

## 1.2 Planning Unplanned



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Graphic Design: Rosebud, Inc., Vienna  
Translations and copy-editing: Ada Brant, Thomas Martin Pesl  
Printed by: Holzhausen Druck GmbH

German / English, 256 p.,  
numerous color images  
26 x 19 cm

Euro 35.-  
ISBN 978-3-86984-063-5

VERLAG FÜR MODERNE KUNST, 2015  
[www.vfmk.de](http://www.vfmk.de)

projects has not yet been undertaken at this point in time. The study *Kunst macht Stadt!?* by Kubesch/Rode/Wanschura (58) examined the impact of Vienna's Soho in Ottakring art festival (founded in 1999 by artist Ula Schneider) on the Soho district's identity and could be considered a first step in that direction. However, this study—and all other studies—must be critically examined in terms of whom it is meant to serve. In this case, the goal was to investigate how the Soho in Ottakring (59) experience could serve as an example for implementing art to revalue certain areas of the city. In the context of Vienna, this does not necessarily mean gentrification (at least not on the same scale that other cities have experienced it), since the structures are too complex. (60) Therefore, one must be even more aware of the danger of transferring initiatives like Soho in Ottakring to other urban contexts, as it could easily result in gentrification.

If evaluation were to be used to legitimize investments in art, the artistic concerns and quality of taking a stand—against dominant interests or otherwise—would be endangered. Since we are so used to adhering to the fulfillment of the quest to judge by quantity (of visitors) rather than discussing the quality of the experiences of individuals—something that cannot be measured by mainstreamed questionnaires—we need to shift the criteria of evaluation. How could one measure the value of a peaceful and inspiring community living together? Can these qualities be reduced to a figure? Or is it not rather the multitude of individuals who contribute to a vital and diverse community, with their often unwanted various social or cultural backgrounds? Counteracting linear “input–output” evaluations is usually based on a need to claim other values, where artistic knowledge and research would be fruitful and highly important: to develop new ways of appreciating the quality of personal experience and the communication processes that are enabled by artists.

#### 4\_TOOLS, TACTICS, AND STRATEGIES

Many artistic urbanism groups, including stealth (Belgrade), MUF (London), atelier d'architecture autogérée (Paris), transparadiso (Vienna), Teddy Cruz (San Diego), Stalker (Rome), and Ala Plastica (Buenos Aires) (61) have developed specific tools and/or urban strategies for engaging, on various levels, in long-term, socially oriented urban development processes that can react to rapidly changing parameters and incorporate the expertise of artists and urbanists on an equal level. Many artists, sociologists, activists, theorists, urban researchers, and people from other fields have been operating in transdisciplinary roles in manifold collaborations pursuing similar goals. In spite of the significance, their tools and strategies have not yet been analyzed in depth or extracted as methodologies. This is one of the reasons why we have compiled the urban-matters.org database, which will be expanded by an analysis of each specific project's context, problems, and methods in the next step.

I would now like to introduce the tools and strategies of direct urbanism (mainly exemplified by two of our projects, “Paradise Enterprise” and “The First World Congress of the Missing Things”) together with the new role of “urban practitioners”, who attempt to shift dominant decision-making and conventional methods of planning towards an open-ended process that respects and makes use of the specific social, societal, political, and

economic conditions of a situation. The goal of the urban practitioner is to create a situation that enables local residents, politicians, and decision-makers to continue with a process once started, providing assistance only when needed. Through its fluidity, this role can assume a position suited to a specific moment in time and to the needs of the people involved. The role may switch from that of an “educator” (although not labeled as such) to a citizen, to a professional—according to the field or specific situation required. It is important to note that the critical voice of the urban practitioner never waives, always defending the independence of artistic strategies and of art that questions societal conditions. The outstanding potential of the urban practitioner is to be both the “other” and the “self”, to act from inside—yet pretend to operate from outside the system (as needed according to the circumstances), to switch roles, to be discrete and overt, to be unpredictable. This strategy of disguise was exemplified by Michel de Certeau as “le péruque” (the wig) (62) when addressing traditional working conditions in a factory. Paul Rajakovics writes about how we can also make use of other terms, tactics, and strategies introduced by de Certeau, explaining how we can adapt and employ them for current urban issues. (63) The recurrent use of military terminology by participants when describing current urban practices in the above-mentioned conference on “The Role of Artists & the Arts in Urban Resilience” (Baltimore, 2014) became a topic in itself during one discussion. (64) It was also pointed out that no one had mentioned the word *avant-garde* as being a forerunner among military terms crucial to the art context. Could this “missing word” indicate the necessity to have the courage to reclaim the new function of art as being *avant-garde*? This is in the sense of using the underrecognized position of being on the fringes of society to ask crucial questions concerning society—and to believe in their potential to actually have an effect. Is this a current potential role of the non-outspoken revolutionary who comes to terms with the fact that we are all part of the system—and that we thus need to challenge it from the inside (as de Certeau suggested with his strategy of the *péruque*), counteracting it with the means we have at hand? Could artistic strategies of this kind become a different kind of activism?

