Distribution and Feedback Loops

The group is focusing on the development, production and distribution of tools that, on their dependency and actual topic, will sometimes act as enablers facilitating consensus, sometimes as disadvantages (disrupting disensus). ACSP is interested in the formulation of questions, outlining of possible inquiries, researching and mapping those territories of distributing, discussing ideas and content as a proposition: an active involvement in the world surrounding us. Within Critical Spatial Practice, the question of feedback is crucial. It is an ever-ongoing system of intellectual and productive practice, differentiating between design and collaboration, and differentiating between collaborative and collaborative practice. What constitutes the collaborative space of politics, both through content-related curatorial questions and the notion of agonistic encounter? What constitutes the space for independent work. Yet, all work hovers around a central core, which is very specific vocabulary to generate a context for their work. This vocabulary allows them to articulate their work, as well as their collaboration with likeminded practitioners and collaborators, as well as potential adversaries. Publishing, in this regard, becomes a central tool to think through its inclusiveness, commonality, and self-promotion. Experiences are not bound in terms of format on approach, and they invite collaborators to rethink and redefine their existing language (literary) when talking about their work. Both architects and artists tend to use a specific vocabulary to generate a context for their work. This vocabulary will be called into question. The program is understood as an assisting structure, which enables students to rethink and rethink the notion of terms such as “project,” “productive framework,” and “autonomy of production.” It is structured enough to be consulted when needed, while open enough to permit independent work. Yet, all work hovers around a central core, which is the annual theme. By doing so, each individual works as a part of a larger narrative in order to develop an ongoing body of work.

2011/12: Cultures of Assembly

This year, ACSP inquires the complex narratives around political congregations spaces and the notion of aggressive encounter. What constitutes the space for political practice? This yearlong project investigates how to imagine, design and develop a space of politics, both within content-related curatorial questions as well as its potential physical expression, differentiating between that which is politics and that which is the political. Participants have worked on and continued to develop thematic sub-clusters dealing with the question of how political congregations and struggle has been and is currently being staged—consciously or not—and how these narratives to those models could be developed. Using the productive conflict between consensus versus dissensus modes of practice as a driving force to develop individual projects, ACSP thinks both in terms of “testing content” and “testing conflict” to develop tools that help ACSP define such spatial frameworks that can be tested against reality—ranging from transient and informal to highly formal. These changes in scale (physical) and intention (informality) will produce a fertile ground for speculation: it is not always, physical space (design) that must matter, what constitutes the elementary components of a political and/or social forum? Participants are currently developing a set of comparative critical studies, mappings and individual projects around the notion of congregational zones and territories as well as the social and spatial dynamics of institutions versus temporary settings of debate. Does decision-making take place only within the designed rigidity of the courtroom or does it emerge in the informal corner of the corridor between meetings, with a coffee and a cigarette? And if so, how can such processes or spaces be addressed through design? This year, the Master Thesis Group has utilized a set of specific tools at various scales in order to understand, interrogate, and deal with spaces of political congregations, ranging from highly-formal and permanent to super-informal and temporary. Within this situation, the group questioned, defined, delineated, and developed what we discussed and approached as critical and productive “problematics.” These problematics range from form to formal political propaganda sites such as the Zeppelinflied in Nuremberg (used by the Nazi Party to stage and corereograph large-scale political rallies), a seemingly never-ending national church project in Belgrade, an informal period of a redevelopment project in the city centre of Frankfurt known as “Darmstädterbahn,” a critical rendering of a selection of global parliamentary spaces and their spatial performance, to the architecture of the Occupy Camp outside the European Central Bank in Frankfurt.

The setting up of such scaffolding and borderlines is important as each individual contributor to the project has been asked to take a position. This, by default, has consequences. Only when a border is acknowledged, under- stood, and recognized it can be broken, transgressed, or (mis)used. ACSP thinks about “space” without necessarily intervening in it physically, but trying to tease, promote, destroy and foster an atmosphere towards contemporary spatial production, its triggers, driving forces, effects, and affects. As a group, we speculate on the modalities of production and potential benefits of the role of “the outsider.” By deliberately producing an agonistic field of productive encounters, ACSP navigates into the space of “impossible thoughts” and fosters a pro-active outlook on the failure as the starting point of all experiment.

