TEH: BUILDING A CULTURAL REGENERATION PROJECT FOR EUROPE

Small atlas of cultural shifts, strategies and prototypes to keep down to Earth

October 2024 Edition

(RE)BUILDING TO LAST

UNRAVELLING TACIT KNOWLEDGE

COMMUNITY PLACE MAKING AND CO-DESIGN

ROADMAP & TOOLKIT

Co-funded by
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(RE)BUILDING TO LAST #1

UNRAVELLING TACIT KNOWLEDGE #2

COMMUNITY PLACE MAKING AND CO-DESIGN #4

ROADMAP & TOOLKIT #3

FOREWORD: (RE)BUILDING TO LAST WITHIN "NEW CLIMATES"

"To build is to destroy," states architecture scholar Charlotte Malterre-Barthes (Malterre-Barthes, 2024) in her recent advocacy for a *Global Moratorium on New Construction*. According to her analysis, architectural practices need to move away radically from well-established extractive and exploitative practices (and economies) that have intensely shaped the profession for decades and are today undergoing a profound crisis. For Malterre-Barthes, architecture needs to be profoundly reinvented through a new culture and economy of "care"; a culture entailing practices of continuous maintenance, repair and self-repair of the built environment and of the social/ecological populations that inhabit them (Malterre-Barthes, 2023). A politics of "repair" and "self-repair" extending to architectural and urban disciplines with the ambition of transforming a sector in deep crisis from the bottom up. From Stephen Cairns and Jane M. Jacobs' provocation that *Buildings must die* (Cairns et al, 2014) to Rotor's co-founder Lionel Devlieger arguing for a need to rediscover the *Art of Deconstruction* (Devlieger, 2019), we could also argue that "to deconstruct" (rather than destroy) is "to (re)build" or, rather should be. In other words, one should not be allowed to demolish existing built infrastructures (a spatial capital, a valuable stock) without a clear vision of what this entails in terms of grey energy and reuse potential, without a comprehensive strategy for both the future of the building and the outcomes of eventual demolition.

Within the realms of such an extensive debate, a concern clearly emerges: we need to re-explore and update an ancient and often lost culture of continuous care and repair for the places we inhabit, to systematically reuse architectural, urban and territorial infrastructures when they eventually reach the end of a lifecycle.

Within a related logic, as the COVID crisis hit Europe in March 2020, Bruno Latour highlighted that "if everything is stopped, everything can be questioned, bent, selected, sorted, interrupted for good" (Latour, 2020). Such an important interruption of both our daily lives and the usual globalised flows has been a key moment to investigate alternative futures and question – on a wider scale – one of the most polluting industries in the world. Even if the costly pause offered by the pandemic to question our societal models did not bear the fruits advocated by Latour – nonetheless – critical questions about the profession are becoming increasingly insistent and widely documented.

The decisive decade

All the while, the environmental crisis appears at the front and centre of most public and non-profit agendas around the world in various shapes and forms. In 2019, the European Union launched the "Green Deal" (European Commission, 2019) amidst its "Europe Roadmap 2050" (European Union, 2050), aiming to bring the continent to carbon neutrality within the next 30 years. In the United States in 2021, the White House launched its "Long Term Strategy" (US Department of State, US EOP 2021), envisioning a future for the country that focuses on carbon emissions, environmental protection and both the energy and climate crisis. In the midst of the current environmental, social and economic crisis, several observers consider the next decade as decisive for the future of our planet[1], emphasising that "10 years are all that remain to avert catastrophe".

At intermediate and local scales, such plans and environmental concerns find direct or indirect echoes in the current investigations many major European metropolises are carrying out into their visions for the future with the likes of "Le Grand Pari(s) de l'Agglomération Parisienne" (Région d'Ile-de-France, 2016) , "Bruxelles 2040" (Dejemeppe et al., 2012), "Visions Prospectives pour le Grand Genève" (Frochaux, 2021) or "Luxembourg in transition" (Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, 2023). This opens up possible comparisons among different cases – metropolitan areas share similar problems – but also highlights the extreme variety of metropolitan spaces requiring tailor-made strategies, fully rooted in geographic, climatic, cultural and economic contexts. Among the common issues of great concern, in relation to the ecological social and economic transition in Europe, is the abundance of post-industrial sites and the absence of wide-scale territorial strategies to address their transformation (Sediri et al, 2021). Resulting from intense and transformative industrial ages, such "vestiges" without a project cover large swathes of land across Europe today (Magnette, 2023). Often extending over large-scale polluted and densely inhabited territories, these spaces present important challenges that have only recently started to be at the centre of strategic planning concerns. In tandem with the extractive rationality that has created them in the first place, these spaces are often left abandoned until their land value has grown enough to offset the cost of their dismantlement, depollution and reconstruction as well as to produce sufficient profit for investors.

Given the current discussions and concerns expressed both by public actors and scholars about such practices (and the urgency to operate major changes in the next decade) concrete examples are needed of what alternatives to the usual resource-abusive architectural and urban developments could look like (their potentials and limits).

Through a collaborative effort[2], the "Rebuilding to Last" project attempts to do this by documenting the capacity of independent cultural centres to address the regenerative future of their buildings and communities within the context of a specific, long-lasting European network of grassroots organisations. Through multiple collaborative investigations into the activity of the Trans Europe Halles (TEH) network and its members, this publication aims to highlight the capacity and limits of inspiring, imagining sustainable transformation practices for what they can teach us about future operations among cultural teams, audiences and communities, cities and beyond. The ways and strategies through which the TEH cultural centres have invested, repurposed and cared for neglected industrial buildings/infrastructures all over Europe since the 1980s constitute an important deposit of local experimentations from which we could learn alternative, non-extractive and community-focused ways to adapt, inhabit and transform our built environment.

1 United Nations High-Level Meeting on Climate and Sustainable Development (2019).

2 The Rebuilding to Last (RTL) project is a Trans Europe Halles initiative, led by TEH in collaboration with a wide range of international partners. The project has been funded by the European Commission.

TEH: Building a Cultural Regeneration Project for Europe

(RE)BUILDING TO LAST

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1 URBAN & TERRITORIAL REGENERATION THROUGH CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

1.1 What is – and isn't – cultural regeneration?

1.2 The New European Bauhaus (NEB) challenge

1.3 Beyond obsolescence: Towards a "cultural regeneration" project

2 TRANS EUROPE HALLES (TEH): A FIRST OVERALL DESCRIPTION

2.1 Describing TEH

2.2 TEH times and visions

2.3 TEH geographies and characters

3 LESSONS FROM TEH: TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF A "WORKING MANUAL"

3.1 Tacit knowledge into play: TEH as precursor?

3.2 Building a "working manual"

Haceria Arteak (Bilbao, Spain)
11 former industrial repurposed buildings by HaceriaArteak cultural centre. Image source : European Network of Cultural Centres

1

URBAN & TERRITORIAL REGENERATION THROUGH CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES

1.1 What is – and isn't – cultural regeneration?

Over the last few decades, during the quest to find new ways of developing western cities in a more sustainable manner, the cultural economy has been identified by many as a key element. 'Cultural' or 'creative' cities have indeed been at the centre of a rising number of urban research reports, publications and policies (Scott, 2010). Richard Florida (Florida, 2002) has famously observed the rise of a 'creative class' in North American cities overtaking previously working-class neighbourhoods. Meanwhile Ruth Glass (Glass, 1964) had already coined the term 'gentrification' to describe the way artists, architects and cultural workers had eventually, albeit not necessarily intentionally, participated in transforming specific neighbourhoods in London, to the detriment of their former working-class residents.

The economic, social and spatial potential of this type of culture-based urban transformations has been actively mobilised by politicians, public administrations and urbanists alike throughout Europe and Northern America. An extensively studied dynamic in the context of major urban centres, especially to understand the specificities of large gentrification processes as in the cases of Paris (Clerval, 2010; 2011; 2022), London (Atkinson, 2000; Reades et al, 2023) or New York (Lees, 2003; Newman, 2006; Hipolito, 2019), to name a few. However, since the early 2000s, culture-based transformation processes seem to have found a particularly fertile environment in the context of struggling post-industrial territories[1]. These are centres that have gone through a significant increase in poverty, unemployment and the departure of their upper and middle-class residents, eventually leading, in the direst cases, to public finance bankruptcies, "shrinking cities" (Pallagst et al. 2009; Wolff et al, 2017) or urban shutdowns[2].

Culture-based transformation has been increasingly mobilised in such contexts as an attempt to redevelop aesthetic charms and strengthen local economies, with varying degrees of success. An often-cited major example is the 1997 redevelopment of Bilbao around Frank Gehry's iconic Guggenheim Museum. When journalist Robert Hugues coined the term "Bilbao effect" in 2001 (Spaid, 2023), he was pointing at the way the struggling post-industrial context of the secondary Spanish harbour-town had considerably benefited from the construction of the museum, from its acclaimed architecture as well as from the important culture and tourism-centric urban development of the surrounding neighbourhoods. Since its post-industrial decline, Bilbao has become an important and attractive economic and cultural centre in Spain and Europe, which can be attributed – at least in part – to such culture-centred transformation[3]. Given the much-publicised appeal of the "Bilbao effect", other post-industrial cities through the western world have tried to follow the same path, structuring their transformations through iconic architecture, cultural infrastructures, and/or major cultural events. Some examples include Santiago Calatrava's Quadracci Pavilion (2001, Milwaukee, USA), Jean Blaise's "Voyage à Nantes" (2011, Nantes, France) (Brahy, 2019), Kengo Kuma's Dundee "V&A Museum" (2018, UK) or Frank Gehry's "Luma Tower" (2021, Arles, France).

While this rising trend in urban transformation processes has been increasingly studied, the process we intend to address through this research concerns a radically different dynamic: a secondary, less visible, community-based type of cultural urban renewal at work in western cities. Such dynamics take place equally in secondary, post-industrial cities, but tend to emerge less within private or institutional initiatives and more within civil society leaderships (i.e. through citizen or resident pressure groups, collectives, non-profits etc.). They also (interestingly) share the particularity of focusing their actions on the re-use and repurposing of existing, often industrial, and abandoned sites/infrastructures. Such initiatives generally benefit from limited economic means but strong visions, extensively supported by local communities, knowledge and volunteer contributions among the ranks of the collectives. While these projects vary in size, purpose and type of sites, they all rely on culture, creation and art as a means to transform and occupy abandoned spaces in a distinctive fashion from the more conventional dynamic described above. Therefore, despite their differences, we consider such initiatives as all contributing to a general, distinctive dynamic that we will call "Cultural Regeneration". This is a process brought to the fore by French architectural collective "Encore Heureux" within the 16th Venice Architecture Biennale (Encore Heureux, 2018). As they present it, formerly abandoned spaces are appropriated by local communities within "an acceptance of the unexpected in order to

1 The context of the economic globalisation and related de-industrialisation of the West has indeed led a vast number of secondary European and North American cities to an important economic crisis and difficulties in reinventing themselves since the early 1980s.

2 See, for example, the case of Empire, Nevada, a US gypsum company town where inhabitants were relocated and the ZIP code was discontinued in 2011, following the closure of the local mine

3 It is to be noted that, since the advent of the so-called "Bilbao effect", various scholars have observed that the renewal of the city cannot solely be attributed to the Guggenheim Museum or even to the sole urban development, but needs to be observed through the lens of a more general development of the area at the time. This also explains the difficulties encountered to replicate the full extent of this "Bilbao effect" in other cities across Europe (Rybczynski, 2008; Lorente, 2023). Well before this re-development, Gomez (1998) already noted how Bilbao's urban policymakers were at the time taking inspiration from the development of Glasgow. In both cases, the cities failed to improve employment numbers.

construct the possibilities of the future" and participate to "embody and expand the very idea of culture". Through continuous efforts and incremental innovations, such communities reinvest in spaces while reinventing themselves as well[4].

The previously mentioned culture-based transformations mainly use cultural and artistic practices as a means to improve local aesthetics at the global, national or international scale. However, "cultural regeneration" initiatives tend to actively produce and use arts and culture to maintain and strengthen local communities with minor concern for economic attractiveness. While this does not exclude capitalistic rentability and cost-and-outcome focused practices and concerns, these initiatives tend to focus on producing free or affordable spaces and services and offer opportunities for communities, artists and cultural practices to thrive, with some degree of detachment to more conventional contexts focused on profitability.
Urban and architectural strategies also differ substantially. While conventional cultural transformation processes use vast demolition and construction operations/resources to implement large-scale cultural events (i.e. festivals, concerts, etc.), "cultural regeneration" initiatives focus more on progressive adaptation, programming and repurposing of existing buildings/sites. This is usually driven by (if only and simply because of the lack of means and the necessary frugality of the approach) a strong attention to embedded local, historical and socio-cultural values.

Another distinctive feature of "cultural regeneration" initiatives can be addressed through the usually more horizontal and bottom-up organisation of their actions. While conventional culture-based urban projects have commonly been structured by one or a few private and/or public organisations as commissioning experts which, in turn, hire contractors, "cultural regeneration" initiatives emerge from more local and independent initiatives and groups of individuals who invest their own time, energy, skills and sometimes money towards the progressive transformation of their environment. Given the profiles of such individuals (artists, cultural workers, local residents, activists etc.), those types of transformation are perceived and led as cultural projects in themselves, embedding community-building and artistic activities through the entire process. In turn, this community-based approach allows for innovation and intense creativity, in terms of spatial and social practices and concepts. This allows the consideration of planning aspects that conventional practices tend to ignore or downplay such as urban spontaneity and hacktivism, continuous prototyping and testing of space configurations, inclusive, 'parasitic' and temporary architectures etc. (Haack, Marteinsson, 2015).

In a more general manner, the practices we identify as contributing to a "cultural regeneration" of the built environment tend to invert the conventional development logics that post-industrial sites have been subjected to. Conventionally, those spaces, when re-developed, have benefited from significant economical means, coming from partnerships between private and public actors of various scales (e.g. local and national government, European funds, multinational companies etc.) (Ozden, 2012; UNIDO, 2018; Václavíková, 2019). These public-private partnerships, in turn, tend to set strict timeframes, limiting the possibility for long-term reflections, on-site tests, the integration of unforeseen contingencies, and wider cultural or conceptual investments concerning the development project's content/aims as their adequacy with local resources, needs and imagery. They have also been subject to criticisms, given the fragility of such partnerships between public and private entities (Eurodad, 2022). In the context of "cultural regeneration" processes, the initiatives we study invert the logic: while benefitting from limited and often time bound economic means, the involved actors compensate for this by a further investment in conceptual/creative work and a long-term investment of an abundant, motivated and mostly volunteer-based workforce on site. Such circumstances create a context of urban transformation that is different from what policymakers and urban planners are accustomed to and which we intend to better under- stand through this publication (and the following publications). In that sense, these initiatives can be compared to what David Harvey identified as "spaces of hope" (Harvey, 2001) in the pursuit of an alternative to the conventional and capitalistic production of the urban environment.

Given such particularities, and the relative lack of large-scale and systematic studies on the subject, "cultural regeneration" initiatives require a more in-depth and extensive understanding. However, one should not mistake this need and interest for unconditional praise of these initiatives. This publication aims to describe a current, specific phenomenon that has distinctive potential and outcomes, but also limits and risks.
Several scholars and researchers have described how post-industrial sites and territories improved by culture-based transformations, even when partly developed by civil society members, could equally become vectors of gentrification (Gonzalez & Guadiana, 2013; Pratt, 2018). Through this lens, for example, Luca Pattaroni (EPFL) argues that such initiatives contribute to an "aesthetical aternativisation of urban space" (Pattaroni, 2020). That is to say that – in certain conditions – such milieux slowly become commodified spaces expected to be "present, accessible, and consumable" in any major urban centre and thus losing part of their "subversive power". Following Tonkiss' analysis (Tonkiss, 2013), we could also point out that such initiatives, which rely less on public spending and more on a voluntary workforce from civil society members, contribute to the construction of a general "austerity urban planning" logic, whereby public investments become increasingly scarce. This leads to public services (their cost and responsibilities) becoming more and more taken over by non-profit organisations or private actors. This phenomenon is significant in the furthering of Western societies' neo-liberalisation and, as such, cannot be unequivocally praised without taking

4 See, for example, experiences such as Marseille's "Belle de Mai", or "Grands Voisins" or Arennes' "Hotel Pasteur" in Paris.

into consideration the more general logic of the unravelling of the welfare state that they emerge from. Our interest in "cultural regeneration" processes and initiatives comes from a place of conviction that these speak of our time and can bring to the fore innovative strategies and practices for the contemporary transformation of the post-industrial built environment. However, if we intend to learn and further develop such practices for the project of "transition", both their potentials and limits – in our context of urgency and crisis – must be addressed.

1.2 The New European Bauhaus (NEB) challenge

Our research focus is further strengthened by the renewed interest of European politics for adaptative and innovative practices of the built environment. In 2021, the European Commission adopted a communication setting out the concept of the "New European Bauhaus"[5] (NEB), which included the aim of propelling initiatives that adapted and transformed the existing built environment (CIRECCE, 2021). This initiative was adopted following the 2019 "Green Deal" declaration, a European Union policy setting Europe on course to become the first carbon-neutral continent. The Green Deal aims to reach a "a fair and prosperous society benefiting from a modern economy, an efficient and competitive use of its resource[s] and a net absence of carbon emission[s] by 2050 in which economic growth will be dissociated from the exploitation of resources"[6] (COM 640 final, 2019). The European Green Deal is a road map establishing a series of policy initiatives to achieve the carbon neutrality goal and respond to the daunting environmental challenges we are facing. The explicit goal to decouple growth from exploitative practices needs to be understood as hugely ambitious for the EU. This indeed signifies a considerable "paradigm shift" in which the economy cannot, under any circumstances, supersede the well-being of natural systems and local communities.

5 The NEB was announced by Von der Leyen in the 2020 State of the Union address. The initiative was subsequently adopted by the European Commission as a communication on 15 September 2021 (CIRECCE, 2021).

6 The current goal has been set to a reduction of at least 55% of all carbon emissions by 2030, compared to 1990 levels, through the adoption of climate, energy, transport and taxation policies. (European Commission, 2023).

Given its considerable ambitions, the European Green Deal was given the New European Bauhaus as a tailored initiative aiming to implement this cultural shift within the EU's territory, within our daily life and spaces by developing its cultural and creative dimensions. As Von der Leyen stated: "The New European Bauhaus combines the big vision of the European Green Deal with tangible change on the ground. Change that improves our daily life and that people can touch and feel – in buildings, in public spaces, but also in fashion or furniture". The New European Bauhaus aims to create a new lifestyle that matches sustainability with good design, that requires less carbon and that is inclusive and affordable for all. In other words, through the furthering of policies and instruments revised or developed within the Green Deal[7], the NEB attempts to translate them into tangible forms. It aims to contribute to the development of new ways of building and living for the decades to come in Europe, in line with its reinterpretation of the infamous Bauhaus movement. As German physicist and climatologist Hans Joachim Schellnhuber stated about this initiative: "we have to develop a new world order. And in the focus of this order will be the built environment because this is where the energy goes, where the material flows go, where the emissions come from, where we are consuming our land. Thus, if we can transform the built environment then we can transform our society into something that will live and flourish for the next millions of years."[8]

While its content and structure remain "in progress", a variety of interconnected tools and programmes are already part of the NEB. Some take the form of networking and experimental initiatives (NEB Lab[9], NEB supporters' network etc.), others include direct rewards and funding (NEB prizes, NEB Rising Stars, open calls etc.), guide-

7 This includes revisions of climate-related policy instruments such as the Emissions Trading System or the Energy Taxation Directive, with a close focus on tax exemptions (aviation, shipping), the "Farm to Fork" strategy aiming to support sustainable efforts in the European agricultural sector, the European Climate Pact, a collaborative platform of European stakeholders which, by adhering to it, set themselves to contribute to concrete and measurable sustainable changes in their organisations, as well as the EU forest strategy supporting forest preservation, restoration and afforestation in Europe.

8 As announced during the 18th Architectural Biennale of Venice collateral event, New European Bauhaus: radical yet possible future space solutions. 25-26 May 2023, Venice.

9 The NEB Lab is described as "a 'think and do tank' [set] to co-create, prototype and test new tools, solutions and policy recommendations. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_4626

Ifö Center (Bromölla, Sweden)
Reuse of a former ceramics factory.
Image source : Ifö Center

BAUHAUS SERIE BAUHAUSBÜCHER by Walter Gropius & Laszlo Moholy-Nagy Eds (1925-1929) Collage of different covers. Image source : design of the authors

lines and toolboxes. Among those, the NEB Compass[10] constitutes the main 'guiding framework' for stakeholders and makers of all kinds. While constituting a basis for an NEB (self) assessment of projects, it establishes values and principles and defines the goals pursued within the cultural and physical transformation of the built environment[11]. Three ambition levels, from what constitutes an "acceptably" NEB project to what is an "ideal" project are being developed. While the first two ambition levels remain somewhat conventional, if still relevant for an actual ecological transition, the third level marks an important change by centring itself on transformative practices and thus fully embodying the Green Deal goal to enforce a deep paradigm shift from exploitative to regenerative practices. This level – which is particularly relevant to this research project – calls for (1) long-term structural dynamics, (2) the integration of the natural ecosystems' logic and (3) the implementation of societal transformation through behaviour and lifestyle changes.1 While such transformative practices are to be seen at both spatial and social levels, the urban, landscape and architectural project is considered capable of contributing to long-term and structural socio-spatial changes[12].
In contrast to the other levels, the architectural project (interestingly) does not call for an improvement or added layer of efficiency to the existing building stock but rather for a structural change. Under these circumstances, the radical, long-lasting and far-reaching experience of "cultural regeneration" practices developed by the Trans Europe Halles network appears particularly relevant – a valuable capital to be exploited. The more than 100 members of the network have been experimenting on a daily basis for the last 40 years with alternatives to the mainstream, replacing the exploitative practices that have – until now – dominated the field of architecture and urban planning.

Local interconnected initiatives have already been identified as key for the development of the NEB. In its 2022 workshop, the "European Committee of the Regions" has established the EU local and regional authorities (municipalities, regional governing bodies etc.) as key stakeholders for sustainable urban, regional and cultural NEB policies due to their direct impact on a vast number of public buildings and spaces as well as their important regulatory and funding role in the renovation of the built capital and the regeneration of spaces. In this context, local and regional elected representatives have been cited as "pivotal when it comes to making the New European Bauhaus more accessible and engaging members of the public in the transformation process in order to advance its implementation" (European Comittee of the Regions, 2022). NEB is also clearly presented as a wide-reaching and geographically diverse project: "As a truly European project, the new Bauhaus must be conceived as an interconnected network of regional or local hubs rather than just a single geographical outpost. It is through these local and regional hubs that further connections to industry, academia, civil society, urban entrepreneurship, and the arts could be built"[13]. The regional relevance of NEB is not necessarily limited to institutional initiatives. Many grassroots initiatives have been called upon to further define what the NEB represents[14].

Within this framework, Trans Europe Halles – as an important network of long-running and pre-existing "cultural regeneration" initiatives – can both be seen as a precursor of the NEB and an ensemble of applied experimentations from which NEB initiatives could learn and grow.

Old and new Bauhaus

A little over a century ago, the Bauhaus movement came to life amidst a society facing deep crisis and uncertainty following the shocks of the First World War and of the two first industrial revolutions. European societies were facing a need for new, innovative perspectives for the future, having opened up the realms of new technical possibilities. New materials, techniques, production processes and resources resulting from the industrial eras, the war and colonial trades laid the foundations for what was going to be a major cultural change across the world.

In this context, the Bauhaus art school (literally meaning "the house of construction") was founded by Walter Gropius in 1919 with the ambition of fully reorganising how arts could be conceived and taught. This reorganisation was first built upon a Manifesto calling for the dismantling of the barriers between arts and crafts, creativity and production[15]. Beyond this philosophical stance, Gropius and the Bauhaus school laid the groundwork for an integration of artistic and craft practices within the emerging systems of industrial mass

10 The Compass establishes three core values and three working principles; all NEB projects shall be "beautiful", "sustainable" and bring people "together", on one side and, on the other, develop a "transdisciplinary approach", a "multi-level engagement" and a "participatory process".

11 The NEB (self)-assessment tool's explicit aim is to "add granularity to this framework and introduce specific lists of measurable criteria for specific types of projects" (NEB 2022, p. 4) and to help stakeholders, through a series of comprehensive, open questions to further projects in the direction of the aesthetic, inclusive and sustainable goals of NEB.

12 This level of assessment is expressed through a variety of evocative questions such as "Can participants question and reimagine their way of life through the project?"; "Is there an understanding of the inner working of a (natural) ecosystem that could restore the landscape or biodiversity?"; or "Is there a vision on societal change by behavioural change or a mention of a paradigm shift?".

13 It is through this scope that one can understand the recent appearance of various local and regional initiatives found under the overarching term of a "New regional Bauhaus". Starting in the summer of 2021, the so-called "NEB of the mountains" has gathered several local and regional actors around the regeneration of the South Tyrol EU region and the city of Bolzano. In the same vein, the Dutch city of Heerlen and the German city of Aachen have developed a similar dynamic in their EU regional collaboration, bringing together local universities and practitioners in defining what a local NEB might entail in terms of opportunities and territorial planning. In a more national context, another example can be cited as the way Lille European Metropolis and the Hauts-de-France region have seized and developed the

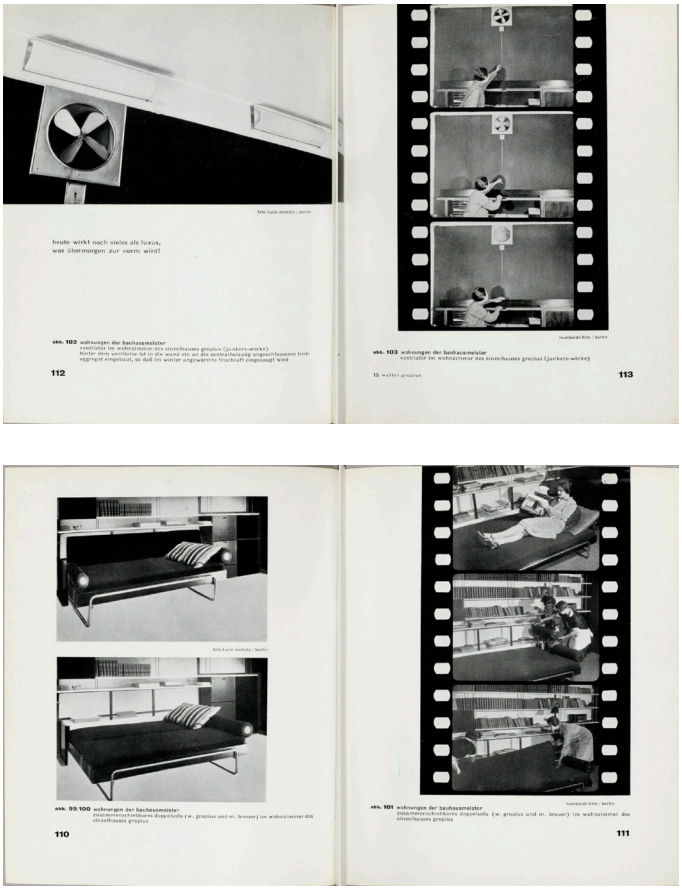
14 See https://frontend.cor.smv.cloud/en/sessions/reference/euregionsweek-2023-stimulating-local-and-regional-new-european-bau-

15 Gropius aimed to bring back together the hand and the mind, the artist and the workshop with no disciplinary distinction; all workers involved in architecture, sculpture and painting were invited to join in service of a 20th century lifestyle.

production hand in hand with a collectivist and social philosophy[16]. While this shift had to integrate the notion of standardisation and norms required by the mass production system, Gropius insisted that arts and crafts needed to evolve beyond those sole concepts to really become modern. While the Bauhaus school only lasted for 14 years, its philosophy, teachings and protagonists quickly became central to one of the most important cultural and spatial transformations of the last centuries. It is fair to say that the modernist movement – as a whole – has been considerably inspired and shaped by such teachings and practices and that the majority of our current living standards have been shaped – in one way or another – by the Bauhaus movement. From the ready-to-wear clothing sector to prefabricated housing units as well as Ikea-style mass-produced furniture, both the positive and negative consequences of this cultural shift are still visible to this day[17].

Today, within a new crisis and turning point, the call for a new Bauhaus must be taken as a call for the capacity to implement a radical societal shift in a small amount of time and with limited means. Within this framework, the long-term, site-specific experiments of the Trans Europe Halles network – as an "alliance of the arts" per se and through the creative, adaptative reuse of the "ruins" of our past – seem a promising germ to conceive the next paradigm shift beyond extractive and functionalist principles and towards "care based" and "alter-functionalist" principles instead.18 In contrast to the Bauhaus functionalism, the alter function- alist approach where "every element fills several functions, every function is filled by several elements" address the ecological transition through constant, continuous, evolving actions drawing on the ordinary rather than the exceptional and intensive implementations. In this context, transition "cannot be exhaustively planned but must preserve spaces of freedom where certain practises and transitory uses can be implemented through time and according to inhabitants' needs" (Mongé, Apaar, 2021) and must focus on principles of reversibility, multifunctionality and co-construction already found in natural ecosystems.

As the New European Bauhaus ultimately calls for a paradigm shift, the existing TEH experimentations could bring us important knowledge about how to deploy new prototypes at the European scale, taking our inspiration from the Bauhaus for its capacity for large-scale cultural change implementation while moving away from some of the movement's more exploitative foundations.



Internationale Architektur. Bauhausbücher 1, München, by Walter Gropius (1925). Collage of different pages. Image source : design of the authors

16 Gropius shared Le Corbusier's observation of a 19th century "machinist revolution", which was followed by a deep intellectual shift.

17 Indeed, while the Bauhaus teachings were rooted in a call for industrial rationalisation and a social conception of mass access to living standards and goods, it also widely participated in a progressive standardisation of lifestyles and living environments, leading to the weakening of local cultures, crafts, habits and the gradual depletion and exhaustion of the environment.

1.3 Beyond obsolescence: Towards a cultural regeneration project

The rapid territorial development of the last century has dangerously eroded and fragmented Europe's landscape, while simultaneously building vast settlements, roads, railways and infrastructures that have extended the continent's inhabitability. In the light of official scenarios and measures on climate change[18], energy consumption[19], quantitative and qualitative protection of the land[20], a complementary, more comprehensive and forward-look- ing understanding of the evolution of urban space might open up innovative and more resilient pathways to deal with urban growth and/or contraction[21] and to face future challenges. In recent years, international research initiatives have proposed innovative reflections and strategies concerning our urban future. Projects such as "Les Nouveaux Cahiers de Doléance" (Latour, 2019), launched by renowned French sociologist and anthropologist Bruno Latour and Medialab or Charlotte Malterre-Barthes' "Moratorium on New Construction" (Malterre-Barthes, 2024), remind us of the importance that unconventional research and design efforts have radically called into question classical representations and reconstructed collective imaginaries in times of deep (socio-ecological) change. Within "carbon-neutral" or "zero artificialisation" fundamental goals, the systematic reuse and "recycling" of our existing built capital appears to be one of the rare concrete and accessible strategies to help achieve such ambitious goals today.

The European "City-Territory" as a renewable resource: A research hypothesis on future "urban Europe"

In this context and within the "Rebuilding to Last" research project concerning the capacity of cultural centres to address the future of their built/non-built/social environments through innovative and inspiring transformation processes, we propose to work on the hypothesis of the **"European City-Territory as a Renewable Resource"[22]** where reuse/recycling/reinvestment reverses the idea that urbanisation is just a process of waste and considers it, instead, as an accumulation, a "stock" and a reservoir of embodied energy[23]: a precious and strategic spatial and natural capital. Within this hypothesis, future challenges (demographics, energy, environment etc.) are taken into account in the context of the European City-Territory as a long-term distributed and decentralised infrastructural, territorial construction. This entails a project that is able to recover and leverage the various forms of inhabitability and their relationship with the infrastructural support, reflecting on new life cycles and innovation, capitalising on the urban and territorial embodied energy, and rethinking Europe's extensive and diffused fixed capital (its "built" stock). The belief is that – within the dense sedimentation of rationalisation that is either at work or abandoned – the "City-Territory" already contains the potential to "regenerate" itself[24].

This hypothesis can be applied to different bodies of scientific research, integrating urban, technological and environmental thinking. Urban metabolism and circular economy (Braungart and McDonough, 2002; Gemeente Rotterdam et al, 2014), life-cycle assessment (Manzini et al, 2008), embodied energy evaluation (Stein et al, 1978), eco-system services and co-evolution theories merge with spatial and social analysis to reconfigure an approach to urban-natural dynamics. While the idea of the "city as a resource" has a long tradition (Jacobs, 1961), it has only been explicitly used since the 1920s when, in the North American context, the idea of "nature preservation" was expanded to include the "urban resource". It was precisely starting from the idea of the "life cycle" that, between the 1920s and 1940s, planners and real estate experts (in the US) expanded the idea of "resource" to the urban space. The idea of preserving the "urban resource", in the same way that forests and rivers are preserved, naturalises the urban phenomenon but represents – at the same time – an essential passage into technological research and urban policies.

In response to the current crises of the urban environment, the European "City-Territory as Renewable Resource" hypothesis considers space as a "capital", a valuable asset, a stock (Lévy and Lussault, 2003; Calafati, 2000). Through the concept of "embodied energy", attention focuses on the urban and the territorial support, where concluding or concluded urban and territorial cycles (typical of urban crises/turning points) are looked upon as open for agents to reconfigure new cycles. What remains on the ground, the leftovers (e.g. materials, artefacts and infrastructures that have supported the formation of past cycles) are not a minor or marginal constituent of the possibility to open up new, virtuous cycles. This hypothesis operates through the territory's embodied energy, aiming to rework the

18 See, for example, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2014 Report (IPCC, 2014) or the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy (European Commission, 2021b).

19 See, for example, the Swiss 2000-Watt Society Scenario (Morosini, 2018) or the négaWatt's CLEVER (Collaborative Low-Energy Vision for the European Region) scenario (négaWatt Association, 2023) or the EU Reference Scenario 2020 (European Commission, 2021c).

20 See, for example, the No Net Land Take by 2050 proposals (Build Europe, 2022) or the EU Soil Strategy for 2030 (European Commission, 2021d).

21 According to the EUROPOP2023 report by EuroStat (2023), the EU's population is still set to grow for the next few years, peaking at 453 million people in 2026, before decreasing to 420 million by 2100 due to the combined effects of declining fertility levels and climate change impacts, with Poland and Italy projected to lose the greatest number of people.

22 This hypothesis has been developed by the author in collaboration with Paola Vigano also within the research project "Towards a new vision for Switzerland 2050" at EPFL/ LABU (2017).

23 With the aim of revising the paradigm according to which urbanisation merely represents a process of waste, the "City-Territory as renewable resource" hypothesis investigates the capacity of a set of design strategies to recycle and upgrade the already available wealth of resources of the "City-Territory's" palimpsest.

24 Regeneration here is intended as a set of ambitious design strategies to improve the performances of what already exists.

existing urban and infrastructural "stock" (artificial and ecological) and to envision new lifecycles for abandoned and underused spaces. Today the evaluation of the embodied energy in the building stock has become part of any attempt to minimise energy consumption; this proposition moves beyond, addressing the question as multifold and trans-scalar. In this mind-set, expanding the purposes of the 2000-Watt Society Scenario[25], the territory itself, and not only the "built stock", could be acknowledged as a huge opportunity to accumulate/save energy.

Besides efficiency, the strength and reversibility of infrastructures (ecological/artificial) will need to be considered via extensive retrofitting/upgrading processes[26]. Through this hypothesis, the project recovers and leverages the various forms of inhabitability and their relationship with the infrastructural support, proposing to valorise and enhance, through a process of adaptation (spatial, social and technological), the transformation of architectural, urban and territorial space. An "increased habitability" of the territory also implies the search for new symbiotic relationships (virtuous co-habitation) between urban and ecosystem functions, and thus a specific interest in possible and multiple correlations/superimpositions between land-use and use of the land, in its physical qualities and in the ecosystem services it provides. This is a process that needs to be enhanced through the development of new positive "images" and "imaginaries" (cultural and social representations) of land (Sippel and Visser, 2021), soils (Blanc, 2021) and places (Kunysz, 2024).

Within and through this working hypothesis, the "Rebuilding to Last" research project, (1) addresses the necessity of conceiving the European cities (and territories) as a "renewable resource" and (2) proposes to do so by valorising and capitalising on the Trans Europe Halles network of cultural centres' long term and layered knowledge (developed over more than 40 years) on the transformation of former industrial built and non-built space.

Towards a "deep cultural regeneration" project

In contrast to other research hypotheses on urban re-cycling (Greenstein and Sungu-Eryilmaz, 2004), the "City-Territory as Renewable Resource" hypothesis extends the concepts of re-cycling and "regeneration" beyond brownfield recovery to all types of space: brown, grey and green-fields. These are all spaces that embody labour and that need to be adapted and improved. Regeneration – defined (in biology) as the faculty of "a living entity (genome, cell, organ, organism, ecosystem) to reconstitute itself after destruction or to reproduce parts of organs/tissues, following loss or renewal" – implies an organism's ability to renew itself autonomously, using its own internal resources (from what is "already there"). In this perspective and within the European city-territory, the regeneration and valorisation of the built and non-built environment as a global strategy offers the conditions for a project that is approached in a different way from the past. It is a vision of territorial habitability and socio-economic development based on existing territorial qualities, which enhances an exceptionally rich territory with a heritage to be recognised and endowed with great flexibility. The aim is to regenerate and establish built and open spaces and landscapes as part of the ecological transition. Regeneration requires us to start from what is already there in order to build our vision for the future, and to make the most of and capitalise on the resources that already exist.

The diffuse, multi-scalar and multi-disciplinary nature of regeneration (which must deal with everything that already exists) also requires a shift in terms of governance. The architectural, urban and territorial projects of the future will have to be increasingly – and structurally – coordinated across the different skills, fields of action and stakeholders. We will need to take into account the complexity involved in setting up a widespread regeneration project, arming ourselves with the necessary skills and cross-disciplinary expertise, some of which are yet to be invented. The adjective 'deep' (after the philosopher Arnae Ness (Naess, 1973), who distinguishes 'classical' ecology – with its anthropocentric roots – from 'deep' ecology, which implies a renewal of the relationship between man and nature) reminds us that the type of process we have in mind when we talk about architectural, urban and territorial 'regeneration' implies a structural (and not superficial) renewal of our way of conceiving, building and inhabiting the territory. Drawing on the strength of the cultural dimension among TEH members' transformation strategies, we will consider its approach as one of "deep cultural regeneration".

25 The 2000-Watt Society is a vision for a liveable future. People in such a society care and stand up for a high quality of life that meets the goals of sustainability. They appreciate the resources the earth provides, use them sensibly and share them equally around the globe. People in a 2000-Watt Society recognise that quality of life is not inextricably tied to a constantly higher material standard of living. See https://www.2000watt.swiss/english.html

26 In this perspective, the City-Territory should work with and not against the reinforcement of ecological systems.

"Incontri del terzo luogo" project: from abandoned parking to garden Manifatture Knos (Lecce, Italy). Inage source : Manifatture Knos

2

TEH: A FIRST OVERALL DESCRIPTION

2.1 Describing TEH

"In the European urban landscape of the end of the 20th century, many sites symbolic of an industrial, merchant and military age lost their 'raison d'être' and fell into disuse, their memory set aside. 'Industrial wastelands, eyesores, silent spaces' are words of absence that designate the brutal passage from one epoch to another, leaving neighbourhoods disfigured and people out of work (...) and yet they open unexpected perspective for use. Among these deserted places, some are being re-used and little by little, are finding new life. The issues at stake with regard to conversion join with those of the artists and cultural activists who wish to influence their culture and their time."
Fazette Bordage (Bordage et al, 2001)

Through these words, former Trans Europe Halles (TEH) coordinator Fazette Bordage describes the philosophy through which the network was born in 1985, inspired by Belgian theatre director Philippe Grombeer. This philosophy is still at the heart of the organisation which, to this day, describes itself as a network "uniting over 160 grassroots arts and culture centres with strong DIY, independent, community driven and alternative values, across more than 40 countries"; "support[ing] grassroots communities in their endeavours to reclaim abandoned spaces and transform them into vibrant hubs for arts and culture"; "regenerate[ing] communities, neighbourhoods and cities" and "promote[ing] social, environmental and spatial justice" (Trans Europe Halles, 2024).
With over 160 members and associates spread across Europe and the world, TEH has grown considerably since its foundation, reaching the status of a well-established European cultural network. Given this size, various members of the network can have extremely different political, economic, geographical and institutional contexts of actions as well as different goals and strategies. These differences will be analysed in a preliminary way in the following pages. However, due to TEH membership policy, all members share common features which have overall remained the same since the foundation of the network. To become a TEH member, organisations must at least[1]:

- Be an independent centre formed through a non-profit legal status originating from a grassroots initiative
- Display a high quality, pluri-disciplinary and autonomous social and cultural programme
- Support and defend a democratic and pluralist society
- Show a strong engagement towards equity, sustainability, diversity, and social justice
- Encourage interaction between local and international art practices
- Operate in a repurposed building

Such features allow for a variety of initiatives to join the network while still maintaining a coherence throughout the socially engaged and community-based cultural actions required by TEH. Given the network's growth in size and recognition, this membership policy does seem to have allowed the network both a consistent longevity and the flexibility needed to face changing circumstances.

TEH's relevance has been recognised on several occasions by the European Union both through the results of the lobbying work of the network and through the (various) projects and development funds it was granted over the years. Moreover, several research proj- ects have been organised about and through the TEH network and the activities of its members. Some projects directly emerged from the members and team of the network, either as self-reflections on the development of the organisation (Bordage, 2002), products of collaborations within their wider sector of activity (Fitzgerald, 2010) or as reports of projects funded by the European Commission, including "Changing Room – Mobility of Non-Artistic Cultural Professionals in Europe" (Laakso et al, 2010), "Engine Room", "Creative Lenses" (Rex, Kaszynska, Kimbell 2019; Kimbell and Rhodes, 2019) or "Factory of Imagination". Those also include a variety of handbooks and reflections on applied practices through the network such as "Managing Independent cultural centre. A reference manual" (Fitzgerald, 2008), "Design handbook for cultural centres" (Lényi, 2014) or "Volunteering in the European grassroots cultural scene" (Voorintholt, Wolfsberger and Sayin, 2020).
Given their longevity, geographical spread and activities, TEH and its members are also more and more frequently featured in academic and market studies, such as Clément's "Manifesto of the Third Landscape" (Clément, 2003), Lucchini's "La mise en culture des friches industrielles" (Lucchini, 2016) or KEA and Deloitte new "Market analysis of the cultural and creative sectors in Europe" (2021). This shows, once again, the relevance and importance of TEH in the field of urban renewal and regeneration, both in the literature and in the

1 Other criteria also involve being founded at least two years prior to membership application, to be based among one of 46 eligible countries andtodisplay a strong motivation to actively engage with the network. Applicants who do not answer to one or several of these criterion may be eligible as associates.

field. While such publications have all brought their fair share of both applied and theoretical knowledge, the "Rebuilding to Last" project, through its research dimension, aims to further this literature by focusing more precisely on a common, and relatively neglected feature: the mandatory **occupation of (mainly industrial) repurposed buildings** and its consequences. Far from a simply infrastructural issue, this required feature for all TEH members is arguably one of the most distinctive elements of the network. This also indicates the experience TEH members have accumulated since the 1980s on the more than ever pressing issue of circular architectural and urban practices.

In this context and through its almost 40 years of existence, the TEH network has developed precious expertise on the culture-based transformation of communities, neighbourhoods, and buildings. Far before the declaration of the New European Bauhaus, TEH was encouraging its members to reclaim abandoned buildings and (re)use them to "regenerate" local socio-cultural ecosystems through creative practices fostered by ecological and social concerns. As such, and as mentioned earlier, TEH can be considered a precursor of the NEB. This precursor status provides even greater motivation for a thorough description of the network and the deployed strategies to see "what can be learned from" four decades of active experimentations throughout Europe and how those might profit from the implementation and support of new initiatives.

To launch our first (tentative) description of the TEH network, we will first explore the network in three introductory parts: first "**Times of TEH**" will be developed through an exploration of the history of the network, its birth and evolution in practices, philosophies, and structure. Second, "**Geographies of TEH**" will be touched upon by documenting the extent of the network's diversity throughout Europe under different aspects. Through those, we will explore the relationships of the centres to European urbanisation, landscape areas, climate zones and natural risks as well as their development in relation to shifting economic and political contexts. Such "geographies" will also allow us to draft an "alternative portrait of Europe" featuring a new constellation of knowledge existing be- yond the political borders of its member states. By illustrating a set of "geographies" through concrete examples, we will also introduce the reader to a sample of the variety of centres making up the network. Finally, TEH will be further characterised through a first quantitative and comparative analysis of selected parameters featured within a survey developed for this research. We will analyse critical elements to understand the variety and extent of "cultural regeneration strategies" developed by TEH members, including their distribution through European countries, the characteristics of their built assets (e.g. period of construction of the buildings they occupy, their typology, their main building materials), the form and ratio of their spaces (e.g. size and distribution of indoor/outdoor occupied areas) as well as first elements addressing the adaptation of their built assets to the energy challenges (renewable energy strategies used, state of the buildings insulation etc.). Through these three parts, we aim to build a first understanding of the TEH network, which will allow a better grasp of the circumstances that pervade the variety of cultural regeneration practices within TEH as they will be presented more precisely in the following publication.

2.2 TEH times and visions

The history of TEH can be explored from at least three points of view: (1) through the **history of the many local initiatives** making up the network, each with its unique story and set of circumstances, which collaborate to strengthen each other and share expertise; (2) through the **evolution of the network** itself as an organisation with a set of principles and leaders which progressively changed through time and integrated more and more members; (3) through the way **those two levels have integrated** and answered to important and rapidly changing political and economic circumstances in Europe. This is especially important in terms of European conflicts, relationships and collaborations, the energy crisis (and the many forms it took since the 1970s) or the ever-growing ecological consciousness in Europe taking form into national and international policies for sustainability. These intertwined stories will help us to understand how and why TEH has grown so much, both in number and relevance, over the last 40 years.

A blossoming vision

While TEH was founded in 1983, it drew from pre-existing initiatives throughout Europe that were already the product of their time. Melkweg, the oldest member of the network was founded in Amsterdam during the petroleum crisis and barely a year after the release of the Club of Rome's "Limits to Growth" (Meadows et al, 1972), one of the first important international reports advocating for sustainable ecological and economical practices to avoid reaching planetary limits and depleting its resources. The other TEH precursors seized their opportunities soon afterwards. As mentioned in the previous section, at the time, many important (institutional) cultural centres were opening throughout Europe with brand new, iconic architectures conceived by leading designers and featuring mainstream cultural programmes[2]. Within this context, the choice of TEH precursors to invest existing, abandoned infrastructures for fostering arts and cultural practices can be seen as both a choice and a statement of their alternative, independent stance on culture.

However, this choice needs to be seen in the economic and industrial context of the 1980s. Indeed, the decade also saw the consequences of the European de-industrialisation and the emergence of neo-liberal politics. In many European countries, this marked the beginning of a decline in public investment in the cultural and artistic sectors. In this context, developing arts and culture in repurposed buildings also represents a pragmatic answer to fewer economical means and a surplus of abandoned industrial infrastructures.

One of these initiatives was, in 1983, in the hands of Belgian cultural actor Philippe Grombeer as he was participating to the creation of an art centre in Brussels' abandoned covered market, the Halles de Schaerbeek. Among his key participations in this endeavour was reaching out to a set of similar existing initiatives in Europe. This set the spark for a fruitful collaboration with five pioneers of "cultural regeneration" practices: Huset (Copenhagen, Denmark); Kultur Fabrik (Koblenz, Germany); Melkweg (Amsterdam, The Netherlands); Ny Scen (Göteborg, Sweden); Pali Kao (Paris, France); Rote Fabrik (Zürich, Switzerland) and Le Confort Moderne (Poitiers, France)[3]. These centres, all connected to the cultural sector, had one main thing in common: to "transform the city based on a past to which they did not turn their back but on which they lean on to ask new questions"[4] . Since their emergence, architectural practices in these spaces took advantage of the history, past and identity of the places transformed in a way that the current NEB initiative has only started to address. The architectural project was not an answer to pre-established programmes seeking profitability of the built spaces but rather repeated attempts – over time – to adapt space to cultural practices, and cultural practices to spaces (within a recurrent movement).

Based on such commonalities, these precursors met in Brussels in 1983, to found the "Trans Europe Halles" network and to establish its philosophy and membership criteria. Fazette Bordage was one of the early members as the founder and representative of "Confort Moderne" (Poitiers) before she became coordinator of the network in 1993.

During an interview realised for this research Bordage recounted her first meeting with TEH: "We were very few and, you know, when I arrived in a Rote Fabrik in summer 86 and met Philippe (Grombeer) from Halles de Schaerbeek, people from Melkweg, Koblenz, UFA... [...] I realized that 'Wow! What I'm doing is not crazy!' Because you know, at that time, we were so isolated"[5]. Indeed, TEH first was born as a place of mutual support for many isolated alternative initiatives throughout Europe. The network soon became recognised by its members as a family of sorts, where one could learn from the experience of others and find resources to develop their own centres and overcome eventual struggles they were faced with. In Bordage's words, "at the beginning, the role of TEH was to give force to each other to keep going with our vision of culture and empowering people with their own creativity but at the same time helping in practical issues concerning eventual relocations, the state of the teams, the

2 Piano and Rogers' Pompidou Center (Paris) opened merely 10 years prior, Stirling and Wilford's Neue Staatsgalerie (Stuttgart) was designed in 1985 while Raue, Rollenhagen, Grossmann and Lindemann's Gasteig (Munich) opened the same year, for example while Gehry's Guggenheim (Bilbao) opened in 1997. Herzog & De Meuron's Tate Modern (London), possibly one of the most iconic and important institutional cultural reuse of an industrial building, only opened its doors in the Bankside Power Station in 2000, on a commission originally dated from 1994.

3 Pali Kao, Huset, Ny Scen have since closed their doors.

4 Original translation from "d'aborder la transformation de la ville à partir d'un passé auquel on ne tourne pas le dos mais sur lequel on s'adosse pour poser de nouvelles questions" by Gilles Clément. Interview conducted to Gilles Clément by the authors in Paris (2024)

5 Interview with Fazette Bordage, 24 January 2024

handling of security, etc.[...]"[6]

This supportive environment was particularly important given the limited-to-non-existent public support and recognition brought to such alternative cultural initiatives at the time. As Fazette Bordage states (Encore Heureux, 2018): "In 1983, when we were claiming that we had invested places of 'industrial, port or commercial heritage', everybody was laughing at us among the territorial communities and the ministries. Technical, utilitarian building devoid of renowned architects could not belong to what was considered 'heritage'. The notion of industrial heritage grew with us."[7]

The cultural activities of the TEH centres were often misunderstood by local authorities: "We were supporting each other because we had no other support. For example, in my city, Poitiers, my evenings were very often ending at the police station because they couldn't understand what was going on. Many young people gathering, things they would see nowhere else, etc.[8]"

This lack of understanding and support was equally found at higher political levels, despite the extent of the network. The nascent European Union was indeed first and foremost developing through economic agreements and industrial policies, leaving no room for recognition of cultural initiatives like the TEH network. As such, TEH remained, for a time, in the role of a dissenting network of grassroots organisations struggling, together, to find public legit- imacy and fundings.

Waves of expansion and contrasting perspectives

Three important circumstances contributed to change these circumstances: the extension of the European Union to the East; the development of European cultural programmes; and the rise of ecological consciousness throughout the continent.

First, after the Cold War came to an end and the strict separation between Eastern and Western Europe disappeared in 1991, an important number of centres located in Eastern Europe were funded and/or joined the network. This contributed to a first increase in size and spread of the TEH as well as leading to encompassing new contexts within the network, i.e. the post-Soviet economic, socio-cultural and architectural circumstances.

This highlighted the strongly European mindset through which TEH was funded. As Fazette Bordage says: "We had a dream about Europe. It is something I shared a lot with Philippe [Grombeer] because we thought 'Europe is a young institution, so it will correct all that is wrong in our old local institutions.' We had the dream that within the European level, we'd invent ideal policies to bring people together, which could then trickle down to each local situation. And – to be honest – at that time, it was so difficult with our local policies and national policies, [...] we really felt that it would save us. We had the dream that this could be a new space to really live together."[9]

This European hope was ingrained in many aspects of the network, including in the decision to regularly move the organisation's office, originally located in Brussels, to various countries. In a way, the development of TEH to the East also foreshadowed the improvement of EU relationships to the Eastern European countries, a decade before they joined the EU.

In parallel, TEH also benefitted from the development of European cultural programmes as the network promptly applied to public calls as the European Commission initiated them. Through the "Kaleido- scope" programme, the network secured a first grant in 1993, allowing the creation of the network's office and the hiring of their first coordinator, Fazette Bordage. Through the 1993-1999 Kaleidoscope programme, Bordage eventually launched the "Phoenix project" in Copenhagen from 1994 to 1996. This major gathering brought together the TEH network with a variety of scholars, politicians, artists, cultural and social workers with the explicit goal to "position art and culture at the heart of exchange and dialogue between different components of European society"[10] through the organisation of workshops, conferences, and artistic events. The inclusion of a variety of international actors, including representatives from South America, Asia and Africa increased TEH's growth, both in terms of international recognition and numbers, as more members joined the network. As Fazette Bordage remembers: "That's how I was invited to Taiwan, Sao Paulo, Montreal ... At the beginning I was very shy, because to me, it was not about setting a model. But it was fantastic [...] everybody understood what we were doing. [...] I could feel it was really the beginning of something that would develop and grow".[11]

Following this momentum, TEH was soon asked by the European Commission to participate in its pioneer European Voluntary Service (EVS) project. The EVS project started a new strategy of international exchanges between the centres of the network of both youth and employees that has since then been at the heart of TEH actions.

The growing consciousness of the ecological crisis in Europe has also slowly contributed towards influencing and modifying the public in regard to "re-use"[12]. While favouring the repurposing of existing, aging buildings has been seen as a marginal, somehow amusing approach for most of the 20th century, it is now more and more identified as an unavoidable and urgent strategy. The Brundtland Report (WCED 1987) first stated the urgency of building sustainable soci-

6 Ibid, 14'00".

7 Original translation from "En 1983, dire qu'on avait investi des lieux du 'patrimoine industriel, portuaire ou marchand' faisait rire tout le monde dans les collectivités territoriales et les ministères. Des bâtiments techniques utilitaires, sans architecte renommé, ne pouvaient appartenir au 'patrimoine'. La notion de patrimoine industriel a grandi avec nous."

8 Interview with Fazette Bordage, 24 January 2024

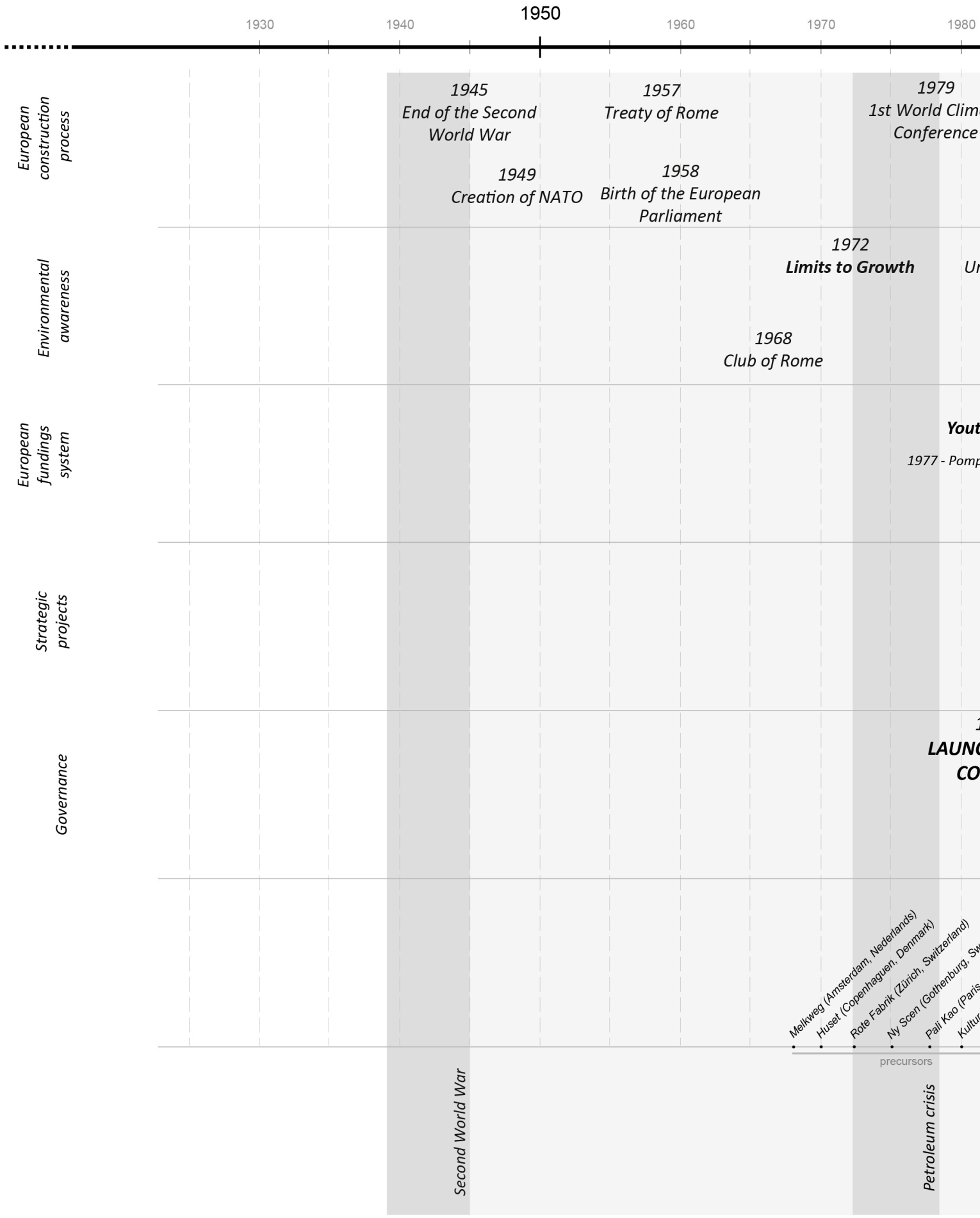
9 Ibid.

