Founding Alive Architecture
From Drawing to Initiating Lived Space

A project submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD

Petra Pferdmenges
Dipl. Arch. (University of Applied Sciences, Germany)
Ma. Arch. (TU Delft, Netherlands)

Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the project is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Petra Pferdmenges

26/01/2016
Declaration

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Signature

Name
Petra Pferdmenges

Date
27 August 2015

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In this PhD I will reveal within four chapters how I founded Alive Architecture. I address the question of how observing and drawing people appropriating the public realm informed my practice.

*Drawing Lived Space* produced by immigrants during the projects at the outset of this PhD informed my understanding of *re-producing*, then *co-producing* and finally *initiating* *Lived Space* in the public realm.

Throughout the PhD I use the term observing. It is changing from *observation of Lived Space* in the first chapter to *observation for Lived Space* in the final chapter.

Besides those revealed in Chapter One, which are the outcome of my Master thesis at the TU Delft, all of the projects have been conducted within the research framework over the course of five years in order to develop the practice.

Besides the *Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm* project that took place in a border situation inhabited by people from different cultures, all of the projects were developed in or around neighbourhoods of undervalued people, such as the red-light district or a trailer park.

Through addressing marginal neighbourhoods, I concentrated upon the inclusion of those who are the most excluded in our society. Whilst I effectively address the issue of generating encounter among people from different backgrounds, I decided to not focus upon the specific condition of marginal neighbourhoods in my PhD. The reason for this is that I consider all knowledge developed through this research applicable in marginal and non-marginal urban situation.

To introduce the research, I will first outline the proposal for this PhD. Further I will give an insight into the background of how this *spatial agency* came about before giving a short introduction to the theory related to my projects. Finally I will present and articulate the projects throughout the four chapters and conclude through revealing my findings.
This thesis is organized in the following way:

In the first chapter I will reveal how my practice was triggered through *drawing Lived Space* in my Master’s degree at the TU Delft in the Netherlands. I included these projects because they represent the beginning of my interest in the production of *Lived Space* in the public realm and are therefore the origin of my *spatial agency*.

In the projects in the second chapter, I started to act myself for the first time in the public realm, *re-producing Lived Space* through minimal and ephemeral actions.

In the projects in the third chapter I involved other people in the actions and therefore *co-produced Lived Space* in the public realm, with the intention of moving from ephemeral to durational projects.

Through the projects in the final chapter, I reveal how I was curating other people to contribute to the production of the public realm and was therefore *initiating Lived Space* that expanded from an ephemeral biennale to a durational project.

At the end of this thesis, I conclude by describing how I founded my practice, which evolved from *drawing* to *initiating Lived Space*.

As my practice evolved, the title of this PhD also changed during the process. In the beginning I referred to *observing open space occupied by marginal people*, later to the *relationship between observation and action* whereas the final title of this PhD is based upon how I set up my practice: *Founding Alive Architecture*.

I position this *spatial agency* on the margins of architecture. Rory
Hyde describes such approach as *Future Practices*. He interviews on the one hand people from inside the profession who take a critical distance on architecture and are forging new relationships and positions; on the other hand he engages with people from outside architecture who are interested in the discipline. While the boundary is constantly shifting, the book reveals fantastic material to prototype the new borders of architecture.

Alongside this book, the notion of Other ways of doing Architecture is articulated in the publication *Spatial Agency*. By calling the book *Spatial Agency* rather than Alternative Architectural Practice, the authors have not replaced architecture as a term, but have radically expanded it.

Both publications explain the extended field of the discipline by searching for the edge of the profession. They refer to the conceptualization of space by architectural practices and non-architectural practices. Coming from different disciplines, all of the practices approach space as a social product that is neither purely physical, nor only about its usage. It is a space in between that I refer to as Lived Space.

This is the reason why in this PhD I will not articulate why I consider my work to be architecture. Instead I will raise the following question, which was my main concern throughout my PhD and in developing my practice:

*How did drawing Lived Space in the public realm inform my agency of initiating Lived Space?*

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**References**

At the outset of my PhD, I was interested by the publication of the biennale *Open City: Designing Coexistence* curated by Kees Christiaanse. For this occasion the urban designer and professor at the ETH Zurich was researching into the degree of openness of a city. He posed the question what we can learn from informal production of the public realm in developing countries for urban design in Europe.

As a German architect who has lived as a foreigner in different countries, I consider myself both as a migrant and a local inhabitant in Brussels. In my interview with Mister Emma of Archiurbain in 2012, I expressed my love for Brussels because of the city's openness to its many foreigners. Inhabited by many different cultures, the
capital of Europe is one of the most international cities in the world, where Muslims make up one quarter of the population of Brussels. The city is officially bilingual (French and Flemish), but walking in the street you can hear people exchanging in Arabic, Spanish, Italian, Polish, German and many other languages.

Mister Emma’s interview with me can be found at the following link: [http://www.alivearchitecture.eu/index.php/urban-margins/mister-emma-2012/](http://www.alivearchitecture.eu/index.php/urban-margins/mister-emma-2012/).

In my second PhD presentation, I focused on my interest into the Open City and described several enclaves and gated communities that reveal the opposite of what I consider an Open City to be. I referred to marginal spaces where people are isolated from the rest of the world, such as immigration camps, red-light districts or trailer parks (photo on this page). In my projects I always try to overcome this separation resulting from different backgrounds, with the intention of contributing to an Open City.

In order to communicate what I defined myself as the opposite of an Open City, I played an extract from the movie The Truman Show throughout the first three presentations of my PhD. The fake city in which Truman lives was constructed and inhabited for a television show. It represents a pseudo reality of a city where everything is clean and all people are wealthy and happy. Christoph, the moviemaker of the reality show, refers to Truman as a real person, mentioning that he was the only person alive in the show. Throughout the movie Truman becomes aware of the pseudo reality and embarks on a quest to discover the truth about his life.

The movie represents to me what Kenny Cupers refers to as the faked mirror image of reality in his publication Spaces of Uncertainty and which I referred to in my article Reality-Bites that I wrote in 2006. The article was the theoretical contribution to the two projects that triggered Alive Architecture called Asica enters Europe and A-life, that I will detail in Chapter One.

**Non-Places**

In the article Reality-Bites, I referred as mentioned to the gated community as an artificial reproduction of the city, which represents a sterilized image of the street:

The search for the clean, the perfect, leads to an imitation of reality, or in other words to the controlling of reality, which finds its counterweight in the creation of non-places, as first introduced by Marc Augé. He contrasted it to the traditional sense of place, as defined by the identity, relationships and history of its inhabitants. Non-places lack any emotional attachment. Not only does the gated community develop into a non-place, but everything within it seems to become controlled: Aside from the fact that every move within the shopping mall is observed by research firms to boost consumption and profit, guardians in the gated communities are in charge of making sure that everything goes the right way, or the infrastructure where soon any individual’s move will be captured. The cloned, mirror image of reality in the contemporary city seems to infringe upon society’s freedom and its Right to the city. The cloned mirror image of reality, an artificial image of it, is the result of the process of controlling reality.

I concluded the essay as follows:
If the cloned mirror image of reality is the result of the controlled reality, then reality in the contemporary city is what remains uncontrolled. Opposing it to the controlled creation of sterilized non-places, reality means a place you can feel emotionally attached to.

Through this article it becomes clear that already early on in my work, I referred to the notion of place or what I refer to in this PhD as Lived Space.

**Placemaking**

The term placemaking originated in the 1960s, when writers like Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte offered groundbreaking ideas about designing cities that catered to people, not just to cars and shopping centers. The term came into use in the 1970s by landscape architects, architects and urban planners to describe the process of creating squares, plazas, parks, streets and waterfronts that will attract people because they are pleasurable or interesting.

Fred Kent founded in 1975 the office Projects for Public Spaces (PPS) to expand on the work of Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte, who I discovered towards the end of my PhD (images on this page). Since the 90's the office has been the central hub of the global placemaking movement. The founder Fred Kent refers to their work as connecting people to ideas, expertise, and partners who share a passion for creating vital places.

Furthermore on their website PPS define the term as follows:

Placemaking is a hands-on approach for improving a neighbourhood, city, or region and inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of everyday community. It strengthens the connection between people and the places they share and therefore refers to a collaborative process to maximize shared value. It facilitates creative patterns of use while paying particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place.

Furthermore it is based upon the participation of the local community and therefore the creation of qualitative public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness and well being.
Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte, whose work the practice is based upon, both focused on the social and cultural importance of lively neighbourhoods and inviting public spaces.

Jacobs encouraged everyday citizens to take ownership of streets. Through her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* she influenced generations of urban planners and activists and always maintained a critical point of view on top-down urban planning. She approaches cities as living beings that are changing according to how people interact with them.

Whyte outlined key elements for creating a vibrant social life in his movie *The social life of small public spaces*. [https://vimeo.com/111488563](https://vimeo.com/111488563)

Based upon this theoretical background of the PPS practice, my projects are very close to the original meaning of *placemaking*. I am interested in connecting people to space and helping them to create patterns of use in the public realm.

However in this PhD I do not refer to the term *placemaking*. The reason for this is that the term has been misused in recent years to refer to any sort of urban development related to people, where community participation is not necessarily at the center of the work.

### Lived Space

Only at the end of my PhD did I find the term *Lived Space*, which I use to express the appropriation of space by people and the related change of space over time.

The term was coined in the *Production of Space* where Henri Lefebvre refers to space as the site of ongoing social relations. Through his triad spatial model of the *perceived, conceived and lived space* he proposes a tool to analyze the process of the production of space.

Whilst *Perceived Space* is the social space developed through a social product, such as thinking (mental) or working (physical), while *Conceived Space* is the representation of space conceptualized by the practices of planners, architects, urbanists or physicists.

In my understanding, for Henri Lefebvre *Lived Space* is the space in between the *Perceived* and the *Conceived Space*. It is a space of human experiences, the mental constructs with which they approach the physical world. It is a space where democratic action happens. It is neither the private space, nor the work space, but a third space in between. In his definition, *Lived Space* can be the public realm but also the virtual space where social relations are happening.

I borrowed the term *Lived Space* from Henri Lefebvre. I chose for it on the one hand because for me it characterizes a social production of the public realm that I am researching through my *spatial agency*. I am interested in the change of the public realm over time through human relations and appropriation. On the other hand, I chose for the term *Lived Space* as it is very similar to the name of my practice: *Alive Architecture*.

### Spatial Agency

*In the publication Spatial Agency: Other ways of doing architecture* the authors explain the notion of *spatial agency*, a relatively recent term in architectural discourse that is defined as the individual’s ability to act independently from the constraining structures of society. They refer to Anthony Giddens, who argued that agency and structure should be understood as a duality, two linked but separately identifiable conditions.

In the publication they write:

*For architecture, this means that buildings are not seen as determinants of society (the primacy of the individual) nor as determined by society (the primacy of structure) but rather as in society. Gidden argues that agents are neither completely free as individuals, nor are they completely entrapped by structure. Spatial agents are neither impotent nor all powerful: they are negotiators of existing conditions in order to partially reform them. Spatial agency implies that action to engage transformatively with structure is possible, but will only be effective if one is alert to the constraints and opportunities that the structure presents.*

Furthermore they refer to Bruno Latour’s view that critical attention is shifted from *architecture as a matter of fact* to *architecture as a matter of concern*.

They write:

*As matters of fact, buildings can be subjected to rules and methods, and they can be treated as things on their own terms. As matters of concern, they enter into socially embedded networks, in which the consequences of architecture are of much more significance that the objects of architecture.*

My understanding of Spatial Agency:

*Other ways of doing architecture and the discovery of many practices in the literature that practice in a similar way to me is the reason why I consider my practice as a spatial agency.*

References

1. Tim Rieniets, Jennifer Sigler, Kees Christiaanse, 2009, Open city: Designing coexistence, Amsterdam: SUN
2. Truman Show, 1998, motion picture, Warner Bros, Burbank, US, California, directed by Peter Weir
I grew up in Germany, where I studied architecture in the provincial city of Regensburg from 1998 to 2003. Very interested in the practice of designing space, I was bored by the technical issues to be tackled in the profession.

After my studies, I moved to Paris in 2003. To make a living I worked in a call-center, where I bought gold from German dentists, while learning French reading the book *Le Petit Prince*. Three months later, I started to work at the internationally recognized architecture firm, *Edouard François*. Here I learned about architecture for exclusive companies, working on the luxury hotel in the Champs Elysée (*upper photo on this page*). Whilst I enjoyed getting to know about a deeply design-based way of practicing architecture, I became tired of spending my days preparing *Autocad* drawings of ideas that were very interesting but did not allow me to design myself.

This is why after eight months in the architectural office I left to travel for four months in Central America, learning Spanish in 2004. It was a moment in my life where I lived with very little money, whilst travelling in a continent where many people live on a very low budget. I enjoyed the experience of being poor and appreciated how poor people appropriated the public realm, with no designer involved in producing these environments (*lower photo on this page*).

The contrast between working on luxury projects in Paris and afterwards discovering the vibrant public realm in Central America sealed my realization of the conflict between design for rich people and...
the self-produced public realm of the poor. I started to wonder about the role of my discipline in generating such living spheres. This is the very beginning of my research into the role of the architect in the social production of Lived Space.

Searching for more meaning in the profession, I applied and was accepted on the International Master’s of Architecture program at the TU Delft in the Netherlands from 2004 to 2006. In my Master’s dissertation, I chose the topic of borderconditions, focusing specifically on Ceuta. In the first semester, we developed visual representations of a border situation of our choice through observing and drawing, while in the second semester each of our findings lead to a design project. I used this experience to start my exploration of the role of the architect in producing Lived Space.

It was by coincidence that in the week when we started the project, in September 2005, six hundred immigrants from Asia and Africa (Asia) entered the Spanish enclave Ceuta in northern Morocco in the hope of a better life in Europe. This information was reported in the newspapers throughout the continent and I decided to develop my work around this political, social and spatial news (upper photo on this page).

I first observed and drew how the immigrants were occupying the public realm. I greatly appreciated engaging with the immigrants and the chance to encounter people from a totally different culture. This is the reason why I designed urban installations that would allow the immigrants and the local population to relate to each other, producing Lived Space in the public realm. I will articulate this project further in Chapter One.

After my studies at the TU Delft, I moved to Barcelona to work at the prestigious architectural office Josep Llinàs for two years from 2007 to 2009. I learned about contemporary form in architecture and about highly quality architecture for people, placing importance on the public realm crossing the building to create passages for people in the city (lower photo on this page). I appreciated drawing interesting projects that also had a social meaning. However, like my work in Paris, I became frustrated at not designing myself and reflecting further upon the research.
I developed through my Master’s thesis. This frustration became the driving force for investigating my own projects.

Since my experience in Ceuta, I have been continuously questioning where the role of the architect lies in producing *Lived Space*, such as the spaces I had observed in Central America or those produced by the immigrants in Ceuta.

This is why during my trip to Japan in 2008 I observed and recorded urban nomads who construct their own houses under bridges along the Kamo River (*photo on this page*). I photographed the nineteen self-built houses and tried to engage with the people. Later, in the beginning of my PhD, I made some drawings of the houses (*drawing on this page*).

In 2009 I travelled to India, where I observed and recorded self-constructed houses on the pavement (*photos and drawings on the next page*). I took photos of these houses and learned through engaging with the inhabitants that they were migrants who moved from the countryside to Mumbai for ten months per year to earn their living. I translated the interviews into drawings similar to how I had done it in the project *Asica enters Europe* in 2005. Furthermore I made some drawings of the photos to communicate to others what I consider today to be *Lived Space*.

I observed, recorded and drew how local communities build, use and appropriate the public realm. I became obsessed with drawing people producing *Lived Space* in the public realm.

How could drawing the public realm appropriated by people inform my practice?

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**References**

TEMPORARILY ON THE SIDEWALKS!

When we came here, moving from the countryside to Mumbai for a better life, we thought we’d stay just for a short period. This is now 15 years ago.

There is enough space in the houses for two people sleeping upstairs, two people sleeping downstairs in the kitchen. The everyday life is happening outside of the houses on the street. They told us we could get a flat for free in New Mumbai but we need to be close to the city center for work. Everyday we try to find some job for the day in the neighborhood to make a living. We save the money to go back to the countryside when the rain is coming. We consider our homes to be back where we come from. There we have a house, a garden. The stay here in Mumbai is just to make a living.
1 / Triggering Alive Architecture: Drawing Lived Space

In this first chapter I will present the projects Asica enters Europe (2005/2006) and A-life (2006) that form the basis of my Master’s dissertation at the TU Delft and which triggered my agency. It might not be normal to include a Master’s thesis in this kind of PhD. I did so because I want to show the origin of my interest in Lived Space.

In the Asica enters Europe project I engaged with immigrants and observed and drew how they are occupying the public realm in Ceuta, whereas in the A-life project I designed installations for such Lived Space. I produced drawings of mobile devices for the immigrants to engage with the local population.

Through first observing and identifying the ways in which immigrants produced Lived Space and by later designing relational objects, I discovered various devices for producing Lived Space that I could use as a designer.

Furthermore I found a method of documenting frozen moments of the Lived Space through drawings and I introduced a specific typography that I used for highlighting and communicating the social dimension of the projects.

Because I communicated my project only within the academic context, the project never had an impact beyond my own career.

Throughout the Master’s thesis I played multiple roles, ranging from observer to artist and mediator. I learned about the importance of building trust in my projects and how important it is to invest time and energy in order to do so.

In the reflection, I reveal the six different layers that occurred in my work which will evolve throughout this PhD.
For my Master’s thesis project at the TU Delft, I chose the studio Bordercondition initiated by Marc Schonderbeek because it was considered to be the most ambitious course at the university. The site given to us was Ceuta, a Spanish enclave situated on the mainland of Africa, north of Morocco, that was at the time (2005-2006) a key gateway for immigration from Africa and Asia to Europe. The title of the first project originates from combining the terms Africa and Asia: Asica enters Europe.

The project research was divided into two parts. In the first semester we defined and represented a border situation that was chosen by us as students through drawings. In the second semester, these visual representations informed a design project. Asica enters Europe represents the first project of the visual part and A-life the design project based upon the findings.

One week after the study began, on September 29th 2005, six hundred immigrants invaded the border between Morocco and the Spanish enclave, of whom two hundred succeeded in entering Ceuta. The news made headlines throughout the European press. To me, unlike my fellow colleagues, it was obvious that I had to use this socio-political news as the source of my project. My reasoning was that I considered the subject to be topical with regard to the notion of Borderconditions.

Observing Lived Space

The whole group of students left for two weeks on a field research trip to Ceuta, Spain. 

Where: Ceuta, Spain
When: September 2005 to January 2006
Why: Master’s dissertation TU Delft
With: -
Budget: -
Movie: -
to Ceuta. This allowed me to embed myself within the socio-spatial context, to observe from within how the processes of immigration generated a spatial impact upon the public realm in Morocco and Ceuta.

**Observing through Walking**

Besides the conversations and mental maps, I observed the immigrants’ use of the public realm through walking in the spaces they occupied. Before the field trip to Ceuta, I knew about the existence of the Ceti immigration camp in the northwestern forest of the Spanish enclave. What I did not yet know about was the flow of immigrants walking between the camp and the city of Ceuta, generating a promenade of black men along three kilometers (drawing on page 20).

On the one hand it was a way to kill time while they were waiting for asylum and on the other, it was a way to discover the Europe.

Through walking, I recognized how the immigrants occupied the public realm, gathering with their fellow immigrants in different spaces along the promenade. Examples are the boulders, from which they had a view to the European mainland, dreaming about a better future, or the supermarket car parks, where they earned some money by helping people carry their shopping.

**Observing through Engaging**

Walking along the promenade I met Abu, one of the two hundred new immigrants who entered Ceuta on September 29th 2005. Through several conversations, I discovered the process of crossing the border from the personal perspective of Abu. I found out about the existence and spatial organization of the informal camp created by the immigrants in Morocco, where six thousand people were living at the time (mental map and drawing on page 21). Some had been there for several days or weeks, others for up to fifteen years.

Furthermore I learned about the routes, means of transport, the prices paid to people-traffickers and the duration of his journey from Ghana to northern Morocco, to finally enter Ceuta (mental map on page 22 and drawing on page 23).

After building up trust with Abu through daily encounters, he invited me to join him in the forest around the camp where immigrants gathered, cooked and made music on platforms that they call tranquillos (drawing on page 24 and photos on page 25 and 26). Each platform was formed by groups of immigrants of the same nationality, musical tradition, culture or language. I was fascinated how these social activities transformed the landscape around the camp, generating appropriation of the public realm.

Abu and his friends invited me to cook with them on one of the platforms. As food is an everyday human need and potentially generates encounters through engaging with others, it is a crucial device that was to be applied in later projects throughout this PhD.

I captured the conversations I had with Abu and his fellows through listening and taking some notes in my sketchbook. This way of recording has a certain risk, as information might get lost or manipulated.

Through walking, I recognized how the immigrants occupied the public realm, gathering with their fellow immigrants in different spaces along the promenade. Examples are the boulders, from which they had a view to the European mainland, dreaming about a better future, or the supermarket car parks, where they earned some money by helping people carry their shopping.

**Observing through Mental Maps**

Being interested in the impact of social processes on the physical environment that was invisible to me, I asked Abu to draw a map of the informal camp in the north of Morocco (mental map on page 21) and of his travel from Ghana to Ceuta (mental map on page 22).

On the mental map of the camp in Morocco, the square represents the swimming pool, the small round circles show the positions of different groups of the same nationality, while the little dots represent the more private spaces inhabited by couples. On the mental map the two lines on the right hand side represent the border. It was difficult to grasp the physical scale of the camp and the spatial relation of the camp to the border.

Through the mental maps and conversations with Abu, I discovered that the social process of them arriving in and leaving the camp in Morocco daily, adapting the space to collective and individual needs, generated a continuous...
transformation of its spatial configuration.

Similar to my notes of the conversations, I asked the young men to draw in my sketchbook that I always carried with me during the field research. Unfortunately this original document got lost.

**Devices for Lived Space**

The immigrants use and appropriate the public realm by means of relational objects and social activities.

**Relational Objects**

The boulders along the promenade, the Ping-Pong table, the fireplaces around the camp and the trunk in the forest used as a bench are relational objects. They allow the immigrants to engage with each other through enabling use of the public realm, resulting in the production of Lived Space.

**Social Activities**

Furthermore the immigrants spent time with each other through activities along the promenade as well as around the camp, such as gathering, making money or food. For me, cooking and eating with the immigrants was one of the devices for engaging and is equally a device for them to engage with each other and thereby transform the public realm over time, generating Lived Space.

**Documenting my Findings**

I documented my findings through photography and the immigrants' drawings of mental maps in my sketchbook. Comparing the situation to later projects such as Visible Invisible, it was very easy to take photos of the immigrants, and sometimes even became a device through which to engage.

I translated my findings into visual representations, combining the knowledge I gained from conversations with information that the immigrants drew on the mental maps (drawings on pages 20, 21, 23 and 24).

To communicate the conversations I had with Abu and some other immigrants, I visualized some extracts through a typography that I invented (right drawing on page 22). Here is one of the many interviews I had with Abu:

“I arrived in the north of Morocco in January. Here we hid in the bush and built our own shelter. Each nationality has a group of shelters and a leader of it. Couples spread between the groups. We have a swimming pool which is a big hole in the ground. But the life here is very tough, it is not about living, it is about surviving. We have to go to Benzu or Castilano and ask people for food. Each night some of us try to cross the border. The first time I tried was in April. I climbed the fence in the mountains in Ceuta they saw me, chased me and sent me back. You are only safe when you reached the police. I finally entered on the 29.9.2005 together with 200 other Africans. When I heard the shots on the border, I thought if I die I die for my family, if I make it I make it for my family.”

**Drawing Lived Space**

At this time I was solely drawing how immigrants produced Lived Space, not yet producing such space myself.

As I engaged with the immigrants I used the public realm together with them and therefore took part in generating Lived Space in the public realm. However, I did so only as an observer in order to make drawings...
of my findings and not yet as a producer. It was the very beginning of my research and the practice did not yet exist.

In the following project I will reveal how I moved from observing and drawing Lived Space to designing and drawing relational objects for Lived Space to allow the immigrants and the local population to engage with each other through social activities.
Drawing of the promenade between the Ceti immigration camp and the city of Ceuta. Over an area of 3 km in length, they occupy different spaces in the public realm, turning them into Lived Space.

Drawing and photos by Petra Pferdmenges
Drawing of the informal immigration camp in Morocco with the different zones in the forest.

Mental map by Abu

Drawing of the mental map of the camp in Morocco, inspired by the mental map of Abu and interviews.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmeinges
ON THE ROAD

I hit the road in Ghana on the 20-5-2004. First I travelled with the bus through Burkina Faso to get to Niger. I spent one month to make some money to travel further. In Tamanrasset, Algeria I spent 6 months working on a construction site. From here we start the Sahara—crossing on Pick-up trucks. The crossing is very dangerous. Many people die in the desert. They leave us before the border to Morocco. Here we cross the mountains to get to Morocco. From here I walked 800 kilometers to the border of Ceuta.
Drawing of the different routes of the new immigrants from Asia and Africa to Ceuta, Spain in the project *Asica enters Europe.*

Drawing by Petra Pf erdmenges
Drawing of the immigration camp in black and the informal Lived Space in the forest around the camp in red.
Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges
Some Immigrants sitting on a trunk in the forest around the Cetí camp. The trunk is part of one of the so-called tranquillos, platforms in the forest around the camp.

Photo by Petra Pferdmenges
Two immigrants cooking together in the so-called tranquillos, platforms around the immigration camp in Ceuta.

Photo by Petra Pferdmenges
In the second semester, the drawings of a border situation were used to inform a design project. The design of the urban installations described here represents a moment of struggle and insecurity in my career. Through the project, I faced the challenge of researching the role of the architect as an actor in a fragile social, spatial and political context, as well as in designing Lived Space.

Designing Installations for Encounter

In my design proposal I focused upon introducing the immigrants and their reality into the European reality in Ceuta (upper image on the next page). I designed urban installations along the promenade for the new immigrants as well as for the local population, to generate places of encounter between both of them (lower image on the next page). I believed that it would enhance their life experience to get to know about each other's culture. This is related to the notion of Open City¹ that I explained in the introduction to this PhD.

Returning to Ceuta

I started my work by returning to Ceuta to organize a workshop. I wished to discuss with some of the immigrants about possible functions that could be created in these spaces.

Unfortunately when I went back to Ceuta, the immigrants whom I had met were no longer in the camp and it was impossible to build up trust in the short moment of my stay to convince any of them to join the

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¹ Open City: A notion by Rem Koolhaas that refers to the idea of creating open spaces for social interaction and cultural exchange in urban environments.
workshop. Therefore I based the functions on the interviews that I conducted during the initial field research, i.e. cooking, learning, relaxing, working and dreaming.

Vacant Sites

During this second field trip, I identified and selected five vacant urban sites where I could make use of leftover spaces in the urban fabric (lower drawing on this page).

The sites were all positioned next to the promenade, and as such were spaces not only for the local population but also for the immigrants, as it was their daily walk from the Ceti camp to the city center.

Installations as Relational Objects

I designed five relational objects along the promenade to respond to the needs that I had observed through conversations with the immigrants. The installations were to be adapted and appropriated through social activities in order to generate Lived Space. Here I will describe two of the five installations, as they appear the most relevant to me in the framework of this PhD.

The three cooking elements of the Meals on Wheels installation positioned in a vacant tunnel along the promenade could extend into the park (image and drawing on the next page). The mobile elements could be pulled out of the tunnel and be positioned in the public realm according to the needs of the user. Besides the mobile kitchen, in each of the elements I envisaged tables and benches, stored in the floor of each of the wagons, as a means of occupying the public realm. The mobile kitchen elements of Meals on Wheels were to fulfill the immigrants’ need to cook, which was at that time, taking place in the platforms, around the camp. The installation aimed to allow the immigrants to engage with each other in the public domain of the city of Ceuta, generating Lived Space in the public domain.

In Eurasica Steps I placed an installation along a vacant wall with two walkways in order to respond to the immigrants’ need for learning (drawings on page 30). One was to discover books on the European culture, the other for books on culture in Asia and Africa. The spaces where people could read the books were the spaces of encounter between locals and immigrants (upper drawing on page 30). In order to
Meals on Wheels installation I designed for immigrants to sell food to locals.