Prof. Markus Miessen

Städelschule Architecture Class (SAC)
Dürerstraße 10
60596 Frankfurt am Main
www.staedelschule.de
www.criticspatialpractice.org

Architecture & Critical Spatial Practice (ACSP)

SAC’s new specialization in “Architecture and Critical Spatial Practice” (ACSP) navigates architecture as a critical spatial, political, cultural, and social tool, while taking full advantage of SAC’s position within the Städelschule. It draws on the playful and culturally discursive potential of the relationship between architecture and related disciplines, first and foremost art, to reinvigorate architecture with cultural, social, and political criticism. It establishes a productive dialogue with both parts of the Städelschule, benefiting from the friction that intrinsically exists between art and architecture. ACSP gains from cross-disciplinary fertilization through intensive collaboration with all departments and classes that the school offers, aiming to promote vital interactions between student bodies with very different interests and ambitions. ACSP sees SAC’s presence in the Städelschule as a privileged position, since one aspect of contemporary production in the arts is to inquire into how critical practices can operate. In this context, architecture holds particular promise, since its relationship to spatial domains is inherent to its history and contemporary challenges. However, much contemporary production in architecture is void of its responsibilities in terms unforeseen and of its consequences. ACSP aims to provide a much-needed re-iteration of vital, critical discourses into the field. ACSP is devised as a space for broad discourses, a setting through which programmatic cross-polination can emerge in a productive, rather than limiting, way. Here, students experiment with a diverse set of discursive tools and techniques, which allow them to engage in alternative spatial practice(s). ACSP contributes to expand the programme of the Architecture Class by emphasizing a reflective space, an extrastuctural construct in which one can develop a language that describes and generates one’s practice besides form and other concerns—open to both architects and artists from Städelschule.

Spatial Practice

Can social complexity, agonistic encounters, and critical content exchanges be designed? What constitutes the productive transitions of physical scales and programmatic (in)formalities when it comes to political encounters? When we stage discourse, when and how does the political emerge? Critical Spatial Practice should be understood as a means of rethinking one’s professional practice and codes of conduct. Consequently, the singular, formal, and often self-referential approach of architecture is being enhanced by a complex field of interests, methods, and lines of attack.

Publishing as Practice

Architectural history has been and continues to be dominated by publications as a site and test-ground for ideas: at some point, it has been argued, paper was the most radical architectural material of all. Architecture has a very specific history embedded in the production and dissemination of discursive platforms such as books, magazines, and self-published fanzines. ACSP understands itself at the intersection of publishing as strategic distribution of ideas—the production of a pro-active and self-initiated (public) debate as a testsite for spatial speculation. This year, the programme investigates publishing as a tool beyond the common misunderstanding of publishing in architecture as a site for failed, un- elicited, or utopian architectural projects, also known as “paper architecture.” Instead, ACSP understands and promotes publishing as an activated test ground, a communication device—to other words.

Architecture + Critical Spatial Practice

Städelschule Rundgang 2012
Feb 10th—12th
10 am—8 pm
Deborah Ligorio
— Tahrir Square,
December 6 2011,
10:36 AM
Deborah Ligorio
— Tahrir Square,
December 6 2011,
11:37 AM
Citizens carrying passports of the Republic of Kosovo can travel without a visa to only five countries in the World: Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Turkey, and the Maldives Islands. Their areas combined create a World of approximately 863,571 km².

sources: http://www.mfa-ks.net/?page=2,70
Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Flaka Haliti 2012
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>10,908 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>13,450 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>25,715 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>28,748 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>783,562 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>1,190 km²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The word parliament derives from the French “parlement”—the act of speaking, the discussion. The chamber in which parliamentary assemblies meet is therefore a spatial setting for that very discussion. The comprehension of the nature of this discussion should hence inform the architectural design.

The spatial organization of formal assemblies has not substantially changed much from Athenian assembly to the modern concept of prime ministerial government that goes back to the Kingdom of Great Britain (1707–1800) and The Parliamentary System in Sweden (1721–1772) that coincided with each other. Classical democracy not only influenced the formation of later constitutions, it also created an architectural legacy which has dominated both the form and style of parliament buildings to the present day.