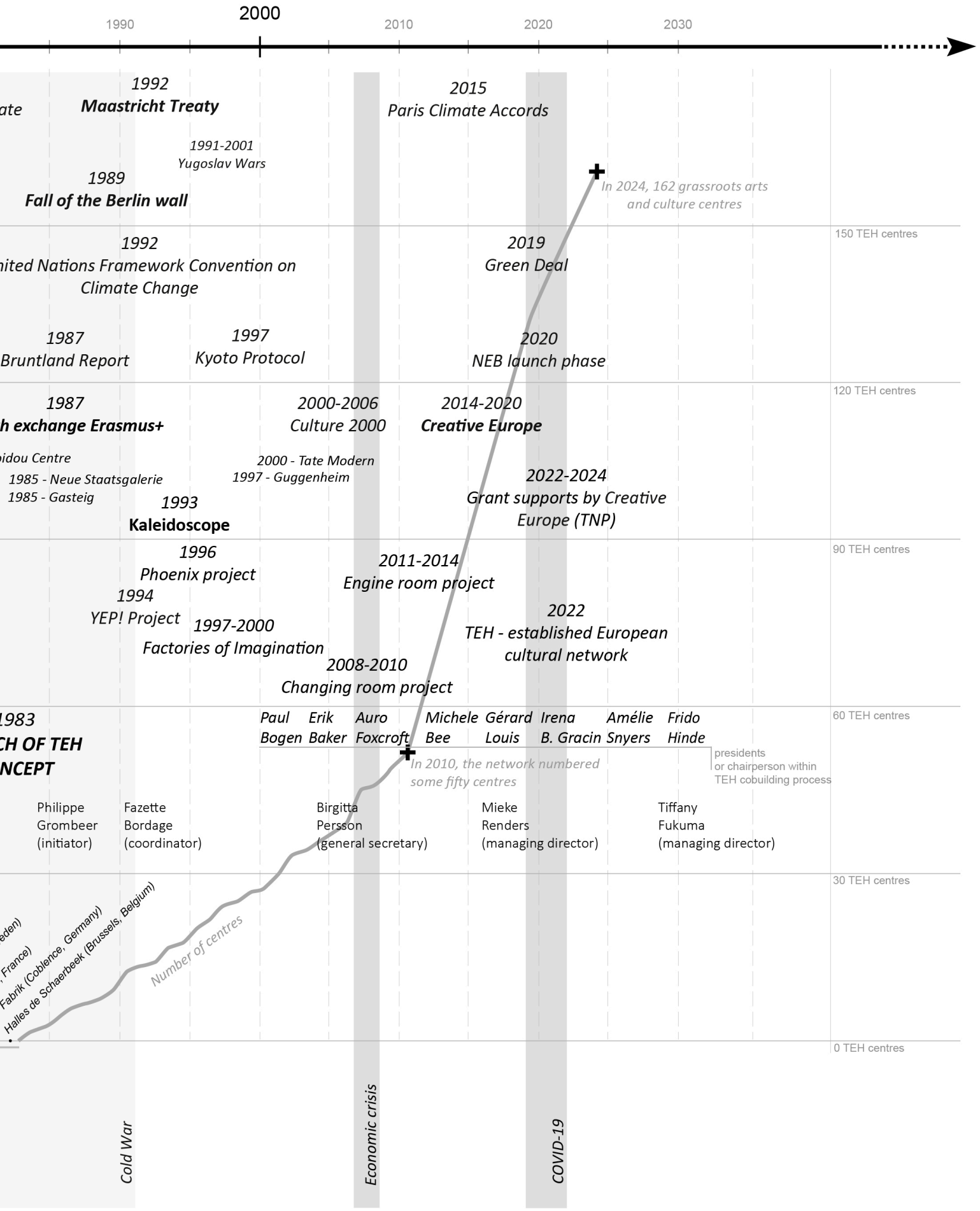
10 https://www.teh.net/inititatives/phoenix-project/

11 Interview with Fazette Bordage, 24 January 2024 .

12 This term, while common in contemporary discussions on sustainable practices, is a fairly new take on the subject. The original TEH members contacted highlight that terms such as "recycling" or "biodegradability" were more commonly used at the start of the network.

TEH / TIMES AND VISIONS




1990
2000
2010
2020
2030
1992
Maastricht Treaty
2015
Paris Climate Accords
1991-2001
Yugoslav Wars
1989
Fall of the Berlin wall
In 2024, 162 grassroots arts and culture centres
150 TEH centres
1992
nited Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
2019
Green Deal
1987
Bruntland Report
1997
Kyoto Protocol
2020
NEB launch phase
120 TEH centres
1987
h exchange Erasmus+
2000-2006
Culture 2000
2014-2020
Creative Europe
idou Centre
1985 - Neue Staatsgalerie
1985 - Gasteig
2000 - Tate Modern
1997 - Guggenheim
2022-2024
Grant supports by Creative Europe (TNP)
1993
Kaleidoscope
90 TEH centres
1996
Phoenix project
2011-2014
Engine room project
1994
YEP! Project
1997-2000
Factories of Imagination
2022
TEH - established European cultural network
2008-2010
Changing room project
1983
CH OF TEH
NCEPT
Paul Bogen
Erik Baker
Auro Foxcroft
Michele Bee
Gérard Louis
Irena B. Gracin
Amélie Snyers
Frido Hinde
60 TEH centres
In 2010, the network numbered some fifty centres
presidents or chairperson within TEH cobuilding process
Philippe Grombeer (initiator)
Fazette Bordage (coordinator)
Birgitta Persson (general secretary)
Mieke Renders (managing director)
Tiffany Fukuma (managing director)
30 TEH centres
eden)
, France)
Fabrik (Coblence, Germany)
Halles de Schaerbeek (Brussels, Belgium)
Number of centres
0 TEH centres
Cold War
Economic crisis
COVID-19

eties on a global level in 1987. Five years later, the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN, 1992) then 1997 Kyoto Protocol (UNFCCC, 1997) set clear objectives for the reduction of CO2 emissions. TEH members' attitudes towards and expertise in the built environment and of socially and ecologically conscious practices are becoming more and more obviously relevant today. TEH's focus on the re-use of infrastructures and care for the land/soil was indeed at the centre of the network since its beginning. Most centres developed their own relationship to their local natural context long before this increase in consciousness: "In Rote Fabrik, there was the lake, in Confort Moderne, we had a garden (...) – you know – everything was already there. But in our mind we were not thinking about sustainability, because the word didn't exist in a way."

The 2015 Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015) and the 2019 Green Deal only strengthened this relevance as Europe insisted more and more forcefully on the importance of circularity and re-use but also on the integration of sustainability in social and cultural practices in general. In parallel, the developing interests for the potential of the cultural economy on local and international levels and the ever-rising real estate values in and around European city centres may equally have contributed towards giving TEH members, both owners of often vast urban piece of lands and promoters of cultural and artistic practices, a legitimacy and relevance in the public eye that was previously denied.

At the turn of the 21st century, however, the development of the network was perceived with contrasting perspectives within TEH. Under the auspices of Fazette Bordage, the network was expanding its influence inside and outside Europe.[13] Other members, including original founder Philippe Grombeer, were concerned by the departure of some centres that opposed this global-scale strategy. They in turn advocated to keep TEH as a familial and supportive network with a limited number of members. Amidst this conflict of visions, the departure of Fazette Bordage led the way for a downsizing of the network's ambitions. Most European projects within TEH were either halted or reduced, drastically limiting the funding of the organisation. The TEH office, then located in Paris and composed of a small team, was closed in 2000, with a sole remaining employee carrying out the administrative tasks from Finland, leading to further loss of funding from the French authorities. This shrinkage eventually forced TEH back to its original volunteer-based form, despite having grown considerably in size and importance in the previous two decades.

This situation was hardly sustainable. Birgitta Persson joined the TEH board at the time of Bordage's departure, in 2000, and recalls: "So, there was this crisis. [...] And we were wondering 'What should we do now?' I particularly remember a board meeting with the founder, Philippe Grombeer and some of the board members – and they were saying that maybe we needed to close the network. Now, they had been there for a much longer time than I did, and I was barely 25 or 30 years old. And I was like 'no, but there [is] so much potential here, we need to give it a chance!"[14] A vision group was formed, solely composed of eight younger members of the network, tasked with reestablishing a strategy for the future of TEH within a year. This vision group went on to invest the remaining funds towards the organisation of recurrent, relevant and affordable meetings for the member organisations with the hope of rekindling a strong collaborative dynamic.

The early 2000s were thus deeply marked by limited economic means and a variety of strategies developed to counter this situation. First, the TEH office was reopened within one of the member centres, Kaapelitehdas (Finland) to benefit from their resources. This eventually allowed for the hiring of a new coordinator. The job was subsequently offered to Persson in 2004, a function she would come to occupy for the next 12 years. The office would then move on to Lund (Sweden) to benefit from regional and local operational grants. Secondly, Persson, building on Bordage's development of the EU voluntary service project, led new grant applications within the youth sector. As the former coordinator recounts, cultural pro- grammes were ill-adapted to the TEH members' activities; the network was often considered too alternative to be seen as eligible for the more conventionally-oriented cultural grants. TEH eventually obtained its first operational grant in 2006 through the Youth Exchange Project (YEP), allowing for further stabilisation of the network. Thirdly, Persson initiated new relationships with the private sector. A first sponsorship contract was brokered with the Finnish corporation Nokia, which provided the network with new funding as well as communication equipment for all member organisations.
Such strategies resulted in a considerable expansion of the network; between 2005 and 2008, the number of TEH organisation members doubled, (Sibelius Academy, 2010). The network soon required significant restructuring to coordinate more than 50 centres.

Development, professionalisation and restructuring

As the creative industry was slowly being recognised as a major strategic sector for Western economies, TEH resources and expertise has become more and more obvious to many organisations. While the grassroots nature of the network carried lots of debates about the risks and relevance to contribute to this dynamic, Persson and many others saw it as a considerable opportunity for the network to go forward. Building on this new-found interest for cultural and artistic activities, a then stabilised organization and an important expansion of its members, TEH secured consecutive European cooperation grants that contributed to the development of the network through

13 In the early 2000s, through a collaboration with Art Factories, TEH was organising international events in key cities on every continent and welcoming new members at an exponential rate, reaching a general assembly of over 50 centres.

14 Interview with Birgitta Persson, 11'00", 25/01/2024 - 77'56".

two important projects: Changing Room (2008-2010)[15] and Engine Room (2011-2014).[16] As Persson recalls: "this was the first time we had both a network grant for carrying out the day-to-day work, the meetings, running your office, having money to support the coordinator, ... and on top of that, we developed Changing Room."[17]

This meant new possibilities to build capacity, develop exchanges and collaborations among the member organisations. It also brought TEH to carry greater weight in EU cultural policies as they were increasingly acknowledged as a reliable and geographically diverse partner for elected representatives and administrations alike. From the small, familial network of support for a few centres in the 1980s, TEH had grown in the 2000s into an important cultural player on the European scene with the capacity and drive to lead policy advocacy at various levels.
With this in mind, soon before Persson's departure, TEH developed more and more professional tools. A three-year strategic plan for the network was established in 2012 as more employees and more centres had joined TEH, taking into account such important changes. Among other elements, this plan advocated for an organic rather than strategic growth, with little recruitment strategy and a focus on maintaining and strengthening members' relationships and exchanges.

This strategy was applied and developed within the next eight years under the leadership of Persson then, after her departure in 2017, by newly hired managing director Mieke Renders. Due to their efforts, the network was growing exponentially, expanding from a little over 50 members in 2010 to more than 100 members just 10 years later. The most significant jump in numbers in the history of TEH occurred between 2016 and 2020. This situation soon began to put to the test the structure of the network itself. Tiffany Fukuma, current managing director, replaced Renders in 2021 and remembers: "That network used to be family-sized for a very long time, [...] five years before I arrived, it started growing exponentially. But the problem is that the administrative structure, the structure of the network itself had not changed at all. [...] [The statutes] were so old – they had been written in another language, then translated, they were not relevant at all anymore. [...] And in terms of HR and finance management, it was really DIY the way it was run. There was no prospective budgeting, no forecast budget. [...] no centralisation, etc. [...] People in the team were also burning out. They didn't know if their work contracts were going to be renewed since there was no budgetary visibility."

In this context, the global COVID-19 crisis triggered an important period of difficulties at the heart of the network, with a team of five employees struggling to push the organisation further. Starting from this observation, Fukuma set a goal of further consolidation and professionalisation with an explicit aim to restructure the organisational and administrative dimensions of TEH as a way to be able to carry the important and growing number of projects and members. New statutes, progressive membership fees depending on members' size, a bigger[18] and more specialised team of employees, a better knowledge and mastery of the archives of the, as well as new strategies to bring together members, all contributed to an intense period of professionalisation.

While this undertaking was born out of necessity and a period of crisis, it also carried a more ideological shift within the network. Fukuma explains that this move was also done alongside a reframing of the network as a common platform of services at the disposal of both members and network outsiders (policymakers, researchers etc.). As she puts it: "I think it's really time to embrace this political mindset that we have lost, in a way. I think we lost as many cultural institutions due to this kind of neoliberal fashion geared toward creative and smart cities, creative economies, etc. That kind of dragged us a little bit away from the big fights of this time. The collapse of democracy, the rise of fascism and discrimination, the refugee crisis, the climate crisis, of course, and all these things that our members are confronted [with every day]. So it is about preparing our members to be more resilient in the face of all these crises economically, but also to understand better what's coming for them in terms of policies that are going to be not so good for them, and about understanding how to leverage investment for their buildings. In a way, it's about operating on the scale of the network but for the benefit of our members."[19]

In a context of multiple crises and difficulties finding funding for artistic and cultural sectors, one of TEH's main goals is now to become more resilient in order to better support their members through this hardship. This also passes through the development of services directed outside of the network itself: "We can [also] be a platform for policymakers. We can be a platform for, you know, people who are just interested in our sector but come from other sectors, etc."[20] Indeed, such services allow for more funding, as well as developing TEH recognition and capacity to influence the policymaking process. This also includes the private sector and the potentially more independent income such collaboration can bring, as Persson had already initiated during her time and as Fukuma intends to develop

15 Changing Room (2008-2010) was a cultural mobility project led by TEH and co-organised with Melkweg (Amsterdam), Sibelius Academy. (Helsinki) in collaboration with 25 TEH partner members. Its aim was "to test, study and evaluate a staff exchange programmer within TEH. As well as the staff exchange, Changing Room included a professional development programme, [a] study by the Sibelius Academy and an on-line mobility toolkit. [...] its results were intended to produce information that could assist in informing the formulation of future mobility policies, projects and schemes." (Sibelius Academy, 2010, p.10) The project was specifically targetting the non-artistic cultural professionals (NAPCs), i.e. "cultural leaders, managers, producers, programmers, curators, technicians, administrators, and those working in marketing, finance and catering" (Ibid).

16 Engine Room (2011-2014) was a TEH project dedicated to independent cultural workers and their creative processes. The project was initiated by TEH and coordinated by Melkweg (Amsterdam, The Netherlands) in association with 10 co-organising TEH members and proposed various programmes and a resource file compiling the outputs of the project, educational points and know-how from the programmes.

17 Interview with Birgitta Persson, 25 January 2024.

18 Between 2021 and 2024, the TEH team grew from five employees to 15.

19 Interview with Tiffany Fukuma, 22 January 2024.

20 Ibid.

with the opening of a TEH business branch in 2024.

This professionalisation also comes with new, more extensive and precise strategic plans. Among other things, three main priorities have been established for the future of TEH.
Firstly, more than ever before, the network has set a goal to develop the "green" transition of the built environment. This brings to the fore the important work of reuse and adaptation of buildings TEH members have been leading since the 1980s, the work that is yet to be done in those particular contexts and the specific funding needed. As Fukuma puts it:
"We work in buildings and we are able to transform these buildings. This is our job. But like if you want these buildings to be more green, efficient, sustainable and lasting, and if you want to protect the local populations who work and interact with these spaces, if you want to maintain these activities and its local economy, you need to take care more and more at the infrastructure and increasingly invest in that."[21]Through this priority, Fukuma points out the specificity of TEH among the rise of newer and younger networks: "I think we are the only network that is not purely a heritage network that is really considering the question of infrastructure. Through this priority, TEH sets an agenda to both support their members in the transition of their built assets as well as taking on a role of advocate on the European and local levels to obtain more public funding invested towards infrastructure adaptations in the cultural sector, actively bridging sustainability and cultural issues.

A second priority lays in the diversification of the network and the expansion of TEH beyond a limited network of peers, with its benefits but its many caveats: "(...) this notion of family, of a network of peers is great because there [are] a lot of connections and we should definitely keep this spirit. But the problem of a network of peers is that it doesn't integrate novelty. It doesn't integrate diversity".[22] Concerned by the homogeneity of the network in terms of age, gender and colour, and under the impetus of its new coordination and a handful of members, TEH has undertaken a so-called "cultural transformation movement that is aiming at looking at all the hurdles to diversity and to try to change ourselves from inside and open up".[23]

Finally, a third priority for TEH has been established to answer the current collapse of democracies through Europe which affects more and more centres and their activities: "the fact that we have several members in Ukraine, and that we have a Mediterranean hub, that a lot of our centres – even outside of the zones of conflicts – have had to adapt to a typology of work that is very different from cultural work; The humanitarian work, the social work, ... is central. In the beginning, it was something that they did to address a temporary situation. But this has become the new normal. This is the reality of the life of cultural workers right now, they have to be social and humanitarian workers. And those crises are not ending, they keep growing."[24]
Following those critical changes within the network, this priority paved the way for what Fukuma identifies as a repoliticisation of TEH that had been previously downplayed by focusing on more mainstream strategies of contributions to the rise of the creative economy. As Fukuma states: "It's more about taking political responsibility as a network of cultural workers to put culture at the heart at of what could be an answer to the different crises. We're opening spaces of dialogue and organising in different ways, becoming media platforms, connecting communities, etc. Something that in a way had been a little bit lost in the past."[25]

A resilient and caring network

Such developments and restructuring, along with the continuous, tenacious efforts of its members, have led TEH to find more legitimacy and funding on local and international scales. The network is now the beneficiary of several important grants including the European Union Horizon, Creative Europe and Erasmus+ Programmes.[26] Those contribute to support the members of the network through a team of 15 employees, four geographical hubs (Eastern, Mediterranean, Balkan, Nordic Baltic) and three thematic hubs (Arts Education, Cultural Transformation Movement, Sustainable Building).

Given the long and varied history of TEH, one can understand the complexity of the journey to reach this point and develop enough resilience and persistence to continue this project over 40 years. This history also shows how much of a natural partner TEH is to further define what the New European Bauhaus movement means in terms of cultural, artistic, planning and architectural practices. As Fazette Bordage stated (Encore Heureux, 2018): "Those wastelands, this vacancy, this disrepair which nobody wanted to see, this debacle of which nobody knew what to do, leads to dream. [...] those spaces fell into escheat, those obsolete objects as well as those neglected know-how and distraught territories gain under our impulse a new life. [...] the reconversion of industrial fallows supported by an artistical and political approach transform the notion of value itself."[27]

This redefinition of value is clearly at work within TEH's actions. One could argue that it actively develops at its heart practices of care as they have been more and more defined and highlighted in recent fem

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Other, more local funds, include the Swedish Arts Council, the City of Lund (Sweden) and the Region of Skåne.
27 Original translation from "Ces terrains vagues, cette vacance, ce délabrement que l'on ne voulait pas voir, cette débâcle dont on ne savait pas quoi faire, font penser à rêver." [...] "espaces tombés en déshérence, objets obsolètes, mais aussi savoir-faire délaissés et territoires désemparés gagnent sous notre impulsion une nouvelle vie." "La reconversion des friches industrielles soutenues par une démarche artistique et politique transforme la notion même de valeur".

inist literature (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Brugère, 2019 ; Laugier, 2020). In that sense, TEH is a network of care from many angles. Caring is first at the centre and the origin of the network in the way it ensures mutual support for its members. The reuse, maintenance and progressive adaptation of previously abandoned industrial ruins and their natural assets, at the heart of TEH, can equally be framed as practices of care for our built environment, in close alignment with Charlotte Malterre-Barthes' arguments (Malterre-Barthes, 2023). Finally, in the light of the feminist literature regarding care, one should not overlook the key leading roles women have played within the network since its beginning. While TEH positions of power and representation have more often than not been occupied by men since 1983, a vast majority of women have been at work to develop, strengthen and adapt the network on a daily basis with a clear agenda of care for the members, for the or- ganisation itself and for the environments we live in. As Fazette Bordage puts it:

"We destroyed the trees, we polluted our waters, we polluted our own beauty and our own power [...] it's so full of inspiration what the role of culture and especially the role these centres already have to enlarge imaginations, enforce changes and give force to our sensibility. [...] If you cut your intelligence from your sensitivity, from what counts for you, the result is what we see today: an economy without imagination. [...] So stop speaking of this kind of rationality which doesn't work. We know now that it doesn't work. No problems but now we have to change. We have to change and we have ideas. We have experience with these centres. Of course it's small, it's small pieces of [our] planet, but if it works on those pieces, that means it can work [for] the whole planet."[28]

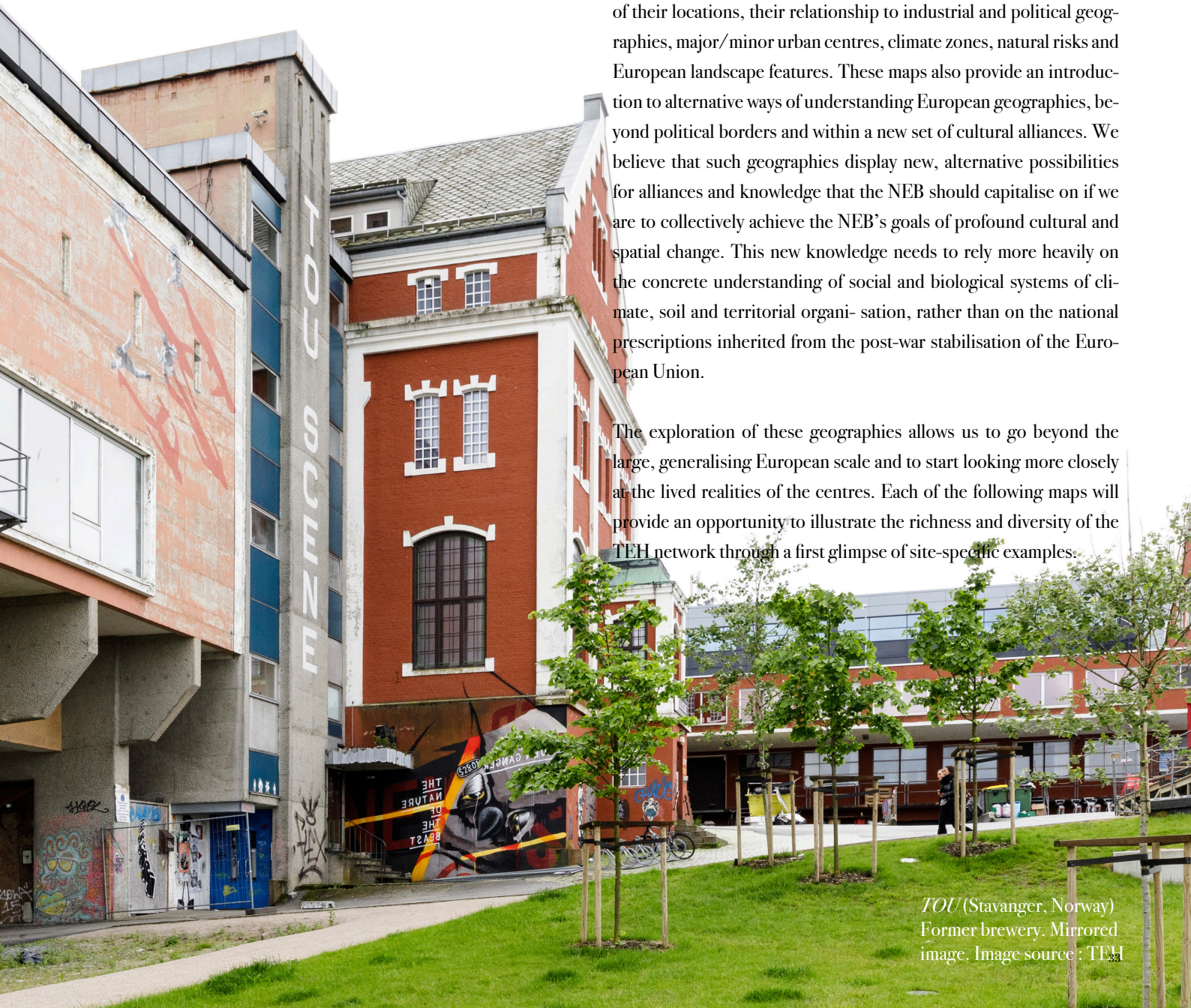
28 Interview with Fazette Bordage, 24 January 2024.

2.3 TEH geographies and characters

Through its four decades of existence, TEH has developed a constellation of "spaces of experimentation" through and beyond Europe. These spaces belong to contexts of intense territorial transformation. As seen in the previous pages of this publication, most of the centres have invested post-industrial spaces and infrastructures as industries, factories, warehouses, railyards etc. that were gradually abandoned, following Europe's de-industrialisation. Each of them has made important efforts to capitalise on/valorise the traces of its "built" past to foster and shape local cultural practices within uncertain (economic, political, ecological) conditions.
The diversity of these conditions needs to be addressed to provide a good understanding of the network and to further explain how TEH can be considered both: a strongly "European" project and a precursor of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) project.

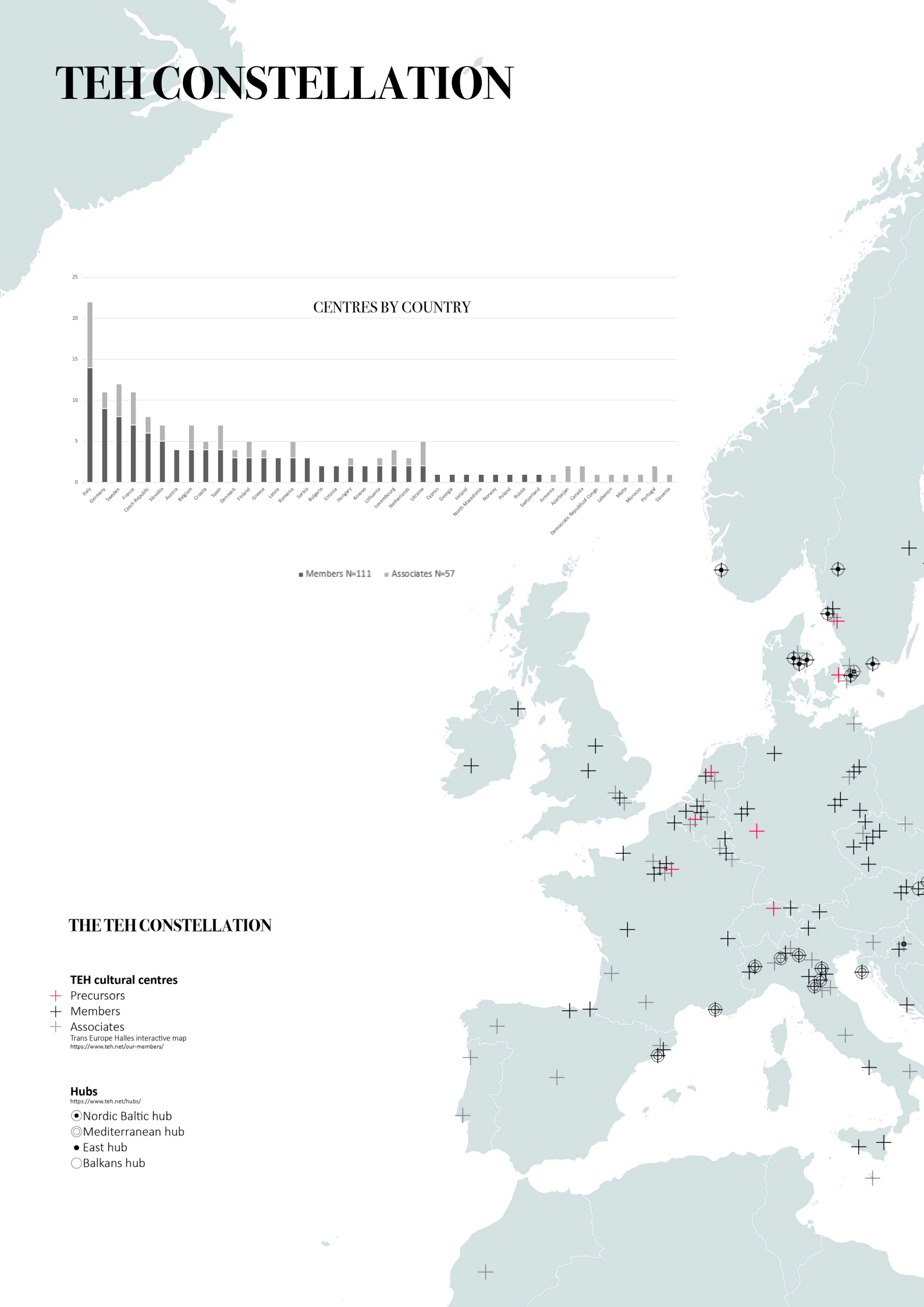
Through the following maps, we will provide a first overview of the network and related cultural centres, through a closer understanding of their locations, their relationship to industrial and political geographies, major/minor urban centres, climate zones, natural risks and European landscape features. These maps also provide an introduction to alternative ways of understanding European geographies, beyond political borders and within a new set of cultural alliances. We believe that such geographies display new, alternative possibilities for alliances and knowledge that the NEB should capitalise on if we are to collectively achieve the NEB's goals of profound cultural and spatial change. This new knowledge needs to rely more heavily on the concrete understanding of social and biological systems of climate, soil and territorial organi- sation, rather than on the national prescriptions inherited from the post-war stabilisation of the European Union.

The exploration of these geographies allows us to go beyond the large, generalising European scale and to start looking more closely at the lived realities of the centres. Each of the following maps will provide an opportunity to illustrate the richness and diversity of the TEH network through a first glimpse of site-specific examples.



TOU (Stavanger, Norway) Former brewery. Mirrored image. Image source : TEH

TEH CONSTELLATION



The TEH network was first structured by its seven founding members, establishing two important clusters: one centred in Belgium and reaching Switzerland, and another centred in Southern Sweden. From these clusters, TEH numbers grew and spread through Europe, first in central and Mediterranean Europe then – following the 1992 Maastricht Treaty – towards Eastern Europe. This growth ultimately led to a progressive restructuring of the centres, which resulted in the creation of four hubs organised in relation to their region of reference.

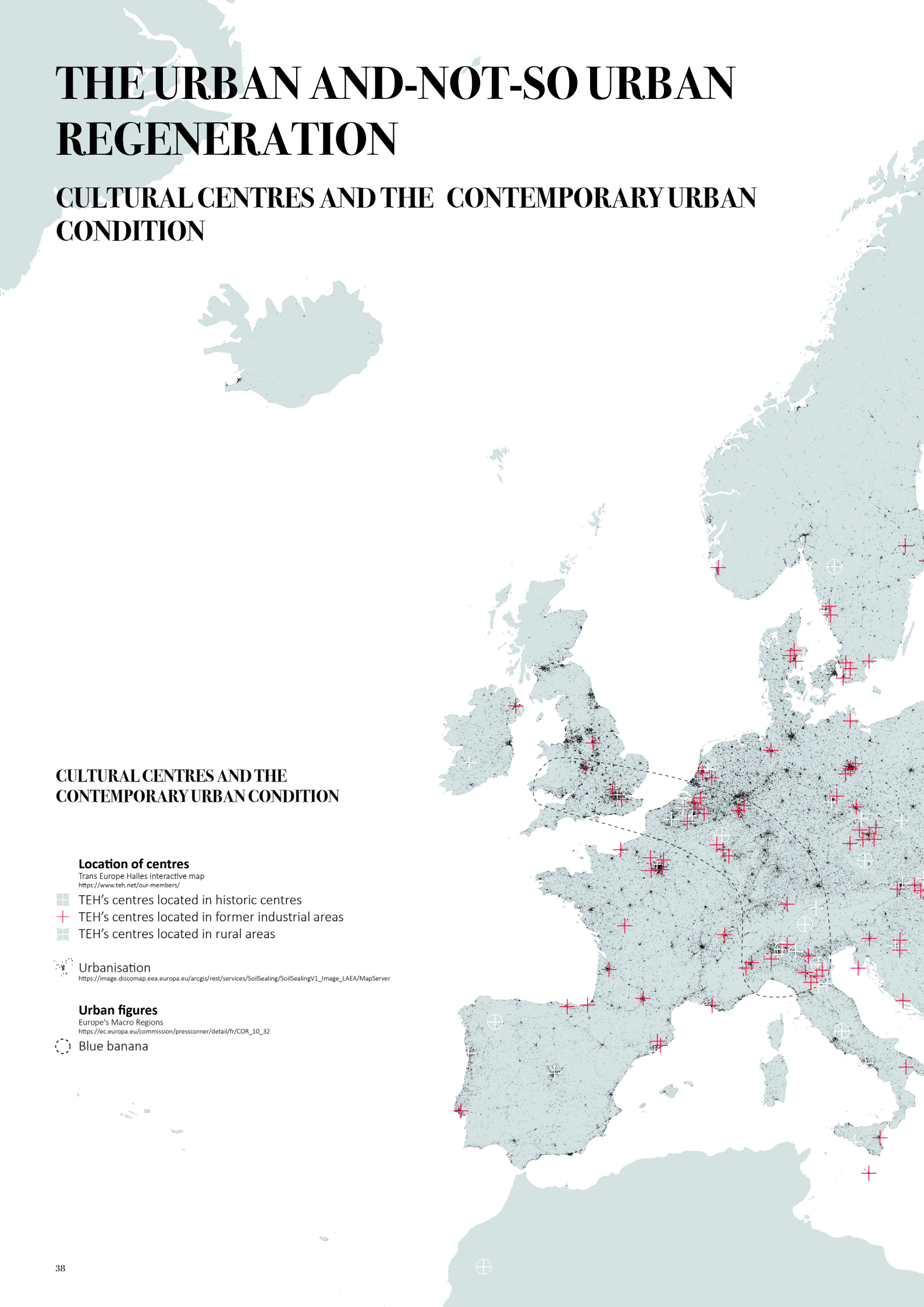
While denser in central and western regions, the TEH network does show relatively wide coverage throughout Europe, showcasing considerable variations between its members. A key aspect of this differentiation lies in the status of TEH members and associates. While the members must be located within one of the EU member states, associates can be located anywhere in the world as well as straying away from one or several of the member's required features. This explains a certain number of associate centres in non-EU countries (Kosovo, Russia, Israel...) including countries even further afield (Morocco, Democratic Republic of Congo, Canada etc.).

Melkweg (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)
the first centre - funded in 1970
Image source : Penta Springs Limited

Imbarchino (Turin, Italy)
the newest centre - funded in 2019
Image source : Imbarchino

THE URBAN AND-NOT-SO URBAN REGENERATION

CULTURAL CENTRES AND THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN CONDITION



CULTURAL CENTRES AND THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN CONDITION

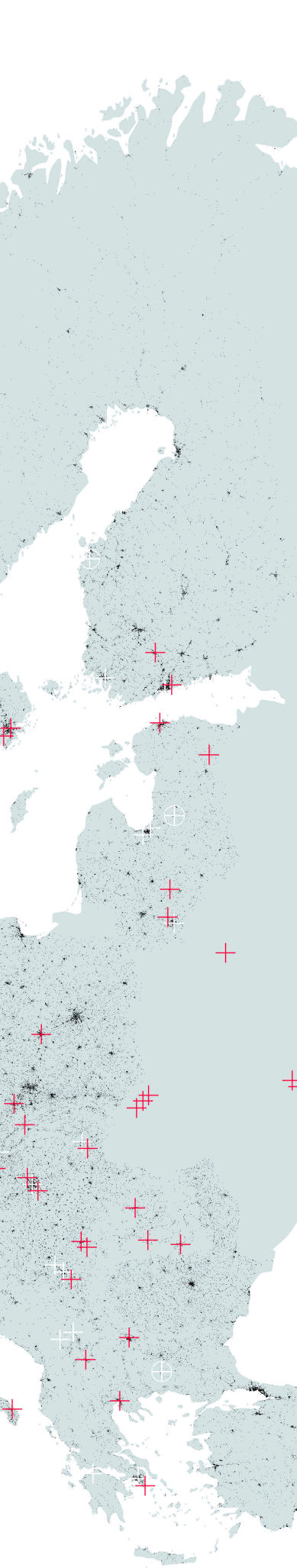
Location of centres
Trans Europe Halles interactive map
https://www.teh.net/our-members/

- TEH's centres located in historic centres
- TEH's centres located in former industrial areas
- TEH's centres located in rural areas

Urbanisation
https://image.discomap.eea.europa.eu/arcgis/rest/services/SoilSealing/SoilSealingV1_Image_LAEA/MapServer

Urban figures
Europe's Macro Regions
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/fr/COR_10_32

Blue banana



When superimposed over the different forms of European urbanisation systems, another layer of diversity can be understood within the TEH network. First, the clusters previously mentioned can be directly linked to the four (interconnected) clusters of cities cited by Clark, Moonen and Nunley (Clark et al, 2018). These are clusters of urban centres sharing particular flows of people, labour, capital and ideas. In particular, the authors identified four types of cities characterising such clusters: the Western European large and capital cities, benefitting from a status of centrality (Amsterdam, Brussels, Frankfurt, Paris, London), the Nordic cities with their own specific set of organisations and collaborations (Oslo, Gothenburg, Stockholm, Malmö, Copenhagen), the Mediterranean cities, characterised by investments in tourism and related infrastructures and services (Barcelona, Lisbon, Lyon, Madrid, Marseille, Milan) and the Eastern and Central European cities, marked by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent adaptation to capitalist globalised markets (Berlin, Bratislava, Budapest, Prague, Vienna, Warsaw).The authors also identified a specific set of de-industrialising cities, which have gone through a process of reinvention following economic crisis (for example, Charleroi, Sheffield, Lille, Bilbao). The centres located in these different clusters directly echo such economic contexts (and their respective challenges) by their specific and situated choices in terms of cultural and architectural transformation practices.

Secondly, European economic regions of interest also explain some major differences between TEH members. Hence, centres located in the so-called "blue banana", the EU region benefitting from the densest and wealthiest population (Brunet, RECLUS, 1989), are characterised by a stronger economic local context than some of their counterparts, such as, for example, those in rural France or Eastern Europe,[29] and the related local markets/private interests. A similar observation can be made for centres located along the so-called "golden banana" (European Commission, 1991) as the densest region of the southern EU region, strongly related to an economy of tourism. As economic/density dimensions of their local territory vary, the circumstances under which the centres operate necessarily fluctuate, structurally affecting the specificity of their action(s) due to differences in, for example, the type and size of public within reach, their expectations or the local attractiveness and level of activity, and thus capacities to easily invite and welcome major cultural actors...

Finally, on a more detailed scale, variations can also be observed between centres located in city centres (especially in major cities), centres located at the urban periphery and centres located in more remote, often rural or semi-rural areas. Indeed, most of the centres are located within peri-urban areas of important urban centres. In most cases, this condition translates the post-industrial character of TEH buildings. Indeed, through the 20th century, a great number of industrial areas in Europe have been developed at a (relative) distance from historical city centres, a space rapidly filled after the 1960s by rampant urbanisation. The de-industrialisation of Europe has left numerous infrastructures in disarray at the heart of such urbanised territories. Some of these infrastructures have been now taken over by TEH members.

However, a considerable number of the surveyed centres are well rooted within historical centres. Some of those situations relate to the investment of an older, and thus more central, industrial infrastructure. They may also be linked to the difficulties many European cities encountered following the 1960s urban exodus (Merlin, 2009); as many middle- and upper- class populations left for the peri-urban and rural regions, urban spaces experienced less economic pressure for redevelopment, leaving many abandoned infrastructures (i.e. hospitals, military barracks, prisons... but also smaller buildings such as older commercial or residential constructions) with no prospects for decades. In turn, those tend to present a more varied typology of former land-use than the post-industrial typology present in the peri-urban areas.

This is also, more often than not, the case of the few TEH centres located in rural areas. Those are made up of farms, for example, or proto-industrial buildings such as windmills.

29 However, this does not necessarily mean that these centres benefit from the aforementioned economic context. The intense economic circumstances of Paris, Brussels or London, for example, may also signify a more competitive access to public funding or higher real estate values, often to the detriment of those centres.

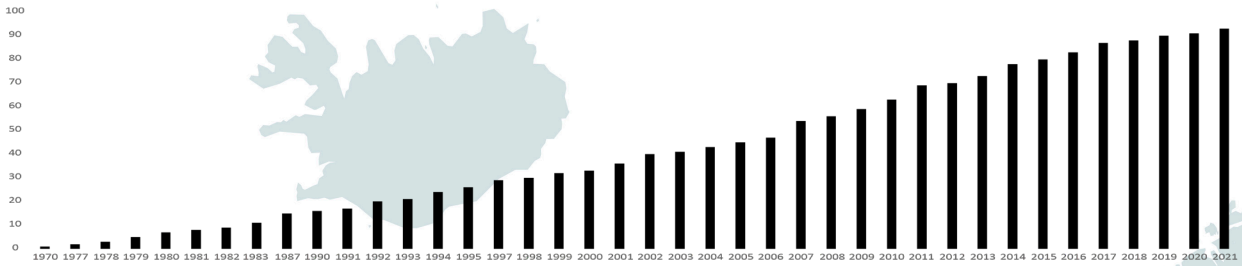
54 Holywell, London City
Village Underground (London, United Kingdom).
Image source : ©Thibault Marghem

Ostrobothnia Region
Malakta (Malax, Finland)
Image source : Malakata

KEY (POST) INDUSTRIAL CONTEXTS

CULTURAL CENTRES AND INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION

Growth of TEH's network
Accumulation of the built stock



TEH constellation

Centres
Trans Europe Halles' interactive map
https://www.teh.net/our-members/

Capitals

Industrial landscapes

Coal basin (underground deposits)
https://bassinminier-patrimoinemondial.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/27.jpg

Navigable rivers
European catchments and Rivers network system (Ecrins)
https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/datahub/datahubitem-view/a9844d0c-6dfb-4c0c-a693-7d991cc82e6e

Canals
http://worldcanals.org/vev/uk/canaux.htm

Ports
Europe's 35 largest ports by freight transport
https://www.isl.org/en/homepage

Dams
Dams with reservoirs on rivers in Europe
https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/figures/dams-with-reservoirs-on-rivers

Main railway system
Trans-European transport network corridors (2021)
https://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/tentec/tentec-portal/site/maps_upload/SchematicA0_EUcorridor_map.pdf

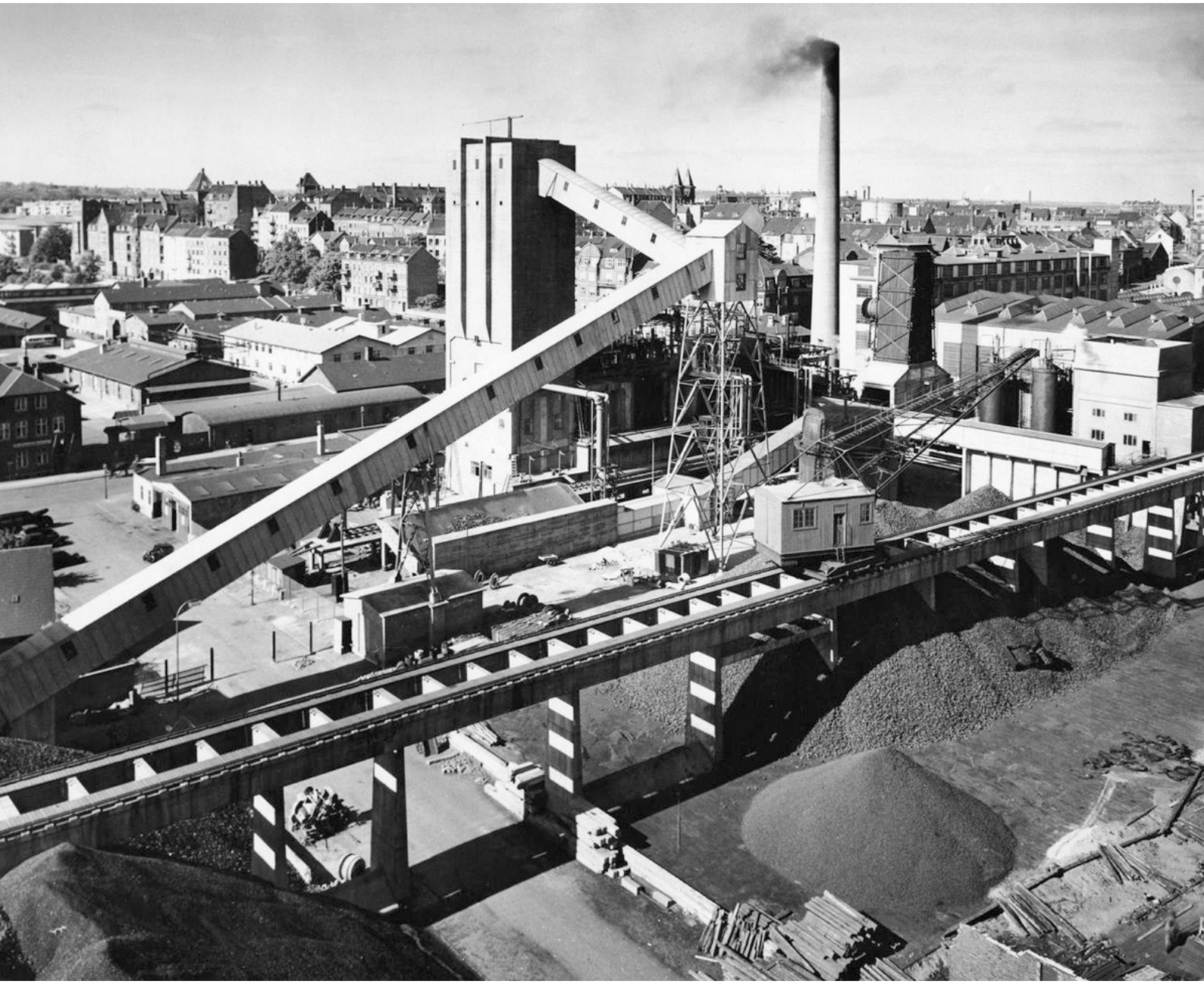
Given the focus of TEH members on the re-use of "abandoned" buildings, and the general context of the European de-industrialisation, the relationship of the centres to the variety of industrial sectors is key to help understand their diversity and potential. Through the TEH network, one can distinguish at least three, sometimes overlapping, industrial contexts which – in turn – influence the local architectural and cultural practices of "regeneration".

First, in relation to the 19th and 20th, century intense coal and steel exploitation throughout a part of Europe, a group of centres take place in infrastructures inherited from that period, displaying typologies and contexts that are particular to extractive activities (mining sites) and/or the transformation of the extracted materials into consumable goods (blast furnaces, rolling mills, factories, storage buildings etc.). While this context can be found along and within the European "industrial crescent" (Magnette, 2023), due to the physical presence of what was for a long time the necessary "industrial fuel" (shown in red on the map), this is particularly true also within the so-called "industrial triangle", AKA Schuman's "vital triangle" (Schuman, 1950). Indeed, at the turn of the 19th century, the intense industrial development had spread from Great Britain to include a particular zone extending to Northern France and Western Germany. This also explains the large number of centres within this triangle, which often presents strong ties to the region's industrial history through their former uses as, for example, infrastructures, production or storage units servicing these industrial activities.

Secondly, these industries were, at the time, heavily reliant on a dense network of railways and rail infrastructures (industrial and civil stations, marshalling yards, ...). A significant number of TEH centres have invested in these types of sites, following their gradual decommissioning. These are very specific typologies which, in turn, shape particular practices and landscapes of activities. Naval transport and industries have also been an important sector of the European economy, which has partly fallen into disarray. Several TEH members have repurposed these contexts where the proximity of water, streams, riversides, seashores and harbour infrastructures (quays, wharfs, locks etc.) create particular circum- stances. In such cases (more than others) centres have often grown and occupied more and more space as such infrastructures (especially railyards or harbours) have progressively decommissioned and ceased their activities. This also results in the neighbouring of the centres' cultural activities with industrial or mobility related activities (freight train transit, un/loading of shipments ...).

Finally, other centres display little connection to the heavy industries of coal, steel and their transportation, but have direct relationships to smaller, sometimes older industries. Textile, paper or dairy factories, breweries, mills, agricultural activities all make for specific contexts and infrastructures influencing the centres' circumstances. The industrial past and typology of such buildings certainly affect the ways TEH members can and do "regenerate" their centres to open new lifecycles and suit sustainability goals. These centres are often very large and characterised by triple, quadruple (and more) height spaces, built with extremely functional structures/materials and with efficiency of production in mind. These kinds of centres face specific challenges, especially in terms of heat and energy conservation/consumption.

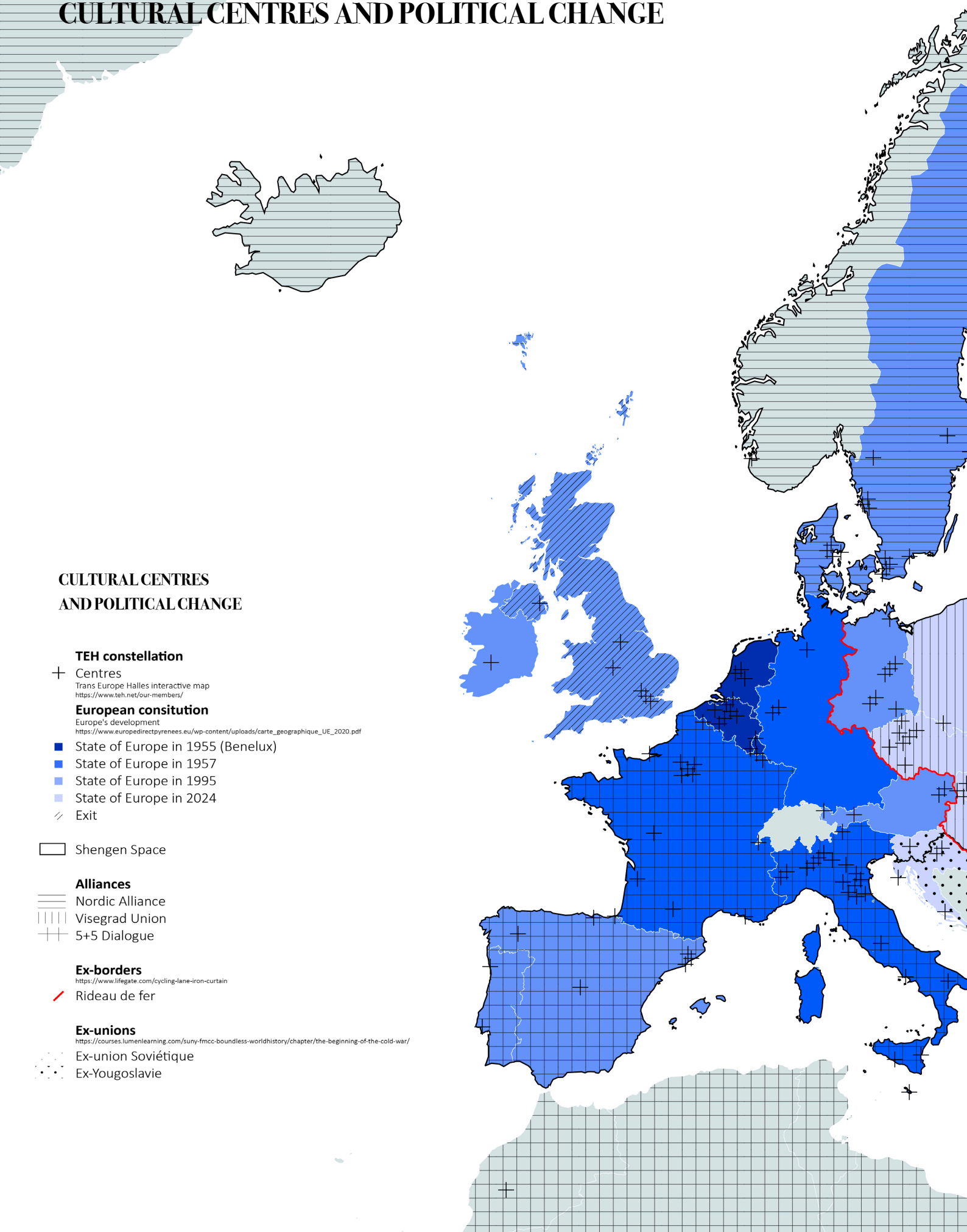
Röda Sten Konsthall (Gothenburg, Sweden)
Reuse of a former boiler house, Port of Gothenburg
Image source : rodastenkonsthall.se

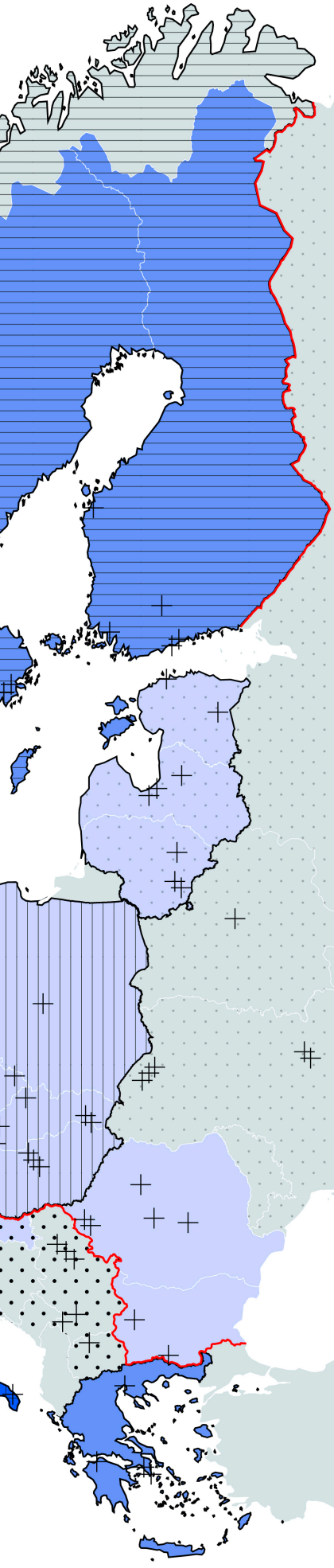


Kulbroen (Aarhus, Denmark)
Reuse of a coal bridge, Port of Aarhus
Image source : kulbroen.com

DEFINING POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

CULTURAL CENTRES AND POLITICAL CHANGE





Geopolitical circumstances also play a defining role among TEH members' transformation strategies and choices. TEH members are influenced by their regional circumstances and the existing international networks and partnerships (or major political events) within their national context.

A first divide can be seen in the relationships those centres have towards two important international spaces: the Schengen Area and the European Union. While most centres are situated within these two overlapping zones, others belong to one, the other, or none of them. This presents a distinctive set of circumstances in terms of partnership possibilities, access to funding and legal settings for their actions. As they are outside of the EU zone, Swiss and Norwegian members experience different conditions, while still maintaining the benefits of free movement granted by the Schengen Area. In the same vein, the recent withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU places its various cultural centres under new, different political contexts/restraints. The evolution of the European Union's borders, in that sense, have considerably influenced the development of the TEH network and the contexts its members work in (and thus also the way their transformation strategies/priorities have evolved). As the iron curtain fell and new Eastern European countries joined the EU, a considerable number of centres were created and/or joined the network, bringing with them the socio-political and economical specificity (and knowledge) of the post-Soviet context. Other members within this context are, however, still outside both the Schengen Area and the EU. This includes the cases of the Romanian and Bulgarian members[30] as well as the many members located in countries resulting from the breakup of Yugoslavia (Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina).

On a deeper level of analysis, one can also consider differences between centres depending on specific international partnerships that concern their national context. Hence, Western centres may have privileged relationships and shared references (and knowledge) within the Benelux countries (Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) while Southern members might have a stronger Mediterranean and North African influence when in the context of the Euromed 9 Group and the Euromed 9, 5+5 dialogue. Similar observations can be gathered concerning centres located within the Visegràd Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) or the Nordic Council (made up of Nordic countries including Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden).

These variations are important from at least two points of view. On the one hand, they show the capacity of the TEH network to maintain and develop a common culture across a great number of different political and cultural contexts. The members all share similar principles and ways of acting concerning socio-spatial and ecological transformation of the existing built environment despite those differences. On the other hand, those variations do entail certain local particularities due to specific cultural and political circumstances. As such, every centre has developed its own specific knowledge and "cultural regeneration" strategy (adapted to their specific conditions), which brings with it a wealth of learning.

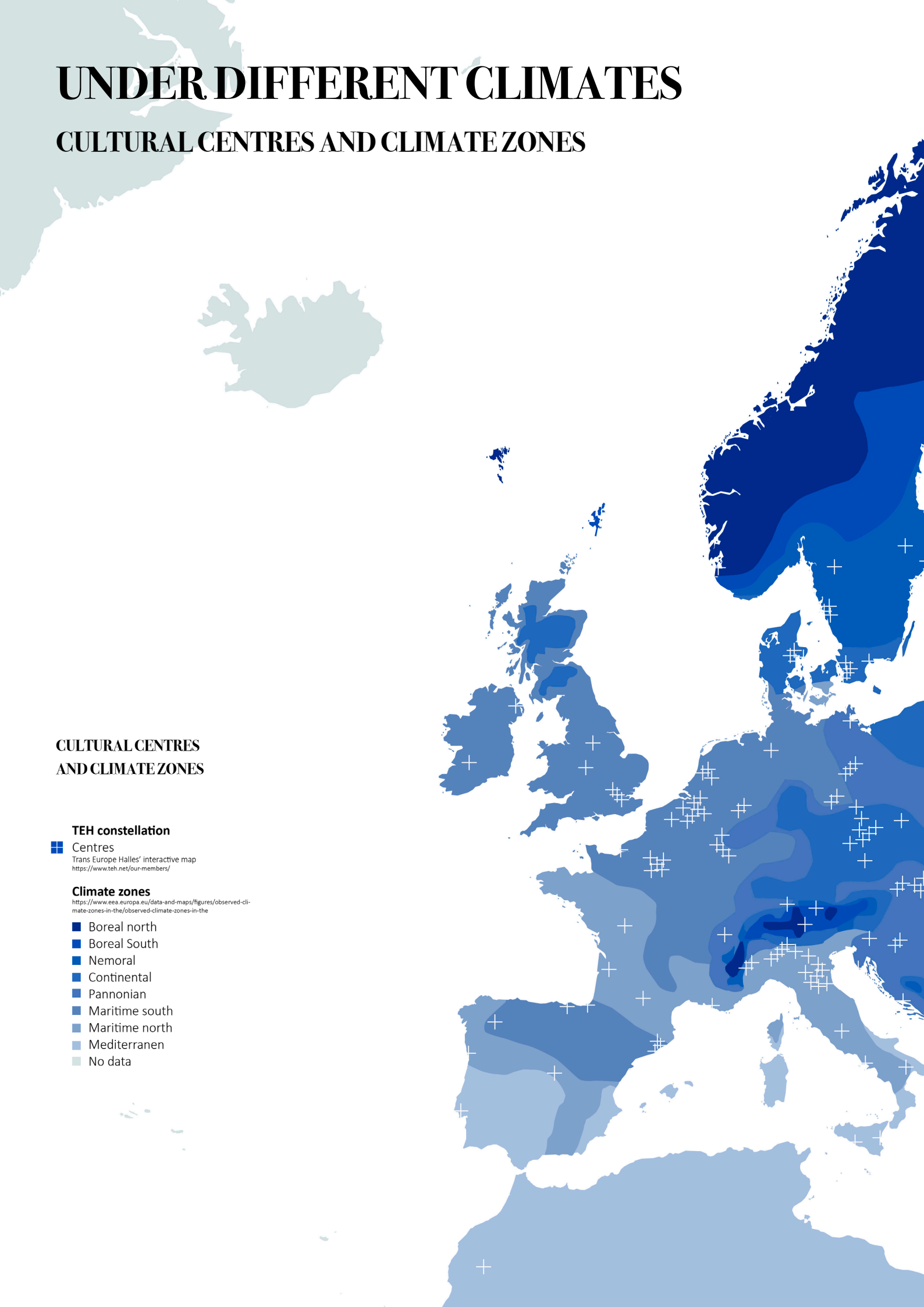
30 The integration of Romania and Bulgaria into the Schengen Area is planned for March 2024.

