. For example, “We cooperated on the basis of desire, not necessity” and “The focus was on the process not the result” (TEMP 2009, 152, 156, 146).

Nonetheless, other poetic cinematographic references can somehow be found at Rog, like for instance that of the masterwork of the Russian filmmaker Andrei Trakovsky “*Stalker*” (1979). A certain beauty can after all be found on site, in the middle of such a decaying ambiance (*img 366*). We could, furthermore, make reference to Romantic painting as a source of artistic and poetic inspiration taken from *decaying architectural objects* presented as fetishised objects of contemplation and exploration. Since long ago, there exists some kind of fascination vis-a-vis the constructions that man has “left behind”, abandoned to their own fate, ultimately pervaded by nature in some kind of a “desperate” gesture of recycling and regeneration, as it is visible in these Romantic paintings of Karl Blenchen and Caspar Friedrich (*img 367, 368*).



Img 365. The post-Chernobyl nuclear accident.
 (source: www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/haunting-images-reveal-city-30-7822528)



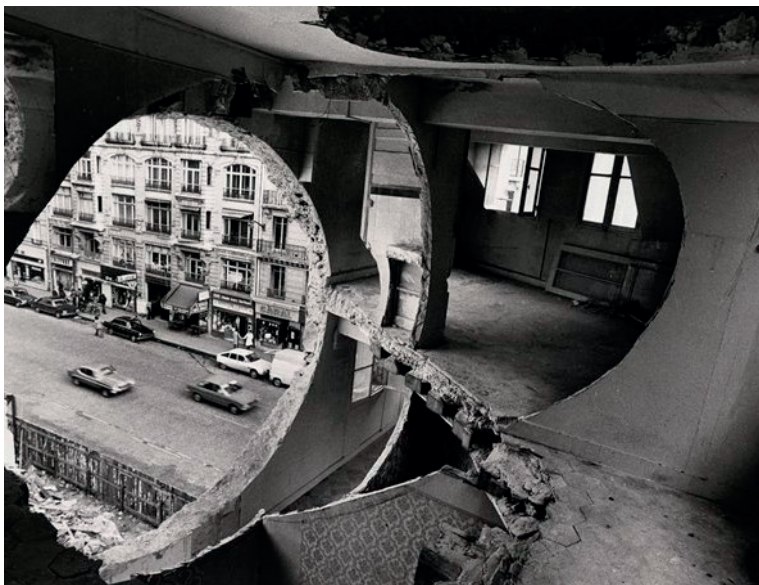
Img 366. Stalker (1979), a film by Andrei Trakovsky.
 (source: <http://alexkittle.com/2011/07/06/stalker-1979>)



Img 367. Ruins of Oybin, by Karl Blechen (1823).



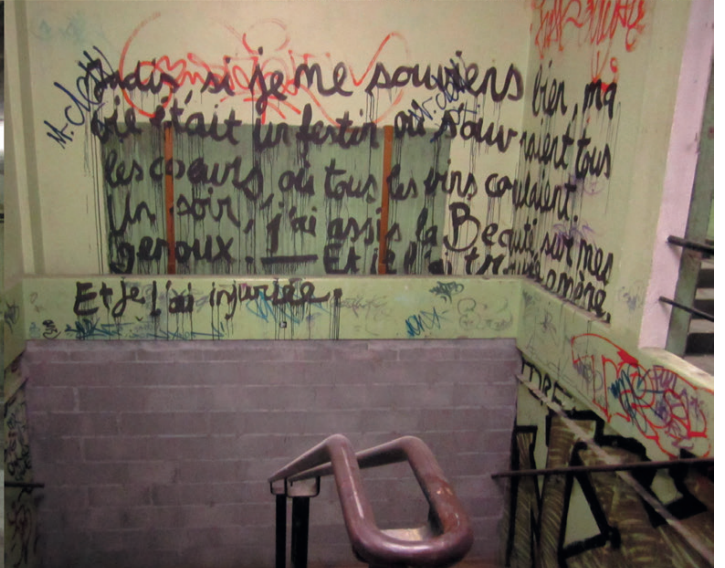
Img 368. Kloosterruine Eldena, by Caspar David Friedrich (1825).



Img 370. One of Gordon Matta Clark's interventions.
 (source: <http://blogs.nobles.edu/visual-arts-department/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2016/01/openhouse-barcelona-macba-shop-gallery-installations-deeper-cut-art-architecture-gordon-matta-clark.jpg>)



Img 369. Tovarna Rog, 2012.



< **Img 371. Details of the space Carpe Diem in Lisbon – destruction, provoked by the decaying of the material conditions of the building left to abandonment, left this way as an aesthetic choice.**

As we can see, there are two main types of “spatial destruction” that we may link to “punkspace” ambiances and are partially present in some of the ACS we have studied, or we can imagine that were used as inspiration for those ACS:

- Those that resulted from violence or a violent event (like war, other type of human aggression):
 - a) Post-war scenarios (e.g. Sarajevo or Mostar, the marks of war being still visible in 2005, when I visited those towns, see img 17-19);
 - b) Post-catastrophe scenarios (e.g. Chernobyl’s nuclear accident and Stalker’s film scenario, the first as a real scenario, the second as an imaginary one; nonetheless, both kinds of environments attract curious and eager explorers).
- Those that resulted from negligence (leading to abandonment and decay and increasing the feeling of nostalgia in the people who observe such decaying spaces).

These scenarios of “destruction”, though distressing, hold also a certain aesthetic beauty, as we have previously mentioned. The praise for this kind of aesthetics, in post-industrial buildings for instance, is also linked to the rejection of the acceptance that “white and clean” spaces are the norm and the desired spaces of most people. The users’ needs and tastes, when using a certain space, are the most varied possible. In this sense, we could, for example, interpret Rog’s visual spatial aesthetics and practices (a position of near “non-intervention”, i.e., showing a reactionary attitude against a complete top-down renovation and revitalisation project) as a kind of “anarchitecture”. Probably not applied in the same way Gordon Matta Clark used to, in his spatial creative destructive experiences¹, but somehow in the way he explains the concept: “most of my experiences which have an architectural impact are actually a ‘no-architecture’: an alternative to what is normally considered as architecture. Anarchitecture” (Matta-Clark, 2011, p. 10). Matta Clark often used abandoned buildings as his raw material (img 369), just as TEMP did with Rog in a way. Nonetheless, the main difference is that Matta Clark cuts the buildings, opening and exposing their understructure, his interventions being this way intentionally transformative, while Rog’s spatial aesthetics is just the consequence of an anarchic kind of use (img 370).

This “beautiful decaying” ambiance can also be found, in a very different way, in Lisbon’s built environment. The way a few cultural projects deal with these “rotten” aesthetics can also possibly be identified as *punkspace*. However, this Lisbon-*punkspace* is softer and more poetic, and even if the marks of destruction are visible in the details, the overall “concept” of the cultural space – like in the **Carpe Diem** example (img 371) – is influenced already in part also by the vintage trend of the bourgeois-bohème lifestyle.

At last, even if struggling against a heavy process of normalisation, the “punk aesthetics” is still present at **Usine Kugler**, in Geneva (img 372). Quite a few details reveal DIY approaches, done in a very “rough” aesthetic way, leaving traces of the architectural past of the building, or simply intervening in a “careless” aesthetic way, favouring instead practical/fonctional technical needs. Also the reaction to the normalisation process is (or was, until a certain moment) visible in the multiple tags existing in certain parts of Kugler.

1 See the part relative to New York artistic movements of the 1970s, in *Creativity [Culture & Compromises]* (pp. 40).

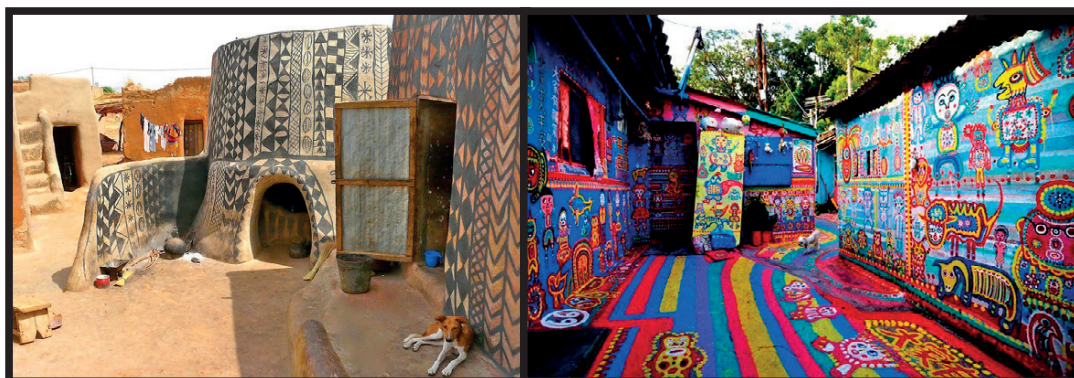
< **Img 372. Details of the space Usine Kugler in Geneva that reveal the struggle against the normalisation process.**

Total Work of Art

Influenced somehow by the Arts & Crafts movement of the 19th century, but also certainly by some vernacular examples of “total work of art” architectures (img 373, 374), a whole new very creative environment has progressively been created at **Metelkova**, in Ljubljana, since the moment the military barracks were squatted in the 1990s. Art, associated to a functional need, results in the most diverse kinds of spatial approaches, where visual, plastic and performative arts coexist with crafts, architecture and street furniture (img 375). Along the last twenty years, a convivial, colourful and very hybrid spatial aesthetics has been organically created, combining the “useful” and the “beautiful” in a same object (understood as furniture or space, in this sense), paying attention to the fact that such object can always be edited or transformed.

However, the option of leaving the holes in the buildings as a memory of past struggles, is an architectural choice that concerns the overall *oeuvre*, having a different meaning when used at **Metelkova** or at **Lx Factory**, in Lisbon, for instance. In this second example, the big hole that has been created in the façade of the main building, has also a link to the (industrial) past of the site (made to let a big machine pass through). Even if the option of keeping the hole as it was found when the new project arrived (Mainside) – this deliberate option being claimed to be part of a global architectural strategy that intends to combine industry, architecture and culture – no link with issues related to resistance exists, these kind of “spatial aesthetics” becoming this way a purely decorative element (img 376).

At last, the influence of the artistic movements of the 1970s that occurred in the Soho, New York, has also contributed to the site-specific approaches taken at **Metelkova** or **Carpe Diem** and **Fábrica do Braço de Prata** in Lisbon. The street furniture that exists today at Metelkova was entirely created for the specific place where it stands, and many of the artistic works installed at both Lisbon’s mentioned examples are definitely site-specific (img 377).



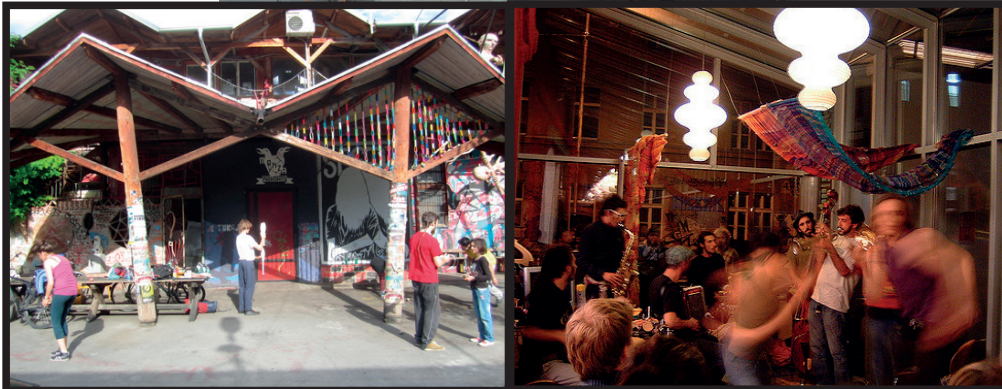
Img 373, 374. Vernacular architectures as “total works of art”.

Left: Burkina Faso, “where every house – a work of art”.

(source: <http://getworldmedia.com/african-village-where-every-house-a-work-of-art/>)

Right: Taichung’s Rainbow Village, in Taiwan (photo by Steve Barringer).

(source: www.odditycentral.com/pics/taichungs-rainbow-village-the-hand-painted-wonder-of-taiwan.html)



Img 375. Metelkova Mesto as a “total work of art”: visual arts, sculpture, architecture, performative arts (circus, concerts, etc.), a convivial meeting place that also hosts people overnight (hostel and artists residencies).



Img 376. Metelkova Mesto (left) v.s. Lx Factory (right) holes left on the façade, as a symbol and a memory of the past of each building.

Img 377. Site-specific artistic works at Fábrika do Braço de Prata (left) and Carpe Diem (right), in Lisbon (2014).



Recreation of ambiances

Pensão Amor used to be a brothel existing in an underground street of Lisbon, and when it was transformed into an *alternative* cultural (night) place, the designers and the architects responsible for the new project decided to recover those *underground* memories into the new decoration of the place (eg. the graffiti painted on the staircase's walls, the dancing pole and hairy leopard textures applied on the surfaces to create a cosy "cheap" ambiance, or the *vintage* brothel erotic ambiance present in the furniture and bibelots, img 378). In this case-study, the influence of the marginal and underground cultures, which actually used to occupy that same space, is explicit. **Lx Factory** (actually Mainside) also used the same strategy of recreation of ambiances on its spatial environment. Even if it is impossible to avoid the presence of the industrial past due to the architectural characteristics of the buildings, this aspect has actually been emphasised by choosing to "exhibit" a few small-size industrial machines on the corridors (as if exposed in a museum) and by using large-size machines as support structures in a few of its spaces (like at the Asian restaurant and the bookshop Ler Devagar, img 379).

Also **Casa Independente** (in Lisbon) plays with the recreation of ambiances, by using a *vintage* kind of style, made of recovered old objects and furniture, which match the overall elegant and "ancient" spatial environment. The cosy-vintage ambiance is furthermore explored in a sensorial way, by the usage of a particular ambiance lighting (by using candles, for instance, or medium-intensity lighting) and "homemade bio local gourmet" food (img 380).

Total Design

Not really inspired by, but at least definitely following the practices developed by *Art Nouveau* architectural approaches (e.g. the architectural design of some buildings of Victor Horta or Charles Rennie Mackintosh, img 381, 382), is the **Village Underground Lisbon** case. As a "total design" architecture, it combines the following elements (img 383):

- semi-vacant *post-industrial wasteland* as the chosen place for territorial occupation (inside a delimited area of *Carris*, a public transportation company of the city);
- *containers* as the architectural support, representative of the latest years' fashion of recycled "ready-made architectures" of rusty, unfinished and raw materials (probably inspired by Pop Art and Dada, if seen as an object "ready-to-consume");
- *graffiti* painting as a work of art, and scenography of the overall scene (by the artist *Corleone*, as part of the outside exhibition of the *Underdogs* gallery);
- *labyrinth* 3-dimensional structure, calling to explore its non-linear path within an adventurous spirit and an appealing sensible approach (influence of the Situationist playful urban approach and of *la dérive*);
- normalised details: necessary safety objects, clean and finished construction details, uniformed and designed fancy furniture, sponsoring panels.



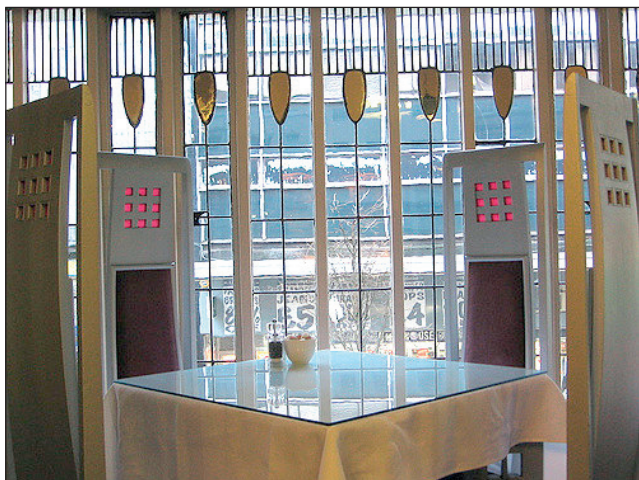
Img 378. Recreation of the brothel ambiance at Pensão Amor (Lisbon).



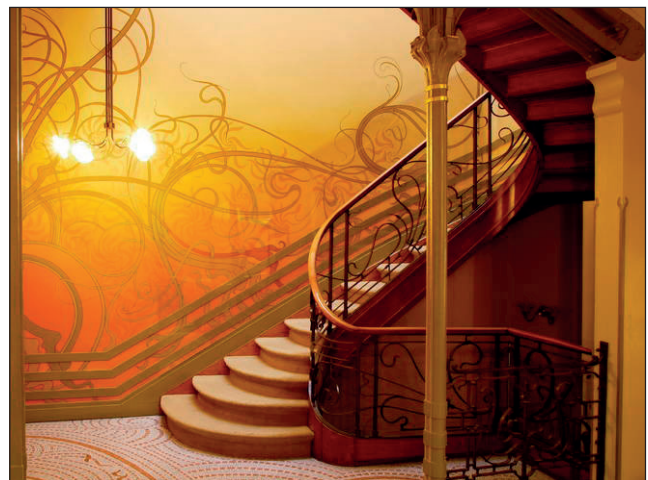
Img 379. Recreation of the industrial ambiance at Lx Factory (Lisbon).



Img 380. Vintage ambiance at Casa Independente (Lisbon).



Img 381. The total design of The Willow Tea Rooms (1903, Glasgow), designed by the architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh.



Img 382. The total design of Hôtel Tassel, designed by Victor Horta (1894, Brussels), both in an Art Nouveau Style.
(image #2 source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1005>)



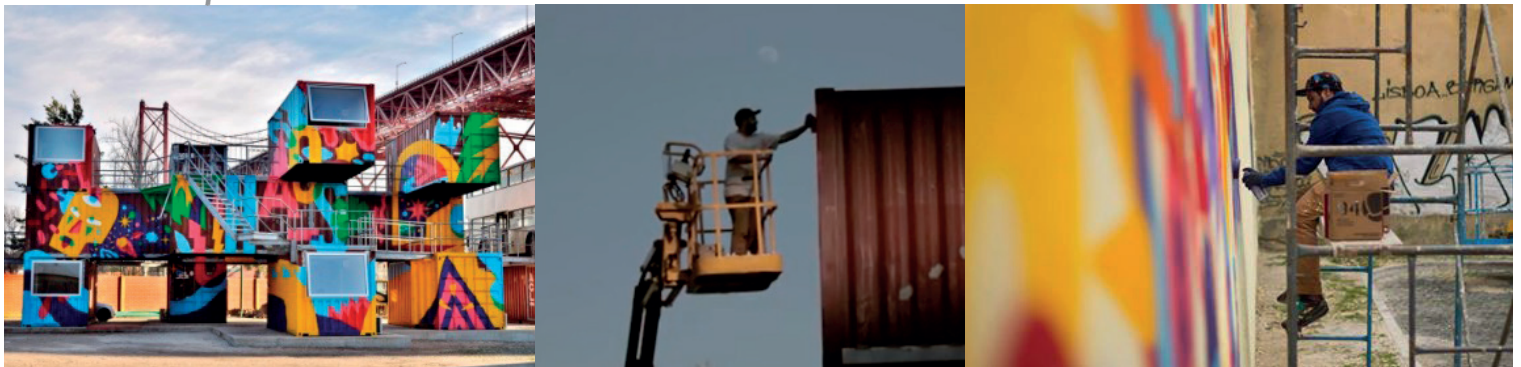
Urban wasteland



Containers



Labyrinthine Path



Graffiti



Normalised construction and material finishing and sponsoring

The combination of urban art, design, architecture and urban wastelands seems to be a formula of success to attract young *creatives*, supported by a “total design” that now also includes “creative management”. This is obviously no longer the world of the counter-culture, but it is nevertheless based on “alternative aesthetics”, as we can see. In the counter-cultural architectural experiences, the political and the subversive dimension of *creativity* work together in the *everyday life environment*. These “total spaces” are at the same time places to sleep, to encounter the other, to party, to create and to meet politically, and tend to disappear due to strict delimitation of functions (linked with security and market logics). What remains are places which look like squats but do serve for capitalist compatible creative activities (Carmo and al. 2014). Furthermore, as designed objects following top-down kinds of approaches, “total design” architectures tend to be frozen, i.e. not able to be spontaneously transformed in case of need, organic and evolutive.