The most appropriate form remained to be hemicycle—semicircular, or horseshoe shaped, debating chamber (plenary chamber), where members sit to discuss and pass legislation. The circular shape is one, which was primarily designed to encourage the politics of consensus among political parties rather than confrontation. The design is used in most European countries (and hence was adopted by the European Parliament) and the United States. The equality in its shape—the equal distance from the speaker, for example—is being used whenever democratic dialogue is anticipated. In contrast, the Westminster system, in which the government and opposition parties face each other on opposing sets of benches, points at an interesting potential: the exploration and exacerbation of spatial confrontation and conflict as a form of agonistic ground condition. This research questions the seemingly causal relationship between the spaces of parliamentary chambers and the system they represent.
This is a lower house of the parliament, famous for its large glass dome available for visitors. The members of the parliament, seated underneath the dome, can constantly be reminded people are the ones they represent.

The General Assembly seated in this chamber represents transnational body constituting of one representative of each member country. The interpreters operating from the booths, aided with earpieces and microphones, play a vital role in the meetings.

The Parliament of this country is seated in the former Royal Palace. The origins of this cradle of democracy couldn’t have been less democratic: it was built in 1842 as the Royal Palace, as suitably grand home for the new royal family.

This is an upper house of the parliament that represents sixteen federal states equally distributed into sixteen rows.

Parliament chamber of this country once seated federal government. The federation fell apart in the beginning of the 1990’s and the government of the single country moved in. Paradoxically the number of seats increased and two rows behind the speaker were added.

The National Assembly of this country is famous for the frequent physical encounters between the members of the parliament, who are showing their disagreement with shoving, pushing, stackling and unstackling furniture, barricading doors, occupying podiums, yelling, singing, hair-pulling and so on.

The House of Representatives is a lower house of a parliament showing the hybrid version of two dominant spatial types—rectangular and hemicycle. This parliament is specific for unusually small number of representatives in comparison to the country’s population.

Members of the upper house of this parliament are appointed and not chosen by the people. Between the two opposing parties are crossbenches for independent members. In the centre also lies judge’s woollack—a wool stuffed cushion or seat covered with red cloth, that has neither back nor arms.

The Supreme People’s Assembly is the primary legislative body of the country, that ordinarily delegates authority to the smaller and more powerful Presidium. 87% of the members belong to the single party.

The Deputies Chamber, a lower house of a parliament, was built within the grand project for the National Congres in newly established capital in 1960’s. The project represents a masterpiece of Modern architecture.
"the building would not be used as an aura-making machine, but as a money-making machine."
2012 marks the 75th year since the completion of the Zeppelinfeld. The structure has been subject to certain variations of use. Zeppelinfeld's strategic position in history is unquestioned, and this is manifested through the different ownerships. Nuremberg City had ownership interest around the start of construction and still have today. The field has had a few and somewhat blurry shifts in ownership. From NS to US Army, American High School, Nuremberg City, however, they're use of the assembly field is often similar if not identical to original purpose.

Today the 'Ruin Theory/Value' one of the decisive factors of realization, may be manifested stronger than ever before. Albert Speer and Adolf Hitler's original intention with the structure still transcends, and maybe the complicated nature of its history, evident in its shift in ownership, avoidance and neglect, or regulatory spatial restrictions, is accelerating its very realization.

The Zeppelinfeld's static design already constitutes an order, by which status of people and symbols are valued and directed. Most if not all originally designed structures for flow and orientation of people still remain. However areas have been designated, and fenced in accordingly. Large scale events no longer can be appropriated in this structure, and both annual events such as Nuremberg and ROCK-IM-PARK, introduce temporary structures to accommodate different pay-levels of audience. Going from a designated political agenda, to isolated commercial events.

Even though the asphalt, fence and grass already made a clear distinction, the decision to plant a row of trees in fact shows the only attempt to permanent break up the square. This comes after parking spaces, organization of future events etc. Has already been negotiated. Future use seems to be laid in a similar way as urban development for car dependent communities.

The Zeppelinfeld is currently regulated for 'cultural and sporting events'. This results in various events, predominantly music and football or other sports, with appropriate commerce. Physical instructs in and around Zeppelin, seemingly is installed and regulated in a temporary manner. Access, pathways tunnel, traffic 'blockers', and fencing, is regulated according to event, and defines zones or territory. Annual events demands spatial regulatory objects such as temporary stands/stage, portable toilets, and additional fencing.