We initiated a healing process and threw the old ghosts of the Nazi propaganda out." (*Peter Lényi*, 2014) *Ufafabrik* (Berlin, Germany). Image source : Ufafabrik

Izoylatsia (Kiev, Ukraine)
Centre under Russian siege since February 2022 Image source : mashter.space

UNDER DIFFERENT CLIMATES

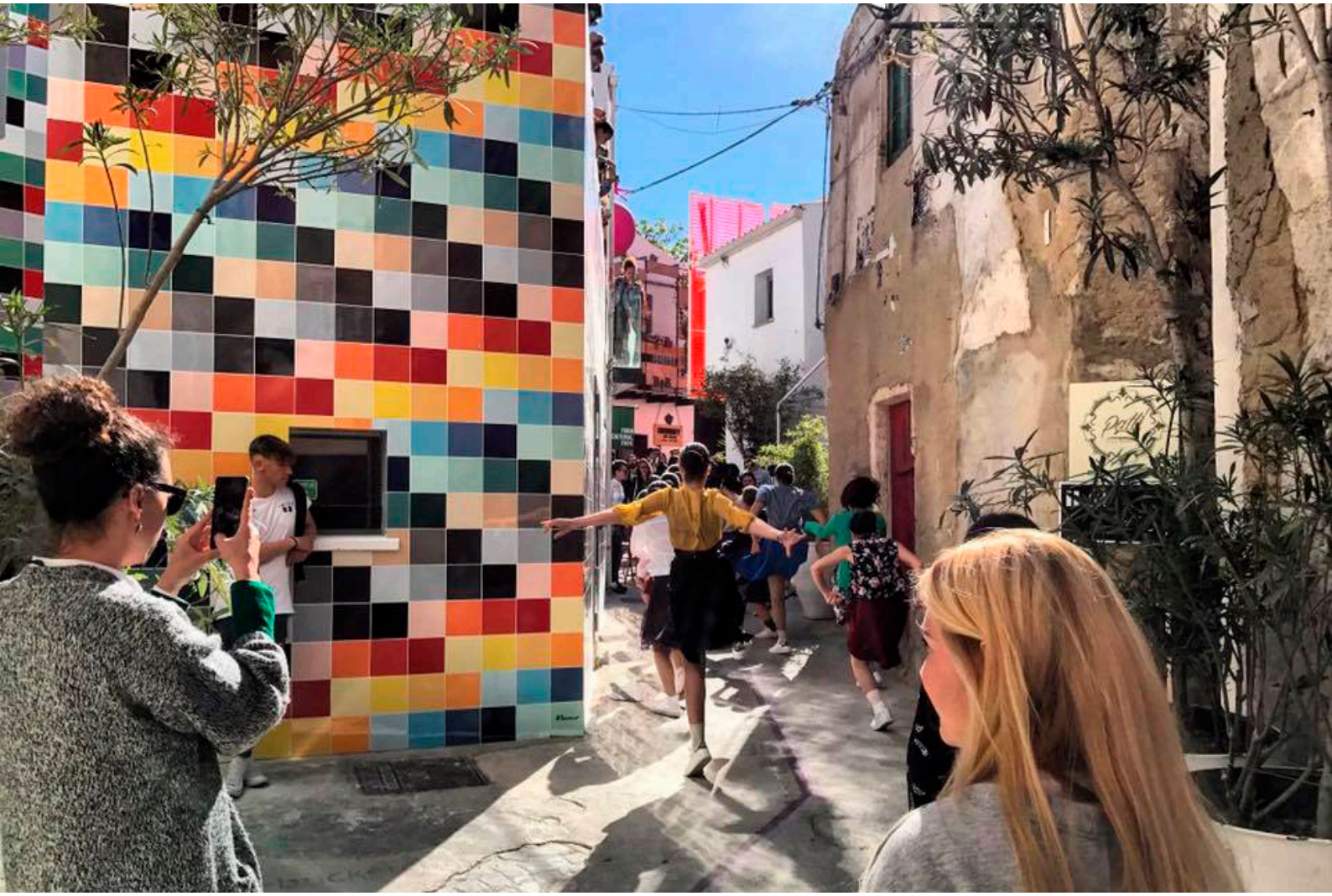
CULTURAL CENTRES AND CLIMATE ZONES



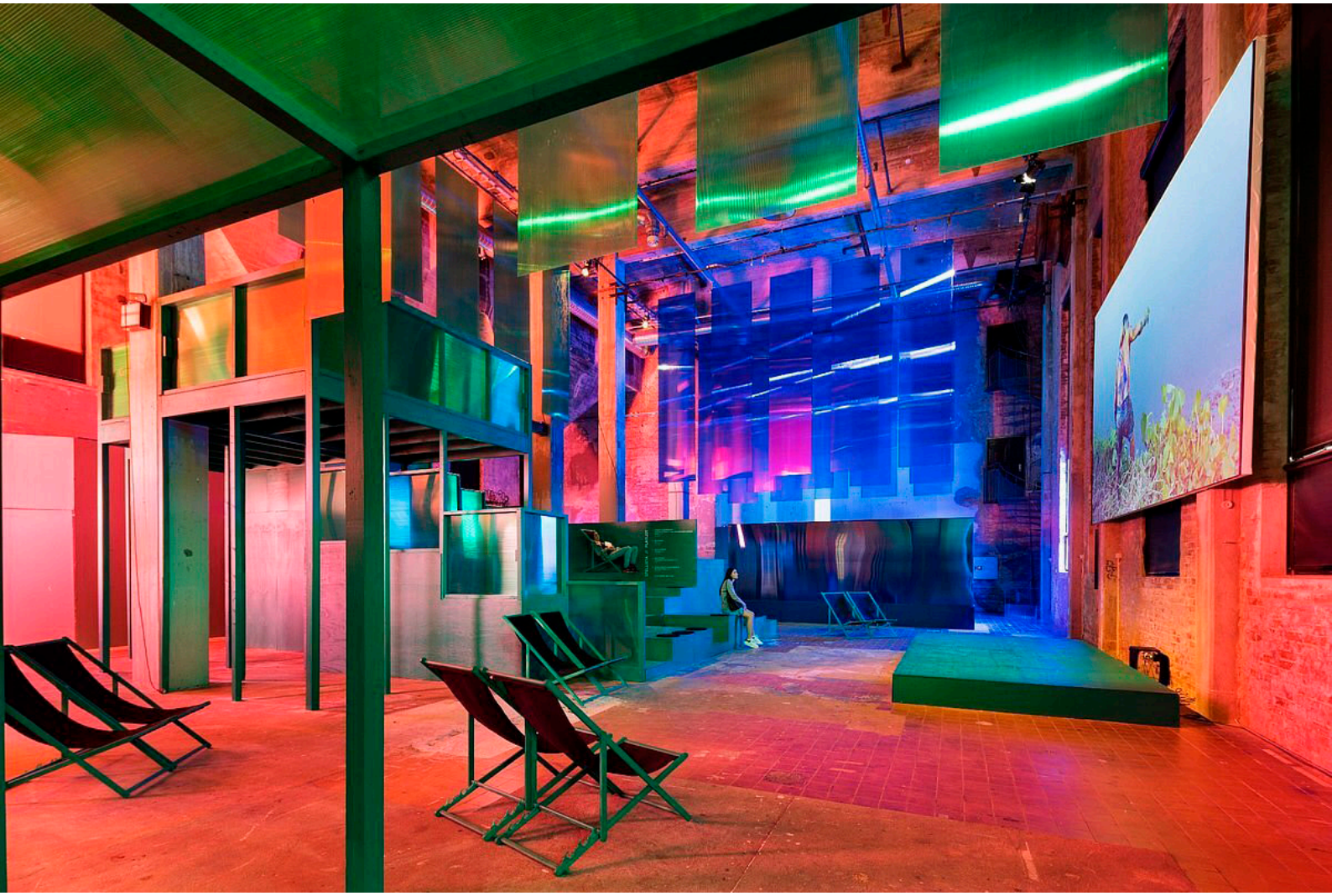
Looking at Europe's (extremely various) climate zones is another way one can distinguish the conditions of TEH centres and the way they have allowed the construction of a vast array of (climate specific) expertise and knowledge within the transformation of the built environment. Some centres are situ- ated in extremely contrasting weather environments, ranging from a Mediterranean climate all the way to Nemoral conditions and, exceptionally, Boreal North conditions. Most of the centres are, however, situated between those two European extremes; their climates range from maritime north to Pannonian and continental. The consideration of such (strong) variations allows a better understanding of the specificity of certain strategies and opportunities offered (or not) to different TEH members and the way they have shaped their actions and – in turn – built their specific culture and knowledge on "regeneration" practices.

It may be easier (and for sure extremely different) to adapt a building for all-year use under a gentle Mediterranean or Maritime south climate with rare occurrences of freeze than under the harsh wintery Nemoral and Boreal conditions, for example. This is a particular concern if we consider the efforts of TEH members to adapt buildings and sites for long-term occupations. Members located in harsh weather conditions encounter more needs for insulation and, in general, weather protection, than others. These measures often prove to be both essential and costly. Southern members might have to devise well thought strategies to avoid over-heating, offer shade or protect themselves from harsh coastal winds. Such variations bring a diversity of applied experimentations of adaptation of the post-industrial built environment of Europe, often designed and developed by centres over time with very little funding and following continuous adaptation through trial-and-error dynamics.

Climate zones may also contribute to specific cultural practices and social behaviours, marking different design trajectories and attitudes. While, for example, southern regions may contribute to a culture and practices of occupying public/open space all year long and develop extensive public activities (within an "outside as inside" approach), Northern regions may be marked by a stronger investment in indoor spaces (and related creative solutions) with different cultural and social behaviours (towards an "inside as outside" attitude). Such differences are in some cases further strengthened in regions where contrasts between winter and summer are more marked, making for stronger differences in the way centres may play social and cultural roles in their locality throughout the year. Such differences also need to be accounted for if we consider cur- rent trends in climate change and the risks these changes present for a wide array of regions.



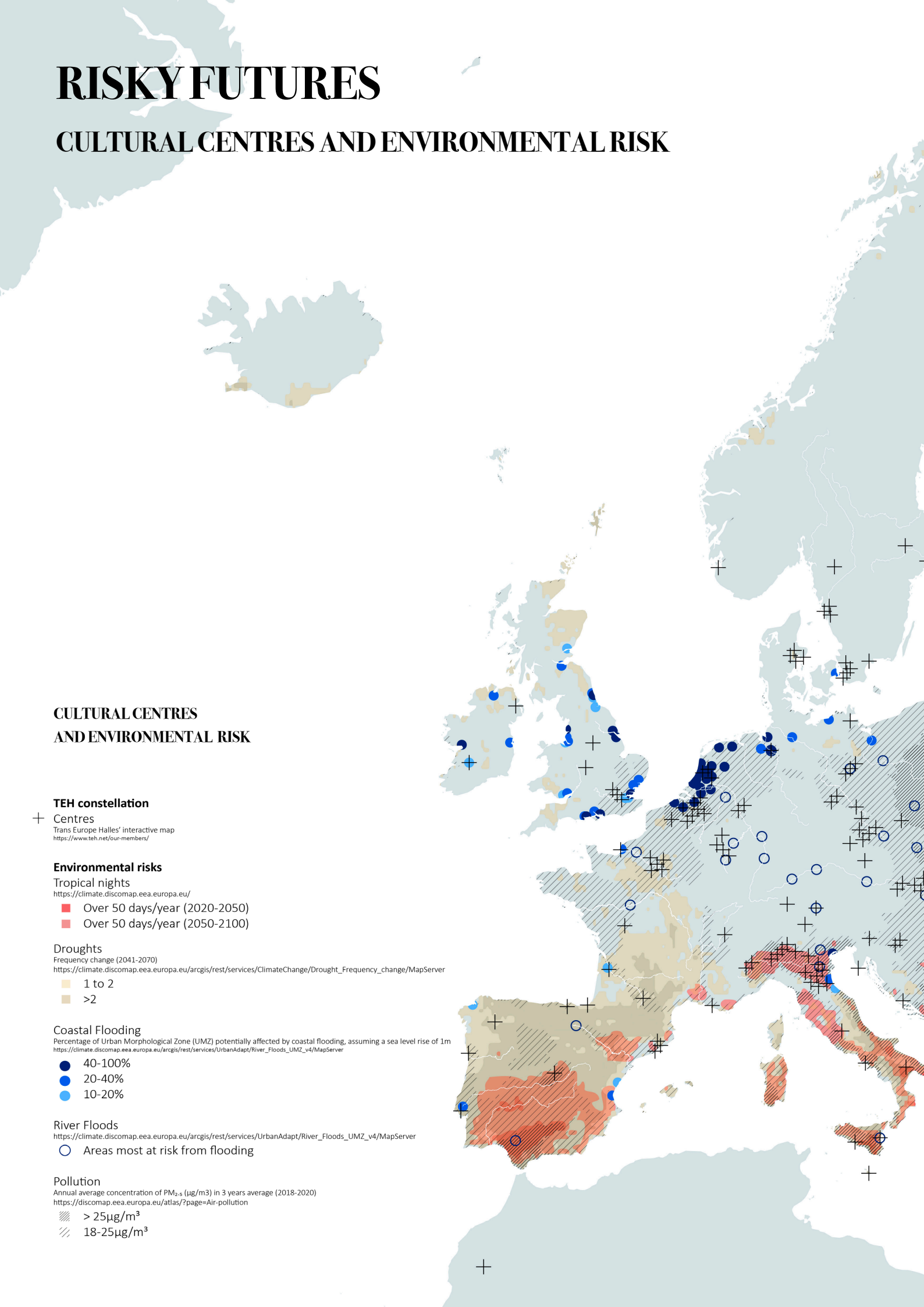
Outside lived as inside space
Farm Cultural Park (Favara, Italy)
Image source : Farm Cultural Park

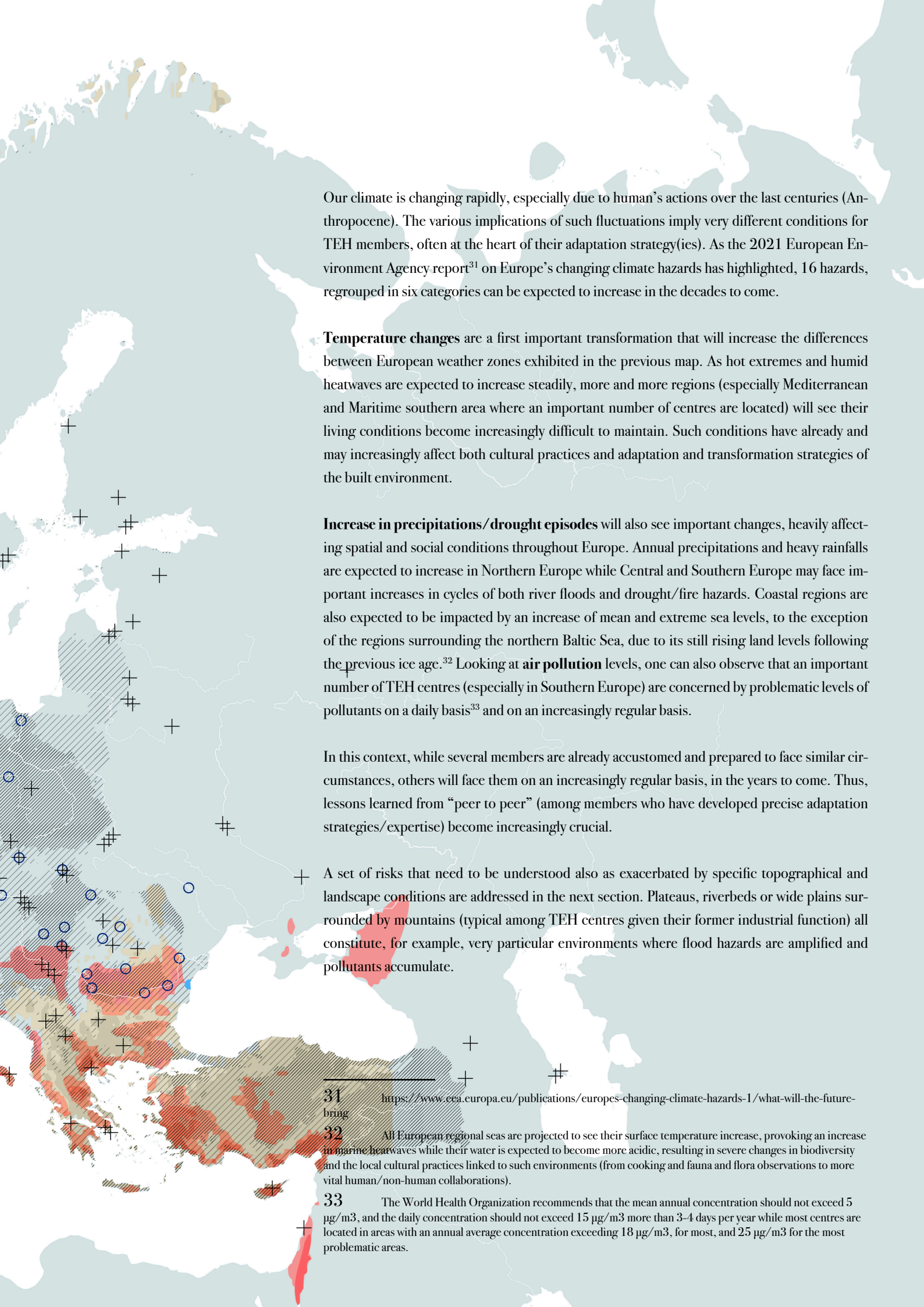


Inside lived as outside space
Röda Sten Konsthall (Gothenburg, Sweden)
Image source : ©Hendrik Zeitler

RISKY FUTURES

CULTURAL CENTRES AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISK





Our climate is changing rapidly, especially due to human's actions over the last centuries (Anthropocene). The various implications of such fluctuations imply very different conditions for TEH members, often at the heart of their adaptation strategy(ies). As the 2021 European Environment Agency report[31] on Europe's changing climate hazards has highlighted, 16 hazards, regrouped in six categories can be expected to increase in the decades to come.

Temperature changes are a first important transformation that will increase the differences between European weather zones exhibited in the previous map. As hot extremes and humid heatwaves are expected to increase steadily, more and more regions (especially Mediterranean and Maritime southern area where an important number of centres are located) will see their living conditions become increasingly difficult to maintain. Such conditions have already and may increasingly affect both cultural practices and adaptation and transformation strategies of the built environment.

Increase in precipitations/drought episodes will also see important changes, heavily affecting spatial and social conditions throughout Europe. Annual precipitations and heavy rainfalls are expected to increase in Northern Europe while Central and Southern Europe may face important increases in cycles of both river floods and drought/fire hazards. Coastal regions are also expected to be impacted by an increase of mean and extreme sea levels, to the exception of the regions surrounding the northern Baltic Sea, due to its still rising land levels following the previous ice age.[32] Looking at **air pollution** levels, one can also observe that an important number of TEH centres (especially in Southern Europe) are concerned by problematic levels of pollutants on a daily basis[33] and on an increasingly regular basis.

In this context, while several members are already accustomed and prepared to face similar circumstances, others will face them on an increasingly regular basis, in the years to come. Thus, lessons learned from "peer to peer" (among members who have developed precise adaptation strategies/expertise) become increasingly crucial.

A set of risks that need to be understood also as exacerbated by specific topographical and landscape conditions are addressed in the next section. Plateaus, riverbeds or wide plains surrounded by mountains (typical among TEH centres given their former industrial function) all constitute, for example, very particular environments where flood hazards are amplified and pollutants accumulate.

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31 https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/europes-changing-climate-hazards-1/what-will-the-future-bring

32 All European regional seas are projected to see their surface temperature increase, provoking an increase in marine heatwaves while their water is expected to become more acidic, resulting in severe changes in biodiversity and the local cultural practices linked to such environments (from cooking and fauna and flora observations to more vital human/non-human collaborations).

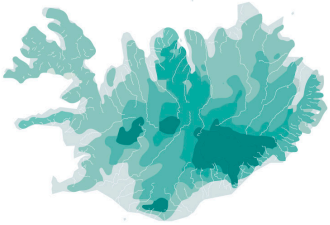
33 The World Health Organization recommends that the mean annual concentration should not exceed 5 µg/m3, and the daily concentration should not exceed 15 µg/m3 more than 3-4 days per year while most centres are located in areas with an annual average concentration exceeding 18 µg/m3, for most, and 25 µg/m3 for the most problematic areas.

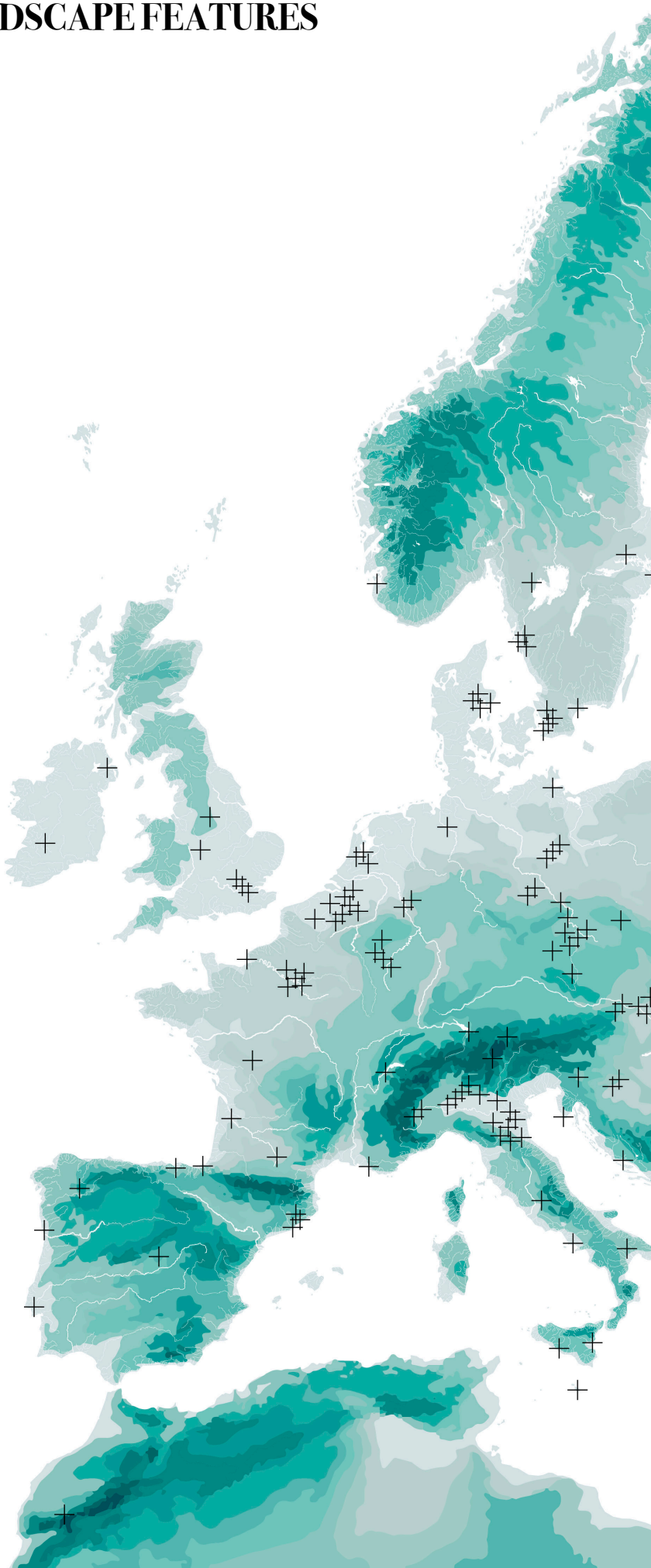
August 2023 - 44.0 °C measured temperature the highest ever recorded in the north of Spain *Bitamine Faktoria* (Irun, Spain) Image source : bitamine.net

October 2023 - Flood in Aarhus
Institut for (X) (Aarhus, Denmark)
Image source : Institut for (X)

TOWARDS A LANDSCAPE APPROACH

CULTURAL CENTRES AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES





CULTURAL CENTRES AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Teh constellation

Centres
Trans Europe Halles' intercative map
https://www.teh.net/our-members/

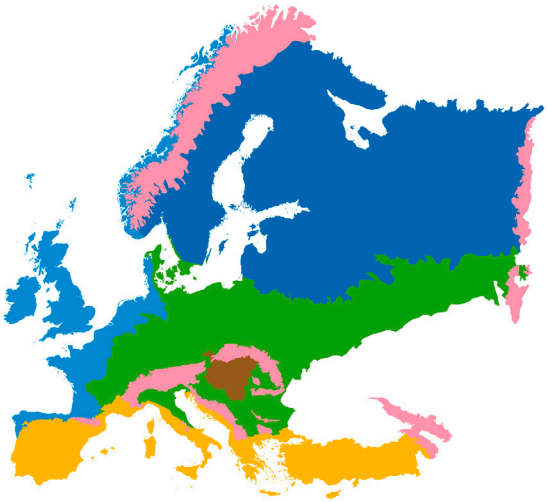
Landscape features

Hydrography
European catchments and Rivers network system (Ecrins)
https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/datahub/datahubitem-view/a9844d0c-6dfb-4c0c-a693-7d991cc82e6e

Topography
https://www.mapzen.com/tag/terrain/

Biogeographical regions
https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/figures/biogeographical-regions-in-europe-2

- Alpine
- Atlantic
- Boreal
- Continental
- Mediterranean
- Pannonian



In terms of landscape features, TEH centres are situated within a wide variety of conditions, representative of European's strong topographical and geological diversity.

On a more detailed level, due to the specificity of the former uses of TEH buildings, most of the centres are located within environments that particularly suited for industrial development: characterised by a mainly flat topography allowing for the development of transport infrastructures (i.e. rail network, transportation channels etc.) and the progressive growth of the same, i.e. river beds, shores, valley beds and plateaus. A smaller selection of centres, in particular in Southern Europe, are surrounded by a more dramatic landscape while still benefitting from the advantages of plain-type situations that have developed artificially or naturally amidst this topography, a dual condition that particularly affects weather and run-off conditions. Finally, a small number of centres are characterised by full mountainous conditions, such as those located within the Alps or the Balkan mountains.

On a larger scale, looking at European biogeographic regions,[34] it can be established that most TEH centres are located within the Atlantic (characterised by low elevations to the north and hillier conditions to the south, and the wide floodplains of the Danube and Po rivers with their related vegetation), Boreal (characterised by its relatively low elevations, its coniferous and taiga forests and water streams, humic lakes and wetlands)[35] and Continental (characterised by its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, its low elevation and intense human-led landscape alterations) regions. Beyond the relatively similar topographies, such variations account for different climate, vegetation and biodiverse contexts between the centres. As mentioned earlier, a smaller number of centres are characterised on the one hand by a mountainous Alpine landscape (characterised by harsh climate and mix of grasslands, scrub heath and rocky environments hosting two thirds of European vegetal species that need to be protected) and, on the other hand, by a Mediterranean context (characterised by a strong proximity to the sea, hilly terrain, semi-arid steppes, sandy and rocky shores and vegetation composed of scrubs, woodlands and forests), a landscape hosting an extremely rich and diverse flora/fauna, increasingly threatened by intensive touristic activities and development practices to which cultural centres offer interesting alternatives.

Finally, a smaller selection of centres, resulting from the post-Soviet development of the network in Eastern Europe, are located in the Pannonian bio-georegion of the Great Hungarian Plain characterised by sand dunes and steppes, grasslands, and mixed forests. Such centres lie in the vast alluvial basin delimited by the Carpathian Mountains, the Alps and the Dinaric Alps and structured by the Danube and Tisza rivers. Due to the complex nature of this area, the centres regularly face varying weather conditions, including significant storms, caused by interactions between wet winds from the west, dry winds from the south and cool winds from the Alps and Carpathian ranges. This is an area that is expected to face stronger droughts in the decades to come, causing the drainage of wetlands, important salinisation and alkalisation of the soils while still dealing with consequent heavy metal pollutions of many local rivers due to the mining industry.

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34 The bio-georegions or bio-geographic regions are a tool defined by the European Environment Agency in an effort to set a general framework for coordinating and reporting overall results of conservation efforts. First established in 1992 through the Habitats Directive, this map has since then been updated several times to cover the entire pan-European area and acknowledge the main differences between the regions. The different regions are established following a series of biological, climate and topographical criteria, which in turn allow the characterisation of the main threats the regional biotopes are facing.

35 Humic or dystrophic lakes contain high amounts of humic substances and organic acids allowing little biodiversity to survive. These mainly consist of algae, phytoplankton, picoplankton, and bacteria.

Val Venosta Alpine valley
Basis Vinschgau Venosta (Silandro, Italy)

Rhodopes mountains
Pro Rodopi Art Centre (Smolyan, Bulgaria
Image source : Rodopi Foundation

CHARACTERS

Name	Year of foundation	Geographical location	Internal spaces (sqm²)	External spaces (sqm²)	Historical function	Year of building's construct
7Arte	2006	Mitrovice, Kosovo	500	70	Ex-bank	1977
A38 Ship	2003	Budapest, Hungary	1.500	-	Stone-carrying ship	1968
A4 - Space for contemporary culture	2004	Bratislava, Slovakia	654	100	YMCA organisation for their activites	1921
Allerweltshaus Köln E.V.	1987	Cologne, Germany				
Alte Feuerwache	1977	Cologne, Germany	5.213	2.500	Fire station	1890
Amigdala / ovestlab	2008	Moderna , Italy	300	100	Workshop	1953
Anibar	2010	Peja, Kosovo	800	100	Cinema	1950
Antic teatre - espai de creació slu		Barcelona, Spain				1650
Aparaaditehas	2014	Tartu, Estonia	14.000	3.000	Manufacture of refrigeration equipment	
Art Factory Łódź / Fabryka Sztuki	2007	Łódź, Poland	8.100	5.097	Textile factor	1886
Asociatia arta În dialog (cinemá arta)	2019	Cluj-Napoca, Romania	400	/	Cinema	1913
Asociatia casa plai	2006	Timisoara, Romania	815	200	Hat factory	1942
Association Toplocentrala	2014	Sofia, Bulgaria	2.300	2.650	Heating plant	1981
Associazione Oltre...Aps	2014	Bologna, Italy				
Ateliersi	2013	Bologna, Italy	600	100	Religious	1100
Bakelit Multi Art center foundation	1999	Budapest, Hungary			War products and textil factory	1900
Banda Larga Associazione Culturale		Turin, Italy				
Basis Vinschgau Venosta	2014	Silandro, Italy	2.300	40.000	Military barracks	1937
Beat Carnival	1993	Belfast, United Kingdom	1.951	/	Engineering works and various other manufactu	1800
Bitamine Faktoria	2011	Irun, Spain	255	/	Innovation center (historical and actual functio	2011
Blivande		Stockholm, Sweden	963	2.800	Industrial harbor administrative building and re	1919
Bloom	1987	Mezzago, Italy	600	450	Ballroom and cinematograph	1948
Brunnenpassage	2007	Vienna, Austria	350	/	Market hall	
C.AR.M.E	2017	Brescia, Italy	1.640	100	Church	1150
Cads Youth Yorkshire	2009	Sheffield, United Kingdom			Iconic cinema	1920
Center for creative industries (cci) fabrika	2005	Moscow, Russia	17.500	/	Technical paper mill	1929
Center for cultural decontamination	1995	Belgrade, Serbia	220		Private museum	1931
Centrala Space	2015	Birmingham, United Kingdom	400	/	Warehouse	1880
Communitism	2017	Athens, Greece	180	370	Photography workshop	1969
Consorzio Wunderkammer	2011	Ferrara, Italy			River warehouse	1940
Cooperations	1990	Wiltz, Luxembourg	5.000			
Cultural centre rex	1994	Belgrade, Serbia				
Cultural development association	1995	Zagreb, Croatia	338	/	Industrial	1960
Culture Hub Prostor	2017	Split, Croatia	150	/	Commercial	1971
Cultureghem	2012	Anderlecht, Belgium	10.000	100.000	Hall for cattle	1888
Culturen		Västerås, Sweden	4.200			1913
Die Bäckerei - Kulturbackstube	2010	Innsbruck, Austria	1.500	50	Bakery	1950
Fabrika Tbilisi	2016	Tbilisi, Georgia	8.000	3.878	Sewing factory	-
Farm Cultural Park	2010	Favara, Italy	2.500	2.500	Private houses and courtyards	2010
Fix in Art	2011	Thessaloniki, Greece			Brewery	1888
Fort!		Le Havre, France		70.000	Military fort	1856
Friche la belle de Mai	1992	Marseille, France	50.000	50.000	Tabacco manufacture	1868
GEH8	2007	Dresden, Germany	960	1.200	Train workshop	1968
Haceria Arteak	1997	Bilbao, Spain	1.445			1950
Halle 14		Leipzig, Germany	20.000		Cotton mill	1890
Ifö Center	2011	Bromölla, Sweden	43.000		Ceramic factory	
Imbarchino	2019	Turin, Italy	608	200	Boat depot	1970
Institut for (X)	2009	Aarhus, Denmark	2.500	10.000	Train depot	1920
Institute for environmental solutions	2013	Cēsis, Latvia			Brewery	
Izolyatsia / Izone	2010	Kyiv, Ukraine	2.000	2.500	Insulation materials factory	1927
Kaapelitehdas	1991	Helsinki, Finland	63.000	1.500	Cable factory	1939
Kanepes Kulturas Centrs		Riga, Latvia				
Klub Mocvara URK	2008	Zagreb, Croatia	937	600		1950
Konstepidemin	1987	Gothenburg, Sweden	5.633	/	Hospital	1886
Kulbroen / The Coal Bridge	2015	Aarhus, Denmark	100	3.000	Coal bridge	1952
Kultura Medialna	2019	Dnipro, Ukraine	2.800	1.000	Military structure	1852
Kulturfabrik	1983	Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg	5.184	3.000	Slaughterhouse	1888
Kulturzentrum Schlachthof	1979	Bremen, Germany			Slaughterhouse	1897
La station/Collectif MU	2016	Paris, France	1.300	6.500	Coal station	1950
Laminarie	1994	Bologna, Italy	650	12.500	Dome Social Services	1967
L'Asilo	2012	Naples, Italy				
Le confort moderne	1977	Poitiers, France	4.076	4.620	Household appliance shop	1905
Le plus petit cirque du monde	1992	Bagneux, France	1.900	9.400	Sport centre	1960
Les Halles de Schaerbeek	1977	Brussels, Belgium	2.000	/	Covered market	1865
L'hybride (rencontres audiovisuelles)	2007	Lille, France	540	/	Car garage	1970
Magacin cultural center	2007	Belgrade, Serbia	2.128	/	Warehouse	
Mains d'oeuvres	2001	Saint-Ouen, France	4.000	300	Social and sports workers' centre	1959
Malakta	2007	Malax, Finland	800	7.000	Dairy	1930
Maltafabrikken	2013	Ebeltoft, Denmark			Malt factory	1861

s tion	Typology	Building materials	Relation cultural centre & city centre	Proportion open space/built-up space	Use of renewable energies	Insulating the centre
	Infrastructural	Concrete	Located in historic centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Infrastructural	Steel	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of open spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Yes
	Evenementiel	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
			Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces		
	Service	Brick	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Industrial	Concrete block	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Evenementiel	Brick, concrete	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Produces part of its energy	No
		Stone	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
	Industrial	Brick	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Yes
	Industrial	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Evenementiel	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Industrial	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Yes
	Infrastructural	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
			Located in periphery of the centre			
	Religious	Brick, concrete	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Yes
	Industrial		Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces		
			Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
	Military	Brick	Located in rural area	Prevalence of open spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
	Industrial	Brick, steel	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
	Service	Concrete, glass	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Yes
	Industrial	Wood	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Yes
	Evenementiel	Brick, concrete	Located in rural area	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
	Service	Steel, glass	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
	Religious	Brick, concrete	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
		Stone	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
	Industrial	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Yes
	Evenementiel	Stone	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
	Industrial	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Produces part of its energy	Partially
	Residential	Concrete	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Infrastructural		Located in rural area	Prevalence of open spaces		
			Located in rural area			
	Evenementiel		Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
	Industrial	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Domestic	Concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Infrastructural	Steel	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Produces part of its energy	No
	Industrial	Brick, steel	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
	Service	Brick, concrete	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Industrial	Concrete	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Domestic	Brick, glass	Located in historic centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Industrial		Located in periphery of the centre			
	Military	Brick	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces		
	Industrial	Concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a renewable energy network	Partially
	Infrastructural	Brick, concrete, steel	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a renewable energy network	Partially
	Industrial		Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces		
	Industrial	Steel	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
	Industrial	Concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces		
	Infrastructural	Concrete, wood	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces	Dependent on a renewable energy network	Partially
	Infrastructural	Brick	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces	Dependent on a renewable energy network	Partially
			Located in rural area	Prevalence of open spaces		
	Industrial	Concrete, steel	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Industrial	Brick	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Produces part of its energy	Yes
	domestic		Located in historic centre	Equal distribution of spaces		
	Industrial	Concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Service	Brick	Located in historic centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Infrastructural	Concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Yes
	Military	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Agricultural	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
	Industrial	Brick, metall, glass	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Produces part of its energy	Partially
	Infrastructural	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Infrastructural	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Religious	stone, wood	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
	Industrial	Concrete block, steel	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
	Service	Wood	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces	Produces part of its energy	Yes
	Service	Stone, metalic structure	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Yes
	Industrial	Brick, metalic structure	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Industrial	Brick	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Service	Brick	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Produces part of its energy	No
	Industrial	Brick, concrete, wood	Located in rural area	Prevalence of open spaces	Produces part of its energy	Partially
		Brick, concrete	Located in historic centre	Equal distribution of spaces		

Name	Year of foundation	Geographical location	Internal spaces (sqm²)	External spaces (sqm²)	Historical function	Year of building's
Malý Berlín	2017	Trnava, Slovakia	475	500	Townhouse, shops and workshops	2014
Manifatture Knos	2007	Lecce, Italy	4.000	15.000	Metallurgical school	
Meatpack	2017	Antwerp, Belgium	1.000		Foam factory	
Mejeriet	1987	Lund, Sweden			Dairy factory	
Melkweg	1970	Amsterdam, The Netherlands			Sugar factory and dairy	1920
Menu Spaustuve (Arts printing house)	2002	Vilnius, Lithuania	2.910	/	Printing house	1585
Moos		Berlin, Germany				
Moritzbastei	1982	Leipzig, Germany	1.610	1.400	Military bastion	1551
Mottattom	1999	Geneva, Switzerland	1.100	/	Shed stables	1910
Moving Station	2000	Pilsen, Czech Republic			Train station	
Nau Ivanow	1997	Barcelona, Spain	1.200	425	Painting factory, textile factory	1958
Nimac	1994	Nicosia, Cyprus	720	650	Powerhouse	1928
Noas	1998	Riga, Latvia				
Not Quite	2002	Fengersfors, Sweden	2.600	500	Paper factory	1792
Nová Cvernovka	2016	Bratislava, Slovakia	18.000	22.000	Chemistry school	1948
ODC Ensemble		Athens, Greece	2.000			
Ormston House	2011	Limerick, Ireland			Beverage commerce	1750
P60	2001	Amstelveen, The The Netherlan	2.090			
Plum Yard / Švestkový Dvů	2013	Malovice, Czech Republic	1.074	2.286	Farm	1868
Pohjala Tehas	2018	Tallinn, Estonia	15.000	17.000	Russo-baltic shipbuilding and	1924
Pragovka Gallery		Prague, Czech Republic	1.400		rubber factory	1950
Pro Rodopi Art Centre	2004	Bostina, Bulgaria	1.400		Kindergarden	
Röda Sten Konsthall	2006	Gothenburg, Sweden	1.500	/	Boiler house	1940
Rojc Alliance (savez udruga rojca)		Pula, Croatia	16.739	33.354		1870
SCS Centar Jadro		Skopje, North Macedonia				
SODAS 2123	2020	Vilnius, Lithuania	4.400	8.489	School for children with special needs	1940
Spielboden Kulturveranstaltungs GmbH		Dornbirn, Austria				
Studio Alta	2007	Prague, Czech Republic	600	930	Care centre for disabled veterans	1731
Subtopia	2002	Stockholm, Sweden			Barn	1902
Tabacka Kulturfabrik	2009	Košice, Slovakia	2.000	700	Tabacco factory	1851
Timis Country Youth Foundation	1978	Timișoara, Romania	11.000		Sports and recreation building	
TOU	2001	Stavanger, Norway	14.500	500	Brewery facilities	1895
Truc Sphérique - stanica	2003	Žilina, Slovakia	300	1.500	Train station	1945
Truc Sphérique - synagoga	2011	Žilina, Slovakia	1.200	200	Synagoga	1931
Ufafabrik	1979	Berlin, Germany	6.000	18.500	Cinema production factory	1933
Veřejný sál Hraničář	2014	Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic			Cinema	1923
Verkatehdas	1980	Hämeenlinna, Finland			Baize factory	1850
Viernulvier	1982	Ghent, Belgium	15.298	136	People's House	1913
Village Underground	2006	London, United Kingdom			Railway viaduc and warehouse	
Vzlet	2021	Praha, Czech Republic	1.800	100	Cinema	1921
WUK	1981	Vienna, Austria	12.000	/	Locomotive factory, technical high school	1866
Zentralwerk	2006	Dresden, Germany	7.200	3.456	Weapon factory	1920
Zo centro culture contemporanee	1997	Catania, Italy	1.600	400	Sulphur refinery	2001

Typology	Building materials	Relation cultural centre & city centre	Proportion open space/built-up space	Use of renewable energies	Insulating the centre
Domestic	Brick, concrete	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Produces part of its energy	Yes
Industrial	Concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces	Produces part of its energy	Partially
		Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
Industrial	Brick	Located in historic centre	Equal distribution of spaces		
Industrial	Brick	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
Industrial	Brick, concrete, steel	Located in historic centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Yes
		Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
Military	Brick	Located in historic centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a renewable energy network	Yes
Industrial	Concrete, metal framewo	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
Infrastructural		Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
Industrial	Brick, glass	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
Infrastructural	Brick, concrete, steel	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
	Concrete	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of open spaces		
Industrial	Brick	Located in rural area	Prevalence of open spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
Service	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces		
Industrial		Located in historic centre	Equal distribution of spaces		
	Stone	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
		Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
Agricultural	Brick, stone, wood	Located in rural area	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
Industrial	Concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
Service	Stone, bricks	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces		Yes
		Located in rural area	Prevalence of open spaces	Produces part of its energy	
Infrastructural	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a renewable energy network	No
Military	Brick, concrete, stone	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Yes
Industrial		Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
Service	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
		Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces		
Service	Brick, stone, wood	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Yes
Agricultural		Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces		
Industrial	Brick, steel	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
Service	Concrete	Located in periphery of the centre			
Industrial	Concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	Partially
Infrastructural	Brick	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of open spaces		Yes
Religious	Brick	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces		No
Service	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces	Produces all its energy	Partially
Evenementiel		Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
Industrial	Brick	Located in periphery of the centre	Equal distribution of spaces		
Evenementiel	Brick	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Produces part of its energy	Yes
Infrastructural	Brick	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces		
Evenementiel	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No
Industrial	Brick, concrete	Located in historic centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Produces part of its energy	Partially
Industrial	Concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Produces part of its energy	Yes
Industrial	Brick, concrete	Located in periphery of the centre	Prevalence of built spaces	Dependent on a conventional energy network	No

CHARACTERS

To further characterise the diversity of TEH centres, an inventory of the centres has been established through 13 different criteria. This inventory can be understood as an attempt at a first synthesis of the TEH constellation. We present it here through the seven most relevant criteria.[36]

Analysis by country

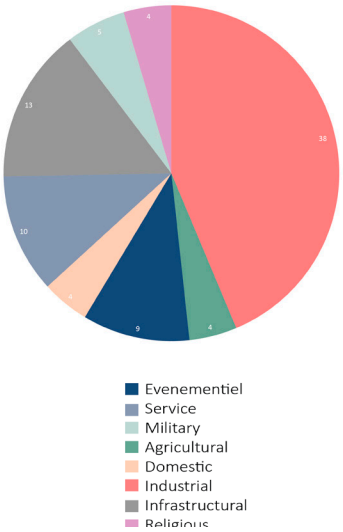
Looking at the distribution of the TEH centres by country, it can be observed that members are well spread out across Europe, with most countries hosting one to three centres. Indeed, only a few EU members do not host any TEH members, namely Malta, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia. TEH is particularly prevalent in Italy (14 centres) and Sweden (10 centres). The Swedish predominance can be explained by the fact that TEH has, since its origins, developed close relationships with the country, to the point of eventually moving its current headquarters to Lund in Sweden. The Italian majority is less clear: while most of the Italian centres are a direct result of the intense industrial development of the Po River plain, we have not seen the same prevalence in equally industrial regions such as Northern France, West Germany or the United Kingdom, which only host four centres despite being an infamous industrial cradle.

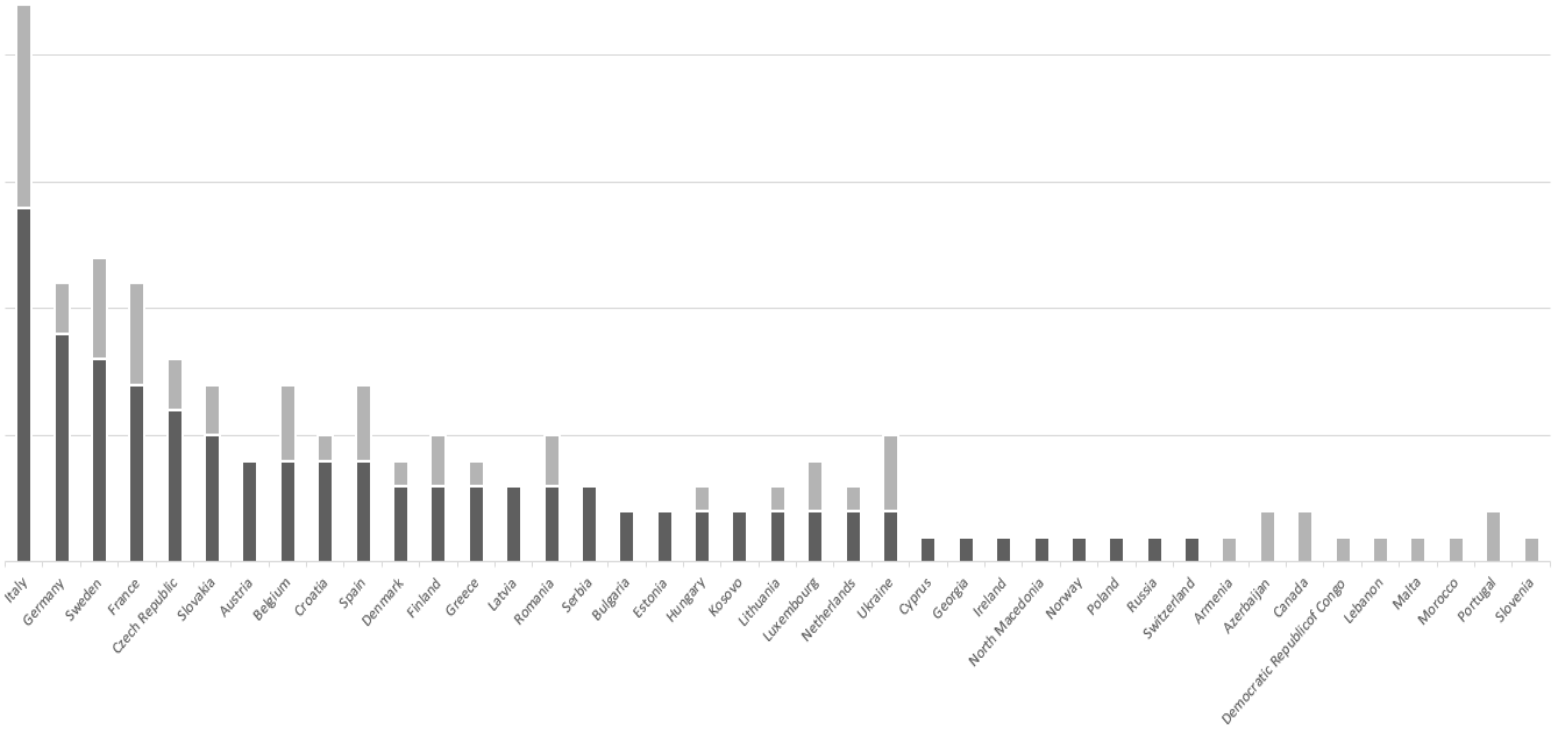
36 This inventory has been established based on a survey addressed to all of the TEH members in 2023. The answers to this survey have been completed, when possible, by research through the available literature. Not all centres have answered this survey or responded to every question. These figures are therefore entirely approximate.

Analysis of the built assets

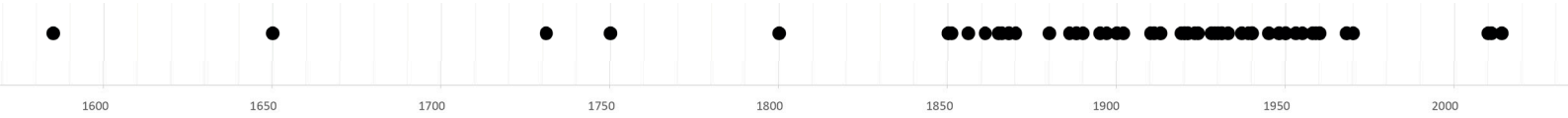
Looking at the year of construction of TEH building stock also gives a sense of an extremely layered knowledge and of the capacity of cultural centres for a wide array of adaptation techniques/strategies. While most centres are located in buildings constructed between 1850 and 1950 (the "industrial" century), the network exists within a relatively wide range of typologies, which highlights the TEH network's capacity to adapt many different manifestations of European's industrial heritage, from its earlier forms (19th century flour mills, small workshops etc.) to its more extensive coal then oil-based forms (large-scale factories, mining infrastructures etc. developed through most of the 20th century). The great "agility" of cultural centres' trans- formation skills (achieving similar outcomes despite very distinct architectural/historical circumstances) is further highlighted by the fact that several members have also transformed/

TYPOLOGY





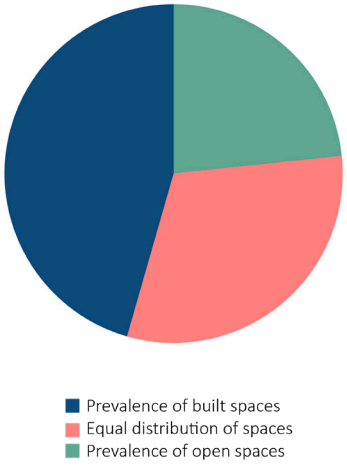
CULTURAL CENTRES BUILT STOCK :
YEARS OF CONSTRUCTION



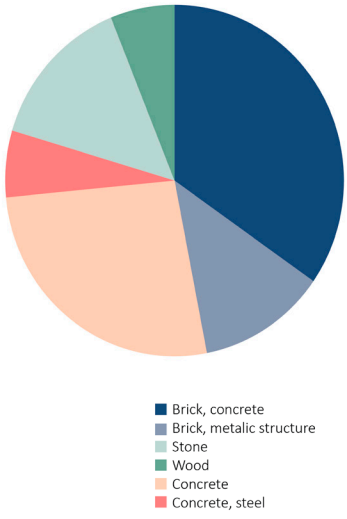
adapted buildings dating from the late 18th century all the way back to the16th century. Such buildings (churches, abbeys, forts etc.) have a distinct set of typologies and relationships to heritage policies and socio-cultural attachments that distinguish them heavily from the rest of the centres.

Looking more closely at the building's **typology** allows us to extend this analysis. As expected, almost half of the surveyed centres occupy abandoned "industrial" buildings of various kinds. On a second level, we see the "infrastructural" (railyards, abandoned rail stations, etc.), "evenemential" (abandoned cinemas, theatres, etc.) and "service-related" typologies (schools, hospitals, sport venues, offices, etc.). A small number of centres occupy a wide array of typologies, from agricultural (4%) or military sites (5%) to domestic or religious buildings (4% each). Again, the versatility and agility of cultural regeneration as employed by the TEH network can be here observed showing its capacity to renew a great variety of built typologies constructed throughout the 19th and 20th century.

RELATION BETWEEN BUILT/NON BUILT SPACE

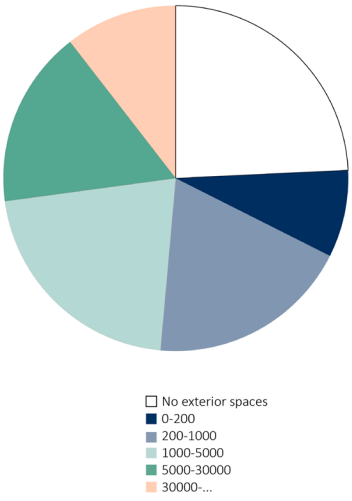


MATERIALS



As building reconversion is considerably influenced by the built stock's construction materials, it is also interesting to characterise the variety of the cultural centres' built assets through their differences in building materials. Due to the industrial nature and time of construction of the majority of buildings, there is a predominance of mixed "brick/concrete" and "full concrete" structures while steel supporting structures are also extremely common. The use of materials such as wood and stone related to an earlier era are present but to a much lesser extent.

EXTENTION OF EXTERNAL SPACE (m^2)



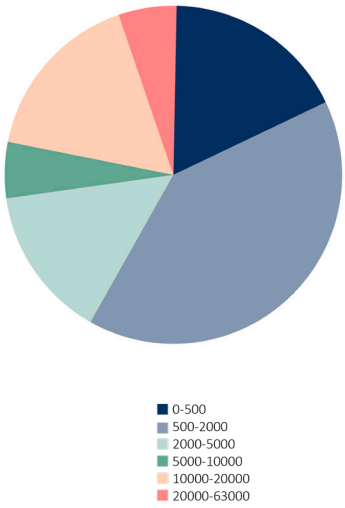
Analysis of the built and unbuilt context

Another informative dimension to further characterise the TEH network can be seen in the size of their buildings and building plots. Indeed, the surveyed centres show a great variety of dimensions (some taking place in an area of barely 200m² while others extend beyond tens of hectares). Nonetheless most TEH members are located in medium-sized areas between 500 and 2,000 m². Those benefit from indoor spaces between 500 and 2,000m² that are well suited to cultural and social events, artistic practices or local communities' gatherings, often allowing the presence of one or two major communal room (exhibition space, workshop, representation space, etc.).

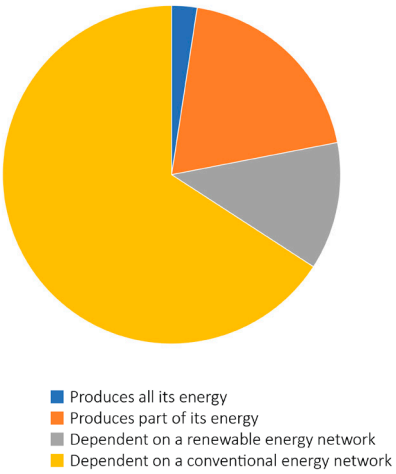
However, a number of centres stray from that description. About a third of the surveyed centres have the use of much larger indoor spaces, extending between 2,000 m² (the smallest) and 20,000m² and up to 63,000m². Space dimensions bring specific opportunities/ issues (and related knowledge) in terms of occupation, maintenance, regulations and activity opportunities. In terms of **non-built/open space** (absent for a quarter of the surveyed centres, at the risk of having a limited outdoor activity) a half of the surveyed centres exceed 1,000 m2 (allowing for relevant outdoor activities/ skills) while a quarter fall below this figure. Centres whose open spaces extend between 5,000 to 70,000 m² (parks, biodiversity reserves, fields, meadows or forests) display particular skills in terms of biodiversity management and integration.

Looking at the **relationship between built and open space**, the prevalence of members benefitting from extensive (over 30,000 m²) important outdoor space can explain why at least a quarter of the surveyed centres show a prevalence of open space in comparison to indoor space. While most members show a predominance of built spaces, about a third show an equal distribution of built and open spaces, making for interesting opportunities and a certain "climatic agility".

EXTENTION OF INTERNAL SPACE (m²)



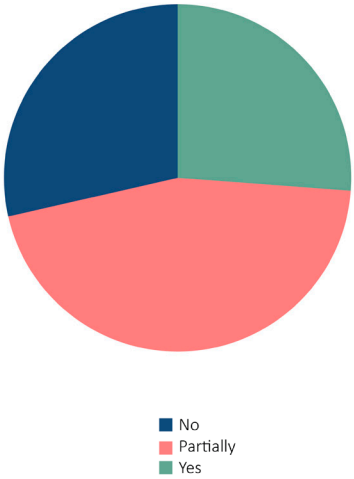
RENEWABLE ENERGIES



Analysis of energy performances

A final aspect that can help understand where the TEH network stand in terms of sustainable practices lies in the energy performances and strategies they deploy. While the economic situation of most cultural centres remains precarious, and the reuse of industrial buildings can jeopardise attempts to improve their performances, many TEH members show considerable efforts in the use of renewable energies (a quarter of the surveyed centres produce part of their energy) and building insulation (three quarters of the centres have entirely or partially insulated their building stock).

INSULATION



3

LESSONS FROM TEH: TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTON OF A "WORKING" MANUAL

3.1 Tacit knowledge: TEH as precursor?

Drawing on these first explorations of the history, geographies and make up of Trans Europe Halles, one can observe that the network, over its 40 years of existence, has developed a "tacit" (Avermate et al, 2023) yet deep knowledge concerning the cultural regeneration strategies of the industrial European built environment, a knowledge demanding to be unrevealed and valorised. "Tacit knowledge"[1] – also known as "experiential" or "tribal" knowledge – is a set of skills/abilities that is often difficult to explicitly communicate, spreading throughout an organisation without being documented and possibly never actively pointed out or discussed. It is an implicit knowledge that can potentially be made explicit through some effort or reflection. Today, in light of the many challenges to come (for our built and un-built environment) and of the European Union's ambitious agenda for a "New European Bauhaus", lessons learned from the TEH expertise concerning the transformation/adaptation of a wide range of formerly industrial built stock seem particularly valuable.