*

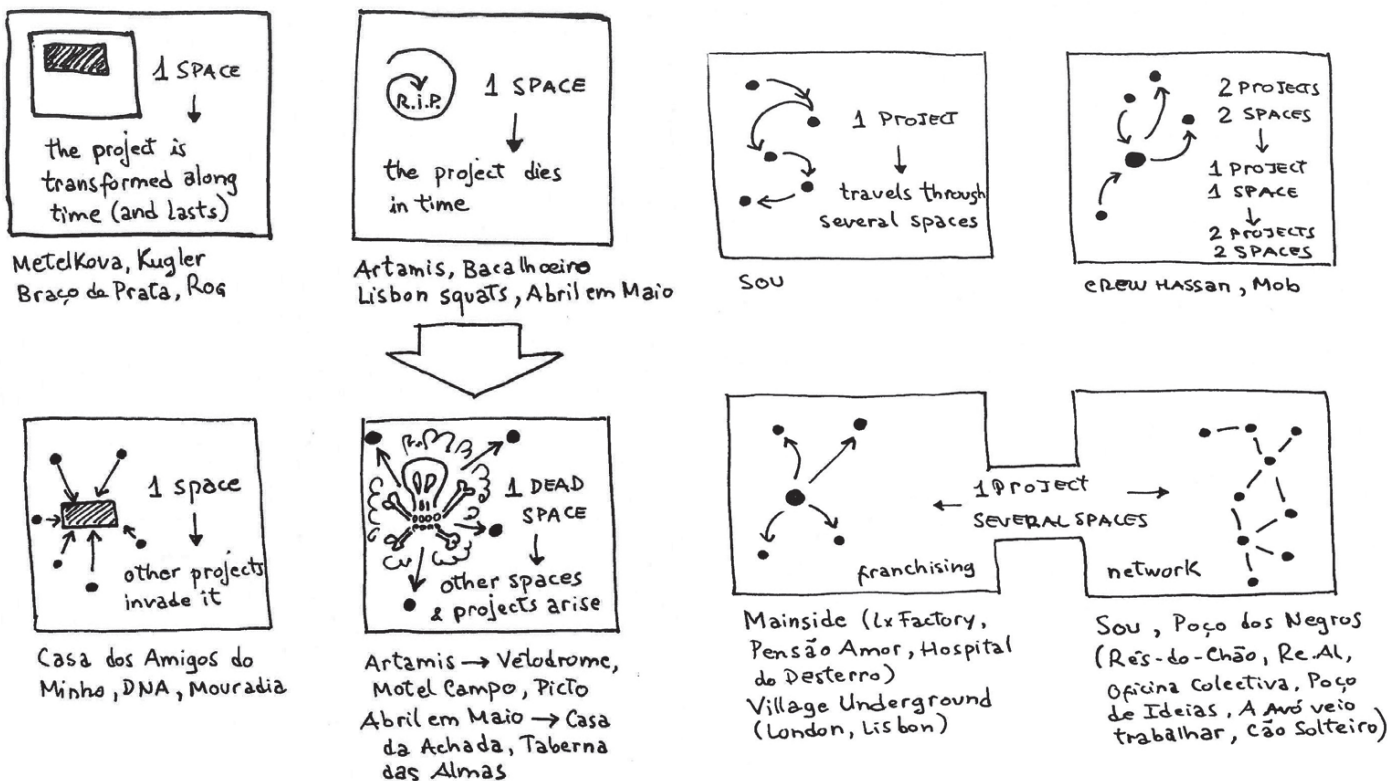
< Img 383. Village Underground Lisbon (pictures taken by Filipe do Carmo or found on FB Village Underground website).

10. LOGICS OF SPATIAL OCCUPATION

Just like in the previous chapter dedicated to the “spatial aesthetics” of the ACS, the analysis used in the “logics of spatial occupation” necessarily concerns the volume and the dimensions of the space, and this happens particularly when both – volume and dimensions – are considered together. However, these logics concern as well a temporal dimension, linked to the existence of these spaces and the territory where they are located. The projects that use such spaces are born and are implemented over a certain period of time, and at a certain point they die, or are transformed into something else. The life extension or survival of a particular project associated to a particular space depends not only of internal issues and (self)management or conflicts, but also of municipal, national and sometimes global factors. We have mentioned, along this thesis, some factors that are able to affect the life course of some of the ACS, like the authorities intolerance and the austerity measures that may follow the economic crises. The impact of these factors usually requires the development of survival strategies of ACS based on movement and mutation, for instance. Considering this, three factors related with the “spatial logics of occupation” of the ACS should always be considered: *space*, *time*, and *movement*.

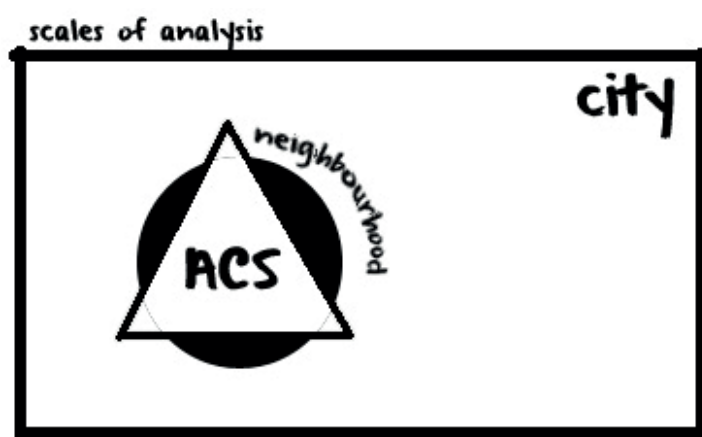
Space, Time and Movement

Taking inspiration on Caroline Dionne’s analysis of the literary works of the British writer Lewis Carroll, the several stories that have been told along this dissertation address “everyday experiences” of our real world that can also at times “be as puzzling as Carroll’s imaginary universe” (Dionne 2014, 32). A quick review of those stories is therefore exposed in the following schemas (img 384):



These schemes highlight the ACS logics of spatial occupation, where the relationship with the surrounding urban territory is expressed in terms of time and movement. This relationship with the urban context can address the street, the neighbourhood and the city in general, varying in accordance with the geographic location (centrality, peripheries, interstices...), the accessibility and the visibility, the social engagement and the survival strategies. We can for instance notice that the “industrial clusters”, which have a rather massive presence in the territory/urban fabric, may last a longer period of time than small-scale ACS, which tend to be more ephemeral and work under a network logics, based on solidarity or on a restless nature. Logics of spatial occupation” are therefore also a reflex of the ACS approaches to political resistance or compromise with the authorities and market logics.

Organicity, “porosity” and sensory aspects of the space itself also play a major role in these kinds of logics, spatial transformation occurring as a consequence of a necessity of a spontaneous adaptation to solve a specific problem related to the everyday use of the space, or derived from a design project. This way, all along this thesis, three scales of analysis are constantly considered:



Before proceeding with the analysis of specific topics, we shall briefly mention some particular spatial practices that most probably played an influencing role on some of the selected ACS approaches:

- apart from the general influence that the “Right to the City” and the squat movements of the 1970-90s may have had in some of the ACS, the SAAL¹ operations that took place in Portugal in the context of the revolution have in some measure influenced contemporary architectural practices and even urban policies, grounded on concepts as “participation”, “empowerment”, “communitarism”;
- the public space reactivation of urban interstices has become a subject of attention once more in the last few years; the work of the Dutch architect Aldo Van Eyck – who tried to revitalise the wounds provoked by the bombs in the urban fabric of several Dutch cities by transforming them into playgrounds, for instance – looks like a most probable influence in so many of the contemporary architectural playful landscape and street

¹ See *Brief history of urban planning and architecture* in Lisbon chapter (pp. 5.1.1.).

furniture approaches taken on contemporary cities²;

- the playful dimension of the urban spaces has also been explored by the Situationists, with their interest on the labyrinthine paths and the practice of *la dérive* (Debord 1958), influencing some of the “creative design” approaches of some of the studied ACS;
- the provocative artistic *happenings* of the 1960s, that have been used as one of the major influences of contemporary urban and cultural practices and policies, resulted in a non-stop event city, hit by the phenomena of “festivalisation”.

We shall therefore consider that all spaces studied in this thesis are interstices, since they reactivated – through culture, creativity and conviviality – spaces that would most probably be devoted to abandonment or even ruin, giving them in this way a second life.

Facing the “traditional” places of power – like squares located at the heart of the city (i.e., in the most central locations), usually surrounded by “noble” edifices like palaces or monuments – the urban interstices work rather as spaces used by marginal people and submitted to unconventional uses, like we have seen in the beginning of this dissertation. However, there are different kinds of interstices:

- some exist in large areas, usually resulting from vacant or abandoned industrial sites and having a clear and strong presence in the city in terms of dimension and volume;
- others are quite discreet, being almost invisible in the context of the urban fabric.

We have therefore distinguished, in our analysis, two major kinds of logics of spatial occupation, in territorial terms, respectively:

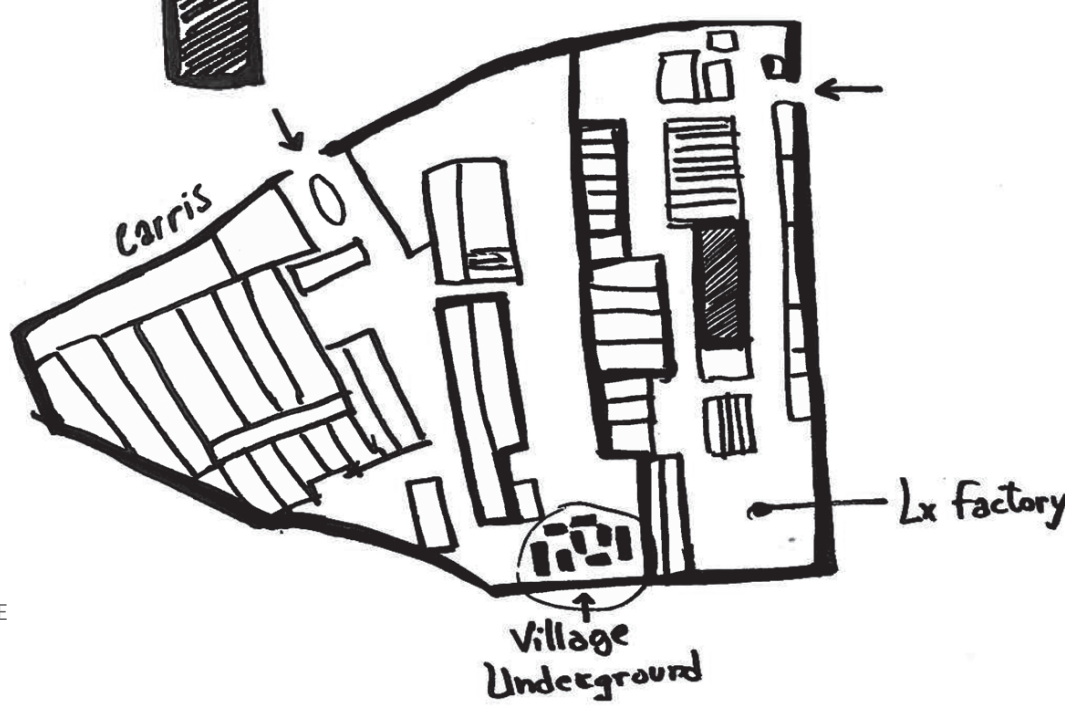
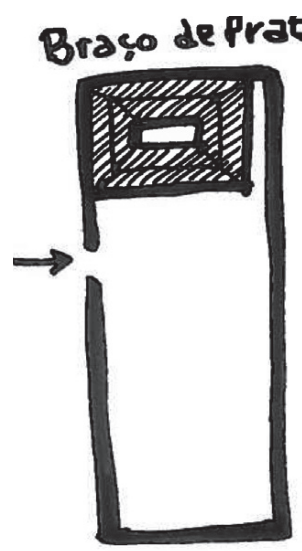
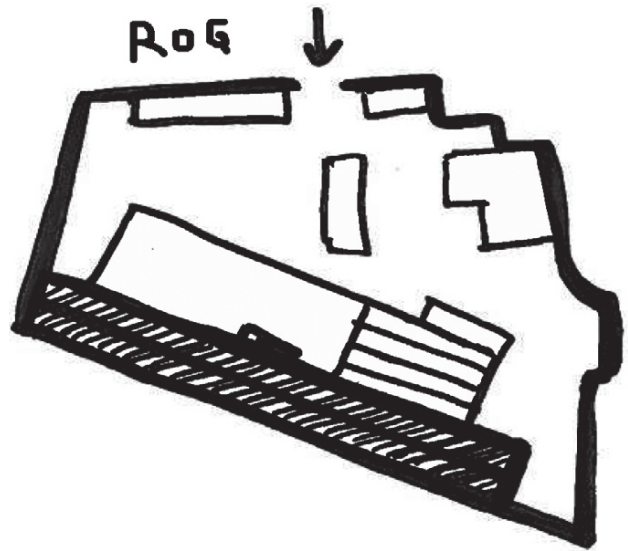
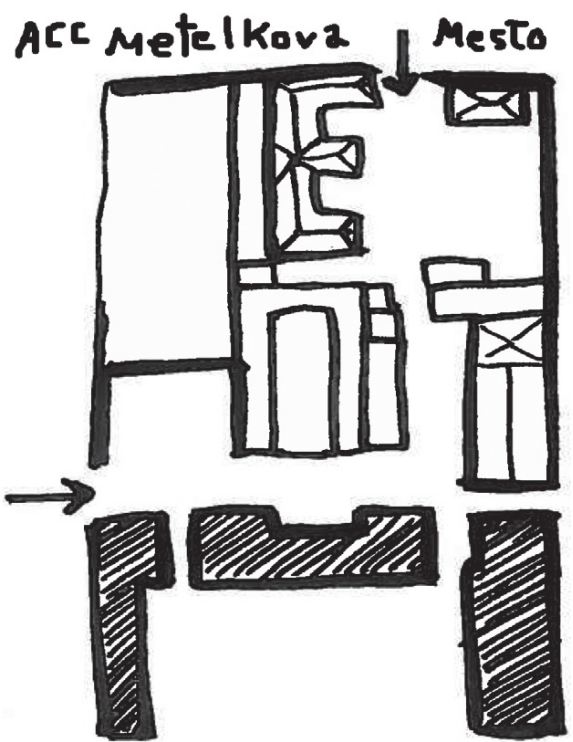
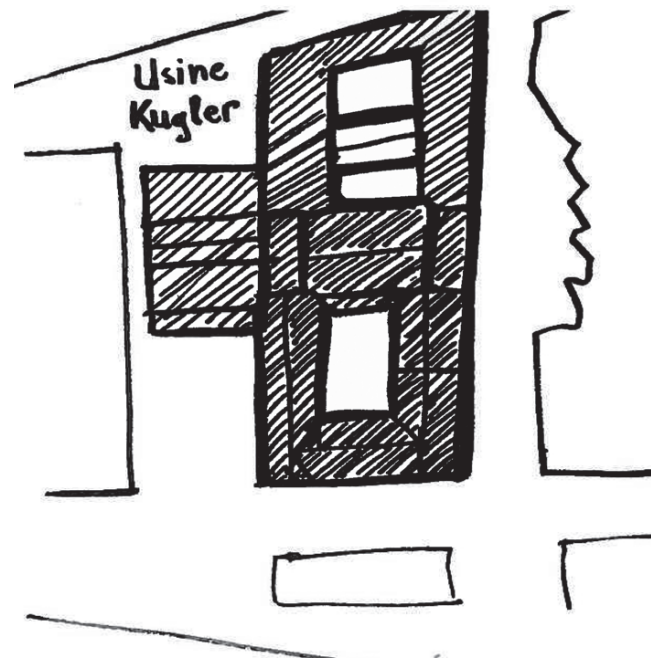
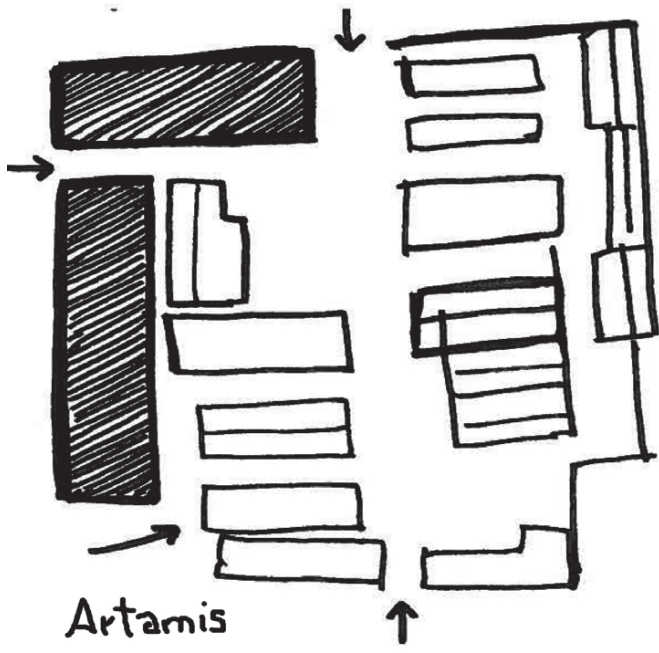
1. the “clusters”;
2. the “porous” spaces.

Clusters

The term “clusters” is inspired by the “creative industries”, which often refer to these kinds of spaces – “creative” projects located in former industrial areas – as “creative post-industrial clusters” (some variations, in terms of composition of these words, might however exist). A few important aspects concerning these *clusters* should however be retained:

1. the first, already mentioned, is the former function of the site : it was usually industrial, but it could also have been military, or related with tertiary uses (like offices, for instance);
2. spatially, they occupy a whole block in the city, this meaning they are usually large areas, composed by several buildings;

² A few examples of these playgrounds are available at this website: <https://merijnoudenampsen.org/2013/03/27/aldo-van-eyck-and-the-city-as-playground/> (seen on 20 May 2016).



3. many are surrounded by walls, this meaning that there exists a barrier between them and the neighbouring city, a barrier which usually has consequences in terms of social relationships;
4. as ACS, they usually gather different groups of people, who develop many varied activities³, mostly creative and/or artistic;
5. they are usually engaged in large-scale urban regeneration processes or a target of them, like reconversion and revitalisation of the surrounding areas.

From the examples we have analysed in this research, we can identify as being clusters (img 385):

- **LxFactory (LXF), Village Underground (VU) and Fábrica do Braço de Prata (FBP)**, in Lisbon;
- **Tovarna Rog and Metelkova**, in Ljubljana;
- **Artamis and Usine Kugler**, in Geneva.

The features mentioned on the topics 2. and 4. are common to all these examples. The other features may vary. Metelkova and VU, for instance, are not former industrial sites (they were military barracks and transports depot, respectively), and Metelkova, Artamis and Kugler do not have walls around their sites, separating them from the city, in opposition to the cases of LXF, VU, BP and Rog. Metelkova and Artamis outdoor spaces have the particularity of being part of the public space of the city, i.e. areas that you can traverse to go from one street to another; they are part of the city's everyday paths. Kugler, instead, is not traversable, but its entrance doors are directly accessible from the street level, its façades being part of the surrounding public urban environment. Curiously, these last three examples are also those whose buildings are not so noble, many of them being quite precarious structures in fact. These kinds of precarious buildings can also be found at Rog's site or at LxFactory, but the main edifices of these two examples are actually quite impressive and solid examples of "noble" industrial buildings, as we have seen, and standing therefore as their main spatial references (i.e. when visiting the site, they provoke a strong visual and spatial impact on the visitors' perception and experience of the place). The impact of their massive presence cannot be ignored.

A curious thing we can notice is that in Geneva the relationship the ACS established with the city is not so distant, i.e. Kugler and Artamis both have a more human scale when comparing with the other examples, and a very direct relationship with the street level (even if they are located in areas that are still considered as urban wastelands, or *friches*). The Swiss urban planning design, if analysed in a wider perspective, has a tendency to integrate many public premises in the public space. The schools (primary and secondary) are a good example: their gardens, or the outdoor space that exists in between their buildings, is generally of public access and traversable, unlike most examples we can find in Portugal, for instance, where a fence or a wall exists to protect the children or the teenagers from the "dangerous world outside".

³ This is the characteristic that is closer to the Oxford Dictionaries definition of "cluster": "A group of similar things or people positioned or occurring closely together" (www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/cluster?q=clusters).

Porous spaces

les usagers "bricolent" avec et dans l'économie culturelle dominante les (...) métamorphoses de sa loi en celle de leurs intérêts et de leurs règles propres.

Michel de Certeau 1980⁴

The mentioned practice of *bricolage*, along with the proposed activities and the aesthetics' environment created by the ACS, reveal a search of a more poetic and sensitive experiencing of the urban daily life by the actors who use them. A discreet spatial occupation of the interstices of the city takes then place in a few basements, garages, roof terraces, decadent palaces or other derelict and abandoned buildings, which often either do not have an explicit visible access or are located in small, hidden and dark streets. These factors bring about the creation of a certain atmosphere that can almost be assimilated to a theatrical scenario (which might even be enhanced by a nighttime usage, since this is when most of these spaces are actually more active). It is in this sense that we believe that some of the ideas developed by the Situationists find a comparable situation in these spaces (Carmo 2013) because, according to them, the city is the place "of a revolutionary transformation of the existence, achieved through the participation of the citizens and the reintegration of the poetic into the ordinary life"⁵ (Simay 2008).

In what, then, do the *clusters* contrast with such *porous* kind of spaces? What means, actually, a *porous* space? This concept is borrowed from Walter Benjamin, the master of *flânerie*, and was used in his description of the built environment of the city of Naples (Benjamin and Lacis 1978 [1925]). This way, to help illustrating the selected case-studies, a parallel has been drawn between them and works written by historical *flâneurs*: first of all, of course, Walter Benjamin, through some quotations taken from notable texts on the Parisian Arcades and on the city of Naples, and secondly, the French poet Charles Baudelaire (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016). Urban and architectural elements are therefore analysed in connection with some paths existing in some (or between some) ACS, linked as well to sensorial aspects created by particular ambiances. Some attention is furthermore given to matters of accessibility, visibility and contrasts, analysed through a perspective focused on the territory.

The analysis of these aspects leads us to explore the labyrinths and the entertainment that you can find in particular in Lisbon's streets (during festivals and other public events), but also in inner spaces (alternative cultural places). These spaces tend to exist in the interstices of the city, where urban exploration may happen thanks to its veiled character. One particularity of alternative cultural spaces is that they can be both visible and invisible, more or less accessible.

⁴ In Vol. 1, Arts de Faire: XXXIX. I chose to leave the original quote in the text, since I believe the translation is not so expressive. Nonetheless, an approximate translation follows: "users make transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy (...) in order to adapt it to their own interests and their own rules." (in de Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life: Arts de Faire*. University of California Press, Berkeley, p. XIV).

⁵ My translation of: "le lieu (...) d'une transformation révolutionnaire de l'existence, à travers la participation des citoyens et la réintégration du poétique dans l'ordinaire."

Since these spaces suffered many transformations over the course of time, while trying to adapt to different functions, their inner paths are often irregular and labyrinthine. This characteristic invites us to explore them and wander (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016).