Image by Thierry Kandjee

Drawing of the Meals on Wheels installation. The tables and chairs are extended into the public space.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges

generate and make the Lived Space visible, the installation would have to change over time through use. When it was open and therefore used by people, the stores were open and you could see a wall full of books, furniture and people. At nighttime when it was closed, the installation turned into a space without any life (lower drawing on the next page).

Installations for Social Activities

The installation enabled immigrants to engage with the local population through social activities as cooking and selling African or Asian specialties. The immigrants' expertise of cooking would enable them to engage with local citizens to fulfill their need to earn some money and offer the local population the possibility to discover their delicious food. The intention was that people from different backgrounds would meet each other in order to overcome the cultural barrier.

Drawings of Installations

In order to make the drawings of the urban installations I used a similar way of drawing as for the visual representations in Asica enters Europe. I drew the built space in black lines and drew red lines over them in order to show how the space became used.

Drawing a City Map

I drew a city map for the immigrants as well as for the local population.

On the front they could find a map of Ceuta where the installations were positioned, along with the promenade and various reference points for the immigrants (drawing on page 31). In the map of the installations, I overlaid two different drawings. The grey map addressed all inhabitants of Ceuta who know their city. The red line includes the installations and the promenade of the immigrants. I added some of their key points, such as the Cruz Blanca (white cross) or the Monzalo Park, where the immigrants played Ping-Pong.

On the reverse there is an explanation of each of the five installations and adverts for some events that would take place there (drawing on page 32).
In the Eurasica Steps library, one of the walkways is for European books and one for Asican books. Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges

Rather than the built objects themselves, the goal of the project was the process of engaging with each other through social activities around the objects, thereby generating *Lived Space* in the public realm.

**Drawing Lived Space**

In *Asica enters Europe*, I observed how immigrants are using and appropriating the public realm, producing *Lived Space*, and I drew these occupations. In *A-life* I drew installations that would transform the space through its use into *Lived Space*.

At this time I was not yet producing *Lived Space* as in my subsequent work, but I was observing and drawing others producing *Lived Space* and later designing and drawing installations for others to produce *Lived Space*.

Both projects were the trigger for my research, on which I founded the spatial agency at the start of my PhD.

**Reference**

Front of the city map with the five installations. The drawing is done in a way to allow the immigrants as well as the locals to read the map.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges
You do not have a kitchen or feel like cooking outside? Or you feel like having a byriani from India or a Maffé from Africa? This open-air kitchen offers both: cooking under palmtrees or taking some streetfood and have a picnic in the surrounding park!

MEALS ON WHEELS

INSIGHT-OUT

Eurasica Steps

Continental Peepshow

You like gardening! or just go and pick some fresh, exotic vegetables or fruits! or just feel like taking a little breath from the bussed city-life for a picnic through being within it? In this oasis you can work, pick greenery or just relax... just go and explore it!

What a pity you cannot see Gibraltar being in the center of the city. This installation on the rooftop enables you to have an intimate relationship with the Peninsula by having a capsule for yourself, with the view to Gibraltar!

You like gardening! or just go and pick some fresh, exotic vegetables or fruits! or just feel like taking a little breath from the bussed city-life for a picnic through being within it? In this oasis you can work, pick greenery or just relax... just go and explore it!

Are you looking for sth. to do in your leisure-time? Would you like to get some more information about the A-LIFE project or watch a free movie in the evening? Maybe you feel like joining a workshop or see an exhibition about immigration from Asia to Europe? Here you find different activities, just pass by and join!

Educate yourself! In this cultural library you get any information about European and Asian culture: Maps, music, books and even free internet access allows you to enlarge your cultural knowledge!

Back of the city map showing the five installations. Different events invite people to join with one other in the installations.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges
Both projects were part of my Master’s thesis at the TU Delft. In Asica enters Europe I was observing and drawing Lived Space. In A-life I was designing and drawing installations for Lived Space.

1. Observation of Lived Space

Observing by Walking

I was observing Lived Space by walking. This is how I discovered the promenade of immigrants moving from the Ceti camp to Ceuta city center. I photographed people occupying the public realm and engaged with them in order to reveal some information about their origin and their current way of living in Ceuta.

For me observing through walking is a way to get to know a space not only from the bird’s-eye perspective of the planner, but from the lateral view, to understand how people inhabit space. I learned about the term lateral in the book Uncertain States of Europe¹, in which Stefano Boeri and his colleagues from Multiplicity refer to lateral thought and eclectic atlases². The eclectic atlases are a way of looking not only from above but also through the eyes of those who live in the space.

Observing by Engaging

Through engaging with the immigrants, I observed background
information about their lives and entered the public realm where they were producing *Lived Space*. I was also finding out about the routes of their arrival in Europe, about the camp in Morocco and about the platforms in the forest around the camp.

I engaged with the immigrants in different ways. Firstly I did so by conversations, secondly by mental maps and thirdly by cooking together with the immigrants in the platforms around the camp.

In both projects, *Asica enters Europe* and the design of installations in *A-life* the immigrants, rather than me as the designer, are the producers of the *Lived Space*. My role was first to observe and draw and later to design and draw relational objects that would allow for such a space.

**Observation of Lived Space**

Even though at this moment in time I was already observing immigrants’ needs through my conversations with them, which later informed the design of the installations, the main focus was the observation of *Lived Space*.

**What is the Observing doing?**

Whilst observing the *Lived Space* produced by the immigrants, I learned that this involves engaging with people. I could not simply photograph immigrants and picture them in a document, but I had to talk to them, ask them to draw maps of where they came from and cook together with them.

This social issue of observing *Lived Space*, and later needs, spatial capital and social capital, has remained an important part of my work as an agent up to today. The reason is that in my practice, observing largely occurs through engaging with people.

**2. Devices of / for Lived Space**

Through Engaging - for Engaging

In the *Asica enters Europe* project I engaged with the immigrants. Among other findings this allowed me to observe their needs, to which I responded through the design of the installations. In this sense, I consider that engaging is a device for *Lived Space*.

In the *A-life* project I designed urban installations that would allow the immigrants to engage with the local population, generating relations among one another. While in the *Meals on Wheels* stands the immigrants could cook food and sell it to the locals, in the *Eurasica Steps* installation they could encounter one another in the spaces that connected the stairs with the books on *Asican* culture to those with the books on European culture.

Both projects are the origin of the activity of engaging in my agency.

**Relational Objects**

The *A-life* project was about designing installations for *Lived Space*. Rather than observing relational objects used by the immigrants, I designed objects that could be activated by people, occupying and transforming the public realm of Ceuta. These drawings were produced in a similar way as for the *Lived Space* that I had observed before.

The *Meals on Wheels* installation, to give an example, was intended to offer the possibility to pull some cooking elements out of the vacant tunnel. By using these tools and setting up tables and chairs stored in the wagons, the installation would have enabled relational activities and therefore *Lived Space* in the park along the promenade (drawings on page 29).

The *Eurasica Steps* installation started to generate *Lived Space* by pulling up the blinds on each of the cubes, including those where people could sit to read the books about European or *Asican* culture and therefore meet each other (drawings on page 30).

**Social Activities**

All the installations are designed in a way to create encounters between the migrants and the local population, generating relations and therefore get to know one another. In the *Meals on Wheels* installation, I envisaged the installations such that immigrants could produce some food and sell it to the local citizens, in *Eurasica* people could engage on the protruding cubes while reading books about different cultures.

Whereas in the *Asica enters Europe* project I engaged with immigrants in the existing *Lived Space*, in the *A-life*
At this moment I did not have a client that would have financed such installations. Furthermore the installations would have needed a social worker as a mediator between the immigrants and the local citizens. The maintenance of the installations could have been achieved through minimal remuneration of volunteer immigrants and therefore generate another way of earning some money through the project.

This is where the political background of the project plays an important role. As the immigrants were not people very welcomed by the local population it would have probably been impossible to convince the local politicians to invest money and time to undertake such a project.

### 3. Documentation of Lived Space

**Photographing Lived Space**

One way of observing was by taking pictures. I asked immigrants if they minded having their pictures taken and took several photos of how they used space along the promenade, as well as their occupation of the platforms around the camp. I highlighted parts of the photos in red to make the ground they were occupying more visible (photos on pages 20, 25 and 26).

**Drawing Lived Space**

In the Asica enters Europe project I made red drawings of the occupation of space for the first time. For me they were a means to translate my findings of Lived Space into visual drawings. This was the goal for all the first semester students on the Master’s course.

I translated not only the mental maps into graphical plans but equally invented a typography specifically for this project to represent the interviews I conducted with the immigrants (drawing on page 22). In the beginning of the PhD I turned this typography into a font that I could use without having to draw and copy-past each of the letters manually. I still use this font in order to communicate what I find out through interviewing people (font on page 18).

In the drawings of the Asica enters Europe project the use of the space is already represented in red and overlay the surrounding landscape or city that I drew in grey. It was the first time in my career that I used this color and represented the dynamic use of space through drawings that were similar to a hand drawing. Both the Ceti camp and the city center are drawn in black, as they are spaces developed through architecture or city planning, whereas all drawings in red are plans of the Lived Space produced by people (images on pages 20, 21, 23 and 24).

Because the spaces changed each minute, each hour, each day, each week they represent a frozen moment in time.

In the drawings of the A-life project, similar to Asica enters Europe, the use of the space was represented in red and I drew the built space of the installations in black. Additionally, because the installations I designed were to change over time through use, I developed schemes for each of the installations to show the evolution of the space over time, generating Lived Space. (lower drawing on page 30).

**Mental Maps**

The mental map of the camp in Morocco drawn by Abu was a way to reveal the Lived Space that was invisible to me. Only by engaging with him was it possible to ask him to produce this drawing which I introduced into the documentation of the projects.

### 4. Communication of Lived Space

As both projects were part of my Master’s thesis I documented the existing Lived Space and the design of the installations solely for the purpose of communicating about the projects in the academic framework of the TU Delft. Looking back at the time and given how important the notion of immigration has become, it would have been interesting to communicate the project to a broader public through a publication or through an article in the media. The communication of my findings
and the design project might have
generated impact. Maybe other
architects would have questioned
the role of our profession in the
context of immigration. Nevertheless,
such communication would not
have incited anyone to occupy
the public realm. In any case, the
communication was and would have
only been of Lived Space and not for
Lived Space.

5. Lack of Impact

Besides having an impact upon my
own career through the discovery
of my interest in Lived Space
and therefore upon this PhD, the
project did not have any impact
beyond myself. The reason is that
I never took the initiative to expand
the project beyond an academic
exercise. To give the project a
chance of being realized, I would
have needed to engage with the
local politicians and present my
proposal to them.

6. Playing and Sharing Multiple
Roles

Throughout the projects I am playing
and sharing multiple roles.

The Observer

In the Asica enters Europe project
I took the role of the observer,
revealing and documenting how the
immigrants in Ceuta appropriate the
public realm and therefore change it
over time.

The Artist

When drawing the existing Lived
Space that I had observed and
drawing urban installations for Lived
space, I paid special attention to the
representation of my findings and
my proposals. This is why I consider
my role at this time as that of a visual
artist.

The Mediator

In my proposal for the relational
installations, I intended to generate
encounter between the immigrants
and the local populations. This is
why I designed the installations as
a mediator between people from
different backgrounds.

If the project had been realized, the
involvement of a mediator would
have been necessary. So on one
side I was the mediator, on the
other side the role would have been
shared with a social worker from
Ceuta.

Further Lessons from the Projects

I learned from this project that it
takes a certain amount of time to
build up trust with people. During my
first field trip, I stayed for two weeks
in Ceuta, which was enough time to
meet immigrants and build up trust
with some of them. This allowed me
to take photos and make drawings of
my findings. However, on an ethical
level, I did not give anything back to
them.

When I came back the second
time, the five days were too short to
build up trust and then organize a
workshop in which the people whom
I met would take part.

Positioning the Projects

At this time I discovered the
work of the Atelier Bow-Wow. In
their publication Pet Architecture
Guidebook they were representing
not people but buildings, which
they referred to as Living Spheres
(photo on the next page). Here they
observed several micro-architectural
buildings through photography that
were produced without the impact
of the architect. They call these
buildings da-me architecture, which
in English means ugly architecture.

I had a certain fascination for
these buildings. From my point of
view they represent Lived Space
though no people are visible in most
of the pictures. But the fact that
plants are expanding from these
micro-architectures and that you can
see the air-conditioning boxes on the
facades made them Lived Spaces
or, as the Atelier Bow-Wow calls them, Living Spheres.

Their way of drawing is different
in that they made axonometric
drawings of the buildings they
observed. This diverges from my
way of observing and making
visual representations. I also took
pictures of the occupation of the
public realm by people. My drawing
superimposed the space used by
people in red over the built space
drawn in black.

At the time when I was designing
the installations, I was also strongly
influenced by the micro-public space
of the architectural office Atelier
Bow-Wow. The White Limousine Yatai (photos on the next page) is a similar object to the Meals on Wheels installation (images on page 29). The designers of the White Limousine Yatai were inspired by street vendors in Tokyo and reproduced what they had observed, simply switching it through a prolongation of such a vehicle.

As in Meals on Wheels, all of the elements were designed for cooking. The stairs are also situated inside the movable object. Both installations produce the possibility to cook on the installation and to create a space where people could share a meal together and therefore generate encounters.

What is different between Atelier Bow-Wow’s White Limousine Yatai and my Meals on Wheels installation is that their object was not designed for encounters between immigrants and the local society, which was a central aspect of my project. Furthermore, whereas their project was produced, the design of my installations was simply drawn on paper.

**Drawing Lived Space: Origin of the Practice**

The projects are the origin of my research into the role of the architect in the social production of Lived Space in the public realm. I was fascinated in the way space can change over time depending on how people use and appropriate it through relational objects or social activities. In my experience as an architecture student this was something totally new to me.

Observing and drawing Lived Space and later designing and drawing installations for Lived Space was the first step in acting between the built and the lived, an issue that Mel Dodd addressed in her PhD. It allowed me to discover devices that I could use in order to design relational installations for Lived Space. In addition I included the notion of economy in my way of designing.

Although I paid a lot of attention to the documentation of my findings and my design proposal for the installations, I did not yet communicate the drawings to anyone beyond the academic community. This is why I did not generate any impact through the projects besides upon my own
career of practice-based research into the role of the designer in the social production of *Lived Space* in the public realm.

In both projects I played multiple roles in designing installations that ranged from observer to artist and mediator.

As a Master’s student I felt obliged to design and draw built space, something which I did through the installations. In the projects in the next chapter I let go of this force and concentrated increasingly on producing *Lived Space*, in which the physical input were often minimal but still necessary to re-produce, co-produce or initiate *Lived Space*.

The title of the project *A-life* later inspired the name of my practice: *Alive Architecture*. In the following chapters, I will reveal how I started, built and finally grounded my spatial agency.

**References**

2. Stefano Boeri, 1997, eclectic atlases, Documenta 3, Kassel
4. Mel Dodd’s, 2011, PhD, Between the Lived and the Built: Foregrounding the User in Design for the Public Realm, Melbourne, RMIT University
In the projects I referred to in the first chapter, I was first observing and drawing and later designing and drawing Lived Space.

In this second chapter, I will describe the projects Visible Invisible (2010) and Fairground Pleasures (2011) through which I started the practice.

I was first observing and then reproducing Lived Space. In Visible Invisible I copy-pasted a sex-worker’s window into another neighbourhood to try to bring about encounter for an inclusive city. In Fairground Pleasures I did so by copy-pasting what I had previously observed in the same space.

Whereas other people took most of the photos in both projects, in the observation part of Fairground Pleasures I took one picture per minute to record the fairground for a duration of sixteen hours. I turned these pictures into a short two-minute film and added anecdotal drawings in order to highlight key moments when the public realm was changing over time. This was the first time that I worked with film in my practice.

Whilst I presented the Fairground Pleasures project only in the academic context, in the Visible Invisible project I started to communicate my work to inhabitants and experts in prostitution through a closure event.

Through having moved from drawing to reproducing Lived Space, I generated an ephemeral impact upon the public realm. Furthermore the Visible Invisible project is the origin of the follow-up Infrared project, which I will discuss in Chapter Three.

In both projects I played different roles, ranging from observer, artist and mediator to client. From the projects I learned to produce Lived Space myself, through developing the courage to act in the public realm.

In the conclusion of the reflection, I reveal the shifts that occurred in my work between the previous and this second chapter.
The Visible Invisible project was an invitation by the architect and artist Jean-François Pirson to set-up an exhibition at his Atelier in Brussels. The Atelier consists of a window in which a different installation is set up or which is used to present the work of a designer for the duration of one month. I asked the social worker and photographer Stijn Beeckman to develop the project together with me. Rather than setting up an exhibition of our work, we searched for a means to turn the window into a Lived Space.

Observing Lived Space

During my weekly bicycle rides from home to Sint-Lucas Architectuur I happened to cross the Brussels red-light district. The windows inhabited by the women inspired me for the exhibition. They were revealing a Lived Space behind a window, exactly as we were seeking to do.

Rather than copy-pasting one of the windows directly, we started to observe the neighbourhood and talk to people to find out more about the spatial situation of the neighbourhood. In order to observe the space we did not spend time on google maps, but on walking around the red-light district.

We discovered two prostitution neighbourhoods located next to each other. In one area in and around the Groenstraat one single woman, mainly from Africa or Belgium, rents the so-called carrés (left photo on the next page).

Carrés: the windows of the sex-workers in the area around the Groenstraat
Picture of a carré in the area around the Groenstraat
Photo by Stijn Beeckman

Drawing on the image above reveals the elements which show how the space is changing over time.
Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Sex workers window in the rue d’Aerschot.
Photo by Stijn Beeckman

Madame x from Prague
35 Euro / 12h for renting the vitrine
40 euro / 15 minutes for a woman
average client: rather young, rough crowds
“The girls come over, sometimes just for 2 month in summer and afterwards go back to Bulgaria. They earn the mony here to pay their studies back home.”
“The doctor is passing once a week. The girls can get treated for free. Whenever a man is getting violent we call the police. They are here in 2 minutes, running down the street.”
The sex-workers are situated behind windows in armchairs and the window is positioned in a mixed neighbourhood with housing blocks, some shops, a pharmacy and some bars and restaurants. The space behind the window in this area is appropriated through the use of personal belongings and therefore generates a *Lived Space*. It changes over time as a curtain in the front is closed once the sex-workers are busy with a client.

In the other area, the *rue d’Aerschot*, women rent one of the stools behind the window for only a month or two *(right photo on the previous page)*. Many of the sex-workers come from Bulgaria during their study break to earn a living. The mixed use in the street is very limited. Apart from two nights shops mainly selling alcohol, there are no other functions than prostitution in the street.

**Engaging with Women behind the Windows**

Walking through the red-light district, we tried to engage with people to have some conversations with them. This turned out to be more difficult than expected. As the sex-workers earn between 25 and 40 euros per 15 minutes, it appeared to be the same price for us if we wanted to ask them questions. Here is one interview we conducted with a woman working in a window in the neighbourhood around the *Groenstraat*, the so-called *carrés*:

‘I came here some years ago. I took over the place from a friend who left. Thus I pay the rent of a space. I am completely by myself, there is no one else involved, but I know the other girls in the street. My house and home is in Antwerp.’ Evelyn from Nigeria.

Here one interview that we conducted with a woman renting the stools to women in the *rue d’Aerschot*:

‘What remains the main problem is the exclusion of the girls from normal society. People judge their profession and therefore the girls. This comes from a lack of knowledge about them. Prostitution is the oldest profession in the world and a job like any other. I wish for the girls that this will change one day!’

Anonymous bar owner in the *rue d’Aerschot*. 

Visible Invisible behind the window of the Atelier of Jean-François Pirson during the day.
Photo by Stijn Beeckman
Visible Invisible behind the window of the Atelier of Jean-François Pirson open during the night.
Photo by Stijn Beeckman

Visible Invisible behind the window of the Atelier of Jean-François Pirson closed during the night.
Photo by Stijn Beeckman

 Modes of Lived Space

As the women inhabit the space behind the window for twelve hours per day, they appropriate the windows as though they were a domestic place. However, as they are searching to build up relations with the client, the Lived Space is also in direct relation to the street, contributing to the public realm.

In order to attract the clients, the women act behind the window by performing for passers-by in the public realm.

Copy-pasting the Windows

In order to generate an exhibition in the Atelier, we made a copy-paste of the windows of both areas to the rather sophisticated neighbourhood where the Atelier is located (photos on the previous and this page). We decorated the window in the same way as we observed in the red-light district. The right side of the door represented the windows around the Groenstraat and the left side the windows in the rue d’Aerschot.

We placed red neon lights and both sides had a curtain in the front and the back as we had previously observed in the red-light district. We also installed elements of what we had observed in the red-light district, such as cigarettes, heaters, clothes, etc. to copy-paste the appropriation of the space.

On the television behind the window we presented a PDF of our findings in the neighbourhood. We put together the photographs of Stijn Beeckman and my anecdotal drawings of what Stijn photographed. We combined the pictures and drawings with the two interviews to form a presentation (Photos and drawing on page 41). Through a sign on the window we asked the following question to the passer-by:

What would you think if your neighbourhood turned red?

Engaging with Multiple People

Reactions went beyond anything we imagined. On the day we set-up the installation, the town planning official visited us and the police were called by the neighbours for a reality check. People started to talk about it and passing cars reversed, as they could not believe their eyes.
Stijn and I spent some time next to the window to engage with people who owned a shop close-by or who were passing to find out their feelings. Here some of the reactions:

‘For me this is more of an event than an installation. Almost all my clients ask me about the vitrine. Some are surprised, some are afraid that their neighbourhood could become a red-light district. I tell them it’s a temporary intervention. Then they laugh and seem relieved it is not real!’ Bookshop owner across the street

‘We think it’s a brothel, but we are not sure. We never see a woman inside and the cigarette box on the chair does not move. It is mysterious. As long as there is no use in the vitrine we don’t mind about it. But if we see a woman, not just us, but people in the neighbourhood would complain. The vitrine would be gone in less than a month.’ Passer-by

‘People are passing by and then walk back, so do the cars. They cannot believe what they see!’ Shop-owner next door

‘When I enter the building, men sometimes ask me for the price. I feel very uncomfortable about it. Would you mind if I switch-off the light when I leave and put it back on once back? Thanks.’ Woman living in the building of the Atelier

Because of the way the window not only brought the street to life but also annoyed those inhabiting the building, as men were ringing at nighttime to see a sex-worker, the exhibition was closed down several days before its envisaged closure.

We organized a closing event and invited the owner of the Atelier, shop-owners, experts on prostitution, people from the city and anyone else interested in the topic. Here some extracts from the exchange we had with people:

‘I grew up in a neighbourhood with red-light activities. There was a link between the women in the windows and the inhabitants, as housing and vitrines were mixed. There was communication between the women and inhabitants, as well as helping out when a woman was having problems.’ Participant at the closure event from Liège

‘The initiative is excellent. I would love to have some vitrines in my neighbourhood, it would be quieter than the Portuguese bar downstairs. It’s a very calm area, with beautiful love-stories happening: imagine a boy coming to see a woman aged 17. He might still come when he is 70 years old. We are too quick to judge people who work in prostitution, it is a profession like any other.’ Catherine François, expert on prostitution

‘We put up a sign saying ON VACATION because people started to ring on the door to meet a woman. Apparently this was not enough. After someone rang in the middle of the night to meet a girl we had to close down the vitrine a few days before the closure event. Never in 14 years had there been such activity around an installation in this window. It was very alive and active. That is why it’s good it will be over now and we can go back to normal life.’ Jean-François Pirson, architect-artist who is curating designers in the Atelier

The message we received from this exchange on our project was that it addressed an interesting issue but that our help would be needed more in the red-light district itself or more specifically the problematic situation of the rue d’Aerschot.

Documenting our Findings

As I was collaborating with the photographer and social worker Stijn Beeckman, he was the one who documented the sex-workers’ windows through photography (photos on page 41). I made anecdotal drawings of what Stijn photographed (drawing on page 41). I highlighted what I recognized as elements that generated change over time through the use of the space behind the windows by adding a few words.

Furthermore I documented the conversations we had with the women occupying the windows or with passers-by. I therefore used the font that I devised for the Asica enters Europe project and that I use throughout this PhD to reveal the conversations (fond in red on this page).

Although the interviews we conducted with women using the windows in Brussels’ red-light district were part of the presentation on the screen in the Atelier, the conversations that we recorded during and after the event were only used for my PhD presentations.
Ephemeral Lived Space

The exhibition in the window lasted for one month. At this time I did not feel the need to move the project beyond the ephemeral. When the project ended, my responsibility for what the window was ended and I concentrated on other obligations in my practice and research.

However the feedback we received during the closure event is the origin of the Infrared project that I will reveal in the third chapter.
I initiated the project based upon the experience of travelling by bicycle in my home city of Brussels. I crossed the fairground that takes place there every summer and lasts for 40 days. Starting by observing the event, I later continued my work through acting after the trailers and stands had moved to another city.

I initiated the project because of the necessity to move from observing to producing *Lived Space* in the beginning of my practice research.

### Documenting through Film

I decided to record the change of the space over time, in the zone of the fair where the street was transformed into a pedestrian road. I started to record the *Lived Space* at 11 am from the terrace of a bar positioned across the road from the fairground, before the stands were open. The owners allowed me to spend the day at one of the tables.
The fairground is partly situated on the car park, partly transforming a street into a space for people.

Photo by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

and I positioned my camera in a way to photograph both sides of the road: the one with the candy floss stand in the fairground and the other with a terrace extending from the existing bars for the duration of the fair.

For the entire 16 hours, I took one picture per minute. I finished recording at 3 am, after the stands were closed and when the last people left the terrace. So I created a series of still photographs over a long period of time (Photos on pages 48, 49 and 50).

I made a two-minute movie from the pictures and highlighted different moments through drawn anecdotes. These show five different types of use of the space by people over time. In the morning when the stands are still closed, children play in the street and it becomes an event space while the fairground is open. In the evening more people visit the fair and in the late evening when the stands close the terrace remains open for people to have drinks. In this period the street is partly reused by cars.

On the following link is for the film of the Fairground Pleasures project: http://www.alivearchitecture.eu/index.php/?/urban-margins/fairground-pleasures-film/

Engaging with Local Actors

Once the fairground had moved on, I went back to the site to engage with people, asking them their opinion about the presence of the fair in the neighbourhood. I was surprised about the positive reactions:

“Of course we like the fair. It attracts so many customers. We expand our terrace to the street to accommodate all these people.” bar owner

“It is a pity the fair lasts only about a month. The kids love it because they can play on the street. Usually the space is crowded by cars.” inhabitant of street & father

Copy-pasting the Fairground

Through three actions, I turned the street where the fairground took place into an ephemeral pedestrian area for the duration of one afternoon (photo on page 52).

Pedestrian Crossing

First I painted a crossing between the sidewalk and the car park, where I later placed the Barbe à Papa.
expansion of terraces of existing bars while funfair pedestrian zone while funfair kid’s playing stands still closed loudspeakers turned off
drawn by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

attractions & open stalls draw people into space expanded existing terraces
space getting crowded elderly couple

drawn by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Picture taken around 11.00 of the space between the fairground stalls and the bars on the opposite site.
Photo by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Picture taken around 15.00 of the space between the fairground stalls and the bars on the opposite site.
Photo by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
terrace getting crowded

melted spaces through occupation

loudspeakers

amusement attractions

youngsters

increase

sounds getting louder

terraces remain crowded

maximum of lights to attract people

Drawing of the picture, highlighting some of the elements that turn the street into a space for people.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
This would allow people to cross the street to get to the stand (photos on pages 52 and 53).

Although the stripes were 3 meters long and 50 cm wide like other pedestrian crossings, they were not positioned next to one other. The reason for this at the time was my questioning of where design fits into my work. I suppose that the pedestrian crossing would have been used more if it had been a true drawing.

Barbe à Papa

I installed a candy floss stand on the side of the car park at one end of the pedestrian crossing. I did not design the stand, but accepted this time that the design was to set-up the relational object and not how it looked. In order to make it more visual I added an umbrella (photos on pages 52 and 54).

People’s Street

After about one hour testing the pedestrian crossing and inviting people to get a candy floss I blocked the street with a plastic tape barrier to turn the space into an ephemeral pedestrian road (photos on pages 52 and 55).

Passers by started to bicycle on the street, walked their dogs or came to get a candy floss (photos on pages 54, 55 and 56). It was an ephemeral moment of turning the street into a space for people, as was the case while the fairground took place. After three hours, a garbage truck honked twice and then crossed the plastic tape and drove onto the street.

In doing this action I did not ask for authorization from the police.