This is a knowledge developed organically over time and somewhat involuntarily; each TEH member (and the network as a whole) is a community of practice[2] that has grown and adapted through time within a trial-and-error methodology. This signifies that, while no two centres are alike, each has refined the way it occupies/transforms its built environment through continuous testing and prototyping in a way that similar public and private initiatives usually cannot do due to the limited economic and temporal frameworks they usually are operating within. TEH members usually operate with few to very few economical means, especially when compared to their public and private counterparts. This is a condition that has slowly evolved since the early 2000s, with the growing recognition of local and international levels of the network and its centres. Cultural actors compensate for their precarious economic situation through a strong voluntary and creative workforce in their local communities, incremental changes brought to their environment in function of opportunities (specific grant calls, collaborations, surplus of volunteers or materials etc.) and a general attitude based on DIY and reuse strategies. Such practices show important and proven strategies of regeneration in tight economic contexts,[3] which could be invaluable in many situations in Europe and beyond in the coming decades.

As shown on a preliminary basis in these pages, each centre has developed a specific expertise shaped by its local circumstances, a finely tuned answer to local political, socio-economic and natural contexts as well as particular built typologies and architectural features inherited from the past. As such, they each entail a set of opportunities to learn from on-site experiments fully integrated and adapted to the many European regional particularities. These are a set of expertise, skills and know-hows, however, that are more often than not tacit; not always valorised or necessarily even acknowledged. This study tackles the need to unveil this knowledge in the hope of both valorising it and helping more initiatives to learn valuable lessons from it.

3.2 Building a "Working Manual"

To achieve the above-mentioned goal, we propose designing a first book (a "working" manual), intended as a set of "lessons to be drawn" from the many "cultural regeneration" prototypes led by TEH members over the last decades. These lessons aim to contribute to a better understanding of what good practices of cultural regeneration can look like and how they could help to shape an ambitious New European Bauhaus. This in turn invites us to turn such lessons into a manual of sorts in the future. This would offer a set of principles and strategies that have proven efficient and sustainable, which could be reproduced under similar circumstances to contribute to the shift in paradigm that the NEB calls for.

This first book's lessons will be structured to highlight the centers' contribution to the current discussion on the European transition

1 "The concept of 'tacit knowledge' was formulated in 1958 by the Hungarian chemist and philosopher Michael Polanyi. Polemical in nature, it was part of an effort to refute the idea that scientific knowledge can be reduced to closed sets of statements or logical propositions. For Polanyi, scientific knowledge implied a worldly commitment on the scientist's part, manifest in the artisanal aspects of constructing experimental installations that involve the mastery of embodied non-explicit implicit knowledge, constitute the basis from which explicit knowledge can emerge, and explain why one always knows more about a particular subject than one can put into words. Polanyi thus positioned tacit knowing in between an idea of 'embodied knowledge' and '[socially] shared knowledge' that remains unspoken" (Ibid).

2 Educational theorist Etienne Wenger (1998, 2006), who has coined the term, defines "Communities of practice" as groups of people who share a concern or a passion for a topic, a craft, and/or a profession. These individuals deepen their knowledge and expertise through regular interaction with each other.

3 While those strategies show great potential under many aspects, we need to acknowledge they emerge from a place of constraints; while they may not cost economically as much as a more conventional approach of reconversion, they may come at considerable costs for the energy, motivation and resilience of the communities involved and are not necessarily sustainable over the long-term. In that sense, the interest we carry here for these strategies should not be confused for an advocacy of a model to be applied as such, but rather as a set of practices that need to be supported and sustained by sustainability policies.

towards sustainable architectural and urban practices.

The book's first part, which has been displayed in the previous pages, introduces the reader to the general aspects of Trans Europe Halles, its history, geographies and make up of the network, and the relevance of the network in the current discussion on the regeneration of the built environment.

The second part constitutes the core of such lessons, displaying a selection of concrete strategies developed throughout the TEH network. This selection is organised in four categories, each addressing a specific set of stakes within cultural regeneration strategies. The first, MATTER MATTERS deals with strategies addressing the radical reuse of materials and built assets, the (re)distribution of matter and space in service of local communities and the refusal to "build more", in keeping with Malterre-Barthes' call for a global moratorium on (new) construction (Malterre-Barthes, 2024).

The second, OUT OF THE BOX includes projects and spatial strategies displaying experimental approaches to urbanism and architecture which thwart expectations and known codes (Bouchain et al, 2014). Strategies that tend to reinvent relationships between the actors conventionally involved in the building process (owners, architects, contractors, residents, users etc.) in ways that break down the usual hierarchies and allow for more collaborations, co-conceptions, and co-constructions.

The third, TIME, TIME, TIME features strategies integrat- ing a plurality of temporalities within the design process (Morton, 2015). This displays articulations between different conceptions of time as well as different uses of time, from the very short (implementation of ephemeral events/approaches) to the very long (approaches going beyond strictly human temporalities and entailing long-term processes such as the regeneration of an ecosystem, for example).

Finally, NEW COEXISTENCES addresses strategies that actively contribute to a redefinition of the divides that modern rationality has constructed between the cultural and the natural, the social and the biological, the human and the non-human, towards a "new biopolitical project" (Vigano, 2023). Such initiatives feed into important discussions on the role of architecture, urbanism and landscape design towards a more inclusive project concerning living entities and bodies in space. Space is here designed as to weave new relationships between living beings, which in turn become a powerful reservoir of possibilities for subjects to emancipate themselves, beyond the human/non-human divide. As such, this second part of the book consists of a first set of concrete lessons from the TEH centres on "cultural regeneration" as shareable knowledge.

The third part brings together the fruits of three short-term experimental projects (Prototypes) carried out within the "Rebuilding to Last" research project. The aim of these projects (carried out in the form of workshops) has been to explore the "scalability" of a series of eco-socio-spatial strategies launched by cultural centres at the urban/territorial scale and for a larger public (human/non-human).

The fourth part stems from the previous parts, drawing a "roadmap and toolkit" aiming to help any actor initiating a cultural centre initiative within a "cultural regeneration" framework.

This book aims to build a first important step towards the construction of a TEH NEB MANUAL, which could be drawn from further enquiries from members of the TEH network (and comparable initiatives). As such, we believe that these lessons could fundamentally contribute to a concrete and ambitious expansion of what the "New European Bauhaus" could look like and how we could achieve it in a systematic way.

While this publication is only a stepping stone towards this goal, it is an essential one that it rooted within long-term, situated and applied strategies. Bringing such innovative and forward-looking experiences alive constitutes the beginning of a wide-ranging and significant research programme that can make an important contribution to a truly sustainable Europe – both in spirit and action.

Institut for (X) (Aarhus, Denmark)
Rethinking the spaces of the railway
Image source : Institut for (X)

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TEH: Building a Cultural Regeneration Project for Europe

UNRAVELLING TACIT KNOWLEDGE

Publication #2
UNRAVELLING TACIT KNOWLEDGE
«(Re)building to Last» Project
WP2 _ Université de Liège
Unité de Recherche en Architecture URA

Liège, 31 July 2024

#2

Publication realised for the “Rebuilding to Last” Project and part of the Research WP2. Members of the team: Prof. Martina Barcelloni Corte (URA, Uliège), Dr. Pavel Kunysz (URA, Uliège), Thibault Marghem (URA, Uliège). Drawings by Thibault Marghem (URA, Uliège). TEH takes full responsibility for image copyrights.

0 FOREWORD

1 MATTER MATTERS

1.1 CIRCULAR THINKING

Cultural Reuse – *Village Underground (London)*

From Rubble to Park – *Nova Cvernovka (Bratislava)*

Zoristirio – *Communitism (Athens)*

1.2 OVERSIZE *(OBJETS RISQUÉS)*

The Common Roof – *Röda Sten Konsthall (Gothenburg)*

Tripolie – *A38 (Budapest)*

Zone of interest – *Stanica (Žilina)*

2 OUT OF THE BOX

2.1 GUERRILLA URBANISM

The Healing Project – *Basis Vinschgau Venosta (Silandro)*

Critical Revealing – *Malý Berlín (Trnava)*

The Coal Bridge – *Kulbroen (Aarhus)*

2.2 WICKED THINKING

Parasitic Transition – *Ifö Center (Bromölla)*

The Neighbourghood Office – *Institut for (X) (Aarhus)*

Chronotopie – *Le Plus Petit Cirque du Monde (Bagneux)*

3 TIME, TIME, TIME

3.1 SIDEREAL

Healing Heritage - *Not Quite (Fengersfors)*

Deep State - *Kulturfabrik (Esch-sur-Alzette)*

Cultural Energy Fund - *Pot Kommon (Seine Saint-Denis)*

3.2 EPHEMERAL

Six to Six – *Interzona (Verona)*

Meanwhile Forever – *Haceria Arteak (Bilbao)*

Cultural Sound Zone – *NGBG (Malmö)*

4 NEW COEXISTENCES

3.1 OBLIQUE HUMAN

Imagine Your City– *Creative Industry Košice (Košice)*

Epsilon – *Timis County Youth Foundation (Timişoara)*

Borderland Fabrika – *Bitamine Faktoria (Irun)*

3.2 CONSTELLATIONS OF BEINGS

Holistic Habitat – *ufaFabrik (Berlin)*

Incontri del Terzo Luogo – *Manifatture Knos (Lecce)*

Embassy of Non-Humans – *Farm Cultural Centre (Favara)*

0 FOREWORD

TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTON OF A "WORKING" MANUAL

Following Publication #1, which introduced the reader to the general aspects of Trans Europe Halles (TEH) and its relevance in the current discussion on the regeneration of the built environment, Publication #2 displays a first selection of concrete strategies, developed throughout TEH's network. These strategies are intended as a set of "lessons to be learned" from the many cultural regeneration prototypes led by the network's members over the last decades. Such lessons aim to contribute to a better understanding of what good practices of cultural regeneration can look like and how they could help with shaping an ambitious New European Bauhaus.

To highlight their contribution to the current discussion on the socio-ecological and economic transition and its main challenges, the strategies are organised in four categories which identify the document's four parts :

1. MATTER MATTERS
2. OUT OF THE BOX
3. TIME, TIME, TIME
4. NEW COEXISTENCES.

Each category addresses a specific set of issues within cultural regeneration.
The first category, MATTER MATTERS deals with strategies addressing the radical reuse of materials and built assets, the (re) distribution of matter and space in service of local communities and the refusal to "build more", in keeping with Malterre-Barthes' call for a global moratorium on (new) construction (Malterre-Barthes, 2023). The second, OUT OF THE BOX includes projects and spatial strategies displaying experimental approaches to urbanism and architecture that thwart expectations and known codes (Bouchain et al., 2014). These are strategies that tend to reinvent relationships between the actors conventionally involved in the building process (owners, architects, contractors, residents, users etc.) in ways that break down the usual hierarchies and allow for more collaborations, co- conceptions and co-constructions. The third, TIME, TIME, TIME features strategies integrating a plurality of temporalities within the design process (Morton, 2015). This displays articulations between different conceptions of time as well as different uses of time, from the very short (implementation of ephemeral events/ approaches) to the very long (approaches going beyond strictly human temporalities and entailing long-term processes such as the regeneration of an ecosystem, for example). Finally, NEW COEXISTENCES address strategies that actively contribute to a redefinition of the divides that modern rationality has constructed between the cultural and the natural (Descola, 2024), the social and the biological, the human and the non-human, towards a "new biopolitical project" (Vigano, 2023). Such initiatives feed important discussions on the role of architecture, urbanism and landscape design towards a more inclusive project concerning living entities and bodies in space. Space is here designed as to weave new relationships between living beings which in turn become a powerful reservoir of possibilities for subjects to emancipate themselves, beyond the human/non-human divide.
Each category is – in turn – divided into two sub-categories, with the ambition of describing particular and/or complementary aspects of the same. Each sub-category displays three strategies providing the entire publication with a total of 24 strategies (made possible by a total of approximately 60 interviews).

As such, this publication consists of a first set of concrete lessons from the TEH centres on "cultural regeneration" as shareable knowledge. Each strategy is presented and illustrated by means of one brief description:
- one interview with one (or more) protagonist(s) who fielded/participated in or experienced the strategy in depth;
- one diagram with the ambition of highlighting the strategy's main spatial elements;
- one evocative image and
- one timeline highlighting the strategy's main stages.

1 MATTER MATTERS

CIRCULAR THINKING

Cultural Reuse – *Village Underground (London)*

From Rubble to Park – *Nova Cvernovka, (Bratislava)*

Zoristirio – *Communitism (Athens)*

OVERSIZE (OBJETS RISQUÉS)

The Common Roof – *Röda Sten Konsthall (Göteborg)*

(Re)Tripolie – *A38 (Budapest)*

Zone of interest – *Stanica (Žilina)*

Today international initiatives are multiplying to emphasise the need to radically change our approach to construction practice (such as the "global moratorium on new construction" launched by Charlotte Malterre-Barthes, (Malterre-Barthes, 2023). In the same direction, the European Union's Circular Economy Action Plan (2015) has set a target for member countries to reduce construction waste by 70% by 2030, with an emphasis on reuse. Nonetheless critical questions about the act of "constructing" remain unaddressed (in North-West European countries only 1% of construction elements are reused).

The ecological transition calls for far-reaching changes in the production of the built environment, and more particularly in the architecture and construction design processes. "The best building is the one we don't have to build... or demolish, for that matter. It's the one that can withstand, adapt, transform and improve" (Somers, 2017). Demolishing existing buildings is always an admission of failure. Today, it affects many 20th century buildings, whose life cycle is considerably shorter than that of older buildings, which raises questions about their technical qualities, use or meaning. Compared with recycling, reusing seeks to preserve as much resident value as possible, as an integral part of its manner and form, whether material or immaterial.

Besides being essential for a new "Baukultur", reuse in architecture participates in a profound societal change, from linear to circular. This is a practice that has always existed in history, but which has been devalued for over a century by the linear process of extraction/production/consumption/disposal. It is, however, a practice that is making a comeback (albeit marginal) in the quest for a circular economy. While starting to attract the interest of a new generation of architects (or future architects), who are keen to get closer to more virtuous design and production processes, TEH centres have decades of experimentation behind them that deserves to be studied/understood/translated. This chapter (Matter Matters) aims to give a first, small glimpse of it through two sections: **"CIRCULAR THINKING"** and **"OVERSIZE".** While the first describes strategies related to the reuse/upcycling of construction materials and/or architectural components, the second portrays strategies related to the reuse of extremely large architectural objects, particularly difficult to reuse (oversized, complex forms etc.).

INSPIRING POSITION/CHARLOTTE MALTERRE-BARTHES (architect)

"We need to stop constructing in order to start building. – (Menna Agha, architect and researcher)

Back in March 2020, everything stopped. Or so it seemed. Worldwide, construction sites largely kept operating. The pause that offered the chance to question our societal model proposed by philosopher Bruno Latour, touting that "if everything is stopped, everything can be questioned, bent, selected, sorted, interrupted for good or accelerated," did not happen. Critical questions about the contribution of the building industry to the ongoing environmental and social crisis remained unaddressed. Responsible for 40% of carbon emissions worldwide, construction and the expansionist enterprise of extraction it fuels goes on unabated. Yet we know construction material's extractive practices are physically impacting entire regions. (...) While decarbonising the industry is an urgent task, a drastic change to building protocols is necessary. Beyond the provocation around the suspension of new building activity, the design studio seeks to articulate a radical thinking framework to work out alternatives: What happens if we stop building anew for a moment?"

(C. Malterre-Barthes, 2023b)

This part concerns creative strategies related to the reuse/upcycling of materials and/or architectural components. Careful dismantling processes, ingenious deployment of salvaged building components to drastically reduce the quantity of demolition waste, while offering quality building materials that have a negligible environmental impact. These strategies investigate the architectural/urban possibilities of a new material paradigm, aiming to improve the management of material resources and implement systemic solutions to "reclaim and reuse" more intensively. Reuse of reclaimed materials also requires flexibility in the design process, being prepared to adapt design according to available materials.

In circular thinking, buildings should make use of existing assets to reduce waste and demolition. They should also be enduring, to avoid being demolished themselves. Design should be flexible and adaptable to allow reconfiguration as technologies and the needs of users evolve. Beyond the building's life cycle, a circular approach to building components/materials is also to think of it as a material 'bank', in which elements can be taken apart and reused in future projects.

1.1 CIRCULAR THINKING

Cultural Reuse – *Village Underground (London)*
From Rubble to Park – *Nova Cvernovka, (Bratislava)*
Zoristirio – *Communitism (Athens)*

CULTURAL REUSE – Village Underground London, UK

Located in the trendy Shoreditch area of East London, Village Underground (VU) opened in 2007 with the ambition to provide affordable creative studios for struggling art professionals. Surpassing the initial goal, VU progressively became an accessible and iconic local and international cultural hub, able to host up to 700 attendees for a variety of events.

Through the reuse of discarded infrastructures and the integration of a wide variety of repurposed materials, the VU project grew in 2006 from a derelict Victorian coal warehouse, a rail viaduct and public bathroom buildings. Four repurposed train carriages and two shipping containers – together with relocated railway ties, staircases, wooden flooring, train seats and many other repurposed elements – actively reduced the quantity of materials needed to produce and transform the cultural space into something vibrant and inviting. In contrast with usual building practices, demolition waste was drastically minimised by radical dismantlement and reuse processes, contributing to an overall negligible environmental impact of the operation, and limited cost. The strategy used is particularly relevant for its ability to implement reuse operations at different scales (urban infrastructure, portions of buildings, architectural elements, materials, furniture components...) and at different stages of the construction process.

Through an active and radical repurposing of different architectural elements/components/ materials, VU has effectively contributed (and continues to contribute) not only to the development of the 'reuse' practice itself but also to the dissemination of its developing culture within the urban context. VU's acquired knowledge in select- ing/assembling/reconditioning but also, and especially, taking care of existing architectural and urban repurposed "elements" make them a key actor within an experimentation and research agenda.

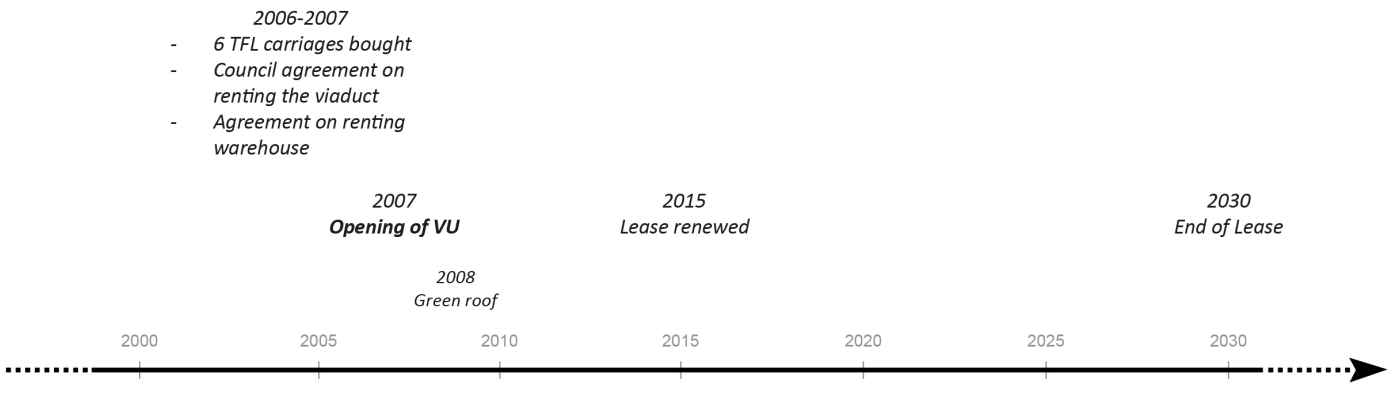
Image: Interior of an underground carriage. © Thibault Marghem
https://villageunderground.co.uk/

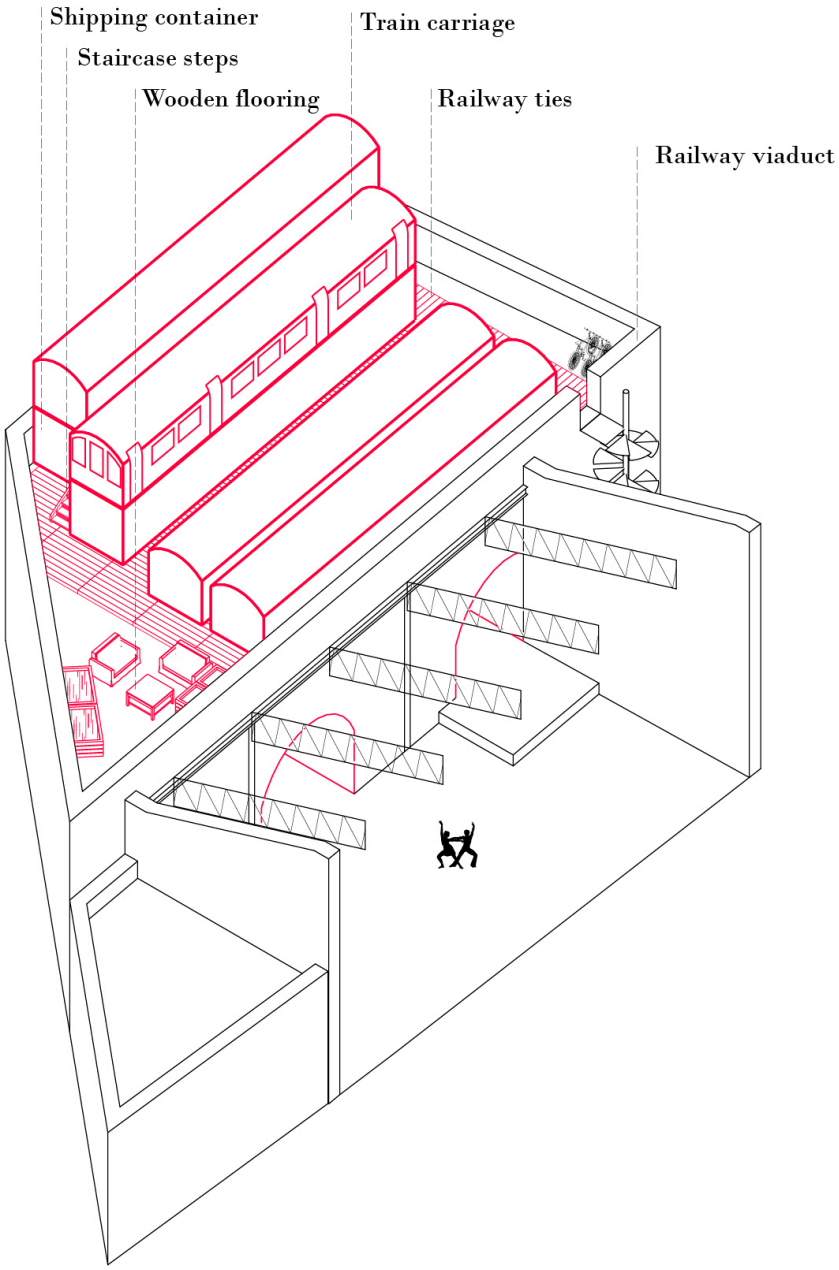
INTERVIEW: AMELIE SNYERS/Village Underground Managing Director (2021-present)

Amelie Snyers, VU's Managing Director, was an intern in the centre in 2010, a few years after it opened. For her, "reuse" cannot be considered a "sustainability strategy" within Village Underground: it was neither planned nor calculated nor did it come from ecological convictions. Rather, she describes it as a culture that came from a place of constraints – the ever-rising London real estate market – and responding to this by mobilising what was within reach: "it's really all about circumstances and finding the right opportunities," she says.
VU's reuse culture stems from the attitude (typical of cultural centre) that makes use of what is accessible and affordable to achieve specific cultural and social goals. An attitude that, in the case of VU, has translated into a set of "hybrid architectures": train carriages are bought to create affordable creation studios; a portion of the viaduct is adapted and regenerated to shelter them; a neighbouring warehouse is then annexed to abide with accessibility regulations without escalating costs; years later, a green roof is installed to counter noise pollution, etc.
This composite architecture of reused elements is the result of stretched financial circumstances, and not so much because of an aesthetic or ecological pursuit by VU, to the point that it can constitute a constraint in the centre's financial viability:
"It is a thin line, because in order for the business to work, we have to obtain a lot of corporate and private bookings. Because it's London, and our rent is crazy, we absolutely cannot survive as a business without the money from those hires. Thus the venue downstairs cannot look too eclectic. It's got to look sleek. It is still a beautiful brick interior; it's not like we're going to change that. But if we're going to continue reusing material, it has to be with a certain approach in terms of design and look; it needs to be consistent and coherent. [...] In the end, it's so much about saving money, as sad as it sounds. Like, we need to change our bar structure at the moment, but we can't afford a new one. So we're looking for a secondhand bar and it's impossible to find what we need; the dimensions never fit and the reused market has become too trendy and expensive. So it's going to be a weird mix of sections. If we had the money, then I don't think we would have gone the circular way, but would have used new materials, just from the perspective of making the venue look as professional as possible."

In this context, maintenance plays a vital, yet challenging role:
"It's a very old warehouse, so it gets very damp; you have mould growing on the bricks and if you don't wash them regularly, it just keeps growing, forming bad stains. So, for a long time, we organised collective annual cleans during one week – jet washing the walls, removing chewing gum, changing the entrance floor when it got too old. But that level of attention to detail kind of dropped; we can't afford to close the venue for too long anymore, and COVID and the new London regulations on concert venues really hit us.
One part of the building we have never maintained ourselves is the train carriages upstairs. But the tenants that rent them as co working spaces are very active in their maintenance. We have left them do whatever they wanted, so they all look very different.
In general, Village Underground, it's a quite straightforward building. There's no extension to be built, there's nowhere to grow. It is going to be the way it is, until it isn't. So, you know, all we can do is look after all those bits and bobs."

At the end of the day, this looking after has required constant work, however frustrating and financially motivated it may have been. But it was still worthwhile, in Amelie's eyes:
"We can still work from those 1983 tube cars; we can run events from a Victorian warehouse, and everything is still solid. It's still functional; we tend to forget it but it's incredible that all this still stands and works so well".




Shipping container
Staircase steps
Wooden flooring
Train carriage
Railway ties
Railway viaduct

FROM RUBBLE TO PARK – Nova Cvernovka, Bratislava, Slovakia

Established in 2016 in the administrative buildings of a former industrial complex, Nova Cvernovka brings together a community of artists and residents on the outskirts of Bratislava city centre by offering public spaces, activities and services as well as over 150 art and creative studios, hosting over 30,000 visitors annually. Nova Cvernovka's 12 hectare public park is one of the centre's key features: wild and including various services (children's play areas, a community garden, a performance stage, resting spaces, a dog area...), it was in part developed upon the rubble of the school complex's transformation through the 2020 "From Rubble to Park" project.

The construction waste created from the building transformation was first stored in heterogeneous piles, preparing the tons of pieces of concrete, bricks, ceramics, metal, glass, plastic and plaster to be moved to a landfill site. This rendered materials' recycling extremely difficult. In an effort to counter a wasteful and costly use of land and resources, Nova Cvernovka's team made the decision to keep the rubble on site and take responsibility for its future. To do so, several experiments were developed combining ecological, artistic and social efforts with the explicit aim of sorting the discarded materials and reusing them on site. Wood salvaged from ceilings were turned into fences and gardening pots, full bricks were hand-sorted to be repurposed later while smaller mineral elements and fine powders became instrumental in composing the layers of a water-permeable stabilised outdoor threshing floor, a new soil.

The "From Rubble to Park" initiative shows a striking enterprise in collective responsibility for past actions and dealing with their results in meaningful and innovative ways while preserving raw material primary sources from further strain. From a research/innovation perspective, this project is particularly relevant for its ability to test the reuse/recycling culture not only within the construction of architectural elements but also within the "construction" of new soils.

Image: Nova Cvernovka – Attack Decay Sustain Release Nasuti 2020. © Ján Šipöcz - https://novacvernovka.eu/

INTERVIEW: BORIS MELUŠ/Project Coordinator and Co-Founder of Foundation Cvernovka

Boris Meluš co-founded Foundation Cvernovka and is responsible for the development of its campus, along with Rubble to Park project leaders Juraj Hariš and Lukáš Radošovský. He describes the initiative as a form of "repair" led both for economic reasons and to take responsibility for actions of the past:

"Ideally, you should sort the rubbles right away; it's easier as you demolish than when it's all mixed together. And, you know, in other places, tenants would probably have told us 'Just use my rent to handle that garbage, don't bother me with this'. But here, there was this kind of... sense of responsibility for what happened in the past and the idea of... 'let's try to do this differently. We're all working there, we made these piles together so we should sort them out together.' We organised several voluntary days; people came, and we did all necessary sorting by hand for the big pieces first, then again after the machines separated the piles by size. This hand-sorting was hard but such an essential part of the reuse process. Somebody said it quite nicely: 'we just did the work that we were supposed to do back then'. In that sense, time is also a sort of resource. Sure, a situation can force you to borrow it from the future sometimes, but you have to give it back eventually."

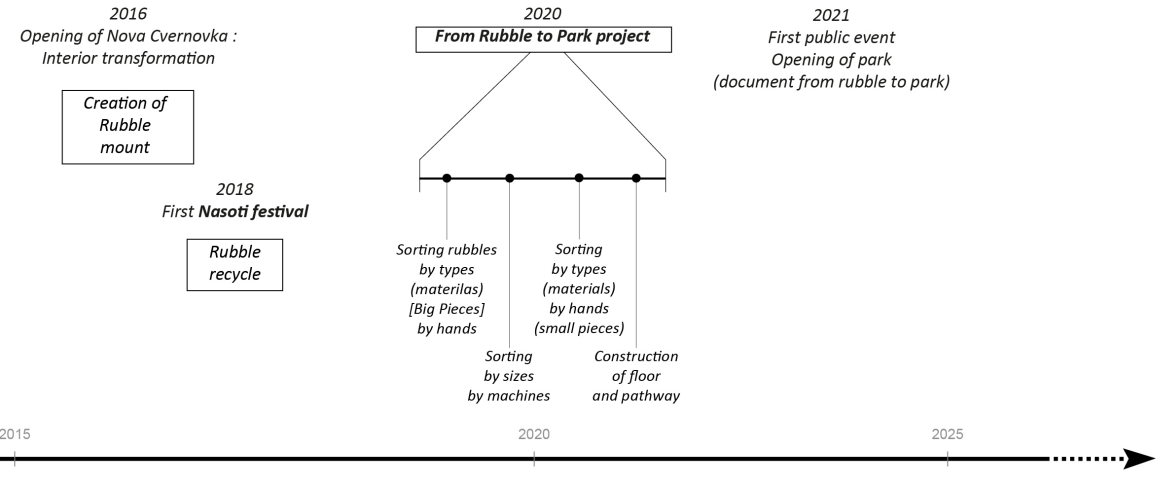
For Boris, the "nothing should be wasted" attitude is a local "ethos". While this ethos came from shared ecological values, its consciousness was also developed through experimentation:

"At the beginning, there was a festival, where we featured the rubble-cycle; it was an experiment to get different fractions and materials separated and see what was in there. It was the first step for the whole process, but it also had an important community role: it was quite fun, it looked nice and interesting as a visual object so it made a lot of people interested in it. By seeing different layers and separating them themselves, it made them believe in the project. Because suddenly, big piles of garbage were transformed into smaller piles of materials and started to make sense for the people."

This imaginary shift from trash to material was central to convince all stakeholders to risk investing time and resources into an experimental project. But the transformation extended beyond symbolism: as licensed heavy machines and contractors were hired to process the tons of remains on-site, those legally became usable like any other construction material. However, local legislation would not easily allow for free-standing constructions due to restrictive permit requirements. The choice to repurpose the demolition "rubble" in service of a less constrained park design embraced those limitations while going further than most reuse-based projects:

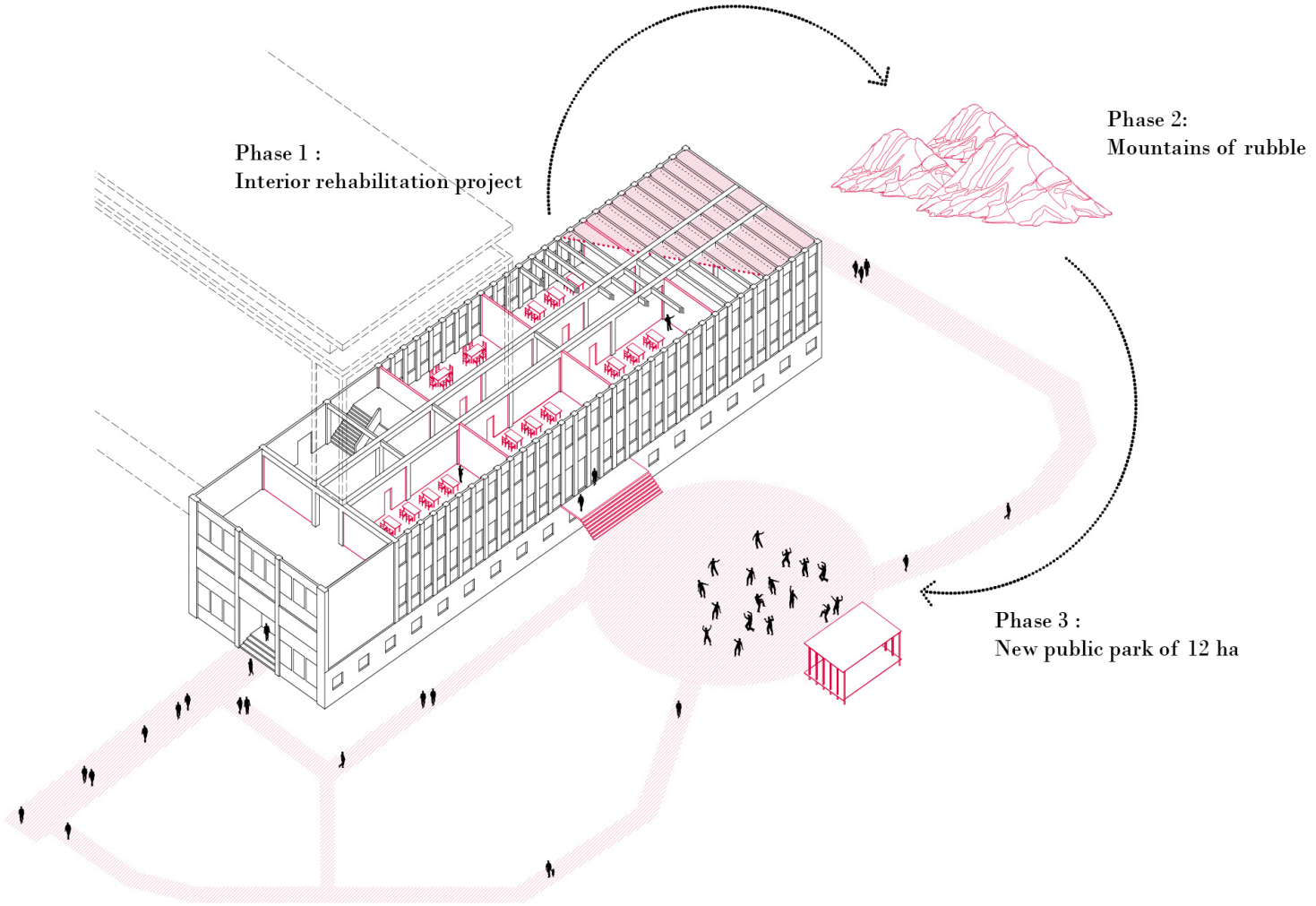
"Because it is a threshing floor, we were able to use not only big pieces of bricks or concrete but also all the fine powders. Most recycling companies don't think about it; those fractions of concrete or bricks are usually unusable, yet they play an important role in the layers of the threshing floor, in its stability and in the way it absorbs water."

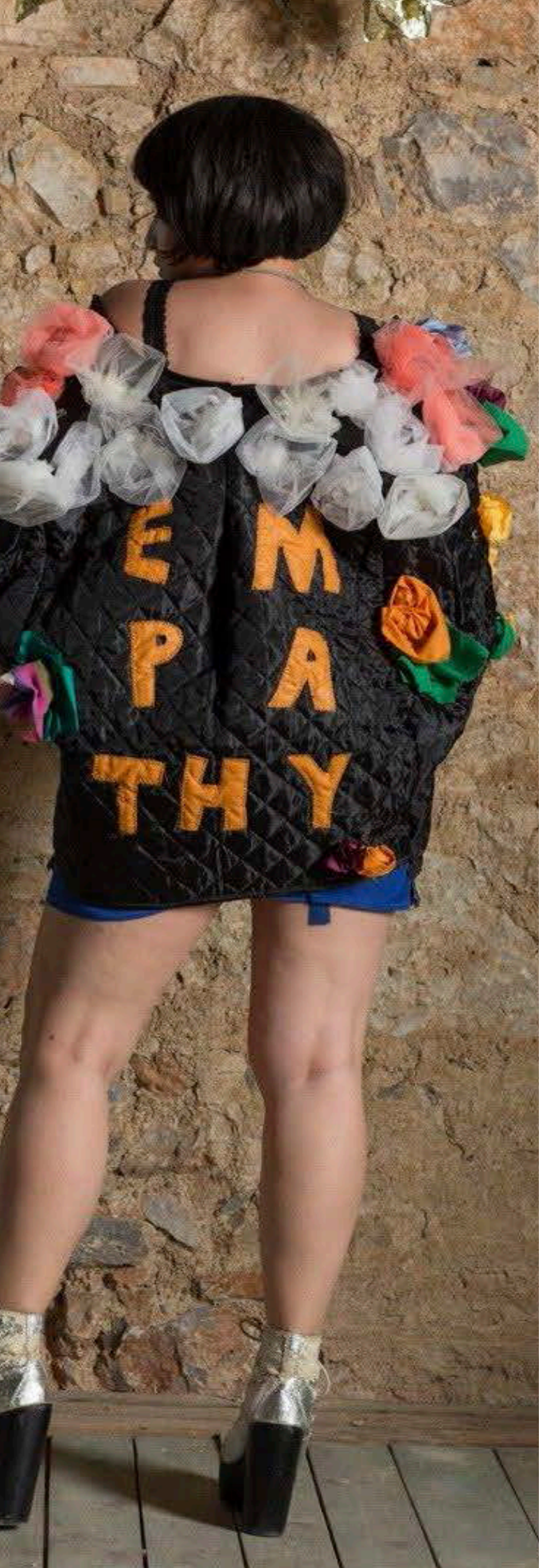
Inspired by the 'mlats' – beaten earth pathways common in Slovakian historical sites – the threshing floor was skillfully composed of layers of mixed rubble with the help of local engineers. Its permeability contributes to water infiltration but makes for a more brittle floor. Ideally, it also requires regular maintenance: weeds should be pulled out annually to avoid organic build ups that would threaten its integrity; under dry conditions, the floor should be moistened to avoid its crumbling; exceptional breakages also need fixing, made possible by the remaining stocks of material. Despite challenges with maintaining this rhythm, Boris reports continuous performances and few con- se-



quences. Experimental and recent, the project still needs to stand the test of time yet its benefits have already inspired locals, with the support of Bratislava's officials, to repeat the experiment in a nearby children's playground.
The rest of the processed rubble, however, is still stored on site. Boris is confident this will serve its purpose in due course. This attitude doesn't come without obstacles, however:

"The community sometimes fights about this; there are people that would prefer to have a completely clean space, saying 'don't store anything, we don't need it anymore'. But, you know, sometimes those things, when we store them, we don't know what will happen with them, but later they become part of the solution of a problem we didn't realise we had yet. It's kind of like this... One person's trash is another's treasure."





ZORISTIRIO/Communitism, Athens, Greece

Zoristirio ('the struggling place') takes its name from the Arabic pronunciation of 'thoristirio' ('the giving place'). This serendipitous play on words was adopted to allude to the intercultural nature of this reuse strategy, as well as the way it was both rooted-in and answered the struggles of Athens' dispossessed populations. Initially it was a simple storage space for clothes collected for homeless populations by the initiative Allos Anthropos ('the other human'). However, in late 2017, it evolved and expanded, through the expertise of two displaced Syrian citizens, Belal Ahmad and Magdi Alshaltie, and resident artist Maria Juliana Byk, into an integrated refugee solidarity system. Zoristiro became a central space to collect and supply clothing for local struggling populations (whether refugees, homeless or low-income families), which then worked with Ithaka Laundry (an NGO for people in need), Chora (a refugee-led NGO offering solidarity spaces, such as a cultural centre, free shop, social kitchen) and assorted refugee housing initiatives to create a local reuse and solidarity ecosystem that ultimately provided over 300 people every week with decent, repurposed clothing.

After Belal Ahmad moved to Ireland, the project was managed by Maria Juliana Byck and Farid Masoudi, a 17-year-old displaced Iranian, with the support of Magdi Alshaltie. In 2019, it was finally associated with the Communitism-based 'fabric hyper upcycling' initiative, 'Butterflies and Camels', which had the ambition of turning unwanted clothing items into new wearable pieces of high-end fashion. The social, cultural and economic reuse ecology developed over the years by Zoristirio and B&C were able not only to test and develop cutting-edge reuse strategies within the clothing (up to the fashion design) field but also to raise awareness and trigger wider discus- sion around sustainable and creative clothing reuse.

Over the years, thanks to the interest and dynamism generated by this initiative and the related activation of public and semi-public spaces, the regeneration of a socially challenging road was made possible in the neighbourhood.

Image : Butterflies & Camels Runway Show ©Communitism
https://communitism.space/

INTERVIEW: ELENI VOULTSIDOU / Project leader

Zoristirio's former project leader Eleni Voultsidou recounts the immediate success of the volunteer-based initiative, and the eventual professionalisation it required:

"When Belal and Magdi were running the project in 2017, it was a free shop; people that needed clothes could find and take them for their family, for themselves. It became very big; a lot of people wanted to get clothes but [were] also donating them."

While many clothes found new owners, unwanted items started accumulating in Communitism. This triggered the development of clothing repair and design workshop Butterfly & Camels. Organisers, artists Tom Hamilton, Angel Torticollis and Natassa Dourida, recall:

"We had that really big amount of unused old clothes. Tom and others had also found a lot of fabric on the streets... You know, we are those kind of people that collect stuff that are thrown away. We collect them and see how we can use and transform them. So we designed the workshops to reuse and upcycle these pieces.

It's partly just using techniques on the clothing; changing the silhouette, the cut, the style... But also incorporating unconventional materials we found. It's using the clothing almost as a vehicle to enable us to recycle materials that might not be recycled, like wood or metal scraps from other makerspaces."

Attended by experimented textile artists and novices alike, these workshops changed the free shop from an isolated solidarity initiative to an essential link into a circular ecology of practices:

"The passing on to refugees was really the 'reuse' portion of the 'reuse – recycle – recover' chain. What we tried to do was to take the clothes that weren't even wanted by refugees in need of them to make sure that they didn't get lost, then go into the next phase, which is the recycling-upcycling really; to make desirable things that were currently unwanted."

From there, runway shows were organised in 2019 then 2021. Through them, Communitism fed this ecology of practice both by displaying and selling the upcycled creations and their circular principles to hundreds of fashionistas, and by fostering social cohesion:

"The workshops would take up all of March and April. They were centred around peer to peer learning, getting inspiration from each other. But they were also a training in social cohesion that we needed for the runway in May: we did it all together. We had a scenography group taking care of the space set up, a styling team for the models, a self-organised bar, etc. It involved all of the building and the community.

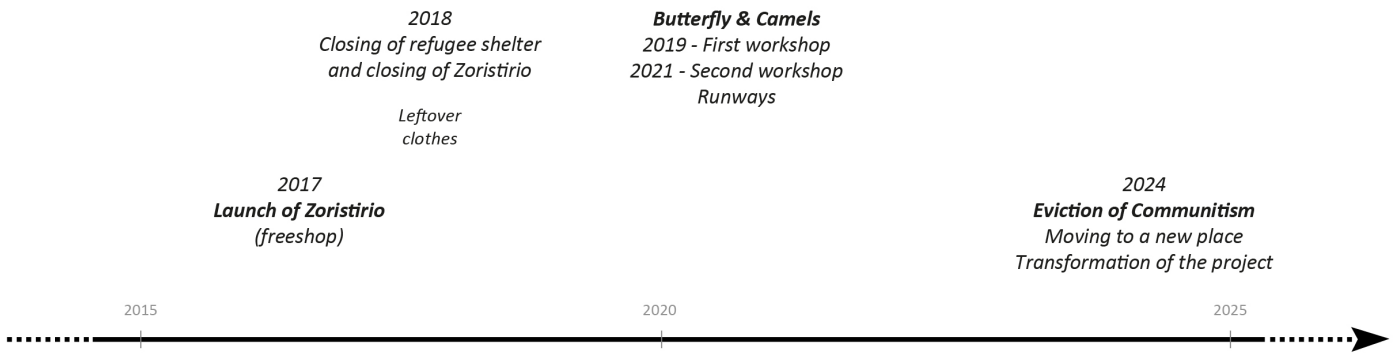
That's central to our methodology: through practice, collaboration and peer to peer learning, by making materials available and letting people use them and do whatever they want... It was a way of becoming a community."

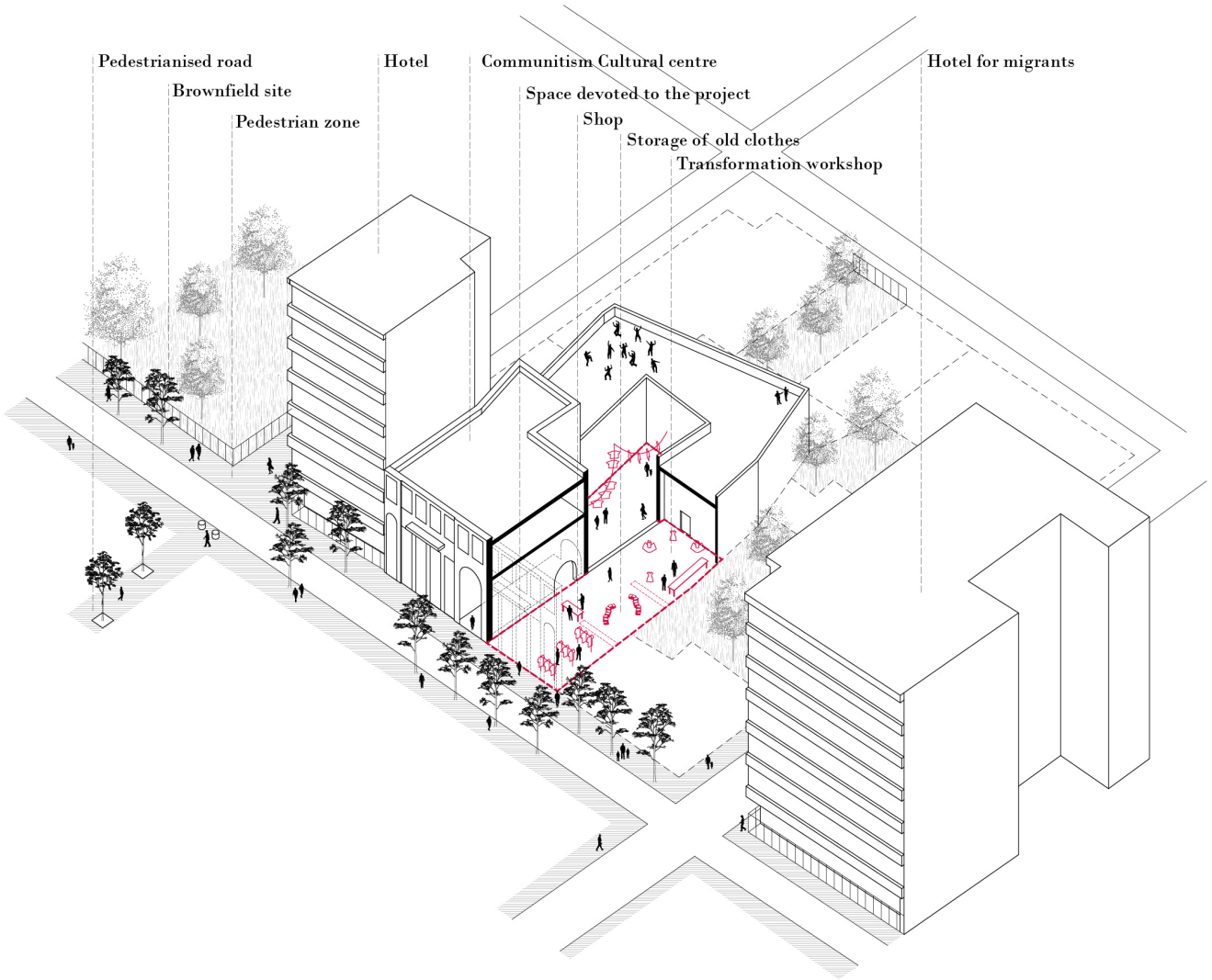
This enthusiasm around circular fashion was soon seen as an opportunity to structure Communitism. For Tom, "we realised that the last stage was to bring it all together, to recognise that all of what we did could be combined, feeding and supporting each other, as a virtuous economic circle."

The project, however, never found stability. In 2018 already, the free shop was closed following both the increasing workload on a limited number of volunteers, and the closure of the neighbouring refugee shelter.

"The free shop was open to the public twice a week; they had to handle that, and the sorting, connection with the social laundry... But nobody working there was getting paid for it; it was just not sustainable in the long term."

The 2020 lockdown followed by Communitism's eviction in 2024 further hindered possibilities for stabilisation. The moving, away from its community, and into a smaller space led to a transformation of the initiative towards a more continuous streamlined approach involving less storage of clothing and events held in public spaces. Untested, this perspective aims to provide an efficient circular economy model.




Pedestrianised road
Brownfield site
Pedestrian zone
Hotel
Communitism Cultural centre
Space devoted to the project
Shop
Storage of old clothes
Transformation workshop
Hotel for migrants

This section concerns creative strategies related to the reuse of architectural objects particularly difficult to reuse (oversized, complex form etc.); it addresses design opportunities and challenges represented by spaces that are too large in relation to current needs, such as empty buildings and structures. These spaces are prominently present in many contemporary urban contexts, and their future is open to speculation. This section displays TEH cultural centres' strategies that have considered the excess of available space as an architectural and social opportunity and mobilised a reconfiguration of uses/social practices towards new dynamics and possibilities (while considering the limitation of economic means). Three strategies are proposed concerning very different scales and processes.

1.2 OVERSIZE (OBJETS RISQUÉS)

The Common Roof – *Röda Sten Konsthall, Göteborg*
(Re)Tripolie – *A38, Budapest*
Zone of interest – *Stanica, Žilina*

VAR
MED
OCH
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THE COMMON ROOF/Röda Sten Konsthall, Gothenburg, Sweden

An abandoned boiler house from the 1940s was destined for demolition after being used by rave parties and spontaneous art practices. Throughout the 1990s, Röda Sten Konsthall withstood a long battle for its cultural reconversion. Since 2000, it has become a major exhibition and educational space in Gothenburg (and the organiser of the Gothenburg International Biennial for Contemporary Art). Overlooking the Göta älv river as it flows into the sea, the functionalist architecture of bricks and concrete consists of a simple, but vast 12m high hall. While financial constraints would not allow for a complete renovation of this sizable infrastructure, its vastness was put into good use in favour of exceptional curatorial practices, constructing/exhibiting/using 1/1 architectural models and actively testing and reshaping the space every time.

Given the severity of Nordic weather, the hall acts as a public space of sorts where concepts of indoor and outdoor blend into one and where changing spatial strategies help fight heat loss rather than costly wall insulations. This is better seen through examples such as architect Marjetica Potrc's use of the space during the 'Common Roof' installation. The artist took advantage of the large space to explore how to plan and construct a common house, using participatory design with visitors' involvement in the shaping of the architectural forms while developing a dialogue with residents surrounding the building. The possibility of building 1/1 scale prototypes in the mild climate of the large central space, even during the coldest days, allowed this initiative (and others) to flourish.

Thanks to the experimental attitude of the art centre's protagonists, Röda's large hall has proven not only its strong adaptive capacity to expanding and reducing space necessities (exhibitions, gatherings, discussions, workshops, new office spaces etc.) but also an interesting ability to rework the relationship between "inside" and "outside" space. The capacity to use and consequently re-imagine indoor spaces as "outdoors" within the centre's activities provides – together with spatial flexibility – compelling research and design trajectories, especially in countries where the climate severely limits possibilities and related practices.

Image : Model 1/1 built during 'The Common Roof' project.
©Marjetica Potrc / Röda Sten Konsthall
https://rodastenkonsthall.se/

NTERVIEW: MIA CHRISTERSDOTTER NORMAN/ Röda Sten Konsthall Director (2005-present)

After a period of mostly volunteer-based operation, in 2005 Röda Sten Konsthall designated Mia Christersdotter Norman as its first Director. She has supervised the expansion and professionalisation of the space since then. She recalls how, in the 1990s, Gothenburg City Council was geared towards a commercial development plan of the industrial area, kickstarting Röda's battle for the building conservation:

"The initial group came from a range of different fields in society, and they had access to a wide and varied network that they informed and included in their battle. The group consisted, among others, of a prominent Art Museum director, a politician, a businessman and many others who saw their vision for the boiler house.

It helped that it was in fashion to turn industrial buildings into cultural centres. But really, they managed to make their dream visible both because they gathered media exposure and had access to people with connections. In this way they succeeded and got the right to use the house from the municipality."

This allowed for a basic renovation of the building; the space was cleaned, windows, staircases and a central elevator to move around the art pieces were added.

"We didn't have any money, so we got loans from the city to renovate step by step, but it was really a slow process. At first, all the available space was mainly used for exhibitions; there was just a tiny, tiny space for the staff.

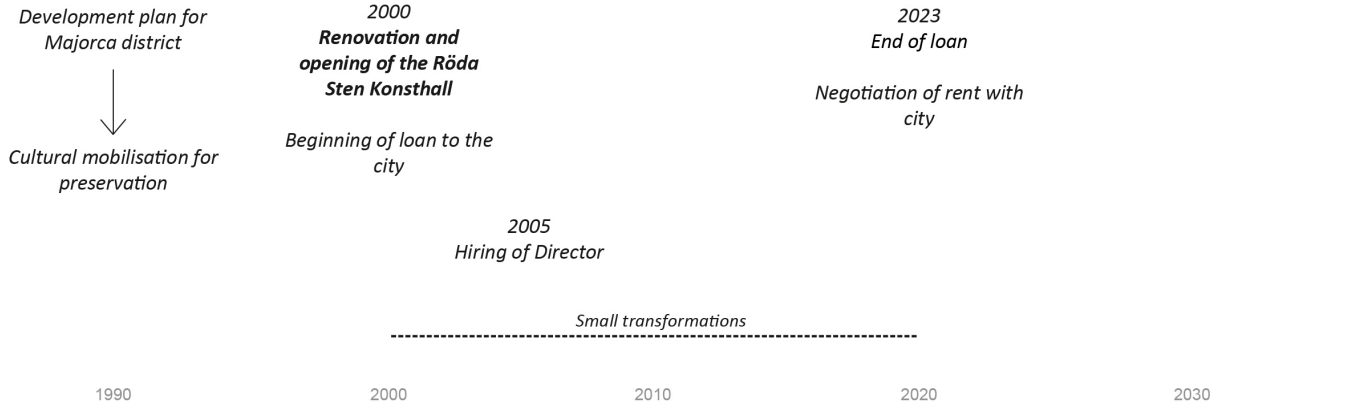
To this day, the transformation is a continuous process of small improvements; we are doing it all the time, using every little space... we started with this office but smaller. Then we extended the office because we got more staff, which was sometimes faced with re sistance from some members of the association; they didn't want us to take too much of the exhibition space. Then we needed restrooms, as well as storage. So we started to add floors where we could, and it went on through the whole building. By now, it's really like an inverted favela of mezzanines with storage spaces."

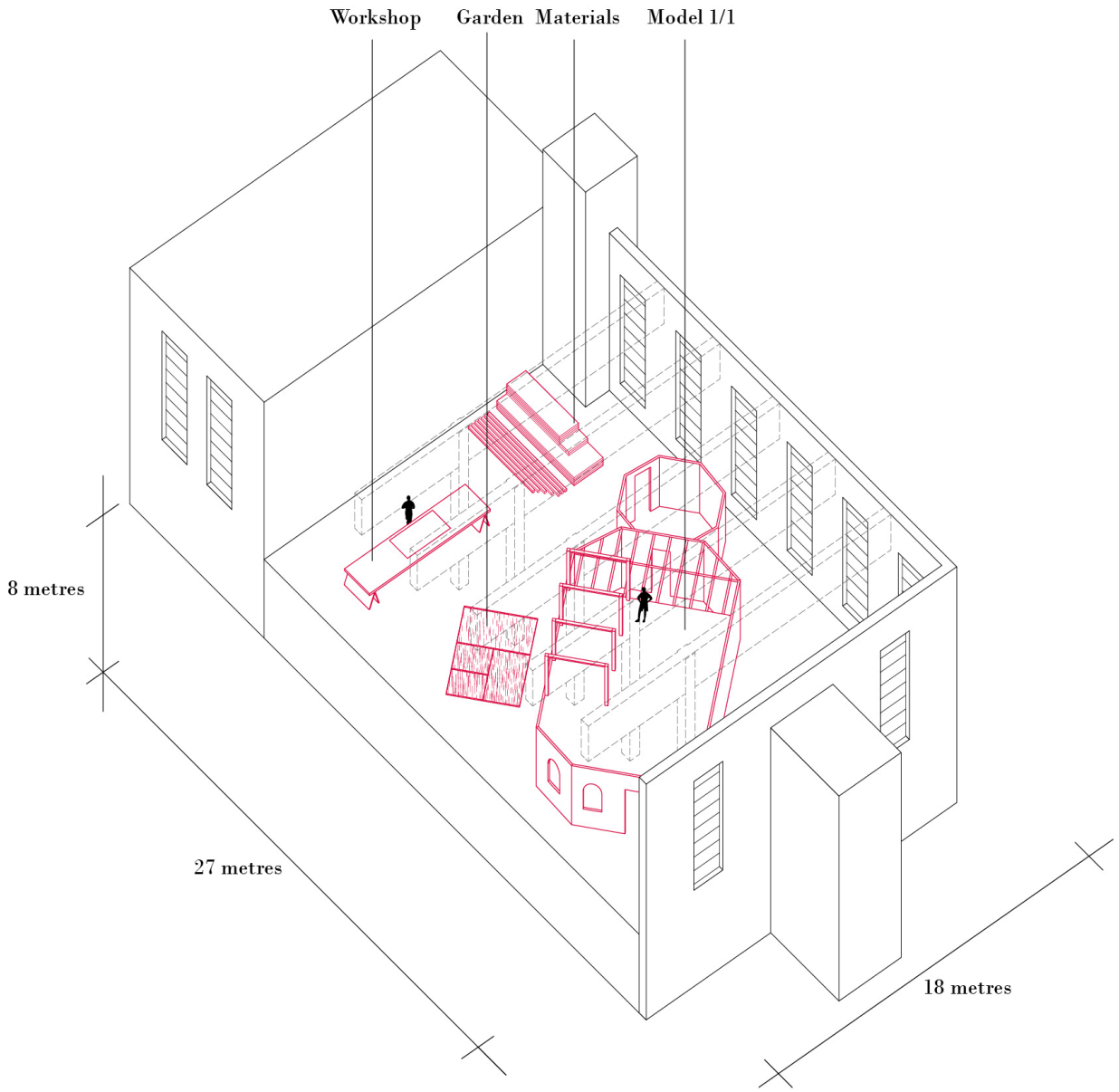
The space was adapted for public use, including showrooms and a restaurant, while keeping many traces of the past, from the naked brick walls to the graffiti adorning them. For Mia, this a common attitude in art spaces; industrial halls, by their size and roughness, are seen as a good fit for such purposes. It does, however, imply specific curatorial practices:

"In one way, it allows us to do rough things. We can drill, we can make dust, noise... but in fact the bricks are starting to become a problem; they became too fragile through repeated drilling. Now, we can't allow drilling in the walls. Add to that the huge windows, we're not left with much hanging space, so we need to constantly build exhibition walls, or use our more 'traditional' floors – two smaller and white galleries.