Lisbon, as a city of labyrinthine paths, mostly due to its irregular landscape, is a good territory to experiment the practice of *flânerie*. Through the identification of particular paths linked to the contemporary alternative cultural life, a debate is undertaken on how space and culture (alternative or dominant) mutually inspire one another (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016). In order to highlight this particular characteristic of Lisbon, a few quotes that manage to capture somehow this ambiance are mentioned, before we start our labyrinthine “tour” of the selected ACS:

... a vision of Lisbon emerges – one among many others we can imagine. Also an Ariadne’s thread, continuously broken and interrupted, yet necessary in this city of a thousand faces. An exploration of a labyrinth as well as the pleasure – always renewed – of being lost in it, which indeed never take an end.⁶

Jean-Noël Mouret (2002, 12)

There is no doubt, bars are very personal navigations. (...) In the bars of Cais do Sodré nobody can be sure of not receiving a poet “wandering” adrift on the front deck.⁷

José Cardoso Pires (2006, 65)

...the promenade, the ascent to some of these belvederes is required to anyone wishing to understand the topography of the city, that no plan, however detailed it may be, will ever enable to guess⁸.

Jean-Noël Mouret (2002, 93)

To try to understand better the real or imaginary place of the *flâneur* in the contemporary city and its capacity to be an actor of the urban cultures, we propose a “guided tour” of some of the most significant spaces of the alternative Lisbon (img 386), the ones which still resist the call of the global “creative city” (Florida 2002; Landry 1995).

The city of Lisbon has been elected to represent the “porous spaces” due to its particular topographic characteristics (hilly and sinuous urban fabric), since the other two cities that are analysed in this research (Geneva and Ljubljana) are flat, their analysed case studies being all “clusters”, as we have seen before. This visit – a real and phantasmagorical *dérive* in the streets of Lisbon, from one space to another – takes the form of a written *flânerie*, or sometimes even a rhetorical *dérive* in a Situationist style. In each case, we shall be escorted by the ghost of the famous *flâneur* – or “historian” of the *flânerie* – Walter Benjamin, author of the Arcades Project

⁶ My translation from: “se dégage une vision de Lisbonne - une parmi tant d’autres imaginables. Un fil d’Ariane, aussi, sans cesse rompu et interrompu, pourtant indispensable dans cette cité aux mille visages. On n’en finit jamais, en effet, d’explorer un labyrinthe et d’y trouver, toujours renouvelé, le plaisir de s’y perdre.”

⁷ My translation from: “Il n’y a pas de doute, les bars sont des navigations très personnelles. (...) Dans les bars de Cais do Sodré personne ne peut être sûr de ne pas recevoir par la proue un poète à la dérive.”

⁸ My translation from: “ la promenade, la montée à quelques-uns de ces belvédères s’impose à qui veut comprendre la topographie de la ville, qu’aucun plan, aussi détaillé soit-il, ne permettra jamais de deviner”.

(1935-1939) in particular, who evokes Baudelaire's haunting in the *modern city*. These ghosts will symbolise, while wandering through four particular experiences, the steps of our labyrinthine promenade (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016). Each one highlights a particular aspect of the "porous" nature an ACS may have, namely:

- Urban design and underground resistance (Regueirão dos Anjos);
- Layers of time and public-private intermingling (Casa dos Amigos do Minho);
- Movement and mutation (SOU);
- Creative design and marketing strategies (Village Underground Lisbon).

Regueirão dos Anjos – the ghost of the barricade

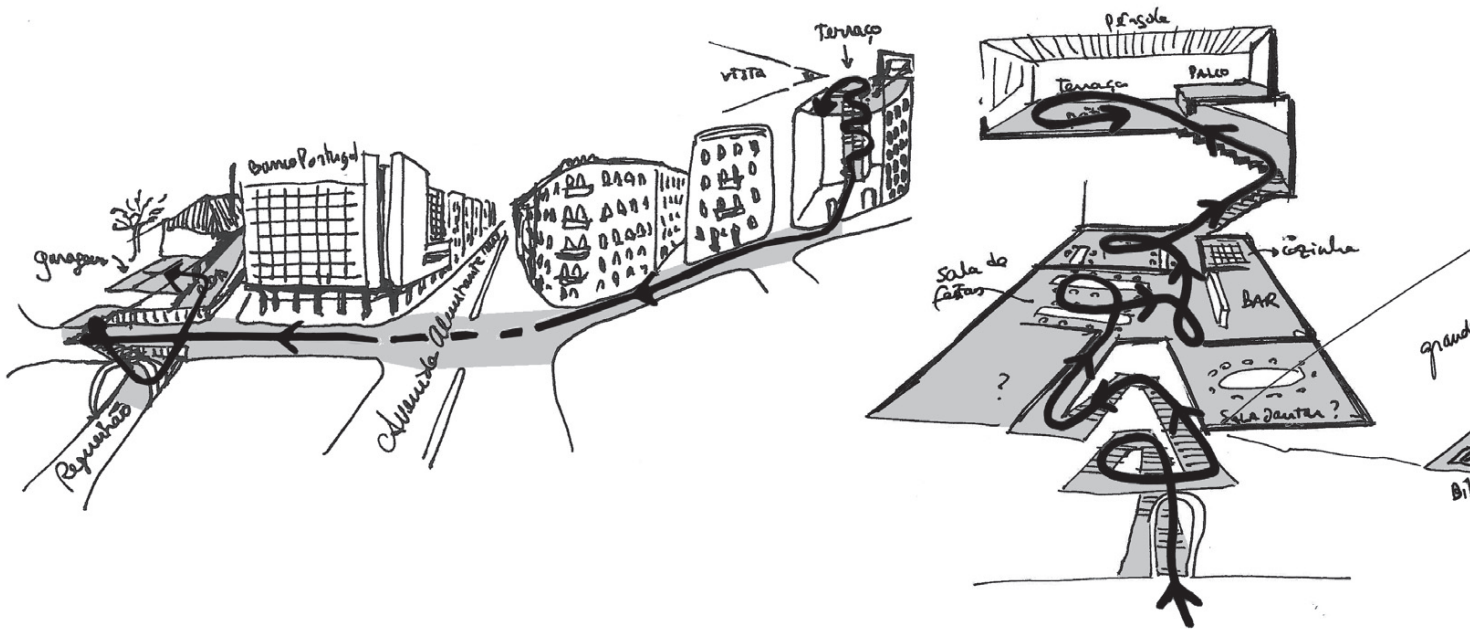
A roof terrace and a garage: **Prédio dos Anjos** and **RDA69** are two spaces which once shared a common story. They could not be spatially more contrasting: one, up it goes, almost able to reach the stars and to grab an infinite panorama of all the roofs of the city; the other, down in the underground world, located in one of the most darkest, forgotten and smelliest streets of Lisbon. However, both places used to have common projects and social actors. Linked by a kind of imaginary stream that flows from the Prédio dos Anjos' roof, down the hill (through Rua de Angola) until it reaches the underground street of Regueirão dos Anjos, this stream is, at a certain point, violently interrupted by the wide and long *Avenida Almirante Reis*. This avenue, the result of an authoritarian gesture of urban design (built at the beginning of the twentieth century), came to replace the old narrow and sinuous street that once used to follow a real stream ("Regueirão dos Anjos" literally means "the big stream of the angels"). Besides, located right at the crossing of Almirante Reis with Rua de Angola, we can find the powerful (and constantly patrolled by policemen) Bank of Portugal. A curious fact of this story is that, actually, the path corresponding to the "stream" between the previously mentioned spaces, leads to some of the most radical alternative cultural spaces of Lisbon (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016).

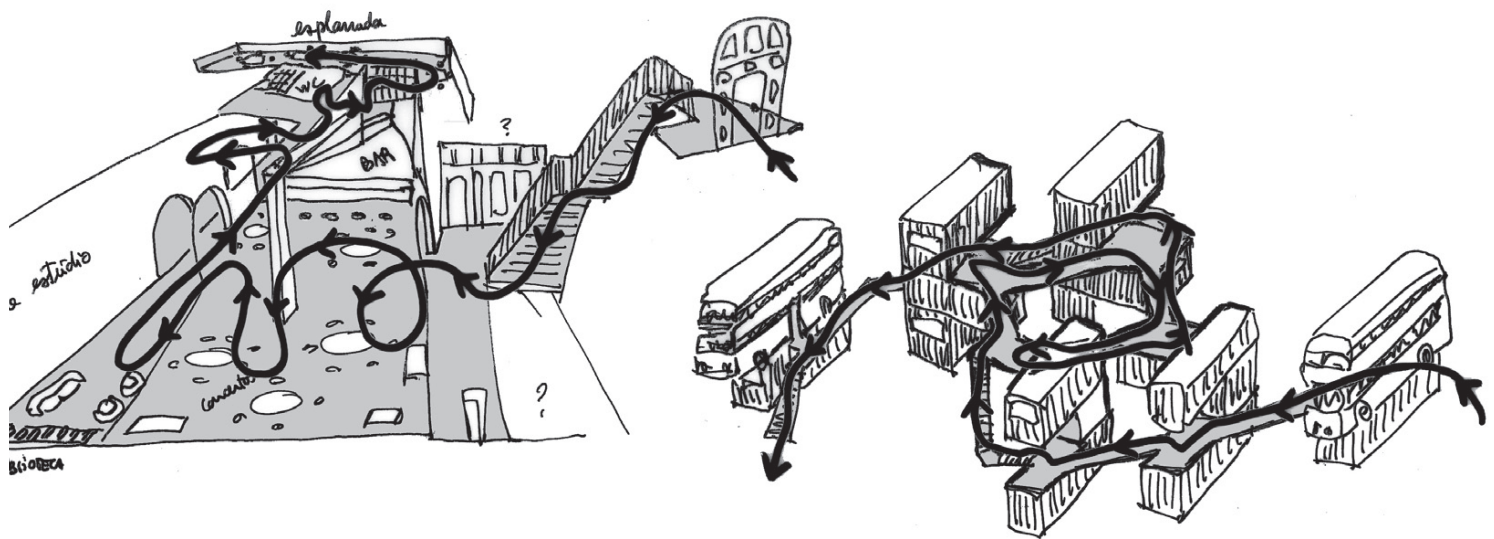
Widening the streets is designed to make the erection of barricades impossible, and new streets are to furnish the shortest route between the barracks and the workers' districts. Contemporaries christen the operation "strategic embellishment".

Benjamin (1935, p.12)

These interstitial spaces were born in the period of the worsening of the austerity measures resulting from the economic crisis. When drawing a parallel with Benjamin's text, we could see "austerity" as the contemporary oppressive force, or the new "offensive" towards the workers (maybe in this case the unemployed) just like the role the building of the wide *Hausmannian* avenues once played against all future barricades.

Img 386. (Next page) Wandering though the labyrinths of the "porous spaces" of Regueirão dos Anjos, Casa dos Amigos do Minho, SOU 2 and Village Underground Lisbon >





Casa dos Amigos do Minho – the ghost of porosity

Though still apprehensive of the marginal world that has haunted the Intendente area for such a long period of time, **Casa dos Amigos do Minho's** members now open the street door more frequently (mainly since 2014). Once we enter and begin to climb those old stairs, we discover an amazing labyrinthine inner space, which alternates salons with corridors, more stairs, courtyards and terraces, and a very curious panoramic view over Lisbon's old roofs (see img 178). The unexpected slope that is hidden behind the straight façade of CAM (invisible from the street) turns this visit into a very rich path. While we walk through the building, the continuous contrasting ambiances (interior/exterior, darkness/light, narrow/large, up/down), is very exciting and appealing to our own curiosity, making us want to continue the exploration of all the secret corners of the house (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016).

In such corners one can scarcely discern where building is still in progress and where dilapidation has already set in. For nothing is concluded. Porosity results not only from indolence of the Southern artisan, but also, above all, from the passion for improvisation, which demands that space and opportunity be at any price preserved. Buildings are used as a popular stage. They are all divided into innumerable, simultaneously animated theaters. Balcony, courtyard, window, gateway, staircase, roof are at the same time stage and boxes. (...) Irresistibly the festival penetrates each and every working day. Porosity is the inexhaustible law of the life of this city, reappearing everywhere.

Benjamin and Laci (1978 [1925] pp. 166-167 and 168)

The contrast one feels while wandering through this space, as we can see, is not only provoked by its spatial characteristics, but also provoked by the shock between the daily activities proposed by the old members and those brought in by the new guests, and therefore creating quite different (and mixed) ambiances in one same spatial environment. Finally *“the festival penetrates each and every working day”* (Benjamin 1925, p. 168): the new actors and events penetrate the daily life – the practices of the everyday life (de Certeau 1980) – of CAM. The same old activities, which have continuously been developed by the members of the recreational association (crossing several generations), are now invaded by “alien” contemporary experimental, social and politically engaged projects, organised by young people. As we can see, what remains is the spatial experience that is sinuous and labyrinthine as always. The space is just one – the same as always – but the actors change. Space is more perennial than the invading ephemeral cultural experiences (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016).

SOU – the ghost of the crowd

SOU moves through the city in a restive way, showing, at the same time, an impressive capacity of mutation. This fact is symbolised by its logo – a chameleon. By following this project, we have seen how this association is, in a way, “everywhere” (around the areas of Anjos and Intendente). Having had, until today, three “headquarters” and a few “extensions”, SOU seems to have the capacity to infiltrate the territory in a tender way, by welcoming local people and inviting them to participate in its projects. SOU aims at creating local networks, looking for the reinforcement of

existing ties, this resulting in having a significant impact on the territory and the dynamics of the city. From a shop on the ground-floor of a street to a building directly exposed to a main square, and residing in the meantime in a basement, SOU went through multiple and varied spatial experiences, as if it were dancing through the urban space. This kind of “spatial performing act” goes even further, by using the streets and the square, as well as the salons of some neighbouring associations, as stages for practicing and performing events. Acting in this way, SOU’s space of action constantly grows and shrinks (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016).

The crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect flâneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world - such are the few of the slightest pleasures of those independent, passionate, impartial natures which the tongue can but clumsily define.

Baudelaire (1964 [1863], p. 9)

SOU is just like a “flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite...” (Benjamin 1935).

Village Underground – the ghost of the department store

The access to **VU** is unclear, as one needs to pass by a guard to enter the site surrounded by walls. The guard works for the city transports’ company which maintains the tram depot on this site. Nevertheless, the entrance door is controlled for any random guest who decides to enter the site. Afterwards, in order to reach the VU, the visitor has to cross the entire complex. When reaching our destination, we face an audacious structure of apparently chaotically disposed colourful containers and suspended buses. The architectural concept – an apparently aleatory disposition of piled containers and buses connected by metallic passages and stairways – was designed to “encourage interaction through its central courtyard” by ensuring a “people flow” that forces the passage by “your neighbour’s door and terrace to reach your own”. The labyrinthine path looks rather like a playground that we can explore as if we were kids. The labyrinth, appealing to a ludic behaviour by the creation of a playful path, recalls the Situationists’ *dérive*; however, the fact of having been *designed* for that purpose, it automatically frames that careless, and somehow adventurous attitude, into *entertainment*: the pleasure of the unpredictable spontaneity provoked by the multiple senses and stimuli of the urbanity is vanished (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016).

The flâneur still stands on the threshold - of the metropolis as of the middle class. Neither has him in its power yet. In neither is he at home. He seeks refuge in the crowd. Early contributions to a physiognomics of the crowd are found in Engels and Poe. The crowd is the veil through which the familiar city beckons to the flâneur as phantasmagoria - now a landscape, now a room. Both become elements of the department store, which makes use of flânerie itself to sell goods. The department store is the last promenade for the flâneur.

Benjamin (1999 [1935], p. 10)

This “total alternative design”, as we have seen before, is the result of a “creative management” process inspired by the *Creative Cities* ideology (Florida 2002; Landry 1995). In this context, VU works almost like a kind of universal fair dedicated to the “alternative” and “creative world” – a kind of a gallery, or a “passage”, where people come to *flâner*, whether to see (the work of art) or to be seen (during the events, in the middle of the crowd, sponsored by renowned brands of alcohol) (Carmo and Pedrazzini 2016). This is “the last promenade for the *flâneur*”... (Benjamin 1935, p. 10).

Synthesis / Conclusion: ghost of the dérive

Time changes, geography too. But in our day and age, the relationship between man and territory finds some equivalents to Benjamin’s notes on the reality of his time, as we were able to see in the examples we have previously explored. However, some particularities can be highlighted in what concerns the contemporary case in Lisbon, when specifically linked to the alternative cultural life of this city: the hybrid character of most of the projects, existing in a limbo between counter-cultural practices and the institutional or even commercial spheres, grounded on ambiguity, constant dialectics and contrasts.

We have seen four experiences, in which we can find a labyrinthine promenade. Nevertheless, each one addressing a particular *flâneuse* experience:

Case-study / Path	Walter Benjamin’s reference	<i>Flâneuse</i> experience
<i>RDA69/Prédio dos Anjos</i>	Barricades	Interstitial (interrupted) continuity
<i>Casa dos Amigos do Minho</i>	Porous city	Contrasting ambiances
<i>SOU</i>	The crowd	Restive movement/metamorphosis
<i>Village Underground</i>	Arcades / department store	Artificial creation / <i>flânerie</i> “enters the service of the merchant” ¹

A society that moulds its entire surroundings has necessarily evolved its own techniques for working on the material basis of this set of tasks. That material basis is the society’s actual territory. Urbanism is the mode of appropriation of the natural and human environment by capitalism, which, true to its logical development toward absolute domination, can (and now must) refashion the totality of space into its own peculiar decor.

Debord (1967)

Having reached the end of our walk, here we are again, back in the early twenty-first century. Nothing seems able to preserve the *flânerie* anymore from the violence of the cities that gradually came to replace its urbanity. Guy Debord, 50 years ago, had already guessed what progress and modernity (architecture and urban planning) would bring in terms of destruction. By the 1960s, the urban *dérive* was already a version both rushed and melancholic of *flânerie*. Nevertheless, it was also a critique of the violence of modern urban planning that our cities, from Haussmann to Le Corbusier, have fabricated. Today, however, in the avenues of unfinished modernity, we can hear again the ghost of the *flâneur*, frightened by the lack of poetry of our capitalist cities and mourning for the city of the past, before it becomes only Order and Discipline:

*Old Paris is no more (a town, alas,
Changes more quickly than man's heart may change);
Yet in my mind I still can see the booths;
The heaps of brick and rough-hewn capitals;
The grass; the stones all over-green with moss;
The débris, and the square-set heaps of tiles.*

Baudelaire ("Le cygnet", in *Les Fleurs du mal*, 1861)⁹

*

⁹ Translation taken from *The Poems and Prose Poems* of Charles Baudelaire. Ed. James Huneker. New York: Brentano's, 1919. "Le vieux Paris n'est plus (la forme d'une ville / Change plus vite, hélas ! que le coeur d'un mortel) / Je ne vois qu'en esprit tout ce camp de baraques, / Ces tas de chapiteaux ébauchés et de fûts, / Les herbes, les gros blocs verdissés par l'eau des flaques, / Et, brillant aux carreaux, le bric-à-brac confus. / Là s'étalait jadis une ménagerie."

RESISTANCE AND COMPROMISE

PART IV

Following the main objectives established for this research, a synthesis of the fieldwork analysis will now be made based on the dialectic perspective of *resistance vs. compromise*. Both tendencies have been highlighted in each particular case of ACS, focusing on their visual and spatial aesthetics, which are claimed to be able to express such opposite positions, reflecting different levels of social and political engagement. We have seen how, in the course of the life-time of each ACS, their particular history and multiple stories often reflect very complex realities, which depends on the authorities tolerance, survival strategies, matters of visibility and popularity, the evolution of the legal status, the established agreements and networks, real estate speculation, and a few other parameters. On the one hand, this tends to result in the most hybrid kinds of approaches, this characteristic being expressed in their materials, methods and practices, necessarily being influenced by the general spatial container or object where each project happens. On the other hand, the established relationship between the ACS and the territory (i.e. the urban context: the city, the neighbourhood, the street) is expressed by particular kinds of spatial occupation (assumed, discreet, close, distant, quiet, nomad,...), which is necessarily influenced by the multiple parameters mentioned above (relationship with authorities, survival strategies related with matters of economic sustainability and intolerance, accessibility, visibility, networks, real estate).

The structure of this last chapter follows the order of the three hypotheses that have been presented at the beginning of this work, the aim at this point being to provide some answers and try to confirm, or not, those hypotheses. It starts with the hypothesis of the existence of an “aesthetics of alternative culture” and postulate the existence of a major influence of the methods, techniques, and practices used by diverse counter-cultures, of the artistic avant-gardes and of concrete material results of actions developed by certain political and social movements.

II. ON THE AESTHETICS OF RESISTANCE

H1) Alternative Cultural Spaces (ACS) have an active role of political resistance in the context of European cities today. The signs of this resistance are present in their visual and spatial aesthetics, which arise from specific kinds of practices and methods. These practices (DIY, bricolage, collage/assemblage, hybrid, organic, communitarian, site-specific...) have been adopted by different counter-cultures, generally associated to social and artistic movements, inspiring visual and spatial approaches, and consequently the ambiances of contemporary ACS.

All ACS have a role of political resistance, in one way or another. They present signs of visual and spatial aesthetics of resistance, based on the practices and methods used by diverse counter-cultures, artistic avant-gardes and social movements. This first finding allowed us to define the parameters that were initially built to group the object of study of this research (the ACS). Inspired by such signs, lists of typologies have been created in the initial phase of this research, classifying the selected ACS, organising them on a scale from the most underground/radical examples to the most institutional/commercial ones, according to a spatial and visual analysis based, to a great extent, on an intuitive approach. Using these lists as a starting point, the “aesthetics of the alternative culture” started to be defined. However, even if some common elements could be found in most ACS, some other varied quite a lot. It became clear that, in some ACS, the resulting aesthetics had been produced under radical or underground political contexts, while in other ACS these aesthetics resulted instead from top-down/vertical directives and designs, being simply inspired by the aesthetics of grassroots approaches. Two contrasting examples, which present clear elements of the “aesthetics of the alternative culture” expressed under hyper-aestheticised environments (img 387), are:

1. **ACC Metelkova**, a “total work of art” (art, crafts, architecture, furniture, events...), where the “aesthetics of resistance” is clear, able to be found on every detail of its spatial environment;
2. **Village Underground Lisbon**, a “total work of design”, presenting several elements inspired by counter-cultures (graffiti, rusty containers, post-industrial site, party/labyrinthine path), but where every detail addresses institutional or commercial ways of production.