Documenting through Photography

As I was acting myself, I could not record myself doing so. This is why I invited a colleague to take some pictures of me acting. I did not yet record the action through film as I did for the fairground, as will be described in the next chapter.

Ephemeral Lived Space

I made a poster in which I proposed turning the street into a pedestrian
road and hung it in the local bars and shops (image on this page). This allowed me to engage with people and ask them their opinion about my idea.

Unfortunately I did not formally record the exchanges I had with people on that day, but I do remember that they were rather skeptical about the idea, as the street is needed for delivery services.

This is why the final proposition that I presented at my third Practice Research Symposium presentation in November 2011 was a street that could be closed temporarily but on a regular basis, for example every Sunday (image on page 57).

In this way the cafés could expand their spaces into the street by setting up outdoor terrace seating, as was the case when the fairground was on the site. It would on the one hand attract people to the cafés and therefore increase the economic income of the bars; on the other it would turn the street from a car space into a space for people.

I used the project only as a speculative proposition but never presented it to the locals or to the politicians to take this idea further.

This is why the action remained an ephemeral project that never achieved any continuation.
I undertook three actions after the fair ended. I drew a pedestrian crossing, set up a Candy Floss stand and closed the street temporarily to cars to make it a space lived by people.

Photo by Christophe Antipas
Myself painting a pedestrian crossing onto the street after the fairground left.

Photo by Christophe Antipas
Picture of myself selling candy-floss at an informal stand after the fairground left.

Photo by Christophe Antipas
In the People’s Street action, I was testing if it could become a space for people after the fair left.

Photo by Christophe Alleray
Photo of people are using the street. I closed it to make an ephemeral pedestrian road.

Photo by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
Possibility of the continuation of *Fairground Pleasures* presented at the PRS in November 2011.

Image by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
In the first chapter I explained how I drew *Lived Space*, first of immigrants who were occupying the public realm and later of relational installations for them to meet the local population and produce *Lived Space* in the public realm. In this second chapter I present how I observed space that changes over time and how I reproduced the *Lived Space* that I had observed through relational actions.

1. Observation of / for Lived Space

*Observing through Walking*

In both projects I observed the space not through studying plans, as is usually the case in architecture and urban design, but through walking. This is similar to how I observed *Lived Space in Asica enters Europe* and other projects before I started this PhD (images on page 206, 207 and 208).

In *Fairground Pleasures* I was observing how the stands were positioned on the opposite side of the terraces along the street and how people use the space in the in-between area. In *Visible Invisible* I was observing how the spaces behind the windows change over time through their occupation by sex-workers.

*Observing through Engaging*

In both projects I was observing through engaging, similar to what I had already done in *Asica enters Europe*. 
In *Visible Invisible* I engaged with people by knocking on the sex-workers’ windows and asking them some questions about their background and the neighbourhoods.

During the closure event I engaged with inhabitants and experts on prostitution in order to observe their point of view of our proposal.

In *Fairground Pleasures* I talked to people in the street after the fair had ended. I asked them about their relation to the fairground and if they considered it as something positive or negative and why they did so.

**Observing through Acting**

Through my presence during the actions I could engage with passers-by. This allowed me to observe their opinion about my proposals of closing the street to cars to make it a space for people.

**Observation of and for Lived Space**

As I reproduced the events that I was observing in both of these projects, they were not only an observation of but also for Lived Space.

**What is Observing doing?**

Observing helped me to identify existing Lived Space and background information on the site and later, during the actions, people’s opinions of my work.

**2. Devices for Lived Space**

In both projects I reproduced the Lived Spaces that I had observed before through relational actions. This was a very spontaneous way to start producing Lived Space.

**Through Engaging - for Engaging**

In both projects I was engaging with the locals. It enabled me to discover background information about the site. Later, the installations enabled me to engage with passers-by. I could find out their opinions about the actions that I created.

In addition, both relational actions allowed people to engage with one another. This was for example the case when customers in the shop next to the window of the *Visible Invisible* project started to discuss with the owner when they saw...
the installation. In the *Fairground Pleasures* project, people started to engage with one another while waiting for their candy floss.

**Relational Actions**

In *Visible Invisible* I would have liked to act myself in the window in order to turn the space into a *Lived Space*. Unfortunately this was not possible because the exhibition lasted for one month. Nevertheless it was the first time that I produced an action in relation to the public realm. We copy-pasted the windows where the sex-workers performed to relate to their potential clients to the *Atelier* of *Jean-François Pirson*.

In *Fairground Pleasures* I reproduced a pedestrian street and a candy floss stand. After having recorded the Fairground and the change of space over time through several photographs, I copy-pasted through minimal means one fairground stand that generated spatial use of the street by people. I also closed the street for cars.

Whereas in *Visible Invisible* it was very difficult to engage with sex-workers in order to reveal knowledge about the red-light district, when we set up the window in the Atelier, it was much easier to ask passers-by questions. People could engage with the installation and react to how they felt about their neighbourhood turning red as they could relate to the installation that we set-up.

In both projects I produced spaces that would generate change of space over time through use. It was not important to me to generate something new, but to repeat and therefore test through minimal means the relational space I had observed. On the one hand, activation occurred through the change of the space itself, as *Jean-François Pirson* was opening and closing the curtains behind the window in the *Visible Invisible* project, and as I was activating the candy floss stand. On the other hand change occurred in the way people related to it, such as the people passing the window or the candy floss stand.

The approach of producing relational actions for engaging with people will be developed further in *Infrared* in the next chapter. In the project I engage with people through the *flash paint* action in order to find out about the needs of sex-workers and potential clients.
Urban Entrepreneurship

In the Visible Invisible project the Lived Space behind the windows in Brussels red-light district only exists because it is a way for the sex-workers to make a living.

In the Fairground Pleasures project I recorded the fairground that also only exists in order to generate an economy for the fairground workers. As I copy-pasted the Barbe à Papa candy floss stand of the fairground to create one of the actions of the project, I generated an economy for myself by selling candy floss. However, I did not do so in order to make a living, but to further my practice-research.

The windows in the rue d’Aerschot as the Fairground are both a form of urban entrepreneurship and therefore generate Lived Space.

What is the Re-Producing doing?

Through reproducing Lived Space I learned that I could generate an impact upon the site where I was working. I could bring about relations with the passers-by through my actions by spending very little money and a few hours in the public realm to reproduce Lived Space for a very limited moment in time.

3. Documentation of Lived Space

Photographing Lived Space

In Visible Invisible the photographer Stijn Beeckman documented the windows of the sex-workers and the window that we activated in the Atelier (upper photo on this page). Therefore the photos are of a higher quality than is the case in Fairground Pleasures.

Here I asked a colleague to take pictures of me acting. This was necessary, as at this time I did not have the equipment to document myself while acting. I was busy selling candy floss to passers-by or closing the street to cars.

Filming Lived Space

In the observation phase of Fairground Pleasures, I used a camera to take one picture per minute and turned them into a short two-minute film (lower photo on this page). I took this decision in order
to document and communicate how the space would change over time. I was no longer documenting a single moment of the Lived Space but the process of people’s use of space.

Drawing Lived Space

This way of pointing out a Lived Space equally evolved in the way I was drawing. In Visible Invisible, I was drawing a moment in time of one window and called the image change of space over time by use (upper drawing on this page). In the Fairground Pleasures movie, I chose to draw five moments throughout the movie that show how the space is changing over time (lower drawing on this page). This is an evolution in how I was documenting and highlighting the importance of process-based space when referring to Lived Space.

At this time I was not yet making films of myself acting, which will be a new learning experience in the next chapter. Recording Lived Space through filming and making anecdotal drawings will be developed further in the projects in the next chapter.

4. Communication of Lived Space

In the Visible Invisible project we communicated our findings of the Brussels red-light district through the exhibition behind the window in Jean-François’ Atelier. We placed a television screen and presented a PDF document with all the photos and drawings.

Furthermore, we organized a closing event and invited inhabitants, experts on prostitution and friends in order to exchange upon our project.

For the Fairground Pleasures project I did not invite any friends or colleagues to join the event as I was somewhat embarrassed about the minimal impact that I generated through these ephemeral events. I communicated about the project only in the framework of my PhD within the academic world and in some conferences in order to describe my practice-research.

Learning from the closing event of Visible Invisible which was the origin of the follow-up project Infrared, it would have been interesting in the Fairground Pleasures project to organize an event with inhabitants and politicians in order to present the project to them and discuss my...
proposal for closing the street to cars for ephemeral events.

As I was not yet inviting anyone to visit the actions, the communication did not generate any Lived Space. This is why in this chapter the communication was of and not for Lived Space.

5. Ephemeral Impact

In Visible Invisible, the project did not have any impact beyond the ephemeral action. However because we organized the closing event, people invited us to reflect and act in Brussels' red-light district. Therefore I continued my reflections upon the role of the architect in the Brussels red-light district in the Infrared project, as I will describe in the next chapter.

The Fairground Pleasures project did not generate any impact beyond the period of the afternoon. I envisaged the People's Street action and the ephemeral closure of the street as a test. If the project had been a success, it may have become durational as first drawn on the poster (image on page 51) and later on the proposal presented in the PhD presentation (image on page 57). However, as I never showed this proposal either to engaged inhabitants who could have taken leadership to realize the proposal or to politicians, the impact remained ephemeral.

It was difficult for me to recognize that even small actions like the Barbe à Papa and People's Street that take place only for a short moment do have a value.

6. Playing and Sharing Multiple Roles

The Observer

In both projects I adopted the role of observer. In the Visible Invisible project together with Stijn I was observing and documenting the Lived Space behind the windows in Brussels' red-light district. In addition I was presenting some opinions of the sex-workers through my interviews with them. I shared the role of observer with Stijn Beeckman. As a social worker he is quite used to engaging with people and asking questions, something that was very helpful for me.

The Artist

In the provocative Visible Invisible project we copy-pasted the windows that we had observed into the neighbourhood where the Atelier is positioned. Even though no woman inhabited the window of the Atelier, the movement of the curtain by Jean-François Pirson generated a performance, as is the case for the women in the red-light district. The fact that the project was a performance and that it was provocative are the reasons that I consider my role in this project as an artist. As when we observed the windows in the red-light district, I did not act on my own but also shared the role with Stijn.

In the Fairground Pleasures project I produced several urban actions in the public domain after the fairground had left. As such events are very common in urban art, I played the role of the artist.

The Client

Looking back at Visible Invisible, I was facing several critical issues. Besides getting attention for my project to intend to overcome the marginalization of the role of prostitution, I could not generate anything positive either for the sex-workers or for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood where I was acting. Likewise in Fairground Pleasures, I could generate surprise in people about the action, but I could not offer any lasting positive impact in what I was doing.

In the third PRS presentation, the question was raised of who are the clients of my projects. In both projects I did not work for any specific people but my client was actually myself.

The Mediator

The Visible Invisible installation was a way to propose a more inclusive city, by claiming that we could overcome the exclusion of such fragile neighborhoods in our city.

Similar to the A-life project, I proposed an encounter among people from different backgrounds,
designing the relational installation as a mediator.

Further Lessons from the Projects

Both projects represent the first time in my practice that I was not only observing but was reproducing Lived Space. Even though the actions were taking place only for a limited period, I learned to go out on the street and actually produce something that was going to transform the public realm.

Positioning the Projects

Tactical Urbanism

All my work at this time can be compared to what Mike Lydon defines as Tactical Urbanism1. He describes it as a means to create quick and effective urban interventions.

Pedestrian Crossing

After having undertaken the Pedestrian Crossing action, I found out about one of the projects by Jason Roberts from the Team Better Block2. He was painting a pedestrian crossing on a street to test his idea in real-time and to see how a community interacts with it later on (upper photo on this page).

The project is very similar to what I did when I drew the People’s Street action (lower photo on this page). Still Jason Roberts’ project has a more honest message than my intervention. While I was moving each of the stripes to the left or the right to make the action more interesting, Jason Roberts simply drew a pedestrian crossing as such to cross the street.

People’s Street

The office Suede 36 from Brussels created a similar test ground in 2012 as the action People’s Street through which I was closing the street to cars in order to make it a space for people (photos on the next page).

In the project Walking Madou, they transformed a street for the duration of several months into a space for people. They painted whole parts of the street in yellow and barred cars from the area, turning a street into a space for people.
While *Suede 36*‘s project was conducted for a period of six months with a budget of 50,000 euros, my project with a plastic rubber was conducted for one afternoon with a budget of 5 euros. Additionally the *Walking Madou* project took place in an official framework and involved politicians.

*Producing Lived Space: Shifts in the Practice*

At this time I was rather lost as to what I meant by *Alive Architecture*.

This PhD research is about how drawing the public realm in which people produce *Lived Space* can inform my *Alive Architecture* practice. Through this second chapter, four crucial shifts occurred.

The first and main shift is that whereas in the projects in Chapter One I was producing drawings first of what I had observed and later of the design proposal, in the projects in this chapter I was first observing existing *Lived Space* and later reproducing what I had to make *Lived Space*. This was a way of generating an impact upon the public realm, even though it was ephemeral.

The second shift is that the production of relational actions allowed me to engage with people and therefore to advance from observing existing *Lived Space* to observing people’s opinion of my proposal for the public realm.

A third shift from the first to this second chapter is that I documented an existing *Lived Space* for the first time through several photographs, and assembled them to make a short two-minute film. This was a way not only to draw frozen moments of *Lived Space* but also to record the important change of space over time through use of the *Lived Space*. Moreover, I no longer drew plans of the *Lived Space*, but instead of people and the *Lived Space* they were producing from a lateral perspective. I introduced these drawings into the film in order to highlight different moments that exemplified how the space changed over time through its use.

A fourth shift is that I organized a closure event for the *Visible Invisible* project and therefore communicated the project to inhabitants and experts on prostitution. This allowed...
me to engage with people in order to exchange upon our projects. As people expressed that it would be interesting to invest our energy in Brussels red-light district, it became the source of the *Infrared* project that I will explain in the next chapter.

I did not yet know why I was acting or what the goal of it was for me. This is because I am trained as an architect, so I needed to find a client beyond myself for my actions.

In the next chapter I will reveal how my agency changed from *re-producing* to *co-producing* Lived Space.

References


In the previous chapter I showed how I started the practice. I observed *Lived Space* and then reproduced it in order to generate *Lived Space*.

In this third chapter I present *Infrared* (2012) and *Licht-ing* (2013), through which I built up the practice. I use the term *building* because I consider that at this time I was still discovering what I actually meant by *Alive Architecture*.

In both projects I first observed the spatial capital and needs of the local inhabitants. Later I observed the action through my presence at the site. This is why I started my work not through observation of *Lived Space* but observation for *Lived Space*.

Rather than producing the *Lived Space* on my own, I involved other people in order to co-produce the *Lived Space* with them.

I documented the actions by recording them through short movies and, as in *Fairground Pleasures*, introduced red drawings to highlight some different moments during the events. Furthermore I made drawings of the people I had interviewed.

In both projects I communicated about the actions in order to have a public. Furthermore I invited the politicians for one of the action as well as the local popular media to communicate about the projects. Through the politicians visiting the *People’s Wall* exhibition and through the media communicating about the *Piadina Wagon* action, it was possible to generate follow-up projects beyond the ephemeral actions.

While the *Licht-ing* project did not have any impact beyond the ephemeral events I was organizing, the *Infrared* project had an afterlife beyond my presence on the site. The *Piadina Wagon* continued to sell their delicious Italian food, while the exhibition on the wall was probably the reason why the call for ideas for the *rue d’Aerschot* was launched. However, the economy generated through the project ended up with people from outside the neighborhood.

As in the projects in the previous chapter, I played and shared different roles in the actions and for the first time in my work I adopted the role of activist.

A further lesson from the projects is that when working with people and attempting to generate impact beyond my presence at the site, it is important to live near enough to the site in order to return on a daily base.

In the conclusion of the reflections I will present in more detail the shifts in my practice from the previous to this third chapter.
Within the framework of the 60th anniversary of Jonction, the Brussels north-south railway connection, I was invited together with Stijn Beeckman and Barbara Roosen to reflect upon the neighbourhood of Brussels' red-light district. While Barbara developed several urban proposals for the Kwatrechtstraat, Stijn together with a colleague made a movie of the Kwatrechtstraat and the rue d'Aerschot.

I concentrated on engaging with some local actors to reveal their needs, developed some propositions on how to improve the quality of life in the street through small transformations and tested three of them through ephemeral actions.

The reason I focused on the red-light street itself is the previous project on red-light issues, Visible Invisible, which I discussed in the previous chapter. During the closing event, several people asked us to move our actions to the undervalued prostitution street, the rue d'Aerschot (photo on the next page).

Our work was exhibited once a month in the Brussels-based gallery Recyclart.

### Observing for Lived Space

**Observing Space**

As in the previous chapter, I was observing space. I no longer observed the Lived Space already...
Photo taken of the rue d’Aershot. On the left is the grey wall while on the right are the sex-workers’ windows.

Photo by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
activated by sex-workers, as was the case in the Visible Invisible project, but instead observed spaces that had potential to be developed.

I noted that along the street there were eight windows that represented vacant space. I recognized the 400-meter long grey wall opposite the windows. Taking the train to Ghent and watching the upper floors of the buildings in the rue d’Aerschot, I also noticed the many apparently vacant spaces on the upper floors.

**Observing Needs**

I started by engaging with the users of the street to find out about the needs that I could address through the project (drawings and texts on page 71, 72 and 74). Although it was quite simple to exchange with the people working in associations, shops, the house of priest and the Magic Land theatre, it was very difficult to get to talk with sex-workers or the men in the street.

Here is some of the information that I found out at the start of my work, by discussing with the local people who were open to expressing their ideas:

> 'What is missing here are places designated as having other functions than prostitution. If the ambiance of the street changed, the street would become open to other people than those involved in prostitution. If we look at Amsterdam it is the opposite: Tourists go there and people live there, it is not a neglected neighbourhood.' Françoise Deville

> 'What is most annoying here is that the street is very grey and sad, I would wish for some green in the street.' Aurelia, trainee at l’Attitude Nord

> 'I would like a restaurant. A place where we could eat Italian food would be good. Each day we eat Moroccan in the Brabantstraat, it’s boring.' Rossi with her dog Carla, client in the nightshop

> 'The wall is very grey. A bit of color on it would improve the ambiance in the street.' Séverine, Akzent association

The exchange was not too surprising in one of the most run-down streets of Brussels. Even though those were valuable findings I was still unable to engage with the main users of the street, especially the sex-workers, to discuss their needs for the street. They spend 12 hours per day behind the ground floor windows making a living. But how could I gain access to them?

**Acting for Observing**

Having recognized the many vacant spaces in the street I wished to generate occupation of them through functions other than prostitution, in order to generate mixed use on the street. As I neither had a budget to activate one of those spaces myself, nor a client that would have financed such a project, I undertook two actions in order to propose a possible use of those spaces. These actions allowed me to engage with the main users of the street: the sex-workers and their potential clients.

The first action was related to the signs in the windows of the so-called bars advertising for saleswomen: cherche serveuse (upper photo on page 72). If the existing windows could use signs to search for sex-workers, I set up signs to search for a person to rent the space on each of the eight vacant ground floors (lower photo on page 72). I set up an email address which I placed on the signs, but never received a single email.

However this action turned out to be successful to engage with people in the rue d’Aerschot for several reasons, especially with passing men (drawing and text on page 72). Firstly because they paid attention to me when I was hanging up the signs. Secondly, the signs had a similar graphical code as the familiar signs for cherche vendeuse, so people were familiar with the visual means.

> 'Are you renting a space? I am very interested! Here the shop is not mine as I work for someone. If there was another ground floor I would like to rent it. Could you keep me updated?' Singh, worker in the night shop, rue d’Aerschot

> 'This space is to rent? How much is it? I know a lot of people that are looking for a place in the area. Not necessarily to turn it into a prostitution salon, it could be something else.' Kris, passer-by

> 'How much is the space and how big is it? I would like to rent a place to live. I don’t mind if it is on the ground floor.' Ba, passer-by
‘What I wish for the street? I would like a restaurant. A place where we can eat Italian food would be great. A pizza or pasta! Each day we eat Moroccan food from Brabant Street nearby. This is really boring.’

Rossi with her dog Carla, client in the nightshop
25.03.2012

‘The wall is very grey. A bit of color on it would improve the ambiance in the street!’

Séverine, Akzent association
25.03.2012
I placed signs on the vacant windows stating: *tenant wanted to rent this place.*

Photo by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Observing the signs in the used ground-floor windows stating: *waitress wanted.*

Photo by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

072

Drawing of a man that I interviewed in the *rue d’Aerschot* and extract of the interview.

Drawing and translation from French by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

‘This space is to rent? How much is it? I know a lot of people that search for a place in the area. Not necessarily to turn it into a salon of prostitution, it could be something else.’

Kris, passer-by
25.03.2012
I found out that there was a great demand for using the vacant spaces on the ground floor.

In the second action I focused on the vacant spaces on the upper floors. I painted arrows onto the pavement that proposed some functions for the spaces such as studios for our architecture students at Sint-Lucas Architectuur, which is situated nearby (left photo on the next page). I expected to engage with people while I painted, as had been the case for the previous action. Unfortunately no one cared about me except the police who came to take me to the police station.

Although the two policemen who picked me up in the street were laughing when they heard that this project was to contribute to my PhD, the police officer cared very little about my excuse:

“What, a research project? I think you have to research more into what the people who work and live in the buildings think. Would you be happy if someone painted in front of your door, mmm? You will go and clean the paint away right now... if you have to go to Ghent to see your students, come and see me at 14:00 with all the necessary material to clean the street. Afterwards you will go to the street and then you will pass by again to see me when everything is in order. Is that clear?”

Police - officer

This encounter with the police generated an unforeseen action. I spent my afternoon in the street cleaning five of the planned eight flashes that were foreseen but never conducted (right photo on the next page).

The success of the action was unexpected in that while I was cleaning I finally got to engage with the sex-workers. Some of them came out of the windows to help me by offering warm water. This allowed me to get to know them and to discuss their needs for the street (drawing and text on this page). Probably the reason is that I was no longer considered as the researcher who was looking for information, but was putting myself on a level below them by washing their street.

“What other functions in the street wouldn’t bother me. Which function could be useful? Maybe a place to eat, that would be good. Or a hotel for the men that come from France. Or some flats, but...
Drawing arrows on the ground to propose various functions for the vacant spaces on the upper floors.  
Photo by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Washing away the arrows on the ground after having been arrested by the police.  
Photo by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
Image made of the eleven micro-interventions that I proposed during the exhibition on the wall. All proposals are minimal interventions that intend to change the atmosphere in the street.

Image by Petra Pfeidmerges, Alive Architecture
personally I would not like to live here, it’s too noisy.’ Melissa, sex worker

’What I wish for the street? I would like to have better clients!’ Emilia, sex worker

Furthermore I got to talk to one of the inhabitants of the upper floors, who are mainly immigrants from Africa:

‘You want someone to rent this place? But we live here! There are six of us sharing the three floors. We all come from Africa except one of us who is from Morocco. You’re looking for ideas for how to occupy the upper stairs? There are often Africans who pass by looking for housing in the neighborhood. They often ask me if I know a place.’ Abdulaye, inhabitant

I was happy to have had the possibility to engage with different actors in the street to get an overview of their needs.

Eleven Proposals to improve the Life Quality in the Street

Based upon the needs that I revealed through thirty-five interviews, I developed eleven proposals for how to improve the quality of life in the rue d’Aerschot.

To document the schemes I took photos of how the space looked when the project took place and produced images that transformed these spaces through minimal means. (photos and images on pages 76, 79 and 83).

Three Actions to Test

I undertook three actions to test some of the proposals through relational actions. After my encounter with the police during the action with the arrows, this time I asked for authorization for each of the three interventions.

Sweet Flowers

The first action on 01.04.2012 tests the proposal for a person who sells flowers in the street (photo and image on this page). The idea is inspired by the call from Emilia for better clients. If I offered flowers to potential clients, they could hand them over to the sex-workers.
Extract from the film *Sweet Flowers*, in which I aimed to provide better clients to the sexworkers.

Film by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extract from the film *Sweet Flowers* seen above.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Extract from the film *Sweet Flowers*. The man gives a flower to one of the sex-workers.

Film by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extract from the film *Sweet Flowers* you see above.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
A woman wearing the flower behind her ear.

Film by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Extract from the film Sweet Flowers. The man seems happy to have received a flower for free.

Film by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extract from the film Sweet Flowers seen above.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Three of the flowers were posted in the nightshop in the street.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
I asked several existing flower shops in Brussels if they would be willing to do an ephemeral pop-up shop. For some of them it was something they had done before, but none of them were interested to do so in the rue d’Aerschot. If I had managed to invite someone else to sell flowers, the project could have been more than a one-off event and even become durational if it had been successful.

Instead of cancelling the action, I decided to do it myself. This is how I ended up on a cold but sunny Sunday with a car, a camera, two stools, a bowl, some flowers and some chocolate in the rue d’Aerschot, where I spent an afternoon handing out flowers for free (photos and drawings on page 77 and 78).

I installed one stool to sit on the side of the entrance to a window and next to it a higher stool upon which I positioned the bowl with flowers and added some chocolate inside. The food was a trigger that would help me to attract people to pay attention to the flowers.

In the first half hour it was very difficult to get people to take the flowers, but once the first flowers were seen in the hands of a few men, others understood that they might be for free. After another half an hour, more and more people, mainly men, were walking around with flowers.

Once all the flowers were gone I packed everything in the car and went for a walk in the street. I could see one woman with a flower in her hair and three flowers in the night-shop (right drawings on the previous page).

On the following link there is the film of the Sweet Flowers action: http://www.alivearchitecture.eu/index.php/?urban-margins/infrared-film-4/

**Piadina Wagon**

The second action on 8.4.2012 was to set-up an ephemeral restaurant responding to several sex-workers needs for a restaurant in the street. (photo and image on this page).

I found two Italian cooks that have a food truck called Piadina Wagon in the surroundings of my own neighbourhood. They were happy to experiment with their mobile device to cook in Brussels’ red-light district (photos on page 80 and 81).
Extract from the film *Piadina Wagon* in the *rue d’Aerschot*, shot from the flat of an inhabitant.

Film by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extract from the film *Piadina Wagon* in the *rue d’Aerschot*, seen above.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
Piadina Wagon photographed from street level. The food truck invited people to use the public space in the street in a different way for one day.

Photo by Jean-François Pirson and Frédérique Bianchi
We passed a great moment and took the proposed Italian specialties with us. The presence of the young women and their Foodtruck generates friendliness in the neighbourhood! It’s a great initiative and it would be great if it would continue!

Three sisters from the house of priest  
01.04.2012

The restaurant is changing people’s use of the street. Normally it seems more like a highway of men passing by. Thanks to the restaurant, people stop. If the Foodtruck comes back, I will definitely come back to get a Piadina.

Abdulaye, inhabitant of the upper floors in the street  
01.04.2012
Clara and Elisabetta make delicious Piadinas, an Italian specialty. I asked them to place a sound recorder in their food truck, to take photos of their customers and to ask opinions about the project (drawings and texts on page 82).

"The restaurant is changing people's use of the street. Normally it seems more like a highway of men passing by. Thanks to the restaurant, people stop. If the food truck comes back, I will definitely return to get a Piadina." Abdulaye, inhabitant

"We enjoyed a nice moment. The presence of the food truck is a moment of conviviality in the neighborhood. It's a good initiative to be continued." Ferial, house of priest

"I like this restaurant. Are you going to come back?" Madame, window

The project was a success as several people bought a Piadina, which generated a rather good economic income for the girls for a first visit to the street. This proved that there was a certain interest for the mobile restaurant. Both issues motivated the girls to come back several times throughout summer.

On the following link there is the film of the Piadina Wagon action: [http://www.alivearchitecture.eu/index.php?/urban-margins/infrared-film-1/]

People's Wall

I undertook the third and final action in the framework of our invitation at Recyclart on 11.4.2012. This time the source was my proposal to turn the grey wall temporarily into a more colorful, used space (photo and image on this page).

I organized an exhibition that lasted for an afternoon (photos and drawings on the next page). Each of the images that I placed on the wall was one of the eleven micro-transformations, based upon the observed spaces and people's needs (images and drawings on page 76, 79 and 83).

While the exhibition took place I engaged with several people to have their opinion on the project and took pictures of the people I interviewed (drawings and texts on page 85). I documented feedback from an inhabitant and from a person from the city hall:
Extract from the film *People’s Wall*. Here some sex-workers visit the exhibition.