But we're not mainly directed towards this kind of art anyway. We do a lot more of projections, installations, sculptures or performances. I mean, the ceiling is 12 metres high! It takes some grand gestures to fill that!"

Such gestures include architectural experiment. STEALTH unlimited's "(Dis)assembled" or "Marjetica" as Potrc's "Common Roof" all took advantage of this particular space to offer unique experiences. Activist and architect Antonio Cirugeda and its "Recetas Urbanas" initiative also exemplifies how the unfinished, grand character of the boiler house fosters unprecedented spatial possibilities through temporary extensions of the infrastructure.




Workshop
Garden
Materials
Model 1/1
8 metres
27 metres
18 metres

(RE)TRIPOLIE – A38, Budapest, Hungary

At the centre of A38 Cultural Centre is the transformation of a 1968 Artemovsk class stone-carrier ship into an alternative cultural space on the Danube River. Since its opening in 2003, the 14-by-85 metre boat has developed into a popular concert hall with two supplementary stages, a restaurant and an additional exhibition space, taking advantage of its location to avoid noise complaints so common for urban event venues. As such, and thanks to the regeneration/adaptation of an industrial ship into a public space, A38 has become a major cultural centre in Budapest hosting a variety of coveted events – from gastronomic manifestations to theatre plays, ar- tistic and musical performances, literary discussions and film screenings. The reconversion of this imposing soviet ship represents in itself an important architectural and technical achievement contributing to make A38 a staple of Budapest nightlife as well as to highlight the capacity of monofunctional infrastructures to accommodate new mixed-use futures.

Image : A38, a cultural centre on the Danube.
©Gábor Nagy / a38
https://www.a38.hu/en

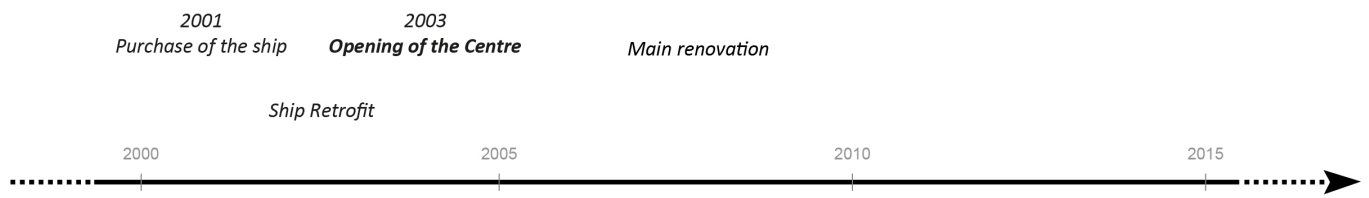
INTERVIEW: LAZLO VÁNCZA / A38 Co-founder

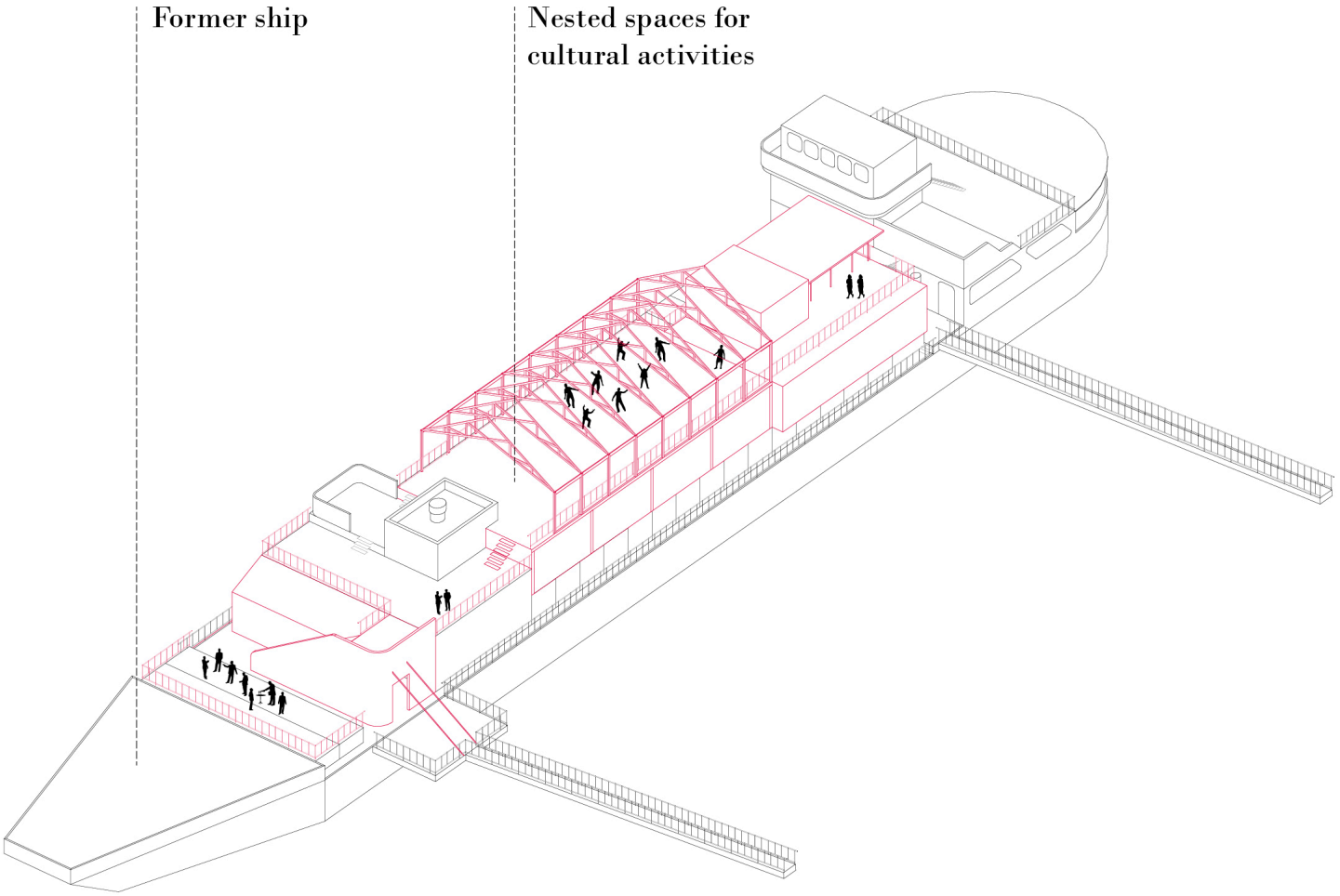
Lazlo Váncza is the architect and co-founder of A38, along with Attila Bógnar. In 2022, he recounted both the financial conditions and the ambitions from which the project emerged:
"Initially, we made design studies for the utilisation of basement premises [but] we felt that they could not work in the long term. Getting ownership would be a terrible expenditure, and a constant conflict with the tenants was guaranteed."
A floating space was thus the answer chosen to avoid the struggles faced by many cultural centres. Reusing an abandoned ship and taking advantage of its sturdy structure, various spaces and capacity to be located in low-density areas were key to the success of the project. However, Lazlo and Attila's ambitions made for a few difficulties in finding the right boat:
"We first tried Danube barges, but because the locks are narrower on this stretch of the Danube, the width of the barges is smaller. The problem with vessels of similar proportions was that the concert hall would have become too long, and we couldn't handle this problem acoustically. Acoustician Endre Szabó recommended we go east, where the locks are wider and therefore boats are more spacious."

The choice of the Artemovsk ship came from marrying the needs of the cultural project and the architectural properties of the Ukrainian boat, themselves shaped by the infrastructural nautical system it was part of. Two years of transformation were needed for a specialised company to convert the ship's structure into a cultural space:
"We completely overhauled the ship's support structure after dismantling the lower part. This is how we were able to create the concert hall. That was the most important aspect. [...] The hull itself, the steel frame, was completely inadequate to meet the acoustic requirements. That's why we opted for the house-in-house system, meaning that we slid the concert hall into the skeleton of the ship, flexibly mounted on rubber blocks, which is what made the acoustics so good."

While these interventions, and later successive ones such as the addition of contemporary exhibition space on the ship's deck, deeply modified the original structure, a lot of importance was given to the safekeeping of many key elements to the history and character of the Soviet boat:
"The positioning of the stage also had its own logic: in the old days, when this was a transport ship, the crew bridge was aft, from where the sailors could get down to the engine room. Today, this space is the backstage, which has retained its original, industrial feel and that's why it's so popular with the musicians. [...]
We've deliberately left [the navigating instruments panels] in place. We wanted to preserve the atmosphere of the space. The original hull represents the world of shipbuilding in the socialist industry of the 60s. From a design point of view, it is a found object, and we did not want to eradicate its values in any way. It was no coincidence either that Endre Szabó chose the Komárom as the most suitable shipyard for the construction of the first phase, as there were still master shipbuilders working there who were familiar with this shipbuilding technology, the use of materials, and the design principles."

While the ship's retrofit might constitute a cheaper alternative to usual buildings, it comes with stronger maintenance requirements, amplified by the number of visitors. The inspection becomes a crucial cyclical moment for A38, which defines its ability to stay afloat:
"Every ten years there is a big inspection. Then the thickness of the plates below the water surface is measured. If there is a problem, the ship has to go into dry dock, but if it's in good condition, with sufficient corrosion protection, it can stay in the water for another five years. As far as I know, a ship can be in the water for up to fifteen years without interruption."




Former ship
Nested spaces for
cultural activities

ZONE OF INTEREST – Stanica, Žilina, Slovakia

Next to Žilina city centre, Stanica ('The station') was created in 2003 within the former Žilina–Zárečie railway station to host an independent cultural centre. Amidst the noise and bustle of trains passing by and cars speeding through the adjacent Rondel overpass highway encircling the building, the space was developed to welcome artistic experimentations and activist groups with the explicit aim to act as a crossroads for people and ideas of all perspectives.

In 2005 the centre began to gradually appropriate its hard and mineral surroundings through – at first – the transformation of the unused spaces below the overpass bridge into a multifaceted outdoor cultural place. After the repair of the pedestrian underpass, the collective went on developing a two-hectare community park and garden in place of a dumping ground, creating a covered outdoor performance stage below the Rondel overpass. Throughout 2009 the initiative continued with the construction of the S2 building within this space, effectively doubling the capacity of the centre and acting as a stage for contemporary art, events and performances. Built out of mostly reused beer crates, straw bales and railway sleepers, through the volunteer workforce of the local community and within a small budget, the space was rapidly adopted for various events – from cultural festivals to weddings.

This initiative brings forward strategies related to the regeneration of major mobility infrastructures' spatial and material waste. As such, it testifies the strong potential of severely underutilised and neglected spaces to be transformed into vibrant public spaces despite the daunting size and impact of modernist infrastructural giants.

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Image : Summer cinema. / Stanica Žilina-Zárečie
https://www.stanica.sk/

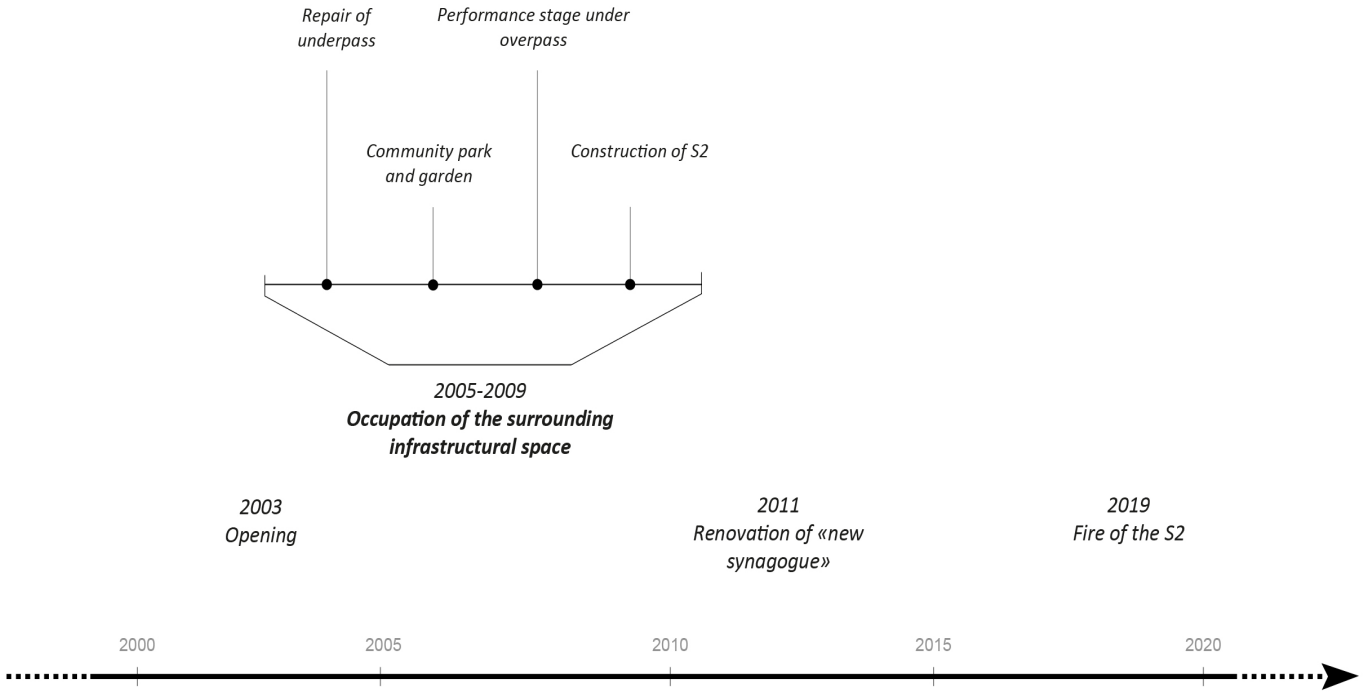
INTERVIEW: ROBERT BLASKO / Stanica Co-Founder

Robert Blasko is the Co-Founder of Stanica and Director of the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Trucs Spheriques, the organisation behind the centre. He describes the extension of Stanica from a former train station to its larger environment as a "step by step process":

"Today you see a beautiful park but back then it was a garbage space. There were a lot of bushes and trees and not much lighting in the underpass leading to the city centre, thus people were afraid to enter. There was also a lot of water accumulating during rainy days. It felt like a 'broken space'.
The first interventions were aimed at fixing the building –only, we didn't imagine occupying the space around. We didn't even plan windows facing the backyard. But then, you start to use it, you look around and you understand [the] potential of [the] space.
Then once a volunteer said 'Ah, maybe we could make a park even if these lands don't belong to us' and the process started. A similar reflection concerned the empty space under the bridge. It doesn't belong to us but, because we needed a bigger space for theatre, and for the organisation of the TEH annual meeting, a crazy idea emerged to make [it] happen under the highway. We said, 'okay, let's do a temporary structure under the bridge.' So, at the end of the process, there was this great S2 building, standing under the highway and using its structure and protection. It really was a huge project, made possible by volunteers and amateurs.
Then, we started to gradually occupy the bridge, to create a vertical green wall, a U ramp for skateboards, a stage, a screen that we use for projections... all thanks to this special infrastructural residual spaces and underused structures."
The use of the overpass bridge comes with several advantages. Its vast deck serves as a roof for many activities protecting them from water and snow but also to collect rainwater then used in the centre's gardens or for the toilets. Its solid concrete pillars constitute important walls against which smaller structures can lie, and acts as a screen for projections. In general, the resources that allowed this formidable structure to be built here are put in favour of further uses: its size and sturdiness welcome ideally lighter, temporary and experimental interventions suited for community building.
Taking over underused and or 'abandoned' spaces is, however, not necessarily without conflicts. While many local residents appreciated Stanica's initiatives, some long-time users, such as street artists, expressed a refusal of sorts:
"Street artists tried to destroy the vertical garden with chemicals. They said, 'you took our wall and we were here before you'. But what they were doing was prosecuted by the police. They had to pay fines and so on to make graffiti. So, we convinced the City to make a legal graffiti zone in the underpass so they'd get more space and less problems. That settled the situation; we're on good terms with the graffiti community now. They didn't repeat the chemical attacks."

Other sources of conflicts, such as material theft, night littering or bonfires, had also to be handled by Stanica, in other ways.
"One big step was to make a fence around the park. In a way, we were saying (illegally) 'this is our space'. The local people, particularly families with kids, felt safe because kids could just run around without the danger of cars and trains around. So it was a paradoxical situation. By creating a fence on one side we occupied land which was not ours but on the other side we offered the entire community a space of better quality and safety."

Some conflicts, however, found harsher outcomes. In an unexpected

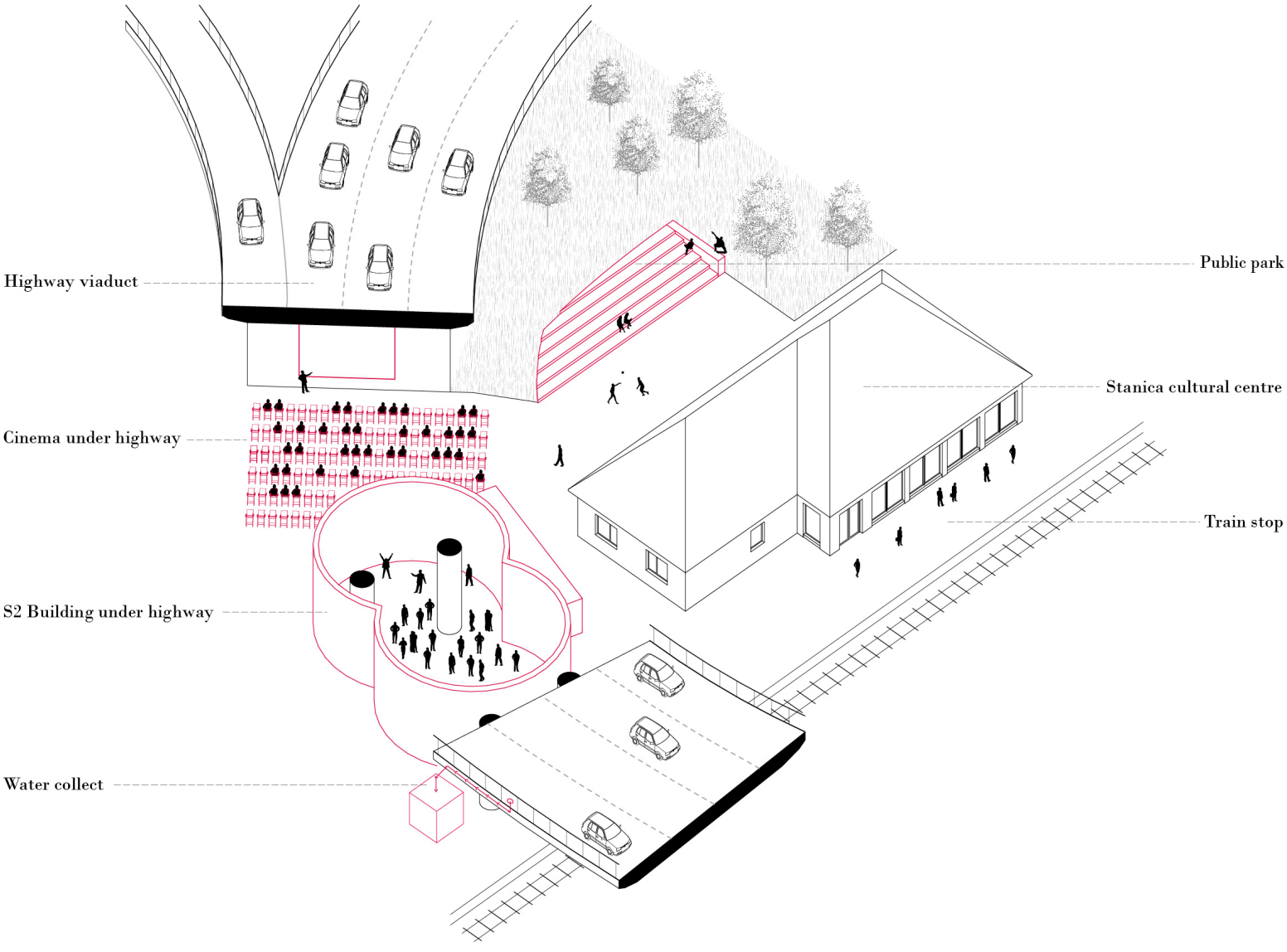


turn of events, the building under the overpass, the S2, was set on fire by unknown people, in what could be an act of protest, or of recklessness. However, to Robert, this event is a testimony to the power of experimental public spaces:
"This place is full of experiments, and many of them failed. This is the story of the place: You try to do something in a different way – of course, often you'll fail, but there is good coming out of it. It's easy for the bureaucrats to say 'you cannot do it' or 'it is not possible'. But what I say is, 'let's see, let's test it and then we can adjust'. And then we can learn something new."

In general, the attitude of Stanica towards its environment can be described as one of struggle and – at the same time – creative and experimental answer and to a harsh context: car traffic, mineral spaces, concrete structures, dangerous or anxiogenic activities are all addressed through further steps of transformation of their direct environment, turning a post-industrial, functionalist and anti-social site into a vibrant community space. An overpass is turned into a multifunctional cultural space while an underpass – lit up with artistic interventions – into a pedestrian, bike and trolley friendly access and space.

To Robert, this attitude is also an example of how local communities take into their own hands the shortcomings of the far-right government currently in place, including the Mayor's initiative and project of transforming a public square into a private commercial mall. Stanica opposes turning a parking lot and infrastructural space into a park, regaining spaces lost or privatised in the past.

Robert describes Stanica as an oasis, both a family home and a community island, surrounded by a sea of concrete and destructive politics for independent cultural spaces.



2 OUT OF THE BOX

GUERRILLA URBANISM

The Healing Project – *Basis Vinschgau Venosta (Silandro)*

Critical Revealing – *Malý Berlín (Trnava)*

Coal Bridge – *Kulbroen (Aarhus)*

WICKED THINKING

Parasitic transition – *Ifö Centre (Bromölla)*

The Neighbourhood Office – *Institut for (X) (Aarhus)*

Architectural Permanence – *Le Plus Petit Cirque du Monde (Bagneux)*

This part of the publication includes projects and/or strategies with 'an experimental approach to planning, urbanism and/or architecture' design process, conceiving it as a 'permanent reinvention', thwarting expectations and known codes. These are projects that are able to advocate for greater freedom, allowing unprecedented propositions to emerge (new protocols, creative approaches, legal frameworks... etc.), applauding a 'way of bending the rules of the game from the inside, making the cultural institution itself the site of a revolution'. Strategies aimed at breaking down the usual hierarchy between project owner, architect, contractors and future residents, and to replace it with a synergy that lets each party make their own contribution. Invention and experimentation are put forward to find a balance between desire and realisation. Within these strategies, centres use their knowledge to reinterpret regulations for the benefit of the project they initiate/ manage; they invent their own commissions and demonstrate that new ways of doing things are to be advocated for their economy of means, their efficiency over time and their sobriety.

This chapter (Out of the Box) aims to offer a glimpse of such approaches within the TEH centres through two sections: 'Guerrilla Urbanism' and 'Wicked Thinking'. While the first portrays strategies related to the act of making places on land that the users do not have the legal rights to use, the second describes strategies related to creative ways of developing/implementing urban strategies or governance schemes.

INSPIRING POSITION/PATRICK BOUCHAIN (architect, urbanist)

'The law should not be confused with regulations. It is essential for life in society, bringing together the conditions necessary for justice, equality and respect for the individual. Reading the texts of the law opened my eyes to their potential and helped me to free myself from the constraints I was often opposed [to]. The law works in the same way as grammar or mathematics: we all have it within us and it doesn't require any special skill to be tackled. Ontologically speaking, we can only be in the law. You therefore need to know the law in order to interpret the law; in other words, to confront it with reality; creating judicial precedents based on experiments to help generalise new practices. Laws are not immutable. Applying them blindly and a priori would be a step backwards in terms of the law (...) when the law is inade quate or unsuitable, we must not hesitate to interpret it on the basis of experimentation and establish case law (...) Risk assessment, discernment and experimentation must take the lead over the literal application of the law. Interpreting and taking it to its limits does not mean making structures more dangerous, it means making them more humane."

(P. Bouchain, 2019)

Guerrilla urbanism (from guerrilla gardening) is the act of making places on land that the users do not have the legal rights to use. It encompasses a diverse range of actors who seek to provoke change by using spatial interventions as a form of direct action. This practice has implications for land rights and land reform; aiming to promote re-consideration of land ownership in order to assign a new purpose or reclaim land that is perceived to be in neglect or misused. Guerrilla gardening emerged during periods when a society stopped treating land as a community resource and started treating it as a commodity.

2.1 GUERILLA URBANISM

The Healing Project – *Basis V Venosta (Silandro)*
Critical Revealing – *Malý Berlín (Trnava)*
The Coal Bridge – *Kulbroen (Aarhus)*

THE HEALING PROJECT – Basis Vinschgau Venosta, Silandro, Italy

Basis is a social activation hub in the city of Silandro, within the South Tyrol autonomous region, where the Italian, Swiss and Austrian borders meet. Founded in 2019, the centre provides a variety of cultural activities while also offering educational and professional support and services (co-working and maker-spaces, residencies, meeting rooms, ...) for local projects.

A striking feature of Basis is the way it managed – through gradual occupation and cultural programming – to process the burdensome history and related social imagery of the spaces it occupied: the 1937 Drusus military barracks. Before its closure in the 1990s, the barrack's four hectares were well known for being a strategic outpost and fortification for the Italian Fascist forces in their efforts to occupy and 'Italianise' the region. It was a space hosting 2,000 soldiers in a village of 1,200 inhabitants . A violent past and a state of abandonment led to development plans that systematically included the demolition of the Fascist infrastructure.

In this context, Basis led an operation of 'symbolic regeneration', defending the historical importance of the complex to engage in a critical remembrance of the past while healing the deep wounds left in Silandro.

Through artistic, cultural and intergenerational programmes and a progressive occupation and transformation of the space, Basis has allowed new ties and histories to develop between the space and the local population – to the point that Silandro municipal council has now centred the redevelopment plan of the area around the partial conservation of Drusus barracks.

Image : Image of the petition "Save the public space ex-Caserna Druso, Silandro!"
https://basis.space/it/

INTERVIEW: HANNES GÖTSCH/Basis Vinschgau Venosta Founder

Hannes Götsch was born and raised in Silandro and worked in private industry before creating Basis. Today, as the centre's board member and its main strategic developer, he recounts how he came to defend the Drusus barracks:

"I've been involved with the local alternative scene since I was a kid, constantly looking for spaces for experimentation and freedom, concerts, DJ sets... It's difficult here, because everything is very controlled. From 2002 to 2013, we organised an open-air festival, then the police shut us down, out of ignorance. It was a really bad moment. Growing up within this German Tyrolean Swiss mentality, with the Italian laws... It's just a very repressive situation. And I was constantly looking for a positive revenge to that. I was also responsible for the growth of a local company which be- came very profitable. I managed suppliers internationally, up to China. When I was there, I passed by the suicide nets, workers piled onto each other. I saw myself enrolled with far-right people, who had no care for human rights... I decided I could not continue. I asked for a sabbatical and got a paid leave for all of 2015. It was a huge luxury. Then once I visited Drusus, I had goosebumps: that's what I had been looking for. That place was made to bring people together; we just had to change the way it was perceived. I realised, 'This doesn't come from nowhere. It needs all my negative and positive experiences. It needs this cultural work of bringing people together and the capitalistic approach, with all its limits.'"

While South Tyrol is a wealthy region due to its agricultural activity, Hannes describes it as a complicated context founded on tight communities but little care for innovation and progressive values. As he found out about the demolition plan of the Drusus site, he took advantage of this context to negotiate directly with the Mayor:

"He wanted to develop this district for startups. But there's no push to invest in innovation here, because there's isn't any money issue. It's a luxurious lethargy. We were not in need of space for entrepreneurs – they left – but of a mindset change to get people out of that lethargy. That's a social activation hub. I had the expertise; I knew all the buzz- words. He was interested, but this is a 2,300m2 building, with two floors. It's big. I had to show them the interest in investing in their own building. I offered myself as a skilled employer for the project and they accepted."

My double background and that particular position allowed for a quick development:

"I did a lot of networking, obtained a European Regional Development Fund and a provincial grant. The first two people were employed in 2017. In 2019, we moved in the middle of the construction site and kept on building it from the inside out.

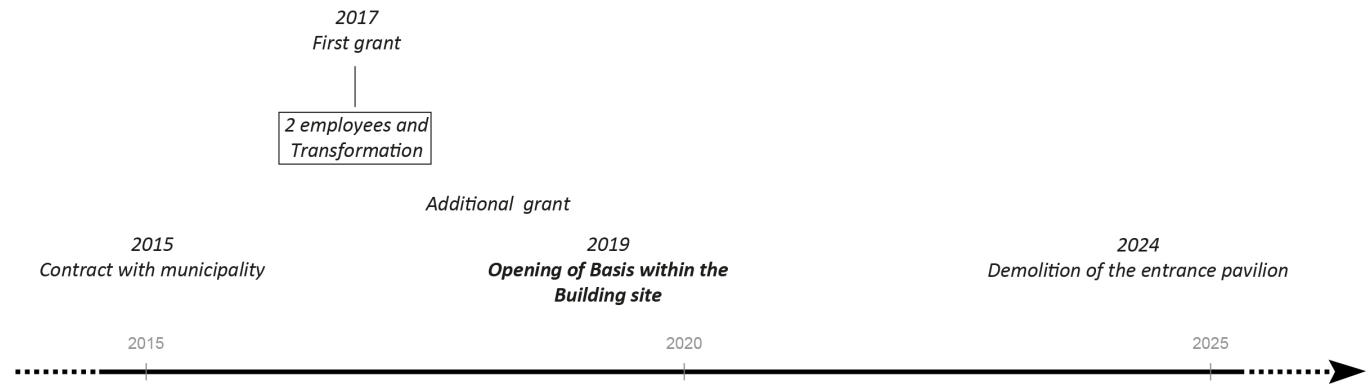
It went much faster than most public renovation processes, it was the private sector way. If you wait too long, you're losing decades and millions of euros, hundreds of relationships, possibilities and young people. The basic things – the hygiene, the internet, making the space usable – is all we needed to start, and that could be covered easily."

Hannes describes the renovation process itself as a frustrating one, made of fights and compromises:

"The renovation almost killed us. The municipality decided on an architect who had no experience in adaptive reuse. I spent a lot of time on the design to help maintaining the quality of the space. This architecture is very strong and clear, with a lot of light, air and space. The whole point was to spend as little as possible to build a pluri-functional box that could adapt to everything. In the end, the architects gave us technical knowledge, but we were deciding everything."

For Basis, this physical renovation represents, however, a tool for the wider transformation of local imaginations:

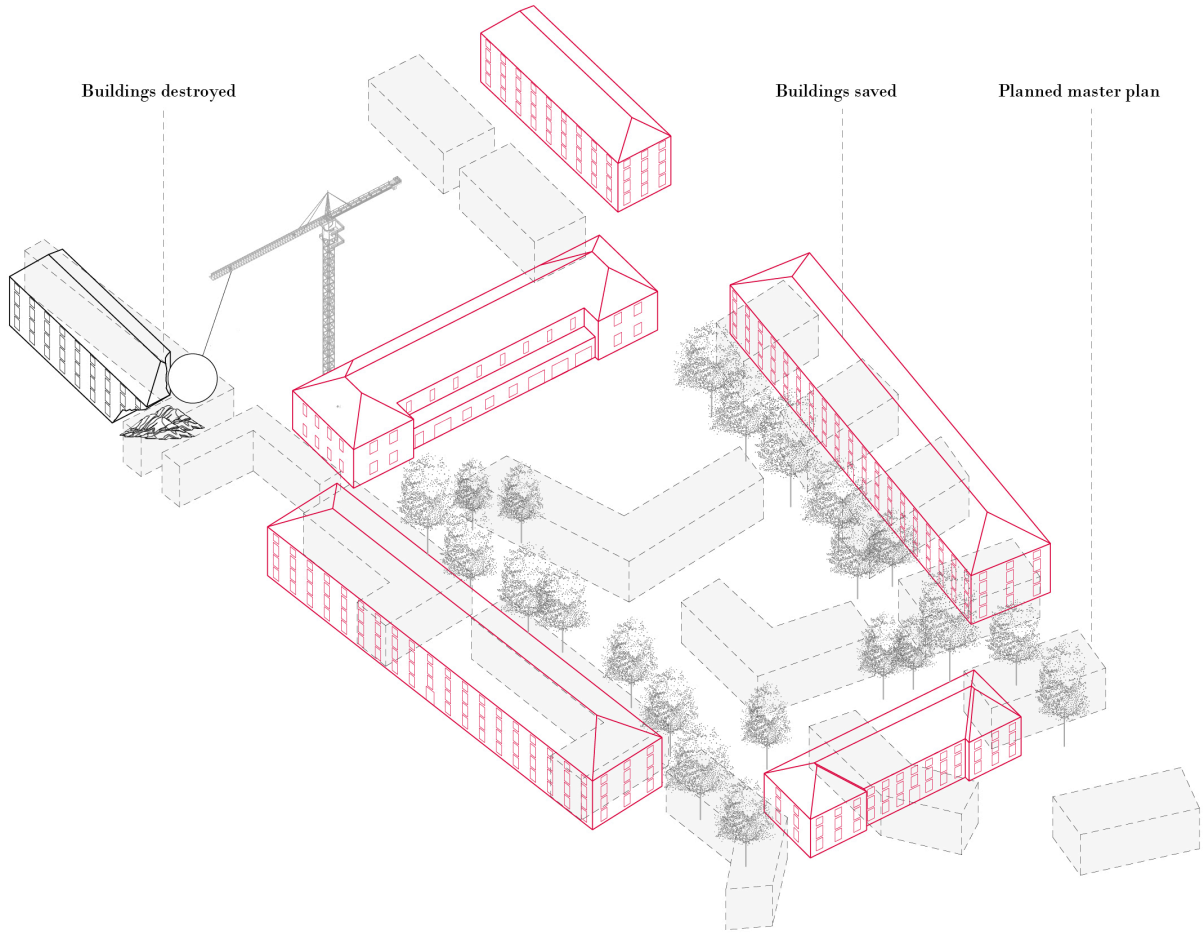
"Drusus was a black spot. It had been land taken away from farmers and made completely inaccessible. For elderly people, it's still diffi-



cult to come here. They don't understand why it wasn't demolished. But we cannot wait for people to die to start doing things. So the first thing was to open the space and bring people to come discover it. For example, the farmers' association now has its meetings here, so they're all forced to come frequently and learn it's not negative anymore.

We create good experiences around various topics to trigger different interests and imageries. We bring families, kids, we've got activities for everyone: cinema, music, educational things, talks... We also develop different projects here. Our team uses half the space, and the rest is used by other people to find their own identity, their own expression, like they couldn't do before in Silandro. Step by step, we've reached a big audience.

It's a difficult context: a lot of people don't want to change. But we are successful with people who can see over the mountains. And anyway, we can't always adapt to the 'status quo'. It is an activist project of respect, love and empathy. There will always be people who hate it and fear change. That can also be a good thing. Because we can say that we are not that, that we are against that, that we are there for different ways, to innovate. And I think that's also why we became a reference for a lot of projects of military space transformation through Italy."



CRITICAL REVEALING – Malý Berlín, Trnava, Czech Republic

Publikum.sk, a cultural association of young creatives, first developed the idea of Malý Berlin Cultural Centre, which opened in Trnava's historic centre in 2018. The centre offers a wide variety of cultural and artistic events while developing ambitious projects. One such "Critical Revealing" brought together – from July 2023 to December 2024 – five cultural organisations (besides Malý Berlín, CC Broumov in the Czech Republic; Aurora in Hungary; Izolyatsia in Ukraine; MUA in Georgia) in a collective research effort to document, discuss, valorise and protect the disappearing Communist cultural heritage. Critical Revealing acts as a network of engaged research initiatives putting in relation key sites and events of Communist history that are nowadays dispersed through the post-Soviet nations. Examples of these are: the industrial bread industry and its built environment (GA); the Western stylistic influence on Soviet industrial buildings (UA); the forced USSR secularisation and internment of nuns (CZ); the College for Advanced Studies democratic learning communities (HU); and the successive integration and exclusion of the Roma minority (SK). As such, the initiative combines both built and immaterial heritage, the safekeeping and critical discussion of Soviet history through exhibitions, oral history, online tools, lecture series, workshops and guided tours.

Image source: Malý Berlín, Trnava
https://www.malyberlin.sk/

INTERVIEW: MICHAEL KLEMBARA/Maly Berlin Director (2018-present)

Michael Klembara is Director of Maly Berlin and in charge of Critical Revealing. He recounts the origins of the project:

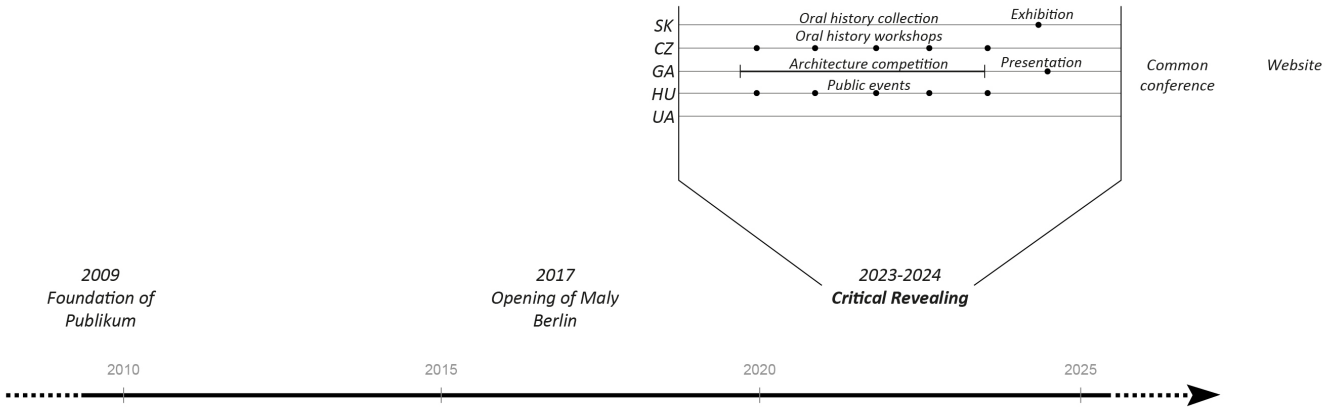
"In Central Europe, the cultural institutions don't work in the second half of 20th century, so the Communist period is almost never addressed and easily forgotten. Our idea was to show we could work more actively with that time period. It is also important to us to show that independent organisations are working with cultural heritage, within a much broader definition. With Critical Revealing, we show that you can work with heritage through both on a material and immaterial level – for example, through oral history and historical phenomena that still have a strong impact on the present."

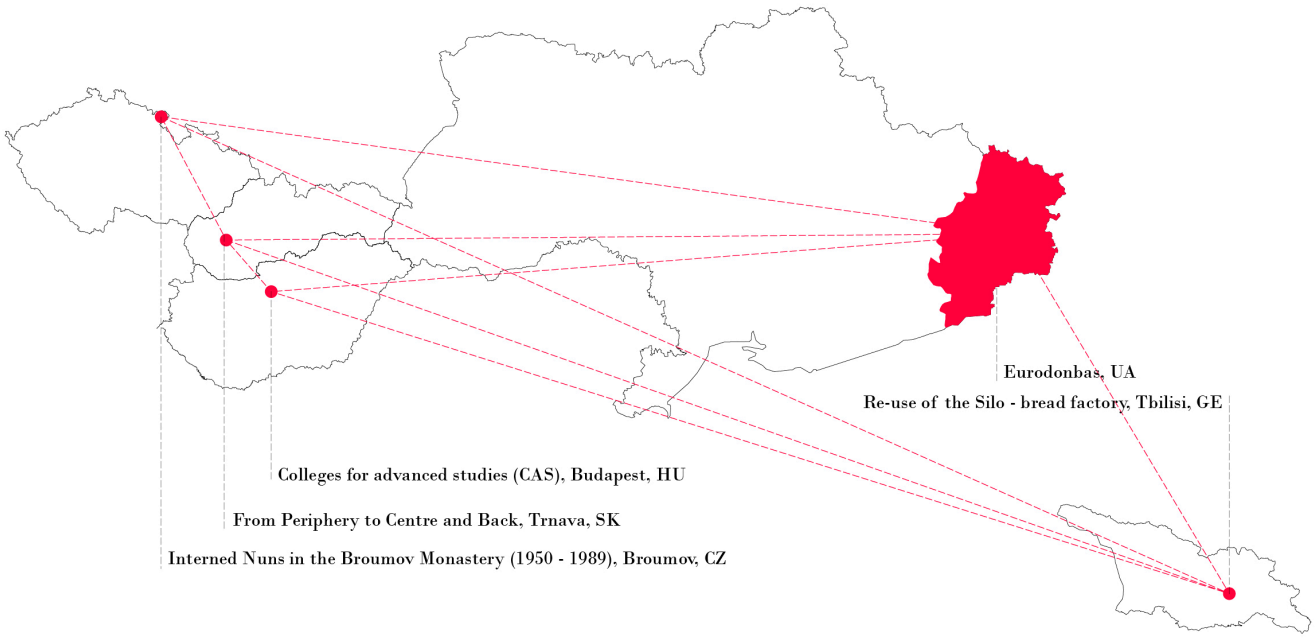
Maly Berlin reached out to both existing partners and new ones: "Maly Berlin is the creator and leader of the project. Since we applied for the International Visegrad Fund, we were looking for centres within the V4 as well as through the western Balkans, but it meant we couldn't integrate people from Baltic countries, for example. We already trusted a few partners, because of past projects, and we found others who were interested and involved in those topics. It was also about how each project and country shared something in common. Georgia and Ukraine were under heavy industrialisation during the Soviet period, and this emerges clearly in the way they tackle the subject through urban and architectural elements. On the other side, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary share a strong his- tory. In general, it's important for us to show that the developments of some USSR states were very different from one another. It's also about the way they shared a political regime, what was possible or not."

This led to a variety of approaches, drawing a rich spectrum between intangible and tangible cultural heritage valorisation practices: "Every partner chose a very different aspect of Communism. Two are working on industrial heritage at different scales, others with intangible cultural heritage. Heritage recognition is particularly relevant for our partners in Georgia and Ukraine. They have buildings to protect and an intense industrial history. For Ukraine, it's also a way to showcase the Donbas region's heritage as well as document it, to save its history and address the conflict and the loss they're enduring. CC Broumoc works inbetween tangible and intangible heritage: they address the violent history of the persecution of religious orders and of their monasteries. Aurora and ourselves, we work on intangible heritage, with threatened memories of that era. The intangible components disappear every day little by little while the tangible get demolished.
At Maly Berlin, we have one researcher and one Roma artist working together on the Roma minority. We could not do it without that, because so much of Roma culture is oral, and access is extremely difficult."

The collaborative aspect of Critical Revealing is thus mainly centred on a common efforts to support Communist heritage through many initiatives:

"We all do our own research on our side, but we are regularly in contact and exchange information. What the research shows is how this common cultural heritage can be approached in many ways and how much it can connect very different countries."




Eurodonbas, UA
Re-use of the Silo - bread factory, Tbilisi, GE
Colleges for advanced studies (CAS), Budapest, HU
From Periphery to Centre and Back, Trnava, SK
Interned Nuns in the Broumov Monastery (1950 - 1989), Broumov, CZ

THE COAL BRIDGE – Kulbroen, Aarhus, Denmark

Within the deindustrialised central harbour area of Aarhus, Kulbroen stands both for a 1952 disused concrete coal bridge and the associative movement that has been committed to its preservation and valorisation since 2014 through a set of vibrant cultural programmes.

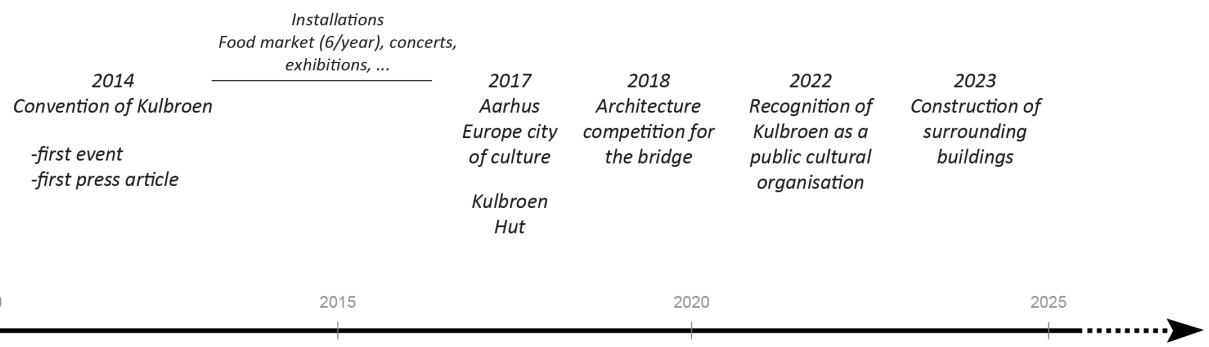
The 160m long infrastructure, cutting through a large industrial site, was once an essential link for the production of energy. Today it constitutes one of the very few monumental remnants of this era since the phasing out of the energy plant and successive demolition process from 1969 to 1997. Through the occupation and cultural animation of the infrastructure, Kulbroen Cultural Centre's team managed to safeguard the bridge from demolition before brokering an agreement with Aarhus officials upon the its central and iconic role within the redevelopment plan of the neighbourhood. In a move reminiscent of New York's Highline Park, the coal bridge is now heading for conservation and transformation, drawing connections and opportunities from the bay to Aarhus' central station, proposing specific adaptations to the various spaces it will cut through.

Image: The coal bridge and interventions by Kulbroen. Museum Aarhus i Den Gamle / Kulbroen / https://kulbroen.com/

INTERVIEW: MARTIN THIM/Kulbroen Co-Founder and Creative Director (2014-present)

Martin Thim is one of the Co-Founders and the current Creative Director of Kulbroen. He describes how he came to care for the bridge:
"I've been doing events and cultural projects for many years. What we always talked about in the community was that there was not really any place for us. Every time the city develops, we get pushed out to the next place. So we saw Kulbroen as an opportunity to not only do cultural projects for a time, but to actually make it part of the area in the future, so that we could hand it over to the next generation."
The existing municipal plans for the area, including the bridge demolition, opened opportunities for action:
"I also have this romantic relation to old industrial buildings; they're so beautiful despite their brutality. So when I found out the bridge would be destroyed, I knew we had to do something. The city plan was to remove everything and build new basically. It was quite old and, you know, back then they didn't see it as an interesting area. It came from a time when Aarhus did not develop very fast, before it started attracting investments and grew. It had become obvious that the plan was not very beneficial for the city and that they could get a lot more money and a much better city if they worked in a different way. They had to know that this very central area, only a five minutes' walk from the train station, could attract big investors."
Indeed, Kulbroen's actions were firmly rooted in a pragmatic vision of urban development:
"We were not naive. We knew the area was going to get the attention of politicians and developers. Because that's what happens everywhere, especially in harbour areas. Those neighbourhoods get redeveloped and gentrified rapidly. So, the job was to show, on one side, the values of what we could create and, on the other, to get the municipality and developers on board to better vehiculate the idea of keeping the bridge and its 'plaza' within an area that was going to become, you know, high rise buildings and all of that."
Starting from three 'concrete huggers' and an extensive background in cultural management, the project developed quickly: "No one knew about the area or the bridge. It was the backside of Aarhus, just an industrial harbour where you'd never go. So, for the first four years, we just organised big events: huge two-days food markets bringing up to 10,000 visitors, smaller concerts or exhibitions that would bring 500 spectators. Events that would attract the attention of people and make them come here. We really had to teach people about this area and what it could become, to deliver a vision. Every time we did something, we'd always present it as a test of what the area could be. For example, we made a football field for the homeless and vulnerable people that inhabit that area. And we said, 'OK, maybe there needs to be a football field when the area is developed'. We'd always try different options – cafes, restaurants... – to see whether this could be part of the neighbourhood and Kulbroen in the future. But what really started us was the first story we got out, saying we wanted to recreate New York's Highline in Aarhus. It's only 160m, it's not the Highline at all, but all the big national press printed that story, and from then on, every time we said something, they'd print it, and it would get a lot of attention. And because of that, a lot of politicians started to be also very interested in what we were saying."
Martin describes how this cultural work of 'visioning' allowed Kulbroen to actively join the negotiations with public and private actors for the future of the area:
"We did a lot of lobbying at these events. We were always inviting people from the city's technical department and from the health, the sports, the culture departments, even the Minister of Environment came the first time! And through that, those politicians would realise, 'ohh, we can make a great place here!' We had this phrase we kept on telling them: we want to create a place that's not from 7 to 4, but 24/7. By the end, they understood it.

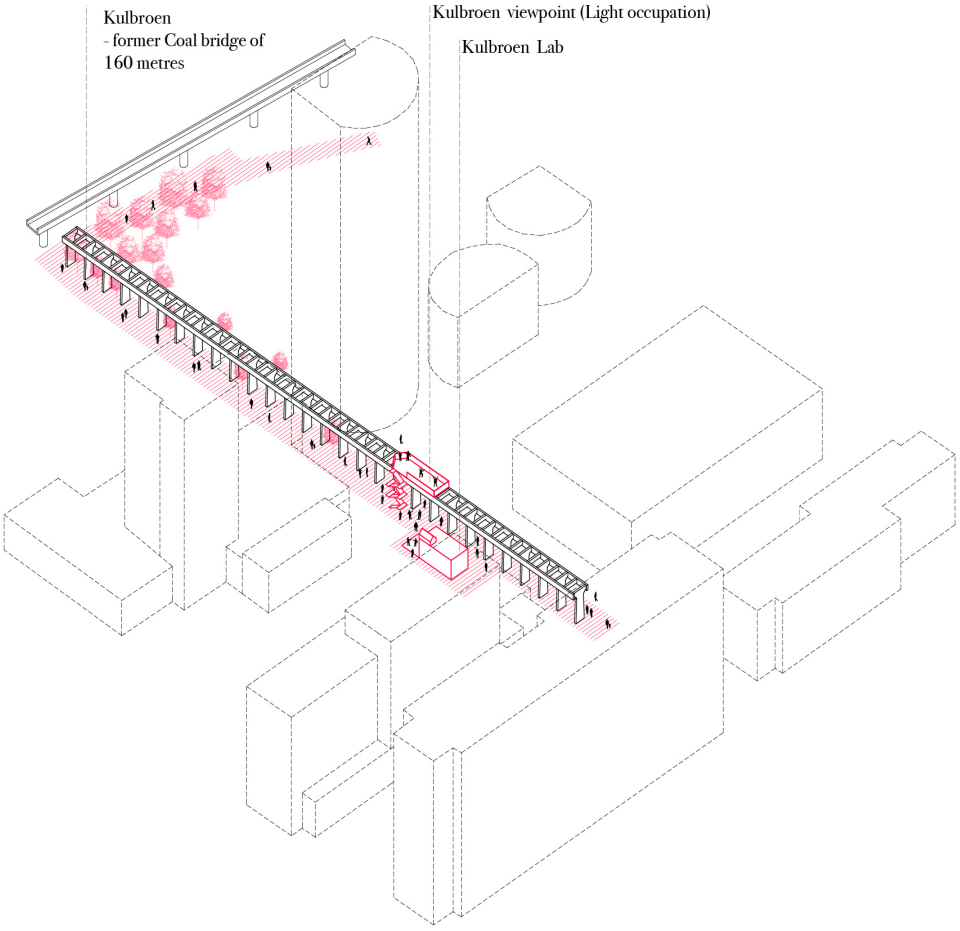
So the city realised it needed a new plan. Usually, they'd invite architect firms, engineers, urban planners, and those people would tell them what to do. But they always forget about the vulnerable people and culture. The city decided to test a new approach in the South Harbour and broaden the expertise to all of that. That was perfect for us and, since we made so much noise, we were part of the discussion."



By 2018, the municipality was set on saving the coal bridge and led an architecture competition for the area. Kulbroen put the time of this process in service of their project. Through Underværker (part of Realdania), the organisation was supported to create the Kulbroen Hut, a wooden structure allowing for small events, exhibitions and a restaurant within the bridge. Other private and public funds stimulated the structure until Kulbroen was recognised as a public cultural institution in 2022 and was granted an annual allocation by Aarhus cultural department.

However, beyond public plans and funding, it is the current private constructions that now secure Kulbroen's hopes:
"It's really been a struggle. Many times, we almost gave up and we thought that it would never happen. In the end we've basically created an outdoor cultural institution around a bridge in a country with very shifty weather! Some events were an economical disaster. And we don't even get paid to do this, so I often told myself, 'let's just get out of here and enjoy life instead'.

But one thing that has helped is that, in our project, we linked the bridge to the new buildings. So today, developers are designing the new blocks to be connected to the bridge, that has become a public space for all. So there's no going back anymore: millions have been invested. Those constructions are nearly finished. They need the bridge to be kept and refurbished, or else it would be a catastrophe. That's why I think you can also sometimes use the developer streams to manifest and develop your own vision."



This section focuses on creative urban/architectural strategies involving experimental governance and/or spatial processes. Strategies which – to develop a project – are not afraid to radically interpret and 'bend' well-established customs and regulations and take them to their limits. Spatial strategies able to implement, through creative and constructive process, an innovative and more democratic approach to the city.

2.1 WICKED THINKING

Parasitic transition- *Ifö Center (Bromölla)*
The Neighbourghood Office - *Institut for (X) (Aarhus)*
Architectural Permanence - *Le Plus Petit Cirque du Monde (Bagneux*

PARASITIC TRANSITION – Ifö Center, Bromölla, Sweden

Ifö was established in 2014 in Brömolla in southern Sweden (a town with around 7,600 residents). It started and developed within the 4,500m² abandoned upper floors of the still active Ifö Ceramics insulation factory to offer – through an almost parasitic relationship – collective creative spaces and residencies to artists and exhibitions, courses, visits and cultural activities to the public. Through European, municipal and private funding, the centre has increasingly developed, welcoming events, forerunning international artists and monumental artistic interventions including gigantic street art murals or art pieces such as Gunnar Nylund's 'Scanisaurus', one of the world's largest ceramic art pieces.

Upon the closing of one of four active factories in 2019, Ifö managed to buy back the building through crowdfunding, stabilising its presence in the industrial area. Through progressive, almost parasitic functioning, Ifö integrated a rough industrial ecosystem, building from medium-sized activities alongside production chains to the acquisition of the 43,000m² industrial building by way of a share-holding company. Through a combination of various public fundings, revenues of public activities and a structure made up of both private and non-profit organisation, Ifö created a specific balance allowing its ongoing transformation within an exceptional context.

https://www.ifocenter.com/

Image : Mural painting "Alice in Wonderland" ©Karin Levin (2020)

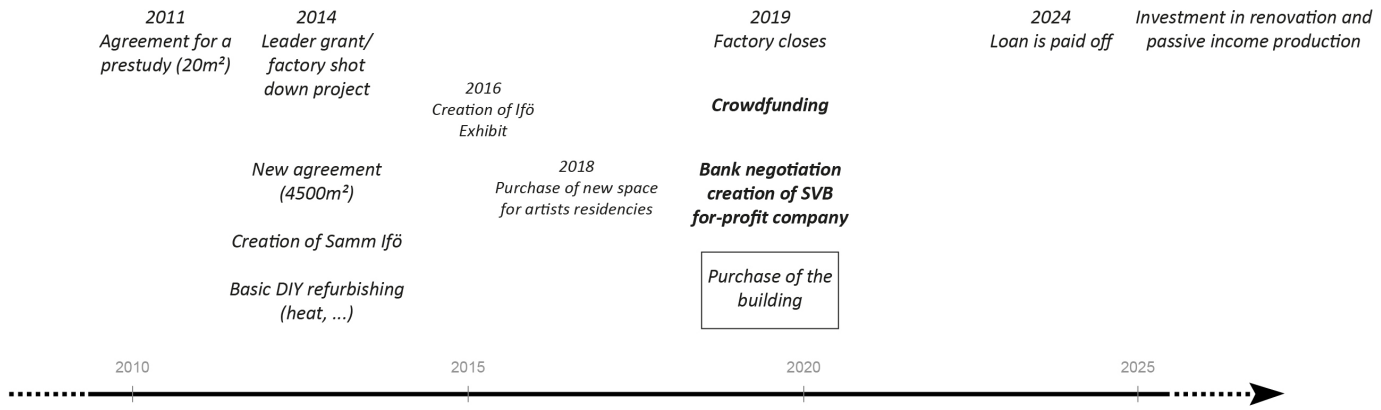
INTERVIEW: TERESA HOLMBERG/Ifö Center Co-Founder and Director

Visual artist Teresa Holmberg is the creator of Ifö Center and holds the position of Director of the cultural organisation as well as being Chairwoman of its boards. She recounts how the centre came to life:
"I started squatting when I was 16 in Malmö then in Eastern Berlin, right after the Wall fell. I would not have taken the initiative to create Ifö Center without this. It was a village within the city. It taught us not to ask but to do things. It taught us grassroots democracy and to solve problems as a community.
After ten years, I moved back to Sweden with Jonathan Haner, the co-founder of Ifö. In 2011, I was working on an artwork and needed to create precise pieces that could wrap around pillars. So I went to this company which made ceramic pipes. What I found was this beautiful, gigantic and almost empty old factory. I had just lost my studio at the time. So, after I saw their fantastic work, I asked if I could have a space there. But it's not enough to show up and knock on the door, right? There needs to be someone willing to open it. That was the manager on site: he thought having an artist around was an interesting challenge for the workers.
I got a two-month grant through a fund for rural areas, LEADER, to see what was possible, and he gave me a small space. Jonathan came over and got also fascinated. We asked so many questions to the workers; we explored and mapped everything: what they did and where they did it, who knew what, what parts were unused, hazardous or safe. You see, the more we understood about that system, the better we could fit in without bothering the host. In the report, we showed that it was possible to create a cultural centre within a big working machine.