Metelkova represents the DIY “collage city” (*Mesto*) of Rowe and Koetter (1986), where all arts have the same dignity (Morris 1877, 1884) and have, furthermore, a symbolic character linked to a revolutionary “art for the people” (Lipovetsky and Serroy 2013, 24). This art is, in the case of Metelkova, also made by “the people”, i.e. by those who use this space. Against conventions, inspired by some artistic avant-gardes, and most of all born out of the context of the Eastern European retro-avant-gardes, or of the so-called *Ljubljana alternative movement*, the artists of Metelkova transform everything into art: the mediocre, the trivial, the unworthy, machines, collages, urban space... while assigning a political nature to it. As Lipovetsky and Serroy notice, the age of democracy allows an aesthetic dignity for all subjects (Lipovetsky and Serroy 2013, 22).

Furthermore, Metelkova holds the values of the bohemian artists of the 19th century (hedonism, creation, self-fulfilment, authenticity, expressivity, the search for experiences). However, these have become part of the dominant values celebrated by capitalism, being transformed into a “consumption” practice that calls the individual to live “a beautiful, intense life, rich of sensations and spectacles.” (Lipovetsky and Serroy 2013, 30-31). This “cultural consumption” dimension is actually present today in most of the analysed ACS.

Village Underground, instead, is a kind of an “alternative superstar-architecture”, when analysed under the perspective of form (and not necessarily of the “signature”), this “Pop” or “Ready-Made architecture” embodies the spirit of Debord’s “society of spectacle” (1967), in a contemporary way, linked to the creative cities ideology (Florida 2002). Working as “a strategy of marketing, a game of seduction to capture the desires of the consumer”, the “creative or cultural industries” are able to mix: design and star-system, creation and entertainment, culture and show-business, art and communication, avant-garde and fashion, architecture and sculpture, all this resulting in a “hyperspectacle” devoted to the democratic and commercial culture of leisure (Lipovetsky and Serroy 2013, 27). As Tafuri resumes, “...the politics of *things* brought about by the laws of profit. Architectural, artistic, and urban ideology was left with the *utopia of form* as a way of recovering the human totality through an ideal synthesis, as a way of embracing disorder through order” (Tafuri 1976, 46, 48). The “disorder” is embodied by the labyrinthine path and apparent random shipping containers’ disposition, and the “order” by the top-down design kind of approach. The “laws of profit” are embodied in the co-working project, that rents working desks to creative professionals by a quite high price, and in the renown brands used to sponsor the organised events.

These findings led me to the second hypothesis.



Img 387. Metelkova as a “total work of art” and Village Underground as a “total design”.

12. ON COMPROMISE AND AESTHETICISATION

H2) Due to certain policies, ACS may be forced to make certain compromises in the course of their existence. They may be transformed and adapted according to the authorities' demands and rules, or falling under the influence of the logics of the market. They may even have been created under those marketing logics. In any of the three cases – even if clearly inspired by the spatial and visual aesthetics of resistance – their projects and ambiances may eventually become negatively compromised, which can result in aestheticised ACS.

We have seen before, with the examples of **Metelkova** and **Village Underground**, two opposite ways of production of “alternative aesthetics”: one resulting from a process built along time, triggered by multiple conflicts and developed by grassroots approaches, and another planned and designed to be built from the start with such kind of aesthetics. The visual and spatial aesthetics of grassroots movements, counter-cultures and artistic avant-gardes – what we have defined as “alternative aesthetics” – have become trendy in the last years, used as an inspiration for the most diverse kinds of practices related with “creative” professions and urban and cultural policies (Florida 2002), but also to “decorate” the environments of several cultural spaces, creating this way particular kinds of “alternative ambiances”. This means that an aestheticisation process occurs oriented by a top-down design process.

So, on the one hand we have seen a few examples of institutional and commercial approaches, “(mis)using” “alternative aesthetics” to create new projects. This results in artificial kinds of environments that are unveiled by a few details, depending on each case (e.g. **Village Underground**, **Lx Factory**, **Pensão Amor**, **MSUM**, **Celica**):

- standardised and perfect finishing details;
- sponsoring panels (from multinational companies or banks);
- information and safety plates and devices (fire protection, surveillance cameras, etc.);
- forced partying ambiances, where *fun* is often synonym of *consumption*;
- designed and planned decoration, often pretending to be random and the result of spontaneous actions.

On the other hand, some ACS that were born from grassroots movements, might suffer changes in their aesthetic environment along time, this eventually resulting in another type of an aestheticisation process, led by top-down and/or authoritarian directives. These “orders” or “guidelines” (depending on each case), imposed at a certain moment of the lifetime of an ACS, force normalisation processes on the spatial environment, which must be accepted in order to assure the survival of the project or the use of a certain space. This way, certain compromises are made, which often result in a reduction of the variety and diversity of the ACS's visual and spatial creation, and also the spontaneous possibility of change and adaptation to the everyday life needs or desires (e.g. **Usine Kugler** and the new spaces that were born from the **Artamis** eviction).

We have seen two examples of aestheticisation process that were oriented by top-down design developments: one that results from an instrumentalisation process, and another that results from a normalisation one. But we had seen before that ACC Metelkova's spatial environment is also aestheticised, even if it results from bottom-up approaches. We must be aware, that aestheticisation processes do not arise only from compromising approaches related with the market or the power authorities' logics, but can also arise from grassroots approaches. One characteristic that we can nevertheless notice and is present in all ACS we have analysed is their hybrid nature in terms of spatial typologies, use, materials, decoration principles, historical traces... ACS are a mixture of references, a fusion between many cultural roots, architectural practices and spatial practices. This means that compromise is necessarily implicit in all examples we have seen and that a kind of a negotiation has been held, allowing the co-existence of multiple sources and realities.

When reviewing the kinds of aestheticisation processes that occur in the analysed ACS, we observe that they may result from:

- transformations occurring along time, due to adaptations and adjustments to functional needs or to artistic and decorative desires;
- adaptations to the authorities rules (municipalities, safety norms or "cordial" neighbouring relationships);
- adaptations to the market trends and laws (competition, profit, success, popularisation, privatisation);
- a planned design , which gathers the last two conditions (this approach should not normally result, by default, in a ACS but the presence of "alternative aesthetics" makes this case possible, under the framework of this research).

As Göbel highlights, we live in "The age of "low-budget-urbanity" (Farber 2014) and "austerity urbanisms" (Peck 2012) in which "architects, investors, preservationists, and urban planners (...) and designers" participate, "among many other professionals of design: artists of the visual and performing arts, electro music scene, political activists, DIY workers/gardeners" (Göbel 2015, 13). All of them contribute to create "cool" ambiances inspired by the post-industrial aesthetics and urban ruins. Within this context, businessmen are today seen as "visionary artists" who use art as a "tool of legitimation of brands and companies of capitalism" (Lipovetsky and Serroy 2013, 28). From this arises the recuperation of the "artistic critique" (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999) and institutional projects of "radical museology" (Bishop 2013) for instance. On the other side, the "guaranteed city" continues to invest on the creation of normalised details in order to assure predictable practices and individuals (Breviglieri 2013).

*

If we take a look over a wider situation, when comparing the relationship between the counter-cultural action and the reaction of the entity in power in each city, we realise that:

- in Geneva, the pressure of the authorities is very strong – they implement and enforce several rules, and decide about the future of the ACS. The latter try to negotiate, but there is almost no room for manoeuvre;
- in Ljubljana there exists a kind of reversed relationship vis-à-vis the one in Geneva, the ACS having a resistant stubborn attitude, and clearly marking their position. In this town, the municipality and the authorities try to negotiate with the ACS, but these seem to be ultimately the only ones to decide about their own future;
- in Lisbon, the dialogue does not seem to be so tense nor so unidirectional. In the first place, the alternative projects (as they are considered under the framework of this research) are actually a more recent phenomena than in the other two cities. In this city, the impact the economic crisis has provoked in the society seems to have had a direct influence in the appearance, the longevity and the way ACS are distributed and moving in the city. Secondly, this situation happened to influence local municipal policies and market strategies, from which two particular kinds of ACS arose:
 - o those that directly collaborate/work in partnership with the municipality (through the BipZip programme, for instance), where “citizen participation” has become a crucial “tool”, and where “culture” has often become a synonym of “social work”;
 - o those that are created under the logics of the market, like the so-called “creative clusters” or “industries”, and the “alternative bars”.

Curiously, in this town, the most radical/subversive projects seem to be more ephemeral and discreet than in the other two cities.

As we observed, relevant changes in the city’s socio-economic environment are mostly responsible for changes also in their respective alternative movements. Diverse factors influence, this way, the rise and fall of so many ACS (such as real estate booms, gentrification and touristification processes, rises in rents, or the commercialisation and bureaucratisation of public space). Many close doors due to the pressure from outside, others undergo a process of institutionalisation or even of commercialisation.

This tension between issues of *resistance* (coming from the grassroots approaches and the social movements) and *compromise* (coming from their multiple forms of relationship with institutions and the market) leads us to the third hypothesis. As we can see, ACS address necessarily matters of territorial politics.

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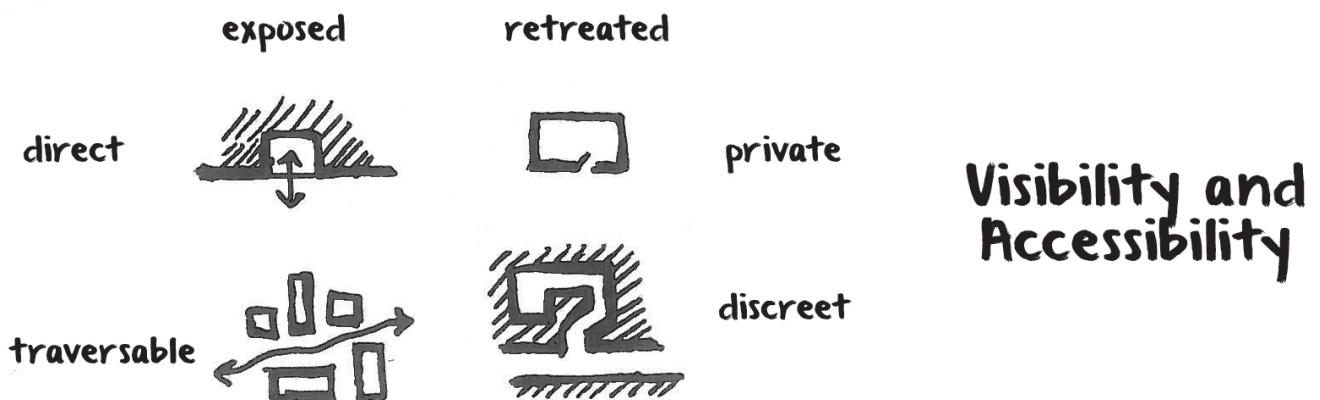
13. ON SPATIAL RESISTANCE AND COMPROMISE

H3) Resistance and compromise, often simultaneously, are present in the way ACS occupy space while staying dependent on their own spatial and architectural characteristics as well as on their singular logics of spatial occupation within a territorial context (a city, a neighbourhood, or a street). Consequently, architecture and urban territories could serve as tools for spatial resistance by refusing the common compromise with formal for-profit growth (such as real estate development).

The space where a certain project happens necessarily influences that same project it hosts, and vice-versa – each new project that arrives at a certain space affects that same space. The changes and transformations that occur along time necessarily affect the ambiance of any space, this being expressed through visual and spatial aesthetics. Furthermore, the result of the transformations that occur at certain spatial conditions also reveals issues linked to wider structures of power and market. On the one hand, those links can be established through certain elements that can be found at the inner physical spatial environment of each project (in terms of objects, materials, devices, art, etc., existing inside their walls or façades), but they can also depend on the dimension and structure of the spaces. On the other hand, the way each space is physically grounded in the territory is also a matter that exposes many other issues of *resistance* and *compromising* approaches.

The way a physical structure relates to the surrounding environment (the city, the neighbourhood and the street) depends on a few parameters. Two of them, for instance, are: *visibility* and *accessibility*. A matter of choice or of chance, these two necessarily affect the character of an ACS. This way, an ACS can be (img 388):

- A. *Exposed* and *accessible*, when having a direct relationship with the street. On this case, both the ACS and the street necessarily influence and affect each other. This might result from two kinds of situations:



Img 388. Visibility and Accessibility: the way an ACS relates to the surrounding spatial environment (the urban territory).

1. a desire to reactivate a degraded social and physical condition of the public space (e.g. **Rés-do-Chão, SOU 3, Mouradia, ACC Metelkova**), resulting on the welding of stronger ties with the surrounding environment and community;
2. a need of attention (e.g. anytime ACS organise themselves and create a festival, for instance, e.g. **BIG, Faz-me Festas nos Anjos, FICA, Open days** at Lx Factory, etc.), resulting on media exposure, debates, bigger success, reconnaissance, and a change of the usual conditions of the ACS' everyday life;

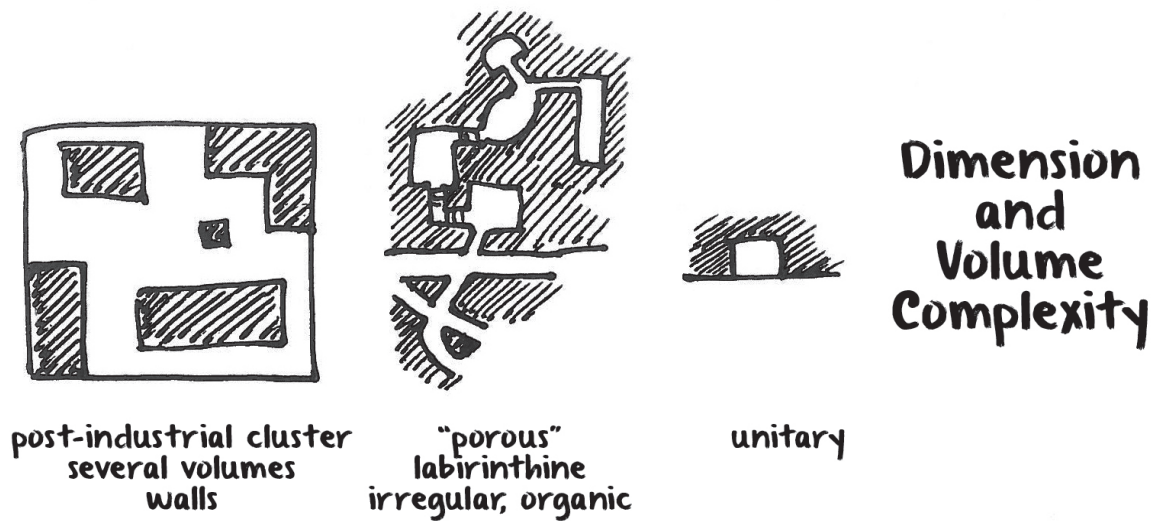
B. *Retreated*, when the communication with the street is not obvious or clear. This might result in:

1. a privatisation/club spirit, allowing the existence of more exclusive/selective activities (e.g. **Pensão Amor, Braço de Prata**, the clubs of **ACC Metelkova, Casa Independente, Plataforma Revólver, Lx Factory**);
2. discretion, allowing therefore enough distance to have a bigger freedom to accomplish more subversive/deviant/marginal, or simply less conventional activities (e.g. **Casa dos Amigos do Minho** today, **SOU 2, Mob 1, Mob2, Crew Hassan 1, Crew Hassan 2** basement, **CRA, Prédio dos Anjos, Abril em Maio, Rog** behind walls).

*

Secondly, the *dimension* and *volume* complexity of each ACS also have an impact in territorial terms. This way we may find three different examples within the cases that have been studied: massive and present post-industrial sites, organic and porous “invisible” interstices and small unitary spaces (img 389).

1. ACS occupying post-industrial sites usually consist of a group of several volumes dispersed through relatively vast open air areas, of different shapes and sizes. Their integration in the urban fabric may be distant, enclosed within surrounding walls (e.g. **Lx Factory, Village Underground, Fábrica do Braço do Prata** and **Rog**) or open, i.e. traversable (e.g. **Artamis** and **Metelkova**), this clearly changing their relationship with the surrounding environment. We could almost dare to say, when looking at the examples that exist between walls, that those ACS necessarily have closer affinities to the market. But then **Rog**, particularly, and to some extent **Braço do Prata**, due to their subversive and/or defying nature, break this norm, leading us to consider that there may not exist a direct relationship between the existence of walls and the nature of the projects. Yet, the existence of walls clearly assigns a *ghetto* nature to the site. Under these conditions we may find:
 - a) Market oriented projects, born within a clear business nature grounded on the “creative cities ideologies”, whose walls actually contribute to keep a certain *convenient* distance with the “suspicious” surrounding environment (e.g. **Village Underground, Lx Factory**).



Img 389. Dimension and Volume complexity: the relationship the ACS have with the urban territory and the corresponding spatial impact.

These examples have a continuous daily activity 7/7 associated to workspaces, and sporadically they organise big evening events;

- b) An intellectual-oriented example, alien to the surrounding environment in terms of physical barriers and cultural offer (**Fábrica do Braço de Prata**). However, it hosts an intense evening activity, but the access is limited by an entrance fee;
 - c) One of the most radical examples analysed in this research, whose walls actually contribute to intensify eventual suspicious feelings by those who pass around (**Rog**). The daily and night activity are mostly irregular¹, but always free in terms of access;
 - d) Two squats, at the core of several issues related with political and urban struggles, both traversable, i.e., working as a continuity of the surrounding urban fabric (e.g. **Artamis**, **Metelkova**²), this character being highlighted by a continuous daily/night activity. In the evening these are/were particularly convivial places in the exterior space existing between the different buildings, working as real public urban space. However, we must highlight the fact that free access is not possible in the entirety of the site, a process of privatisation of spaces having occurred along time at certain parts of the site (e.g. artist studios and the night clubs).
2. Interstitial ACS, with an unclear and discreet impact on the city, assigns an almost "invisible" nature to some of these projects. The richness of these examples is relevant due to the spatial environment of their inner spaces, whose dimensions are generally small, but quite

¹ This having changed since June 2016 (see pp. 340).

² We realise that Metelkova is not located at a former industrial site. However, we have explained, in the previous chapter, why we have decided to include it in this category.

varied and irregular. The way these spaces are connected form usually a sinuous path, composed by an organic and complex composition of volumes, offering quite labyrinthine and diversified sensorial experiences to the visitors. These inner paths often seem to continue the surrounding exterior paths of irregular streets³, this curious mixing resulting in what we have previously mentioned as “porous” spaces (Benjamin and Lacis 1925). As we can notice, the examples exhibiting this characteristic are all located in Lisbon, due mostly to the topography of this city (**Casa dos Amigos do Minho, SOU 2, Casa Independente, Primeiro Andar, Pensão Amor, Crew Hassan 1, Mob 1, Re.AL, Prédio dos Anjos, Plataforma Revólver, Village Underground**):

- a) Their unconventional spatial containers are organic, adaptable, irregular, and very hybrid, working as resistant architectures to normalisation and standardisation processes, easing the existence of more informal, marginal or underground activities;
- b) The given examples are mainly associations, which means they work under a legal institutional framework; on the other side, this condition allows these spaces to run non-profit oriented projects and also to filter undesired visitors (since one is normally required association membership in order to get in);
- c) One example – **Village Underground** – is also actually placed in the previous category (post-industrial sites). The choice to include it here is related with its labyrinthine path. However, this path is not happening in an inner environment, and it links instead separated volumes (the shipping containers) which look randomly disposed and suspended in the air. As we have previously seen⁴, when wandering in this path one has the feeling of being “entertained”, this resulting somehow in an artificial kind of experience.

3. Unitary ACS, usually have a direct relationship with the street through a showcase glass. This characteristic allows them to have a more direct and active social engagement in the life of the neighbourhood, working as insider safety agents, contributing to oppose eventual tendencies of desertification, and social and physical degradation of the public realm. These ACS contribute to alert for the decay of the built environment, therefore to reactivate the social tissue, but also to increase the value of the square meter in the area. Sometimes they expand their activities to the exterior as well (e.g. **Mouradia, SOU 3, Rés-do-Chão**).

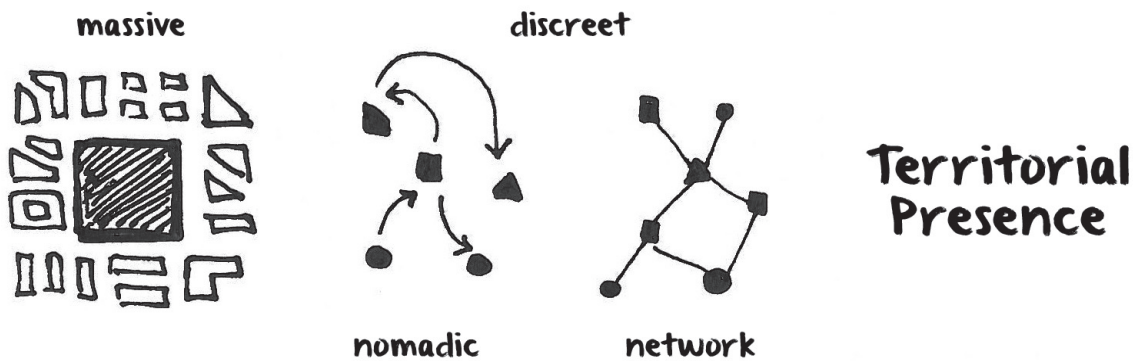
- a) some examples are more detached from their surrounding environments, being more focused on their own “business” (activities), the occupation of such a place being mostly a matter of chance or opportunity (**Oficina Colectiva, Cão solteiro, Galeria da Boavista, CH2-bar...**).

*

³ This having inspired the creation of the psychogeographic map presented in the chapter “Mapping the alternative cultural spaces in the city”, in Lisbon chapter.

⁴ See Chapter 10: *Logics of Spatial Occupation*.