Visual marketing reaches its peak during Nuresting, the annual motor-sport event since 1947. The 2 km track, started and ended on the central access, directly in front of where Hitler stood, circulating around the grandstand, and not in front of where Hitler stood, circulating around the grandstand, and not in front. The 2 km track, started and ended on the central access, directly in front of where Hitler stood, circulating around the grandstand, and not in front of where Hitler stood, circulating around the grandstand, and not in front.

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Sićilian architecture can be a powerful political tool, but its physical manifestations (churches) can also be ‘called on’ as witnesses (of Yugoslavia’s politically, religiously and nationally saturated past) in order to generate a narrative of the country’s history. Observing the way architecture has manifested itself physically throughout history can give us a key insight into understanding and directing complexity of this narrative, recognizing turning political moments in their material appearance. At the same time it underlines official secular rhetoric of the country and indicates the actual desecularization, which fosters non-tolerance on many levels. There were three countries called Yugoslavia in southeastern Europe in the 20th century, occupying various territories, and under different state polities. It was created on aspiration of certain groups among South Slavs to live ‘under the same roof.’ In one century, as it existed, the country managed to go through several political systems.

During the mid-1980s, Yugoslavia—a country constructed on a multiethnic dream—started to fall apart. Ideas of equality, brotherhood, unity and friendship had to be replaced with a new ideology. Religion, abandoned for almost half a century, had a big comeback. If we consider the architecture of pro-ethnocentricity—that is to say architecture ‘for’—it is big, remarkable, breathtaking, and visible from everywhere for everybody. On the other hand, architecture of anti-multiethnicity—architecture ‘against’—is rather small, allowing it to pass unnoticed. Whilst the borders became relaxed once again, as they had been so many times in the past, a new hope appeared on the horizon—a dome. The nation gathered around one dream: to build the biggest orthodox church in the world. They are observing self-development, building the temple the nation is actually building itself striving toward never achievable perfection. A group of individuals gathered around another dream—to preserve the borders and express non-tolerance. They built probably the smallest Orthodox Church in the world.

The former of these two phenomena gives us, the world’s largest Orthodox Church. The latter, although physically small, finished in a day, represents territorially the size of a country. How big is ‘big’—how big is ‘small’—and what constitutes the size of a country?

### Soft Borders

**1346 – 1359** Serbs in 1346, during the reign of the Nemanjić dynasty, stretched over half of the Balkan Peninsula and had access to 4 seas. During this period, the Serbian Orthodox Church was founded.

**1389 – 1804** The territory of Serbia was part of the Ottoman Empire between the XIV until XIX century. During this period, borders were non-existent since the Ottoman Empire occupied the Balkan Peninsula in the 15th century.

**1804 – 1815** During Revolutionary Serbia (the time of the national and social revolution of the Serbian People that took place between 1804 and 1815), this territory, finally, after 5 centuries under Ottoman rule, evolved from an Ottoman province into a constitutional monarchy and a modern nation-state.

**1815 – 1912 (1929)** The Kingdom of Serbia was created in 1815. In 1912, Serbia joined the State of Slovenians, Croats and Serbs to form the Kingdom of Serbia, Croats and Slovenians (later known as Yugoslavia).

On April 27, 1595, the wooden coffin, with Saint Sava’s relics, was burnt on a pyre on the Vračar hill in Belgrade. Saint Sava, born Rastko Nemanjić (1224 – 1234), was a Serbian Prince and Orthodox monk, educator and founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The burning was executed by the Ottoman authorities to suppress the Serbian rebels after the Banat Uprising in 1595. During the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 20th century Serbia had positioned itself on the new European map slowly establishing its borders after the Ottomans had occupied the territory for almost 500 years. At the Exposition Universelle Internationale held in Paris in 1900 Serbia got a prominent location directly on the Seine river and presented a church-like pavilion in full Serbo-Byzantine style. It was a collection of national myths, a display of pro-ottoman occupation, idealizing the image of the past. The pavilion was an embodiment of national identity, lost and now finally found again, and therefore national representation on an international stage.