With the help of the municipality, we applied to the same programme to start the project and got 1 million kroner in 2014. Then a horrible thing Happened: the enlightened manager was fired and the new management shut us out completely. They didn't understand why he let us in in the first place. It was terrible, by then our entire studio was there, and we just got all the funding. But the ex-manager gave us good contacts and we managed to sign a contract stating that the company was not liable for us and allowed us to use 4,500m²; we founded the organisation Samm Ifö."

While the location was then secured, it still needed to be put to work, with limited funds:
"Our funding was for cultural activities, not for the building, so we had to make do and look around for help, just like squatters. We met with international friends and local volunteers to figure out how to clean and heat the space. The local paper mill provided us with hot water through the existing network and we installed old radiators from dismantled buildings. It was not warm in the winter but at least some areas were not freezing."

From there, Ifö Center grew exponentially through the organisation of exhibitions, visits, events and the invitation of international artists. By 2016, the growing activity justified the creation of a structure focused on the management of the centre's art hall, Ifö Exhibit. By 2018, Ifö had developed a successful artists' residency programme, justifying the purchase of a new space. This development was done in parallel with the ongoing industrial activity, with little interference:
"Such big groups don't want to be landlords, they don't care about maintaining their buildings. What allowed the local leadership to welcome us is that they weren't liable, and it didn't cost them anything. Unless you really cause a problem, you're not on their radar. So, we just avoided being in the office area and did our own activities. They did give us rules; we couldn't have children, alcohol or fires in

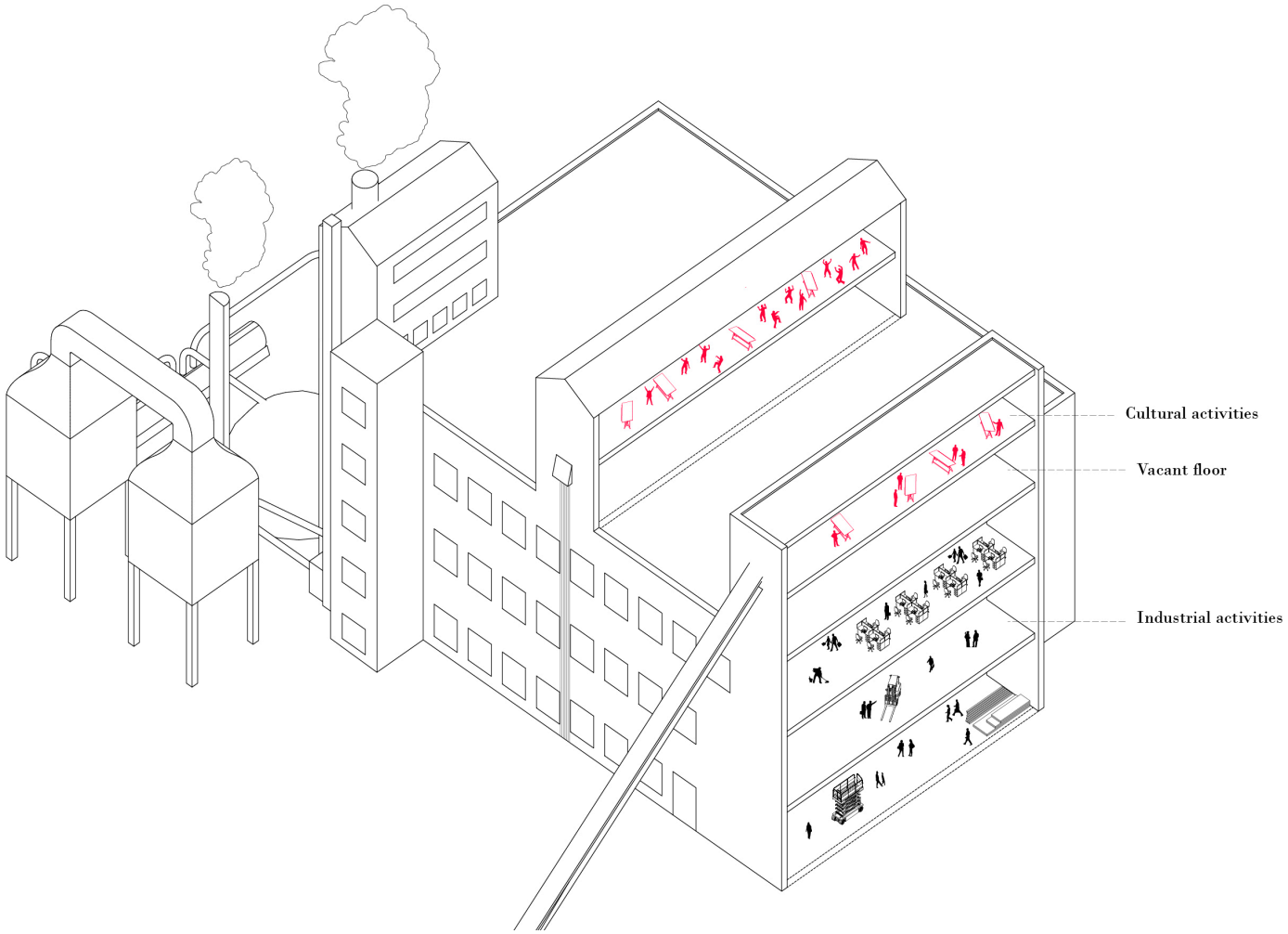


most of the centre. We thought that would hold us back, but it actually forced us to focus on adults rather than children, like art spaces usually do in Sweden."

In 2019, the centre's development was threatened again:
"The owners of the factory decided to close it down. All the workers got laid off. They were all angry and sad. They disappeared day after day, and we didn't know what would happen to us. I heard they were selling the building and realised the price wasn't impossible to reach. We had been watching that company neglect this building for so long, and nothing bad had happened, so the bar was very low, it made us confident that we could do it.

We studied how other people did it and decided to start selling 500 kroner imaginary 'support shares' . We only crowdfunded through people who knew us; friends, family... We had been up and running for a while, and lot of people wanted it to continue. We also had a clear narrative, and that made it easier for people who wanted to help: if we managed to buy, they'd become shareholders and if we didn't get it, they'd get their money back. We ended up with 550 contributors, at an average of 1,500 kroner. That was enough to contract the loan we needed to buy the factory."

Through a long negotiation with the local bank, and with the help of a pro bono lawyer, Ifö was able to purchase the property in 2019. Five years later, Ifö has paid off the loan and is now investing towards passive income creation through solar power production and an optimisation of the building's use. Teresa is also looking to share her experience:
"I've squatted so many houses that owners neglected so they could tear them down. Squatting is the opposite; it's people seeing something discarded who start to take care of it together. What we do is no different. We also want to pay forward, to help other communities to take control of their spaces."



Ask not what your
city can do for you;
Ask what you can
do for your city.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICE – Institut for (X), Aarhus, Denmark

Institut for (X) opened in 2009 in a 1920s abandoned customs building in the district of Godsbanen – a former railway traffic area – in Aarhus city centre. Institut for (X) acts today as a cultural and business platform fostering grassroots initiatives, bringing together 90 projects, 50 businesses and 35 associations. The centre follows a strong horizontal philosophy, a "Do-ocracy" that "gives power to the ones who act on their ideas and follow through. The essential lack of hierarchy within the system gives space for rapid change and smooth spatial transformation, easily occupied by doers" (This is X 2015: 159).

Following this philosophy, X has gradually occupied and actively transformed the site's buildings and public spaces while acknowledging their eventual eviction and demolition planned by the city. By celebrating the 'bulldozer days', X mobilised the intrinsic qualities of their tempo- rary and ephemeral condition (to the point of celebrating it) to stimulate innovation and spontaneous actions (rather than opposition) beyond ordinary procedures and frameworks. This proactive and constructive attitude eventually led the centre's work and added value to be recognised by local stakeholders in 2017 when Institute for (X)'s "Neighbourhood Office" was formally designated and funded. Functioning as an information agent for the population and a consultant for local development, the "Neighbourhood Office" is today a key actor within the city's urban transformation. It currently conceives, develops and implements a variety of tactical projects and clever 'urban tools' for a more creative and inclusive urban development.

Image : Excerpt from 'This is X' book (p. 252), (Haack et al., 2015) / Institut for (X), Aarhus
https://institutforx.dk/

INTERVIEW: CHRISTIAN JUUL WENDELL/Institute for (X) Head of Communication

At first, Christian Juul Wendell was the user of a small studio at X before he became the Institute's chief community officer in 2014. Now head of communication, he recounts how the "Neighbourhood Office" came to be:

"Originally we had a trust-based oral agreement with the city. The municipality let us (X) be here for free as long as we didn't cost them anything. We had to handle the electricity, the garbage, the sewage... But that also meant that the municipality had to overlook how we did it. Anything that was built since our installation, was done without any permit, which sounds crazy today.

They could also ask us to leave anytime. That's the Bulldozer day philosophy; we knew that eventually, we would have to go, which created a sense of urgency, especially politically. We never had a big advocacy plan, but year after year, we made a series of small tactical projects, which helped us build credibility. We started by making infrastructures that the everyday citizen would like; small water stations, green spaces ... I believe one of the reasons we're still here today is that we brought all those things to the urban fabric and that people enjoyed it.

In 2013, we got a small use contract, which was renewed every year. We built a good relationship with the municipality and the owners of the lands around by showing that we felt responsible for the space around us. Through this attitude, we were building public opinion to like this kind of rowdy, dirty cultural space where people prototype all kinds of things.

The fact that the Mayor was an ally of the project helped of course, but, in Aarhus, every department has its own Mayor so we had to convince many people. One thing that helped is when we developed the 'SpaceMakers' initiative for the municipality, in 2015. We helped map the empty buildings through the city, for the purpose of reusing them in the future. That showed our capacities and goodwill and con vinced even the right-wing politicians and private actors.

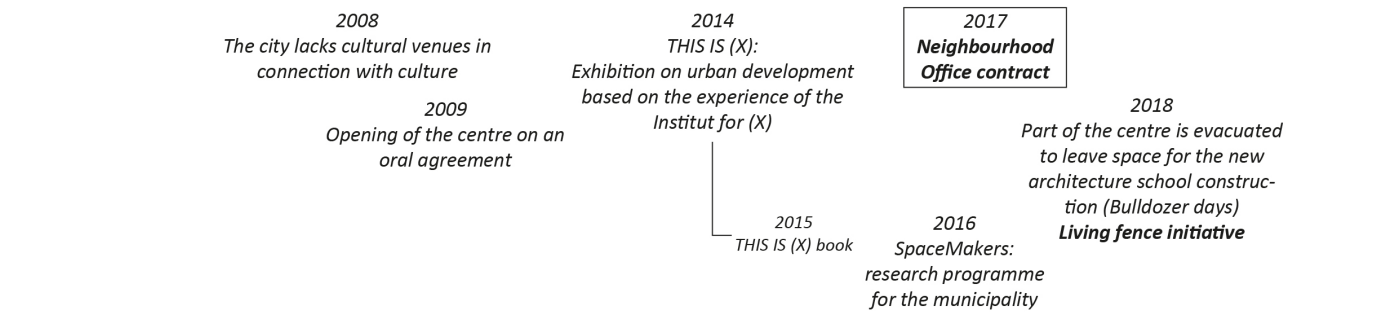
By 2017, we were supposed to leave but we had this dialogue ongoing with the politicians. It took some time, but we were finally granted a ten-year lease and recognised as an official partner through the "Neighbourhood Office" contract, in exchange for services and the 'normalisation' of all buildings. Now, 90% of the centre has a proper permit. And now, we've been around for so long and been so persistent and useful for the city that it's very unlikely anyone would want to see us gone."

Christian explains this outcome through a sort of middle path strategy:

"We could have been more anarchist; be angry, throw rocks, fight... But we were allowed to stay for a while, and decided to settle; we were not trespassing, but it was definitely a grey area. So, we decided to lean into the problem. And that's part of what we call the 'bottom-up/top-down strategy', which basically dictates that when we're doing urban projects, we establish it as both bottom up and top down. That means we do our own thing, but we also involve decision-makers, politicians and civil servants."

While the agreement with the municipality formalised the Institute's presence, it also gave it duties and a precise role in local development:

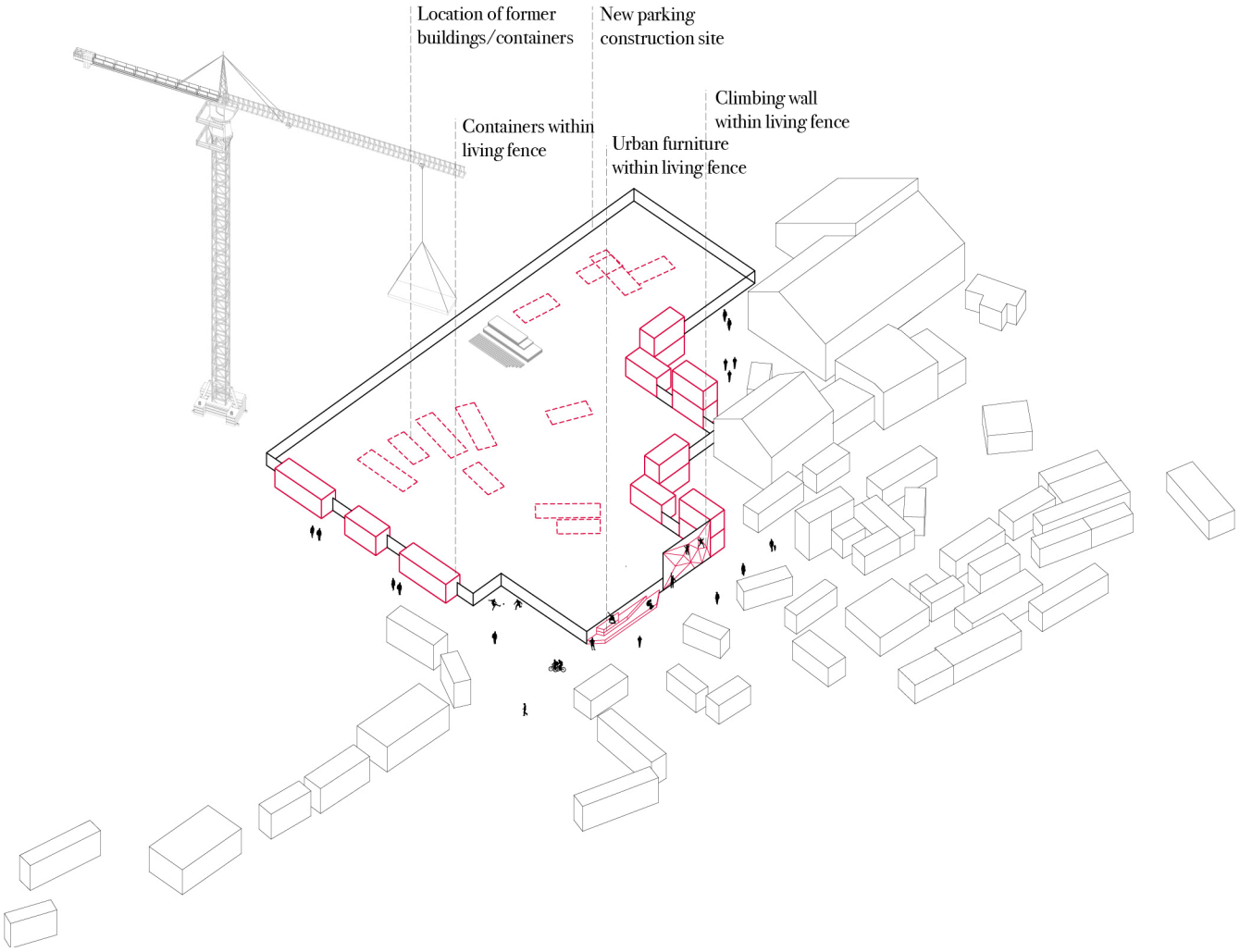
"From the start, the municipality's plan was to make the site a creative and cultural district. In this frame, our first mission as the Neighbourhood Office was to develop a citizen engagement strategy. We inform the population about what's going on, we also hold some of the official public meetings here. But we do it our own way. For instance, we made one as a marketplace just for the developers; each had their stand, and the neighbours could just ask questions directly. With the Neighbourhood Office, we also get to work on public tenders and with developers. One of our big wins is that any person buying land here will have to consult us. They gave us 'carte blanche' to be a thorn in the side to all the city departments and the owners. That way, we can foster dialogues between the projects and see how they're going to give back to each other and to the public space. And now, for the southern development, that allows us to contribute to the design ing process, from the size of the lots to the competitions' design."



This formalised role of Institute for (X) allowed for new experiments, some of which have since been reconducted in other spaces in the city:

"One of our main methods is what we call 'co-drawing'; we put together the different local planners and architects to design together so they achieve more understanding of each other's project and how they can relate and produce things for [the] public sphere. It also helped us directly contribute. There's also what we called the 'Living Fence'. When the architecture school was getting built, we went to the build- ers and asked what they would like from the construction fence that separated us from the building site. This led to integrate in the fence a window, to showcase what they were doing. Then we gradually integrated a space where they'd leave surplus construction material for artists to use and – always within the fence – a temporary building for the architecture school. It gradually became a living and inhabited fence rather than just a wall. This triggered many exchanges, and now we're hired as consultants in the harbour area to do the same, and we have it included in all the tenders.

In the southern area, we're also helping create citizen landscapes through 'Borgerlandskab' (urban life hubs). We lead open calls for the future open areas and people can contribute to their design. That's kind of the new frontier because, when you go there, it feels like X, 10 years ago. It is a big open freight train area, with nothing but garbage and industrial waste and then small pockets of young guys developing studios and workshops. They feel like small satellites of X."



LE
AVANT LE LYCÉE

ARCHITECTURAL PERMANENCE - Le Plus Petit Cirque du Monde, Bagneux, France

Founded in 1991, PPCM ('the smallest circus in the world') structures its programme around a circus art school, creation workshops and a variety of public events and services. Since 2014, it has established its activities within an experimental building and process designed by architects Loïc Julienne and Patrick Bouchain, in the northern suburbs of Paris. Under the mentorship of Bouchain, a series of experimental urban and architectural strategies have been implemented. Among these, the 'architectural permanence' stands out – a collaborative design process including an 'open building site', where users, construction workers and the public share the space as it changes. The strategy was expanded in 2019 when PPCM, Bagneux's administration and Bouchain's newly founded agency La Preuve par 7 (LP7) collaborated within 'Le lycée avant le lycée' – a permanent structure for the construction of the neighbourhood's new high school. Through the occupation of the construction site, its opening to the public and a programme of performances, debates, experimental workshops and engagement with local actors (administrations, private actors, residents, teachers, schoolchildren...), the permanence was able to build a strong educational community for the future school, years before its opening. The collaboration allowed for an innovative educational programme including arts and circus practices to take form and find consensus while feeding the programmatic and architectural project through the needs and desires of its future users.

Image : Construction site in transformation ©Mary-Lou Mauricio
https://www.lepluspetitcirquedumonde.fr/

INTERVIEW: JULIA DESFOUR/PPCM Project Manager (2022-present)

Architect Julia Desfour has been the 'Lycée avant le Lycée' project manager on behalf of PPCM since 2022. She recounts the origins of the project:

"Originally, PPCM used the old sports hall of the local high school. After 30 years of existence, the municipality launched a competition for a proper building and Patrick Bouchain and Loic Julienne won. That's when they brought these practices of 'architectural permanence' and open building sites.

The 'Permanence Architecturale' is about implicating both architects and inhabitants before construction to engage the entire territory and better understand the context in which we work. Ultimately, the goal is to engage citizens 'permanently' in the conception and in the construction process. For architects, it's a way to get truly confronted to the context, to the future users and to exit a practice that's out of touch and only centred on drawing.

Bouchain and Julienne's idea was that the construction of a circus should also be a cultural action that engaged all the territory's inhabitants; building a big infrastructure like that can be something brutal and violent in the history of a city. Especially in a working-class neighbourhood, with many delicate issues.

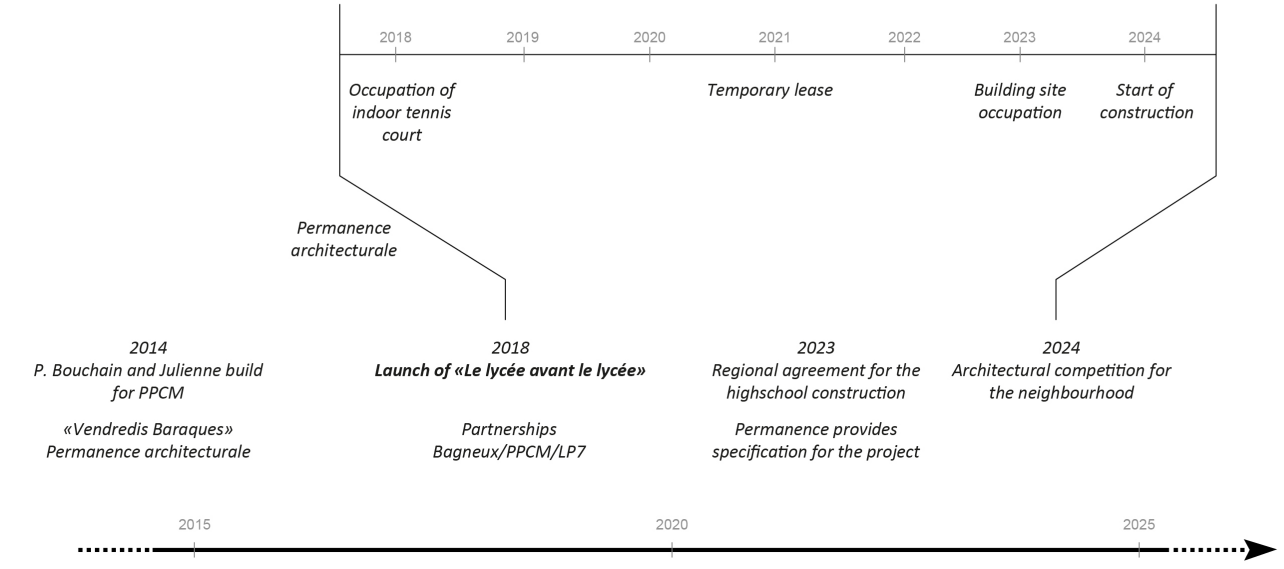
That's when the 'Vendredis Baraques' (Worksite Fridays) were created. We used construction huts to make meeting places for inhabitants, artists, architects, local associations, schools... So, they could get information but also propose a cultural and festive programme. We still hold those one Friday a month; we still pursue this sort of territorial mediation, with an open programme.

Thus, the 'Lycée avant le Lycée' project emerged in 2018 from this particular network. The regional authorities had no plan to build a new general high school in Bagneux, but there was a local need and request. PPCM carried this request and managed to broker an agreement for a triple partnership between the Municipality, PPCM and LP7 to convince the region to build the high school here."

The agreement set up the possibility to both express the need for a high school and to investigate the kind of high school that was needed. Each structure provided one employee on secondment:

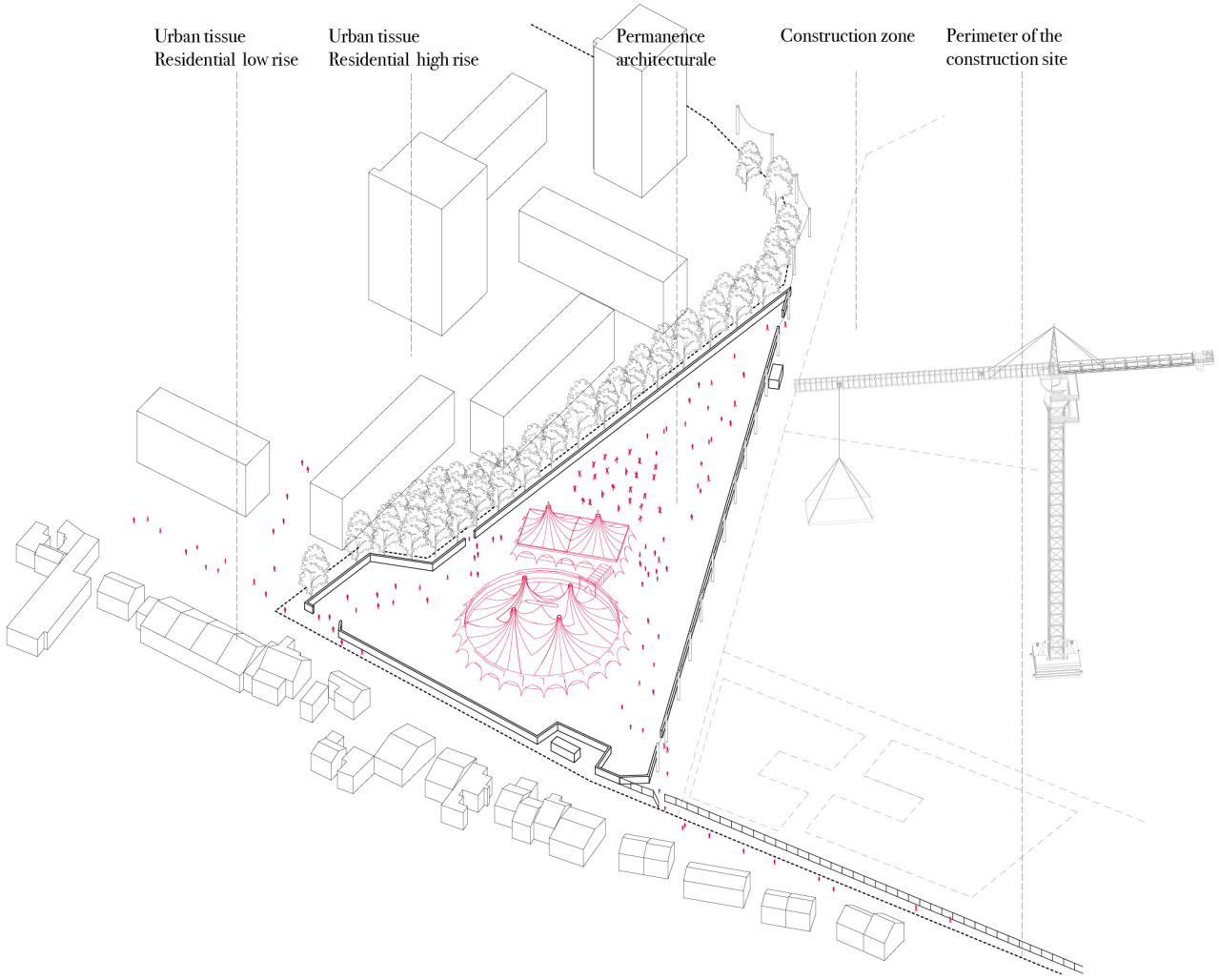
"Our goal is to get the high school built the way the local population needs it. And our way to do that is to inhabit the place where we want it built, because construction needs to feed on its territory. Thus, we started the 'permanences' within some indoor tennis courts; then we obtained a temporary lease within an abandoned building. Finally, in 2023, we settled on the future construction site. And now, we'll leave soon to let construction begin.

So yes, that's how we managed: we opened a 'permanence architecturale' on site for a future 'high school' and made it irreversible. Through the mobilisation and engagement of citizens, we managed to both set the project on the public agenda and to discuss the pedagogical and architectural elements long before the beginning of any design process."



The triple partnership was also supported by an important private actor's financial support:
"The high school project represents only 1 hectare of a bigger (conventional) development led by BNP Paribas. They finance our experiment through their social and economic committee, and they give us operational support."

Based on on-site workshops and events with a variety of local actors (the seven existing high schools, teachers, students, parents, neighbourhood residents, artists, designers and architects...), the partnership agreed on a set of architectural and pedagogical specifications. These include an active and inclusive pedagogy, legitimising the pursuit of general and higher studies by working-class students, offering flexible spaces, adapting to a variety of activities and identified potential collaborations with existing structures around the area to support the infrastructure programme. "One way or another, our work will influence the project, it won't just stay on paper. It's a way of thinking and doing that already reached the inhabitants and the municipality. So even if we will not have a full impact we did – for sure – manage to change the ways things are done: it's already a huge victory to have a municipality build a partnership of this kind, for the first time. In the longer term, it can constitute an example that can be discussed by researchers in architecture schools among others. We contribute to change the norms in general, I think."



3 TIME, TIME, TIME

SIDEREAL

Healing heritage – *Not Quite (Fengersfors)*

Deep State – *Kulturfabrik (Esch-sur-Alzette)*

Cultural Energy Fund – *Pot Kommon (Sine Saint-Denis)*

EPHEMERAL

Six to Six – *Interzona (Verona)*

Meanwhile Forever – *Haceria Arteak (Bilbao)*

Cultural Sound Zone – *NGBG (Malmö)*

This part of the publication highlights projects and/or spatial strategies that are able to explore the multiplicity of temporalities within the design process (beyond limited and rigid conceptions of time). When we think about time in an expanded sense, it ceases to be 'monolithic' and 'exclusively human' but instead becomes multifaceted and 'open' to multiple possibilities.

Within the last century, having shifted from a representation of time as an 'open future' (understood as an open process driven by progress), towards a 'closed' one (a future that has lost its force of attraction, within which 'projecting' has become forbidden), the 'present' has gradually became the only conceivable horizon to experience. This is what F. Hartog calls 'presentism' (Hartog, 2015), a ubiquitous yet limited dimension that has absorbed the future and the past and paralysed time to a single extent.
A dimension, recalls Hartog, that has recently destabilised by the advent of the Anthropocene era, which carries an extremely long future and draws upon an extremely long past. Today, new and diversified temporal concepts to be explored.

This chapter (Time, Time, Time) aims to give a glimpse of projects with multiple and open approaches to time, from 'short-term' projects capable of having a strong impact in a very short time ('Ephemeral') to particularly 'visionary' and far-reaching projects capable of projecting themselves over long or very long time horizons, beyond several decades despite the lack of immediate results such as, for example, those related to the five years of a political mandate ('Sidereal').

INSPIRING POSITION / TIM MORTON (Philosopher)

"Time. If no one asks us, we know what it is. Or at least we know what one of the different versions of it is. Deep ecological time, evolutionary time, time travel, longitude, time expansion and contraction, alternative timelines and parallel universes. Polyphasic sleep, anti-ageing creams, fertility clocks, black holes and artificial intelligence. The groups of neurons forming population clocks within our brains, the nanosecond of difference between the space-time of our feet and heads, the monitoring of every second through our devices."

(Morton et al., 2019)

This section concerns urban/architectural strategies involving 'long-term' perspectives in radical terms. Projects with a strong, long-term vision that are not afraid to confront the lack of short-term results and to commit the project (partly or exclusively) to future generations.

3.1 SIDEREAL (TIME)

Healing Heritage – *Not Quite (Fengersfors)*
Deep State – Kulturfabrik (Esch-sur-Alzette)
Cultural Energy Fund – *Pot Kommon (Seine Saint-Denis)*

HEALING HERITAGE – Not Quite, Fengersfors, Sweden

Not Quite was established in 2002 as an art studio and workshop ensemble in a repurposed paper mill in the middle of the small town of Fengersfors, Sweden (350 residents). It has since then drawn over 70 permanent and semi-permanent Swedish and international artists, designers and craftsmen and has expanded to include pottery, carpentry and forging studios, exhibition spaces and a cafe, making it one of the liveliest hubs of this rural region. The paper mill is also used by small-scale enterprises including a bakery, several carpentries, a micro-brewery and a fish farm.

In 2019, this development was facing a big challenge because the current owner wanted to sell the property. As a response to this, the 'New Mill Town' project was established, funded by Not Quite and the region of Västra Götaland. The aim was to secure a new, long-term ownership for the paper mill, and support rural entrepreneurship in material-based art and food production.

As ground pollutants make ownership complicated and possibly very costly, the sub-project Healing Heritage was initiated as part of this long-term process to study and develop a solution using new, nature-based techniques. Healing Heritage received separate funding from FORMAS, a Swedish government research council for sustainable development. The research team includes artists, natural scientists and spatial planning experts. Together, this cross-disciplinary team has investigated the impact of pollution – both at the mill area itself, and in the entire landscape surrounding it.

As such, Healing Heritage constitutes a research-based demonstration of qualitative, sustainable and livable long-term decontamination practice using time – here understood in decades – as an asset, far from the common expensive and wasteful practices of extracting/dumping/ capping. It holds itself as a proof of concept for the further generalisation of regenerative, non-extractive practices within urban planning and landscape design.

Image : Experimental cultivation phyto-remediation of metal contaminants. ©Not Quite
https://www.notquite.se/en/

INTERVIEW: YLVA FRID/Healing Heritage Initiator

Architect Ylva Frid was employed by Not Quite as Project Manager of the New Mill Town project and was the initiator of the Healing Heritage project. She takes up the story:

"When the owners announced they wanted to sell the papermill, it became evident that it was necessary to secure our long-term conditions if we were to continue to invest in a place like this. So, we started searching for long-term ownership models and it quickly appeared that a key element was soil pollution. In Sweden, the owner is responsible for the depollution of the land, but that only takes place at the transfer of the property, unless the original 'polluter' can be found and sued. In our case, it concerned old industrial pollution, so we would eventually have had to address that depollution ourselves. This was a big obstacle, especially in our rural context, thus it froze the situation. We then sought a research grant for sustainable innovation to see how we could tackle that problem in a different way."

Financed over four years, Not Quite obtained a pilot project, which brought together interdisciplinary experts around real and large-scale experimentations:

"We've put together a team of two researchers in soils and agronomy, one artist and three architects. First, we looked at the history of this pollution. The paper industry used to transport wood from the forest through one of our lakes then, after processing it into paper, they'd transported it down to the other lake to ship it out. We realised that the industrial process affected (polluted) the whole landscape, including the mill and the southern lake. Cordula Bielenstein-Morich, the artist in the team, proposed an installation on five sites, able to show those connections.

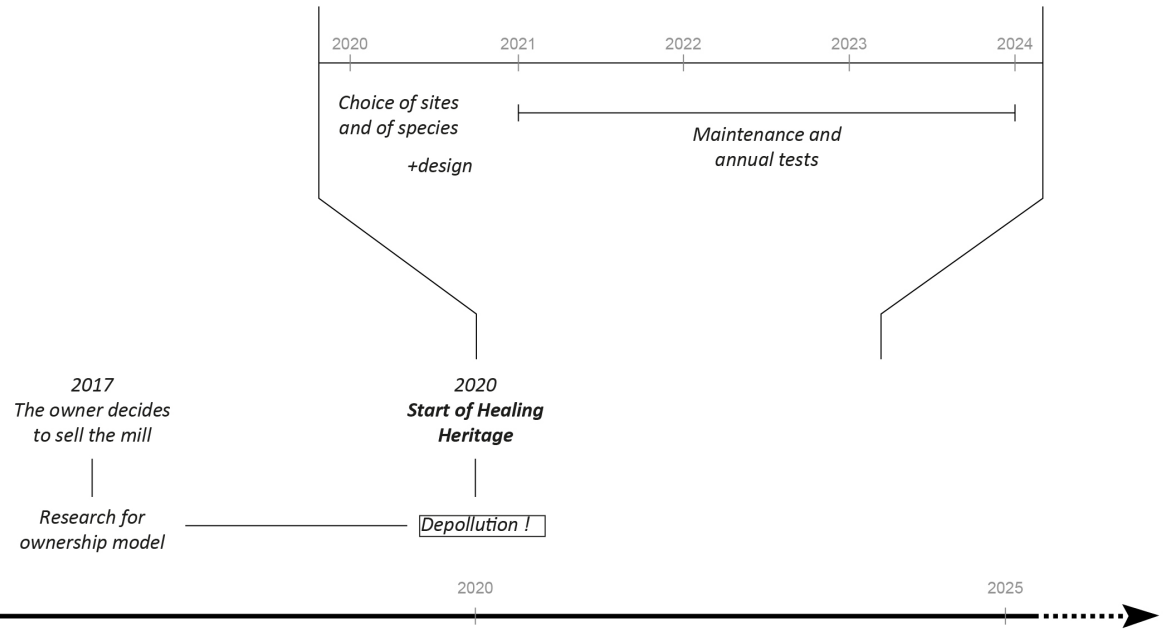
From there, we picked two places around the mill to test out phyto-remediation. This choice was strategic: one was located just by the cafe, well visible, thanks to the big sunflowers, and the other was located in an unused area, within an exciting industrial ruin setting; it was supposed to be the starting point for having more activities there. That choice was about the pollutants but also about how they could add something to the environment and invite visitors to new perspectives and places.

We first did soil surveys to have a precise vision of the pollutants. The process was slow but, once we had the results, we knew that it concerned only chemical pollutants that could be broken down by plants. Based on that, the climate and the local history, the researchers suggested five species we should work with: sunflowers, lusern [a perennial summer legume], mustard, nettles and tobacco. We'd normally use willows, but since our situation was not necessarily permanent, we couldn't work with trees. They also established a clear protocol: one of the spots was our testing ground while the other was the control subject. They're also both 400m², *so they're big enough, but not too big to maintain.*

We did a lot of design and worked with gardeners to end up on different styles and perspectives. One was more of a classical baroque garden with clear shapes for different species, and amounts that were easy to control, which was required from the research perspective. The other an open setting, arranged around the visual perspectives on the different species."

As the plants needed annual nurturing, harvesting and analysing of the pollutants, maintenance has been an important part of the project:

"The first year, we had a lot of work to take away the top layers of grass and plant everything... Then each spring, we needed to sow



everything, water and nurture the gardens, take away the weeds... you need someone almost on a daily basis to attend to the gardens. You're also dependent on weather: one year, it snowed in May so we had to delay our work; another year, it got so dry that we had to replant everything... It was much more demanding than we expected.

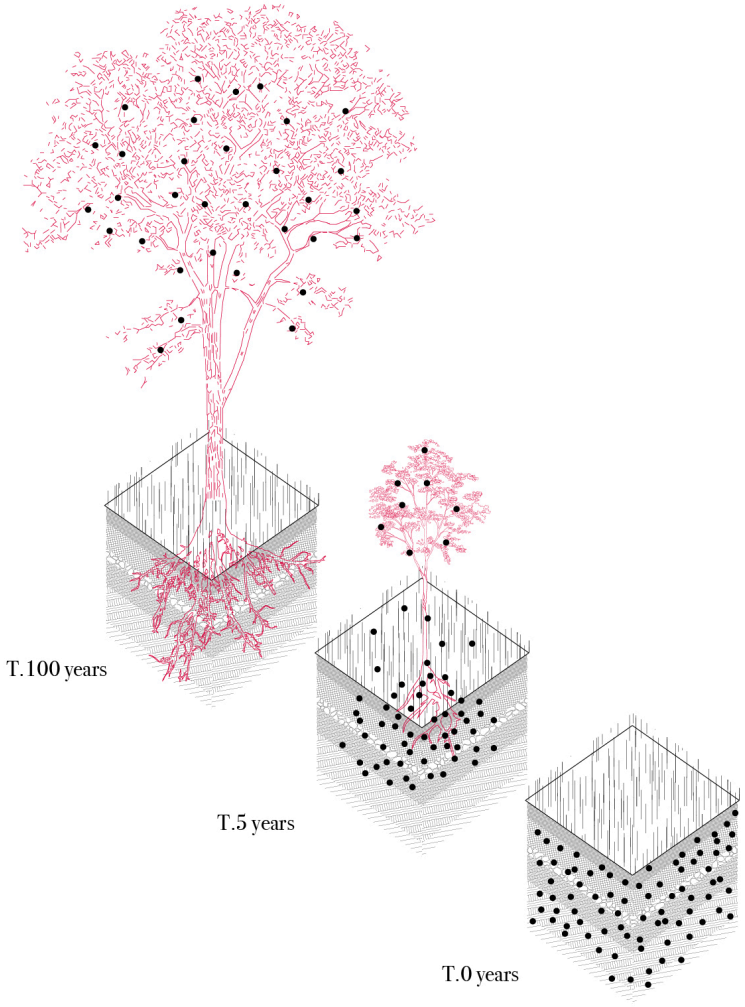
But once you have learned how to do it, it gets easier. It's a feasible technique if you're running a centre already, if you're anyway taking care of a public environment frequently. Also, if you can plant more permanent plants like willows, that will definitely require less maintenance."

As the project is going through its third and final season, results are promising, but the imminent displacement of Not Quite gives her mixed feelings.

"There are clear advantages: it is not only ecologically sustainable, but it allows to take part of the process, you can explore and care for the space. You also don't have to carry and transport polluted soils and waste oils. But in exchange, you still must inject human labour for maintenance, and it is very slow. It would take at least 15 years to solve the problem here. So, it might not be a solution in densely populated areas, with lots of pressure to build. But in the rural conditions, where we don't have much financial flow it becomes very interesting.

We need more time to get a full view. The results we obtained are only a starting engine to get more research done on the subject and more funding. Because there is a lot of interest in these techniques but not that many concrete tests... I think we're the largest test in Sweden! But now that Not Quite has to definitely move out, there's not much reason to put all that work anymore. So, I don't know what the future of the project will be.

In any case, it is very unusual to do such long-term projects, so we've learned a lot. What's interesting is that you can really start to imagine a new kind of industry. Cordulla, for example, was really interested to see if she could get out lead from the ashes of the burnt plants to then turn them into glaze for ceramics. That could be an interesting long-term storage solution for those pollutants, but also a powerful metaphor. Because, especially in Europe, we are really at a stage where we need to deal with our previous mistakes in a relevant way."



2018
ILLUSTRATED
MARTA BEVACQUA
SALVADOR
DALI

DEEP STATE – Kulturfabrik, Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg

Kulturfabrik was founded in 1983 amidst the cultural and artistic occupation of a 19th century municipal slaughterhouse that had closed a few years earlier. Since its public recognition as an art centre in 1996, "KUFA" has grown as one the main cultural centres of the Grande Région ('Great Region'), in southern Luxembourg. Covering an area of 4,500m2, two performance halls, a gallery, a cinema, a brasserie, a bistro and several rehearsal rooms, KUFA offers numerous shows and services to artists and visitors while develop- ing several experimental projects and research.

This ever-growing activity and attractiveness progressively increased pressure on the centre and its staff, eventually sparking a severe internal crisis in 2017, which – after its intensification during the 2020 lockdown – was addressed through a radical organisational shift towards a voluntary slowdown of activities. This allowed space for reflection and creative research to expand while providing better working conditions and a strong reduction of energy consumption. KUFA's 2021-2025 development plan has involved a strong redefinition of its identity as an ecosystem that takes slowness as a value and a principle to carry, together with qualitative, positive and sustainable cultural work. By taking the time to think, KUFA offered itself, and the cultural sector, a place for experimentation where eco-responsibility and de-acceleration are interconnected.

Image : Curiosity Feeds Imagination (mural painting of Marta Bevacqua), ©Mantra (2016).
https://kulturfabrik.lu/fr

INTERVIEW: RENÉ PENNING/KulturFabrik Director (2020-present)

René Penning has been working as musical programmer then administrative director of KulturFabrik since 1998 and took the position of Director in 2020. He recalls the emergence of the centre's radical transformation:

"We're in a very dynamic city, the second largest in Luxembourg, which was European Capital of Culture in 2022. It has a bad reputation, poverty and a lot of post-industrial sites. The reconversion of all those abandoned areas is a new dynamic that has recently emerged, but we can already see that it's going to completely change the city. In 2017, we decided to question how our cultural project could evolve to fit in those changes and better professionalise our activity. That's when we started to develop a proper strategy for the Kulturfabrik, with the help of Olivearte, a counselling agency.

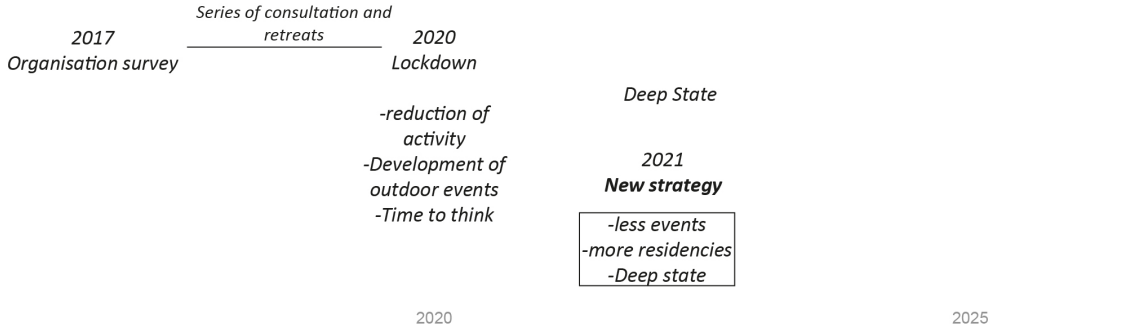
We started by a participative survey of the organisation, with individual and group interviews. It made us realise that we were putting ourselves in a difficult situation. You see, we had 30 employees, but we were constantly underwater because of a very dense agenda; we always had a large quantity of ongoing projects like residencies, exhibitions, shows, the cafe... We also did a lot of things outside, like urban art festivals, international pedagogical projects... It's so common in this sector, because we're passionate and enthusiastic, we never say no. But that has a heavy impact on our teams. So, in January 2020, we knew we could not continue like that. But even through the retreats we organised to address the issue, we felt we were still not going in the right direction; the only solution we could see was to stop everything and start back from scratch.

Then COVID happened, which brought all those problems, including someone from the team passing away. But it also gave us time to think about what we really wanted to do, and we realised how important that was. So, we started back in 2021 with a new strategy centred on slowing down and taking the time for creation."

René explains the philosophy behind this strategy as essential for both cultural workers' wellbeing and the creative and ecological roles of the centre:
"The strategy relies on the well-known motto: 'less is more'. We want to slow down, to have the time to set up our programme. That's for the wellbeing of our workers because if we can't create a healthy environment for them, we can't do it for the public, the artists or anyone. But it also gave us more time and space for actual creation, to put that work back at the centre through a proper artist residency programme.

We are also a very ecologically engaged centre, but we never had the time to question how we did things: should we have an artist come by plane just for one show? How could we work more with local artists? Having more time allowed us to develop answers, rather than constantly focus on production. Just because we finally took time to think about it, we managed to save 52% in energy costs in the last four months, for example.
All of that brings us to have an ecosystem that seems to work in a calmer and more thoughtful way. That doesn't mean stopping work; we do pretty much as many hours as before, but with a different rhythm, and in a more committed way."

In action, this strategy can be seen through an important reduction of activity as well as refocusing on 'non-productive creation' and the creation of the 'Deep State' – a watchdog organ responsible for maintaining this slow rhythm:
"First, we decided to cut our ties with several big structures and stopped our largest projects to focus on ourselves. Then, we defined three main intentions:
(1) Rethinking our artistic project. That means we spend less time on hosting and producing shows and more on artistic residen-



cies where we support the artists from beginning to end. That means we pay them and we host them for longer periods. We now have an associated artist for three-year cycles – without obligation of results, for example. Our strategy is to help them work on their art in a safe space without necessarily having to deliver something at the end.
(2) Working more with the public and becoming a living space. The cafe plays a big role in that, especially with our big outdoor Summer Bars, which we started during the pandemic. Because people love this place and it makes KUFA much livelier; people want to stay there,
not just see a show.
(3) Strengthening culture in the long term, including the future renovation of our building.
Finally, we realised that our biggest challenge was not to get taken back to our previous speed. Thus, we created what we call the 'Deep State' – an organ composed of KUFA's programmers and the production director, which meets monthly to think about our programme, its density, its rhythm and how it affects the centre's life."

Behind this strategy, taking the opposite course imposed by capitalist growth, René sees an essential character of a proper sustainable future:

"We try to do better by taking more time to protect our ecosystem. Because the question is not to know what changing our ways will cost us economically but rather to understand all that will be lost if we don't change anything!"

69
28
55

CULTURAL ENERGY FUND – Pot Kommon, Seine Saint-Denis, France

Pot Kommon first started in 2016 as an informal network of four independent cultural spaces within the Seine Saint-Denis 'departement': Mains d'Oeuvres, 6 B, Villa Mais d'Ici and Les Poussières. It developed in 2018 into a subsidised structure proposing a variety of common actions, from organised visits and support to other cultural spaces to on-site trainings taking advantage of resident artists' expertise. Several ambitious projects arose progressively from this alliance and mutualisation, such as the cultural community land trust La Main or the energy cultural community project Green Kommon.

The latter, initiated in 2024 with a governmental subsidy of €2 million, seeks to set the Pot Kommon network up both as producer and consumer of solar energy. By articulating the four centres (and another 15 cultural spaces within a 9km perimeter) into the creation of micro solar power plants and auto-consumption energetic loops, Green Kommon aims to reduce the energy expenditure of the group by half while partly financing their cultural activity through the sale of electricity back to the grid. With the support of "Plaine Energie Citoyenne" – a social cooperative venture for photovoltaic promotion and development, Pot Kommon developed an expertise now expanding into a forerunning initiative of economic and energetic autonomy for the cultural sector. Drawing from an ecology of actors with complementary roles, Green Kommon offers new long-term perspectives for the sustainable transition of cultural spaces.

Image : ©Mains d'œuvres
https://www.potkommon.com/

INTERVIEW: JULIETTE BOMPOINT – Mains d'Oeuvre Director (2014-2021)

Juliette Bompoint was Director of Mains d'Oeuvre from 2014 to 2021 before becoming project developer at Trans Europe Halles. She also contributed to the creation of Pot Kommon and Green Kommon. She takes up the story:

"We created Pot Kommon in 2016 to bring together four local cultural third spaces. It was first an informal initiative to better understand what we could do together, then we structured it to seek out specific fundings.

Our relation to land property was one of the very first topics: everybody had issues with their landlord. That's how we created a cultural land trust cooperative in 2018, La Main, to help us, and then others to take back some degree of ownership. Since then, through the support from the Ministry of Culture, we extended it throughout France.

Green Kommon emerged in that context. At the time we had a big issue: energy prices had been surging but our public fundings had not, so we had less and less resources to dedicate to our main activity – arts and culture. Sometimes, our public supporters offered to pay the bills but it was a temporary solution that didn't fit our sustainability vision. This made us realise we don't use our buildings enough as tools for territorial transition.

Thus, in 2023, while directing Saint-Ouen's candidacy as the 2028 European Capital of Culture, I met many sustainability transition actors and I discovered the energy auto consumption model. The idea is to create energy loops; energy communities of actors who are both producers and consumers and that can distribute what they produce locally (within 2km). As we were collecting Pot Kommon's consumption data, we rapidly realised that cultural places have the capacity to produce more energy than they use and thus carry the entire neighbourhood towards energy transition."

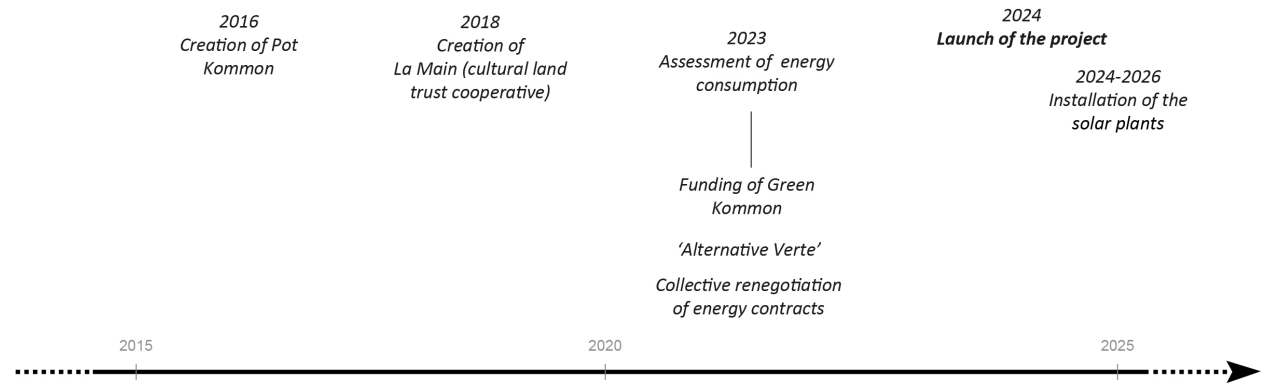
Co-developed with the local cooperative 'Plaine Energie Citoyenne' on the basis of a governmental 'Alternatives Vertes' grant, Green Kommon aims to bring together cultural independent spaces as engines of the energy transition. Juliette expands on the strategy their network developed:

"Plaine Energie Citoyenne (PEC) trained us to use online tools to assess our production capacity, how to collect consumption data and compare them. From the data we got, we first collectively renegotiated our existing energy contracts, which saved us some money. We then realised we could produce €10 million within 25 years. With this long-term perspective, our goal became also to constitute a cultural energy fund to help art residencies and employment in the local cultural sector for the future. In a context where public financing for culture is shrinking, in the long term it's a question of survival.

On an organisational level, La Main and PEC are the producers for 15 self-consumption loops, each with a leading organisation in charge of organising consumption around a photovoltaic station. The plan is that, on one side, we're going to use our funding to equip the buildings with solar panels and on the other, we will continue recruiting local actors, like schools or private companies, to become consumers of the energy we're going to produce. We're also in discussion with actors like supermarkets to equip their parking lots with solar panels, which could produce large volumes of electricity, that they can donate to us with a 60% defiscalisation through the cultural patronage laws in France.

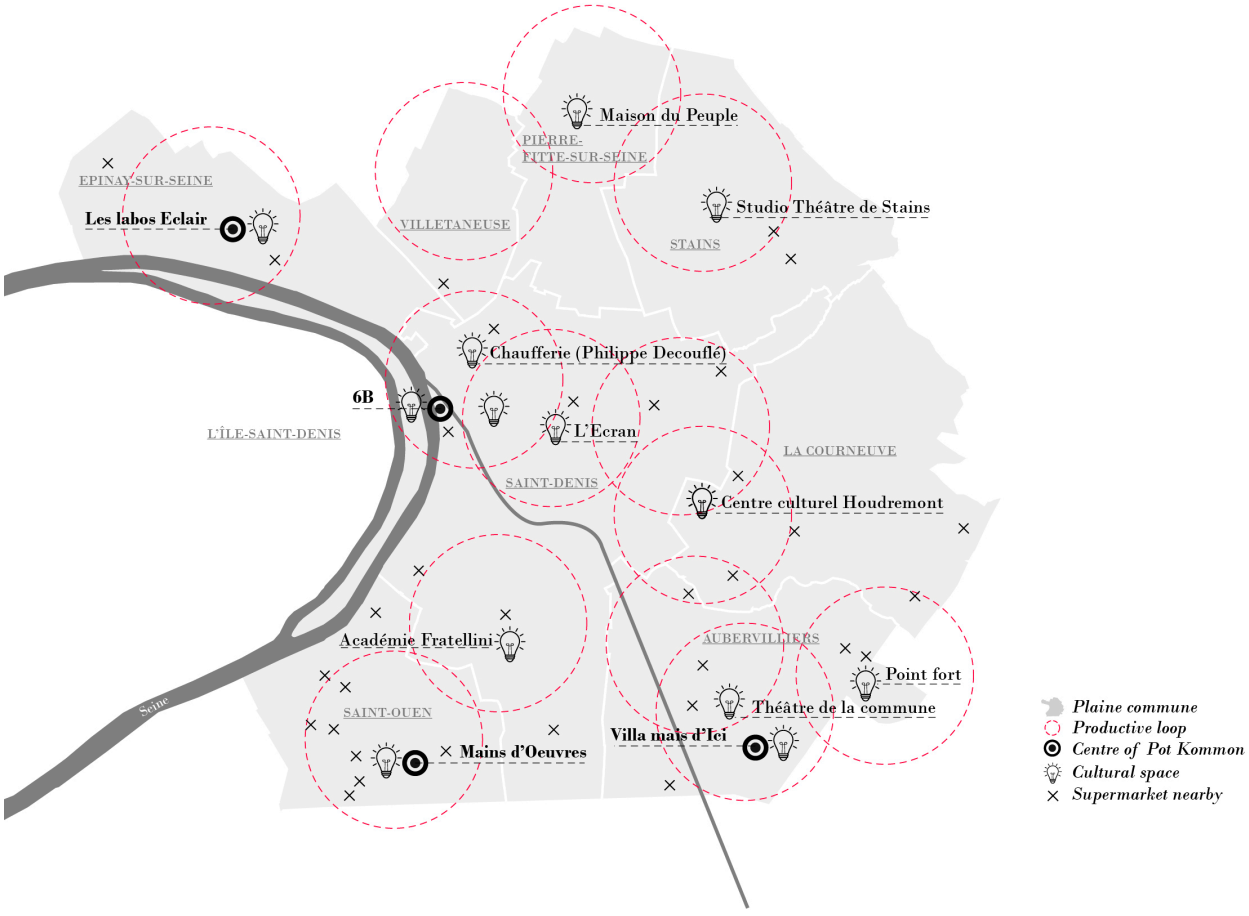
The 20 cultural spaces can produce by themselves over 792 MWh annually but, with all the collaborations, we aim to produce 2.5 GWh by 2026. That means we can feed this cultural energy fund while providing the consumers with energy for 40 to 80 e/MWh less than what they're currently paying. And that will be a fixed price for 25 years, we are –thus – helping ourselves and the local community to fight against energy price surges in the long run."

While energy loops are multiplying through the world, the specificity of the cultural sector is highlighted by Juliette:



"Pot Kommon is used to cooperate on projects that carry millions of euros. We trust each other, which is essential for such a big initiative. We're also reaching over 500 000 visitors annually in our centres. We're used to dealing with the public, reaching out to many people, teaching them about sustainable energy. This initiative is also about making the cultural sector more independent and allowing us to focus on culture rather than trying to survive in the long term. So, it's not only about mutualising our resources but also and especially about collectively empowering everyone and upscaling what is already happening here."

Green Kommon is, however, not without its own challenges:
"We need an authorisation from every landlord for 25 years to install solar panels in a context where most cultural spaces are owned by public actors (just three by private owners). Some pay their energy bills directly, others through public contracts. So, it's very complex, and a case-by-case situation.
Even with public owners, we're doing a job that shouldn't be within our responsibility: such public buildings should already be geared towards sustainable energy. But, for now, it's never been a priority, especially in a territory like ours, where poverty and housing are the first things to be addressed. In this sense for public actors, it is always awkward to see us accomplish what they're supposed to do but can't. They're happy but it's also complicated, especially if we start asking them to make land available for us. It's a very fragile relationship. But it also comes back to the question of land ownership: we want to be long-term actors of our territory and Green Kommon leads us to negotiate proper perennial contracts to do that, if not to buy back our buildings where we can."