At last, we should mention the *logics of territorial presence* an ACS project can have during its existence, in terms of spatial occupation. We have considered that all ACS are interstices⁵, since they all reuse previously existent spaces, which were abandoned or vacant, contributing this way to their spatial reactivation. However, these interstices have different shapes and logics within the context of the city, whose form might, or might not, change through time. We can find two kinds of contrasting territorial presence: a massive and still one, and a diffuse, fragmented and restless network composed of several small spaces (img 390).



Img 390. Logics of territorial presence an ACS can have during its existence, in terms of spatial occupation.

Those which are massive (i.e. occupy a whole block in the urban fabric), seem to last longer (e.g. **Metelkova, Kugler, Rog, Lx Factory, Braço de Prata, Artamis**⁶). Their solid and steady position gives them a more lasting spatial nature in terms of a territorial and time analysis, this resulting in two kinds of situations (that can actually sometimes happen simultaneously). On the one hand, even if the core of the project and the space inside its borders tends to suffer some changes or transformations during its existence (when analysing these ACS as one single “body” integrated in the city), they demonstrate a persistence through time, consequently of resistance against eviction or even destruction. On the other hand, due to the fact of lasting in a same place during a long period of time in order to assure its longevity, these examples necessarily have to make some compromises and accept certain rules (internal or external, of the community or imposed by the authorities, respectively).

Smaller structures tend to be more restless, since their overall conditions (spatial, economic) are more fragile and precarious. This way, some ACS find nomadic strategies of survival to guarantee their longevity, moving around the city trying to find ways to better adapt to the changing reality. Consequently, each time the core of the project, along with the new space, changes, it makes us wonder which one has a major influence on the other – the space or the project. This reveals a very hybrid situation of case studies that move within an “official” ground (i.e. institutional, since most are associations) but whose spatially restless attitude escapes in a way the control the authorities could have if the conditions would not constantly change. This

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Even if it no longer exists, it had a relevant role in terms of spatial resistance that lasted a considerable period of time.

could be seen as a *guerrilla* kind of strategy, in terms of spatial occupation, whose challenging *tactics* and *ruses* (de Certeau 1980), based on movement and constant mutation, avoid heavy normalisation and instrumentalisation processes (e.g. **SOU** association, **Crew Hassan and Mob**). The other particularity of these smaller ACS is how they can work under a network logic, creating links through common events or space sharing or exchange. These solidarity ties allow them to grow as a group and acquire a stronger entity, but this implies accepting to play with other actors and different points of view, and consequently accepting common rules and agreements and therefore several compromises (ACS at **Poço dos Negros, Anjos, Intendente, Cais do Sodré**, and particularly the association **SOU**). However, these networks mostly happen under exceptional conditions – like events – being actually rather fragmented during a daily-basis condition.

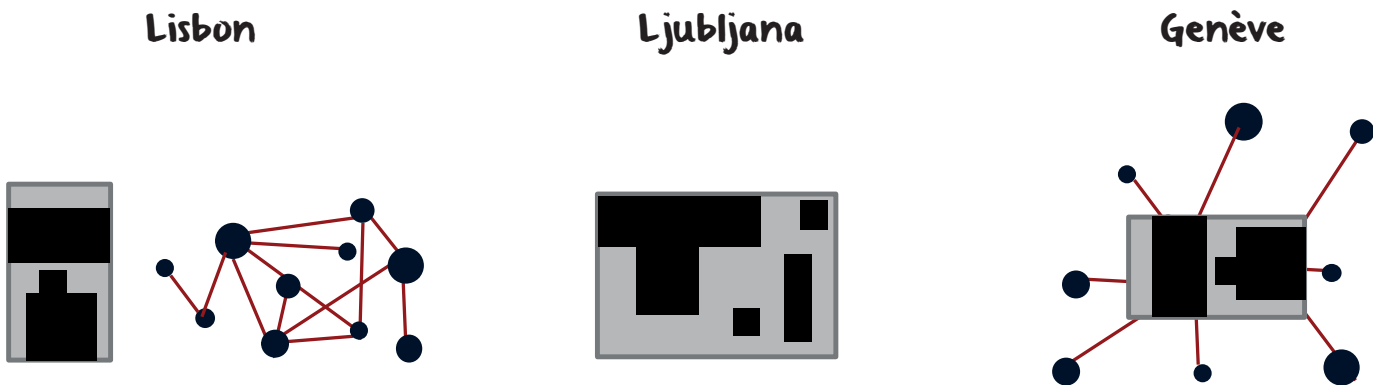
*

If we apply the logics of spatial analysis to the selected cities and want to summarise the outcome in a schematised manner, we realise that three different models exist (img 391):

1) in Lisbon, the “clusters” are located in more peripheral areas – which happen to be flat (thus making it easier the construction of larger buildings and complexes) – and the unitary and “porous” spaces are located in a more central zone (which has an irregular topography and therefore offers the best conditions for the existence of labyrinthine kinds of spaces). In this particular topographic central area of Lisbon there exists a kind of a network of ACS, sometimes clearly interconnected (e.g. Prédio dos Anjos, Zona Franca dos Anjos, RDA69), sometimes quite fragmented (e.g. Crew Hassan and Mob, or the ACS existing at the area of Intendente, like SOU, Mob, Casa dos Amigos do Minho).

2) in Ljubljana – if we consider, according to our study, that Rog and Metelkova are the most significant cases that exist under the perspective of analysis of an ACS – only one type of model exists: the “cluster”. Both examples are located in the “noble” central area, which actually happens to be flat.

3) in Geneva – mostly a flat city – a very fragmented and dispersed network of ACS exist this being caused by the disappearance of the squat scene, and particularly of Artamis. The remaining ACS are nonetheless interrelated by their historical background, and by a former common space.



Img 391. General logics of territorial presence of ACS according to each city (resume).

*

Cities only make sense as a continuous construction site and in constant movement and change. As expressed in the *AlterArchitectures Manifesto* by the Collectif Etc, “We should not look to finish the cities, they would die.” (Collectif Etc 2012, 180). *Flexibility* and *disorder* are inherent to the urban environment, and even more particularly “at a time when nothing is conquered with absolute security, neither knowledge nor skills. Newness, the ephemeral, the rapid turnover of information, of products, of behavioural models, the need for frequent adaptations...” (Innerarity 2015). According to the Spanish philosopher Daniel Innerarity, today “Imprinting something onto the long term seems less important than valuing the instant and the event.” Furthermore, he argues that “a greater awareness of disorder and irregularity (...) demands that we reconsider disorder in all its manifestations, as disorganisation, turbulence, chaos, complexity, or entropy”. This is clearly reflected in the moving and mutation strategies that have been adopted by ACS like **SOU**, or **Crew Hassan** and **Mob**, for instance. It is also present, in fact, in most of the analysed ACS, as complex and hybrid entities, spaces and projects existing in our postmodern contemporary world.

Complexity, disorder and hybridity are, however, timeless characteristics of the urban environment, but which can have an extreme aesthetic expression in the contemporary reality and moment. The “eternal” dimension of complex, disordered and hybrid spaces is present in what Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacin call the “porous city”, which they describe in the following way:

As porous as this stone is the architecture. Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades, and stairways. In everything, they preserve the scope to become a theater of new, unforeseen constellations. The stamp of definitive is avoided. No situation appears intended for ever (...). This is how architecture, the most binding part of the communal rhythm, comes into being here... anarchical, embroiled, villagelike in the center...⁷

Benjamin and Lacin (1925, 11-12)

Just like the Napolitan church – which is hidden in the surrounding profane buildings where the distracted individual passes by without even noticing it (Benjamin and Lacin 1925, 11-12) – so are the access doors and paths to many of the ACS (most particularly those existing in Lisbon, like **Casa dos Amigos do Minho**, **Prédio dos Anjos**, **Casa Independente** or even **Pensão Amor**, when entering through the “pink street”). The “porous city” assures the continuity of the urban fabric and of multiple layers of history, against the fragmentation produced by modern movement. Besides, according to Boym, it “exists in any city, reflecting the layers of time and history, social problems, as well as ingenious techniques of human survival. Porosity is a spatial metaphor for time in the city, for the variety of temporal dimensions embedded in the physical space. This porosity creates a sense of urban theatricality and intimacy. In cities in transition, the porosity turns the whole city into an experimental art exhibit, a place of continuous improvisation...” (Boym 2001, 77).

⁷ Translation of French by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: “Poreuse comme cette roche est l’architecture. Édifice et action s’enchevêtrent dans des cours, des arcades et des escaliers. En tout on préserve la marge qui permet à ceux-ci de devenir le théâtre de nouvelles constellations imprévues. On évite le définitif, la marque. Aucune situation n’apparaît (...) prévue pour durer toujours (...), Ainsi se réalise ici l’architecture, cette pièce la plus significative de la rythmique d’une communauté. (...) anarchique, enchevêtrée, villageoise”.

FINAL REMARKS

A “hybrid map” of complex entities has been presented in this research, a map that constitutes a reorganisation of different “oral stories” with many different actors.

No Alternative Cultural Space has revealed a character of pure *resistance* and, of course, no ACS is the result of a pure commercial or authoritarian approach. All the examples that we have seen are hybrid spaces, characterised by different factors and dependant on multiple contexts¹. This way, “alternative aesthetics” does not necessarily presuppose an active *resistance*, even if it tends to make a reference to that resistance, basically through the image. Floating between the universe of *culture* and *entertainment*, between *subversion* and *business*, between *recycling* and *recycled* aesthetics, the ACS show us that there are different ways of “doing the alternative”. Furthermore, this “alternative aesthetics” varies according to each city, even though there is a basis that is common to the three cities.

In order to present a general overview of what has been analysed and studied in this research, some final remarks will now be exposed. A few words that have frequently been repeated in this dissertation will now be combined in an alternating manner, creating a dynamic game that intends to clarify a few results of this research. Those words – some are concepts that have been defined in the introduction chapter – are: Alternative, Aesthetics, Space, Culture, Architecture, Aestheticisation, Territory, Destruction and Poetry.

¹ See chapter “Resistance and Compromise” for more clarifications about “hybrid spaces”, pp. 426.

Alternative + Aesthetics

Being present in the title of this dissertation, these two words offer us the visual image of an ACS whose existence is in accordance with the specified conditions defined in the beginning of this thesis. We have seen – when trying to confirm the first hypothesis (H1)² – how a common visual language and expression exists in our case-studies. When analysing the aesthetic differences between the three studied cities, we could briefly say that Ljubljana’s “alternative aesthetics” is very strong in terms of colours and plastic expression, when comparing it with Lisbon, a city where these characteristics are softer (particularly when considering the most radical ACS). Instead, when we consider Lisbon’s ACS that have a more commercial character, the visual impact that their aesthetics illustrate can be as expressive as the corresponding aesthetics revealed by Ljubljana’s grassroots approaches. In Geneva, in turn, the normalisation process that, in the last years, has occurred in this city is progressively suffocating these aesthetics. According to Böhme, “[A]esthetics represents a real social power. There are aesthetic needs and an aesthetic supply. [...] [T]here is also aesthetic manipulation. To the aesthetics of the work of art we can now add with equal right the aesthetics of everyday life.” (Böhme 1993, 125). When these aesthetics are analysed together within a specific spatial context, that makes us wonder what kinds of architectural practices led to the creation of such ambiances. The way a spatial ambiance is perceived by the user of a particular space depends largely on the mode of production of that same space, and on the primary intentions that existed behind the creation of a particular design or a particular construction. Those aesthetics, in turn, are in general linked to radical political ideas, urban and cultural policies, local social engaged projects or market and business trends.

Aesthetics + Architecture + Aestheticisation

The idea may have passed, at a certain stage of this research (when analysing the cases of Rog and Metelkova, for instance), that the ACS that are more subversive and radical have or had no architectural design project. However, spatial intervention always exists, even if only sometimes quite discreetly, when it concerns small functional adaptation works of maintenance to ensure the minimum use or living conditions. This spatial intervention can be made by the users and/or by professionals of architecture. Sometimes, amongst the users of a space, some of them are architects.

When relating the aesthetics of ACS with the architectural practices that have been developed on site, we realise that there exist several and quite different processes of aestheticisation (i.e., the creation of a particular spatial ambiance). When analysing the role architects had in the spatial transformation of ACS, a list of practices has been identified, varying from mainstream and institutional approaches to the most subversive ones:

² See chapter 11 of PART IV (*Resistance and Compromise*, pp.420).

- Even if not really considered an ACS, **Metelkova South** is directly linked to Metelkova Mesto, one of the most important case-studies analysed in this dissertation. In this sense, it is mentioned here mainly to highlight the evident contrast between both approaches, especially when considering their cultural dimension. Metelkova South represents this way “architecture as a final product”, since it is not designed to be transformed by the users during its life course. Besides the applied materials are mostly prefabricated and standardised, which means they are less susceptible to be spontaneously transformed. These kinds of architectures are therefore more impersonal, and contribute to increase the distance between the users and the buildings, decreasing this way the social engagement of the former. This “**mainstream architectural approach**” ends up to be a delusion, according to my point of view both as an architect and a user of the space, mostly in terms of originality (since it is built under an institutional framework, following therefore stricter rules; also the solution found for the new façades of the building is quite questionable), and in what concerns the creation of a public space (which is fragmented by several objects, has a dysfunctional central “hole”, is controlled by surveillance cameras and is full of interdiction signs);
- The “**comercial design**” is exemplified by **Pensão Amor**, **Lx Factory** and **Village Underground**, where architects create ambiances to trigger consumption (of drinks or of creativity/culture), imposing strong aesthetic choices grounded on market trends and business spatial logics;
- **Usine Kugler**, in turn, represents the “**compromised architectural practices**”, where the architect stands in a position framed by a constant negotiation between the needs of the artists (users of the space) and the authorities (owners), this affecting and being visible in the spatial design details (mostly internal);
- A few examples – “**the socio-cultural architectures**” – highlight the effort that has been made in these last years to add to socio-cultural activities an architectural component, working with the most adapted solutions, in what concerns space and materials. The phenomena going on the other sense – the desire to include a stronger social attention to architectural projects – has increasingly been observed recently. These kinds of architectural approaches have become mostly relevant in the last years of the economic crisis, mostly specifically in Lisbon. **SOU (Largo Residências)**, **Mouradia** and **DNA** show us some of those approaches, where architects (AtelierMob and Artéria) test projects in collaboration with local population, which are in turn supported by public urban policies. The “mark” of the architect is visible in the finishing details, but does not impose strong aesthetical choices, neither intends to “freeze” space into a “finished product” / “work of art”;
- The “**communitarian spatial practices**” are here represented by **Metelkova North** as a continuous work-in-progress, a flexible practice that allows change and transformation at any stage of the production process; here, the work of the architect is not really present, or does not really have a strong impact when considering the present condition of this example. The decision of the architect of keeping the holes of past destruction of the façades as well as the consequent integration of those holes in the general design process of reconstruction – both being relevant architectural and symbolical elements of

political resistance – should nevertheless be referred;

- At last, the **“architectural/spatial praxis”** is present in the case of **Rog**, whose squat operation was to a great extent actually led by architects. Apart from a clear theoretical critique and concrete action materialised mostly by the squat operation, the moment the building was occupied and started to be used for a daily purpose must be emphasised. At that moment, the “architectural professional work” – which is somehow “invisible” in terms of material details – is in fact quite present in terms of organisation and management of the general (but discreet) renovation works that took place in the building, orienting and coordinating the users in such a labourious darning work.

As we can see, many ACS that have been considered and analysed in this dissertation meet Perez-Gomes comments on the possibility of “architects embodying values of a different order than those rooted in fashion, formal experimentation or publicity and be cast in forms other than the seductive gloss characterizing all present mechanisms of cultural domination”. Perez-Gomes adds that “Architecture holds the power to inspire and transform our day-to-day existence” (Perez-Gomez 1994, 8, 40), and that is quite clear in many of the spatial environments of ACS, particularly. At this point, we must go back to one of the initial questions of this research: What kind of city do we wish to live in? What kind of cities do we desire?

Territory + Aestheticisation

It has been observed that a curious relationship exists between the territorial occupation of ACS and their aestheticisation processes: either ACS happen to move in the city, or they suffer a process of aestheticisation. As we have seen, there exist two main types of territorial approaches – the “porous” spaces and the post-industrial clusters – which usually reflect different kinds of aestheticisation, this being directly related with opposite kinds of, let’s say, survival strategies:

- the first type tends to move in the city, i.e. the project is itinerant or “nomad”, occupying different spaces in different parts of town, such restless movement contributing to avoid a process of perennation or a long-time settlement. Such short-term stay at a certain location decreases the level of engagement and investment on spatial transformations. This temporary character thus blocks the process of aestheticisation, which normally requires a considerable period of time to be developed (e.g. SOU). This itinerancy of ACS is often related with monetary issues, necessarily affected by wider political and economic contexts that affect the lifetime cycles of the cities (in terms of tourism, gentrification, economic crisis, real estate, municipal policies, market trends, in between others);
- the second type tends to settle and be still. It concerns larger spaces and areas whose projects last longer in time, this allowing the time for a stronger and more detailed process of aestheticisation (e.g. Metelkova). While in the previous case *one* project travels through several spaces, in this case *one* space hosts usually several projects.

These quite big spaces (normally occupying a city block) mark therefore, due to their long time duration (i.e. two or three decades, until today), a stronger and more visible position in terms of urban resistance. Their scale allows a bigger media impact and a longer process of change in time is implied. It is something that contributes necessarily to increase the legitimacy process of the project, and institutionalisation (under different forms of expression and types of internal organisation).

- a third case exists that is nonetheless more detached from the “natural” rhythm of the city: the most recent post-industrial clusters linked rather to business approaches (e.g. Lx Factory and Village Underground Lisbon). The fast aestheticisation process these examples undergo contributes to force a certain identity of the project, usually linked to marketing strategies rather than to survival ones, as we have just seen (those associated to political resistance or unfavourable economic contexts).

The strategies that concern the first two ACS cases remind us of the kinds of tactics and strategies used in war but applied to political science, exposed by Antonio Gramsci in the beginning of the 1930s³, in which he makes a comparison between the “war of position” and “war of manoeuvre”⁴. As Gramsci defines it, the “war of position” is conducted mainly on the terrain of civil society, using trenches, fortresses, a rapid fire power, abundance of supplies and men as mass force. It demands enormous sacrifices by masses of people, and “once won, is decisive definitely” (Forgacs 2007, 222–24; Gramsci 2007a, 226; Gramsci 2007b, 230). On the other side, the “war of manoeuvre” is “brilliant” and “ephemeral” and “subsists so long as it is a question of winning positions which are not decisive” (Gramsci 2007a, 226, 230). However, both kinds of “war” have their origin in a crisis (like an economic crisis, for instance), situation which allows the offensive “troops” to open a breach in the enemy’s ranks. If the “enemy” (the State, as the “political society”; the dominant class) is the one that coerces and dominates, then the “troops” would correspond to the “civil society”, hegemonic and directional, i.e., “the terrain on which the dominant class organises hegemony and the terrain on which opposition parties and movements organise and build social power.” (Forgacs 2007, 224). If we would consider the ACS as the “civil society” and we would compare these logics to the ACS own strategies of resistance and attack (towards the established power or the authoritarian forces), we could say that the “war of position” would correspond to Metelkova’s case, for example, and the “war of manoeuvre” to SOU’s. Both were born out of, or exist under situations of crisis (economical, political), applying different strategies of survival and struggle, which curiously seem to find a parallel in such war/political tactics. While Metelkova grows stronger as an identity, and more legitimate, SOU’s ephemerality and restless attitude has been preventing it from settling, from becoming a space and a project with a very established ideology and structure.

³ Gramsci, Antonio. [1932-1939]. In [Forgacs, David]. 2007. “VII The Art and Science of Politics.” In *An Antonio Gramsci Reader - Selected Writings, 1916-1935*, 222–30. New York: Schocken Books Inc.

⁴ Inspired on Rosa Luxembour’s conception of “mass strike” (defined on a pamphlet named “Mass Strike , Party and Trade Unions”, 1906) (Gramsci 2007a, 225).

Destruction + Architecture + Aestheticisation

In this line of thought, it is curious to highlight the relationship that exists between the signs of earlier destruction, present in certain ACS⁵, and the aestheticisation process. As Lebbeus refers, (whose words Bibic (2003) applies to the case of Metelkova) “War is architecture and architecture is war”. The integration of *holes* (provoked by violent actions of destruction) in the architectural process of renovation of the buildings’ façades (e.g. Metelkova, Lx Factory, or even the renowned Die Taschelles, in Berlin) clearly exemplifies the process through which signs of destruction have become fetishistic aestheticised objects. As we have seen, in the cases we have analysed, the fact of maintaining such holes is actually an aesthetic choice, already included in the architectural design planned for each ACS, where the desire to tell the story of past struggles is present. Metelkova Mesto and Lx Factory are two of the most aestheticised ACS that have been observed and analysed in this research, though the reasons for keeping the holes in each case are distinct: political and commercial, respectively. However, both ACS desire to communicate, share their history and some messages with the visitors, and it is through the visual impact and the questions that might arise from the impact of that “image” that the aestheticisation (process) is relevant in the context of this work.

What kind of message could therefore be transmitted? Apart from a call of attention to the violent actions that have occurred on site, there is a second political message that concerns the way of dealing with space itself, which is related with the types of methods and practices that are used. ACS may present concrete examples that show us that finishing details do not have to be standardised and “perfect”, or brand shining and new to create an interesting and welcoming spatial/architectural environment. Local and specific approaches, adapted to each case, prove, furthermore, that other ways of doing architecture exist, and that DIY methods are also valid in the building construction/renovation process. But this research also proves that “raw”, old or “unfinished” finishing details, and ruined or abandoned spatial environments do not only exist in ACS aligned with leftist radical political ideas or artist avant-gardes, being today used to support projects with clear business approaches (like Pensão Amor).