Film by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extract from the film seen above. It shows visitors arriving at the expo.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Extract from the film *People’s Wall*. People from the city hall came to join the exhibition.

Film by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extract from the film seen above. It shows visitors arriving at the expo.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
"It is very interesting to learn to look at the street differently and to experience it differently by visiting an exhibition and discussing over a drink. The unavoidable interactivity when looking at the images made it possible to establish a different view of the street."

Emilie Haquin, urban prevention in the district of Schaerbeek
11.04.2012

"Indeed, the graffiti’s are really a problem for many people. Imagine if you lived surrounded by graffiti, they are everywhere, it is really tiring."

Anonymous inhabitant
11.04.2012
The graffiti’s are really a problem for many people. Imagine if you lived surrounded by graffiti, they are everywhere, it is really tiring. Anonymous inhabitant

It is very interesting to learn to look at the street differently and to experience it differently by visiting an exhibition and discussing over a drink. The unavoidable interactivity when looking at the images made it possible to establish a different view of the street. Emilie Haquin, urban prevention in the district of Schaerbeek


Documentation

It was the first time I not only documented the interviews, but also made a drawing of the persons I interviewed before and during the actions. I did so because I wished to present the interviews at the monthly exhibition at Recyclart.

Unlike in the previous chapter, this time I was not photographing but filming the actions to be able to present the project at Recyclart. Furthermore, as in the observation during Fairground Pleasures, I shortened the film to two minutes and added anecdotal drawings to highlight key moments in the film (photos and drawings of the film on pages 77, 78, 80 and 84). The camera was hidden each time and I learned through this project about the ethical problems that this sort of filming would pose.

During the films of the Sweet Flower and People’s Wall actions, I hid the camera in the car, in the Piadina Wagon action I took the picture from the terrace of Abdulaye, whom I met during the action of drawing arrows on the pavement. Therefore this film is not documented at eye level but from above. This view from above is still to this day something very annoying to me. The reason is that I did not record the action at eye-level and therefore it does not show very clearly how the space changes through use over time (photos and drawings on page 80).

The movies were on the one hand a means of bringing back documentation to Recyclart, on the other to learn more about what was happening during the action. For example, by watching the film, I found out that during the Sweet Flowers action one man knocked on the door of a sex-worker, offered her the flower and left (right photo and drawing on page 77). I would not have been able to notice this activity without having watched the movie.

Communication of / for Lived Space

Inviting People

In this project I handed out small flyers to the sex-workers to invite them to the action in their street. I also invited politicians, some associations and colleagues from Sint-Lucas Architectuur to the People’s Wall exhibition.

Inviting the Local Popular Media

Furthermore I invited the local TV channel for the second visit of the Piadina Wagon and several journalists who arrived and communicated about the event (photo on this page). I remember how uncomfortable I felt to have Someone from the local media interviewing the girls from the Piadina Wagon in the rue d’Aerschot. Photo by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
people with camera’s and questions coming to the rue d’Aerschot to interview the girls and myself. During the return of the Piadina Wagon I also send an invitation to Mister Emma, who did an interview of my work. Mister Emma is presenting architectural and urban visions in Belgium on Archiurbain that runs every Sunday evening for twelve minutes on Brussels television channel TéléBruxelles.


Exhibition at Recyclart

In exchange for the use of a studio at the local Recyclart gallery, we had to organize one exhibition per month throughout our three-month stay in artistic residence (photos on this and on the next page). I showed the drawings and interviews that I made with several people, the eleven proposals to improve the quality of life in the street, the photos of the first two actions and the three films of the actions through which I tested some of the eleven proposals.

The exhibitions at Recyclart were the trigger for me to do these projects and it was important for me to show work with a certain content such as the drawings and the movies. Nevertheless, for me the most important aspect of the project was to generate an impact upon the street through and beyond the actions.

Beyond Ephemeral Lived Space

As I not only acted myself but shared my role in the project with the girls from the Piadina Wagon, it was possible to generate impact beyond the ephemeral actions that I realized.

Overmore, having invited the popular media to communicate about the project, a second food truck started to sell food in the rue d’Aerschot. Additionally after I invited some politicians to the exhibition of the proposals for the street, a call for ideas was launched for the street.

Several months after the exhibition on the wall, a call for generating and
View of the public exhibition space during our third expo at Recyclart. I invited the Piadina Wagon to sell their delicious Italian food at this evening event in order to activate the outside space.

Photo by Stijn Beeckman
realizing ideas to improve the quality of life in the rue d’Aerschot was launched.

Food for Love

As mentioned before, the girls from the Piadina Wagon came back several times throughout summer to continue the project. They invented their own title for the return to the rue d’Aerschot that is Food for Love. The times that they came back they brought a friend to introduce a delivery service (photos on this page).

Solely because of Mister Emma or some other local popular media that publishing the project, another food truck probably took over visiting the rue d’Aerschot when the Piadina Wagon left.

Lebanese Food Truck

Probably based upon one of the broadcasts of the Piadina Wagon project, another food truck set up in the street once a week for several months (photo on page 91). It was a pleasure for me to see that there was a continuation of the project beyond the action of the Piadina girls or me.

I love Aerschot

Several months after the exhibition on the wall a call for making and realizing the ideas to generate more respect in the rue d’Aerschot was launched. I worked on the project together with L’Escaut Architecture, OKUP and Sébastien Lo Sardo. We had a total budget for the project of 40,000 euros.

This assignment started with a study of several ideas that could generate a transformation of the quality of life in the public realm that we were meant to test in a second phase through actions.

The proposals were close to what I developed in the Infrared project: to activate a vacant ground floor, to turn the wall into a Lived Space through paintings and to close the street to cars. Furthermore the artists from OKUP came up with the idea of placing a photomaton in the street for several weeks. The only project that was selected by the city council to be transformed into an ephemeral project was to activate one of the vacant ground floors (photos on page 92).

The Rirbaucout collective conducted the project. For two months, they
organized many events at 94 rue d’Aerschot, including some yoga lessons. Furthermore they sold food and organized a food-delivery service. They developed the activities on one hand for the local actors and on the other for everyone interested in the project. I did not follow the project in detail personally, as I was busy curating Parkdesign 2014: Parckfarm, which I will present in the next chapter.

From Ephemeral to Durational

Throughout my projects, I intended to generate more durational impact through testing actions. This is why I originally meant not to hand out the flowers myself but to ask a seller to sell flowers for during an afternoon. In that way the Sweet Flowers action would have been a test rather than a one-off action.

The other two interventions did have a more durational impact. I asked the Piadina Wagon girls to come back throughout summer to sell their Italian specialty in the street and they accepted. While they did not continue their work after the summer, our publication of the action on the local popular news probably incited the Lebanese Food truck to operate there once a week for six months.

This continuation of the project would probably not have happened if I had not involved the local popular media to communicate about the project. Finally, the call for ideas after the exhibition on the wall was a great lesson on how crucial it is to involve politicians. If this exhibition had not taken place, the call for ideas might never have been published and the activated window would never have taken place.
Ten days after the Piadina Wagon project was publicised, a Lebanese Foodtruck started to sell food once a week for several months. Is this a coincidence or an impact of the project?

Photo by Françoise Deville
Activation realized of a ground floor space in the rue d’Aerschot by Rirbaucout at nighttime.

Photo by Hans Eelens, Rirbaucout collective
Project 2: Licht-ing

Where: Aalst, Belgium
When: Feb-April 2013
Why: PhD
With: -
Budget: € 1.850, founded by KU Leuven (Sint-Lucas Architectuur)
Film: http://www.alivearchitecture.eu/index.php/?the-everday/licht-ing-film/

I initiated Licht-ing because of a previous project that was based upon observation of and action in trailer parks (Trailers and Voyageurs project on page 205).

I would have liked this project to be located in Brussels. Unfortunately there are no trailer parks in our city. This project is therefore situated in Aalst, following a recommendation from an expert and social worker from Brussels that I contact at the time.

The project was funded by the KU Leuven and was a means of advancing my PhD development.

The site is a bicycle track between a longitudinal trailer park and some houses inhabited by a sophisticated population (photos on the next page). Furthermore, a supermarket, a boarding school for handicapped children and a primary school are situated close to the cycle track that extends from this edge of the town to the center of Aalst.

Observing for Lived Space

Observing Space

During the first site visit I observed that on the bicycle lane there were trees which could be used for the actions, in order to base my proposal upon what was already there. Additionally, I recognized that the bicycle lane itself had specific potential to be used.

When the bicycle track was not greatly used for a period of time, I wanted to activate it so that it became a more Lived Space.
Observing Needs by Engaging

During my first visit and before knowing what actions would be possible, I engaged with one of the trailer park inhabitants, asking her for an eventual need on the bicycle lane.

“What we need here? A playground for the kids is missing.” Inhabitant of the trailer park

As I did not feel very welcome in the space, I did not ask for further needs or desires for the space, but based the first action upon my findings.

Four Actions to Test

Licht-ing 1

The first action was a trial to turn the green, eight-meter wide zone next to the bicycle lane into a playground. Together with Teodora, a trainee with Alive Architecture at this time, we hung three tires from the trees, imagining that the kids would come and use them as swings (photos and drawings on page 96).

Unfortunately this happened only in a very limited way. A crucial reason is that we did not communicate the information of the new playground on the edge of Aalst to any of the neighbours.

Licht-ing 2

Rather than giving up the action, we decided to get some candles and placed them along the bicycle lane when the night was falling. We performed together to lighten up the lane (photos and drawings on page 97).

This activity attracted much more attention. A woman from the trailer park got out of her home and stood on the other side of the fence that separates the lane from the trailer park. She said that this was very beautiful and that the space was usually too dark. Another woman stopped on her bicycle to watch what was happening. Finally two boys from the trailer park came out of the park and helped us first to light the candles, and then later they started to use the tires as a swing.

Licht-ing 3

In the next action I learned from our success and failure from the previous actions. I prepared a...
flyer that I offered to children in the primary school on the morning of the action. I explained to them that they were welcome to join us light the pots hanging from the trees and that there was hot chocolate. I wrote on the invitation: Join us to do it together (image on page 100). Furthermore I posted the flyers in the mailboxes of the houses in the neighbourhood and put up posters in the school, the supermarket and the boarding school.

Together with Teodora we hung 200 glass pots from the trees and placed candles inside them (photos and drawings on page 98). This time we did not light them but invited everyone to come and do so. This request was such a success in a sense that when the pots were lit we had to get more candles that the children could place on the ground in the snow. Children from the trailer park engaged with children from the primary school and everyone enjoyed a crêpe and hot chocolate.

**Licht-ing 4**

The ephemeral actions were supposed to become a final intervention that would last for two weeks. Together with one local actor I hung about 15 light bulbs from the trees and used the electricity from the toilet block on the trailer park (photos and drawings on page 99). During the event the lights were red, although in the end we lit them to turn the bicycle lane into a brighter lane using yellow light.

This fourth event was less successful than the third one, where we lit candles together with the children. The reason is that people could not participate to light the bulbs, but could only look at the red and later white candles.

On the following link there is the film of the Licht-ing project: [http://www.alivearchitecture.eu/index.php/?the-everday/licht-ing-film/](http://www.alivearchitecture.eu/index.php/?the-everday/licht-ing-film/)

**Sprouting Actions**

In the Licht-ing project the actions were built up on each other. I did not conduct a different action each time, but the second action, which was successful, fed the third one and the third one, the fourth. This is how I achieved not a durational impact, but an impact on several occasions related to the same topic: to turn the dark bicycle lane into a brighter space.

**Documentation**

Similar to the Infrared project, I placed a hidden video camera first in the car and later along the bicycle lane in order to record what was happening. Again these video cameras were positioned so as to be invisible, an ethical issue that I had to confront, being aware of it at the time.

As in Infrared, I recorded each of the actions and turned them into short two-minute movies. Again I highlighted key moments through drawings to illustrate different uses during the periods of the actions (photos and drawings on pages 96, 97, 98 and 99).

Whilst I did not make drawings of the people that I engaged with and interviewed during the action, I did introduce some of my findings in the film itself. As in the Fairground Pleasures project, I communicated about the work only at my PhD presentations.

**Ephemeral Lived Space**

I envisaged the four actions in such a way that the first three would be a testing period while the fourth one would last for a period of two weeks.

When I came back to the site after two weeks, the lights were already taken off. According to the inhabitant that helped me to hang up the light bulbs, the police passed by and considered the installation to be too dangerous, and took it down after a short period of time.

As the action was taking place too far from my home city Brussels, I also did not have the chance to return continuously to check if the lights were still switched on. Moreover, the distance to the project made it impossible to engage several times with people to see if there was any further way of generating a durational impact from the project on the dark bicycle lane.

Therefore the impact was purely during the four moments when I was present on the site. This is from my point of view a failure of the actions, as at this moment in my practice I was attempting to generate impact beyond my presence, as had been the case in the Infrared project.
Extraction from the film of the first action where we hung up some tires to create a play space.

Film by Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extraction above from the film of the first action.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
Extraction from the film of the second action, where we placed candles along the bicycle lane.

Film by Alive Architecture

Two children from the trailer park come out to help us to light the candles and play with the tires.

Film by Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extraction above from the film of the second action.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extraction above from the film of the second action.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
Extraction from the film of the third action, where we hung pots with candles from the trees.
Film by Alive Architecture

Extraction from the film of the third action, where the children enjoyed lighting the candles.
Film by Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extraction from the film of the third action.
Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extraction from the film of the third action.
Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
Extraction from the film of the fourth action, where we hung lightbulbs from the trees.
Film by Alive Architecture

Another extraction from the film of the fourth action, where people were getting together to meet.
Film by Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extraction from the film of the fourth action.
Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extraction from the film of the fourth action.
Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
LICHT-ING

Flyer inviting the local community to the candle-lighting action.
Image by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
In chapter one I revealed how I was observing and drawing immigrants who produced Lived Space. In chapter two I revealed how I was observing space that changes over time and how I reproduced it. In both projects in this third chapter, it was not only me but also others acting whom I invited to join in. This is why I call this chapter co-producing Lived Space.

1. Observation for / of Lived Space

Observing Spatial Capital through Walking

In both projects I was observing space to reveal what I could improve or refer to in order to set up the actions. As in the previous chapters I was observing space not only from the satellite view but also by walking in the streets.

In Infrared I recognized the grey wall and the vacant spaces in the buildings on the rue d’Aerschot. In Licht-ing I identified the existing trees along the bicycle lane and the lane itself. Each time, these findings helped me to initiate actions on the specific sites.

Although I was observing the space similar to the projects in the previous chapter, this time I was observing space that had potential to be developed, rather than existing Lived Space.

Observing Needs through Engaging

What is new in both of the projects in this chapter is that I was observing
the needs of the local communities. I identified these needs through engaging with people.

Since the first chapter, engaging has been a crucial issue in my work, which is helping me to find out about the site, needs and the opinion of people from within the neighbourhood.

**Observing Needs through Acting**

What I learned this time is that when it is difficult to engage with some people, I could do so by acting in the area in order to find out about needs. This was the case in the *Setting up Signs* and *Flash-paint* actions. They allowed me to engage with people through unforeseen means to get in touch with those that I could not talk to before. This way of engaging with people through action was a new technique that I had not yet experienced in *Fairground Pleasures* or in *Visible Invisible*.

**Observing Opinions through Engaging**

Similar to *Visible Invisible* and *Fairground Pleasures* in Chapter Two, in both projects in this chapter I engaged with people through actions and asked them for their opinion about what I was doing. In the *Licht-ing* project, I got to engage with people through the second action when we were lighting up the bicycle lane by placing candles on the ground.

What changed is that this time I used those findings in order to set up follow-up projects for the initial action in order to improve my interventions.

**Observing the Actions**

I observed each of the actions through my presence in the space and documented them through films with anecdotal drawings. This was a way to document the projects that I will describe later in this chapter.

**Observation for and of Lived Space**

As I was observing needs and opinions about my actions, the observation changed from observation of to observation for. In addition, observing the actions through my presence on the site and documenting them through film, I realized a subsequent observation of.

**What is Observing doing?**

Observing helped me to reveal the potential of the space that I could use in order to realize my actions. Furthermore, through engaging, I could identify the local community’s needs and opinions about my actions.

2. **Devices for Lived Space**

Whilst in the projects in the previous chapter I produced the actions myself, in the projects in this chapter I co-produced them together with others.

**Through Engaging - for Engaging**

In both projects I engaged with people to reveal the needs they had for their neighbourhood. Even though I started each time by engaging with people in a traditional way, in both projects the actions enabled me to discover the opinions of local actors about my proposals and to adapt the next action according to their reactions.

In the *Infrared* project I painted and later washed away arrows on the ground that proposed functions for the vacant floors of the buildings in the rue d’Aerschot. This allowed me to engage with people to find out about their needs. Based upon these needs I developed eleven proposals in order to improve the quality of life in the street. Finally I realized three of these proposals through relational events.

In the *Licht-ing* project I engaged with people during the action of placing candles along the cycle path. The positive reactions taught me about the need to lighten up the street. Therefore the follow-up actions were based upon this finding and extended throughout them.

As in the projects in the previous chapter, I not only engaged with people myself, but I created actions that would enable people to engage with one another. During the *People’s Wall* action, the visitors from different backgrounds started to relate to one another. During the *Licht-ing* events, the inhabitants of the trailer park, from the school and other local actors also engaged with one another.

**Relational Actions**

All the actions in both projects generated encounters between
others and myself or between the visiting or participating people themselves.

The *Sweet Flower* action generated first a relationship between the men and me (*upper photo on this page*), then later between the men and the sex-workers in the street through the most minimal object I ever used in my projects: a flower (*right photo on page 77*). The *Piadina Wagon* brought about relations between the two girls running the food truck and their customers, as well as between the customers waiting for their Piadinhas.

Some of their customers were sharing the food, sitting at the table that the girls had installed behind the food truck. In the *People’s Wall* action I engaged with the visitors of the exhibition as they starting to talk amongst themselves about the images they saw on the wall, thereby generating relations between people and myself or among different visitors.

Finally in the *Licht-ing* project I talked to people and they talked with one other during the different actions while lighting the candles in the pots that I had set up (*lower photo on this page*).

**Urban Entrepreneurship**

In the *Sweet Flowers* action I was offering the flowers for free. Probably few of the men passing by would have paid for a flower. Similar to the *Barbe à Papa* action in the previous chapter, in the *Piadina Wagon* action the girls were selling the food to people passing by. Such entrepreneurship in the public realm is a way to attract people, activating the public realm and therefore contributing to generate *Lived Space*.

In hindsight, what is a problematic issue from my point of view is that through the *Piadina Wagon* action I generated an economy for the girls of the food truck and not yet for local actors. Generating gentrification through my projects, I believe that it is important that the financial profit from the projects should end up in the neighbourhood.

The issue of the guest in a neighbourhood generating an economy is going to evolve in the next chapter, where I pay attention to improving the local economy through the *Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm* project.

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*While I was handing out the flowers men were giving them to women.*

*Film by Alive Architecture*

*While we were hanging up the pots the children were lighting the candles.*

*Film by Alive Architecture*
Co-Production

Encouraging Clara and Elisabetta to bring their Piadina Wagon to the rue d’Aerschot and personally offering flowers to the men so they could give them to the women was a way of inviting others to act.

Inviting the politicians to the People’s Wall action probably initiated the call for ideas that I worked on together with l’Escaut Architecture, OKUP and Sébastien Lo Sardo, through the project I love Aerschot. Here we handed over our role to activate the ground floor to the collective Rirbaucout.

Also in the Licht-ing project, I invited the children to light the candles rather than doing it myself.

What is the Co-Producing doing?

Through co-producing I learned that I could generate Lived Space not only by myself but also through collaborating with other people. By involving them to co-produce an action in the public realm, the space actually became a Lived Space that was partly taking place without my involvement and could therefore generate impact beyond my physical presence.

3. Documentation of Lived Space

Filming Lived Space

In both projects I recorded the actions through films that I then turned into short two-minute films. Whereas in the film of Infrared I made one short two-minute film of each action, in the film of Licht-ing I made one short film of the same length of all four actions. In Fairground Pleasures I did make a film, but only of the existing Lived Space and the film was assembled through a series of pictures that I took every minute over sixteen hours.

We see that the anecdotal drawings in the Infrared and Licht-ing projects became more precise than the film in Fairground Pleasures through painting parts of the images fully in red (drawings on the next page).

This new way of filming allowed me on the one hand to watch the process of the collective actions several times in order to learn about them after the action was finished. Furthermore the films were a delightful way of presenting my work to other people, such as the visitors to our exhibition at Recyclart.

Drawing Lived Space

In both films I highlighted key moments how the Lived Space changes over time. The Infrared film does not present people talking, whereas the Licht-ing film shows extracts from the interviews as part of the film (drawings on page 106).

Drawings of People

Furthermore, in the Infrared project I made drawings of the people that I interviewed and wrote the text below the image. The drawings show on one hand the needs that I observed in an initial phase (drawings and interviews on pages 71, 72 and 74), but equally the people that I interviewed after the action took place (drawings and interviews on pages 78, 82 and 85).

4. Communication of / for Lived Space

In both projects I started to communicate about the actions that I realized. This was a way to communicate on the one hand about the project to the public, and on the other a way to inform the Lived Space that I intended to create.

In the People’s Wall action in the rue d’Aerschot, I spread flyer to the sex-workers in the windows and I invited colleagues from Sint-Lucas Architectuur whose building is situated next to the site. Moreover, knowing some people at the city hall, I invited some politicians to visit the exhibition. As the call for ideas and realizing them through actions in the street was launched several months later, I later learned that communication about projects to politicians can be crucial.

Through the exhibition of the project at the Brussels-based art center Recyclart, it was possible to communicate about the project to a public that is interested in art.

During the second intervention of the Piadina Wagon, I invited several local popular media to communicate about the project through an article in the newspaper (image on the next page). Several journalists came, some of them with cameras, and I felt uncomfortable to have generated such a media invasion in
I was taking one photo per minute of the Fairground to make a two-minute movie.

Photo by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Extraction from the film of the Licht-ing action. Children were lighting the candles.

Film by Alive Architecture

Drawing of one picture in the film of Fairground Pleasures.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture

Drawing of the extraction from the film Licht-ing.

Drawing by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
Nevertheless, the communication of the project was probably the reason why another food truck started to come to the street in order to sell Lebanese specialities.

On the following link there is the full article in Dutch: http://www.brusselnieuws.be/nl/nieuws/mobiel-restaurant-charmeert-aarschotstraat?-show=video_89966

The return of the Piadina Wagon was also the reason why I send an e-mail to Mister Emma who interviews architects to present their work on the Brussels television channel TéléBruxelles for the twelve minutes every Sunday evening. He interviewed the Piadina Wagon girls and me about the Infrared project.

On the following link there is the film of the interview Mister Emma realized with me: http://www.alivearchitecture.eu/index.php?/urban-margins/mister-emma-2012/, and the interview he did with Clara and Elisabetta from the Piadina Wagon: http://www.alivearchitecture.eu/index.php?/mister-emma/interview-20122/

Lately I was interviewed about the project by the Ezelstad online newspaper: http://www.ezelstad.be/2015/08/08/aerschot/

Whilst I invited the local media to visit the Licht-ing project in order to communicate about it in the newspaper, none of the journalists were interested to do so. However, one journalist passed by the action by chance, took a picture and published a small article about the project on the nieuwsblad.

The following link is for the article in Dutch published by the journalist: http://www.nieuwsblad.be/cnt/dmf20130125_00446227

As I am still in contact with the inhabitant who helped me set up the light bulbs, I know that she never heard about any continuation of the project. This is why I think that the article did not generate any impact in terms of a follow-up project on the site.

Using the media to communicate about projects and ideas to generate impact is very familiar to guerilla actors, who use it to generate impact.

Through communicating the actions to people in order to invite them to visit and participate in the actions, I could generate an impact upon the Lived Space by enabling people to join in the events. In addition, both
Mister Emma’s interviews with the girls and myself about the project and the item on Brussels news had an impact, as the Lebanese food truck came to sell its specialties in the street. In this way, the publicity was contributing to the Lived Space in the rue d’Aerschot. The invitations as well as the publicity were therefore, partly, communication for Lived Space.

5. Impact beyond the Ephemeral

In the projects in Chapter Two I concentrated on moving from drawing Lived Space to re-producing Lived Space in the public realm and therefore did not worry too much about the duration of the different actions. While Visible Invisible took one month, Fairground Pleasures took only one afternoon.

This was different to the work for the projects in this chapter. Here it became crucial to me that the actions should have an impact beyond the ephemeral. The reason for this is because as an architect, I aim to generate durational transformation of the public domain.

In Infrared, I was frustrated to not have found a real micro entrepreneur for Sweet Flowers. For me it would have increased the value of the project if a flower-seller, as the Piadina Wagon, had come back to sell flowers to the people in Brussels’ red-light district.

In the Piadina Wagon action, there was a progression from the ephemeral to durational. As explained above, the Piadina Wagon action continued and took place several other times throughout the summer. The girls called it Food for Love. The change of the title shows that they had appropriated the project.

Furthermore a second food truck popped up selling Lebanese specialties once a week for several months. Probably this visit of the other food truck in the street is related to the publicity about the Piadina Wagon in the popular media. This kind of move from ephemeral to durational gives me pleasure and gives meaning to my work.

Also, as described above, the follow-up project in the rue d’Aerschot was probably inspired by the exhibition in the People’s Wall action, where several people from the city hall joined the event. The district organized a call for ideas and

Alive Architecture vroeg bewoners en prostituees wat ze missen in de buurt. Een restaurant was een van de uitgesproken wensen. Een vaste eetent kreeg de Aarschotstraat (nog) niet maar de creatievelingen stuurden wel een bestelwagen die warme, Italiaanse broodjes verkoopt. Klanten konden die ook op een geïmproviseerd terras eten.

The local newspaper published an article about the Piadina Wagon project after their second intervention.

Screenshot from Brusselnieuws on 25/5/2012
together with L’Escaut Architecture, OKUP and Sebastián lo Sardo I proposed to activate one of the vacant ground floor windows.

The Rirbaucout collective activated the vacant ground floor premises, as we proposed in the project.

Unfortunately the Licht-ing project did not continue beyond my presence on the site. One reason is that none of the media that I invited visited us to document and communicate the action. Neither did I invite any politicians. This could also have generated an impact and turned the project from an ephemeral action into a durational project such as, for example, a call for ideas to illuminate the cycle path.

Finally, if I had continued my work, I could have started to collaborate with some of the engaged inhabitants to fulfill their intention to make the bicycle lane brighter. The reason why this never happened may be because I live too far away from the site to be able to follow it up. The geographical distance from projects became a crucial issue. This is why in my current work I am intending to concentrate on acting in Brussels.

6. Playing and Sharing Multiple Roles

The Observer

As in all the previous projects presented in this PhD, I played the role of observer. Nevertheless, rather than observing existing Lived Space in the projects in this chapter, I was observing space that has potential to be developed. Furthermore I observed the needs of people and generated actions based upon those findings. Finally I also observed what was happening through the actions through making films.

In the Piadina Wagon action I asked the girls to observe the reactions of their customers and to take pictures of them. Moreover, when Mister Emma came to visit the return of the Piadina Wagon in the street, he observed and communicated about the project through the interviews on Archiurbain.

The Artist

By undertaking actions in both projects I played the role of artist. I was acting in the public realm through interventions realized through minimal budgets.

In the Piadina Wagon action I did not act myself but instead invited Clara and Elisabetta to sell their Italian specialties in the rue d’Aerschot. Being involved in the Brussels art scene, they adopted the follow up action Food for Love in a creative way, inviting a friend to do the delivery service. Furthermore they made a shirt for their friend Lapo who realized the delivery service upon which the name Food for Love was stitched (photo on page 89).

Sharing the role of the artist allowed the project to continue beyond my presence, as they went back several times during the summer.

In the I love Aerschot project we proposed the activation of ground floor premises in order to generate mixity in the street. As I was too busy with the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm project that I will explain in the next chapter, I was not the one realizing the project, but the Rirbaucout collective. This was another way to hand over my role as an artist to realize the project.

The Activist

The flash-paint action in the beginning of the Infrared project was typical of how activists act in the public realm. Proposing bicycle tracks by painting three lines on each side on the street and a logo in the middle, the Cylo Guerilla BXL is doing similar work. Just as I did not ask for permission, neither do they, but hope that a person in power will discover and realize their proposal.

In addition I invited the popular media to visit the Piadina Wagon girls when they returned to the rue d’Aerschot and Mister Emma in order to communicate about the project through Archiurbain.