#### 4.1 ARTISTIC URBANISM STRATEGIES

What follows are examples of artistic urbanism strategies (based on our, i.e. transparadiso's work) that can contribute to a new methodology of an open-ended process for urban development. Many of them are interconnected and can be employed and interpreted in ever-new permutations.

### → Unlearning

Unlearning means forgetting imaginary and actual barriers; leaving bias behind and evolving beyond the experiences and the roles we have assumed, since they often result in self-censorship and prevent openness towards new methods and processes from surfacing. Unlearning claims an “artistic state of exemption”, thus enabling us to free ourselves from any assumed expectations we are accustomed to acting in accordance with. (65)

62 See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1984; *L'invention du quotidien*. Vol. 1, Arts de faire, 1980.

63 See *Das künstlerische Handeln in einer neuen Praxis – „Urban Practitioners”* by Paul Rajakovics, p. 134 ff.

64 “Transatlantic Symposium. The Role of Artists & the Arts in Urban Resilience”, organized by Wilfried Eckstein, Goethe Institut, Washington D.C., May 31–June 1, 2014, MICA, Baltimore.

65 The first time we employed unlearning as a strategy was in Valparaíso (Chile, 2001) for the “deseo urbano” project, in which we developed an urban game for involving residents, city administrators, and government officials. We invited them to produce their wishes for the urban realm beyond conventional categories of urban planning. In this way, unlearning is also closely related to the production of desires. Through this, we freed not only ourselves from presumptions, but also freed everyone involved. The expertise was attributed equally to all the participants involved—no matter what background, an aspect we consider intrinsic to unlearning.

58 Kubesch, Christian/Rode, Philipp/Wanschura, Bettina: *Kunst macht Stadt?! Study for the City of Vienna*, 2008.

59 The name was criticized from the very beginning for being a direct reference to the gentrification process in Soho, New York.

60 The last remnants of the legacy of the “Red Vienna” era (1920s) left in the social-democratic consciousness are somehow still present in public awareness. However, this remaining public awareness is in danger of being completely extinguished, since current (urban planning) policies are increasingly based on neoliberal agendas, even in Vienna.

61 For more examples see the projects in this publication and on [www.urban-matters.org](http://www.urban-matters.org)

## → Shifting roles

Shifting roles is closely connected to unlearning. It is a strategy that can be used in two types of situations: from the outside, in order to set the preliminary tenor of a project, and during the course of a project:

1—Shifting roles is a method of creating new narratives, possibly even new roles, such as “actors”. {66} This strategy can also refer to the technique of the “péruque” (see de Certeau). In certain contexts, it is more viable for an artist to act from the position of an urban planner, a developer, a social agent, or an activist—fulfilling whatever the person vis-à-vis might consider to be a “professional”.

2—Roles are switched according to the requirements of the process—regardless of the role in which a person has been trained: from the “artist”, who is usually not taken very seriously (often even seen as a “crazy person”), the “negotiator” (a professional), the “architect/planning expert” (who understands the interests of developers), and many more.

66 See, e.g., the project 7x7 by osservatorio urbano/Lungomare.

67 See “Park Fiction” (Hamburg, Germany) by Christoph Schäfer and Cathy Skeene, which has become the “mother of production of desires”.

68 For the exhibition “Talking Cities” (2006), curated by Francesca Ferguson.

69 At the same time the strawberry fields are a signifier of manual labor being regarded as an unaffordable good due to high labor costs in central Europe and therefore outsourced to big strawberry plantations such as those in Spain, which are harvested by immigrant or migrant workers.