Territory + Destruction

The compilation of fanzines of urban critique “Désurbanism” (2001-2005) came, recently, to offer a curious, critique and subversive overview about the relationship between “urban destruction” and “poetry” (Collectif 2014). As we have seen, many ACS disclose a beautiful “aesthetics of decay”, the one we could say gives to space a certain poetical character. However, ten years have passed since the last of those publications appeared, and the world has suffered major changes

⁵ Destruction as a result of confrontation/clashes between the established power and the “right to the city” movement, scars of the industrial past, negligence/abandonment or real war.

that cannot be ignored. The financial and economic crisis (which can also be considered as a particular kind of war) has turned upside down many of the things we used to take for granted before, and the impact those changes had in the urban realm has been significant. Many of the ongoing large scale urban planning projects have been blocked due to lack of funds, and more than ever “alternative” projects started to rise. This is quite clear in the case of Lisbon where, since 2008, so many ACS have been popping up, following a dispersed, interstitial and fragmented kind of territorial spatial organisation (closer, in fact, to traditional urban models of spatial development). The return to such kinds of traditional spatial logics in the postmodern reality⁶, after the industrialisation process and of the modern movement, could be understood as a contemporary kind of “deconstruction” based on the citizens’ desire of change from the previous urban logics of the last decades, resulting from the laws established by savage capitalism.

Territory + Resistance

The spatial conditions where each cultural project takes place necessarily affect the relationship the ACS have with the territory at several scales (the city, the neighbourhood, the street) in terms of accessibility and visibility (assumed, discreet, close, distant). This way, when analysing the ACS in terms of urban logics of spatial occupation, we must highlight the importance of the *squat movement* in Geneva, the power of the counter-culture in Ljubljana, and the existence of a fragmented and restless network of ACS in Lisbon. The three of them have contributed to propose alternatives to the dominant urban planning model and to the artistic and cultural realm of each city, in their own way, sometimes more expressively, other times discreetly. Nonetheless, the interstitial approach is a constant in all the examples we have seen, present whether in the form of large-scale post-industrial clusters or small-size “invisible” spaces existing in “porous” spatial environments. Interstices are somehow linked to the notion of “temporary spaces”, if we consider these are spaces often devoted to disappear in a near future, victims of the “progress” (which we could consider, particularly under the framework of this research, as the consequence resulting from normalisation and/or urban revitalisation processes). But, even if the “aesthetics of decay” that tend to exist in those interstices may hold a character of resistance and a certain poetical beauty, and if “temporary” spaces look like exciting utopic places open to all possibilities, precariousness should not, however, be accepted as a way of life. Most ACS exist actually under quite precarious conditions, and it should here be noted that those which are more subversive (generally born out of crisis and conflicts) have an important role in what concerns the struggle against social and spatial injustices (not forgetting as well the effects resulting from negligence related with the urban built environment and from administrative or other policies).

⁶ Even if iconic large-scale buildings serving cultural purposes continue to be designed and built, like: the Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology (MAAT, designed by Amanda Leveté) in Lisbon; the Museum of Ethnography of Geneva (designed by Graber Pulver Architekten AG); the project of extension of the Museum of Art and History of Geneva (designed by Jean Nouvel).

Aestheticisation + Compromise

Another question that was asked many times along this research was if an aestheticisation process is necessarily always something negative. From the analysis of some examples, we could get that idea. But other examples show us that the progressive process of aestheticisation of space is also what has allowed the creation of very creative and original environments, highly artistic and subject to intense change (e.g. Metelkova). A second question, that follows the previous one, concerns the aestheticisation process whether being necessarily or not the result of compromise (this compromise, being understood as a negotiation between the users of ACS and the established power, or as the convergence of the multiple desires and tastes of the users and of the entity that has that power). We must agree that both actors of negotiation (the established power and the community/users) necessarily have to reach an agreement about the aesthetics and the transformation of the space in each project. The agreement must even be reached among the users themselves. In this sense, compromise is present and visible through the aesthetics of an ACS, being more clear on those that have lasted a long period of time, and still exist today (e.g. Metelkova Mesto, Usine Kugler). In those ACS that were born under the market logics (e.g. Village Underground Lisbon, Lx Factory, Pensão Amor), the compromise does not really happens in terms of a free dialogue between the users of the space and the mentors of the project, or the authorities, but rather in terms of compliance with the rules of the market.

Resistance + Alternative + Compromise

When the ACS are forced to do some compromises during their lifetime or are born under the market logics, it may happen that a number of the spatial and aesthetic approaches that are taken challenge certain ideologies, existing authoritarian spatial practices or simply acquiescent ways of dealing with the everyday life. As art historian Lauren Rosati explains, even if many alternative spaces are not transgressive nor have political motivations, “their adoption of new models – ephemeral, migratory, conceptual, collaborative – represents a similarly potent political gesture” (Rosati 2012, 41).

As we have seen when defining the main concepts of this dissertation, the “counter-culture” is born from a reaction to a certain established cultural context. In this sense, it looks for an “alternative” to a mainstream (or oppressive) practice. But does it make sense to call “alternative” to the kinds of projects we have analysed? Most of them either have lost their subversive character, or were never born under a protest context. Thus, the art critic Julie Ault has questioned the longevity, viability and marginality of such kinds of spaces and projects already back in 2002 (Rosati 2012, 41). Many actually work today in a kind of a cultural network that is complementary to the mainstream one, this fact being highlighted by Elsa Vivant (2009) when she mentions the fading of the borderline between the “in” and the “off”, the “alternative” and the “established”. In

fact the “alternative” is now seen as “cultural offer(s) among others”⁷, working rather in a kind of symbiotic relationship with the “established”. Also Lauren Rosati, who has analysed the art-spaces of New York in the years 1960-2010, sees the contemporary alternative spaces as “extra-institution”, and no longer as “anti-institutional”. Rosati believes they have not evaporated, but have in fact suffered a transformation, “subsisting in a radically different economic, social, and political context than the alternative spaces of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s” (Rosati 2012, 41). Furthermore, the recent film “Tomorrow” (2015), directed by Cyril Dion et Mélanie Laurent, also suggests that it no longer makes sense to talk about “alternatives” (to the established system), because they actually only make sense when working in parallel. This means that “alternatives” work rather as a complement to a bigger whole, as a kind of “option”, than as a completely different and original way of doing things.

ACS complement, in this sense, the mainstream and larger institutional cultural offer, while contributing to add a proximity character to it (in terms of geography and of social engagement). However, even if the sense of the words “alternative” and “opposition” is today more blurred, ACS continue to have an active role in the revitalisation and transformation of cities and their local cultural life. Furthermore, ACS do not impose ways of doing but instead offer options and, through their architectural approaches and active cultural role in the city, are necessarily political and poetical spaces. Alternative Cultural Spaces, affected by particular histories, locations and general urban and economic contexts, are this way hybrid and complex spaces of culture, creativity and resistance.

We wonder if, and how, ACS will continue to exist in the future. In a world changing faster every day, will ACS - in European cities in 10 years away from now - still make sense as a cultural offer and as convivial meeting places or political debate platforms? What kind of spaces will they use and occupy? What will they look like? And what kind of social and political role will they have?

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⁷ See pp. 58 (chapter 2).

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CURRICULUM VITAE



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Nationality Portuguese
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Education and training

Organisation providing education / Doctoral School / Laboratory **PhD Ès Sciences** (Sep 2011 – Sep 2016)
École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL)
École Doctorale d'Architecture & Sciences de la Ville (EDAR)
Laboratoire de Sociologie Urbaine (LaSUR)
Ecublens – CH-1015 Lausanne, Switzerland

Thesis Title “Resistance & Compromise – Spatial & Aesthetic approaches of Alternative Cultural Spaces in Lisbon, Ljubljana & Geneva”

Supervisor Yves Pedrazzini

Principal subjects/ occupational skills covered Architecture, Urban Sociology – spatial practices, informal architectures, visual aesthetics, alternative culture, urban and cultural politics, urban resistance.

Training in Doctoral School (EPFL) Apprendre la thèse en sciences sociales et en architecture / Architecture et sciences sociales : quelles rencontres? Langages et méthodes + Théories et concepts / La ville, un espace en mouvement / Les méthodes de recherche dans les études urbaines / Penser l'espace : le corps / Quels langages non-verbaux pour penser l'espace ? / Théorie et histoire de l'architecture - Le Corbusier et la Photographie.

Further Additional Training (Switzerland) Residencial Seminar EDAR, Rolle: Architecture and Sciences of the City” : “Quels langages non-verbaux pour penser l'espace?”, 20-23 Jan 2014
Residencial Seminar CUSO, Bossey: “L'écriture scientifique en sciences sociales: de la monographie à la peer review, quels enjeux pour la discussion du savoir?”, 28-29 Nov 2013.
Residencial Seminar CUSO, Bossey: “Les méthodes de recherche dans les études urbaines”, 8-9 Mar 2012.
Course “English Academic Writing for Doctoral Students”, EPFL, 2012.

Junior Lecturer Teaching Urban Sociology (a course within the Master Program in Architecture, with Prof. Luca Pattaroni, 2012/13).
Territory and Society (a course within the Master Program in Architecture, with Prof. Yves Pedrazzini, Barbara Tirone e Kaj Noschis, 2013/14, 2014/15)
The City: A moving space (a course EDAR LaSUR, 2015/16).

<i>Papers in books (in the context of the Doctorate)</i>	<p>L. Cabeçadas Do Carmo, Y. Pedrazzini, "Flâner with Walter Benjamin's ghost in the alternative cultural spaces of Lisbon", in the International Conference proceedings <i>Flâneur – New Urban Narratives</i>, Lisbon (May 2016).</p> <p>Y. Pedrazzini, L. Cabeçadas Do Carmo and M. Reitz, "[Heroic] Figures of Urbanity, 'Creativists' and Travellers: New (post)heroes in Town", in V. Kaufmann (ed.), <i>Translating the City: Interdisciplinarity in urban studies</i>, Lausanne / Oxford / New York: EPFL Press and Routledge, p. 163-183, 2015.</p>
<i>Papers in periodics (in the context of the Doctorate)</i>	<p>L. Cabeçadas Do Carmo, L. Pattaroni, M.-S. Piraud and Y. Pedrazzini. "Creativity without critique: An inquiry into the aestheticization of the alternative culture", in <i>Lisbon Street Art and Urban Creativity - 2014 International Conference</i>, p. 274-281, 2014.</p> <p>L. Cabeçadas Do Carmo. "Urban Movements in Lisbon's Crisis Environment", in <i>Resourceful Cities (Autonomous urban movements: socio-spatial structures and political impacts)</i>, Humboldt-University Berlin, Institute for Social Science, Dept. for Urban and Regional Sociology, 2013.</p>
<i>Oral work presentations (in the context of the Doctorate)</i>	<p>L. Cabeçadas Do Carmo and M.-S. Piraud. <i>Creative Cities and Counter-culture - Learning from Lisbon and Geneva</i>. Sociologie urbaine - Cours de master en architecture (L. Pattaroni), EPFL, Lausanne, Switzerland, Nov 2015.</p> <p><i>Flânerie in the alternative cultural spaces of Lisbon</i>. International Conference Flâneur New Urban Narratives, São Luiz Theatre, Lisbon, Portugal, May 2015.</p> <p>L. Cabeçadas Do Carmo, L. Pattaroni and M.-S. Piraud. <i>Genève et Lisbonne : enjeux théoriques et méthodologiques d'une enquête sur la question culturelle en régime de "ville créative"</i>. Public Seminar - MICM-arc Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Brussels, Belgium, Nov 2014.</p> <p>L. Cabeçadas Do Carmo and M.-S. Piraud. <i>Creativity without critique: An inquiry into the aestheticization of alternative culture</i>. Lisbon Street Art & Urban Creativity International Conference, Lisbon, Portugal, 2014.</p> <p>L. Pattaroni, Y. Pedrazzini, L. Cabeçadas Do Carmo, M.-S. Piraud and A. Estevens et al. <i>Cidade, arte e política. A produção comum do espaço</i>. Debate UNIPOP e revista imprópria, Núcleo de Lisboa da Associação José Afonso, Lisbon, Portugal, Jun 2014.</p> <p><i>A Reciclagem Crítica e a Crítica da Reciclagem: Estéticas e Espaços Culturais Híbridos</i>, Pannel: Espaços, no "Primeiro Congresso Pensamento Crítico Contemporâneo", organized by Unipop in Fábrica de Braço de Prata, Lisbon, 14-15 Dec 2013.</p> <p><i>Urban Movements in Lisbon's Crisis Environment</i>, Panel "Autonomous urban movements: socio-spatial structures and political impacts" in the conference "Resourceful Cities", held at Humboldt-University Berlin (DE), Institute for Social Science, Dept. for Urban and Regional Sociology, 29-31 Aug 2013.</p> <p><i>Junkspace & Punkspace</i>, included in the course "La ville, un espace en mouvement", École Doctorale en Architecture (EDAR) de l'EPFL, directed by Prof. Y. Pedrazzini, Mar 2013, Apr 2014, Oct 2015.</p> <p><i>L'esthétisation de la culture alternative</i>, included in the Course "Sociologie Urbaine", EPFL Master Program of Architecture, directed by Prof. L. Pattaroni, Nov 2012, 2013, 2014.</p> <p><i>The Alternative Cultural Life of Lisbon: two case-studies</i>. Les méthodes de recherche dans les études urbaines, Bossey, Switzerland, 2012.</p>
<i>Artistic installations and performances</i>	<p>L. Cabeçadas Do Carmo and M.-S. Piraud. <i>Spaces in Times 12 - Bureau des doléances de la ville capitaliste</i>. BIG - Biennale des espaces d'art indépendants, Plaine de Plainpalais, Geneva, 2015.</p>

Practical professional experience in architecture offices

Apr 2011 – May 2012

Name and address of employer

Collaboration in the following projects (Switzerland)

Architect

ACarré SA

Rue de l'Industrie, 59, Bussigny-près-Lausanne, Suíça

Preliminary Project Design and Terms of Reference for a Hotel and Apart-Hotel in St.Aubin, Neuchâtel / Preliminary Project Design and Execution Details for an Apart-Hotel in Alger [Algeria] / Preliminary Study for a Chalet in Corbeyrier, Vaud ; idem for a Villa in Thailand / Preliminary Study for an Extension of a Farm in Ecublens, Vaud; idem for an Extension of two Villas in St Sulpice and for residential buildings in Montcherand.

Apr - Nov 2011

Jun - Dec 2010

Name and address of employer

Collaboration in the following projects

Independente Architect

Rehabilitation project of an apartment and reconversion from office (sound studio) to housing, Campo de Ourique, Lisbon, Portugal

Architect / researcher

fabric | ch - Architecture, interaction & research

Rue de Langallerie, 6, 1003 Lausanne, Suíça (www.fabric.ch)

Paranoid Shelter, scenic installation - a critic to global surveillance systems. *Arctic Window*, art installation, MIMI Festival, Islands Friuli, Marseille - a critic to global warming. *Deterritorialized house* - experimental architectural project promoting virtual mobility through information global networks.

Nov 2008 - Jan 2010

Name and address of employer

Collaboration in the following projects (Switzerland)

Architect / intern

WAS - Widmer Architectes Sàrl

Avenue Dapples 17, 1006 Lausanne, Suisse.

Details (1/50, 1/20, 1/10, 1/5, 1/2, 1/1) for a rehabilitation of a housing block at Préverenges, for a small annex in Lausanne and for the Cantonal Administration Office in Moudon / Study of colors for the façades of several buildings / Hospital of Nyon: Feasibility study and preliminary project design for the transformation of a Medical Imaging system; Development of a Master Plan for 2030; Terms of Reference for a heliport and a car parking Tendering: military canteen and offices at St Maurice (3rd prize); Gymnastics Pavilion in Béthusy, Lausanne; transformation and extension of the Fribourg Cantonal University Library / Organisation of Parallel Studies: Control of surfaces and volumes, and calculation of ratios for evaluating projects in architectural tendering process.

Apr - Aug 2008

Name and address of employer

Collaboration in the following projects (Portugal)

Architect - intern

ASG, Lda - António Santos Gomes arquitectos

Rua Maria Pia, lote 3, loja 1. 1300 Lisbonne, Portugal

Foundation Lapa do Lobo - Feasibility Study, Preliminary Project Design and Terms of Reference for the rehabilitation of a medieval house and extension of an auditorium in Lapa do Lobo / Details of execution: Accessibility project for insertion of escalators and ramps in the Municipal Market of Faro, Portugal; Closet for a housing apartment in Lisbon / Master Plan of the housing neighbourhood for the workers of the new supply market in Huambo [Angola].

Education and formation (2)

	Master in Architecture (Sep 2001 - Jun 2008) (Portuguese <i>Ordem dos Arquitectos</i> ; member nr. 18269) <i>Thesis Title</i> "Acessibilidade e Revitalização em Centros Históricos" (16/20) <i>Supervision</i> João Vieira Caldas and Francisco Teixeira Bastos. <i>Final Project</i> "Mechanical pedestrian pathway between Lisbon downtown and the Castle of São Jorge, in Lisbon, Portugal – revitalization and new project for the pathway named 'Baixa-Castelo', through the improvement of accessibility and revitalization of buildings and public spaces", dir.Prof. Arq. Manuel Salgado (15/20). <i>Other projects developed during the bachelor and master (Portugal)</i> Housing in Restelo, Lisbon, Portugal. Professor Manuel Vicente / Student Dormitory, Porto Brandão; Master Plan, Conde Barão, Lisbon, Portugal. Professor António Barreiros Ferreira / Kiosk-Library in Bela Vista Park, Lisbon, Portugal. Professor Teresa Heitor / Multi-functional space for the Student's Association Pavilion of Instituto Superior Técnico. <i>Organisation providing education and training</i> Instituto Superior Técnico (IST) - Universidade Técnica de Lisboa Av. Rovisco Pais 1049-001 Lisboa, Portugal. Sócrates-Erasmus (Sep 2005 - Jun 2006) <i>Principal subjects/ occupational skills covered</i> Congress Centre in Bled, Slovenia. Professor Vojteh Ravnikar. Classification: 10 out of 10; Design Studio, Light and Lighting in Architecture, Space and Media, Architectural Sketching, Graphics for Architects. <i>Organisation providing education and training</i> Fakulteta za Arhitekturo, Univerza v Ljubljani, Ljubljana, Slovenia.
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Languages

<i>Mother Tongue</i>	Portuguese	<i>Proficiency</i>	English and French
<i>Good Knowledge</i>	Italian and Spanish	<i>Basic Notions</i>	German, Slovenian, Russian

Photography

Portfolio (www.flickr.com/photos/letsletslets + web.ist.utl.pt/leticacarmo/en/fotos/index.html).
Collaboration with Metéo Lausanne, section 'photographes' (www.meteolausanne.com/).
Photography Exhibition, Centre Culturel Pôle-Sud in Lausanne, May 2011 (www.polesud.ch/).

Computer skills

Microsoft Office [Word, Power Point, Excel, Movie Maker], Adobe [PhotoShop, InDesign], Autocad, Microsoft / Final Cut Pro, PinnacleStudio, SketchUp, InDesign, Dreamweaver, Microsoft Office [FrontPage], GifAnimator / Design of my personal website (<http://web.ist.utl.pt/leticacarmo/>).

Other skills and competences

Workshop "The Institute of Radical Spatial Education", com Tatjana Schneider, Jeremy Till e Nishat Awan, Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa, MUDE, 2013.

Audiovisual course: modules of sound, image and post-production (editing), coordinated by Amina Djahnine and Jean-Luc Rochat, Lausanne, 2011.

Drawing courses: Architectural Sketching, oriented by Prof. Marjan Ocvirk, Italy, 2006 / Pre-Colombian Drawing Workshop, oriented by Diniz Conefrey, Ethnological Museum, Lisbon, 2007 / Human body (live model) - oriented by Prof. Sculptor Quintino Sebastião, National Society of Fine Arts, Lisbon, 2004.

Puppet Theatre "Commhumus": direction, staging, confection of the puppets and participation; with Sara Porporato, Andrea Cerreta and Nicolo Marchesi. BIG - Biennale des espaces d'art indépendants, Plaine de Plainpalais, Geneva, Switzerland, 2015 / Polyssons theatre group, at EPFL, Lausanne: Le cerveau - directed by Antonio Llana.

Danse (Rock'n'Roll, Salsa, European Traditional Dances [Folk], Contemporaneous Danse, Lindy Hop, Forró, Tango).

Collaboration in Festival de la Cité of Lausanne and Cully Jazz, welcoming the artists.