The Mediator

Through the Sweet Flowers action I was playing the role of the mediator by generating better relations among the sex-workers and their potential clients. Later, in the continuation of the I love Aerschot project, the Rirbaucout collective invited the sex-workers and visitors from the region through some actions.

In the Licht-ing project, I invited people from different backgrounds, thereby generating relationships among them through their joint participation in the various actions on the cycle path.
Such use of the popular media in order to communicate political positions or need for social change to generate an impact is a tool that is commonly used by activists. Realizing my actions without asking for permission and my way of communicating about the projects through popular media are reasons why I would define my role in the projects as that of an activist.

In a sense, the way Mister Emma communicates about such projects so positively is also a sort of activism.

**The Client**

Because I was realizing the projects to further my PhD in order to find out what I meant by Alive Architecture I was my own client in both of the projects. This is similar to my role as client in the previous chapter.

However, as I observed the needs of the local actors in both the rue d’Aerschot and in the Licht-ing project, I defined a client outside of myself who were local actors.

Therefore in both projects I had two clients: the local community and myself.

**Further Lessons from the Projects**

Most of the projects up to now took place in my home city of Brussels. This is important on the one hand as I transport materials with me and in Brussels I even do this in some of the projects on my bicycle; on the other hand, acting close to my home I can return to the site to engage with people to observe their reactions.

The Licht-ing project took place in Aalst, which is situated approximately 45 minutes by car from Brussels. This posed a problem in the project. For example, when I wished to spread flyers I had to travel to the site before the action was taking place or to spread the flyers on day of the event.

Furthermore I could not follow up what was happening. For example, when the police came to take the light bulbs off the trees, I was depending on the local inhabitant who was helping me to set up the lights.

Additionally, if the project had taken place nearer to my home, I could have engaged more easily with the inhabitants and therefore, if they had been willing, continue the project.

**Positioning the Projects**

**Guerilla Approach**

When I painted the flashes on the pavement of the rue d’aerschot I did not ask for permission (right photo on the next page).

The Cyclo Guerilla Bxl has a similar approach. They never ask for authorization when they paint bicycle lanes on the city’s streets. They simply paint six stripes, three on each side, and the logo of the Cyclo Guerilla BXL in order to propose such a space for bicycles in the public domain (left photo on the next page).

The difference between my Flash-paint action and the Cyclo Guerilla Bxl is that through the arrows I was drawing on the ground I intended to engage with people in order to ask them for their needs, which is different in the actions of Cyclo Guerilla Bxl.

For them, if a person who has the authority to undertake such an intervention for real discovered their ephemeral proposal, they hope it might get realized through a permanent marking.

**Activating the Vacant Ground Floor**

In the Homebaked project by Jeanne van Heeswijk, the artist is activating a vacant ground floor through a bakery run by several local artists and inhabitants from the neighbourhood (upper photo on page 111).

She is enabling people to participate in this project. As the project was not ephemeral but generated impact and therefore became durational, there are currently four people employed to run the bakery.

This project is similar to what we were doing in I loved Aerschot in the street In our project we invited the collective Rirbaucout to activate the vacant ground floor (lower photo on page 111).

The fact that the project did not generate its own finances but that the collective was paid for it by a limited budget meant that after two months, the project ended. In hindsight, we could have launched a non-profit organization or searched for an existing local association to activate the project. In that way the project could have continued beyond the initial period.
Drawing of a bicycle lane on a street in the center of Brussels by the Cyclo Guerilla Bxl.
Photo by Gerben Van den Abbeele for Cyclo Guerilla Bxl

Drawing of an arrow to propose functions for the vacant spaces in the buildings of the rue d’Aerschot.
Photo by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
Lighting up Streets

The Licht-ing project is very similar to the Under a different Light project in Athens by the Beforelight Art Light Collective (upper photo on the next page). The collective invited inhabitants from the street to contribute to lighten up a dark street. They brought their own lights from home and co-produced the installation.

Whereas in Licht-ing the intention was to get people together and turn the cycle path into a space of encounter for one evening (lower photo on the next page), the Beforelight project was a more durational project. As already mentioned, I appreciate such continuity of projects. Whilst three of the four Licht-ing actions were a success, the project never expanded beyond these ephemeral events.

Co-producing Lived Space: Shifts in the Practice

At this moment in time, I could define more clearly what I meant by Alive Architecture.

My research into Founding Alive Architecture is about how drawing the public realm in which local communities are producing Lived Space could inform my practice. In this third chapter six shifts occurred.

The first shift is that in the previous chapter the observation first of the existing Lived Space and later reproducing it through an action evolved in the projects in this chapter. Here I first make an observation for Lived Space by observing the potential of the site and the needs of local actors. Only afterwards, when realizing the actions, did I undertake an observation of the Lived Space I had produced.

The second shift is that not only did I engage with people before or after having finished an action, but I also used the action itself in order to reveal the needs and opinions of local actors. This shift will evolve further in the next chapter where I observe not the needs of people but the social capital in order to work with the existing spatial situation.

The second shift is that rather than producing the Lived Space alone, I involved people to co-produce Lived Space. In this way I could generate duration of the project beyond my presence at the site. Only by
handing over the role to others could the project have a continued existence.

The third shift in Chapter Three is that I was recording not the existing Lived Space through film but I was filming the Lived Space that I co-produced together with other people. Furthermore the quality of the anecdotal drawings evolved from abstract drawings to rather clearly defined drawings on which one can recognize the people whom I was drawing.

The fourth shift is that I started to communicate the actions not only through inviting people, including politicians, but I also the popular media in order to expand the projects through the press. The visit of people to the actions was a way to increase the activation in the site for the duration of the actions. In addition, the communication through media and the invitation of politicians probably had an impact upon the expansion of the project beyond the ephemeral.

The fifth shift is that I was expanding the roles that I played through acting as an activist and by sharing the role of the client with the local actors, who expressed their needs in the project. Moreover I generated engagement between others, by taking on the role of mediator.

The final shift is that the Infrared project went beyond the ephemeral. Not only did the Piadina Wagon return several times throughout summer, but also for me it was a great success that the Piadina Wagon action continued on its own through the Lebanese food truck selling his specialties in the street (upper photo on the next page). Also we invited the collective Rirbaucout to activate the ground floor (lower photo on the next page).

But a crucial question remains: who are the others? Why did I invite people from outside the neighbourhood to act in the area? Is this not a way of generating gentrification? Would it not be more ethical to involve the locals to contribute to the development of their own neighbourhood?

Further, if it is only the locals who are acting, who is assuring a certain quality of projects in order to not isolate them by asking them to take care of themselves?

Even though the shifts helped me to define more clearly what I meant...
by Alive Architecture, it is only in the following chapter that I discovered how to generate durational projects that continue more deeply beyond myself being physically involved in the production of the Lived Space.

Reference

In the previous chapter I explained how I was building the practice. I was observing needs and spatial capital and afterwards co-producing *Lived Space*.

In this final chapter I will present the *Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm* biennale (2014), through which I grounded the practice. I use the term *grounding* because I consider this project to represent what I was looking for in my practice: to *initiate Lived Space* that would continue to live beyond my presence for a durational period of time. Further, it was the first time that I had access to a public project with a real client.

I started the project by observing the spatial and social capital that would influence the creation of the *Parckfarm*, undertaking *observation for Lived Space*.

In addition, I was curating not only the artistic teams but also the actors from the local community, who came up with proposals to contribute to the *Parckfarm*. The involvement of the locals as well as the relational installations and activities of the artistic teams contributed to generating *Lived Space*. Furthermore I paid attention to stimulate the local economy through assigning part of the project to local farmers.

Unlike the previous projects, I did not document the biennale myself but asked a local cameraman to film some events and the everyday life in the *Parckfarm*.

I communicated about the projects through many different means, including the meetings at *Momo’s Café*, websites, facebook, the *Farmtruck* and by inviting *Mister Emma*.

The project represents the moment when I could finally generate an impact beyond my presence, over a sustained period of time. Because of the biennale’s great success, the *Parckfarm* was extended beyond the ephemeral period of the five months of the biennale and is still continuing today.

Only through involving not only the designers but also the inhabitants was it possible to *initiate Lived Space* that is continuing even today. For the *Parckfarm* project we won the *Prize for Public Space 2015*.

In the concluding reflection, I refer to the various twists that have altered my practice in comparison to the previous chapters.
Project: Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm

Where: Brussels, Europe
When: September 2013 - September 2014
With: Curation team: Taktyk & Alive Architecture
Co-curation: Jaques Abdelman, Eric Dil, Hidde van Schie
Client: IBGE
Budget: € 375,000
Film: http://www.alivearchitecture.eu/index.php?/urban-margins/parckfarm-film/

Parckdesign is a design biennale that aims to experiment with different ways to make public space in Brussels. In the 2012 edition, the curators from the firm Architectural Workroom Brussels together with Atelier le Balto from Berlin focused upon the activation of vacant sites in Anderlecht, a district in Brussels, through temporary installations which they called Garden (upper photo on the next page). In the 2014 edition, we expanded design intervention from built space to Lived Space, stimulating social life in a new urban park through the Parckfarm.

On the following link there is the film of the project: http://www.alivearchitecture.eu/index.php?/urban-margins/parckfarm-film/

Winning the Commission

Taktyk and my practice Alive Architecture were selected to curate the Parckdesign 2014 biennale after responding to a competition. My contribution to this call was to introduce the notion of social design into our proposal for the biennale. In our bid I referred to the Holding Patterns project by Interboro at the MoMA PS1 in New York in 2011, a temporary project in the art museum that had an impact upon the neighbourhood. The project curators met with local associations and asked them what they needed, before selecting items they thought were a good match between the exhibition and the neighbourhood to generate a connection between both.
All too often, such design events address only the creative sectors of society, being by and for designers. We proposed to develop a relationship between the biennale and the neighbourhood in which 60% of inhabitants are Moroccan.

In contrast to the project by Interboro, we did not propose to observe the needs of the people but to involve them actively in the making of the biennale. If the five-month event was successful, it could generate a durational impact upon the park and its surroundings.

Our team was chosen because of the different expertise we represented: the office Taktyk for their experience in urban projects and Alive Architecture because of my experience in participation. We applied jointly with three international artists, to be able to co-curate the biennale with a team that had both a local and an international competence.

Site

The site of the project is a social, spatial and economic border context between the three municipalities of Molenbeek, Laeken & Jette and the exclusive Thurn & Taxis development (lower photo on this page). Situated next to the canal, Thurn & Taxis is a large urban area in Brussels that will be undergoing transformation for the next fifteen years.

The 40-hectare site of Thurn & Taxis was formerly the train exchange, and has been privately owned since the end of the 1990s (upper photo on the next page). On the site with its beautiful old train station and a renovated industrial building, there is currently an office development, which will soon to be followed by some luxury housing. Interestingly enough, our client, the IBGE with its 900 employees, has its new office building on the site.

The site of the biennale represents the first part of the new park that was simultaneously being developed for the biennale. The three hectares of the site of the biennale to the northwest of Thurn & Taxis will extend a park of 10 hectares in total and will reach out all the way to the canal.

Curating Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm sparked my interest in how the biennale could generate an impact beyond the ephemeral upon the large-scale, long-term
Thurn & Taxis urban development. Furthermore I searched for ways, in a context of contrasts, the biennale could provide support through design interventions to make this first part of the park a *Lived Space*, appropriated by the local community but equally used by all people.

Parck + Farm = Parckfarm

Through our initial fieldwork and encounter with some local actors, we discovered that several people had turned the edges of this wasteland into collective gardens, animal farms and a pigeon shelter (*photo on the next page*).

Our proposition that we called *Parckfarm: From the Landscape to the Plate* aimed to support these informal practices that we found. By recognizing the qualities of the site, expanding it into a larger farm and combining it with the characteristics of a park we could test a new model of a public space of a farm combined with a park. My role in this process was to recognize and value the existing qualities on the site and to get the local actors involved.

In addition I initiated the *Farmtruck*, a mobile device, that generated links between the *Parckfarm* and the farms in the region to exchange knowledge with other, more experienced urban farms in the region, as well as the wider public realm, to communicate the project in the public realm throughout the city (*lower photo on this page*).

The Designer, the Farmer & the Local

It was the first time in my career that I have had such an opportunity to set up a call for projects. To me it was crucial that we launched a call for multidisciplinary teams made up of a designer, a local actor and a regional farmer to ensure that the local community and a regional expert on farming were involved.

We asked them to create and activate the *Parckfarm* around the following relevant topics related to the notion of a farm: a *farmhouse*, an *animal farm*, *waste*, *bees* and a call for students for an *experimental food garden*.

To me it was important to ask the teams to develop installations that could be activated and to organize several events on the site and beyond.
The collective garden on the site of the Biennale and the park on the site were built.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture
We set up a jury of experts, who assessed the projects and selected propositions according to their capacity to create a successful, sustainable contribution to the future park. I was very happy to have the possibility to invite the artist *Jeanne van Heeswijk* to the jury and learned from her how crucial it is that a large part of the budget is assigned to the involvement of people and not just for the built installation.

For the *Farmhouse* we chose a team consisting of a local architect in collaboration with the local association *Jes/Yota!* who work with the young population. For the *bee project* we selected the project *Beecar* of a regional expert on wild bees. For the *animal farm* we opted for *KotKot* of an inhabitant next to the site with an architect from the region. The chosen project for waste, *The Temple of Holy Shit*, was to be managed by a team of international designers. For the *Experimental Food Garden*, we brought together several architecture students from the *KU Leuven* with landscape architecture students from *Gembloux*, a French-speaking university, which was later in the process called *Cubious*.

Based upon our principle of having mixed teams, I was happy that we had found a mixture of local and regional actors, although I was less convinced about the international team for the waste installation as they won against the collective *Rirbaucout* that is living and working the neighbourhood.

### The Local Welcoming the Guest: *chez Momo*

Six months before the biennale started, we introduced the idea of having a monthly meeting at the café *Pannenhuis* (photos on this page). The café’s chef, *Momo*, played host to all neighbors, farmers, designers and politicians for a whole evening once a month. We invited all the design teams to exchange ideas on their projects, and the inhabitants to propose local initiatives and help construct the installations.

These meetings were moments when the teams and I that were not from the neighbourhood got to engage with the local community. I met *Stéphanie* and *Abdel* who were working in the existing collective garden. *Stephanie* expressed that she would like to bake bread and *Abdel* responded that he knew how
Four à Pain: bread oven

to build a bread oven. This is how the *Four à Pain* was borne.

During these meetings I also met Tessa, an inhabitant who was very keen to get involved in the biennale and who ran and is still running the canteen in the *Farmhouse*.

I also got to meet Karim through these meetings. He was starting filming the meetings on his own initiative. He is the person I later invited to record the different events and everyday life of the biennale and who made the movie of the *Parckfarm*.

The meetings grew from month to month. Whereas at our first meeting there was a group of only twelve people, there were about fifty of us at the fifth meeting, including the minister of the environment at this moment of time.

Momo’s café was also where the title of the *Temple of Holy Shit* project changed. The reason was that after the international team distributed flyers to co-construct their installation some youngsters from the neighbourhood spread the flyers around the Mosques in the area. They felt that this name was a lack of respect for the Muslim religion and distributing them was a way to involve others into their protest against the installation. The artistic team accepted my demand to organize a meeting with local community leaders and together they chose the new name for the waste installation: *Usine du Trésor Noir*.

**Participative Construction-sites**

Several installations were realized through participative co-production processes on site.

The inhabitant Ruth Plaizier and the architect Ewoud Saeys whose project *Kotkot* won the call for the *animal farm*, invited all the neighbours to participate in the design and construction of the installation. They cooked and offered food to the volunteers and in exchange, many local inhabitants helped with the construction. Although the animals were there from the outset, the installation was only finished at the end of the biennale. I believe that this delay is a sign of the project’s strength. It demonstrated the development through a participative process over time and was not just a finished built object (*upper photo on this page*).
The Farmhouse by the local architectural firm 1010 a+u relied upon the collaboration with their colleagues from the association Jes/Jota! who are active in the neighbourhood and who involved several young people in the construction (lower photo on the previous page). Some time later I met one of the local people involved, who told me very proudly that he had built the red house inside the Farmhouse. This is how it became visible to me how people appropriate a space when they take part in constructing it.

As the inhabitants had been waiting for the park for many years, the pre-opening was a great public success. The locals presented their expertise, and locals and visitors from the region visited the site, where they could appreciate specialties made by the local. Just as Momo had welcomed us, here also the locals welcomed their guests in the new park in Brussels.

The following visual essay explains the nine commissioned artistic installations and two unforeseen local initiatives. These projects came about following proposals from the local community during the meetings at Momo’s café and were realized in the framework of the biennale.

Pre-Opening

When the minister Evelyne Huytebroeck attended the fifth meeting at Momo’s café in February 2014, she was impressed by the involvement of local actors in the project. This is why she proposed a pre-opening of the park and the biennale for the local inhabitants, so they could claim ownership of the space before the rest of Brussels discovered the new park.

This pre-opening took place five days before the opening (photos on this page). I invited the local scenographer Mathilde Coster to organize a scene for the Parckfarm for the day. She used hay bales to set up the stands and straw to fill up part of the ground with a different material. She also placed umbrellas throughout the site to create a vertical visual impact in the space.

Further I asked all the neighbours & local associations if they would like to set up a stand to present themselves or to sell food from their culture.

Pre-opening of the Parckfarm: inhabitants were invited to set up a stand to present their neighbourhood.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture, Scenographie by Mathilde Coster

Pre-opening of the Parckfarm: stand of some local actors.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture, Scenographie by Mathilde Coster
The Farmhouse
1010 Architecture Urbanism

Rather than creating a new building, the team displaced a glasshouse from the Netherlands to Brussels. I appreciate this recycling of an existing glasshouse, but even more their participatory approach, through collaboration with the local association Jes/Yota! in order to involve young people in the team. This is why I took the lead at our jury meeting to present this project as the one, which was most coherent with what we were seeking to achieve in the biennale.
Tessa is still running the canteen of the Farmhouse today, offering people drinks and small snacks.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture
Cubious

Students of the KU Leuven & Landscape School Gembloux

In the two-meter cube, mushrooms, crickets and flowers were produced. The guests were invited to test their senses and discover this strange vegetable garden.

Even though the concept of the installation was interesting, it was not a great success, as it needed more maintenance.

If the team had been present at the local meetings at Momo’s café, it might have generated more interest among the local actors and thereby have helped to create a connection between the students and someone from the neighbourhood to appropriate the installation and take care of it.

Furthermore, we thought that by bringing together some French and Flemish designers, we might generate a link between the two different cultures. Unfortunately this collaboration was extremely difficult.
Usine du Trésor Noir

Collective Disaster

The Usine du Trésor Noir (The Black Treasure/Gold Factory) was a public waste installation based on the principle of compost toilet, where the waste from the Parckfarm's visitors and activities is processed.

More than the function of a toilet and compost, I appreciate that at the back of this small house there was a slide for the children to play and that the front had steps that were used for many activities as a stage to perform. This space was used by the teams for several rituals and notably by Tcharmela, children and others to hold concerts.

While I was not convinced during the selection process to choose this international team, I started to enjoy their installation, their involvement and collaboration with the locals during the biennale. Furthermore I appreciate that the team was present throughout the meetings at Momo's café.

Here some youngsters from the neighborhood were giving a concert on the stage.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture

The artistic installation Usine du Trésor Noir of the Collective Disaster photographed from the backside.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture

The artistic installation Usine du Trésor Noir of the Collective Disaster photographed from the frontside.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture
The team travelled with Sam the donkey from the Maxi-Mille-Liens Boerderij to the Parckfarm.

Photo by Ruth Plaizier

KotKot
Ruth Plaizier (Communication) & Ewoud Saeys (Architecture)

KotKot is the Parckfarm’s animal farm, a sustainable housing project for animals in the town that relies on the neighbourhood’s participation. The goal for several local inhabitants was to decide together how they were going to organize looking after ten hens, two geese and two sheep on a daily basis, and how they were going to build the shelters. I appreciated enormously how the team involved the local community in the process of building and running KotKot.

Besides the KotKot animals, the team introduced Sam the donkey in their project, who for several weeks walked the city from the Maxi-Mille-Liens Boerderij to provide the Parckfarm with waste from local restaurants along the way. This initiative was a fantastic expansion of the project beyond the site.

The KotKot installation during the participative construction site.
Photo by Takiyk & Alive Architecture

Children playing with sheep in Ruth Plaizier and Ewoud Saeys’s ‘KotKot animal farm’.
Photo by Takiyk & Alive Architecture
The KotKot installation in its final stage.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture
**Beecar**

*Scrabe*

*Beecar* is a beehive with five bee colonies in five huts. One of these huts is mobile and can be moved around the neighbourhood and the city by bike. The bees still collect pollen from the flowers in the park and neighbouring gardens today and therefore produce *Parckfarm* honey.

Similar to the donkey initiated by the *KotKot* team or the *Farmtruck* that is extending to the farms of the region and the public space in the city, *Beecar* could expand their installation beyond the site of the biennale thanks to it being designed as a mobile device. I equally appreciated how the team organized several media gatherings, challenging public awareness on bee farming and the *Parckfarm* as an experiment.

Although we in the jury considered it as being too colorful an installation, during the biennale and even today children from the neighbourhood and from Brussels especially love to visit the installation.
Adults and children alike enjoy discovering the installation even today.

Photo by Dieter Telemans
Thanks to the edible and medicinal plants inserted in the table itself, the installation invites the public to meet and eat in direct contact with a landscape. The essence of this project is to involve the visitor in the landscape, farming, nature and cooking through shared moments.

What I appreciate in the Landscape Table is that through the intervention the designers aimed and managed to support social encounters in the public realm related to the topic of the biennale’s farm. The large table was and still is a great object for designers, farmers and locals, as it is a fantastic space to gather, discover useful plants for cooking and is a beautiful designed object.

Unfortunately the designers of the table did not organize any event around the table. However many other actors used it as a support for happenings in the Parckfarm, such as the Beecar team when they extracted the honey from the hives, and the cooking workshops that partly took place around the landscape table.
The installation illuminates the space under the Jubilée Bridge.

Electric Rainbow Farmfair
Hidde van Schie

The colorful, luminous sculpture was developed for the space under the Jubilée bridge. The installation draws inspiration from the atmosphere typical of an agricultural fair. The artist refers to it as the installation by the *electric rainbow* attempts to create new connections between people.

Whilst the installation offers a great framework for holding a farm party, unfortunately the artist organized only two events, for the opening and the closure. For this reason, the installation was underused compared with its potential. Like the *Cubious* installation, if one of the local people had appropriated the project as their responsibility, this could have increased the use of the beautiful light sculpture.
People from the local community working in the vegetable garden.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture

Jardin des Recettes
Taktyk (Aline Gayou)

As a continuation of the existing vegetable gardens, this new garden of recipes uses raised beds as a means of gardening on a slope and producing food with few means. Every terrace in this vegetable garden is composed of recipes to come and harvest, discover and enjoy.

Taktyk’s collective vegetable garden is partly used by families as private plots, partly as a garden of the local farmers of the Parckfarm.  
Up to now, the local farmers have organized green Wednesdays every week, where they teach groups of schoolchildren or other participants about gardening.

The bread oven is situated in the garden, like the house of the guardian Marcel. The ownership of land by different actors leads to various conflicts, especially between the Moroccan and non-Moroccan communities. We are counting on Gabrielle, the new coordinator of the Parckfarm’s non-profit organization, to take a lead in these discussions.

The pigeon house located in the Recipe Garden by Taktyk.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture

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The Farmtruck is active in front of Momo’s café.
Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture

Farmtruck
Alive Architecture (Idea & Design) & Rirbaucout (Design & Activation)

The project represents the mobile part of the Parckfarm. It is a van that can be turned into a kitchen, a workshop, a cinema and a stage, amongst other things.

I initiated the Farmtruck to generate links with other farms in the region and to invite people from Brussels to the biennale through presenting the Parckfarm in the public realm of the city. When the team Rirbaucout visited farms they took movies and showed them in the Parckfarm.

Today Aline Gayou from the non-profit organization Parckfarm T&T runs the Farmtruck. The intention is to consolidate the use of the Farmtruck through more extensive connections with existing farms and by using it to expand the inclusive urban concept of the Parckfarm beyond the site to the rest of the region.
Atmosphere created on and around the Farmtruck at nighttime.

Photo by Taltyk & Alive Architecture
Local Initiative: Four à Pain

Abdel

During our monthly meetings at Momo’s place, the local farmer Stephanie, who is today a member of the non-profit organization Parckfarm T&T mentioned that a place to bake bread was missing in the farm. Abdel proposed to build a bread oven. Thus the idea of the Four à Pain in the Parckfarm was borne and Abdel constructed it together with a friend.

Ever since the beginning of the biennale, while he is heating up the bread oven on Saturdays and Sundays, everyone is invited to bake pizzas, bread and tagines.

The budget of this installation is only about 10% of that of the other installations developed by the artistic teams. This is where I learned that when the local community is allowed to take ownership of the public realm, it lowers the costs of projects.
Hanging out around the bread oven while it is heating up.

Photo by: Taktyk & Alive Architecture
Local Initiative: Salon de Thé

Momo

The back door of Momo’s café leads directly onto the site of the Parckfarm and the space became a delightful open terrace with a view over the Thurn & Taxis site during the biennale.

When our client sent a letter telling Momo that he had to close down the terrace, I invited Mister Emma from Archiurbain to interview him and other local actors from the Parckfarm (photo above). He expressed how fantastic the view from the terrace is and that he will communicate this to the ministers in order to resolve the issue of Momo’s terrace.

Today the Salon de Thé sign is no longer positioned in the park, but on the window of the street entrance to the café. The terrace is used only in a very informal way by Momo and his friends and has no longer such a diverse clientele, as was the case during the biennale.

I believe that stopping the monthly meetings at Momo’s café when the biennale started was probably my biggest mistake in the project.
To have a critical view from a person who has followed the process from the beginning until now, I interviewed Ruth Plaizier to share her inside vision throughout this project:

Petra Pferdemeyer: Ruth, you introduced us in the beginning of our preparations for the biennale to Tessa, who is currently the most active person around the Farmhouse and to Momo, who hosted our monthly meetings to involve the locals in the biennale. Looking back at this period, do you think it was a good way to involve the neighborhood? What are the critical factors involved?

Ruth Plaizier: I thought it was really nice that the meetings found a place at Mohammed’s café. But I think that these meetings started maybe too late to really find out what some people actually wanted. I introduced my project because of these meetings, but I had been thinking about this kind of thing for a long time.

For Mohammed it was new to be involved in a project like this. I think he should have had more time and help to think about his project. He never really understood why he didn’t have official permission to make a terrace while other projects even received money to carry out their ideas. It wasn’t always clear to people how it worked and who took the decisions. I think it could have been very interesting if Mohammed’s bar had got a budget in exchange for cooperation with an architect and the organization of activities in his bar. But of course we can never know what might have been. To organize something together in a democratic way is not easy at all. We all talk about common sense, but people do not always understand the same thing when talking about common sense. That is why this kind of project can be very nice today, but can also turn out really terribly tomorrow. It is never finished. It all depends on good communication between people. I don’t think you can leave this kind of project up to neighbours alone, but believe that there is a need for assistance from a neutral professional who has no personal involvement.

PP: Throughout the biennale the artistic teams organized events, but equally the local initiatives found their roles in the project. Looking back at the period, what is your opinion of these different happenings?
I was surprised that there were so many and varied people, making time to come to the meetings. People were excited by the possibility to take part in the evolution of their neighbourhood.

Throughout the biennale, you were the most visible person on the site as you were the main person running the canteen in the Farmhouse. What experience did you take from this time?

Tessa Poldervaart

I referred to Tessa Poldervaart (left photo on the next page) earlier in this chapter as one of the local farmers of the Parckfarm who is running the canteen. Like Ruth Plaizier, she has been present in the process since the beginning during the meetings at Momo’s café. She is the most active inhabitant to date, inviting all the volunteers, training and organizing them so that the Farmhouse is opened at weekends. I also interviewed her to get a better insight into the project’s development and what the Parckfarm is today.
TP: I tried to make connections between people through the discussion about feeding yourself in the city. I remember saying to myself that I would never forget this experience.

PP: Even though the park is in a neighbourhood where 60% of the inhabitants are Moroccan, they were less present throughout the process of the biennale. You live in the neighbourhood and are married to a Moroccan man. How do you explain this lack of involvement among the local Moroccan community?