This section concerns urban/architectural strategies involving 'short-term' and transitory perspectives; projects including a strong performative component (space as performance), related to temporary structures/occasions/conditions, ideal for experimentation. The creation of short-lived and transitory spaces, although temporary, can leave an indelible mark in the memory of those who witness them.

3.2 EPHEMERAL

Six to Six – *Interzona, Verona*
Meanwhile Forever – *Haceria Arteak, Bilbao*
Cultural Sound Zone – *NGBG, Malmö*

MOIRA ORFEI
STREPITOSO SUCCESSO IMPROROGABILMENTE
26
LE LUCI DELLA ELETTRICA
MARZO
TUTTO A COSTO

ADIGE

CENTRALE DEL LATTE

veronafiere
centro
autostrade
Porta

SIX TO SIX – Interzona, Verona, Italy

Interzona was first funded in 1992 as an independent art and culture laboratory inside the abandoned Magazzini Generali of Verona's periphery. However, since their eviction in 2016, the Interzona team has kept operating without a fixed location, favouring events and ephemeral actions to sustain their goal of promoting cultural initiatives. Interzona presents SixToSix, as a 'festival of urban imagination'. In 2021, this temporary action invited a variety of cultural and artistic actors to appropriate Verona's abandoned industrial/agricultural spaces for a night through performances, concerts, installations and projections. The initiative, besides revealing the potential of underused/abandoned spaces, offered new ways to look at and live these vast suburban disinvested areas. For 12 hours, visitors were invited to discover a 'renewed' landscape of 20 original musical and visual artworks through a pedestrian and cycling route, accompanying a slow path within a new imaginative process. The Viale Piave overpass, abandoned factory buildings, railways and residential neighbourhoods became the nocturnal scene of a cultural transformation. In a matter of hours, SixToSix led over 250 people to reconsider their relationship with and the possible futures of this important productive space, inspiring new initiatives.

Image : Series of photos of the different places occupied during the festival. ©SixToSix
https://www.izona.it/

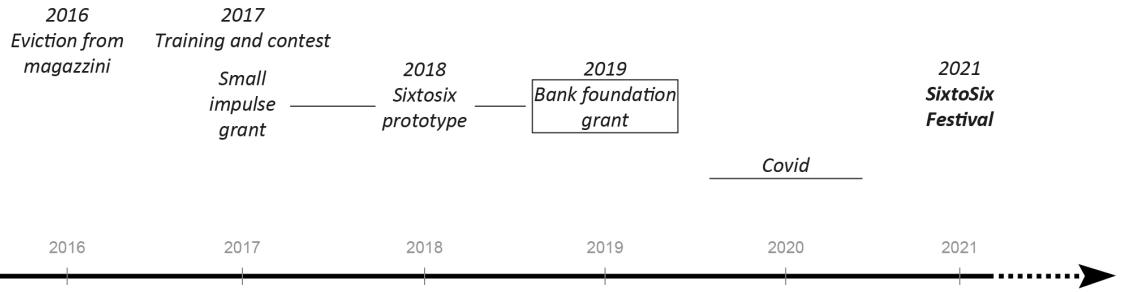
INTERVIEW: STEFANIA MARINI/SixToSix Co-Manager

Stefania Marini has been a member of Interzona since 1996 and actively engaged through its board starting in 2014, before taking on the role of Co-Manager of the SixToSix project. She recounts:

"Around 2017, we had just lost our space and our volunteers were starting to disappear. We took part in a training course for third sector actors where they had us compete on a project proposal. We came up with this idea of a festival to attract new people and revitalise the association as well as the spaces we would use.
We came second but the project was appreciated so they gave us a small amount of money, which made us able to organise a micro-festival, a sort of a prototype to SixToSix. So, when the Bank Foundation launched a call for projects, we were already prepared to participate; we had a project, and a large network of partners. I spent one month during the summer to create the partnership and in November 2019 we won the call.
We started to organise the whole event but had rapidly to stop because of the COVID crisis. We started to rethink the project in a hybrid format. That way, some artists could be involved in person, which they preferred, but others could also contribute with pieces of art, music... We organised also a lot of meetings and some training activities online so in July 2021 we could finally hold the festival.
The participants would register at the starting point, receive a map of the installations and their description and explore them by themselves. There were a lot of performances but also installations, music and videos, some live, some accessible through QR codes."

The choice of the ZAI ("Zona Agricolo Industriale") industrial zone was important for Interzona and for the festival:
"The festival was organised in this big area full of iconic but abandoned warehouses, an area developed in the 20s and then in the 50s around the local food and agricultural industry. It's a very chaotic area with empty spaces and new commercial and logistical hubs. We had two big spaces there before getting evicted. So, the location was natural to us, because we were born here, with the goal to revitalise the area. People dismissed the buildings. But if you looked at them as pieces of history, a social symbol or icons of post–industrial architecture, they become charming and important. Modifying that gaze towards a new vision is the heart of Interzona. So, the festival was a way to continue promoting this vision with art, music and culture and bringing people to walk and bike through these forgotten spaces.
We also tried to match the iconic spaces of the ZAI with the artists. The main strategy was to find places that were suited to hosting performances, installations, but artists could also choose the ones they felt better in. Several artists produced music pieces that were created or adapted for those spaces, for example.
One key aspect of the festival was its size, bringing people to explore a large industrial landscape implicating complicated logistical issues: "Another objective of the festival was to explore the area in a sustainable manner, through walking and biking. But it's a very car centric area: it's difficult to reach, and dangerous for pedestrians. So, we avoided using the main streets and planned safe itineraries.
It was our first big event outside of our space, and it was so big! We had to bring in all the logistics, the technical elements... which was even more difficult because there were so many locations. We also didn't have enough volunteers to manage all the locations so we really struggled, even with some help from the municipality and artists helping out. It was very stressful."

Stefania describes this experience as both a success and a failure, fearing for Interzona's future:
"We managed to realise the festival, it was a great success in itself. The park is more used now, and the municipality is considering regenerating the bridge area. But the rest of the ZAI is still quite empty. We only reached 250 people, that's not much given the energy we put in. We also still don't have a new building, and some volunteers left. COVID played a huge role in that: it made the whole organisation even more complicated, and lots of people were not ready for such a big event right after the lockdowns. But another thing is that, for an association like us – that used to have a space – losing it is terrible, because you have your habits on how you organise things, and a community involved in that space.
So right now, the association is in a complicated position, but we did make an impact. Through the festival, we got some support from a newer association, and it was great to get to engage with young people and pass on our knowledge. Another association started doing events in the industrial park, promoting the revitalisation of the area with a similar approach to ours. In this sense, I feel the event provoked a series of positive spin-offs. That's fertilisation."



Viale Piave overpass - entrance portal to Verona's ZAI
Fedrigoni Paper Mills (1888)
Magazzini Generali (1930)
Manifattura Tabacchi (1926)
The Verona Fair (1898)
Former Fruit and Vegetable Market(1956)
Centrale del Latte (1960)
Ex Magazzini Eva (1953)
Railway tracks
Residential street
The confectionery company (1922)
Office Adige sign (1950)
Officine Adige sign (1950)

MEANWHILE FOREVER – Haceria Arteak, Bilbao, Spain

Haceria was founded in 1997 as an organisation dedicated to performing arts through the reconversion of an abandoned sawmill in a flexible exhibition and creation space, within the Zorrotzaurre island, less than 3km from Bilbao's infamous Guggenheim Museum. The organisation also offers services, consultancy and research work based on their cultural expertise.

In 2008, Haceria launched ZAWP (Zorrotzaurre Art Work in Progress), a major programme challenging the newly approved urban regeneration development plan for the Ribera de Deusto and Zorrotzaurre island neighbourhoods as designed by Zaha Hadid Architects. Through arts and performances, ZAWP promoted the cultural regeneration of the local abandoned industrial buildings of the island during the lengthy process of operationalisation of the development plan. Through this project, Haceria is trying to reorient the future of the sector, safeguarding the presence of industrial and grassroots cultural actors from the urban renewal process. While acknowledging the eventual full transformation of the island (as testified by their first eviction in 2018 to another space on the island) Haceria takes advantage of the 'meanwhile' condition to reorient this ongoing process, fuelling local cultural activities with the animation of 10 spaces throughout the island, at varying times.

Image : People moving to a new site. ZAWP Bilbao
https://www.haceriaarteak.com/

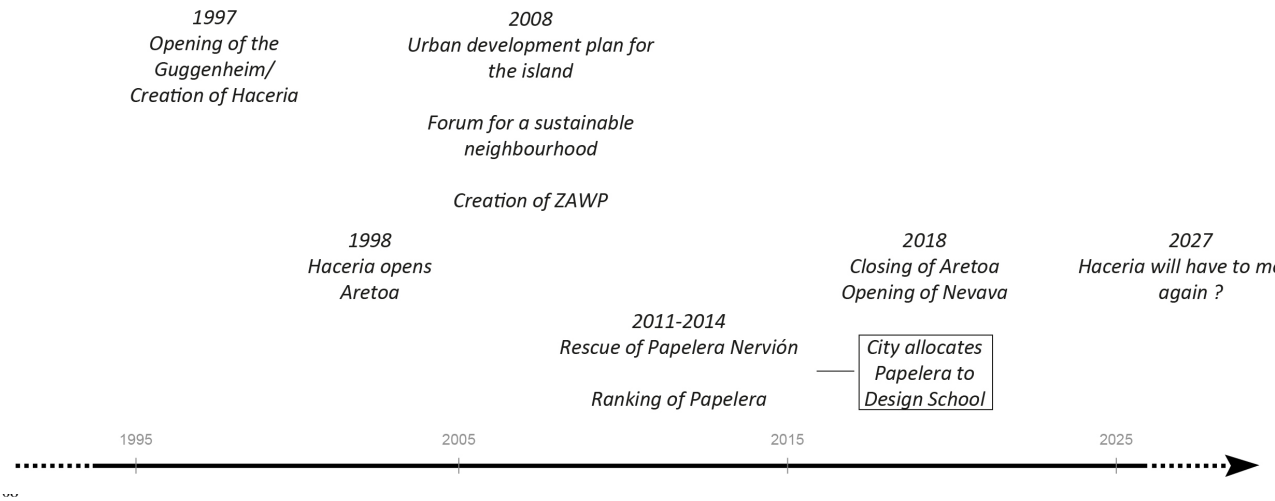
INTERVIEW: CRISTINA PASCUAL/Haceria Communication Manager

Cristina Pascual is Haceria's Communication Manager and has overseen the ZAWP project since 2019. She explains:

"Bilbao was an industrial city, with big shipyards, and many smaller companies living from it. When this shipping industry started to disappear, so did those companies. Then, in 1997, the Guggenheim replaced the shipyards, but all the small companies of the islands were still abandoned. So, the idea of the founders of Haceria was to replicate this big institutional idea on another scale: convert the small industrial spaces into small cultural venues. That's how the association opened, and how they transformed an old sawmill into a theatre venue, in 1998. And for 10 years, Haceria gave spaces for creators in the city in a very free and familial manner.
In 2008, the current president of the association, Manuel, heard that the municipality was developing plans for this part of the island. The first plan was to demolish everything to rebuild. But the problem is that the island is owned by many small owners, so it's quite a complicated space to work with. We realised that the plan was not going to get done before 20 years or similar.
So, Manuel's idea was to see how Haceria could contribute to the transformation process in the meantime and maybe avoid the demolition of everything. He hired a sociology student, Ruth Mayoral, to work on this. At the same time, Haceria was invited to a 'Forum for a sustainable neighbourhood' which brought together institutions and the 450 inhabitants that still lived on the island. That was the beginning of the ZAWP movement that Ruth carried until she became Professor at University."

ZAWP is based on a clear understanding of its urban context, and attempts to use it to divert on-going transformations:
"Since the beginning, we knew that what we did could only happen in what we called the 'Meanwhile'; institutions will eventually decide what they want to proceed and do it. So, we developed and carried on our projects in that 'suspended time' even if we knew that the island would be – eventually – completely transformed. But maybe things would have changed in the meantime.
We have four main work lines: (1) to transform the landscape through arts and culture, that's why we have an annual call for artistic residencies and affordable co-working spaces; (2) to revitalise the area through culture, that's why we develop many activities, to stimulate the neighbourhood and attract new people; (3) to revitalise the industrial memory of the landscape, that's why we made a big archive of demolitions of the buildings and interviews with inhabitants, owners, directors of the factories... ; (4) to export our model, that's an ongoing process."

By promoting cultural activities and initiatives throughout the island, Haceria is slowly influencing the on-going transformation of its environment:
"First, we saved the Papelera Nervión, one of the island's industrial buildings. The rule was that they couldn't demolish it as long as there was an ongoing activity. So Haceria rented it for three years, sacrificing salaries on this, with the hope that we could force public institutions to save it and eventually use it for our cultural factory. But suddenly, the town hall took the management of the building and gave it to a design school. It was a success, we were happy because we saved the building but, of course, our cultural factory could have been there too.
Another example is Pavilion n°6. There, a theatre association that we funded at the beginning started their activity. Now local institutions will give them a new building in the project. We had to move and reinvent many times. We ended up renting another pavilion, and started transforming it into a cultural factory in 2019, with concerts, exhibitions, events, gastronomy, music...
I think this process and approach shows how cultural activity can change the landscape; there are going to be cultural venues on the island after all. And the city decided to keep 14 industrial buildings in their final plan, so that's good too. But then we still fear that, in

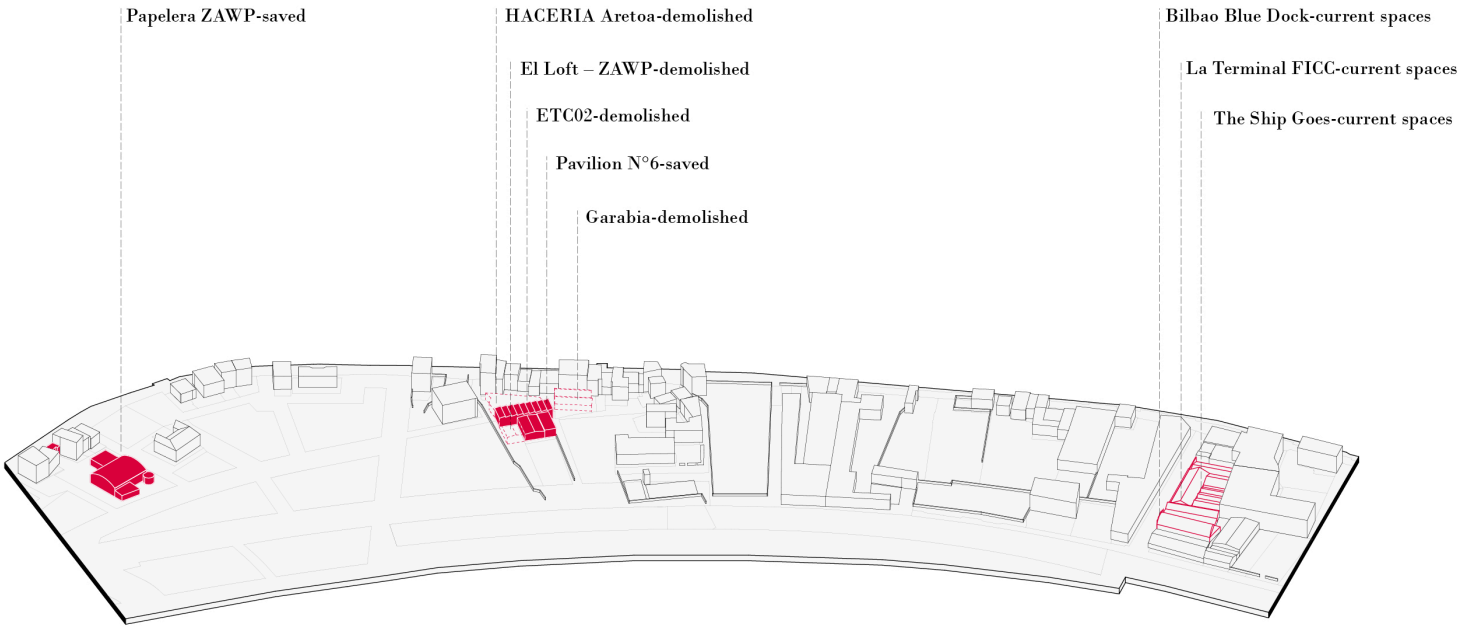


three or four years, our building will be demolished, and we will have to move again, and reinvent our project."

Indeed, despite the understanding of the urban development context, Haceria's relationships to public authorities can be at times frustrating:

"We have the support of the institutions; our main income comes from yearly nominative grants by the city of Bilbao and the Basque government. But their attitude is more about... 'don't give us any big trouble, because we are going to change the island and then we will maybe give you new equipment. In the meantime, just adapt to the master plan.'

That's why our philosophy is temporary, because we don't really know if, in the end, we will have a space or not, and what kind of space we will eventually obtain. We are not a public institution, so our pow er is very limited. But we like to bring change by doing small things and keeping a low profile. That's why we like to call ourselves space-time intruders; we are like hackers of the island. We can defend the island's cultural projects' common interest."



Zorrotzaurre península (60 ha)-ongoing demolition

P-automat

CULTURAL SOUND ZONE – NGBG, Malmö, Sweden

Situated South-East of Malmö's city centre, on the border between the Sofielun and Annelund neighbourhoods, NGBG was established in 2019 within a former farm. Its ambition has been – since the beginning – to build a new cultural centre for Malmö ('Malmö's new cultural heart') within the industrial area of Norra Grängesbergsgatan, from which it drew its name. Bringing together artists, craftspeople and cultural workers, NGBG wants to focus on building an accessible, inclusive, sustainable, mixed use and joyful free space within an otherwise desolate industrial space.

While today this ambition takes form through various projects and spaces spanning from co-working locations to after-school programmes, NGBG grew out of an ephemeral initiative: the annual 'Gatufest', a temporary but extremely intense musical and cultural event, taking over the Norra Grängesbergsgatan street and attracting thousands of people to the otherwise deserted industrial space. A special event making room for artistic and cultural actors otherwise pushed out of city centres due to residential noise complaints.

In 2021, such ephemeral events led Malmö officials to both provide NGBG with their current building and to recognise part of the industrial zone around Norra Grängesbergsgatan street as a 'cultural sound zone', which is to say a space in the city where not only industrial, but also cultural activities (clubs, theatres, organisations ...) are allowed to be louder than anywhere else in the city.

Through a series of ephemeral activities, NGBG thus managed to actively change the imaginaries and uses of the area while challenging local urban regulations. The adoption of NGBG Cultural Sound Zone serves as a testimony to the power of ephemerality to overcome modernist mono-functionalism as well as to preserve the rich cultural liveliness of urbanity from displacement and extinction.

Image : The Gatufest (edition 2018). © NGBG
https://ngbg.se/

INTERVIEW: IAN DACE, NGBG Chairman (2019-2023)

Ian Dace is the creator of 'Gatufest' and was the Chairman of NGBG from its founding in 2019 until March 2023. He recounts how he came to build this project:

"From 2006 to 2011, we ran a grassroots event, the Möllevångensfestivalen, in an area nearby. It was of a sort of anarchist style; we would throw electric cables out of people's apartment windows and bands would just plug in and play. We'd just ask for permits to stop the traffic, but other than that, it was a 'free-for-all': people would just do what they wanted. But then we moved to Norra Grängesbergsgatan when the city proposed us to occupy a building there.

The area was seen as useless and unproductive, so the city originally planned to knock it down to build residential units. Malmö's public housing company had a project to transform one of the factories but when they applied for it, this major baking company took the project to Supreme Court. Obviously, if housing was to be built close to the factory, immediate complaints would arrive about transport, noises from ventilation or the smell.

In the meantime, we found out how useful it is for cultural workers to be in an industrial zone: you can make much more noise and do many more things than in most areas within the city. That's why you often find there many welding firms, garage workshops or studios, clubs and rehearsal rooms for bands. We wanted to safeguard these conditions for our members so we flanked the factory with the argument that there should be an area in the city centre where noise could be made. That's why we started Gatufest in 2016, to showcase how lively and useful this place actually was, and that it didn't need housing or demolition to gain significance. By 2018, we had 9,000 visitors, and it really changed the way people spoke about the area, it was clear that residential projects would destroy its potential.

In 2019, the company won the case, establishing that, since they had been there before, there couldn't be any residential units built there. This, of course, annoyed the city. That's when the municipality pivoted towards us. They started promoting our argument: this could be a great 'cultural sound zone'. Newspapers also picked it up. Soon enough, the city pushed this policy as if they were rooting for it all along."

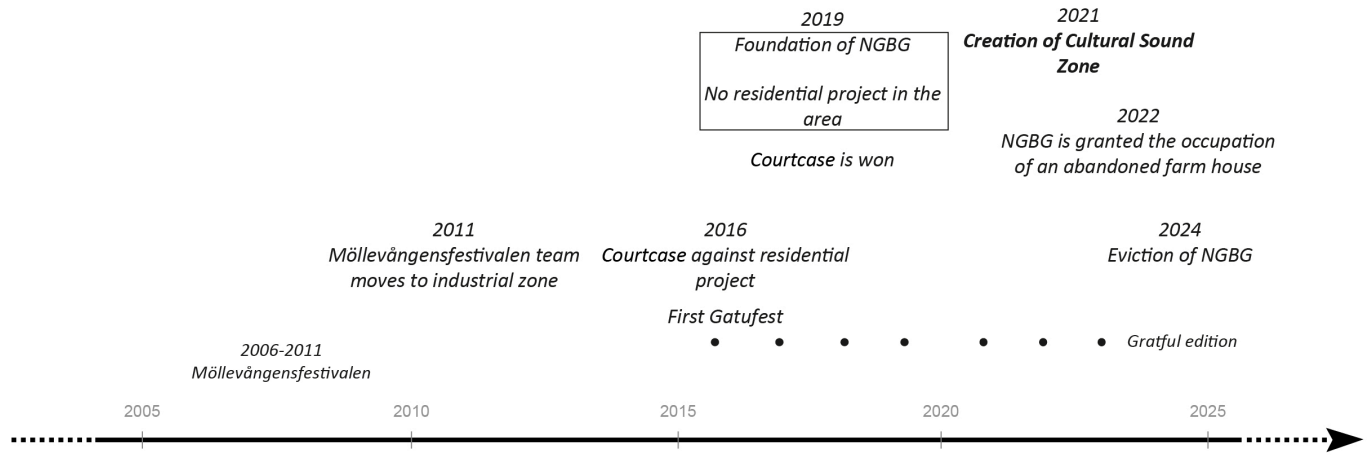
The 'Gatufest' relies on a few principles of being non-commercial, inclusive of a variety of cultures and open:

"The festival itself is about giving people access to the space without terms or conditions. There's a stage for every genre, every ethnicity ... We don't pick the best bands, we just open applications and people apply by indicating whatever style or genre they define themselves with. Then we put them together and they form self-organised groups around the stages that they use as they prefer. Then, since everybody knows at least one person from the other stages, they can always negotiate between groups. Our only rule is that you can't complain or try to stop someone else.

Mind you, a lot of fights could be possible: we sell alcohol and meat next to Muslim or vegan groups, for example. But actually, the worst conflict we ever had was between the 'noise', 'drone' and 'ambient' scenes; they're all forms of electronic dance music with maybe a 20 bpm difference. Because they're close, they fight to distinguish themselves. In comparison, people from the mosques, or the LGBTQ people, are very secure: they present themselves and ignore the rest. The general idea is to operate tolerance and respect; no one gets to dominate the culture in the area, anyone who lives here can get a stage."

While NGBG has been very successful in its endeavour, Ian also recognises the limits to their actions:

"In 2023, we had 50,000 attendees – it's hugely successful. Since the court case, zoning laws have been changed to cancel all housing plans, and the Cultural Sound Zone (CSZ) agreement runs until 2040. But the factories are already leaving, and all the available properties are bought back. Ultimately, they will build commercial centres and housing areas. I think you can probably interfere at some

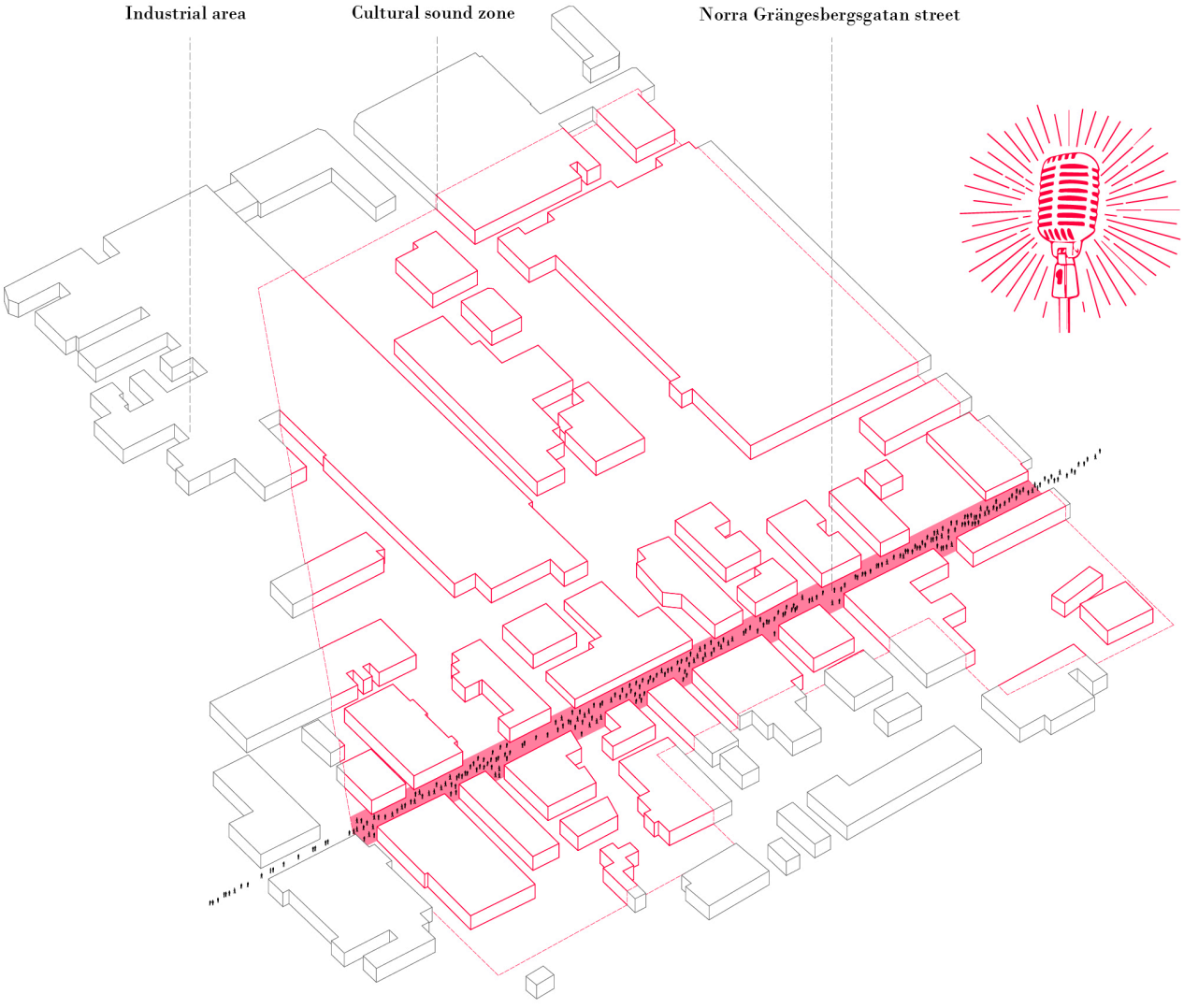


point like we did, but you can't stand in the way of huge companies and admin istrations for too long.

There is also less culture in the area now than before. Because the municipality's idea was mostly related to cultural start-ups and not really for bands or non-productive groups. So, we got what we wanted in the first place, but in the end they did it in the service of what they mean by culture, even us, we recently got evicted from the space they gave us to allow the extension of a big night club.

That made us realise that the details of the Cultural Sound Zone were more inspired by our language than based on it, and that – in the end – we risk being kind of gentrifiers. It is more a temporary victory that allowed people that were pushed out of the city to find a 'safe haven'. We will, maybe, have to move culture again: either outside of the city, in farms or rural areas or literally, with moving events. But can we get the urban culture to move to the countryside?

However, if I learned anything from it, it's that it's better to do something even if it doesn't last. You can't expect to last forever in the same place, but you can keep it together by using your strengths and being ready to adapt. You often see communities losing a building and giving up. But the buildings are not the ambition, they're just tools; so it's possible to survive, no matter what."



4 NEW COEXISTENCES

THE OBLIQUE HUMAN

Imagine your City – *Creative Industry Košice, Košice, Slovakia*

Epsilon – *Timis County Youth Foundation, Timișoara, Romania*

Borderland Fabrika – *Bitamine Faktoria, Irun*

CONSTELLATIONS OF BEINGS

Holistic Habitat – *ufaFabrik, Berlin*

Incontri del Terzo Luogo – *Manifatture Knos, Lecce*

Embassy of Non-Humans – *Farm Cultural Centre, Favara*

"Space enables, defines living conditions and opens (or can deny) possibilities of emancipation. It is an essential instrument of re-distribution: of opportunity, justice and horizontality. Redefining boundaries and distances between species in space will define the distance between the present and future city. This part investigates projects and/or spatial strategies exploring new ways of coexistence in space between humans (The Oblique Human) or between humans and non-humans (Human/Non-Human). Questioning these modes re-opens the (modern) debate on the role of architecture, urbanism, landscape design in the frame of a broader biopolitical project concerning living entities and bodies in space. The biopolitical space is here considered not (only) as an apparatus of control exercised over a population/species, but also as a powerful reservoir of possibilities for subjects to emancipate themselves, between human beings, and between humans and non-humans." (Vigano, 2023)

In a context of widening political divisions and growing economic inequalities, we need to imagine and envisage spaces in which we can live differently together. Today the question becomes even more urgent and relevant, and on a bigger scale than before. The socio-ecological transition could provide a precious opportunity to question and redefine the ties that Western man maintains with his environment and to imagine radically new forms of society.

INSPIRING POSITION/PHILIPPE DESCOLA (Anthropologist)

"There is a vast field of research here, at the crossroads of ethology, ecology, infectiology and the social sciences, which is still in its early stages and which would enable us to better understand the diversity of our associations with 'fellow' species. As the current crisis clearly shows, it does us little good to think of it in the abstract terms of man's relationship with nature. What we need, on the contrary, is a better understanding of the dense and complex network of interactions, interrelations and feedback between beings and phenomena that cannot be defined a priori." (Descola, 2010)

The 'oblique focus' facilitates revisions of fundamental, persistent Western narratives about difference, especially racial and sexual difference. Is it possible to create a community where everyone lives according to their own rhythm, and yet respects the individual rhythms of others – increasingly dilated, flexible spaces, homes that become places of 'extended' cohabitation? This section explores a series of projects regarding new spaces of coexistence and new ways of living together among humans.

4.1 THE OBLIQUE HUMAN

Imagine your City – Creative Industry, Košice, Slovakia
Epsilon – *Timis County Youth Foundation, Timișoara*
Borderland Fabrika – *Bitamine Faktoria, Irun*

IMAGINE YOUR CITY – Creative Industry, Košice, Slovakia

Creative Industry Košice (CIKE) was established in 2015 in Slovakia's second biggest city (240,000 inhabitants), after its members were involved in the organisation of the city's title of 2013 European City of Culture. Since then, CIKE has developed strong expertise in cultural projects, including the development of international co- operation, education, mobility and professionalisation programmes, as well as artistic residencies. Among these, the Imagine Your City project (IYC) aims to use urban co-design to foster stronger communities, bridging Košice's citizens and the Ukrainian populations seeking refuge from Russian invasions. Held through 2022, this project brought communities together through the co-creation of site-specific interventions in public space around the temporary refugee shelter of the Jedlikova dormitory. The project aimed to co-design public space while creating prototypes for scalable solutions. Developed and upscaled by local creative businesses, those prototypes were aimed to be usable by city administrations across Europe when dealing with future refugee crises, whether the result of wars, climate change or energy and economic crises.

Image : Workshop & exploration on site. ©Creative Industry
https://www.cike.sk/

INTERVIEW: MARKO POPOVIČ – CIKE Project Manager (2021-present)

Marko Popovič has been Head of Programme and Project Manager at CIKE since 2021 and has overseen the development of Imagine Your City from beginning to end. He shares his thoughts:
"CIKE is different from other TEH members because we are not a cultural centre, we are an intermediary organisation established by the city to build capacity for the cultural and creative sector in Košice. We have city representatives on our board, and we are financed up to 50% by the city. In return, we deliver services and co-develop, co-design and implement strategic cultural policies in the city. We also help the municipality to design processes to make the urban development more participatory and community based. In this frame, we seek to build a common sense of identity, joint ownership and values. We collaborate with the city to foster these kind of activities and diminish top-down development."

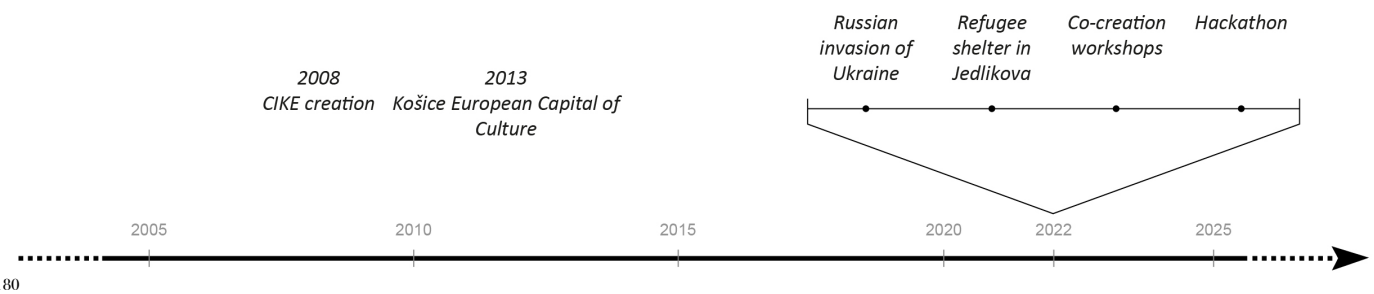
The closeness of Ukraine to Košice led CIKE work to evolve following the Russian invasion of Ukraine at the beginning of 2022:
"Suddenly, so many Ukrainian refugees came to Košice, because we are just 80 km from the border. Some moved rapidly to Bratislava, Czech Republic, Poland, or further to the West. But many decided to stay here too. Of course, there was a first wave of solidarity but, you know, it's a small town, so when you have a lot of new people coming in, you can feel it. I wouldn't say that there were any problems, but you could start feeling some tensions, and the city at the time didn't have any coherent strategy. So, as an organisation that connects culture, creative industry and urban planning; as people that work with communities, we started developing different programmes towards the integration of this new community with the local population.
Some among them were students and started studying at the local university, but for the majority there was no social interaction with the local population. That is how IYC started, the idea was to use our expertise in urban development to connect to communities. We wanted to use our expertise in placemaking to bring together those communities."

IYC was developed in two different phases, starting with exploratory research: "First, we did some research on the area around Jedlikova dormitory, the city's main refugee shelter. We had interviews with residents and the Ukrainian community, to understand how they used the area. The potential was huge: the area consisted of a large open space made of grass, trees and some parking lots, in the middle of a residential neighbourhood. The communities were already sharing that space, which was in very bad conditions. So, there were already strong incentives for both communities to come and say something about it and how it should be. And, from the point of view of the city, even without this context, the area was to be revitalised."

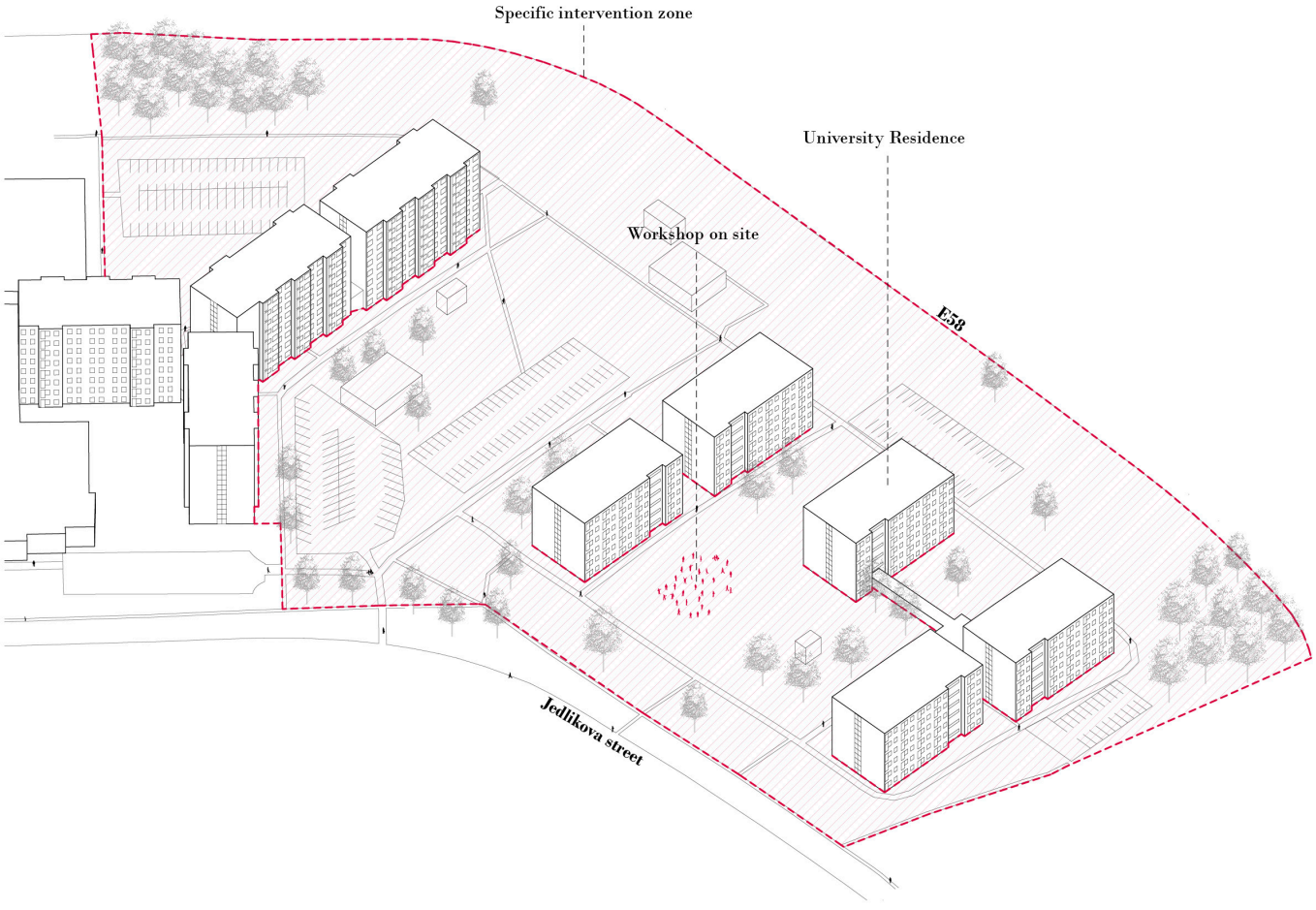
Based on those preliminary elements, and explicitly building on the New European Bauhaus principles, CIKE went on to organise a series of workshops:
"We developed living labs where we invited facilitators from different fields, including people from our organisation. We also invited Ukrainians who lived in the dormitories, and the population that lived in the neighbourhood. Through participative workshops, the experts guided discussions with them about what to do with that public space, engaging both communities through placemaking, with maps, models, etc. And bringing them to give suggestions. They were basically developing possible future uses and suggesting concrete interventions in the public space to bring people together."

Based on those results, CIKE held an open hackathon, inviting creative professionals to propose strategies for the space, with the ambition of enabling the encounter of two communities:
"We used the data developed during the living labs on how the space was used, what were the people's needs, their ideas and interventions to structure a Hackathon Challenge for companies and professionals. We said: 'OK, so you got the technical knowledge, we have inputs from citizens, so your challenge is to propose very concrete solutions for that area."

While CIKE's programme had come to a close by 2023, Marko is confident: "We ended up with a large quantity of inputs and brought them to the city administration. While we are still discussing the possibilities for more actions with the city, it's not that important because, for us, the goal was that people from different communities



somehow connect and interact. And that happened: lots of people came and made new connections. What was important to us was that local residents started thinking about the Ukrainian people as their new neighbours; not as some poor people in a dormitory. And inversely, that Ukrainians started to see themselves as new citizens, and to see Košice as the place they live in and not only a place to survive. In the end, it's part of the process of finding a new home and developing a feeling of ownership. Because feeling a city as your home is not so much about the kind of spaces you go through to buy food or other, and much more about the relations you build, if you start talking with your neighbour on the way."



Change maker
Change maker
Change maker

EPSILON (FOR AND BY YOUNG PEOPLE) – Timis County Youth Foundation, Timișoara, Romania

Timis County Youth Foundation (FITT) was established in 1990 in Timișoara – one of the most populated Romanian cities (311,000 inhabitants) – as a federation for 33 youth NGOs. FITT also manages the Timișoara Youth House, a youth centre offering housing, cultural activities and services and a performance hall in Northern Timișoara, within the iconic Communist Youth House designed by Haralambie Cocheci and Ivan Stern. From the construction of the building (in the 1970s) to the current management of the Youth House, FITT places the active involvement of young people (from 14 to 35) at the centre of their activities. The Epsilon initiative incarnates this stance. Taking from the symbolic 'epsilon', designating infinitesimal mathematical quantities, the initiative hints at the neglect of young artists and the absence of support, trust and recognition they find in an ageing society and the general contemporary artistic field. Started in the autumn of 2023, Epsilon offers the space and conditions for young creatives to be considered as a force and a source of innovation for Romanian arts and society at large. It constitutes a platform for the expression of their visions and ideas while relating to the 21st century conditions and struggles.

Image : https://fitt.ro
https://youthcenters.fitt.ro/timis-county-youth-foundation/

INTERVIEW: MIHAI VILCEA/ FITT President

Mihai Vilcea is FITT's current president. As he reaches his tenth and final year of involvement, he recounts how young people were at the heart of the project well before the foundation of FITT and the fall of the Soviet regime:

"It's very important to understand how the Youth House was made, because it was built with less than two or three percent of the total budget coming from the state. Everything else came from the annual fee of young people. It was money coming from youth volunteering; during the Communist period we had this kind of mandatory volunteering during the summer where young people would work in agriculture or organisations of the Communist Party's youth branch. A lot of young people also worked on the actual construction along with the professional builders, as sort of semi mandatory/semi volunteer work. The building was opened in 1978 and it was the first building built from scratch in Romania with the purpose to serve young people."

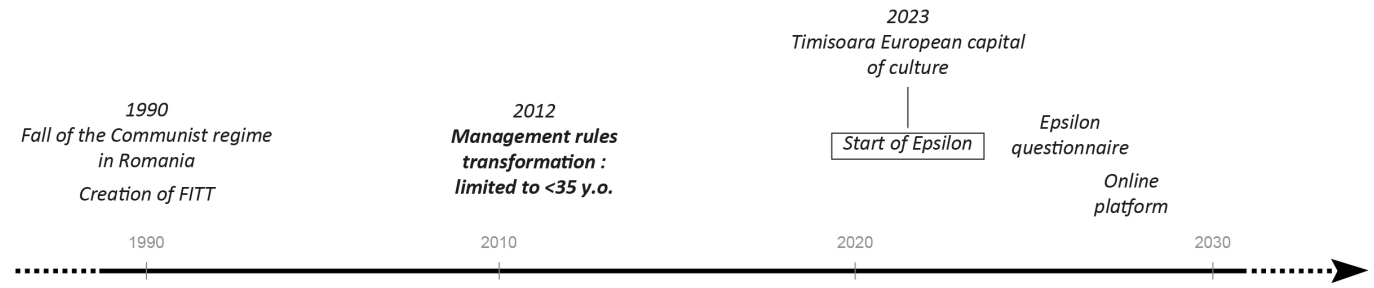
FITT was founded by one of the last popular decrees issued amidst the fall of the Communist era and in absence of an elected government, in 1990. Those circumstances allowed the youth organisers to claim ownership of the iconic building they built and pursue their activities despite an eventful political climate and uncertainty that concerned the future of publicly owned infrastructures.

After a period of conflict within the organisation, in 2012 users and workers allied to fundamentally change FITT and its management structure, setting up rules ensuring that the structure would be managed democratically "by and for young people". Since 2013, the majority of the staff and elected board members need to be below the age of 35. The board itself is subject to specific criteria: composed of 10 members, four places are devoted to women and four to men, one for a young person coming from a disadvantaged background and another to a young person who is part of a socio-cultural minority. Beyond the democratic goal of this organisational change, Mihail describes the structural impulse it brings:

"It creates a system in which you constantly must prepare new generations. The whole idea is that you will work maybe eight or nine years but, after that, if they are not young people competent enough to continue what you started, then everything crumbles. So, each generation has the responsibility to create a space in which young people are able to grow and get directly involved. We have to maintain a space where they can come as volunteers, for example. And if they show commitment or potential, then we have to make sure our space allows to bring them further, as an employee or as a member of the board for example. And you know, the Youth House is a 11,000m2 space. The local, regional and national authorities give us no money to maintain it or support it, not even to pay utilities. So everything is coming through grants, services or programming that we plan here: it is a lot of responsibility. At the end of the day, this really is about creating a system in which new generations can come and become leaders, much earlier than in the real world."

The philosophy behind FITT is that young people should always have a say in the decisions that affect them, away from conventional patronising stances considering youth as unable to lead or build constructive decisions. This extends to cultural grants, whose main public is often young people even though institutions rarely involved them:

"Timișoara, for example, was the 2023 European Capital of Culture. That's millions of euros given for different programmes. Guess



what? The only age group that was not specifically targeted is young people. You've got programmes for children, adults, pensioners, seniors... But nothing specific for young people. And while most of the public has been young people, they still didn't build a specific programme for that. So, as part of Epsilon, we've been developing a collection of young artists' opinions, building an argument that European Capital of Culture funding should be primarily for young artists. We want to introduce a new criterion making it mandatory for cities to target local young artists and be agents of change for young people's EU frameworks."

Mihail is joined by Alina Sferle. She started visiting the Youth House at the age of 17, a year before she was employed part-time at FITT while completing her art degree. She is now Director of FITT's cultural department and responsible for the Epsilon initiative:
"We are trying to make a community for young artists in Timișoara and connect them with artists throughout Europe and the world," she says. "We started with a questionnaire on how young artists felt through this year of capital of culture and how they saw themselves in this process, what helped or didn't help them. We held workshops with them and now we're also developing an online platform. It's a website where the artists are part of a community. They can have their page where they promote themselves and connect with others. Younger artists are so often working alone, from their home, they need connections with other artists at a professional level to evolve and get opportunities."
Mihail adds: "In the end, it is also about establishing an art movement. The idea is that we're slowly starting a community to transform the art field in Romania and open it specifically for young people, with their perceptions and their visions. So, we're trying to shape also an art movement in which young people are the centre, and not waiting to grow old to become confirmed artists."

NO
FRONT

BORDERLAND FABRIKA – Bitamine Faktoria, Irun, Spain

Bitamine was first founded in 2010 by the Artitadetó Artists' Association, a group of women artists and cultural workers, on the Bidasoa riverbank, which marks the Franco-Hispanic border. Since then, the project developed into a 'creation factory', offering a range of cultural and artistic initiatives focused on intercultural exchanges and community building with a strong focus on gender perspectives, local memories and public space. In particular, Bitamine develops reflections on borderland socio-cultural conditions in the Basque country setting, and the many intercultural relationships and conflicts it triggers. Through various projects, Bitamine proposes spaces to overcome boundaries, bridge cultural communities and bring forward the importance of working together to face present and future challenges. From the wandering theatre Transbita to the Ribera festival, as well as through their more research-oriented projects, the centre has set an example of bringing together different social and cultural communities to meet and share beyond the political fragmentation of political borders. Since 2021, Bitamine Faktoria became Bitamine, a room for artistic, cultural and social research on the border, with a focus on re- search and, since 2023, also acts as a publisher.

Image : Barriers on a bridge linking Irun (Spain) and Hendaye (France). ©Bitamine Faktoria
https://bitamine.net/en

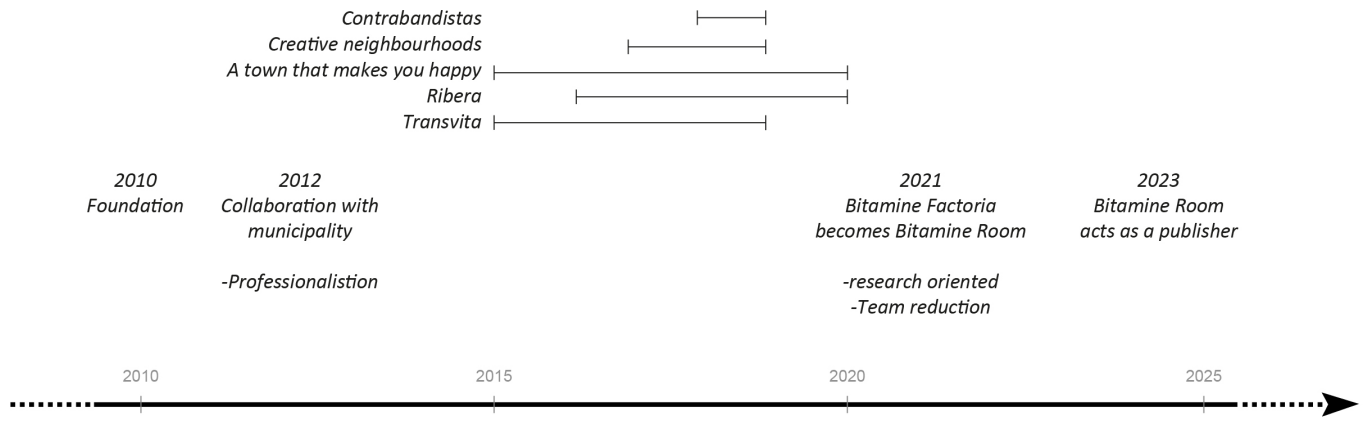
INTERVIEW: HELGA MASSETANI PIEMONTE/ Bitamine Director (2010-present)

Helga Massetani Piemonte has acted as Director and Coordinator of Bitamine since its foundation, and acts as its sole employee since 2021. In her words, the geopolitical situation of the centre is central to its existence:

"I use the border, and I live in it; my house is in France, my work in Spain. So Bitamine, myself, we're part of this ecosystem, with those specific interactions. There are so many layers: it's the border of Spain and France, but we're also in the Basque country, which is autonomous, a sort of 'country within a country'. That adds another layer: there is a Spanish, Basque country and a French one. Then the language: people may speak Basque, Spanish or French. And the political layer, with the Basque country politics – the Euskal Herria – the Spanish and the French ones. Everything works in this way, we need to combine it all.
It has always been very important for us to understand those variations and how they can engage together because we love to work in common with both sides of the border."

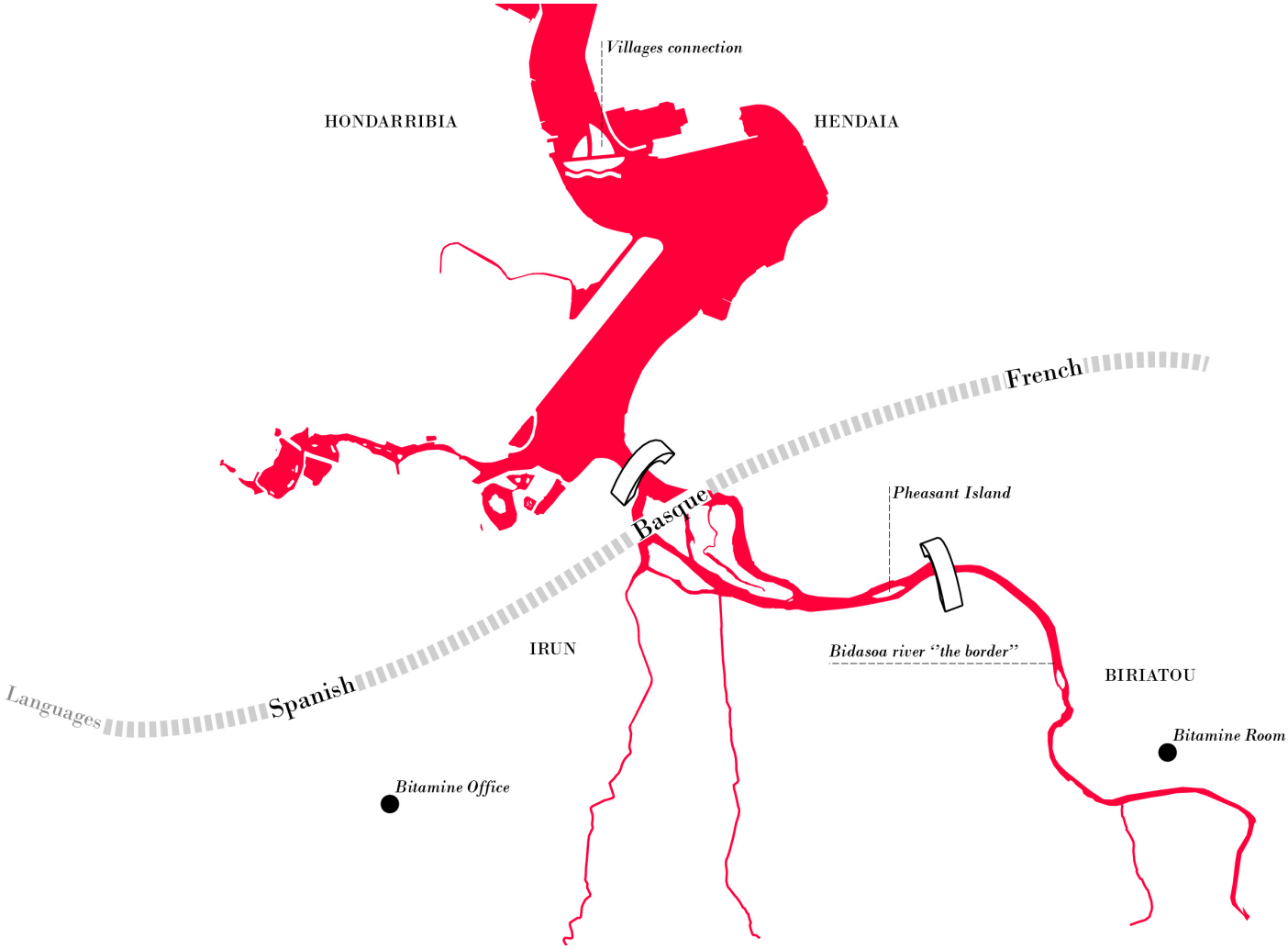
Starting in 2012, Bitamine went from being a small collective of feminist artists to being recognised by Irun's socialist municipality for their work with local public and spaces. Through project funding, Bitamine ran many successful events until 2021. A few were recurrent participative and or artistic happenings, taking place alternately on either side of the border, via light and mobile devices. These include the Creative Neighbourhood workshops, intergenerational participative moments discussing Irun's public space issues, the experimental performance caravan Transbita or the artistic publication Contrabandistas. Other events took the form of festivals spreading over the city and bridging its divides, including the artistic youth festival Kontoparanea, inviting local creatives to a first paid experience to create, programme and manage cultural events; the street art festival A town that makes you happy or Ribera, a site-spe- cific art festival focusing on historical memory and the cultures of borderland.
The creation of festive events as well as the promotion of creative freedom were the main objectives of those initiatives but the end goal of Bitamine has always been the encounter of cultures, whether through the geography of the events or their programme, as Helga explains:
"We would mix artists from both sides of the border, and we would put them together for the event. For example, a musician from the Spanish side and a visual artist from the French side; or a Spanish dancer and a French musician would work together."

Working together often implies recognising and addressing the limits of intercultural action through active means:
"It is not easy here, because of so many small things. For example, if we organised something at lunch or before dinner, we always had to think about time: it can't be too late for the French nor too early for the Spanish. We don't even eat at the same time! It's frustrating but, beyond the question of participation, it's a kind of tolerance we need to develop towards each other; to sometimes give something so we can receive something back from the other. We need to be able to accept the culture of others, to construct something together."
Bitamine has thus developed a set of key strategies to engage interculturally. One concerns events held in public space. Spectacular devices or performances have proved useful to attract a wide audience, but Helga highlights how, following the COVID lockdown, such moments became too energy-consuming and difficult to organise. A second strategy requires every meeting, event or communication to be multilingual. This implies time and resources invested towards translations, whether written or 'live', so that everybody can be understood and understand each other, which is a particularly important aspect when the events include children. Bitamine's attitude towards translation extends beyond logistics:
"Language is used as a full part of the artistic project. If we make an event of poetry, some poetry might be in other languages too. So, the artist needs to understand these languages. Let's say she's from Spain and doesn't speak French or Basque. She still introduces these languages in her poetry, it's part of the research process. Language can be like a brush, or a pencil."



A third strategy brings Bitamine to actively engage the public with the creative process. Through questionnaires, visits or interviews with inhabitants, every project is developed starting from the populations' lives and memories:

"We have more engagement with the people if we make them full participants of our projects. When we started the Bidasoa Emotional Atlas, for example, we started with listening to the people. We'd rather work with them directly and place their words on a new level of im- portance. So, within the research project, we have a bibliography, the archive, but also their voices, and all is placed on the same level of importance."



The custom from which it is necessary to break away is called human-centred organisation. This section highlights a series of projects/spatial strategies working on cohabitation, coevolution among species, and embodied cross-species sociality. Projects highlighting the importance of 'engaging with the significant otherness'. Projects testing new ways of sharing continuities and discontinuities between man and his environment.

4.2 CONSTELLATIONS OF BEINGS (HUMAN/NON HUMAN)

Holistic Habitat - *ufafabrik, Berlin*
Incontri del terzo luogo - *Manifatture Knos, Lecce*
Embassy of Non-Humans - *Farm Cultural Centre, Favara*

HOLISTIC HABITAT – ufaFabrik, Berlin, Germany

UfaFabrik was created in 1979 amidst the planned demolition of the 'UFA-Film Kopierwerke' historical location for German movie production, in southern Berlin. From a first illegal occupation, this space quickly became forerunner of the 'reclaim movement' of abandoned urban spaces. Today hosting 30 inhabitants and 300 workers, UfaFabrik has developed a vast array of activities: accessible housing, community gardens, theatre programmes, a cinema venue, a restaurant, a cultural centre, a daycare centre... One common feature is the focus and expertise Ufa has developed – throughout its activities – around innovative ecological projects and the virtuous relationships between them. As early as 1979, the local community developed initiatives of clean energy production and mutualisation, then planted walls and roofs before taking on projects of green building insulation, natural grey water treatment as well as computer-optimised solar and wind power production. Throughout its more than 50 years of existence, UfaFabrik has kept on fine-tuning this constellation of ecological initiatives to propose a holistic vision including humans and non-humans into a single ecosystem and metabolism.