ANNEX I

List of interviews - Lisbon

who	expertise / fonction	ACS related	when	by whom	where	recorded
José Pinho	manager/director of Ler Devagar	Livraria Ler Devagar, LxFactory	Jan 2012	LC	Livraria Ler Devagar, LxFactory	no
Pedro Fidalgo	studied circus at Chapatô. Mentor of the project	Bacalhoeiro	Jan 2013	LC	Casa das Bifanas, Baixa	yes (+/-)
Nuno Nabais	Professor Of Philosophy	Fábrica do Braço de Prata	Jan 2013	LC	Fábrica do Braço de Prata	yes
Patrícia Craveiro Lopes	president of Casa Independente	Casa Independente	Jan 2013	LC	Casa Independente	yes (+/-)
Liliana Escalhão	artist	Primeiro Andar	Jan 2013	LC	Primeiro Andar	no (informal talk)
Vânia Rovisco	contemporary dancer and choreographer of MicaMoca (Berlin)	Galeria da Boavista, Demimonde – Ora bolas há espaço, vamos usá-lo!	Jan 2013	LC	Café A Brasileira, Chiado	no
Eduarda Dionísio	translator (Romanic Philology)	Casa da Achada, Abril em Maio	Jan 2013	LC	Casa da Achada	no
Catarina Ribeiro	contemporary dancer	SOU (Forno do Tijolo)	Jan 2013	LC	SOU (Forno do Tijolo, Anjos)	no (informal talk)
Natxo Checa	Head Curator Visual Arts	ZDB (Zé dos Bois)	Jan 2013	LC	ZDB	no
Bruno Caracol	artist	RDA69, Prédio dos Anjos, Casa do Vapor, Hortas	Jan 2013	LC	RDA69 + Laboratório Galeria	no (informal talk)
Tiago Carvalho	Environmental engineer + bicycle's repairman	RDA69 - Cicloficina dos Anjos	Jan 2013	LC	RDA69	no (informal talk)
Joana Grilo	architect at Artéria	Mouradia, DNA	Nov 2013	LC	Atelier Artéria, Ground Floor, Baixa	yes
Susana Soares	art historian, organiser of the Ground Sessions	several	Nov 2013	LC	Atelier Artéria, Ground Floor, Baixa	yes
Corleone & Kruella de l'Enffer	artists, illustrators, graffitis	Village Underground, Lx Factory, Central Station, Tour13, etc	Nov 2013	LC	Café Tati, Cais do Sodré	yes
João Guimarães	cultural manager of Praga theater company	DNA	Nov 2013	LC	Escola das Gaivotas	yes
Joana Gomes	architect at Mainside	LxFactory, Pensão Amor, Hospital do Desterro	Nov 2013	LC	Pensão Amor	yes
(barman)	barman	Sol&Pesca, Cais do Sodré	Oct 2013	LC	Sol e Pesca, Cais do Sodré	no (informal talk)
Sara Eugénio	Street art & the art market in Portugal	GAU, DNA	Dec 2013	LC, MP	miradouro São Pedro de Alcântara e Cç da Glória (GAU)	yes
Vítor Matias Ferreira	Sociologist and historian of Lisbon	Lisbon city	Dec 2013	LC, MP	VMF's home, Graça	yes
Tiago Avó	PREC's cultural production after 1974s revolution	ACS of the revolution	Jan 2014	LC, MP	Évora	yes
Mariana Duarte Silva	manager	Lisbon Village Underground	Jun 2014	C4	Village Underground	no (informal talk)
João Pestana	mentor of the project and part of Assembleia Popular de Algés	Fábrica de Alternativas de Algés	Jun 2014	LC	Fábrica de Alternativas de Algés	no (informal talk)
Mónica Almeida	working at EGEAC	EGEAC, festas de Lisboa	Jun 2014	LC, MP	EGEAC, Palácio Marquês de Tancos	yes
Sandra Vieira Jürgens	Art historian, critic and curator	Kunsthalle Lissabon, Parkour, 211, Salão Olímpico, Pêssego pr'á semana...	Aug 2014	LC	Pastelaria Scolinha, Chiado	no
Helena Barnowsky	RDA69's vice-president	RDA69, Gaia	Aug 2014	LC	RDA69	no (informal talk)
Sérgio	conservator-restorer of tiles	EKA palace	Nov 2014	LC	EKA Palace	no (informal talk)
Marta Silva	contemporary dancer	SOU (Largo Residências)	Jan 2015	LC	SOU (Café-Estúdio do Largo do Intendente)	no
Ana Francisca Aires	architect	Festival ManPower, Rua do Poço dos Negros	Dez 2014	LC	Café Tati, Cais do Sodré	no
António Brito Guterres	social assistant, Aga Khan coordinator, researcher	Kasa Enkantada, peripheral Lisbon's neighbourhoods	Jan 2015	LC	Arroios, Vale da Curraleira	no (informal talk)
Ana Feijão	landscape architect	Mob, Atelier Artéria	Jul 2015	LC / MP	Largo do Intendente	yes
Marta	bar attendant	Crew Hassan	Nov 2015	HC	Crew Hassan bar	no (informal talk)

Ground Sessions			
#	ACS	Participants	Commentators
1	Braço de Prata	Nuno Nabais	Sandra Vieira Jurgens - historian, art critic and director of the journal "Arte Capital" José Capela – architect, stage designer and artistic director in Companhia de Teatro "A mala Voadora"
	DNA	João Guimarães	
	Carpe Diem	Lourenço Egreja	
	Projecto Remix	Ângelo Campota	
2	IN Mouraria [GAT], Geraldine Lisboa, Panteras Rosa, P28		António José Albuquerque (psychiatrist), Raquel Freire (screenwriter / director / producer)
3	Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude Associação Nacional de Futebol de Rua Centro Artístico do Vale da Amoreira SFRAA - Sociedade Filarmónica de Apoio Social e Recreio Artístico da Amadora		Isabel Guerra (sociologist / Professor at ISCTE) Isabel Raposo (architect / Associate Professor at FAUL)
4	FABLAB Lisboa	Bernardo Gaeiras	António Câmara (CEO at Y-dreams / Professor at FCT-UNL) Miguel Muñoz Duarte (Chief inspiration officer at iMatch)
	LX Factory	Filipa Baptista	
	Mercado de Fusão	Isabel Raposo	
	Quiosque de Refresco	João Regal	
5	Zé dos Bois	Marta Furtado	Delfim Sardo (prof, curator, essayist) Luís Santiago Baptista (architect, critic, director of journal ARQ/A)
	Pensão Amor	Filipa Baptista	
	SOU Largo Residências	Marta Silva	
6	Associação Renovar a Mouraria	Filipa Bolotinha	António Henriques (journalist) Tiago Mota Saraiva (architect at Ateliermob).
	Botequim da Graça	Hugo Costa	
	Cozinha Popular da Mouraria	Adriana Freire	
7	Casa Conveniente	Mónica Calle	Pedro Campos Costa (architect)
	Casa Independente	Joana Nóbrega and Patrícia Craveiro Lopes	
	HotClub	Inês Cunha	
	MusicBox	Gonçalo Ricardo	
8	CrewHassan	Renato Rodrigues	Pedro Lévi Bismark (architect, director of revista Punkto - Porto) Ricardo Gomes (architect at Y - Berlin) Fernando Ramalho (Unipop)
	Mob	Ana Feijão	
	Bacalhoeiro	Pedro Fidalgo	

[Available at: <http://archive.radiozero.pt/groundsessions.xml>]

Ground Floor (Atelier Artéria, Rua Dos Douradores, Baixa)

(organised and debate oriented by: Ana Jara, Lucinda Correia, Joana Grilo, Susana Soares)

Trienal De Arquitectura De Lisboa, Oct-Nov 2013

< Non-exhaustive list

LC: Leticia Carmo / MP: Mischa Piraud / C4: Creative Cities and Counter Culture group of research / HC: Helena Cabeçadas

LISBON

A few interviews made during this research about the Ljubljana's ACS have been selected. Also a selection of the main questions that were asked during these interviews – made between 2011-2015 – follows in the next lines. Due to the agreed terms of confidentiality, the answers are not published below, but the main lines of the discussion are here exposed in order to allow the reader to understand how I built the stories of each case study and the general contexts of each city.

A FEW MAIN QUESTIONS ABOUT FÁBRICA DO BRAÇO DE PRATA

To Nuno Nabais

What is the story of this place? When was this building built? When did the project open to the public? What has been happening meanwhile? Did the economic crisis and the austerity measures affect the project? Did the huge success this project had in the beginning slow down meanwhile?

How is the project financed? Do you depend on someone, some institution? To whom do you rent your rooms? Under the frame of any particular kind of events? How much does it cost to rent a room per night? And the whole building?

Is the cultural programme flexible? Do artists who come here to perform or expose get payed? Where does the money come from?

Were there architects involved in the spatial transformation/renovation of this space? Who did it? What did you change? What are these holes on the roof? Do these holes give a certain charm to the space, you think? You once said: "People come here and are faced with beauty, because here everything is illegal." What is the relationship between 'beauty' and 'illegality'? In which sense is 'beauty' more beautiful just because it is illegal? Do these 'illegalities' contribute to define your identity? The fact of having this specific aesthetics, does it attract a particular kind of public? Do you wish to have the most varied public? Or do you select your public?

What is the relationship and the difference between BP and LXF?

Is this project identified with some particular political wing? Do the artists who come here also feel rather identified with a particular political tendency?

Do you think this is an ACS? What means 'alternative' to you?

A FEW MAIN QUESTIONS ABOUT LER DEVAGAR, LX FACTORY, PENSÃO AMOR

To José Pinho

Your bookshops are related with many of the cultural projects and spaces I am studying, like LXF and PA, or even BP or ZDB. Were you also involved in the creation of such ACS? Did you have some role or influence on the renovation and rehabilitation of these buildings? Can you tell me a bit more of your experience on each of these spaces? Do you see them as 'alternative' cultural projects? Do you collaborate because you share the same kinds of ideals/ideas, or just because the opportunity of renting such spaces, or participating with these particular projects, came on?

All the spaces you use are actually reused. All of them hosted some other function in the past. Are you concerned with the revitalisation of the built heritage of the city? What led you to keep the big printer machine on site at the warehouse at LXF? Hard to remove? Useful as the structure of the different levels? An aesthetic choice related with the desire of creating a particular kind of spatial ambiance? Was that machine a decisive element, when you chose to rent that space? Or was rather the value of the rent that contributed to define your choice? Do those traces of the industrial past work as surplus-value elements to attract visitors?

Do you have some target public in your bookshops? Is that the same public that frequents LXF, BP or PA in general, for instance, or is it independent?

What is the status of *Ler Devagar*? What is its main concept?

Had you to do some renovation works, or any kind of spatial transformation in order to make the buildings more comfortable, accessible or safe? Did you collaborate with some architects? Can we say that the main spatial transformations of *Ler Devagar* at LXF are basically given by the use of a particular furniture, shelves covered with endless books, and other particular kinds of objects? Is that related to economic constraints?

Did you ever have some financial support from CML, the State or company? How is your association supported economically?

What are your opening schedules? Do they depend on the ACS' own opening schedules? Why this late-evening preferences?

A FEW MAIN QUESTIONS ABOUT MOB

To Ana Feijão

What is the story of this project? Through how many spaces did you pass, how many spaces did you use? Who are “you”? What is your relationship with Crew Hassan? Who are the “Precários Inflexíveis”? What is the particularity of your project when comparing with other ACS?

You organise political debates and meetings to organise a few demonstrations... who do you invite to come here to talk, and what kinds of groups do you welcome in your space? Do they all have some kind of a political engagement? Do you propose the cultural/political programme of the space or others can also propose?

When did your space in Bairro Alto open? How did you find this place? What was the former use of that place? Did you transform the space in order to be able to host your project in there? What kinds of modifications did you do? Who did those works?

Why did you move to Intendente? What used to be this space before you moved in? Why do you have a library? What are your opening schedules?

How was your relationship with the neighbourhood at Bairro Alto? And how is it now at Intendente? The relationship with the neighbours, the police, the drunken people, the prostitutes, the drug dealers, the other ACS and the other bars...? Do you use the square of Intendente?

How much did you pay and how much do you pay for your space(s)? What is the rent of each place?

Do you pay your employees? Why militant work?

Who is your public? People from the surrounding area or rather those with a closer political affinity with you? Is your public rather created through word-of-mouth? Through a network of friends of friends?

How do you finance the project? With the money coming from the bar? The quotes of the associates?

A FEW MAIN QUESTIONS ABOUT SOU

To Marta Silva

What is the story of your association SOU? Since when do you exist? What was like the first space you used? How is/ was your relationship with the people from the neighbourhood and the others? What changed, in this relationship, when you moved from a ground-floor small venue to a bigger underground space? Before you moved in, what was the use of this basement?

What is the new project of yours, the Largo-Residências? What kinds of projects do you propose, and what kinds of projects you welcome? What is your relationship with Companhia Limitada? What kinds of “residencies” you propose? To artists? To tourists? Do you choose somehow the people you host? If so, why, how?

Are you an association or a cooperative?

What came first in your project: the artistic formation or the cultural programme? How did the economic crisis affect your project and activities? Is that linked to this third project located in Largo do Intendente? How did you find this new space? Why did your project change so much since you moved here?

How do you finance you project? Do you have any subsidies or do you manage to assure the expenses just with the income from the bar and the hotel? What was the importance of BIPZIP under this context?

What spatial transformations did you do in this building? Considering you are dancers, how did you define your new aims and priorities when moving here? Where are you practicing now, since you have no dancing studios in this building? Why did you have to quit the other underground space? With whom, or with which associations, local partners, do you collaborate today? Do they lend you their rooms? Why? Do they use yours? What are those collaborations like?

What is your relationship with Casa Independente? And with Casa dos Amigos do Minho?

Did you collaborate with some architects to do the renovation works of this building?

How is the ‘zone’ of Intendente evolving these last years? What main transformations have been occurring since you moved here, and since the ‘revitalisation’ process started to happen? How do you deal or welcome the previous local people in your activities and projects?

In what concerns the spectacle “LIS+BÚ”: how did you choose and find the spaces where this performance occurred?

A FEW MAIN QUESTIONS ABOUT MOURADIA, DNA, ARTÉRIA

To Joana Grilo and Susana Soares

What kind of association is yours, more concretely? What are the main goals of your association? What is the advantage of being an 'association', as an architecture office?

Your 'manifesto', when designing the project for Mouradia, pretended to demonstrate that it is not cheaper to destroy and build again something new, but that it can also be as cheap to renovate old buildings. One of the particularities of this 'manifesto' is the fact that the construction materials were basically given to you for free. How did you manage to have these free construction materials? Could you choose somehow the ones you preferred? What was the counterpart of having this privilege? Did you have to mention the name of the companies who gave you the materials, make publicity of them? Did the available materials constrain the initial idea you had for this project? What other constraints did you have? Did you manage to have some design freedom in the conception of the project? Or is the building as it is today rather the result of many imposed conditions?

Was your work, as architects, financed? How? Was Bip/Zip funding enough to cover the expenses of your work? How long did this funding last?

In which sense did you collaborate with the neighbourhood association? How? And do you continue to collaborate with Mouradia today?

Why did you decide to organise these Ground Sessions? Who selected these projects and spaces and who invited these particular speakers? Did you organise each session according to a particular theme? How did you group the several cases? (#1 cultural/artistic; #2 health; #3 peripheries; #4 business; #5 nightlife/performative; #6 social/territory; #7 nightlife/music; #8 politics/resistance).

A FEW MAIN QUESTIONS ABOUT MAINSIDE, PENSÃO AMOR, LX FACTORY, HOSPITAL DO DESTERRO

To Joana Gomes

Who is part of the team of architects of Mainside? When did Mainside start? Who is heading it?

Is Mainside focused mainly on urban rehabilitation? And also particularly in the industrial heritage? What kind of investment do you do in terms of construction and renovation works?

When did you start to be interested on this component of art and street art? What is attractive for you in this kind of aesthetics? Why do you create specific ambiances – cosy, underground, etc? What is the relationship between the street art and the industrial environment, according to you? What is the role of graffiti in LXF? Why did you choose to represent underground characters through street art on the walls of the staircase of PA? Does street art make easier the reference to such kind of environments? Does it bring comfort to the visitors? Does it attract them?

Do you have some kind of target public? Do you prevent some people from entering in your venues? What kind of companies do you host? Mainly creative-oriented ones?

Do you give some directives or suggestions to the companies that rent your spaces, in terms of spatial transformation and the creation of ambiances? Can those companies adapt the spaces to their needs and desires? Do you control the changes they make? Can you agree or disagree with their ideas?

Did you decide to divide the open space of LXF (main building)? Why did you do it? What is the concept behind the design of each floor? And the one behind the common spaces (corridors, street, stairs, etc.)?

What happened to the project Alcântara XXI? Wasn't your project at LXF supposed to be temporary? What is the relationship you have with the neighbourhood?

How do you see your projects? As successful ones? Would they be as successful 15 ago, for instance? Or was it a matter of opportunity linked to the present time situation? In which sense did the factory "crisis" influence Mainside's way of acting?

Do you establish any connections, or are you part of any network of cultural spaces or creative industries in the city, in the country, or in the world? Did the Lisbon Cowork project start at LXF?

Do you think you have influenced in some way the urban and cultural strategies that the CML has been using lately in the city?

For how much do you rent the spaces? Has there been an evolution of the space/m² along time? Who rent your spaces? Portuguese or foreigners?

What is your relationship with the CML? Do they support you? If so, how?

What is the relationship your projects establish with the surrounding territory? The impact they had in Cais do Sodré, for instance? Who had the idea of painting the street in pink? Why? With whom did you collaborate to do this action? Did the old bars existing on site agree? What changes did that provoke, in terms of clients and public? What else changed? Did CML participate also? Who financed/sponsored those changes in the street? Are those MUPIS some kind of a street art gallery? Is Absolut Vodka running them? Does Absolut also sponsor the painting on the floor? Why did the bars start to put barriers around their terraces?

I remember, the day PA opened, you had problems with the floor, because so many people came that it started to

move more than you expected. Did you do some works to keep it more stable? Is the security guard at the door controlling the number of people that enter in the room? Do you have a maximum number of people that are allowed to be inside? And is the space prepared with fire extinguishers and all the necessary to prevent fires? Is PA a bar? Or a concert hall? Is your aim to make profit out of the income coming from the bar, in order to sponsor somehow the music artists? Who invited the artists to paint the staircase of PA? Do you have some art curator?

*

GROUND SESSIONS

INTRODUCTION

By Artéria (Ana Jara / Lucinda Correia):

(...) This Architecture Triennale project of “Novos Públicos” Program is, within the Triennale, the one that is intended to expose architecture and open talk about architecture to a general public. (...) Because the architecture is also an issue that concerns everyone (...).

(...) For us, as architects, it is very important to listen, to talk and speak. (...)

This Ground Floor Act (...) is a Public Office, during the daytime, so here projects are being designed to the general public and in front of it, developing an architectural project called the DNA-Lisbon (...) we are all pleased to welcome everyone to participate, to ask questions, and let them observe a process while it is being developed.

(...) we have every Thursday these Ground Sessions where we want to talk about architecture – an architecture that takes place in the city and, in a way, has not yet been declared as architecture, because it is not that visible, it is not an architectural project in the classical sense (...).

(...) we believe that, in a certain way, these projects that activated certain areas of the city, and which contributed to build the city in various and different ways, and through different dimensions – social, cultural and political –, are interventions that have been made under the field of architecture. These are transforming actions, and we want to discuss them (...).

These Ground Session propose a space for dialogue; they are talks between architects and non-architects (...).

(...) in these talks we looking for answers. We ask the mentors of some of the projects that activated Lisbon – socially, politically, culturally and architecturally – in the recent years, to tell us the stories of the processes, the relationship between projects and the surrounding areas, and we try also to discuss the way people have designed their projects and their spaces.

In this session we have x projects (...) that have something in common (...). Most are located in historic neighbourhoods (...) and use the advantages of that situation (...). These projects watch the transformation of the place.

(...) We invited to this session x commentators and asked them to give us, at the end of the presentations, a bit of their personal thoughts under the framework of their profession and personal environments, in order to build links between the narratives that are here presented, since they have been chosen for having common characteristics.

SOME QUESTIONS

How did you implement the project?

What problems did you find?

What is the place of architecture in this process?

The big issue: transform or not to transform?

How to rehabilitate in a simple way?

Who did the transformation work?

And if there was not Bip/Zip? How to act?

*Will there be the possibility of these spaces to institutionalise?
What is the relationship with the territory?
Is this a space of resistance or of democracy?
Is it part of the gentrification process in the neighbourhood?
Do they compete or collaborate?*

SOME ANSWERS

#1

Carpe Diem: Walls that do not have 90°C, bent groundfloor () no white cube () site-specific () a curatorial and educative project.

Braço de Prata: ...the old factory (...) was bought by a real estate company, to build a big luxury gated community (...) incompatibilities between that project and the director municipal plan (...) abandoned (...) use the space meanwhile (...) that is why our intervention was not very deep: we just put some Wall, painted them, repaired the roof (...) we had no leasing contract (...) this is an illegal space.

DNA: A public contest (...) the first relationship with the building (...) no charm, dirty (...) some potential. (...) We do not want to change the space, we want to host (...) a project that includes the community (...) that contributes for social cohesion and hosts pertinent artistic projects.

#5

ZDB: We passed through 4 different spaces (...) The recovery of the building where we are installed today was gradual (...). We started by cleaning (...), we tried to keep the original character (...). The works we have done are adapted to the use we give to the space. The bar generates revenue to help the association. (...) Before, we thought about soundproofing the concert hall for the sake of neighbours, not to bother them. Now we resort to soundproofing because the street noise is too much!

SOU: The basement has become a sort of space dedicated to neighbourhood culture (...) We have developed the activities according to the demand and need of people (...). it started to be affected by the crisis (...). [In Largo do Intendente] we wanted to contribute to the rehabilitation of the neighbourhood and to the control the gentrification. (...) which walls can be knocked down? Almost none. (...) The ground floor is a commercial space (...) The furniture we use is all almost recycled.

Pensão Amor: Rooms for services payed per hour (...). We grabbed this concept and have transformed the negative part of it into something positive (...). Show the whole history of the building (...). It is mainly a decoration work (we are – Mainside – a firm of architects and civil engineers).

#6

Mouradia: As a convivial place it is very important since it welcomes 'insiders' and 'outsiders' from Mouraria.

Botequim: The clients helped to shape the emblematic of the space.

Cozinha Popular da Mouraria: One cannot plan anything (...) it seems that everything has to be spontaneous! (...) It is a mix of young and old people, dealers, everyone! Without Bip/Zip today this kitchen would not exist.

#7

Casa Independente: The concept was (...) to do a contemporary 'Grémio'.

Music Box: We try to be independent of subsidies (...). Texas [bar] had to be destroyed (...) it is the show, it is the disco, and not the decoration of the space that will be noticed. The space is a "hole", ready to receive the content.

Hot Club: There was this fire (...) no institutional support (...). Aires Mateus made the project (...). We have IKEA chairs rather than sofas (...) there is no money.

Casa Conveniente: Cais do Sodré no longer makes sense to me (...). We went looking for marginal areas in the centre (...). We appropriated each space every time we had to transform it. The works were made by the actors themselves and not by architects (...). [We had] floods (...) [so we made] a performance in the water (...). Today it is no longer possible to break barriers in Cais do Sodré, which is increasingly more standardised (...). For me it makes sense (...) the appropriation of the place, to create scenographies (...).