TP: I don’t think that they weren’t involved. I believe that they just took a role in a different way. In the vegetable garden, for example, there are more Moroccans than European people. Concerning their involvement in the biennale, I think it’s a question of different cultures. Moroccan people might invest their time in events related to the family rather than working as a volunteer in a biennale.

PP: Today you continue to invest your energy and time keeping the Farmhouse running, not only through the canteen but also through the green Wednesdays together with Nadine. You organize the volunteers and maintain the Farmhouse as a Lived Space. What are the interesting issues and difficult points in doing so?

TP: The green Wednesdays make sense in and around the Farmhouse. A lot has been done, but a lot still has to be done. Meeting people is great, seeing their satisfaction with Parkfarm is great! I invite them to join us. I would like to transform the association into a cooperative way for people to have a good life with food and a house.

Abdel

As described before Abdel together with Stephanie from the non-profit organization Parkfarm T&T initiated the bread oven and constructed it together with a friend (photo below).

He was and still is the most active person from the local Moroccan community. He earned and is still earning a small salary as a volunteer for heating up the oven every weekend.

Unfortunately it was not possible to hold an interview with Abdel as
he spends his summer in Morocco and therefore hands over his role to another person from the neighbourhood.

**Non-profit Organization Parckfarm T&T**

As a curatorial team, we decided that the Farmhouse should make it possible to get a coffee, beer and small snacks. We had a rather important discussion among the team and with the client as to who was going to run the canteen. To me, it was crucial that the money earned through the biennale should end up in the neighbourhood, to stimulate the local economy. Through our meetings at Momo’s café, I met Tessa, who was more than willing to invest her energy in the project and who has expertise in growing food in the city.

This is why I initiated the non-profit organization Parckfarm T&T (photo on this page). A non-profit organization would on one hand make sure that the money enters the neighbourhood by involving the local community; on the other hand it would offer the potential for the project to continue beyond the period of the biennale. The name originates from the title of the biennale and the urban site under development, Thurn & Taxis.

I was happy that three local actors joined the team in order to make the non-profit organization official: Driss Kasri, who is Tessa's husband, Stephanie Bertel who has been active in the collective garden next to the site for seven years and Ruth Plaizier from KotKot, who helped out because we needed to be four people in order to set up the non-profit organization.

The formal part of being four of us in the non-profit organization turned it into a very improvised basis that served in the beginning only to employ the local farmers. They are Tessa, Nadine, who is another very active inhabitant that initiated the green Wednesdays, and Caroline, a friend of Tessa who run the Farmhouse. The three of them did a fantastic job not just in running the place but also in welcoming locals and visitors alike to the Parckfarm. When we managed to continue the project, our client invited the non-profit organization to run not only the Farmhouse but also the other installations that continued after the biennale.

Today the non-profit organization Parckfarm T&T is being organized more professionally, thanks to Stefanie Bertel who has taken over the lead in the association. Further people have joined as members or administrators. The Moroccan woman Rhama took over my role and Moustafa recently joined the association to have a say in his neighbourhood.

On a financial level Tessa who is still very involved in the project of the Farmhouse organized and managed to receive a Growfunding to continue to run the canteen: [https://www.growfunding.be/bxl/parckfarm-en](https://www.growfunding.be/bxl/parckfarm-en)

Also the association from our client received 75,000 euros in funding and uses it in order to employ a coordinator to organize the many volunteers involved and to mediate in the conflict situations. Furthermore the association is currently searching for administrative help for all the financial issues. I remain involved in the project but concentrate on the expansion of the urban concept.
In that way there is an exchange of different cultures, without any importance of the social status. There are nice encounters happening!

PP: What are your projects for the Parkfarm in the future?

RA: My project is to cook together with the women of the neighbourhood in the Farmhouse. To enable the different women from the neighbourhood to participate, even those who do not speak French properly. We do the cooking workshops with recipes from the whole world.

PP: Is there anything else that seems important to you to add to this interview in order to give the reader an idea about the Parckfarm?

RA: Everyone should come and visit us, be open to mixing, so everyone gets along with the others!

Tcharmela

Tcharmela is a youth organization in the neighbourhood that was founded through and for Parkdesign 2014: Parkfarm (right photo of the next page). The term Tcharmela refers to a Moroccan sauce that has become synonymous with a mixture. They chose the term because the site of Lived Space in the Parkfarm through the Farmtruck to other sites in the region and beyond.

PP: Rahma, I consider you to be the most active Moroccan woman in the neighbourhood around the Parkfarm. This is why I was very happy that you accepted to take over my role in the non-profit organization Parkfarm T&T at the end of the biennale. Since this moment you have involved the local Moroccan community in the Parkfarm. What is your way of doing this?

Rahma Assoufi: My way of doing this is to discuss with people, generate links with inhabitants and invite them to discover this wonderful place. The Parkfarm generates a small nature in the middle of the city, I invite people to visit it and tell them that it is a place for everyone.

PP: How does the Moroccan population experience the Parkfarm?

RA: They are very happy to have it, especially the people with children. As there was no real park in the neighbourhood it is a place of which the mothers were dreaming of. They take their children with their little bicycles, play in the park without being afraid of cars or other dangers because of the traffic in the street. It really is a natural place and welcomes people through the greenery and all of its facilities. There are families that come with a flask to drink coffee and to eat a little something. They do not really use the Farmhouse but remain mainly in the external space. However, they like the collective garden a lot. I see many men for whom the plot became their preferred place to pass their time on Saturdays. They plant, garden, check and follow how the fruits and vegetables grow. A neighbour also places the herbs from her kitchen in the shared part of the garden so everyone can enjoy them. The schools come here too, for example for the green Wednesdays. It’s a place of great importance in the neighbourhood.

PP: How does the encounter between the local population and the visitors of the Parkfarm go?

RA: Often it is inspiring! Sometimes people come from far, I discussed already with some from Ostend. There was the grandmother and the grandchildren. This was really nice.
meetings to determine the name of the collective, how many people would be in the collective and what we could organize for the neighborhood.

Caroline Claus: The team around Hakim was really motivated. It was not the money that was the most important. I find it really important that it is not just about money but also about the wish to understand the needs of young people. I met some youngsters who knew about the reality of the neighborhood.

PP: What was your experience of Tcharmela during the biennale?

HZ: It allowed me to get involved in setting up events, to learn about it from within. I learned to handle the young people, to organize a team and to organize things we needed for the events at the last minute and about security.

I refer to security in the sense that if young people feel involved, if they feel a sort of ownership, they protect their neighborhood, the park. I also learned about having contact with people.

CC: Hakim, you are actually really good in communication. To the biennale is positioned between different communities with many different cultures. The development of the group took place thanks to Caroline Claus from the association Jes/Jota! who is working with the youngsters in the neighbourhood.

Tcharmela organized different sort of activities, from music to soccer and a barbecue by and for young people in the neighbourhood during the period of the biennale. The group continues to exist but is currently far less active in the Parkfarm. Like the non-profit organization Parkfarm T&T they applied for Growfunding but unfortunately were not successful.

PP: Caroline and Hakim, how was Tcharmela borne and for what reason?

Hakim Zaouchi: Tcharmela was borne thanks to Caroline Claus from Jes and in the framework of the Parckdesign festival. Caroline came to tell us that there will be a project for young people in the neighbourhood. This interested me directly. From this moment onwards we organized different

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motivate others, to find them, to invite them and to communicate about the project is your expertise. This is really important in this context. How many times have you done this and continue to do it today!

PP: What impact did you have upon the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm biennale?

HZ: I let the neighborhood learn about the existence of the park. I showed them that they are very welcome and that it is a new park for them and for everyone else and that we can do a lot of things there. The young investigated their terrain, in their park, once they realized that they could do so. I also had an influence on the park. It is a park for the neighborhood so you have to respect it. Security is very important. We did not let anyone break the installations or set them on fire, or allow any other sort of vandalism.

CC: Maybe you can use a word that is more positive. Consider it as an opening for the youngsters of the neighborhood rather than referring to you as a policeman and a guardian.

PP: Today Tcharmela is no longer involved in the Parckfarm. What is the reason for this?

HZ: The reason is that I received a contract at the Allée du Kai, a project close to the Parckfarm, in order to involve the youngsters. Furthermore I no longer feel involved as no one is asking me to invest in it anymore.

CC: Hakim, how about Growfunding?

HZ: I tried it this year but unfortunately it did not work. We will try again next year.

PP: What impact did you have upon the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm biennale.

HZ: This is true. During this period we learned alot from Jes. Thank you for this.

PP: Does Tcharmela still exist today?

HZ: Yes! Tcharmela is still there. It is really involved in the neighborhood, it is known as a young collective that helps youngsters to organize activities. We will still be there in the coming years and will try to improve. We wish to have a building, a community center and subsidies. We actually wish to turn the collective into a non-profit organization.

CC: Hakim, you place a lot of importance on security. Hakim, you are not a guardian.

HZ: Just take a look how many times the guardians’ house was burned or the windows were broken in the park next to the Parckfarm. In the Farmhouse, vandalism took place only on a single occasion. This is because the youngsters from the neighborhood respect it as a place.

CC: I realize you place a lot of importance on security, Hakim. You are not a guardian.

HZ: I organized the workshop Parckfarm Afterlife together with my colleague Christopher Paesbrugghe for 60 students from the international Master of Architecture course at the KU Leuven. Each of them designed a postcard which would propose an Afterlife of the Parckfarm that would reach beyond the given site and period (images on the next page). These postcards were one of the means to convince our client of a possible Afterlife for the project, unfortunately without success.

Because of the great involvement of the local inhabitants there was a genuine demand to continue the project after the end of the biennale. It would have been strange and incomprehensible if the installations disappeared after only a few months.

To perpetuate the biennale beyond the ephemeral turned out to be more difficult than expected. Only during an exchange on 10/07/2014 with people from the city together with people from Nantes (France) was this option finally given a
We made it, probably thanks to our invited guests from Nantes, who must have given a hunch to IBGE to give it a trial.

On 7/8/2014 we could read in the local popular news Brusselnieuws (image on page 147):

‘The Parckfarm will not be taken down after the summer. The temporary urban farm in the new Thurn & Taxis park set up in the context of Parckdesign will remain after the summer. Because of its great success, it was decided to keep it for one more year’ Brusselnieuws.’

On the following link there is the full article in dutch: http://www.brusselnieuws.be/nl/nieuws/parckfarm-niet-ontmanteld-na-zomer

The success of this biennale as a test comes partly from its public recognition, but above all from the empowerment of the locals to co-produce the Parckfarm Thurn & Taxis. Without Ruth, Tessa, Nadine, Abdel, Marcel and the others, the project would not have been possible as such.

**Parckfarm Afterlife**

At the end of the biennale we organized a closing event called Parckfarm Afterlife (photo on page 149). We invited different people to express the most important issues concerning the continuation of the Parckfarm.

The animator of the morning was Dr. Marten Roels who initiated an urban farm in Brussels. He refers to the visibility of the farm in the park that is lacking in other farms in Brussels. He considers this issue as one of the most interesting points of the project and expressed that for the future it is important to strengthen the relationship between the Parckfarm and the site of Thurn and Taxis under development.

In addition we invited the philosopher, academic and activist Prof. Dr. Lieven de Cauter to give a
Public discussion organized together with forty people, including inhabitants, artists, our client and people from the city of Nantes in France to discuss the crucial issue of continuing the project beyond the period of the biennale.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture
talk in the conference. In his speech, he reminds us that we should not think about what is produced here but rather what is happening here. He calls the project a **heterotopic space** and refers to each of the installations as **mixing machines** and states that the city of tomorrow will need those **mixing machines**, highlighting that we humans do not tend to mix. He points out that such mixed use in the future of the city is more important than food.

Finally we invited Brussel’s former chief architect Olivier Bastin, who referred to the project’s capacity for polarization and about its great potential for mediation. He questions the future of the keys of the Farmhouse, raising the idea that it might become a more public space if the Farmhouse would exist without keys in order to be open to everyone at any moment.

We ended the day with a music event under the Jubilée bridge organized by Hidde van Schie. This created a beautiful atmosphere with lighting throughout the Parkfarm (photo on page 150).

The project is recognized in a very positive way in Brussels and has five stars on Facebook. However, the many different cultures turned the collaboration into a challenge that is probably more difficult than a project in a neighbourhood inhabited by people from similar cultures. As Ruth Plaizier mentioned at the end of her interview, I really think that everyone should try to make an effort to live together and accept one another’s differences.

### Public Space Prize

For the Parkfarm project we won the Public Space 2015 Prize in Flanders and Brussels (image on the next page). The head of the jury described it as follows:

‘There are opportunities there for process planning, in which the end result is not fixed and where the design arises from bottom up ... In other words: letting go of traditional design methods. From that perspective, Parkfarm is head and shoulders above the others. In Belgium we have never seen anything like this on such a scale before.’

What is interesting is that the owner of the private site of almost 40 ha next to the site of the Parkfarm...
learned about this award and saw the chance to use the prize for his advantage. Whereas before he fenced off his site from the biennale site, this separation has since been removed (photo below).

Furthermore, he invited the Parckfarm T&T non-profit organization to a meeting and is interested in some form of collaboration. He suggested that an expansion of the Parckfarm project on his side through the use of a small house on his site not far from the Parckfarm might be an interesting option.
The Parkfarm Afterlife conference, discussing the challenges for the continuation of the Parkfarm.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture
Atmosphere in the evening after the Parkfarm Afterlife conference.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture
Parckdesign, geïntroduceerd door Leefmilieu Brussel, is een evenement dat de rol van groene zones en openbare ruimtes in het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest Centraal plaatst. Onder de titel GARDEN worden er een reeks projecten uitgevoerd die de groene zones en openbare ruimtes omzoomen. Wanneer een groene zone wordt omgebouwd tot nieuwe voren van stadsruimte, wordt ook een vegetatie-ontwerp op het terrein gemaakt. Architecten, 

The image shows the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm publication. Graphic Design by Ruth Plaizier, Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture.
In the first chapter I revealed how I was drawing Lived Space. In the second chapter I described how I observed space that changes over time and followed this up by reproducing Lived Space. In the third chapter I presented how I observed spatial capital and needs to later co-produce Lived Space. In this final chapter I observed the spatial and social capital in order to build the project upon the already existing qualities to initiate Lived Space.

1. Observation for Lived Space

Observing Spatial Capital through Walking

During our first visit to the Parckdesign 2014 biennale site, we observed the existing values of the vacant site. We found several neighbors’ vegetable gardens, a pigeon house run by the homeless inhabitant Marcel living on the site and a building with chickens run by Ruth Plaizier. These findings inspired how we defined the topics for the artistic installations in order to base the biennale upon the site’s existing qualities. The vegetable garden would serve as the first part of Taktyk’s Garden of recipes while the chicken house was the inspiration for the KotKot animal farm.

During one of the meetings with the IBGE we managed to convince our client to not take the pigeon house out of the future park which is maintained by Marcel, but to accept it as an existing feature that should remain part of the park.
Observing Social Capital through Engaging

From the outset of the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm project, I engaged with the local inhabitants and associations to involve them in the process. I tried to reveal the expertise in the neighbourhood. This process was extremely time-consuming. The work required me on one hand to get in touch with people and on the other hand to build and maintain trust over time.

Through our encounter with the inhabitant Ruth Plaizier, we found out about her existing chicken farm, about Marcel taking care of the pigeons and we visited the existing vegetable garden. My first encounter at Momo’s café was also at Ruth’s invitation.

I consider Ruth Plaizier to have been the most crucial local actor in the process of setting up the biennale, who collaborated with us before and throughout the period of the biennale. I learned from our collaboration with her that it is crucial to have one or more key contact persons from the neighbourhood who communicate the project to the local community on a daily basis.

The communication by her and other active neighbors such as Tessa and Abdel contributed greatly to bringing several local actors into the project and therefore to generating Lived Space in the Parckfarm. However, just as engaging was very time-consuming for me, such communication was very time-consuming for Ruth Plaizier. In my next project I will try to involve such person in the project through freelance collaboration in my spatial agency.

After this first gathering, it seemed crucial to me to start up the monthly meeting at Momo’s café in order to observe what further expertise existed in the neighbourhood and to connect the local actors with the artistic team to discuss the various installations.

We asked Ruth Plaizier if she would be willing to collaborate with the artistic team for the animal farm. However an even better solution emerged. Ruth Plaizier handed in a proposal for the animal farm that was then selected by us together with the other members of the jury. Up to now, not only Ruth Plaizier and all inhabitants that she involved in the construction and the maintenance of KotKot, but also the animals contribute to generating Lived Space in the Parckfarm.

During the meetings at Momo’s café, I also observed the expertise of Stephanie, who knows about baking bread, and of Abdel, who knows how to build bread ovens. This was one of the most crucial discoveries and the starting point of the bread oven that has a huge success to this day. By enabling the construction of the bread oven, I initiated Lived Space.

In order to involve the local Moroccan community, I invited Nadia from the local association Repère to prepare some food for the meetings at Momo’s café. Moreover I invited Karim to continue recording the activities as he had started to do on his own initiative during the meetings at Momo’s place.

I also employed the Moroccan architecture student Fatima whom I met at the KU Leuven and who is living in the neighbourhood to help me through a summer student job in the biennale.

In addition, I handed over my role in the non-profit organization to Rahma, who is the most active Moroccan

Nadia from the Repère association is offering food to the participants at the meeting.

Photo by Stijn Beeckman
woman in the neighbourhood. Finally I am grateful to Caroline Claus from Jes/Yota! who facilitated the young collective Tcharmela at the beginning of the biennale project.

Through my interest and energy I put into involving the Moroccan community, I initiated their involvement in the creation and the event of the Parckfarm. However throughout the biennale preparation process, it was mainly Europeans who got involved in the preparation. Until now, most of the inhabitants who help out in the Farmhouse as volunteers have been non-Moroccan.

Observing not only the spatial but also the social capital was something new in my practice and therefore an added value in the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm project.

Observing for Lived Space

As I was observing on one hand the spatial capital and on the other the social capital I could identify the site’s existing qualities and the expertise of the local actors and involve them to contribute to the Lived Space in the Parckfarm. It was no longer observation of Lived Space but for Lived Space.

What is the Observing doing?

I learned about people’s expertise and the existing spatial capital. This was made possible through the monthly meetings at Momo’s café. Only by allowing the guests at these meetings to speak, rather than talking myself, was it possible to observe how people were interested to engage in the production of the Parckfarm.

2. Devices for Lived Space

In the Fairground Pleasures project, I was the one producing Lived Space. In the Infrared project, I co-produced Lived Space by handing out flowers to men who could then give them to the sex-workers and by inviting the Piadina Wagon girls to sell their food and to expand the table and chairs to the public realm. In the Licht-ing project, I co-produced the candle installation hanging from the trees together with the children from the trailer park and the school.

In the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm project I curated many different actors in order to initiate Lived Space: the artistic teams on the one hand and the local community on the other. This is demonstrated through the artistic installations, the local initiatives and the Rirbaucout collective, which activated the Farmtruck. The different ways of curating others made it possible to initiate Lived Space.

Through Engaging - for Engaging

To organize the meetings at Momo’s café during the Parckfarm project was a crucial means of engaging with people. It allowed me to identify local expertise and the motivations of local actors to contribute to the biennale. In addition these meetings allowed not only myself but also the artists to engage with the locals and vice-versa. The teams could express that they were seeking people to construct the installations, while the locals could ask how they could get involved in their work.

Besides all of us engaging with one another during the preparation of the biennale, each team designed a relational installation and organized social activities that would allow people to engage with one another. One aim of the project was that people from different backgrounds would engage with one another, including the local actors that come from many different cultures.

Relational Objects

Personally I was not only looking for beautiful objects but was in search of objects that generated use and encounter, generating Lived Space. This is why in the call for projects we called for relational installations that would make it possible for people to meet one another.

The scene on the installation Usine du Trésor Noir was only one example of such relational installations. The youngsters themselves organized activities on this stage and therefore related to the physical space. Moreover in the Farmhouse, there was no fixed table, but users could move the tables around according to the different activities taking place. It is clear that the animal farm KotKot is a relational installation, as the animals have to be taken care of by people. In addition it became a real attraction for the children who enjoyed playing with the sheep. The Landscape Table is a relational installation by nature: it allows people to sit together, engaging with the plants growing out of the table. The Farmtruck that I initiated and

Table Paysage: Landscape Table
for which I designed the spatial organization and functions to allow for social activities, opens up on all three sides and in this way creates a table where people can cook together or use in various ways (upper photo on this page). When one of the sides is closed, it turns into a cinema and offers benches and tables where people can sit while watching a film.

The design of an object that allows people to engage with it and to change its position in the public realm is very similar to the design of the *Meals on Wheels* installation, where people could move the stands in the public realm and cook in them, placing tables and benches around them to allow for occupation (lower photo on this page).

The fixed installations and the mobile *Farmtruck* are relational objects that stimulate *Lived Space* in the public realm.

**Social Activities**

We asked each of the teams to set up a minimum of three events. The demand for these relational activities was one of my ways to facilitate encounters among locals, actors and visitors to the biennale.

For example *Collective Disaster* from the project *Usine du TrésOr Noir* organized a series of concerts, food events and presentations on the stage of their installation, which was in my opinion the most crucial zone of their construction.

The team from the *Beecar* installation organized several demonstrations of emptying the honey from the beehives of their installation. They invited people to join the spectacle, which was also a way of generating encounter among different people through the activity.

**Eating as a Social Activity**

Since the *Asica enters Europe* and *A-life* projects, food has played a role in my projects.

In *Asica enters Europe* I photographed the immigrants cooking together in the forest around the camp. In *A-life* I based the project upon what I had observed. I designed the *Meals on Wheels* installation whereby the immigrants could cook their food and sell it to the population of Ceuta (lower
In the projects in Chapter Two, I was producing urban actions. In the Visible Invisible project I transformed the space behind the window into a space that performed over time through the opening and closing of the curtains. This generated interaction among people in the neighbourhood as they exchanged upon the installation. In the Fairground Pleasures action I engaged with people and allowed other people to engage with one another.

In the projects in Chapter Three I used minimal physical means to create relations among people. The Sweet Flower action generated a more respectful relationship between the men in the street and the sex-workers. For the People’s Wall action I invited politicians, sex-workers and colleagues to visit the exhibition. The project generated relationships among people in the public realm.

In the project in this final chapter, I designed the Farmtruck. The Rirbaucout collective engaged with people in the public realm and generated relationships among people through various urban actions, ranging from cooking and cinema to exchanging upon urban agriculture. Also Ruth Plaizier’s walk with the donkey Sam was a relational action. The Beecar team realized urban actions through cycling with the objects in Brussels’ public space.

Empowering the Local

Through my role as a curator, I had access to power for the first time in a project. This enabled me to hand power over to the local.

The call for the artistic interventions by designers were one way of empowering the local. I did so by making a call for teams that would include a local actor.

In the overall biennale budget I reserved a certain amount of money to be invested for local actors who proposed initiatives that had not been envisaged and commissioned in the biennale. This is how Abdel’s bread oven came about. People come from the neighbourhood but also from across the region to celebrate their birthdays or other events around the oven.

Caroline Claus facilitated the creation of the group Tcharmela by some of the young people from the local community. This allowed the young generation to appropriate the Parckfarm. Because of the feeling of ownership they took care of the park and the Farmhouse. According to Hakim this probably even avoided the vandalism of the Farmhouse, which is widespread in the neighbourhood. In the park next to the Parckfarm, a new building had already been burned and the windows broken several times.

The value of local initiatives and the associated initiation of Lived Space is also why I supported the idea of creating a terrace in the new park.
Piadina Wagon in the Infrared project to generate encounters through food.
Photo by Alive Architecture

Barbe à Papa in the Fairground Pleasures project to generate encounters with people through food.
Photo by Christophe Antipas

We offered food in the Licht-ing project to generate encounters among people.
Photo by Alive Architecture

A cooking workshop in the Farmhouse generates encounters among participants.
Photo by Taltyk & Alive Architecture

We offered food in the Licht-ing project to generate encounters among people.
adjacent to and run by Momo’s café. From his terrace the visitor has a beautiful view over Brussels and the Thurn & Taxis site in urban development.

Curating the local contributed to the project’s success, by initiating Lived Space in the public realm of the Parckfarm.

In the Spatial Agency publication it is written:

*Power exerted is the power of one person over another, which is hardly consistent with the notion of shared responsibility. A better definition in relation to spatial agency is that the agent is 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.*

Involving local actors is a way to directly involve those who are using the space on a daily basis. By giving them the possibility to collaborate on the installations they could appropriate the public realm of the Parckfarm.

**Co-Production**

The installations were designed and put in place by each of the teams, partly with the participation of local inhabitants or students. The collaboration of the designers with local actors made it possible for most of the teams to have a strong connection with the neighbourhood, such as the Farmhouse team, which collaborated with Caroline Claus from Jes/Yota! who involved several youngsters in the construction of the Farmhouse.

Further as discussed before, Ruth Plaizier of KotKot involved many inhabitants into co-producing and maintaining the installation.

Involving people into the construction of objects in the public realm gives them a certain feeling of ownership. In my opinion, this is why people will take better care of what they constructed and how they use the space.

**Local Urban Entrepreneurship**

The canteen in the Farmhouse is an urban entrepreneurship. Through two locals running the canteen in the Farmhouse during the biennale, most of the money spent by visitors to the biennial ended up in the neighbourhood and selling drinks and food activates the project, generating Lived Space.

Albeit in a very informal way, the bread oven is an urban entrepreneurship, as the guests are paying a little money to Abdel for his service. His project invites guests to the neighbourhood as it creates a new focal point in the city that generates gentrification. However, the money is ending up in the neighbourhood, stimulating the local economy.

**What is Initiating Lived Space doing?**

By initiating Lived Space through the above devices during the biennale I was finally stepping out of the role of being the person who is producing Lived Space and handing over this role to the people involved. Only through stepping out of the process and allowing other people to act could I create Lived Space that went beyond the ephemeral.

**3. Documentation of Lived Space**

In the previous projects, I was the one who photographed or filmed the actions. I was highlighting moments of change over time through anecdotal drawings. In the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm project I curated a local cameraman to take over the role of recording moments in the biennale (photos on the next page). I met Karim Amezian at one of the meetings at Momo’s café where he was filming the encounters between the people. I invited and paid him to continue to record the atmosphere during the pre-opening and several subsequent events, as well as everyday moments in the Parckfarm.

With a bit of help from me, he edited the different films into one short five-minute film, including some music from one of the events that took place during the biennale.

On the following link there is the film of the biennale:


Curating a local to record the biennale events made it possible to build trust with part of the Moroccan local community and a way of inviting the cameraman and his
An extract from the film taken by a local cameraman during the biennale. Film by Karim Amezian

Extract from the film that recorded everyday life at the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm biennale. Film by Karim Amezian

friends to take part in appropriating the Parckfarm.

As it was Karim and not me who filmed the movie openly in the public domain, it also avoided the ethical issue I previously faced when I filmed using hidden cameras.

Furthermore, the red images that I drew in the previous projects were no longer present, but instead many different situations were captured in the film.

4. Communication for Lived Space

Learning from Infrared and Licht-ing it became clear that in order to initiate Lived Space we had to communicate the existence of the biennale and the many events to as many people as possible in order to generate participation.

Chez Momo

Through the monthly meetings at Momo’s café I generated communication about the biennale to the local actors and among the locals, the artists and the client. This turned out to be very productive, as people that wished to get involved in the project could do so through local initiatives, organizing activities or through co-producing the installations.

Website

We used the already existing website http://www.parckdesign.be of the biennale Parckdesign. Furthermore, the Parckfarm T&T non-profit organisation also set up a website http://www.parckfarm.be.

Whilst it took a lot of time to set up a proper graphics for the website and to collect photos of all the local farmers in order to present them as part of the biennale, the impact of a website seemed minimal to us compared with the effort we invested in it.

Facebook

We also used the already existing facebook account https://www.facebook.com/Parckdesign. During the period of the biennale the amount of facebook fans evolved from 340 in the beginning to more than 2,700 people. The social media helped us a lot to invite people to the event
and to communicate the news in the Parckfarm. Furthermore the non-profit organization Parckfarm T&T set up a Facebook account https://www.facebook.com/parckfarmtourtaxis. This is where they still communicate all the information about what is happening in the Parckfarm.

Farmtruck

I designed the Farmtruck as a device to communicate about the project through a physical tool. It was active in the farms and public space in the region, communicating to the population about the biennale through cooking, showing films and participative events.