## → Anticipatory fiction

Anticipatory fiction takes the envisioned final outcome of a process and assumes it has already become reality. This conviction helps overcome barriers and can achieve much more in the long run than dealing with any “expected” difficulties. Anticipatory fiction goes beyond the production of desires {67} or the creation of visions. It works by developing narratives that transgress the seemingly doable, involving poetic moments as well as introducing new values other than that of the prevalent neoliberal governance.

In Judenburg, we simply stated that the “paradise” was already there (in the outstanding quality of the landscape space along the river Mur), and that it just needed to be rediscovered and reinterpreted. However, the method of anticipatory fiction can also be employed to move in a completely different direction. For example, when we were invited to develop a concept for the inauguration of Zeche Zollverein Essen (Germany) as a design space, {68} we proposed Plan B. Plan B was a project anticipating dependence on Russian energy supplies, the incalculable costs for consumers that go with this, and the growing problematic of Central Europeans (especially retired people) not being able to afford

heating anymore. Plan B proposed to make use of a recently closed surface coal field in Köflach, Austria, by opening it up for “coal picking”. This was a reference to the self-picking strawberry fields that are enjoying growing success in Austria, since this voluntary “manual labor” offers immediate pleasure as a pastime. {69} The Plan B project proposal was dismissed by the curator as being “cynical”—but the following year the Upper Austrian Regional Exhibition offered “coal picking” as an exhibition event, without addressing any further complex set of problems that go with it. Our critical anticipated fiction had thus been overruled by mere entertainment at a different venue.

## → Shifting the context

Similar problems often arise in different cultural, societal, and political contexts. We can learn from these contexts and look at the means, methods, and tools they produced, to expand our vision and produce ideas beyond what our imagination usually perceives as doable (a limitation that often can lead to self-censorship). Voices from the

## → Expanding the context

Oftentimes the problem stated by the commissioning party needs to be reconsidered from a broader perspective in order to arrive at the core of the problem. In the “Commons Come to Liezen” project, transparadiso expanded the context from the matter of empty ground floor areas to questioning the spatial politics of the municipality, which had purchased property from farmers in order to build a huge outlying shopping area, thus draining consumption from the city center. Therefore, transparadiso reintroduced the aspect of the “commons” (based on the town park, an orchard still functioning as commons, even though this aspect had been forgotten in the public awareness) and discussed the complexity of how new economic practices and communities acting together could contribute to a new understanding and an assumption of responsibility for the well-being of the town that goes beyond personal economic interests.

## → Research through practice

It is not possible to develop new tools, strategies, and techniques through theory alone, they need to be used and tested in direct situations. The challenge is that there is no predefined ground or outcome. The direct experience and the parallel analysis reflect back on developing the next steps for the concrete situation while continuing to develop and shape the dialog between theory and research. This ping-pong process requires openness from all people involved, including the divesting of conventional concepts of what research is. Research through practice can be considered a method of artistic research. Unlike conventional scientific research methods, {70} the goal of employing research through practice is not to achieve a quantifiable measurement of results. This artistic method (like the others mentioned above) instead opens up space for unexpected knowledge through direct experience.

70 For example, sociological research methods often drawn upon for urban research.

outside are important. It is crucial to not assume that all solutions are at hand, but instead to refer to other situations with similar problems and challenges to find modes of coping that may seem impossible to apply to a different situation. Shifting the context allows the commissioning party to draw their own conclusions rather than pretending to have a solution at hand.

The artistic strategy of drawing on the concept of a congress as an established format for generating knowledge by people on-site, accepting them as the experts, was initially developed for the “First World Congress of the Missing Things” (Baltimore, June 2014), and was then reinvestigated as an artistic method and adapted for the “Second World Non-Congress”, which took place at Aspern Lake City in Vienna in November 2014. The method of shifting the context from a shrinking city to a growing city obviously meant that conditions could not be compared. The chosen setting, artistic means, and procedures employed in Vienna were completely different, yet the two congresses had in common that they generated unexpected, yet specific, future perspectives.

## → Dialog and polylog

Bringing people with contradictory interests together as active participants and offering situations for them to communicate requires the construction of non-hierarchical discussion situations. These new situations and encounters on an eye-to-eye level can facilitate the leaving behind of familiar territories. It still needs to be carefully investigated in which situations activist strategies are more powerful for change—or when it is conducive to provide situations for engaging people in a communication process on an equal level. Too often, the greatest obstacles to change are language and social barriers between the various backgrounds, fields, and experiences. Artistic procedures can offer a language and setting to communicate across diverse interests, and thus overcome confrontational oppositions and presumptions of non-understanding.