In 1895, three hundred years after the burning of Saint Sava’s remains, the Temple of Saint Sava, Vračar, Belgrade was founded in Belgrade. Its goal was to build a cathedral on the place of the burning. A small church was built at the future site of The Temple and was later moved so the construction could begin. At the beginning of 20th century this ground on Vračar hill was already
marked and fenced. The fence was broken down during the conflicts in 1746. Soon the first small church was built. It survived the re-conquering of Belgrade in 1739 and remained until 1757 when the Turks destroyed it. A few years later the second church was built on the ashes of the old church, this time using durable materials. During 1908 the church was extended by adding a narthex on the west side. In 1928 two side naves were added. The original church with its upgraded parts was there until 1935. The same year construction of the third Savinačka church, one that still exists in Vračar, began and ended. Material from the previous church was used to build the present one. One reason for destruction was to release space for the entrance of Saint Sava Cathedral (The Temple), but also to replace the old church with a new, representative building.

In 1905, a public contest was launched to design the church; all five applications received were rejected as not being good enough. Soon, the break-out of the First Balkan War in 1912, and subsequent Second Balkan and First World Wars stopped all activities of the construction of the church. After the war, in 1919, the Society was re-established. New appeals for designs were made in 1926; this time, it received 22 submissions. Though the first and the third prize were not awarded, the second-place project, made by architect Aleksandar Deroko, was chosen for the building of The Temple.

Forty years after the initial idea, construction of The Temple began on May 20, 1935, 347 years after the burning of Saint Sava’s remains. The work lasted until the Second World War Axis invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941. The church’s foundations had been completed, and the walls erected to the height of 7 and 11 meters. After the 1941 week ceased altogether. The Society for the Building of the Cathedral ceased to exist and has not since been revived. In the post-war period of the newly created Yugoslavian state, atheism represented a part of the official state policy in the reign of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia from 1945 till mid 80s. Young people were not directed to act as God commanded, which was the case before the war. The new faith was Communism and young people took an oath on their first day of school - to develop the brotherhood and unity and ideas that comrade Tito fought for. State atheism in communist Yugoslavia had the same ideological peculiarities. Public denial and suppression of religion was justified by the fact that religious differences highlight the divides between the Yugoslav nations and nationalities, and thus encourage nationalism and chauvinism, and undermine the brotherhood and unity.

What was a beautiful dream became ruin (fig. 4). In different periods through this short period of time, space surrounding the temple’s walls was used as a parking lot or storage. Somebody from the government came up with the idea of giving this space to a circus, that was visiting Belgrade from time to time, and simply to cover the existing walls with a circus-like tent roof. Another suggestion was to add a new flat roof which would not resemble any sacred architecture, but would use the space for more or less religious purposes—as a fresco gallery. In 1958, the Patriarch renewed the idea of building the church. After 88 requests for continuation of the building—and as many refusals, permission for finishing the building was granted in 1984. 12th May 1985; The Patriarch, 20 bishops and numerous clergy served a solemn liturgy, which took place inside the walls of the church and was attended by about 12,000 people, while in the courtyard there were about 8,000 people. Construction was started in 12th again August 1985th. The walls were raised to full height of 40m.

THE BEGINNING OF THE FALL OF COMMUNISM

It should be noted that the year 1985 was still part of the communist period. Maintenance of liturgy and laying the Charter in the cathedral foundations on 12th May that year symbolized the beginning of the fall of communism. In the euphoric atmosphere more than 100,000 people gathered. Although it is not especially marked in history, that date may be considered a turning point.

1985 – 1990
The phases of the construction were followed by the great solemn liturgies, once for the sanctification of the land on which the temple would be built, and the second time for the sanctification of the completed foundations, both times visited by non-Communist companies.

1990 – 1994
During the WWII the occupying German army used the unfinished church as a parking lot.

1994 – 1995
In 1994 the Serbians and the Red Army used it with the same purpose. Later, it was used for storage by various companies.

1985 – 2012
With relinquishment of the communism, brotherhood and unity, religion again reappears as an umbrella for the whole nation.
**Art of Seduction**