Flyers

Furthermore, most of the teams distributed flyers in the neighbourhood and beyond when they organized an event related to their installation. Before the beginning of the biennale we employed one of the local farmers in order to walk around in the neighbourhood in order to put up posters, spread flyers and communicate about the project generally.

Popular Media: Mister Emma

When Momo received the letter from our client that his terrace was not legal and that he had to close it, I invited Mister Emma from Archiurbain to interview him and some of the other local actors.

The terrace today is only used by Momo and his friends and is lacking the diversity of people from throughout the region. Momo never heard any further complaint about his terrace and I hope that it will be used in the future also by non-Moroccan locals and Parckfarm guests from the region and beyond.

On the following link is the film of Mister Emma’s interview with Momo, some local farmers and myself: http://www.archiurbain.be/?p=5118

International Experts

When we organized the discussion to debate a possible afterlife for the Parckfarm, our client invited some guests from Nantes, France to present their work and to join us in the discussion. Whereas before the meeting I did not pay a lot of attention to the visit of these international guests, their participation was probably the reason why the project was accepted by our client to continue, as one week after they met them, several experts on Brussels, the artists and the inhabitants, the IBGE called us to discuss the continuation of the Parckfarm.

Publication of Parckdesign 2014

After the biennale was finished we produced a publication of Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm, as had been the case for the previous edition1. Editing a publication was a new and rich experience for me.

Also together with Thierry Kandjee from Taktyk, I wrote an article for the publication2 about the public space prize that we won for the project, and Ann Cannière from ADT wrote an article on the project that was published in ruimte, a Flemish magazine about public space3. Furthermore, thanks to my supervisor Sue Anne Ware, the project was the subject of an article published in the magazine Landscape Architecture in Australia4.

Publication on Local Popular Media

In the projects in the previous chapter I worked with popular media in order to communicate to a larger public. Since the biennale ended, there have been innumerable publications about the Parckfarm project. Each time I discover one, mostly by coincidence, it makes me happy to read about the different descriptions of the project which are, as far as I know, all very positive.

Here are the links to three of them, one of which is in English: Parckfarm niet ontmanteld na zomer (in Dutch on Brussel Nieuws): http://www.brusselnieuws.be/nl/nieuws/parckfarm-niet-ontmanteld-na-zomer


For me it is not important that my name is mentioned in the publications as is the case in the article on Flanders Today, but that the project is communicated to a large public. If our client or the local actors appropriate what I intended to do through the projects, it is even better.

The communication about the project through the popular media encourages many guests from outside the neighbourhood to the Parkfarm and is, in that sense, a means of contributing to the Lived Space. Because of the gentrification that such a project is generating, it is important to me that the money spent by the guest should stimulate the local economy.

Digital and Physical Communication

While communication during and after the biennale has mainly taken place through digital media, in order to better reach the neighbourhood we ought to have communicated and still have to do so far more on a physical level through posters and flyers, as many people from the Moroccan community in the neighbourhood do not have access to Internet. This is one of the reasons why I am very happy that Rhama accepted to take over my role in the Parkfarm T&T non-profit organisation. As she knows many of the Moroccan inhabitants in the neighbourhood, she is communicating about the project through exchanging with people.

The communication of the project through meetings, facebook, flyers, posters and of course the Farmtruck was a way to invite people to join the project or the events and therefore had an impact upon the Lived Space. I hope also that Mister Emma’s film generated an impact through giving renewed life to Momo’s terrace. I appreciate the communication for Lived Space as it can contribute to the life of the project.

5. Durational impact

In Infrared, for the first time in my practice, something happened beyond the ephemeral event that I was organizing. The impact was probably prolonged on the one hand through the Lebanese food truck that started to sell specialties in the street; on the other through the follow-up project by the collective Rirbaucout activating a ground floor. In Parckdesign 2014: Parkfarm the continuation from ephemeral to the durational occurred through a continuation of seven out of the nine installations, and of course the bread oven.

This expansion over time was only possible because of the existence of the Parkfarm T&T non-profit organization. A group of actors in the neighbourhood took responsibility for maintaining and running the canteen, as well as many events by and for the locals inside the Farmhouse.

Until now, the non-profit organization consists of a group of four administrators and about forty volunteers who open the Farmhouse for green Wednesdays, organized by Nadine and Tessa, the canteen from Thursdays to Sundays or cooking workshops on by Rhama. Through her cooking workshops on Sundays, she involves the Moroccan women in the project.

I learned that only by building trust and giving value to other people to contribute to their neighbourhood is it possible to initiate Lived Space that will continue beyond the ephemeral moment of my presence to generate impact on a durational base.

6. Playing and Sharing Multiple Roles

The Observer

As in all of the projects that I present in this PhD, I played the role of the observer. Observing spatial and social capital in order to base the project upon the As Found approach, I generated observation for Lived Space by empowering the local through contributing through their expertise.

The artist

In the Parkfarm project we made a call for projects from teams of mixed expertise for the artistic installations. Furthermore, each of us as curators also realized a project. This is why I initiated and co-designed the Farmtruck together with the Rirbaucout collective. So on one side I adopted the role of artist, which on the other was shared by others.

The Mediator

Throughout the project I played the role of the mediator. I did this on the one hand between the locals and the designers, by generating encounter among them through the meetings at Momo’s café; on the
other I generated relations between the locals and the guests, thereby stimulating the local economy.

Besides me, other people also played the role of mediator. First of all, Ruth Plaizier mediated between the architect of the KotKot installation and many of the inhabitants.

Furthermore she was mediating between the locals and us as curators as we were not always up-to-date about conflicts or other issues in the neighbourhood related to the Parckfarm. Finally, the Rirbaucout collective mediated between the local farmers and the farmers in the region.

As the issue of mediating was extremely important I will detail this role later in more detail.

The Activist

When we received the agreement from our client to continue the Parckfarm project, Momo’s terrace had not yet been accepted by our client. This is why I invited Mister Emma, who had already interviewed the girls of the Piadina Wagon and me in 2012 and whom I referred to in Chapter Three, to do an interview with Momo and some of the other local actors. Through his good knowledge of the ministries, he can directly address those who are in charge of decision-making.

Acting myself as an activist in the Parckfarm project I discovered I was not the only activist around. When I stepped out of the project at the end of the biennale, the activist Prof. Dr. Lieven de Cauter called me in order to remind me of the ethical issues of abandoning the Parckfarm T&T non-profit organization. This is why I reengaged in the process and established a stronger link between the association and our client.

In addition, I still continue even now to have an external eye on what is happening in the Parckfarm, through visits to the Farmhouse or participating in meetings organized by the association.

The Curator

For the first time in my career I had the great opportunity of being a curator. As such, I had access to power that I could share with others, especially through empowering the locals.

The Client

Unlike in Chapters Two and Three, this time I had a real client for the project. However, in my spatial agency I considered the local community rather than the organization paying for the project as being my client. Moreover, I was the client for the artistic teams that we selected.

Looking back, I believe that it was crucial to have different clients in the project and to position everyone on one level. Without our real client, the project would never have taken place.

Similar to the previous chapter I did have several clients in this project, and I was the client for the artistic team as well as for myself, by furthering my PhD.

Further Lessons from the Project

Mediating between Multiple Actors

In the Parckfarm project I revealed how the designer can collaborate with the local and how the local welcomes the guest in order to generate an inclusive process and a public realm where people from different backgrounds mix.

As Prof. Dr. Lieven de Cauter mentioned in the Parckfarm Afterlife conference, the mixed use of space by people in our cities is disappearing and will become the main problem in our cities of today.

However such mixture does not happen automatically but needs mediation in order to come about.

Mediating between the Local and the Designer

For me it is crucial to engage with the local community but also with the designers. It allows me to mediate between the various experts who collaborate in the project.

Whereas in some projects the collaboration took place through the partnership of a designer
and a local, such as in the KotKot installation, in other projects it was necessary to make the link between the designer and the local. For example in the Farmhouse a local architect developed the project. I brought together the designer and some local farmers who activated the Farmhouse through different activities and by selling food and drink, generating Lived Space through this urban entrepreneurship.

The Cubious sculpture for example could have been a success if I had generated a link between a local actor and the students who designed and built the installation. This would have helped to appropriate the project and therefore to take care of its maintenance.

Besides creating this connection between people, it is crucial to envisage a small budget or a system of exchange for the volunteer who invests his time taking care of the installation. This would have helped to appropriate the project and therefore to take care of its maintenance.

Mediating between the Local and the Guest

In the A-life project in Chapter One I designed installations that were for the immigrants and the local population in the city of Ceuta. In this project, the immigrants can be considered as the guests in Ceuta and the population as the local. I developed the installations in such a way that the immigrants and the locals would relate to one another, generating encounters between the local and the visitor in the public realm. However in my field research I engaged only with the guests in Ceuta, not with the locals of the enclave.

In the Visible Invisible project in Chapter Two I copy-pasted one of the vitrines of Brussels red-light district to Ixelles, which is a rather posh neighbourhood. My intention was to introduce an excluded part of society into the everyday life of the area. The guest in the neighbourhood was the sex-worker and the local the inhabitants of Ixelles. As a mediator between both of them I intended to generate an encounter between the local and the guest. As in Asica enters Europe, before creating the installation I did not engage with the locals in order to find out if they are interested to host such a guest.

In both projects in Chapter Three I started to concentrate on engaging with the local. In the Infrared project I observed the needs of the sex-workers in Brussels’ red-light district and based my action upon the needs that I identified. Based upon the finding that some of the women wished for a restaurant in their street I invited the girls with their Piadina Wagon to be the guests in the street. I was mediating between the local and the guests, this time after having engaged first with the local and later with the guest.

However, this invitation of the guest to act in the neighbourhood is a way to bring about gentrification. This is why from my point of view today it is crucial to not just respond to the needs of locals but to give them the role of welcoming the guest in their neighbourhood.

The preparation of the biennale took eight months. In this time I brought different people together through our meetings at Momo’s place. Artists could present their work to the local and the politicians could engage with the artists and the locals. Therefore the local was welcoming the guest.

As I gave a role to all locals interested to be involved in creating the Parckfarm, they could actively participate in the creation of the public realm.

The Local Welcoming the Guest

The main moment that I learned for about the relationship between the local and the visitor was during our meetings at Momo’s café.

As his café is situated just next to the site, he was welcoming everyone to the café Pannenhuis to discuss the future of the site and of the project. For this he received some recognition and it improved his economic situation.

I copy-pasted this idea during and beyond the biennale, through the local farmers of the Parckfarm T&T non-profit organization welcoming visitors. In this way, the locals have a role and earn some money through the visitor entering the neighbourhood.

We employed three farmers of whom two are local inhabitants, to sell food and snacks from the Parckfarm and from the bakery in the Farmhouse.
Today only local actors are running the Farmhouse canteen.

**Stimulating the Local Economy**

In the overall biennale budget I reserved a certain amount of money to be invested for local initiatives. Furthermore to me it was crucial that we chose some local teams in order to increase the money that is spent on the neighbourhood, such as the KotKot project and the Farmhouse that was realized by the architectural firm 1010, whose office is in the neighbourhood.

Finally I founded the non-profit organization to ensure that the income entering in the Parkfarm through selling drinks and food would increase employment in the neighbourhood.

Having spent about one third of the overall biennale budget on local artistic installations, local initiatives or local salaries, I believe that in a future project this share can be increased further.

Moreover I learned that local initiatives are achieved with a far lower budget than artistic installations. The bread oven for example was accomplished with 1/10 of the budget of KotKot or the Landscape table. At the same time, they allow the locals to appropriate part of the public realm that is contributing to Lived Space.

This is an interesting and good precedent to motivate future clients to integrate local initiatives in the creation of the public realm. But primarily, it is a fantastic way to stimulate Lived Space so that people can appropriate the public realm.

**Working with Gentrification**

When developing a new park in an undervalued neighbourhood, the gentrification of the surrounding area is unavoidable. Once a great park is introduced into a neighbourhood, it improves the quality of the surroundings and therefore invites people from outside to use the space or even to move to the area.

In order to make the gentrification as positive as possible for those inhabiting the neighbourhood, the issue of local economy seems to be crucial to me. If the local community recognizes that the new people arriving in the neighbourhood improve their economy, it makes it easier to welcome the visitor, as I explained earlier in the local welcoming the guest.

Further, as Rhama mentioned in the interview, the encounter with visitors can sometimes be very inspiring. I believe that sometimes expertise can be transmitted through entering the neighbourhood. For example through the visit of the Farmtruck to other farms in the region, sometimes the farmers joined the Ribaucout collective and could transfer their knowledge to the local farmers.

**Lived Space and Conflicts**

Encounter through Lived Space never occurs without conflicts, especially when people from different cultures get together in a project, such as the Moroccan man on one side and the European women on the other. Community cannot be taken for granted, but is made up of many different individuals, each with a different perspective.

As the neighbourhood is inhabited by people from many different cultures, 60% of whom are of Moroccan origin, local does not have the same meaning for all people from the community.

Although the Farmhouse is run by two local inhabitants, they are not of Moroccan origin and are therefore not considered as locals by some of the neighbours. The cultural boundary is for me the most difficult issue of the Parkfarm and remains a difficult point even today.

After the biennale ended, Tessa took over the leadership of the Farmhouse. Abdel claimed ownership of the bread oven.

While the Farmhouse brings a certain financial support and employs the two local farmers Tessa and Nadine on a half-time basis, Abdel was not being paid for heating up the bread oven. The reason is that people could do it themselves and did not need Abdel to take care of the job.

Thanks to Mostafa who is part of the Parkfarm T&T non-profit organization, the conflict was diminished. Together with Abdel they created a second association of Moroccan men around the bread oven. Furthermore Abdel is now a volunteer paid by the association to heat up the bread oven. This is how
the leadership around the bread oven in the vegetable garden was returned to the Moroccan community.

There was a sort of positive outcome to this conflict, although other conflicts arise weekly. The main moment that I learned for about the relationship between the local and the visitor was during our meetings at Momo’s place. As his café is situated just next to the site, he was welcoming everyone to the café Pannenhuis to discuss the future of the site and of the project. For this he received some recognition and it improved his economic situation.

Lived Space and Ownership

I learned from the project that by involving the local community through co-producing the installations, through local initiatives and through offering them employment to welcome the guests, as was the case for the local farmers in the Farmhouse, people get a feeling of ownership. It invites people to use the public realm during and beyond the construction and therefore generates Lived Space. However, the notion of ownership also has its bad side. Too much ownership can generate jealousy and conflict between people.

Built Space for Lived Space

Asking the teams to set up a minimum of three events was a way to initiate Lived Space. I appreciated some of the events that were not related to the production of built space. For example the stroll with the donkey was simply about organizing some excursions with Sam from the farm Maxi-Mille-Liens Boerderij.

Prof. Dr. Lieven de Cauter expressed in the Parkfarm Afterlife conference that we should not look at the physically produced space but at what is happening in the space.

This is similar to when Cedric Price expresses that the addition of a building is not necessarily the best solution to a spatial problem and that there are other ways of making a spatial difference6.

I agree with this. Nevertheless, as an architect I believe that sometimes in order to initiate Lived Space in the public realm the built space is necessary. For example without the bread oven there would not be any Lived Space taking place around food. In my opinion the built space should serve the Lived Space.

A Social Worker Needed!

With hindsight, looking back at the biennale and following up what the project is becoming, it seems crucial to me to involve a social worker in a project that is taking place on a site where many different cultures are confronting each other. This is similar to what I referred to in Chapter One, when I designed installations that would generate encounter between the immigrants and the local population.

The conflicts only arose because of a lack of communication between the different actors. If a mediator takes over the responsibility to help in the issue of communication, it facilitates exchange between different actors.

Even though I hesitated for long time whether this person should be from the neighbourhood or not, I now believe that such person should be from outside the neighbourhood in order to have a neutral view of what is happening in the area.

The coordinator Gabrielle who started working at the non-profit organization Parkfarm T&T in mid-August 2015 is from outside the neighbourhood and has expertise in this area. Besides organizing the many volunteers, he will take over the role of supporting different actors to communicate with one another.

Positioning the Project

Raumlabor

The Berlin-based office Raumlabor uses food when they organize interventions in order to bring people together. In their Kitchen Monument project in Dusseldorf (photos on the next page), the mobile structure brings cooking into the city. Similar to Parkdesign 2014: Parkfarm, their project is a tool to generate communication and encounter between different people.

Although Raumlabor’s Kitchen Monument is a mobile structure with a certain form that it imposes on its environment, in my own work the production of a physical space is a tool in order to initiate Lived Space. I do not care about the formal expression of the built space, but instead about the social production of space it allows to happen.
Muf Architecture & Art

During the period of the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm biennale, I invited Liza Fior from the office Muf Architecture & Art in London to give a lecture in the framework of Common Grounds, a bottom-up action course at the KU Leuven, which was set up by Gudrun de Mayere in 2012.

In their publication Making Space in Dalston, Muf call the first chapter Value what is there, while the second chapter is Nature the possible and the third chapter Define what is missing (photo below).

This is similar to our approach in Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm. Observing in order to value what is there, to nurture the possible and define what is missing, in order to turn the park under development into a Parckfarm.

The difference between our project Parckfarm and Muf's project Making Space in Dalston is that we added some further installations that were not missing, but that could enhance the notion of the Parckfarm. One of these is the Landscape Table by the team of Jacques Abelman and Eric Dil from the Netherlands. This
The project was a new intervention for a farm and was appreciated by all the locals and visitors to the Parckfarm.

Furthermore, the project *Making Space in Dalston* is based largely upon the recognition of the physical situation. The knowledge of people and collaboration through empowering the locals therefore plays a secondary role. This is why I will refer to the Freehouse project by the artist Jeanne van Heeswijk who, as an artist, concentrates on co-producing projects to activate the public realm.

Jeanne van Heeswijk

Jeanne van Heeswijk from the Netherlands, whom I invited for the jury of Parckdesign 2014, has a similar approach, allowing the local community to co-produce activities in the public realm.

In the *Neighbourhood Kitchen South*, local cooks are preparing and serving food on the terrace while the market is taking place. The ingredients come from the African market. Further the kitchen creates caterings and cooking workshops.

The mobile *Lucky Mi bus* is the culinary ambassador of the African neighbourhood (upper photo on this page). The project is expanded to the public realm in the country in order to present and sell food in the public realm and therefore generates *Lived Space*.

The project is similar to our Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm project because both use the expertise of the inhabitants and initiate *Lived Space* in the public domain. In the Parckfarm project, Abdel activates the bread oven. In the Freehouse project, the inhabitants involved produce clothes and food that they present in the public realm.

Moreover, the mobile *Lucky Mi bus* has a similar goal to the Farmtruck of the Parckfarm, to communicate with the public.
the quality of the project on the site beyond the neighbourhood. (lower photo on the previous page).

What is different is that the \textit{Freehouse} project is based on the neighborhood workshops and expands into the public space, while the market is taking place. The \textit{bread oven} but equally the \textit{Farmhouse} are constructed in the public space, generating social encounter directly in the public realm.

As an architect and urban designer, this issue of working in a first place with people interacting in the public realm space is a crucial aspect of my work.

Here is a presentation by Jeanne van Heeswijk of the \textit{Freehouse} project: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gC2e-k0plBM

\textbf{Marjetica Potrc}

I invited the architect-artist \textit{Marjetica Potrc} as the international expert in the Pyblik Masterclass in 2013 that I was coordinating. We worked on the surroundings of the \textit{rue d'Aerschot}, intending to find ways to generate a more qualitative neighbourhood.

With a group of participants she developed a project not based upon an object, but through generating encounters between people (drawings on page 168 and 170). It started through spreading seeds of pumpkins to inhabitants that formed the basis to start planting vegetables in their gardens. As all neighbours received such seeds the inhabitants became active in the garden and started to engage with each other. Based upon this engagement they activated a vacant space and turned it into a community garden, where they held some meals together. This allowed new neighbours to join the group, generating new encounters. This is how the neighbourhood started to become a community with the identity of growing pumpkins. For Halloween they organized a pumpkin parade and the sex-workers from the \textit{rue d'Aerschot} dressed up with pumpkins on their breasts.

I learned from her work with the participants about generating \textit{Lived Space} without creating built space. Starting purely from seeds in order to build a community was and still remains a fascinating approach to me.

In the project \textit{The Cook, the Farmer, His Wife and Their Neighbour} which...
she co-organized with Wilde Westen (Lucia Babina, Reinder Bakker, Hester van Dijk, Sylvain Hartenberg, Merijn Oudennampsen, Eva Pfannes and Henriette Waal) in 2009, she and her collaborators engaged with local inhabitants to grow vegetables in the community garden in a previously unused, look-only yard between apartment buildings in the new West district of Amsterdam (upper photo on this page). Next to the site they set up a community kitchen in an existing building where everyone could meet to cook and eat together (lower photo on this page).

The garden and the kitchen create bonds within the neighborhood and became a catalyst for transforming not only the public space but also the community itself.

Both projects are about generating encounters through growing vegetables and subsequently meetings among actors in the neighbourhood through eating together. The notion of generating engagement through food is an important aspect in the Parkfarm. The vegetable garden is the place where the food is planted, while in the Farmhouse people meet to cook and enjoy a meal together (photo on page 72).

What is different in Marjetica Potrc’s project is that it was not about generating encounter between the local community and visitors, but to bring the people from the same community together to generate encounter through co-producing the vegetable garden and through cooking and eating together.

Unfortunately her project did not develop an independent life where the inhabitants took responsibility and cared for the garden and site on their own.

This is where it becomes visible how much the success of such a project depends not only on the dynamic of the designer but equally the willingness and energy of the inhabitants to take control of a project. In our case the project would not have continued its life without the motivation and energy of the many inhabitants involved in and beyond the Parkfarm T&T non-profit organization.

Initiating Lived Space: Shifts in the Practice

In this chapter my practice Alive Architecture takes a clear stance on
observing social and spatial capital for curating people in order to initiate Lived Space. The people involved are on one hand the designer and on the other the local community, through their initiatives and involvement to run the Parckfarm.

The proposition of this PhD is how observing local communities occupying the public realm could inform a practice of initiating Lived Space. Through this final chapter, the following six shifts become visible.

The first shift is that I did not observe the local community’s needs to produce or to ask the artists to respond to them, but I observed the spatial and social capital of and around the site in order to base the biennale upon the existing qualities. Therefore I am no longer creating observation of, but concentrating on observation for Lived Space.

The second shift from the previous chapter is that I was empowering the local community in order to contribute to the project and that the local community accepted to take on this power. I no longer acted myself to produce Lived Space, but handed over the role to the artists and to the local community to initiate Lived Space.

The third shift is that for the first time I was accessing a public commission with a real budget related to it. This not only simplified the possibility to empower other people to produce Lived Space but also offered access to a public client who would subsequently take over responsibility and support the continuation of the project. Furthermore it is the reason that for the first time there was a budget to realize the project. I paid special attention that part of the budget should end up in the neighborhood, generating the local economy that could be increased in the future.

The fourth shift is that I no longer recorded the Lived Space myself but invited a local cameraman to record moments throughout the biennale and to turn it into a short five-minute film. This fourth point is similar to curating the local community to collaborate not only on carrying out the project but also documenting the event.

The fifth shift is that I started to communicate about the project in several ways. First of all I set up meetings at Momo’s place where all the actors interested in the project were invited to join in and discuss the future of the project. Additionally we used websites and facebook in order to publicise the events taking place in the biennale. I also initiated and designed the Farmtruck in order to communicate between farmers in the region and the local farmers from the Parckfarm. Finally I called Mister Emma to interview the local actors when Momo’s terrace was rejected by our client.

The final shift is that by involving local actors, it was possible to give them a role in producing the Parckfarm. In this way it was we could expand the biennale from an ephemeral event to a durational project that is still continuing and will continue to do so in the future.
Some locals organized a sewing workshop at the Parckfarm Farmhouse after the biennial had finished. Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture

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4 Cameron Bruhn, 2015, Landscape Architecture Australia, AA Architecture Media, Melbourne
5 Claude Lichtenstein, Thomas Schrebenberger, 2001, As Found: The discovery of the ordinary, Lars Mueller publishers, Zuerich
7 Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider, Jeremy Till, 2011, Spatial Agency – Other ways of doing Architecture, Routledge, New York, page 31
Encounter through food in the Farmhouse of the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm project.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture
Meeting with the locals, the artists and the client at Momo’s Café in the Parckfarm project.

Photo by Stijn Beeckman
Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm while the pre-opening.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture
Conclusion

In each of the four chapters I articulated my findings through six layers. In this conclusion I will bring them together and conclude upon each of them. It will show how I triggered my practice through drawing Lived Space, how it started through re-producing Lived Space, and how I built it through co-producing Lived Space to finally ground it through initiating Lived Space.

In this way I wish to communicate how I founded Alive Architecture.

I will finalize the conclusion by proposing a future course for my spatial agency.
In this conclusion I shall articulate the six layers that were described in each of the four chapters. Through communicating these layers, I am addressing practitioners who are active or interested in the social dimension of architecture of the public realm.

1. From Observation of to Observation for Lived Space

I never stopped applying the notion of observation throughout the projects. However it altered from observation of Lived Space to observation for Lived Space. This change in my practice was inspired by Prof. Dr. Ranulph Glanville’s reflection upon knowledge of and knowledge for¹. In one of my first PhD presentations, he recognized that I was stuck in observation of and invited me to develop my practice to observation for. While expressing this reflection, he referred to Prof. Dr. Gerard de Zeeuw’s writings about models of and models for.

The A-life project in Chapter One was an observation of Lived Space. I made photographs and drawings of public realm appropriated by immigrants (upper photo on the next page). This first project triggered my interest in Lived Space and therefore my spatial agency Alive Architecture. In the Asica enters Europe projects I was questioning through design the role of the architect in the social production of Lived Space.

Both projects in Chapter Two were an observation of Lived Space. In Fairground Pleasures I made a film of the occupation of the public realm by people for the first time. Through reproducing the vibrant spaces that I had observed, the projects were also an observation for Lived Space.

Both projects in Chapter Three were an observation for Lived Space...
through the observation the spatial capital and the needs of local actors that informed for the co-production of Lived Space. Later I documented the actions I undertook through observation of the event in order to communicate the projects to others.

The project in Chapter Four is an observation for Lived Space through observing social and spatial capital in order to curate others to produce Lived Space. The local initiative of the bread oven represents best how through observing I could initiate Lived Space (lower photo on this page).

**Conclusion**

Moving from observation of Lived Space to observation for Lived Space allowed me to proceed from drawing Lived Space to initiating Lived Space in the public realm.

**2. Devices for Lived Space**

*Through Engaging - for Engaging*

In their writings, Jeremy Till and Saskia Sassen refer to people engaging for the social production of Lived Space. Since the outset of my work, I have engaged with people through encounters, meetings and actions. Additionally the meetings and the actions, like the relational objects that I designed, are means for other people to engage with one another.

Both engaging with people myself and enabling other people to engage with one another, from all different backgrounds, is the reason why for me engaging is a way to stimulate Lived Space.

In the *Asica enters Europe* project in Chapter One I engaged with immigrants to observe how they occupy the public realm in Ceuta. In the *A-life* project I designed installations that allowed the immigrants to engage with the local population, generating Lived Space.

In the *Visible Invisible* project in Chapter Two, I engaged with sex-workers in order to understand their reality of working in Brussels’ red-light district and afterwards with people walking past the installation in order to find out what they think about their neighborhood turning red. The *Barbe à Papa* action in the *Fairground Pleasures* project allowed
me to engage with people through performing in the public realm.

In both projects in Chapter Three I engaged with local actors to find out about their needs for the street. I did so on the one hand in a traditional way, and on the other through actions in the public realm. The actions that I realized, based upon my findings of the local actors’ desider for their neighbourhood, allowed people to engage with me as well as amongst themselves.

In the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm project in Chapter Four I engaged through the meetings at Momo’s café with the community in order to reveal their expertise. The design of the Farmtruck was a means to enable the Rirbaucout collective to engage with people and for people to engage with one another. The social activities organized by the teams and the locals were also a means for people to engage with one another.

Engaging with people is crucial in my agency and makes it possible to build up and sustain trust. At the same time, engaging with people and building trust means investing an enormous amount of time. This is why I believe that in my future practice it would be crucial to collaborate with a social worker.

Relational Objects

In his publication Esthétique Relationelle, Nicolas Bourriaud investigates contemporary art that generates encounters among people. In my projects I value and produce such aesthetics through relational objects, social activity and relational actions, through which the relational object and the social activity are joined.