## → Conflict as a productive force

We need to reconsider conflict and start developing a “culture of conflict” as a possible productive force for changing single-minded attitudes instead of aiming to eliminate conflict altogether. This applies especially to our Central European culture, where openly addressing conflicts is something that is avoided. Conflicts are pushed to the outer edges and made invisible so as to not obstruct the comforting feeling of well-being, which politicians, in particular, try to convey. {71} This “forced” consensus means eliminating differences on the surface, even though differences are what constitutes lively urban environments. Opposing interests need to be publicly discussed rather than arranged behind closed doors. Artistic practices can create settings and narratives for playing out moments of conflict and even compelling them by using the art project as a rehearsal area for conflicts to be acted out.

## → Open space or “The Urban Reserve” {72}

Exempting certain areas from urban development in order to maintain a space as an urban reserve for unplanning is a major strategy in complementing the quest for a realized final state solely based on a previous plan. Urban reserves supply the potential to adjust to processes and unforeseen changing parameters. For *Beyond*, a long-term urban arts program for the new Leidsche Rijn development in Utrecht, the Netherlands, curator Tom van Gestel embedded a scenario called “blind spots” to highlight this potential. At Aspern Vienna’s Urban Lakeside, I proposed the Consortium Freies Feld (Empty Field Consortium) project. The proposition was to not just leave a certain area empty (regardless of size), {73} but to reinterpret it and develop an international forum to discuss the deficiencies of urban development and “missing things” in a broader context and the conditions that cause their absence.

actual needs and shortcomings are, since “voices have been heard”. Creating situations for appropriation means leaving the dichotomy of planners and consumers behind to construct settings where a different type of research, like *research through practice*, is needed. Here, again, artistic strategies can play a fundamental role, e.g. understanding who should be involved at which point in a (planning) process. Situations where unheard voices and unwanted wants can surface should be taken as a basis for further progress. “The First World Congress of the Missing Things” {75} in Baltimore (June 2014) can be considered a paradigmatic example of creating such a situation. How can one return the public voice to the people using this rundown area next to the inner city of this shrinking town, which has recently been laden with expectations for raising its property value? How to engage these people, who are mainly homeless and drug addicts, and gain their confidence in the meaningfulness of getting involved in an art project? How to explain to city authorities that this, or any art project, cannot and must not resolve the vast social problems stemming from the political and economic system? This is why I decided to use the word *congress*, referring to the unquestioned credibility of a congress to produce content and build contacts. However, I shifted the congress format away from the typical closed situation, creating an open access conference in urban public space. While a congress is usually defined by its exclusiveness, the “First World Congress of the Missing Things” was based on providing a spatial setting for local people to articulate and discuss their missing things. Exactly what these missing things were was up to their own interpretation, of course, and ranged from “providing jobs for ex-convicts” to “a swimmable inner harbor”, addressing an entire range of social, urban, and societal issues. At the closing ceremony, the “Charter of the Missing Things” created by the congress was handed over to the mayor. This experience was new not only for the participants from disadvantaged backgrounds, but also for the politicians and public authorities who spent time at the congress together with those very people whom they otherwise only considered as “problems”. One of them said, seemingly touched: “Now, for the first time after having served in my function for 15 years, I feel that I am in touch again with the people and the reason why I decided to get involved in politics.” Of course, one small, temporary event like this will not change political attitudes as a whole, but it can indeed provide insight on what is needed. The aesthetic of the congress situation not only brought back an appreciation of this underrecognized site and the people living there, but it also created deep—and I almost want to say poetic—moments on a human level. For two days (or a total of three weeks together with on-site preparations), the congress successfully interrupted the tragic helplessness and hopelessness. As one black woman said to a white academic from Baltimore: “I was born a slave, you were born a master. How can we communicate?” And they went on to have a long conversation, as did many others.