**ENGINEERING**

The main dome project was a huge achievement for the Serbian Orthodox Church and its believers because finally the Belgrade skyline will get what was meant to be there a long time ago. For the rest of the nation (who were secretly nostalgic for what had been kept) the technique used to lift the dome was a tremendous feat of engineering, never seen before. It was built on the ground, inside The Temple, and then lifted up to be positioned in the sky (fig. 6). The dome weighed more than 4000t; never before had such a heavy burden been lifted from the ground. With 16 hydraulic cranes, specially constructed for the job in a factory, the dome was separated from the heavy burden been lifted from the ground. With 16 hydraulic cranes, specifically constructed for the job in a factory, the dome was separated from the ground and was slowly rising higher and higher (fig. 6). On the day when the lifting of the dome started, many curious people gathered on Vračar hill. Among them there were 2000 scientists and other experts from the building industry. Every day with 2 hours of work, for 40 days, the dome was travelling to the sky. The 12m high gold plated cross, which was placed on the top while the dome was still on the ground, was rising like a phoenix from the ashes. Vračar hill is the highest elevation of the city center, at an altitude of about 134m. It absolutely dominates the skyline and is visible from all approaches to the city; one could almost see it in all its magnificence the entire time—The Temple. On June 26th, 1989 Belgrade was "almost finished". But the building of the nation just begun (fig. 6x).

**FINANCING**

The building of the church is financed solely by donations. A donation is a gift, which implies voluntary. There are numerous donations that can meet this definition, but in some cases voluntary is "voluntary". The Serbian government decreed that all postage in Serbia must include the cost of an additional stamp designed for the construction of the Memorial Temple of Saint Sava in Belgrade (fig. 10). Funds from the sale of additional stamps go towards the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church to finance construction work and work on the interior of the temple, or for making mosaics.

With every standard utility bill that people receive, comes a blank pay slip to make a voluntary contribution to the Serbian Orthodox Church. Where usually one can buy cigarettes and newspapers (fig. 11). Although the Temple is still under-construction, religious activities are taking place without interference. A photo showing the kiosk inside The Temple is one of the photos from the work of Belgrade based artist Ivan Zupanc’s. In one of his previous works Golden Ratio where the gold-plated-12m-high cross plays the main role, the thing he is wondering about is exposure and the insistence on a symbol which has the meaning just for one religious group in a multicultural country. The work questions if this can be considered as tolerance. While this work was politically saturated, the next one—A Holy Place, is exploring culture of visual inside of the unfinished Temple, while capturing moments of intimacy of religious acts, and the glory of the space and the light juxtaposed with images of the construction site and elements from very informal spheres of daily life.
BIG CHURCH, SMALL HILL

1980’s
When we were children in the beginning of the 80’s, by the time we were starting primary school and became Tito’s pioneers – the park around the Temple used to be called informally the park in front of The National Library. All pedestrian paths were intersecting at the center.

1990’s
In the 90’s new students were no longer becoming pioneers. The celebrated political project named Yugoslavia failed and fell apart; brotherhood and unity across nations and religions were being changed for nationalism. Belgrade skyline was finally finished, adorned with the most magnificent dome in the territory of The Eastern Orthodox Church.

2000’s
At the beginning the territory implied verticality but after conquering the horizon, the temple finally grew in plan, rearranging the network of pedestrian paths. Three main accesses to the park lead directly to the temple; the park’s green area surface is paved in the shape of a circle, in order to serve the religious act of burning Christmas fire. Additionally the Temple is fenced with combination of vertical (columns dressed in the same stones as the facade) and horizontal elements (bushes).

2010’s
One of the most prominent features of the Temple is its constant and eternal progress. In this moment, (the year 2012) work on the interior is still present. And there is always more. The Detailed Regulation Plan for this area is based on the winning competition entry fig. 14 for Saint Sava Plateau from 1988. Competition suggests: closing of two adjacent streets, demolition of existing buildings and paving of the entire plateau in front of The Temple which then smoothly in form of terraces continues to descend over the slopes of the hill. The current plan is to close one of these two streets, as well as construction of the Patriarchate building in the near future.

Serbia is officially a secular country, which means that the policy, in government and formal power are separated from church. Conversely, the moment this building becomes the national project, officials of the country must be present at the regular meetings of the Assembly dedicated to the project fig. 15.

The Rumija Mountain is a site of great religious significance. The Cross of Jovan Vladimir is carried every year on the Feast of Pentecost from the village of Velji Mikulaci to the summit of Rumija. In addition to Orthodox Christians of Bar area, traditionally Catholics and Muslims also take part in this procession and ascent to Rumija summit.