#8

Bacalhoeiro: *The project is tiring (...) It is not a profitable project (...) Before we used to have subsidies (...) today we are just a bar and a concert hall (but there is a subversive nature. It is an alternative project (...)) Our line is mainly artistic, not political.*

Crew Hassan: *A space of ideas, non-commercial, a project of quality. The model was a cultural cooperative (...) that was a mistake because we were paying a lot of taxes. (...) Sometimes it seemed a space of several conspiracies! (...) the model was the squat! (...) on foot on ideology, another one in legality (...) We always refused the concept of 'alternative cultural space' because we are an 'option'. (...) 'Alternative' is a label (...) they invented to normalise, frame, rule (...) We never accepted volunteering work at the bar, we always pay well, and are proud of it.*

Mob: *An association to fight precariousness (...) We are an associative space, politicised and social; a meeting point for activists and not only (...) we have alternative culture, non-commercial nor mainstream (...) These kinds of space have to live a lot from militant work.*

SOME COMMENTS

#1

Sandra Jürgens: *These projects arose a bit against the institutions and galleries and museums (...) always very multi-disciplinary space – theatre, dance, plastic arts (...) These spaces helped to change the (artistic) creation itself, the production become more informal (...). In Portugal, in Lisbon is happening (...) not something organised (...) different typologies, different communities (...) the network (...) so often informal (...) not a vertical hierarchy, but much more horizontal.*

José Capela: *Not an anonymous architecture (...) the images [you have shown here] do not transmit that (...) A strategy close to the ready-made.*

Ana Jara: *The available place (...). A pre-existent architecture, which 'overflows' to the territory (...) How did architecture did not yet abandoned aesthetics?*

#5

Mouradia: *[The aim was to] Solve a solution, not [to do] an authorial imprint.*

Ana Jara: *The relationship of architecture with illegality is curious.*

Lucinda Correia: *Architecture is a social science.*

Marta Silva: *[The process] goes through a deep knowledge of the neighbourhood.*

#6

Tiago Saraiva: *Before the concept of sustainability was "green"! Now it is "economic". But it should also be social!*

António Henriques: *Your projects have three characteristics: Invisibility (abandoned spaces in urban interstices), community (neighbourhood, meeting), democracy (exchange of expertise).*

#7

Pedro Costa: *These projects accept the elements [around].*

#8

Pedro Bismark: *These are spaces of resistance, they disturb a certain political regime, that is aesthetic (...). Is it possible to transform this resistance into a didactic thing? How to make a collective of these islands (...) in a moment of crisis? (...) The forms of democracy are a bit stagnated, resistance also... it is pacified, controlled. How to create, through these spaces, an operative resistance? In which sense architecture has something to do with it? All and nothing. (...) It has a political and a social responsibility. (...) not to delimit a function for a specific space gives freedom, richness.*

Ricardo Gomes: *The temporary existence of these projects (...). Leisure is an essential component of your projects. (...) Militant work is fantastic, but it leads to exhaustion.*

List of interviews - Ljubljana

who	expertise	ACS related	when	by whom	where	recorded
Ida Hirsensfelder	media-art designer	Metelkova, Rog	Oct 2012	LC	Ljudmila	no (informal talk)
Saša Spačal	media-art designer, social sciences	Rog	Oct 2012	LC	in town	no (informal talk)
Maša Cvetko	architect at Prostoroz	Trubarjeva ulica, Park Tabor	Oct 2012	LC	Trubarjeva ulica	no (informal talk)
Zala Velka	Communication studies, Prostoroz	Trubarjeva ulica, Park Tabor	Oct 2012	LC	Trubarjeva ulica	no
Tjaša Mavric	architect, designer	Pop Up Dom	Oct 2012	LC	in town	no
Urška Jurman	coordinator of Second Chance project in Ljubljana	Rog	Oct 2012	LC	RogLab	no
artists/students	cinema, plastic and visual arts	Rog	Oct 2012	LC	RogLab	no (informal talk)
Miha Colner	curator at Photon Gallery, SCCA	Metelkova (SCCA)	Oct 2012	LC	Hostel Celica, Galerija Aksioma	no (informal talk)
João Pita Costa	PhD mathematics	Galerija Tukad Munga	Oct 2012	LC	in town	no (informal talk)
Simão Bessa	artist	Škuc	Oct 2012	LC	Škuc	no (informal talk)
Luka Piskoric	co-founder and managing director at Poligon Creative Centre, co-founder of Slovenia Coworking and Crowdfunding.si + NSK co-founder and	Kino Šiška - coworking, Poligon (Tobačna Tovarna)	Nov 2012, April 2013, May 2014	LC	Leipzig, Kino Šiška, Poligon (Tobačna)	no
Eva Matjaz	managing director at Poligon Creative Centre and of Slovenia	Kino Šiška - coworking, Poligon (Tobačna Tovarna)	April 2013, May 2014	LC	Kino Šiška, SEM	no
Netta Norro	photographer	artistic independent life in Slovenia	April 2013, May 2014	LC	in town	no (informal talk)
Marko Marovt	mechanical engineer	Kreativna Cona Šiška	April 2013	LC	Kreativna Cona Šiška	no (informal talk)
Jerneja Batić	Department of Culture MOL	Metelkova, Rog, Cukrarna,	April 2013	LC	MOL	yes
Leigh San Juan	visual artist	Rog	April 2013	LC	Stara Elektrarna	no (informal talk)
Jadranka Plut	art historian	Metelkova	April 2013	LC	Galerija Alkatraz	no
anarchists (several people)	activists, social sciences	Metelkova (@infopoint)	April 2013	LC	@infopoint	no (informal talk)
Urban Jeriha	Group TEMP	Rog	April 2013	LC	by Ljubljana	yes
Andrej Kurnik	Prof Political Sciences, activist	Rog (Social Centre)	April 2013	LC	Pekarna (Maribor), Metelkova, Rog	no (informal talk)
Barbara Bezec	PhD political science, activist	Rog (Social Centre)	April 2013	LC	Pekarna (Maribor), Metelkova, Rog	no (informal talk)
Petra Onderuf	violinist	Rog	April 2014	LC	in town	no (informal talk)
Borut Savski	artist (Cirkulacija2)	Rog	April 2014	LC	Cirkulacija2	yes
Marko Hren	activist, Peace Institute	Metelkova	May 2014	LC	Park Tabor	no
Neven Korda	artist	Metelkova	May 2014	LC	Neven's studio, Metelkova	yes
Neven Jelesijević	artist (Kitch duo), PhD art critic	Metelkova North and South	May 2014	LC	SEM	no
Tjaša Pureber	political scientist and sociologist	Metelkova (@infopoint)	April 2014	LC	@infopoint Metelkova	no
Andrej Pavlišič	political science	Metelkova (@infopoint)	April 2014	LC	@infopoint Metelkova	no
Sebastian Krawczyk	sociologist	Metelkova (Alkatraz)	April 2014	LC	Galerija Alkatraz	yes
Saša Nabergoj	curator, art historian	Metelkova	May 2014	LC	SCCA	yes
Andrej Pezelj	sociologist	Metelkova	May 2014	LC	Metelkova	yes

LJUBLJANA

A selection of the main questions that were asked during the interviews I made between 2012-2015 follows in the next lines. Due to the agreed terms of confidentiality, the answers are not published below, but the main lines of the discussions are here exposed in order to allow the reader to understand how I built the stories of each case study and the general contexts of each city.

A FEW MAIN QUESTIONS ABOUT METELKOVA

To Jerneja Batić:

How, why are you tolerating Metelkova as a squatted place (considering MOL is the owner of the land)? Are you interested in legalising Metelkova Mesto? Why? Why is it not legalised yet? Is it nice/convenient for the City of Ljubljana to have such a place, the way it exists today?

To Sebastjan Krawczyk:

Do you consider Metelkova as a ghetto? In which sense?

Why did the machinery come to destroy Metelkova's buildings? Who rebuilt these spaces? The artists / Metelkova's community itself? The mosaics, were they put on the walls to prevent the building from being destroyed? Was the idea to turn them into an 'art piece'? Or the idea was just to give some 'identity' to the buildings? Was it about the function or the aesthetics of the place? What is the difference between the mosaics that exist on Alkatraz's walls and the ones existing on Celica's walls? They resemble a lot, but on the first one you can cut your hands if you are not careful enough – because the mosaics are sharp – and on the second example the mosaics are very soft and regular, probably normalised in shape due to safety reasons (since it is an international hostel). Do you know who did these mosaics? People from Metelkova? Or other? Was there some architect present in the renovation process of Metelkova?

Do Celica's rooms still look the same as when initially transformed and decorated by Sestava?

Do you think Metelkova may one day become 'national heritage'? Or that it will continue evolving along the years? Do you need some permission to change things at Metelkova? Are there some kinds of rules or directives that one has to respect or to follow in this space, if you are an artist, and when someone does an intervention? If so, who defines those rules?

Is it a main concern of Metelkova's way of functioning, or art production, to recycle materials and objects?

In which way do art and crafts work together here?

Do you see Metelkova as some kind of a scenography?

Is there some kind of rules or intention of promoting Metelkova's common spaces as places of conviviality?

Why is the garden locked? Are there some types of internal conflicts?

Is there some rotation of the artists who occupy the studios? Or are they all the same since the beginning?

What about the relationship between Metelkova North and Metelkova South? Who wrote this words: "art / creativity"? Why? Why are people from Metelkova Mesto so revolted against MSUM?

Does Galerija Alkatraz collaborates with MSUM? Or with SCCA, or even Škuc?

To Saša Nabergoj:

This East Art map... I was surprised to see Metelkova here related to this Ljubljana Alternative Movement. Can you talk a bit more about this?

Something that has been intriguing me is that the spaces that claim to be the most 'alternative' are often the most commercial or mainstream – what is your opinion about this?

The article you wrote for ČKZ talks about this "total work of art" – "gesamtkunstwerk". When trying to describe the environment of Metelkova, I started to describe it as a 'scenario' because of all the colours and sculptures and art objects we can find here... I also heard someone addressing to it as a "cabinet of wonders". The moment I read your article I was interested about "total work of design" – this relating to another space I am studying in Lisbon (Village Underground), which was designed to be a "total space". But Metelkova is different, it grew up along time, in an organic manner. What is the relationship with this spatial and visual approach/aesthetics and the masterplan that had been planned initially for Metelkova? And with the relationship with the current situation of Metelkova – the squat, and illegal space?

Can you talk a bit more about the squatting of Metelkova and about who or what triggered this idea of the mosaics? Was this action – of decorating the walls with broken mosaics – financed by someone or some

institution somehow? I started to collect pictures of the mosaics and I realise it is somehow part of the 'identity' of Metelkova, it gives 'unity' to the whole, this approach being repeated everywhere... The approach used at Celica captured my attention, it is different from the others. Was it made after the other ones, or at the same time?

What is the role of these wooden and metallic constructions that are spread all over Metelkova? What is the role of these 'furniture' and of these 'participative architectures'?

Shall the art that is produced at/for Metelkova be preserved?

I made a tour about the artistic works that are exposed at Metelkova with Jadranka and Sebastjan and I realised that every time there is some symbology associated: anti-war, anti-repression, anti-... Why is that? And is it related somehow to the fact that it is an art produced by a community, and a constant work-in-progress? Is there some agreement on the fact that all art produced at Metelkova must have a symbolic character?

Is 'alternative' art rather be called 'independent' or 'autonomous' art? Is the art produced at Metelkova today subversive? Do you think Metelkova has some social role of critique addressed to the urban condition of Ljubljana today? Do you think Metelkova's position is as strong as it was in the past? Is Rog the new Metelkova, in that sense, maybe?

To Andrej Pezelj:

Can you explain me how did you get your studio at Metelkova? About the competition and the politics of attribution of a place here? Was there a public competition? Are there other people in your situation? Do you pay to be here? To whom? What is your thesis research about?

Can you tell me a bit more about this concept of 'autonomy' and about the notion of 'authorship' you mentioned in the article you published at ČKZ? If you want to install a statue in the middle of Metelkova, do you have to ask permission to someone? Is there some money available for those pieces of art? What do you think about these graffiti that someone did on the border between Metelkova North and Metelkova South, which say: "art / creativity"? Is there some link between this and the way of functioning and of art production at Metelkova? Why do you think people wrote that? Can we also link that to the façades' decoration on each side?

What is that wall full of graffiti next to Celica? There are some logos of some brands next to the paintings... was that some kind of a graffiti competition? Are international brands using Metelkova's scenario to do their ads? What right has Metelkova's community to say they disagree of these actions, if this place is squatted? Has 'alternative culture' become trendy? Has there been an 'aestheticisation' of the 'counter-culture'?

Why is ŠOU running Celica? Are they running it since the beginning? What is the difference between Celica and the other clubs existing at Metelkova?

Is all the artistic scene of Metelkova based on social critique? Did it increase, since the economic crisis started?

To Neven Korda:

What do you mean when you say that people just talk about Metelkova in the 90s and not from 'the past'? When you say we must clearly differentiate between 'independent culture' and 'autonomous culture' – particularly when addressed to the cultural and artistic production of Metelkova – why is that? And do you think Metelkova produces these two kinds of art – independent and autonomous? What do you understand by 'independent'? Do the universes of 'independent' and 'dominant' artistic approaches cross each other? What do you mean when you say that the cultural economy of Metelkova is just a duplication of the dominant model of production? Isn't it the other way around? Don't you think that the art produced at Metelkova is used by the 'dominant' system?

How did Metelkova change in the last twenty years?

Who are the managers of the clubs? Who are these people? Did they participate in the squatting?

Your thesis about the "Conditions of Alternative Culture Production", can you tell me some more about this?

How did you end up having a studio here? Did you have to fix and transform your studio? What existed here before? Did you isolate it for the Winter? Isn't it too cold? Can you work under these conditions? How long did it take to do all these interventions? Is it worth to have all this work instead of going to another place?

To Marko Hren:

You were disappointed with the failure of the grassroots cooperatives in Metelkova, the NGOs and the "cast division". Can you give me specific examples of these failures, misunderstandings at the core of Metelkova? When was the turning point, when did you decide "that's it, I must leave Metelkova now"? Or was it because some other opportunities came up then?

Why were you interested in Peace Movements, personally? Was it because you were predicting the Balkan's war already, in some way? Or was it some other personal issue that led you to have this big motivation and get so involved? Why learning from the Swiss? Who were the "War Resisters"? From the period after the WW2?

Why particularly be inspired on “Die Rote Fabrik”, in Zürich? Were there other things going on there, apart from the Peace Institute, that inspired you?
Are there some real spaces of resistance today in Slovenia (physically speaking)?
Do you think that the true creativity comes from this grassroots movements?

A FEW MAIN QUESTIONS ABOUT ROG

To Jerneja Batić:

The land where Rog is located belongs to whom? To the city? Since when? You bought it to whom?
The Second Chance project... you started to look for investors... Why was it impossible to continue the project? Because of the economic crisis and the austerity measures? How is the crisis affecting your plans, your provisions?
What is the role of the RogLab container project?
When did you decide to change the strategy? What will you keep from the project you had planned before?
Do you keep the idea of renovation of the main building because it is listed as ‘heritage’?
Is this a common strategy for all the European projects that are part of the Second Chance project? Or, why is this one specific?
Who will be using Rog’s space afterwards, once the project is completed? The artists who are squatting the place nowadays or other people? Only local people, or also international? Will the program be mixed (art, commerce, etc)? Is the Social Centre also included in the future plans of the site? Do you plan to include also social workers in that project?
Did the squatting action of group TEMP change or have some influence in the strategy you had planned for Rog’s site? Did it ‘open the eyes’ to MOL to the fact the building was abandoned for so many years? Did it work as some kind of pressure?
Did you try to legalise the squatters’ situation? For temporary use...? Was some paper signed? Why / why not?
Are you in good terms with the squatters?
Do you compare Rog’s case to Metelkova? In which sense is it different or not?

To Borut Savski:

What do you know about the plans for Rog’s site? Is this Second Chance Project in stand-by? Do you think that with this particular economic situation that project will move forward? Why is this RogLab outside of Rog’s land, and not inside of the walls, and what is the logics of being on that location?
Do you prefer to work here or at home? What changes between one place and another? Is your artistic production based on self-production, and if so, what does this mean? How do you support financially your artistic work? Are subsidies being cut since the crisis arrived?
Why did you choose to have your own space instead of sharing an open space in the main building?
How do you see the relationship between the artists and the activists of the Social Centre, more concretely?
Do you collaborate in some way?
How do you see the initial squatting operation of Rog? How do you see Rog, the way it works today?
How do you see the relationship between Rog and Metelkova? As some kind of competition or collaboration?
Or of a succession? Are the people that occupied Rog the ‘new generation’ of ‘alternatives’, maybe? Or are they the same that were involved in Metelkova’s squatting operation back then, still?
Do you think that the municipality is using these spaces for the alternative culture as a tourist attraction tool?

To Urban Jeriha:

I am interested in TEMP as a group and in Rog as a space, in terms of resistance action. I am interested to know more about the occupation, transformation and evolution of space related with this kind of spaces that claim the right to the city, and reuse and recycle spaces and objects. When did TEMP formalise as a group? What other projects did you do, before the one in Rog? With whom did you collaborate? What was the role of the Faculty of Architecture within this process? And of Professor Koželj? In which way did he support you? How many were you in the beginning? Why TEMP no longer exists?
How did you get in contact with Škuc? Why? Under which form did you collaborate together? I heard you made a map of the abandoned places existing in Ljubljana back then. Was Rog figuring in this map? Did you get some subsidies?
When did you occupy Rog? How was the squatting operation more precisely? How was the communication with the municipality done? Did you negotiate the use of the space before? How many people squatted the place? When did the guard – the one standing at the entrance gate of Rog – come? Is this guard hired from MOL? What was/is his role?

What was the first thing you did when you occupied Rog? Did you start to transform the space, cleaning it...? What other actions did you do? What was your main idea when squatting the place? Were you also planning to live there, or just as a space to work? How long did the main initial enthusiasm last? Did other people come afterwards? What kind of people? Were you ever involved with the Second Chance Project somehow? What is your opinion about the visual and spatial aesthetics of Rog?

A FEW GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT LJUBLJANA

To Jerneja Batić:

(about Kino Šiška): Who are these artists? Where were they before? Since when are they in Šiška?

What do you think about the evolution of the cultural management along time, since Yugoslavia times and now under the European Union context?

To Neven Korda:

Why do you think people see that what is going on around here is a gentrification process? There are several graffiti on the walls mentioning this... Isn't it rather an "Europeanisation" process that the city of Ljubljana is suffering?

List of interviews - Geneva

who	expertise	ACS related	when	by whom	recorded
Severin Guelpa	artist	Vélodrome	Nov 2012	C4	yes
Richard LeQuelec + Madeleine Amsler	art historian + visual artist and cultural developer	Maison Baron	Nov 2012	C4	yes
Serge Margel	artist (photographer)	Mottatom	Nov 2012	C4	yes
Matthias Solenthaler	urbanist	Motel Campo / Artamis	Nov 2012	conference	yes
Dominique Gros	Direction SRED, social movements	Etat	Fev 2014	MP / LC	yes
Mariano Busaglia		Kugler	Fev 2014	MP/LC	no (informal talk)
Stefan Press	Architect	Vélodrome	Fev 2014	LC/LP/MP	yes
Isabelle	artist	Picto	Fev 2014	C4	yes
	Service of the department of culture	Ville de Genève, alternative culture, cultural policies	Mar 2014	MP/LP	yes
	cultural advisor	Ville de Genève, PTR (association)	Mar 2014	MP	yes
Magdalena Ybarguen	Artist	"Espace Temporaire"	Mar 2014	C4	yes
	municipal advisor	State, Cultural Policies, alternative culture	Mar 2014	MP	yes
David Simonin	Environnement engineer, President of ARV	ARV Association	Mar 2014	LP/EP/MP	yes
Albéric Hopf	Service Praille Acacias Vernets (PAV)	State, PAV	Apr 2014	EP/LC	yes
Cléa Redalié	worker at Canton de Genève (cultural policies)	State, PAV	May 2014	MP / LP / EP	yes
Ferocious 41	Artist (Artamis + Goulet)	Vélodrome	Oct 2014	MP	yes
Jerôme Massard	Artist	KLAT, Vélodrome	Nov 2014	MP/LP	yes
Albane Schlechten	UECA	UECA, Gravière, Usine, PS	Nov 2014	MP	yes
Anna Berseghian	artist, curator, runs an artist residence	Utopiana	Mar 2014	LP	yes
Gabriel Alvares	artist (scenograph), runs a theater	Galpon	Mar 2014	LP	yes
Stéphanie Prizerni	artist, FAK	Usine Kugler	Mar 2014	LP	yes
lefki papachrysostomou	scenograph	Art, travail 7 théâtre	May 2015	MP	yes
Maja Bösch	artist	Genève	Jun 2015	LP/MP	yes
Shins	Rapper	Genève Culture / art / travail	Set 2015	MP	informal talk
Patrick	designer	Fouuund	Oct 2015	MP	informal talk
Liliane Schneiter & Catherine Queloz	Professors	Genève and art	Oct 2015	MP	informal talk
Isabelle and Joseph	socio-cultural animators	Geneva social work	Nov 2015	MP	yes
Alexandra Pittet	Social worker	Libellules	Dec 2015	LP/MP	yes
Stéphanie Prizerni	artist	Kugler / FAK	Jan 2015	LP / LC / MP	yes
Harry	artist	Kugler / FAK	Jan 2015	LP / LC / MP	yes
Serge Boulaz	artist	Edicules /BAL	Fev 2016	LP	yes
Séverine Fromegeat	curator	Pro Helvetia	Fev 2016	LP / MP	yes
Edward Mitterrand, Galerie Mitterrand, & Cramer	gallerist	Quartier des Bains	Set 2016	MP	yes
Denis Pernet, Hard Hat	gallerist	Quartier des Bains, CAC	Set 2016	MP	yes
Sandro Rossetti	cultural actor	Culture alternative, Théâtre du Loup, RAAC, Bâtie, etc.	Set 2016	LP & MP	yes

(Non-exhaustive list)

LC: Leticia Carmo / MP: Mischa Piraud / LP: Luca Pattaroni / EP: Éléonore Pigalle / C4: Creative Cities and Counter Culture group of research / AP: Anouk Piraud