### 4.2 CREATING SITUATIONS \_ TAKING ACTION

All these artistic tools and methods contribute to the main goal: creating situations for appropriating urban public space as part of durational urban concepts by highlighting social values and translating these into cultivated aesthetics. They proclaim the equal importance of “soft skills” (such as engaging with very different individuals and social groups of the population and their controversial needs and agendas) and “soft facts” beyond the aspects and categories usually analyzed in urbanism. These “soft facts” can be hidden agendas or potentials that need to be unveiled, as in “Paradise Enterprise”. {74} transparadiso conducted the research on-site, inviting young local residents to show their favorite places along the river Mur as the first step in rediscovering hidden potential. This research gave the expertise back to the local people—as in the next steps—and established the basis not just for developing the overall project but also for establishing communication on an equal level. The soft fact of revealed hidden potential thus also resulted in the soft skill of building confidence.

Creating situations in which everyday users and residents are encouraged to take action, to take matters into their own hands, counteracts participation being used as a generic and often pseudo-democratic instrument. In these pseudo-participatory planning processes, representatives of certain groups are singled out and involved in conventional urban planning processes in order to legitimize them. No further research is done on what the

### 4.3 AN OPEN TOOL AND STRATEGY CATALOG: FOR THE UNPLANNED

The narratives produced by and in situations like that of the “First World Congress of the Missing Things” exceed expectations. They cannot be planned. They cannot be evaluated. They are not “functional” in a measurable way. When discussing urban tools and strategies with decision-makers, there is a recurrent interest in how to make them into something functional like a “tool catalog”. Basically, there is nothing wrong with a tool catalog in the sense of learning from experience, as long as the people who want to implement specific elements are aware of the need to adapt the tools and

71 Recently, the right-wing Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) requested to ban begging in the inner city tourist areas in Salzburg and Graz instead of addressing the underlying issues of begging.

72 See Paul Rajakovic and Barbara Holub, “Vacancies and Urban Reserves”, in *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces*, Robert Temel and Florian Haydn (eds.), p.113–119, Birkhäuser, 2006.

73 The concept of the Empty Field Consortium was derived from the fact that the Aspern Lake City has not achieved its goals of attracting institutions such as the Vienna University of Technology or the Vienna University of Economics to Aspern, institutions which would have been major carriers of identity and stimulated a mixed use.

74 see p. 238 ff.

75 For a detailed description of the project, see p. 156 ff. in this publication.

## Einführung der transdisziplinären Rolle des Urban Practitioner:

Für gesellschaftliches Engagement zu *urban issues* zwischen den Feldern von Kunst, Urbanismus, Soziologie, Stadtforschung und anderen Expertisen:

- Wie können KünstlerInnen und künstlerische Praktiken ihre kritische Stimme behaupten und (doch) gleichzeitig als gleichwertige Experten z.B. zu Stadtplanern oder Soziologen betrachtet werden?
- Wie können künstlerisch-urbane Praktiken dazubetragen, neue gesellschaftliche Werte, die gemeinschaftliches Handeln propagieren, etablieren und damit einer von neoliberalen Entscheidungsprozessen geprägten Stadtplanung entgegenwirken?

## Was braucht der Urban Practitioner?

\_Wir müssen zwischen den verschiedenen (Kultur- und Stadt)produzentInnen, ihren Interessen und Rollen in der Kulturpolitik und Stadtplanung unterscheiden - anstatt sie als "kreatives Kapital" zu behandeln.

\_Die Finanzierung dieser Prozesse muss unabhängig von „messbaren Resultaten“ erfolgen.

\_Klare Definition der Rollen aller Beteiligten (KünstlerInnen, RezipientInnen, „KonsumentInnen“...):

\_Die Situation gibt einen Rahmen vor, innerhalb dessen sich jede/r verhält, wie er/sie es möchte.

\_Die eigene, neue Erfahrung ermöglicht neue Handlungsräume - entgegen einer gefühlten Ohnmacht.

\_Der spezifische Kontext muss betrachtet werden:

> dann kann von anderen Kontexten mit ähnlichen Fragestellungen gelernt werden.

\_Offener Prozess: keine vorgefertigte Erwartungshaltung an das Ergebnis.

### 3\_Partizipation, Kollaboration, Kooperation



collaborative projects need to propose a holistic multi-dimensional approach  
looking for structures that we can support

what is the creative moment? is it conflict?  
the role of the planner as educator should be taken into account

the right people need to be together at the right time

how can you act freely when you are commissioned?

are we part of a system?

when do departments of the city government approach us?  
- when projects are stuck

is participation already the result of what we did the last 10, 20 years - or a fake?