In 2005, Serbian Orthodox Church mounted the metal church building to the summit, by means of Air Force of Serbia and Montenegro helicopter fig. 16. This was a highly controversial issue, as building of the church was not approved by Montenegrin authorities. The use of the Air Force helicopter was perceived by some as a provocation in the wake of Montenegrin independence referendum. As of 2013, the church is still standing, Although the case is well known in Montenegro, and it even came to Brussels where the status of Montenegro’s EU integration is going to be discussed—it is unbeknownst to Serbia’s public. The majority of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament members rejected an amendment filed by Jelko Kacin, the member of the European Parliament, which advocates demolition of the church on the Mountain Rumija and condemns statements issued by Serbian Orthodox Church dignitaries. According to the official announcement released following the session of the committee, 31 members voted against Kacin’s amendment, 30 members voted in its favor, whereas 3 members abstained from voting.

Ephemeral Permanence
The Big one is a dream 7 centuries old. It is being built for almost 100 years. Everything is communicated in numbers: 70 meters tall, the floor area to accommodate 10 000 believers at any time, 49 bells, and the 12 m high gold plated cross visible from all accesses to the city. It is not finished yet. This building epitomizes eternal desire, never accomplished because it is trying to reach: unobtainable, a dream, the cure for lost, confounded national identity. It became a national project, already a few times an abandoned tower of Bel and after each derelict it grows higher and closer to the sky. The nation is observing self-development, through the building of the temple it is building itself striving toward never achievable perfection.

Permanent Ephemeralism
The Small one is like a move in chess. It is built in one day with employ of the Air Force of Serbia and Montenegro helicopter. In 2005, Serbian Orthodox Church mounted the metal church building on the top of the Mountain – a site of great religious significance. The Cross is carried every year to the summit of the Mountain. Multikethnicity is what distinguishes this location from other locations of the pilgrimage; together with Orthodox Christians of Bar area, Catholics and Muslims would also take part in this procession and ascent to Rumija summit.

Author:
Dunja Predić

Thanks to:
Dubravka Sekulić, Mirjana Predić, Brian Hoy, Ivan Zupane, Ayax Abreu and Markus Miesen
The re appropriation of Diamantenbörse was a yearlong episode in the buildings' lifespan that has by all means brought greater visibility to the MA project. However it did not produce entirely desired effects such as mutual collaborations between various organisations, or bigger projects which could draw the attention of the media and prominent cultural institutions. Occupying abandoned or dysfunctional buildings has proven to be an ideal condition for creative exchange to take place, however this is something that cannot and should not be imposed.

On the other hand, one can speculate that the very nature of ownership and affiliation with re appropriated space determines the way it is being used. The nature of the production reflects temporality of the whole project as well as, the lack of the sustainable model that could provide the users with possibility to stay. The project's feasibility could have been, for instance, ensured by the influx of cultural institution.

The question about the methods of evaluating such production arises. How can we monetise symbolic capital that gets invested into the location when actions like this are undertaken?

“Program” is an unstable category when compared to the question of materiality of a building—re-appropriation of no longer functional buildings has, over the last decades, become a common practice. For a period of one year, between the spring of 2010 and 2011, a twelve-story office building in the centre of Frankfurt—known as “Diamantenbörse”—hosted an entirely different set of inhabitants and programs. During the period between the acquisition of the building by a new owner and the beginning of construction works, that would turn it into a residential one, a window of opportunity appeared so to speak. The building's central message as a huge urban container was redesigned by its temporary users, who adapted the building as an alternative work and exhibition space.

If one investigates this building as a default mode of gentrification one can come to some quick conclusions: the generous gesture of the investor in return gave the building a new image as a cultural hot spot instead of an old, run-down building, which could hence be promoted in a much more financially attractive way. What is often portrayed as the seemingly black and white reality of gentrification needs to be re-read, in a case like this, as a slightly different mode of opportunistic practice from the point of view of cultural institutions, inhabiting a window of opportunity, which produces, at least in theory, assets for both parties involved.

This is a document of the yearlong process that resulted in creating a specific art space and arguably successful model for urban regeneration. It examines more closely spaces used by Städelschule students—the ground floor galleries and the ninth floor of the building—which, for the period of one year served as their work space, as well as a set of specificities that made it arguably successful as a place of art production and exhibition.

“Space and its usage are two opposed notions that exclude one another, generating an endless array of uncertainties.”