In the A-life project in Chapter One, I first observed relational space and later designed relational objects that would enable the stands to transform over time through their use. In Chapter Three the Piadina Wagon action was not an object of contemplation but a food truck for people to line up and buy food. Furthermore they could eat on the tables in the public realm and produce Lived Space. In Chapter Four we made a call for projects not for beautiful objects to only look at but for installations that people could engage with and which therefore initiated Lived Space.

Social Activities

Through this PhD, I found out that besides many other activities that generate interaction among people, food is an attractor for Lived Space.

In Chapter One I observed immigrants cooking in the platforms around the camp. Cooking was a way for them to appropriate the space in the forest and to engage with one another but also for me to engage with the immigrants. I designed one installation that would have made it possible for the immigrants to engage with the local population through cooking and selling food, transforming the stands in the public realm through use over time.

In Chapter Two I sold candy floss, which was an easy way to relate to people in the public realm. Also in Chapter Three, the food production in the Piadina Wagon initiated interaction and allowed people to engage with one another. In the Licht-ing project, I offered some drinks and snacks to attract people to visit or to co-produce the actions on the cycle path.

In the final chapter, the subtitle of Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm was From the Landscape to the Plate. The cooking workshops brought people together, occupying the Farmhouse through the production of food.

Relational Actions

Most of the projects are happening on the boundary between a relational object and a social activity. I refer to the in-between projects as relational actions.

In the A-life project in Chapter One I designed relational objects that would allow for social activities and are therefore the source for relational actions (upper image on the next page).

This is the case for the Visible Invisible project in Chapter Two. Even though it was a window installation to look at, it was designed so that people would interact with one another. In Chapter Three the Sweet Flowers and the People’s Wall are similarly relational actions. They generate social activities through minimal physical means.

In the Parckfarm projects, besides the relational objects, social activities
also took place. This is the case for Ruth Plaizier’s walk with the donkey or the Beecar installation, as they could transport the objects through the use of bicycles in the public realm. Also the Farmtruck is generating relational actions in different spaces in the city through the multiple social activities it provides for, ranging from a cinema to cooking or exchanging among people about urban agriculture (lower image on this page).

Co-Production

In the A-life project in Chapter One, it was not possible to co-produce the installations, as they were never realized. In Chapter Two I produced the copy-paste of the fairground myself without involving others. In Chapter Three I involved the children to light the candles in the cycle lane in Aalst. This co-production of space allowed them to appropriate the action and generated Lived Space.

In the final chapter, both the Farmhouse and the KotKot animal farm were developed through co-production and thus allowed people to interact with the installations during the construction period. It is those who were involved in building the installations who are maintaining the installations today.

Empowering the Local

Some advocates of A Pattern Language, Christopher Alexander’s design approach claim that ordinary people can use it to successfully solve very large, complex design problems. In the Parckfarm project I do not work on such a large scale, but I do intend to empower the local.

The notion of local initiatives was borne out of the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm biennale in the final chapter. By allowing the local community to propose an initiative in the public realm, they could physically interact with the Parckfarm and therefore contribute to generating Lived Space. The bread oven is the best example of such a local initiative.

Another way of empowering the locals was by making a call for projects in which the teams would collaborate with a local actor.

Finally, initiating the Parckfarm T&T non-profit organisation was a way of empowering the locals. Since the beginning of the biennial they have
maintained the Parkfarm and run the canteen, taking responsibility for installations in the public realm.

Local Urban Entrepreneurship

In his publication *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, William H. Whyte values urban entrepreneurship because it generates social life in the public realm. In my work I value urban entrepreneurship for exactly this reason.

In the A-life project in Chapter One I designed the Meals on Wheels installation in such a way that the immigrants could generate an economic impact through selling their traditional food.

In the *Fairground Pleasures* project in Chapter Two, I first observed the urban entrepreneurship of the fairground. Later I realized the urban action of a candy-floss stand, stimulating my own economy by selling candy floss. Asking money for a candy floss was not a means to earn money, but rather a way to turn my action into something that would not be questioned by the visitor (upper photo on this page).

In the *Infrared* project in Chapter Three, I invited the urban entrepreneurs of Piadina Wagon to Brussels’ red-light district and therefore generated an economy not yet for the local but for the guest in the area (lower photo on this page). Having invited people from outside the neighbourhood, this is a mean to contribute to the gentrification of the area.

Looking back at the Parkfarm project in Chapter Four, I was greatly interested to generate a local urban entrepreneurship. The canteen in the Farmhouse is an urban entrepreneurship. It is two local farmers running the canteen in the Farmhouse during the biennial, so most of the money spent by visitors to the biennial ends up in the neighbourhood. The bread oven is an urban entrepreneurship in a very informal way.

Conclusion

Through the projects I identified seven different devices that can be used to stimulate the social production of Lived Space. In hindsight it seems important to me to give a great role to the local to run such urban enterprise. The reason is that involving the locals...
is a means to value the community of the neighbourhood. This seems important to me in a process of gentrification related to urban development.

3. Documentation of Lived Space

The documentation of my projects shifted from photography to filming in order to capture the important process of how space changes over time through its use as Lived Space. Furthermore it moved from drawing plans to drawing place to finally not drawing anymore, in order for me to spend my time and energy on initiating Lived Space.

From Photographing to Filming Lived Space

In the Asica enters Europe project in the first chapter I started my work through photographing Lived Space. In the Fairground Pleasures project in Chapter Two I was working for the first time with film, built up of photographs taken each minute, observing the Fairground for sixteen hours. In the projects in Chapter Three I recorded the Lived Space that I was co-producing together with other actors through hidden cameras. In the projects in the final chapter I curated a local cameraman whose expertise I was observing to record situations in the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm project.

From Drawing Plans to Drawing People

In the Asica enters Europe project in Chapter One I drew plans of Lived Space by using something approaching hand-made drawings on InDesign placed upon technical drawings of the existing built space. This way of drawing was a means to express not only the physical environment but the use of it and to make plans readable not only to the architect but also for other people. In the projects in Chapter Two I started to document the Lived Space by drawing the window of the sex-workers from a lateral point of view. Furthermore I made drawings of the Lived Space I observed during the fair. They became part of the short films in order to highlight different uses throughout the day. This way of making drawings from the lateral view rather than the satellite view was new in my agency. In the Infrared project in Chapter Three I made drawings of people whom I was interviewing. Furthermore in both projects I highlighted different moments in time of the films through drawings. In the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm project in Chapter Four the notion of drawing disappeared in my work. I neither found the time to do so, nor did I see any sense in spending my rare opportunities during the project to make such drawings.

In my future work I wish to reintroduce this notion of drawing. In response to an invitation to a cultural festival in Hasselt, I will position full-scale drawings of people on the concrete wall in the public realm.

Conclusion

Moving from photography to film was a means of finding a way to document the process related to Lived Space. As the space continuously changes over time through the use, a movie can record such transformation, whereas photography only captures a frozen moment from it. By introducing anecdotal drawings into the films it was possible to highlight some key-moments of the spatial transformation of the public realm.

4. Communication of/for Lived Space

Throughout my projects the notion of communication evolved. While in the beginning it was limited to communication of the projects within the academic boundaries, it later became a means to generate impact upon the use of the public realm through communication for Lived Space.

In Chapter One Asica enters Europe and A-life were projects developed purely in an academic framework and therefore not communicated beyond the university.

In the projects in Chapter Two I was not yet using communication in order to invite people to the actions I was setting up. On the one hand I was not yet sufficiently proud of my work that I felt the need to communicate about them, neither was I aware of how important communication is in order to generate Lived Space.

In the projects in Chapter Three I was starting to communicate the actions by inviting sex-workers, colleagues and people from the city hall for an exhibition in the red-light district. Furthermore I put up posters and distributed flyers in order to
invite people to join the event on the cycle lane next to the trailer park. I also invited politicians to join the People’s Wall exhibition and Mister Emma to communicate about the project on Archiurbain and invited some journalists of the local popular media to write about the action of the Piadina Wagon in their newspapers. I learned that by communicating my work to politicians and through popular media to the general public, I could generate an impact upon the use of space in the public domain. A Lebanese food truck started to sell food in the rue d’Aerschot, and the city made a call for projects to generate respect in the street through ideas and realizing those ideas.

Finally, in the project in Chapter Four, I was more aware of the importance of communication and made the project known through flyers, posters, Facebook and websites about the project and the different activities related to it. I organized the monthly meetings at Momo’s to generate communication between the local and the artistic teams and I designed the Farmtruck to communicate about the project beyond the boundaries of the site, generating relations with other farms and inviting people to the biennale.

Furthermore, when the client disagreed on the continuation of Momo’s terrace, I invited Mister Emma to communicate about the issue on Brussels Television channel TéléBruxelles and to his friends in the ministries. The use of such popular media is very helpful to communicate to the public if a project is successful but not yet accepted by the client. The use of Facebook as a form of social media has been crucial in my work since the Parckfarm project and remains an effective tool to communicate news about the Farmtruck’s current activities. The Parckfarm project was communicated through different publications in architectural magazines.

Conclusion

I use many different ways in order to communicate about the projects, including through organizing meetings where I help establish relationships between locals, designers and our client, by inviting politicians and the local popular media to communicate about the projects, through actively using social media (Facebook) and by inventing the Farmtruck.
Whilst I do appreciate publications of the project in architectural magazines, I value more communication achieved through the popular press. The reason is that such communication is often not of Lived Space but for Lived Space, as it can encourage people to participate in the project and therefore might contribute to the social production of Lived Space.

5. From Ephemeral to Durational

Architecture, like landscape architecture and urbanism, is a discipline that develops durational spaces that last for a long period of time. Similar to landscape architects, I appreciate the transformation of space over time. While in landscape architecture it is the plants that are growing and changing, I am interested in durational space that is not fixed but changes over time through use by people.

The design of the Meals on Wheels installation in Chapter One was for durational mobile devices that could be moved and transformed over time. As A-life was a student project, I only drew the Lived Space that could potentially be produced through relational objects and the project was never realized.

The actions in Chapter Two were achieved for a short moment of time. Here I produced Lived Space myself by copy-pasting a window from the Brussels red-light district to another neighbourhood and by copy-pasting the Fairground after the stands had left. Both actions were ephemeral.

In the projects in Chapter Three I was co-producing Lived Space. In Infrared the Piadina Wagon came back to the rue d’Aerschot several times and later a Lebanese food truck arrived to sell food in Brussels’ red-light district. Also the activation of the window in the street by the Rirbaucout collective was an unforeseen continuation of the ephemeral Infrared project beyond the period of time when I was present in the space. Unfortunately today there are no traces of the different interventions that took place.

In the final chapter, the Parckdesign 2014 biennale was envisaged for five months. Because of the great level of local involvement, the project was a great success and became a durational project that is still continuing today, one year after the biennale ended.

I learned through the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm project that this continuation needs a certain amount of time and involvement of people to offer their time to run the project beyond the ephemeral. Without the many local actors that have up to now been involved in the project, it would not have been such a success or continued to involve people in the Parckfarm. Additionally, in order to overcome the conflicts related to the encounter of people in the production of Lived Space, it is crucial to involve a social worker from outside the neighbourhood in order to help out from a neutral position.

6. Playing and Sharing Multiple Roles

Similar to Mel Dood who defines her roles through five terms in her PhD (The Local, The Double Agent, The Educator, The Artist and the Policy Maker), I take on the multiple roles of the observer, artist, mediator, activist, client and curator.

Furthermore, sometimes these various roles are taken on by myself or by others.

The Observer

Throughout the projects I play the role of the observer.

Conclusion

Initially all my projects were ephemeral, similar to the work of an event manager, setting up social frameworks to get people to interact. However, I consider all projects to be a test for potential durational transformation of a site. If it is successful, as judged by the user of the space, the social engagement with the physical space will continue and transform the public realm continuously over time.

In the Asica enters Europe project in Chapter One I was observing how immigrants occupy the public realm, producing Lived Space. In the projects in Chapter Two I was observing and later reproducing Lived Space. In the projects in Chapter Three I was observing spatial and social capital in order to base the project upon the already existing qualities of the site.
The Artist

In all projects I play the role of the artist. In the projects in Chapter One I made drawings of my findings and of the urban installations that I designed, acting as a visual artist. In the projects in Chapter Two I realized urban installations to generate encounter with people and therefore relational aesthetics. In the projects in Chapter Three I also realize urban installations, but this time they are building upon each other, intending to generate durational impact. In the project in Chapter Four I take the role of the artist by designing the *Farmtruck* as a relational object.

In the projects in Chapters Three I am not alone in playing the role of the artist, but am sharing it with others. The *Infrared* project was the source of the Piadina Wagon's *Food for Love* project, while the *People's Wall* action was the origin for the *I love Aerschot* project, in which the Rirbaucout collective activated a vacant ground floor.

In the *Parckfarm* project in Chapter Four I was on one side adopting the role of the artist by designing the *Farmtruck* and on the other side enabling others to play the role of the artist by curating the biennale.

The Mediator

I adopted the role of mediator in almost all the projects. In the *A-life* project in Chapter One I designed installations that would generate relationships between the immigrants and the local population. In the *Visible Invisible* project in Chapter Two, I intended to generate relationships between the sex-workers and the local population. In the *Infrared* project in Chapter Three I intended to improve the relations between the sex-workers and the clients by distributing flowers. In the *Licht-ing* project I generated engagement between the trailer-park inhabitants and other local actors. In the *Parckfarm* project in Chapter Four I mediated on the one hand between the designers and the locals, and on the other between the locals and the guests.

In the *Parckfarm* project I was not the only one mediating. Through her installation *KotKot*, Ruth Plaizier mediated between many of the local actors and between us as curators and some locals when conflicts were to be discussed. Furthermore, the Rirbaucout collective mediated between the farmers in the region and the local farmers of the

The Activist

I took up the role as an activist in the *Infrared* in Chapter Three and in the *Parckfarm* project in Chapter Four, as I was actively involved in generating social change in the public realm. I accomplished this role on the one hand by realizing actions without asking for permission, and on the other through inviting the popular media to communicate about the project.

When I distanced myself from the *Parckfarm* project after the end of the biennale, the activist Prof. Dr. Lieven Cauter called me to remind me about the ethical issue of leaving the inhabitants on his or her own. By sharing the role of activist, we could both contribute to the successful continuation of the project.

The Curator

In the *Parckfarm* project I took on the role of curator, enabling artists, architects and locals to design and realize relational installations and local initiatives. In the future People's *Highway* project the curator will be the Architectuurwijzer in Hasselt, Belgium, whereas I shall be the designer of an ephemeral relational action with a durational outcome.

The Client

The role of the client changed throughout my projects. In the projects in Chapter One I was a student, so I was my own client. This did not change in Chapter Two as I conducted the urban actions to further my PhD. In the projects in Chapter Three I was on the one hand my own client, and on the other the local actors were also my clients. In the fourth chapter I had a real client for the first time. However, I consider the local actors as my clients and equally as important. Furthermore, I was the client for the artistic team as well as my own client, as all projects served my research.

Conclusion

As a spatial agent, I not only act through different roles but also share those roles with others. Sharing multiple roles I do not consider authorship as important but value shared authorship.
Alive Architecture

By moving from observation of Lived Space to observation for Lived Space, it was possible to move from drawing Lived Space to initiating Lived Space in the public realm.

The reason is that the observation of expertise through engaging with people is the source for initiating Lived Space in my Alive Architecture agency. Only by recognizing expertise, to be able to share and hand over the project, is it possible to generate durational Lived Space beyond my presence in the public realm.

Empowering the local community to become involved in the production and maintenance of the public realm allows it to assume ownership. When the local community is empowered through f.e. encouraging urban entrepreneurship which stimulates the local economy, the locals can then welcome their guests in a gentrification process that is commonly found in urban development.

Ultimately I consider Alive Architecture to be a spatial agency whose purpose is to initiate the social production of Lived Space in the public realm.

References

1 Ranulph Glanville, 2006, Construction and Design, Constructivist Foundations 1, page 103–110
2 Jeremy Till, 2009, Architecture depends, MIT Press, Massachusetts
4 Nicolas Bourriaud, 2001, Estétique relationnelle, Les presses du réel, Dijon, France
7 Multiplicity, 2003, USE, Ways of seeing, lateral thought, Skira editore, Milan, page 432
8 Mel Dodd, 2011, PhD, Between the Lived and the Built: Foregrounding the User in Design for the Public Realm, Melbourne, RMIT University
9 Henri Lefebvre, 1998, The Production of Space, Victoria, Blackwell Publishing
The Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm biennial was a test. Because of its success it was expanded and generated a durational impact. The project continues to exist today and is run by the non-profit organization Parckfarm T&T.

Photo by Taktyk & Alive Architecture
Academic Practice

Considering my work as an academic practitioner, I wish to communicate my spatial agency through participation in several conferences in order to get feedback from others to advance the research. My academic work, I hope, is going to continue through a post-doctorate to continue my research into Lived Space in the public realm.

For an initial intervention, I have been invited to a festival in Hasselt where I am going to develop the People’s Highway project. I will photograph people using a tunnel under a highway and represent them on a 1:1 scale on the concrete wall of the tunnel.

Farmtruck - Part 2

In my practice I wish to continue to develop the work through commissioned projects, concentrating on my home city of Brussels. As there are so far very few calls for projects that fall within my specific expertise I wish to concentrate on developing a few projects that will help me to advance my research, as it was the case for Cedric Price.

The Farmtruck which I designed for the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm project and which I own is a tool that generates relationships between different people around the table at the same time as serving food and projecting presentations. It makes it possible to generate encounters between those involved in the top-down urban planning and the bottom-up communities, in order to create our city together.
Currently I am lending the Farmtruck to academics and practitioners in order to test the tool in the Brussels region.

The Curiosita collective tested the Farmtruck in order to turn a street into a space for people (photo on page 176). Also this autumn the Farmtruck will be used by Hanne van Reusel from the KU Leuven to activate the street next to the large-scale Josaphat Common site that is currently under development in Brussels. She will engage with the different actors in order to discuss the future of the site.

People are slowly finding out about the existence of the Farmtruck in Brussels. I hope that it will become a common tool that will support exchange among local communities, designers and politicians in the urban development in Brussels in order to develop our city together through and for Lived Space.
The illustration shows the different functions of the Farmtruck.

Image by Petra Pferdmenges, Alive Architecture
The Curiosita collective closed a street with the Farmtruck to turn it into a space for people. 

Photo by Alive Architecture


Awan Nishat, Schneider Tatjana, Till Jeremy, 2011, Spatial Agency – Other ways of doing Architecture, Routledge, New York, NY

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Cupers Kenny, Doucet Isabelle, 2009, Agency in Architecture: Reframing Criticality in Theory and Practice’, Footspring no. 4

Cupers Kenny, Miessen Markus, 2002, Spaces of Uncertainty,
Annex
The exhibition was organized in a totally different way than this catalogue. Rather than moving from drawing to initiating Lived Space, I addressed the six different hats that I wear as an architect in my practice: The Observer, the Curator, the Client, the Activist, the Mediator and the Artist.

The exhibition and presentation of the PhD took place around the Farmtruck. The reason for this is that after the biennale it is continuing to play an important role in my spatial agency. Furthermore, it is a tool to engage with people to produce Lived Space that plays a crucial role in my projects.

The exhibition was set up through extracts of the urban actions that I conducted during the various projects over the last five years equally as through the projections of films.
During my presentation I reproduced the unforeseen urban action when I washed arrows in the rue d’Aerschot during the Infrared project.

Photo by Thierry Kandjee
I invited the jury to sit on high chairs on the Farmtruck.

Photo by Thierry Kandjee
I handed over the images I showed to the jury to the public that followed my presentation.

Photo by Thierry Kandjée
After the presentation I invited everyone to discover the exhibition through offering some drinks.

Photo by Thierry Kandjee
The moment around the Farmtruck generated Lived Space in the Palo Alto in Barcelona.

Photo by Thierry Kandjee
## CV Practice

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## Academic CV

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### Alive Architecture

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### Petra Pferdmenges (before Alive Architecture)

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### In Offices

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Alive Architecture - Parckdesign 2014 Parckfarm

General Info: Brussels, Belgium
2013/2014
In collaboration with Taktyk

What: Curating the Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm biennale

How: Engaging with the designers and the local actors in order to test the new park as a model of a park combined with a farm through urban installations, local initiatives and events

Why: To try out the new urban model and to involve the local to appropriate the Parckfarm by running the place

Alive Architecture - Parckdesign 2014 - Farmtruck

General Info: Brussels, Europe 2014
Idea, Concept & Design by Alive Architecture
Design, Construction & Activation by Rirbaucout

What: To generate a multi-functional mobile device within the framework of the Parckdesign 2014 biennale

How: Through designing an active truck that combines the functions of cooking, transporting, showing movies, etc.

Why: To expand the biennale beyond the site to the Brussels region
**Alive Architecture - Jardin Collective**

**General Info:**
Durbuy, Belgium  
2013  
In collaboration with Nele Stragier  
First prize

**What:**
Housing and collective garden for ten families that lived previously in trailer parks

**How:**
Engaging with social and ecological associations in order to generate links with the different actors in the region

**Why:**
To involve the excluded trailer park inhabitants in everyday society in the region
General Info: Aalst, Belgium
2013
Supported by KU Leuven (Sint-Lucas Architectuur)

What: Transformation of a bicycle path into a Lived Space where people meet and coproduce light for the dark lane

How: Through 1:1 Actions of trial and failure in order to test if such intervention can be successful.

Why: Testing how to generate encounters among people next to a trailer park

Alive Architecture - I love Aerschot

General Info: Brussels, Belgium
2013
€ 40,000
In collaboration with L’Escaut, Okup, Rirbaucout & S. Sardo
Client: City of Schaerbeek

What: Proposing and testing the use of a vacant space in Brussels’ red-light district. The collective Rirbaucout carried out the project.

How: They organized events for the sex workers, the neighborhood and people from the region

Why: To activate one of the ground floor windows through a function other than prostitution
Alive Architecture - Infrared

**General Info:**
Brussels, Belgium
2012
Artistic residence @ Recyclart

**What:**
Engaging with the users of Brussels’ red-light district, revealing their needs and undertaking three actions to test them

**How:**
Through 1:1 actions that were conducted on one day

**Why:**
To test the ideas and to observe the opinion of the users

**Films:**
General Info: Brussels, Europe  
2012-2013

From ephemeral to durational:  
After having sold their delicious food, the Piadina Wagon came back several times to Brussels’ red-light district and set up a delivery service. Probably because we published the event in the local news, ten days later another food truck started selling Lebanese food in the street.
Alive Architecture - Fairground Pleasures

General Info: Brussels, Belgium 2011

What: Recording Brussels’ Fairground and conducting three actions in order to copy-paste the Fairground once it left.

How: Filming the fairground for 16 hours through 1 picture per hour and copy-pasting the Fairground through 1:1 actions

Why: Testing to turn the street into a space for people beyond the Fairground

**Alive Architecture - Trailers & Voyageurs**

**General Info:** Various trailer parks in Flanders, Belgium 2011
In collaboration with Stijn Beeckman

**What:** Engaging with inhabitants of trailer parks and proposing to involve them in the everyday life of our cities

**How:** Proposal of a mobile truck through which we could inhabit the public realm of the trailer parks for the duration of our actions

**Why:** To engage with the inhabitants and to test their reactions if we installed our truck in their trailer park

---

When we came here, moving from the countryside into Mumbai, we expected to stay for a short period. But this was 15 years ago. There is enough space in the houses for two people sleeping upstairs, two people sleeping downstairs in the kitchen. The everyday life is happening outside of the houses on the street. We told the inhabitants we could get a flat for free in New Mumbai. But we need to be close to the city center for work. Everyday we try to find some job in the neighborhood to make a living. We save the money to go back to the countryside when the rains are coming. We consider our homes to be back where we come from. There we have a house, a garden. Our stay here in Mumbai is all about making a living.
Alive Architecture - Visible Invisible

**General Info:** Brussels, Belgium
2010 / 2011
In collaboration with Stijn Beeckman

**What:** Installing a window of Brussels’ red-light district to the rather posh neighborhood of Ixelles

**How:** Making a copy-paste installation on 1:1 scale of a window

**Why:** To test a more mixed use of prostitution and the rest of the city in order to contribute to the creation of an open city

700 Euro / month for the space with vitrine
25 Euro / 15 minutes
average client: rather elderly, modest

“I prefer werking here. In the rue d’Aerschot the girls dress in underwear. Here we dress normally, look at me.”

“This is Christina, the project’s caretaker. She brings food to the girls and the other girls in the street. She gets 5 Euro for the meal.”

Photos by Stijn Beeckman
Alive Architecture - Firering

General Info:  Zillerthal, Austria
July 2010

What:  Installation of firewood around the fireplace

How:  Using the local material, setting up the installation and using it, together with the cows. Taking pictures over time of how the installation changes.

Why:  To test, through the use by us and by cows, what I mean by Alive Architecture
General Info: 
Istanbul, Turkey
2010

What: 
Observation of the bank of the Bosphorus in Istanbul which is used by people as terraces, where they build living rooms through the use of the stones along the water

How: 
Engaging with people, taking pictures, interviews and making interpretative drawings

Why: 
To reveal a space in the city that remains uncontrolled

---

MY PLAYGROUND

I come here almost every day since I’m a child.

Where ever I would go in the world, it could be the best five-star hotel, I’d always miss this place. Everything is simple here, without any economic value. We build our own terrace, our own gathering spot to claim the space and have comfort. Once a year we renovate or change the space. There is also a fishing pond around to keep the fish fresh. Once a week we bring the whole family over. Then we make a Barbeque and drink tea all evening long. They all love it.

Afed, 2010, Istanbul
Petra Pferdmenges - Pavement Dwellers

**General Info:**  
Mumbai, India  
December 2009

**What:**  
Observation of how pavement dwellers build their houses in the city and extend their private life to the public realm

**How:**  
Engaging with the inhabitants, taking pictures and making drawings as interpretations of the findings

**Why:**  
To reveal how people inhabit the public realm in Mumbai
**Petra Pferdmenges** - Sleeping under the Stars

**General Info:** Kyoto, Japan  
2008

**What:** Observation of the self-built houses along the river bed inhabited by homeless people

**How:** Observation through walking in the space and taking pictures to finally draw the findings

**Why:** Interest in the reality of the open city of Kyoto. Instead of the park, the river is the most public space in the city.
Petra Pferdmenges - Daily Junction

General info: Competition
Novosibirsk, Russia
July 2009
In collaboration with Manuela Gebracht

What: Rather than designing a pavilion to exhibit architecture, we introduced a more open way to present architecture, instead of just to those interested in the discipline

How: Spreading urban installations in the Metro stations throughout the city

Why: To enable all people to come across the installations
Petra Pferdmenges - Naturebanity

General Info: Europan 9 Competition
Kuopio, Finland
2007
In collaboration with Stefan Zellner

What: Proposal to generate the public realm in a housing project in the countryside

How: Spreading out dense houses and highlighting nature as the actual public realm where activity is taking place

Why: To reveal a model that does not oppose urbanism and nature but that combines both qualities through one project
General Info:  Master's degree at the TU Delft
Border conditions Course
Ceuta, Spain
2005-2006

What:  Design to provide opportunities for encounter between the reality of the immigrants and the reality of the local population

How:  Introducing installations on vacant spaces on the promenade the immigrants use to walk from the camp to the city of Ceuta

Why:  To bridge the barrier between people of different backgrounds
Petra Pferdmenges - Asica enters Europe

**General Info:** Master's degree at the TU Delft
Borderconditions Course
Ceuta, Spain
2005-2006

**What:** Observation how new immigrants occupy the public realm once they have entered the European enclave of Ceuta

**How:** Engaging with immigrants, taking pictures of them and making drawings of the findings

**Why:** Interest in the Lived Space produced by the immigrants occupying the public realm
Petra Pferdmenges - Hybridescapе

General Info: Pescara, Italy
Diploma Germany
Europan 7 - honorary mention
February - June 2003
In collaboration with Stefan Zellner

What: Connecting two urban fragments that are positioned on either side of a large, vacant, urban area

How: Through bridges that are used or even inhabited by people and by creating a park in the vacant site

Why: To generate encounter between the inhabitants on both sides
In Office: ARJM

General Info: Project Leader Architect @ ARJM
Brussels, Belgium
2009 - 2010

Photo by ARJM (Abdelmajid Boulaloun)

Model by ARJM (Petra Pferdmenges)

Drawing by ARJM (Petra Pferdmenges)
In Office: Josep Llinas

General Info: Architect @ Josep Llinas
Barcelona, Spain
2006-2009

Photo by Toni Anguera Buendia
In Office: Edouard Francois

General Info: Architect @ Edouard Francois
Paris, France
2003-2004