—Bernard Tschumi
The building of Diamantenbörse is located in the very centre of the city within the borders of the historical inner city (Innenstadt). The main pedestrian street is just 250 m away and the building is sharing a block with Karstadt, one of the city’s biggest department stores. Opposite of the building is Peterskirche, a late 17th century evangelical church. That in 2004 was transformed into St. Peter’s youth cultural centre. The park between the church and Diamantenbörse, a remaining piece of the 15th century cemetery, was a meeting place of the drug scene in the 1970s. This area is place of disparity with a highly commercial character, and is being visited both during the day and the night. Due to the many gay bars located here, it is also known as the “Pink triangle” as well as “Zell backyard.” As such this location was an ideal place for the promotion of the “lifestyle district” for future dwellers.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Jozef Orgler and Anita Mikulski, later Muno Adaisah Saisum, opened in 1974 a diamond bourse in Frankfurt, the first one in Germany. The high expectations to make Frankfurt into one of the centres for diamonds exchange, next to Antwerp, Tel Aviv and New York, failed—the investors ended up in jail in the late 70s for creating a debt, of more than 100 million German marks.

The building was being rented out as office space in the following 30 years. In the beginning of 2010 a controversial investor, Andy Goldman, buys it off with the idea to turn it into a contemporary residential complex complemented with retail and wellness. The project for 80 condominiums throughout the ten floors, designed by Christopher Mäcker, was promoted as a concept of “andere wohnen” (“residing differently”). “Real-estate visionary” Goldman named his project MA (Japanese for space, place).

While waiting for necessary permits Goldman gave the building space to various organisations and institutions in the field of art to use it for the period of one year, among these was Städelshule. This offer coincided with the renovation of a large part of the school, which lead to huge deficiency in work space for students. On the other hand, part of the idea of selling the concept was to change the unpopular reputation of this area and the building itself. This year was mutually beneficial for both artists and the investor.

After the one year period, the temporary occupants moved out. However, the MA project faced difficulties—it didn’t manage to get necessary permits and it had to be redesignated again into an office building designed by HGP Architects. The construction works for the new project, promoted as “andere leben” (“living differently”) started in the end of 2011.

**SPATIAL CONTEXT**

The building of former Diamantenbörse is located in the very centre of the city within the borders of the historical inner city (Innenstadt). The main pedestrian street is just 250 m away and the building is sharing a block with Karstadt, one of the city’s biggest department stores. Opposite of the building is Peterskirche, a late 17th century evangelical church. That in 2004 was transformed into St. Peter’s youth cultural centre. The park between the church and Diamantenbörse, a remaining piece of the 15th century cemetery, was a meeting place of the drug scene in the 1970s. This area is place of disparity with a highly commercial character, and is being visited both during the day and the night. Due to the many gay bars located here, it is also known as the “Pink triangle” as well as “Zell backyard.” As such this location was an ideal place for the promotion of the “lifestyle district” for future dwellers.
The architecture of Diamantenbörse is an example of functionalism that was dominating local discourse of the time. Ground and first floor were initially designed as 600 m² bourse hall but later converted into retail stores. Between spring 2010 and 2011 ground floor was used as a common exhibition and event space. Large storefronts made art visible and accessible, and the building gained an image of a new urban hot spot. The little store on the corner was given to Städelschule students to use it as their gallery. Their work space was located on the ninth floor, in vacant offices arranged along the long hallway. Relatively small rooms, additionally suppressed with suspended gypsum ceiling were not ideal to serve as artist studios. However, a greater disadvantage was actually moving the greater part of school life away from its hub, Städelschule’s main building, rather than the physicality of the space itself. Albeit students knew that all partitions will be torn down as soon as they leave, no major spatial interventions happened.

1974–2010 / Before the building was sold, there were always only offices. The layout rendered typical organization of that time—the space partitioned into smaller offices.

2010–2011 / Offices were turned into ateliers for Städel students. Relatively small rooms, additionally suppressed with suspended gypsum ceiling were not ideal to serve as artist studios.

2011 / Initial residential project, that was canceled, proposed condominiums on all typical office floors, including the ninth. There were six residential types, varying from smaller maisonettes to luxurious ones, 300 m² in size.

2012 / The final project for the office layout displays contemporary requirements for flexibility. Only several offices and conference rooms are physically enclosed, while the rest is open space.
### Anmeldung einer öffentlichen Versammlung oder eines Aufzuges gemäß § 14 Versammlungsgesetz

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