Image : First occupants at ufa. ©ufaFabrik
https://ufafabrik.de/en

INTERVIEW: WERNER WIARTALLA – ufaFabrik Environment Office Project Leader

Werner Wiartalla joined ufaFabrik in 1987 shortly before becoming the project leader for the organisation's *Ökologie* Büro (Environment Office) and developing its wide array of sustainable practices. He highlights the circular strategy at the heart of ufa since the 1980s: "The main goal for me has always been to create circles, that everything comes together. That all of the houses can be electrified by a cogeneration system, that hot water could be produced in one house and used everywhere, or that we collect rainwater from all the buildings and use it for the toilets, or to water the plants. It's all about the circles: we grow the plants that we eat, we cook them with the electricity we generate, we shit in the water we collect, and from the shit, we make the biogas we heat ourselves with. The sun, the rain, the wind, they make us very well connected to nature and our environment.

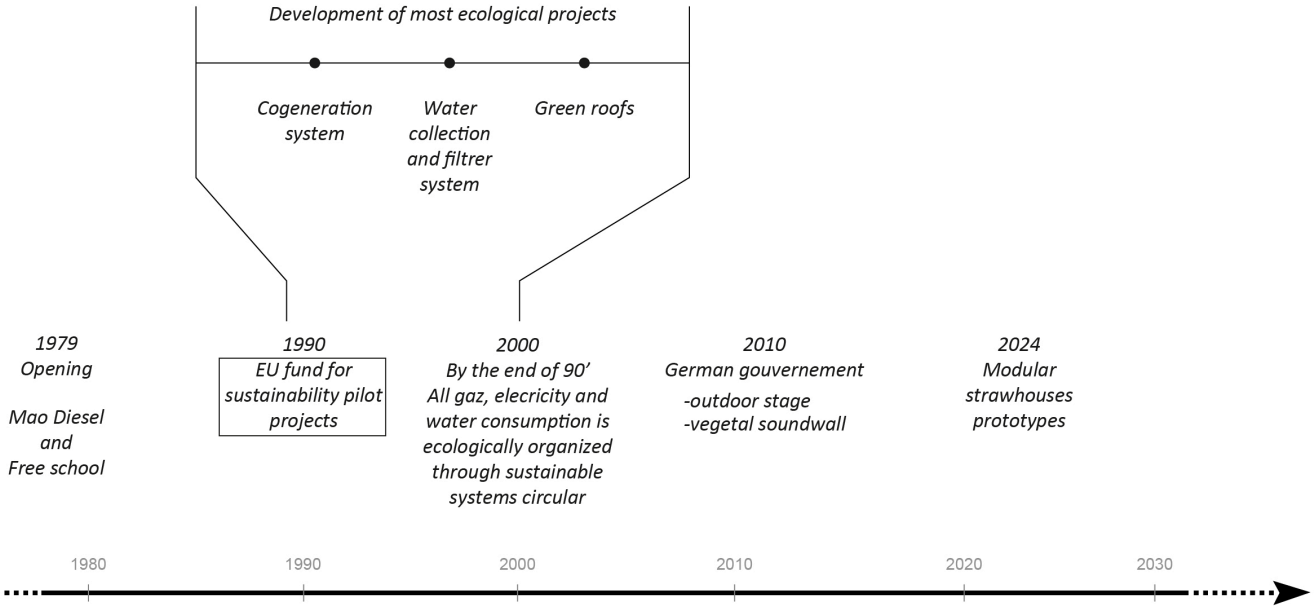
We started in 1979 with 'Mao diesel' so we could be autonomous in electricity and heat production. It was an old van motor running on waste, paired with a waste gas washing system. It produced more electricity than we used, meaning the counters were turning backwards and the electricity company had to pay us money! Of course, they didn't allow it, but that forced the development of new measuring systems, which helped when we all started using cogeneration systems and solar panels. I started making plans for ufa; by the end of the 80s we got fundings from the EU to develop sustainable pilot projects. That's when most of our projects started."

Building on a major funding , ufa developed several initiatives through the 1990s. Some, such as the first propane-based cooling system once used within ufa's bakery, were short-lived innovations that didn't withstand the test of time. Many, however, are still thriving today. The buildings' roofs were reinforced and planted with vegetation with the help of the local university. The green roofs first contributed to the buildings' insulation and fight local heat island effect. Through selections and monitoring, ufa's roofs also became more biodiverse than most public parks: through monthly blooms, they provide insects with resources and gather over 65 vegetation species per roof.

Both this biodiversity and ufa's energy production are amplified by the combination of green roofs with solar panels. The latter provide shade, allowing for the growth of more species. In turn, the soil cools the photovoltaic devices, providing better efficiency. The roofs and streets of ufa were also equipped with extensive rainwa- ter collection systems. In 2024, 60% of the water falling on the area is collected, filtered first through a pre-tank then aquatic plants and organisms, allowing the centre to save 13,000m³ of water annually. The system also requires little maintenance: the green roofs are left to their natural rhythms while the solar panels demand little more than an annual cleaning and punctual service maintenance.

In 2024, ufa is still developing new socio-technical experiments, thanks to German funding. Those include the creation of vertical gardens, soundproofing an outdoor stage by combining demolition scraps, coconut fibres and selected plants as well as modular housing prototypes, built of compressed straw.

However, ufa's sustainability strategy is as social as it is technical. Werner is joined by Benedikt Sudau, who has known ufa since he was a child at the centre's elementary school and has worked there for over 13 years, now working as staff coordinator. Benedikt adds to Werner's circular vision by showing how community and education

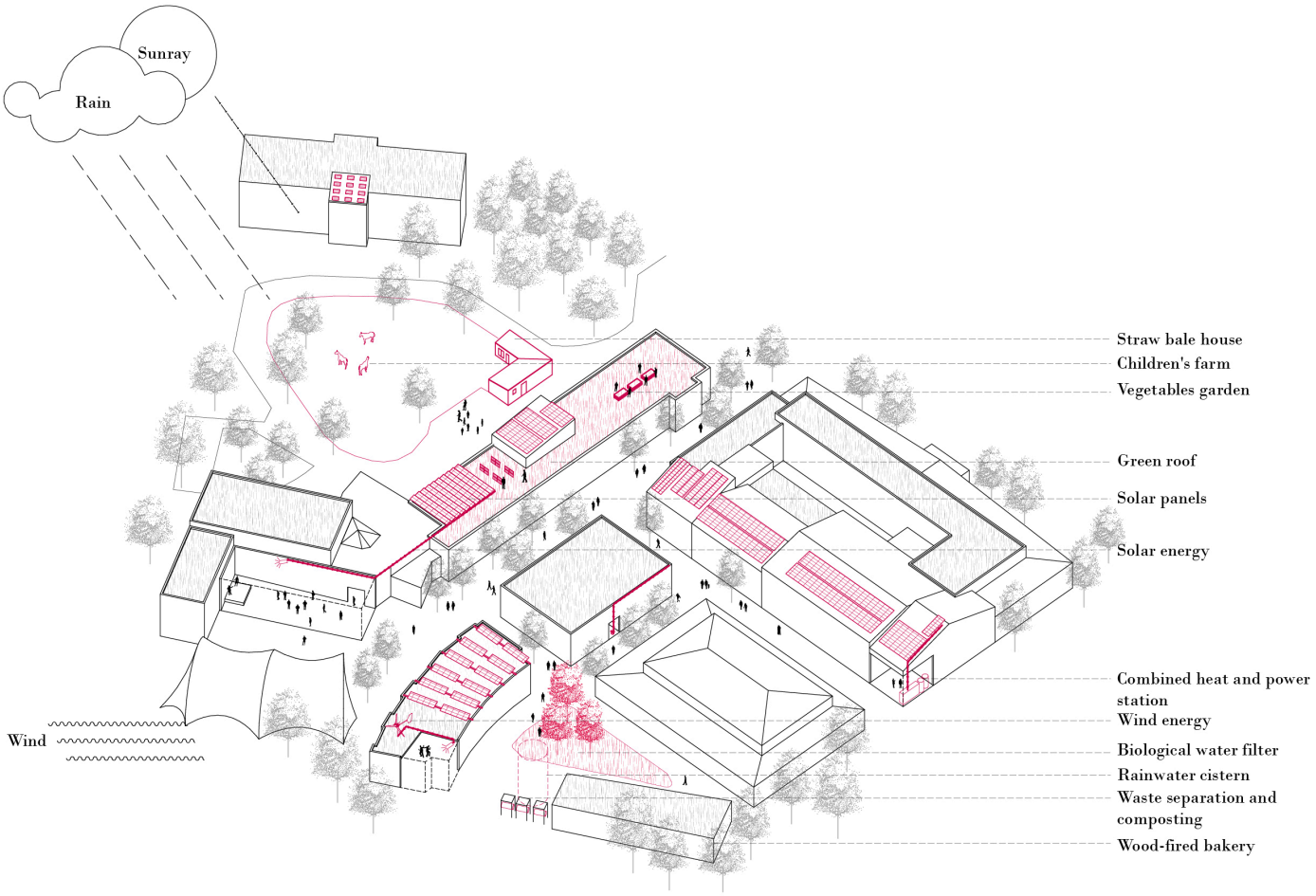


adds to the equation:

"To be sustainable, to last a long time, you can't see it as just techniques. If you don't care about the surrounding, the culture and the education, technique alone is nothing. We must be connected with the entire neighbourhood (human and non-human). That's why we have a free school. We don't want to teach our children that they must do this or that, in a simplified and flat way. We need them to be critical and innovative and challenge us. So here, you don't have regular classes. What you learn is to solve problems by yourself, and a lot of social skills; the teachers are there to bring you to solve conflicts in a good and caring way. The school is paired with our animal farm, which is open to the public, so the children must interact with animals and strangers. They learn how to work with animals and plants, how to care for them. Then they grow up and know that nature is important, that animals have feelings and lives and need care. That's very important for children in a city, and it also shows that an elementary school is a central part of our society."

This commitment to education is everywhere in ufa insists Benedikt Sudau:

"We offer services, education and cultural programmes accessible to everyone, and we always show what we do. We don't have a fence, we don't have a door to close, almost every area is open to anybody, even at night. Everywhere we have signs that explain the science behind our ecological actions. So, when people come for a coffee, a show, they can learn and understand what's possible."



INCONTRI DEL TERZO LUOGO – Manifatture Knos, Lecce, Italy

Once a 4,000m² steelworker training centre, Manifatture Knos has been transformed – since 2007 – into a 'third place', i.e. an explorative and creative cultural hotspot for non-profit organisations. The transformation and gradual regeneration of the site included the participa- tion and expertise of important intellectual figures, including the renowned landscape architect and gardener Gilles Clément and architect Patrick Bouchain, making use of Knos not only as a space for free artistic and social expression but also as a continuous in situ experiment for social engagement and sustainable landscape design.

In this context, the 'Incontri del terzo luogo' (meetings of the third place) first started in 2012 as a biannual event bringing together 30 to 150 architects, landscape specialists, artists, students and inhabitants to observe, discuss and experiment with the possibilities of 'third places' in Knos (and throughout Europe), in real scale and time. From small-scale design interventions to the conversion of a 10,000m² parking lot into an experimental garden, those encounters invited practitioners, scholars and students to imagine, explore and design new relationships between the built and non-built environments and between different living species (human and non-human).

Image : Third landscape in Knos. ©Manifatture Knos
https://www.manifattureknos.org/knos/

INTERVIEW: MICHELE BEE/KNOS Co-Founder

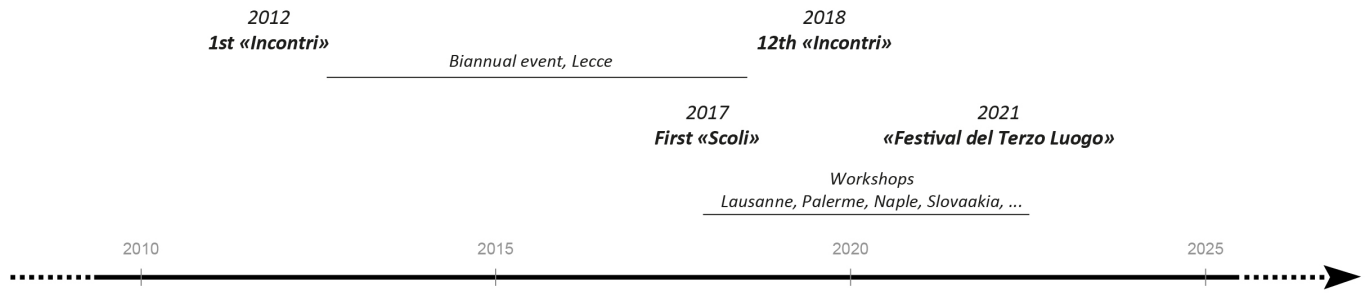
Michele Bee is one of the founders of Knos. He has been its President for a decade and is now focused on the development of the centre's international relations. He recalls the Incontri's origins:
"They were created when we had to close the Manifatture because it had to be refurbished to fit security norms. Since we couldn't use our space, we launched some participatory projects, but it didn't work. Inhabitants would say, 'You are the experts, why do you need me? I don't have time, I don't care, just don't touch to the parking lots in front of my house'.
When we came back, we had to try something different. We found what we were looking for in the 'Third Landscape Manifesto', by Gilles Clément, in the way he described the importance of giving back political dignity to indecision. The third landscape is something beyond places determined by the laws of man. But, to him, it happens in spaces abandoned by humans. We wondered: can we have the same indecision, spontaneity and openness, where humans are still there? The third space to us was where the undecided biological and social inventions happen.

So I wrote a letter to Gilles Clement to ask hm if he would accept to experiment with us, and he accepted. That's how the Incontri started. We chose places that were taken back by nature, like an abandoned quarry, or completely at the hand of men, like our asphalt parking lot. And we asked: 'can we open this to indecision?' 'to new forms of coexistence?'
When Gilles came to Knos we asked him: 'what shall we do with the asphalt?' Everybody had ideas and projects. Luckily, we didn't have money to make them. Then, someone came and broke it [the asphalt]... Just like that.. it started a process that brought us to create a garden. Later, we realised that we simply accelerated a process that would have happened if humans didn't do anything for 100 years; the plants would break the asphalt, and then the forest would start appearing. Just like Gilles said: 'Don't worry, because if we do nothing, the forest will always come'."

This led to more workshops in Lecce and then in Denmark, Slovakia, Greece and Switzerland. The Incontri tested new situations and conditions to understand in situ how to create 'new coexistences where all living things are welcome, even humans'. These workshops were also a testimony to the capacity of self-organisation in scarce contexts, away from conventional planning practices:
"It started with that guy who broke the asphalt. We don't even remember who it was. Then we started cutting it here and there. And that's great because if we took away all of the asphalt, if we brought tons of soils and the trees, it would have been terrible to maintain. On the contrary, by taking out small pieces and helping spontaneous plants to colonise and grow, we discovered that the asphalt – if cracked in the right place – could keep the moisture in during summer, rather than being a furnace during summer. Today, we don't even have to water the garden. It is self-sustained despite the climate in Lecce."

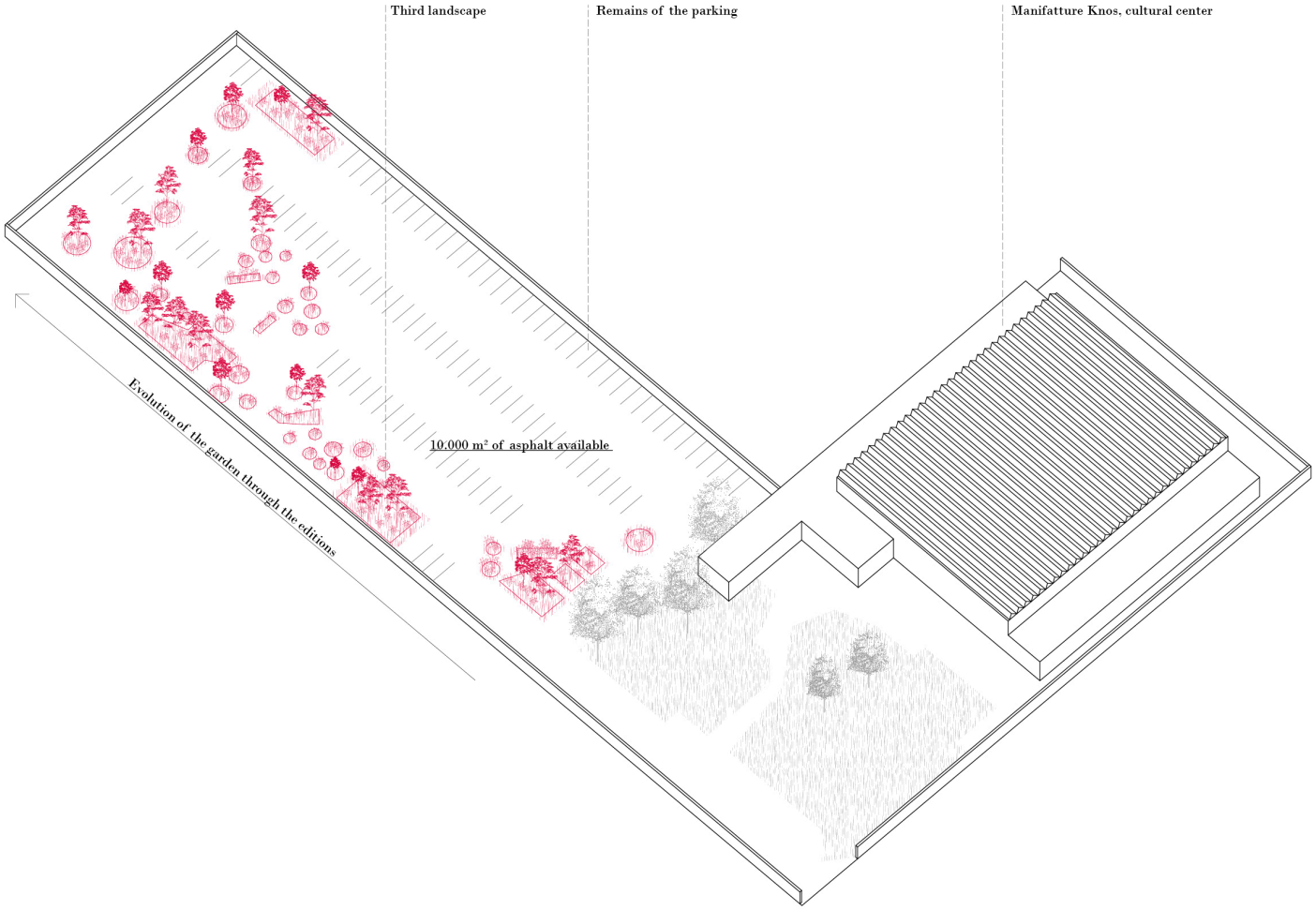
The Incontri also provided the occasion to see how to divert from conventional technocratic ways of planning and their expectations:
"We also learned to stop asking for permission and rather perform actions. That's when administrations come to tell you 'it's marvelous' and citizens come to ask 'what's happening'. And this way also allows a lot of people to become protagonists at any time. Because anyone, if they think of doing something, can do it. It happened in Lecce and in Lausanne: we were breaking the asphalt, with no communication at all, and people spontaneously came to ask. They'd say, 'Why are you putting the tree there? There's a shadow, you should put it there!'. Then we'd give them the shovel, and that's how you get people breaking down the parking in front of their home. Because if we rung at their house and told them they could do whatever, they wouldn't move."

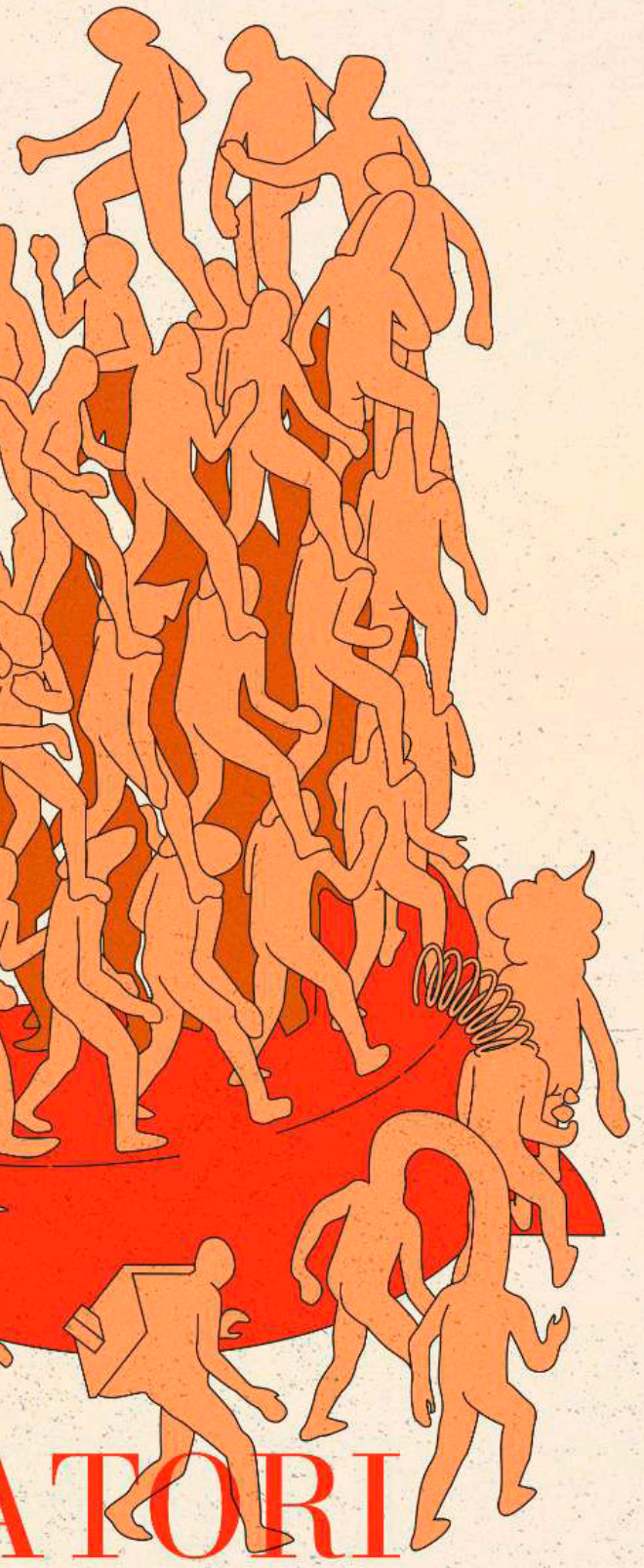
Given the importance of nature within the Incontri, temporality was also a major aspect of the dynamic:
"In Lecce, we organised Incontri every six months, for years, because time is necessary to see natural changes. It's not a one-shot performance like, 'I come, I take out the asphalt, I put some soil, plant some stuff and I leave'. You need to come back with some distance and respect the temporality of the garden, the repetition it requires. It is also a rhythm, with slow periods and moments of climax where energy and people gather freely, a bit like a carnival, before it relaxes again."



That aspect was particularly striking within another edition of the Incontri, developed in another site in Lecce, an abandoned quarry: "When we arrived there, the municipality cut all the plants. So, Gilles Clément said, 'let's go, we cannot do the workshop here anymore.' And, suddenly, we found a space that was untouched, because it didn't belong to the city. Gilles started walking through the brambles, we cut some pathways. That's when inhabitants came, called us crazy, told us that all they wanted was to burn it down to make way for a new parking lot. After three days, they discovered with us an orchid garden that was protected by the brambles and their gaze started to change...

Six months later we came back with people from all over Europe. Everybody interacted with the space in their own way. We widened the pathways, threw some seeds to accelerate the forest process. We had a beautiful meeting with the inhabitants. Someone came to sing, and everybody had to come through the brambles ... We created new interactions between inhabitants, plants, animals...
Then, two things happened. First, the inhabitants from the surrounding village came spontaneously and told us, 'listen, this is the first time in 40 years that we all met together'. Then, when we were leaving, they told us, 'this time, you're not taking the gardening tools with you. Leave them with us, we'll be the gardeners of this place. This is not a place to burn, it's a place to care for'."





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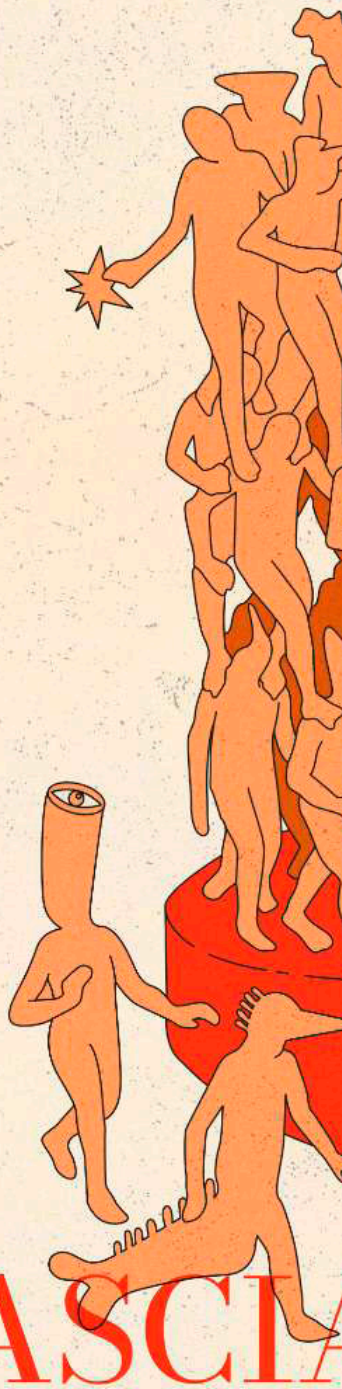


GLI AMBASCIA DEI NON U

Testo di Saverio Massaro ed Enrico Lain

Con la Compagnia Giovani de LiNUTILE

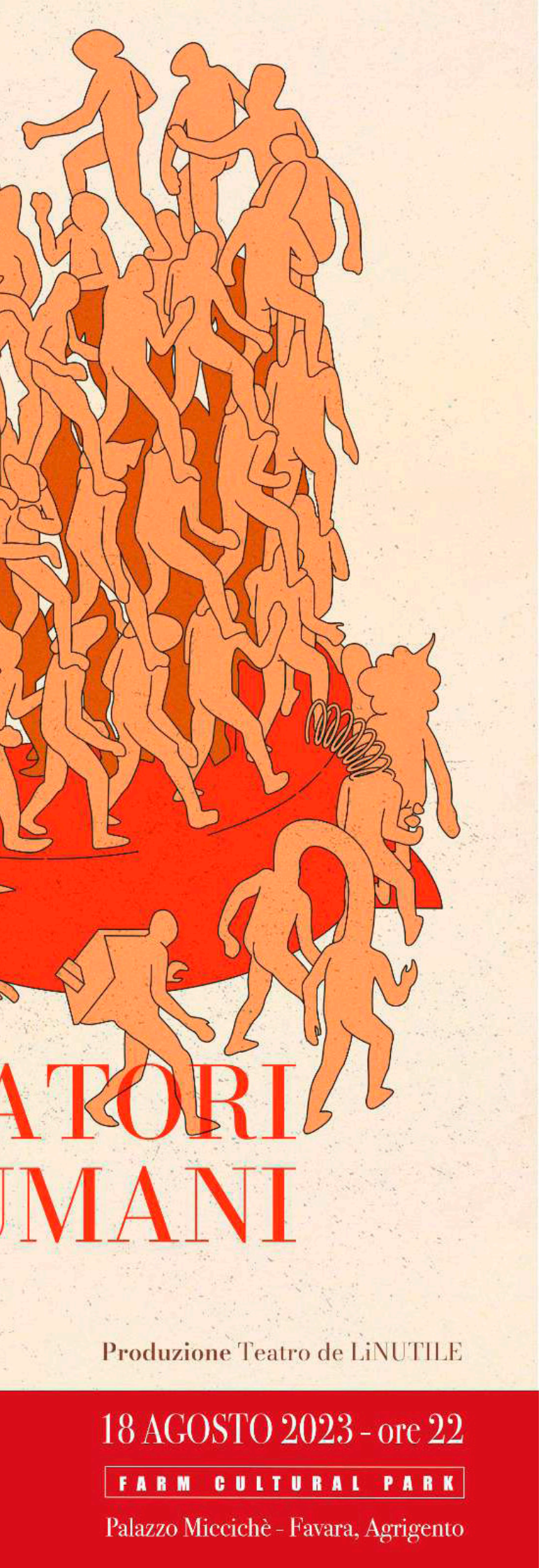
Regia di Marta Bettuolo e Stefano Eros Macchi

18 AGOSTO 2023 - ore 22

FARM CULTURAL PARK

Palazzo Micciché - Favara, Agrigento

HUMAN FOREST



EMBASSY OF NON-HUMANS –Farm Cultural Centre, Favara, Italy

Farm Cultural Park opened in 2010 under the impetus of art collectors Florinda Saieva and Andrea Bartoli, who intended to reinvigorate the shrinking town of Favara (30,000 inhabitants), on the Sicilian western coast of Italy. The cultural centre, developed within the then-abandoned Sette Cortili residential ensemble, now spreads across the town through a variety of projects, exhibitions, events and workshops and attracts numerous residents, artists and tourists. One of these projects, the 'Non-Humans' Embassy' (NHE), was launched in 2023, following Enrico Lain and Saverio Massaro's intervention at the Italian Pavilion of the 17th International Architecture Biennale of Venice in 2021. Here the first Non-Humans' Assembly took place: 10 delegates, each representing a community of humans, plants, animals or technologies, all fostered ideas, texts and references to consider a common future. In later years, the assembly led to an innovative theatrical performance guiding spectators, wondering around the streets of Favara, to interact and participate in this democratic assembly of a new kind. By removing humans from the centre of the planetary experience and showing non-humans as a necessary interlocutor to build a common future, the NHE aims to renew our collective consciousness of who inhabits our planet and to reflect on how we can and should collaborate to sustain each other in a forthcoming transformation.

Image source: Project's poster. ©Farm Cultural Centre
https://www.farmculturalpark.com/

INTERVIEW: ENRICO LAIN and SAVERIO MASSARO /Non-Humans' Embassy Co-Creators and Curators

Saverio Massaro and Enrico Lain are the co-creators and curators of the Non-Humans' Embassy (NHE). While the former has been part of the Farm Cultural Park ecosystem for a long time, the latter came to it through this collaboration. They both reminisce:

"In 2021, in the context of the Architecture Biennale, we wanted to talk theatrically about sustainability and ecosystems, and to give a space to non-humans, as we were very inspired by Bruno Latour. With the help of two actors from Padova's Teatro dell'inutile, we created 'Fair Play', a piece where different experts acted as representatives of different non-humans: concepts, techniques, animals, ... "
"Andrea and Florinda were invited to represent the agent 'community'. They quickly saw the potential of the play and challenged us to make it bigger, offering us the resources and the space to do it. That's how we started working on this larger project that is Non-Humans' Embassy."
Building on this first experience, the two architects went on to write other parts for other non-humans, played by other actors. This led to the birth of the first Embassy in Favara in the summer of 2023, which they describe as follows:
"The Embassy was activated by a ritual, a public performance. In Favara, thanks to the special contribution of Oriana Persico – a cyber activist involved as well in the Biennale's Assembly – the opening ritual was the first request for political asylum submitted on behalf of five computational agents created by Persico and Salvatore Iaconesi. Performance is central to activate the public and its attention. It brings a completely different way of perceiving those issues that we can't put in writing; the written language is a segment of the whole process. All the rest is made by actors who integrated and developed their parts. As you're invited to enter the Embassy, you are involved in a situation floating between fiction and reality; you're not entering a pavilion or a building, you're entering a condition in which the space, this strange palazzo, itself populated by trees and plants, allows you to understand new relations through the way people act and interact room after room. There, you discover the different pieces of the performance where the actors move and express complex concepts with their bodies.
The public is not passive and is part of the performance. Under the guidance of an actor, the procession starts outside the palazzo. The public holds things, chants with us, is very active. Once we enter the building, you're also involved by the actors, who interact with you..."

This setting leads the people involved to reconsider their relationship to humans and non-humans, and what and who surround them:
"The result is striking; for instance, we asked children if they understood the concepts, had them draw, and it was clear they understood perfectly the complex issues and the connections we made. This shift included also the actors, you know. They were at first reluctant about the texts; they didn't understand how we wrote them. But once they've completed the performance, the opposite happened: they understood the message and their role in it; they defended and transformed it. It's an empirical process for everybody, including us."

Farm Cultural Park's Palazzo Miccichè, where the play was held for the first time, is central to the Non-Humans' Embassy. The performance takes full advantage of the many rooms of the formerly abandoned building, combining the raw stones and growing vegetation to the explorative performance, a site-specific project itself:
"The palazzo is a powerful vision: it's clearly made for plants, not for humans. So, it was the perfect starting point for the Embassy. And the actors, once in Favara, they all got influenced by this fantastic place: they discovered the roles they were performing; they went on to find the right room and the right place for that specific agent they were performing."

Beyond the performance itself, the Non-Humans' Embassy is a wider project to connect and involve the public actively with non-humans and research the best way to do so. In the words of Enrico, "it's a political act that started aesthetically[...] the Non-Humans' Embassy is a research for the impossible and the paradoxical, to find a freer way to see the city".

In that sense, the duo constantly collects data emerging from the performances:
"In the end, the actors become the antenna of the work; their understanding of the performance gave us new data about the interrelationship between non-humans and the space. We are using them as indicators of how the performance is adapting. We collect interviews

of the actors on the way they perform their part. It is a kind of one-to-one empirical experiment of non-human relationships that we document in real time."
While a digital archive project is currently being developed, data are currently shown through a permanent exhibition in Favara. Using the biennale to today, explaining the role of the participants and non-human delegates. Each computational agent that has been welcomed for asylum through the performance constitutes also a digital artwork itself.

Indeed, Enrico and Saverio's goal is the expansion of the Non-Humans' Embassy through a larger network that is being built little by little.
"The first network started at the Venice Biennale, through the participants who worked with us to put their words into texts that we could use afterwards. Then the horizontal collaboration came, with more people, extended with the opening of the Embassy in Favara. Soon, we'll try to open other embassies in other places. It's both a family that we try to create and a research process."

While this process is only at the beginning, the co-authors firmly state their intentions:
"As designers, we think our task is to change the setting, rather than problem solving. So it's a different way of thinking. What we hope is that thinking can be as engaging as playing music in a band.
We believe in it because we never saw people crying or having goosebumps concerning sustainability before this. So, the question is not what 'sustainable' theme to broach, but rather in which way we talk about it. This is the main thing, to propose new ways of communicating and raising awareness."

TOWARDS A "WORKING MANUAL"

As shown on a preliminary basis in these pages, each centre has developed a specific expertise shaped by its local circumstances, a finely tuned answer to local contexts as well as particular built typologies and architectural features inherited from the past. As such, they each entail a set of opportunities to learn from on-site experiments. As a set of expertise, skills and know-hows that are more often than not tacit, valorised or necessarily even acknowledged represent an extremely valuable asset.

This study tackles the need to unveil this knowledge in the hope of both valorising it and helping more initiatives to learn valuable lessons from it. This part consisted of a first set of concrete lessons from the TEH centres on "cultural regeneration" as shareable knowledge. As such, we believe that these lessons could fundamentally contribute to a concrete and ambitious expansion of what the "New Europe-an Bauhaus" could look like and how we could achieve it in a systematic way.

While this publication is only a stepping stone towards this goal, it is an essential one that it rooted within long-term, situated and applied strategies. Bringing such innovative and forward-looking experiences alive constitutes the beginning of a wide-ranging and significant research programme that can make an important contribution to a truly sustainable Europe – both in spirit and action.

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TEH: Building a Cultural Regeneration Project for Europe

COMMUNITY PLACE MAKING AND CO-DESIGN

Publication #4
COMMUNITY PLACE MAKING AND CO-DESIGN
«(Re)building to Last» Project
WP4 _ Manifatture Knos

DRAFT VERSION
Lecce, 31.08.2024

#4

Publication realised for the «Rebuilding to Last» Project and part of the Partcipatory Architecture Interventions WP4.

Members of the team: Michele Bee (Manifatture Knos), Giulia D'Antonio (Manifatture Knos), Michele Loiacono (Manifatture Knos), Rossella Tricarico (Manifatture Knos), Gaetano Zaccaria (Manifatture Knos) Silvia Tarantini (Manifatture Knos), Maurizio Buttazzo (Manifatture Knos), Miguel Georgieff (coloco), Claudia Hernandez (coloco), Flavien Guidoux (coloco), Clémence Dubois (coloco), Diego Peris (Todo por la Praxis), Jo Munoz (Todo por la Praxis), Nicolas Munoz Escalona (Todo por la Praxis).

The maps of Aarhus and Zilina, part of the Research WP2, have been realized by Prof. Martina Barcelloni Corte and Thibault Marghem from Université de Liège - Unité de Recherche en Architecture URA.

CO-EXISTENCE: A COMMON FRAMEWORK

INSTITUT FOR (X): AARHUS (DANMARK)

A spontaneous container village along an abandoned railway

Co-existence in X

Overview of the interventions in (X)

Who are you in the forest?
Creation of a Collective Project for the Renaturation of the Common Landscape

Capitalism's Tears

STANICA TRUC-SPHERIQUE, ZILINA (SLOVAKIA)

A railway station in the middle of a roundabout

Co-existence in Stanica

Overview of the interventions in Stanica

Weeds are welcome / Burína Vítaná

Coloco's intervention

Todo por la Praxis' intervention

COMMUNITISM, ATHENS (GREECE)

A new agent claiming for new spaces for new communities

Co-existence in Communitism

Overview of the interventions in Communitism

PERSPECTIVE ON REBUILDING TO LAST

Co-existence
A common framework

What if our cities welcomed the forest, the wetlands, the weeds, the insects, or the rabbits instead of chasing them away? What if cities became prototypes of coexistence, welcoming places for all living things, including humans? How can we stop building and start Rebuilding a world starting from what we normally exclude or abandon?

The Amazon rainforest is the symbol of life on Earth, which is being threatened more and more every day by human activity. But the Amazon is not virgin. The Amazon rainforest has been inhabited and transformed by humans for thousands of years without hardly anyone ever noticing. An almost invisible garden has been tended and transformed by its human inhabitants, just as the other creatures that coexist within it have always done. In the dreams that take place there, described by anthropologist Philippe Descola, humans and non-humans talk to each other, have found a way of living together.

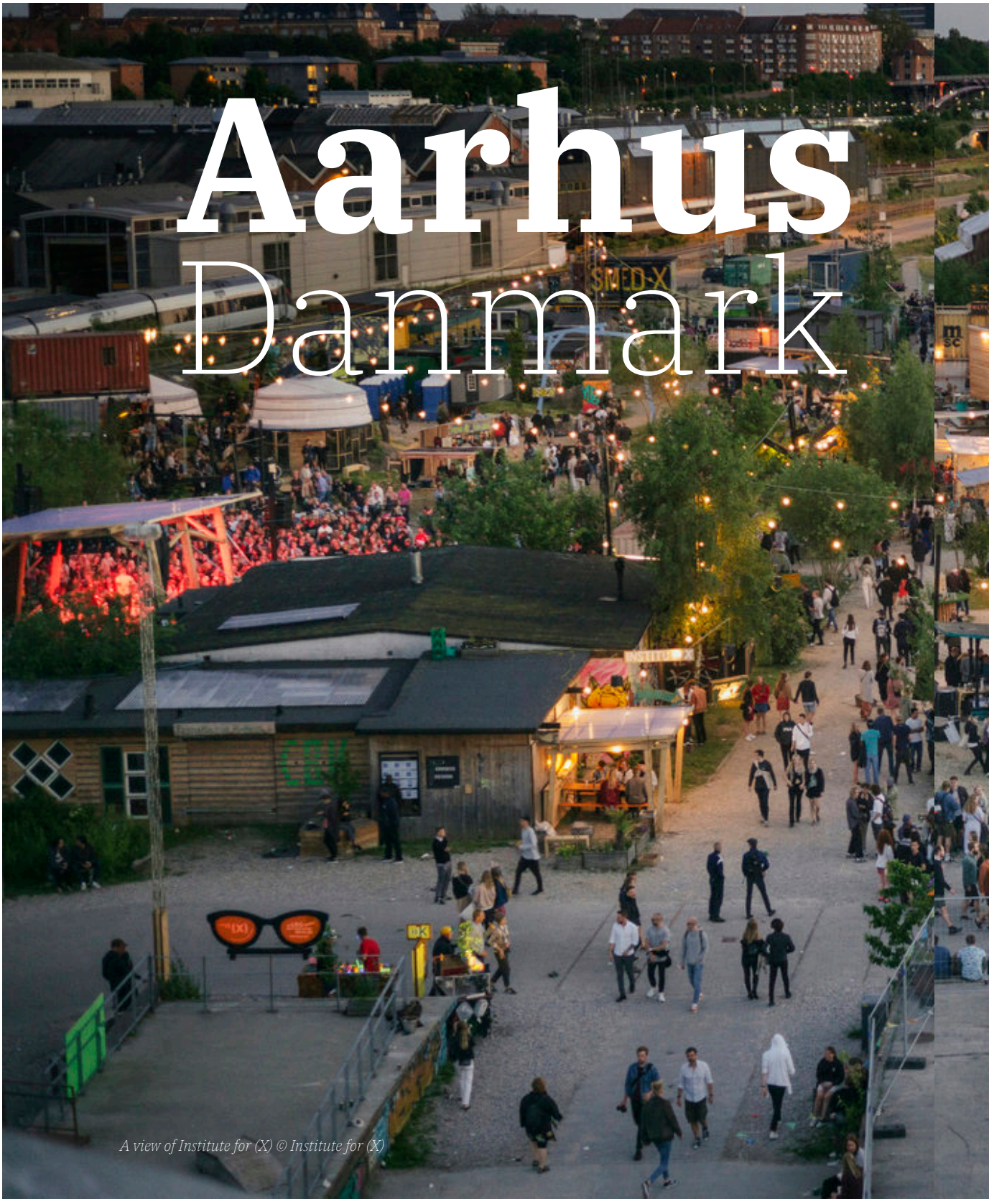
It is not a question of returning to the forest, as Rousseau or Thoreau could have imagined. Perhaps it would be enough to welcome the forest back into our cities. Perhaps it would be enough to give space to that invisible garden, a place where humans and non-humans meet, and where utopia –as critical way to investigate reality– is still possible. Here gardening could name specific forms of care where a multiplicity of techniques, know-hows, beliefs, affections could be enacted and experimented. New prototypes could be imagined and designed as powerful agents of coexistence, as reservoirs of possibilities for subjects to emancipate among humans and between human and non-human species. We imagine objects, lives, desires, practices shaping and interacting in the same space, towards the construction of a more "permeable" self.

Contemporary crises, culminating in the recent health crisis appear as precursors of increasingly fierce social, and environmental ones. Today, they reveal themselves as "crisis for all", meaning that to protect ourselves we need to protect others. This clarifies even more that "there is no individual shelter" and that we must begin to imagine and cultivate new spaces of coexistence. Together, we want to explore these possibilities by experimenting with new forms of coexistence in three exemplary places with different conditions: Aarhus, in the small spontaneous settlement along the railway called "Institute for (X)"; in Zilina, around the once abandoned railway

station, where passengers now enter a self-managed community space called “Stanica-Truc Spherique”, under a large roadblock; in Athens, were Communitism aim to become the catalyst of a new artistic and creative community advocating for the reuse of abandoned heritage and against the gentrification of their neighborhood.

Together with the organisations and numerous participants, we carried out three different projects with co-existence as a framework. In the first two cases, Aarhus and Zilina, we focused on the presence of water as the guiding element of the initiatives; in the case of Athens, we focused on the potential of a new small space as a manifesto for the reuse of abandoned spaces and in contrast to speculation.

Aarhus
Danmark



A view of Institute for (X) © Institute for (X)

Institut for (X)

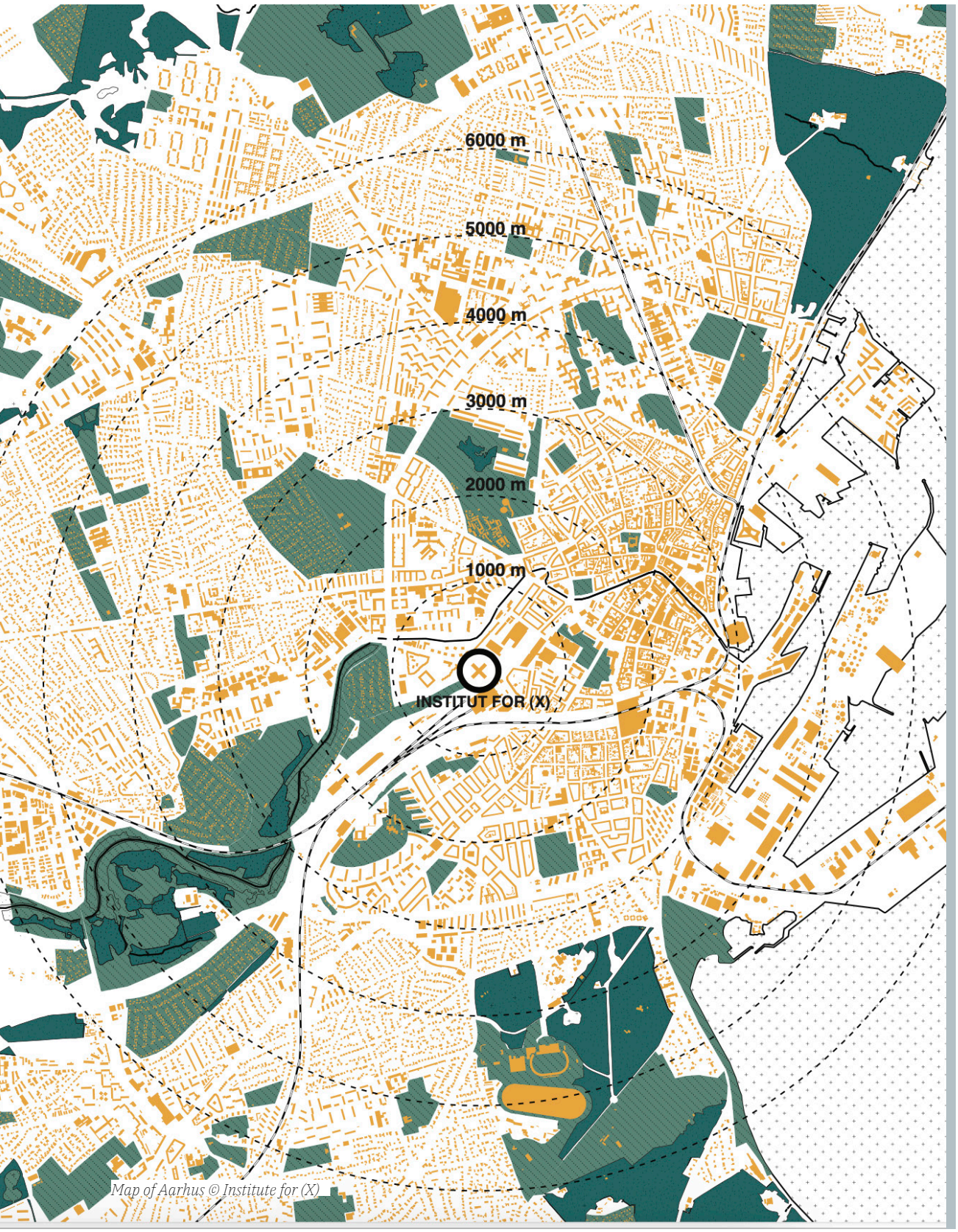
A spontaneous container village along an abandoned railway

Institut for (X) is a culture, business, and education platform founded in 2009. It is an independent, not-for-profit association arising from citizen initiatives, situated at **Godsbanen in the center of Aarhus**, Denmark. Our 10,000-square-meter landscape, formerly a freight railway station, is characterized by a blend of public park areas, cultural heritage buildings, repurposed shipping containers, Mongolian yurts, and train wagons.

(X) operates as a non-profit association where members with a unit pay a membership fee and organize through neighborhood meetings. We have a board elected by members at the annual general assembly. Administration is kept to a minimum, and everyone participates in maintenance roles as janitors. Owned by Aarhus Municipality, the site was under temporary use agreements for several years before we secured a contract for at least ten years. In 2019, urban development reduced Institut for (X)'s area by 40%, impacting public green spaces and leading to increased building density. This reduction means any physical expansion by (X) or its members adversely affects potential public green spaces.

Urban green spaces are essential, not only for recreational purposes but also for climate adaptation, biodiversity, CO2 sequestration, and more. Global climate changes have led to more extreme weather conditions in Denmark, such as heatwaves, heavy rain, floods, and droughts. Consequently, there is an increasing need for climate adaptation in our cities, and Institut for (X) is no exception. The aim of the RTL project for (X) is to return spaces to nature, biodiversity, and public use with every new construction project. This strategy ensures that enhancing cultural activities does not compromise urban green areas. By creating solutions where cultural growth and urban green spaces coexist, we aim to contribute positively to the city's climate resilience and ecological health. (X) believes that integrating green spaces within urban environments is vital for the well-being of the community and the sustainability of the city.

Institut for (X) continues to strive for a balance between cultural development and environmental stewardship.



Map of Aarhus © Institute for (X)

Co-existence in X

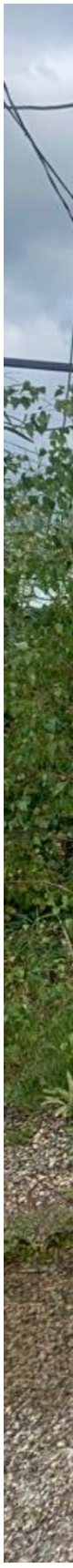
What if even puddles were an opportunity to welcome the diversity of the living that we usually push away? The 'real city' is looming higher than a metre to push the water it does not want elsewhere. But is it not in this 'elsewhere', where the Institute for (X) is located, that the city that is to come arises? Amphibious, welcoming, ready to mutate?

Life without water is unimaginable: our planet and all living things - plants, animals and humans - depend on it and its presence. How then could it happen that water was expelled from our cities, hidden deep underground out of our sight? What if we could use water to our advantage and unlock its potential to bring life to places considered 'uninhabitable'?

A small spontaneous settlement behind an old railway station in Aarhus has tried to turn water from 'enemy' into 'ally'. Often flooded by unwanted water from the city, Institute for X decided to use it to create a garden that would welcome all species and provide a place for them to live together.

Our main hypothesis is that –in the city– water could become the cradle of such "prototypes of coexistence", through the spaces capable of holding and stocking it – as sponges. Since the dawn of time, water and life have been deeply connected. Dense with biological presence, water shelters profoundly heterogeneous ecological conditions. All creatures –man, animals, plants– are made of water and have water "in common". Historically hidden/expelled for hygiene purposes and covered under layers of landfill, water still accumulates in the city. It flows and pools not only along waterways or creeks but also throughout topography's invisible folds, within imperceptible lowlands or sandy soils, once territory of marshes and wetlands. It is within these "urban lowlands", where water secretly accumulates nurturing life (distant from the public gaze) that new coexistences could be left growing and tested.

In the next pages part of the research from the University of Liège about the lawlands mapping and approach.



Institute for (X) after the rain, October 2024

Maps of Institut for (X) and Aarhus

Part of Research WP2
by Université de Liège - Unité de Recherche en Architecture URA

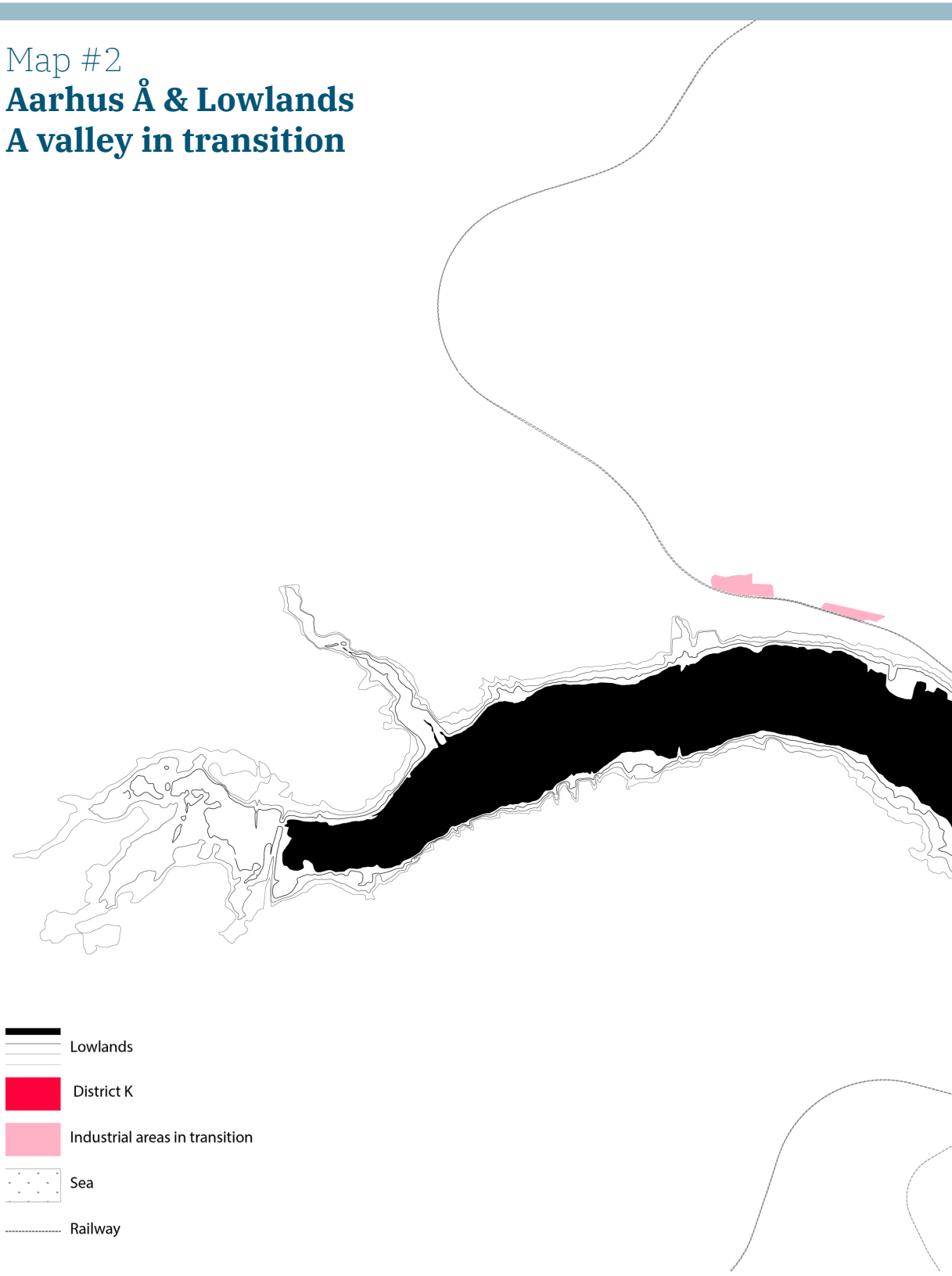
© Prof. Martina Barcelloni Corte and Thibault Marghem

Map #1

Water geographies

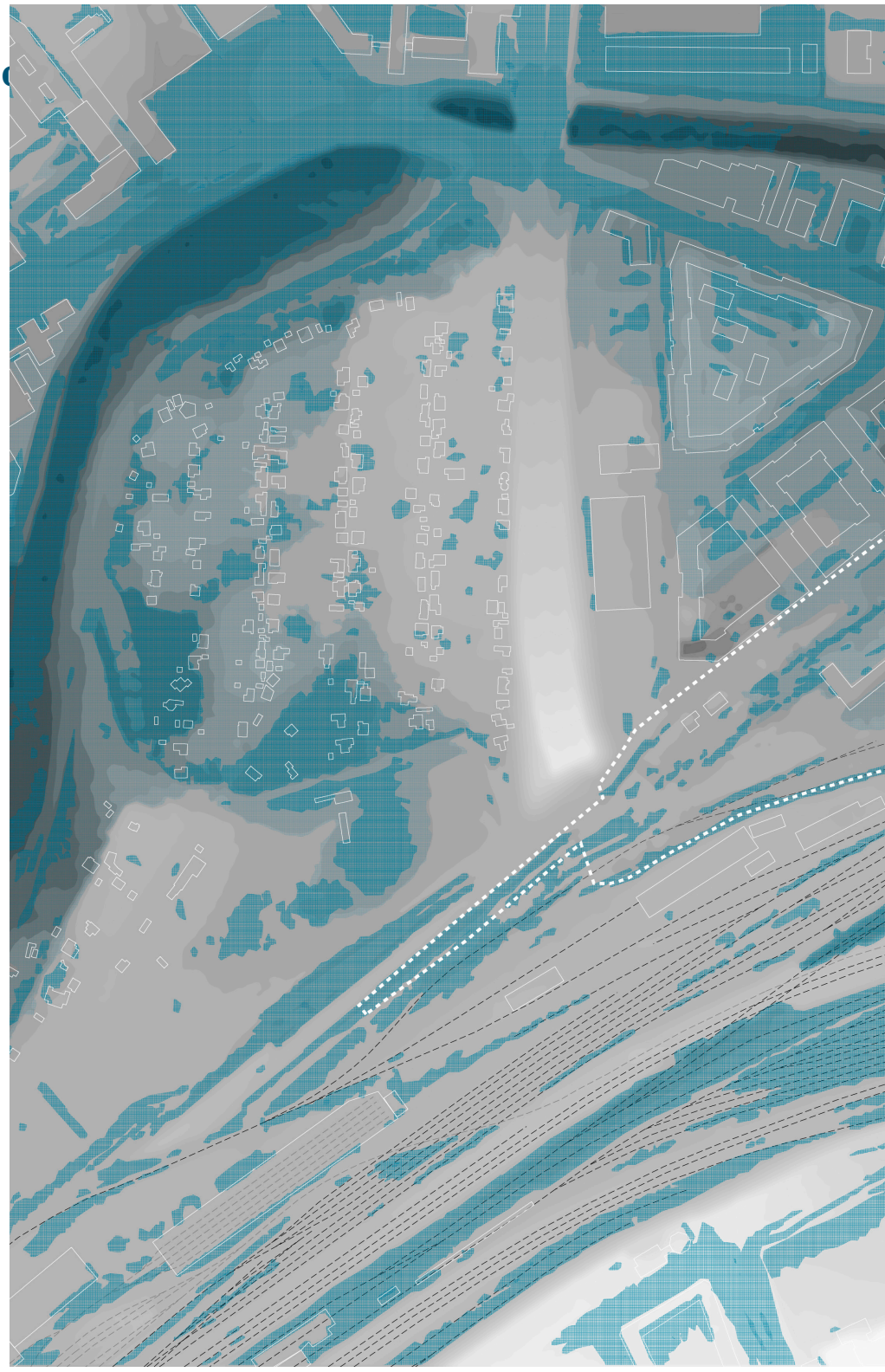
Map #2

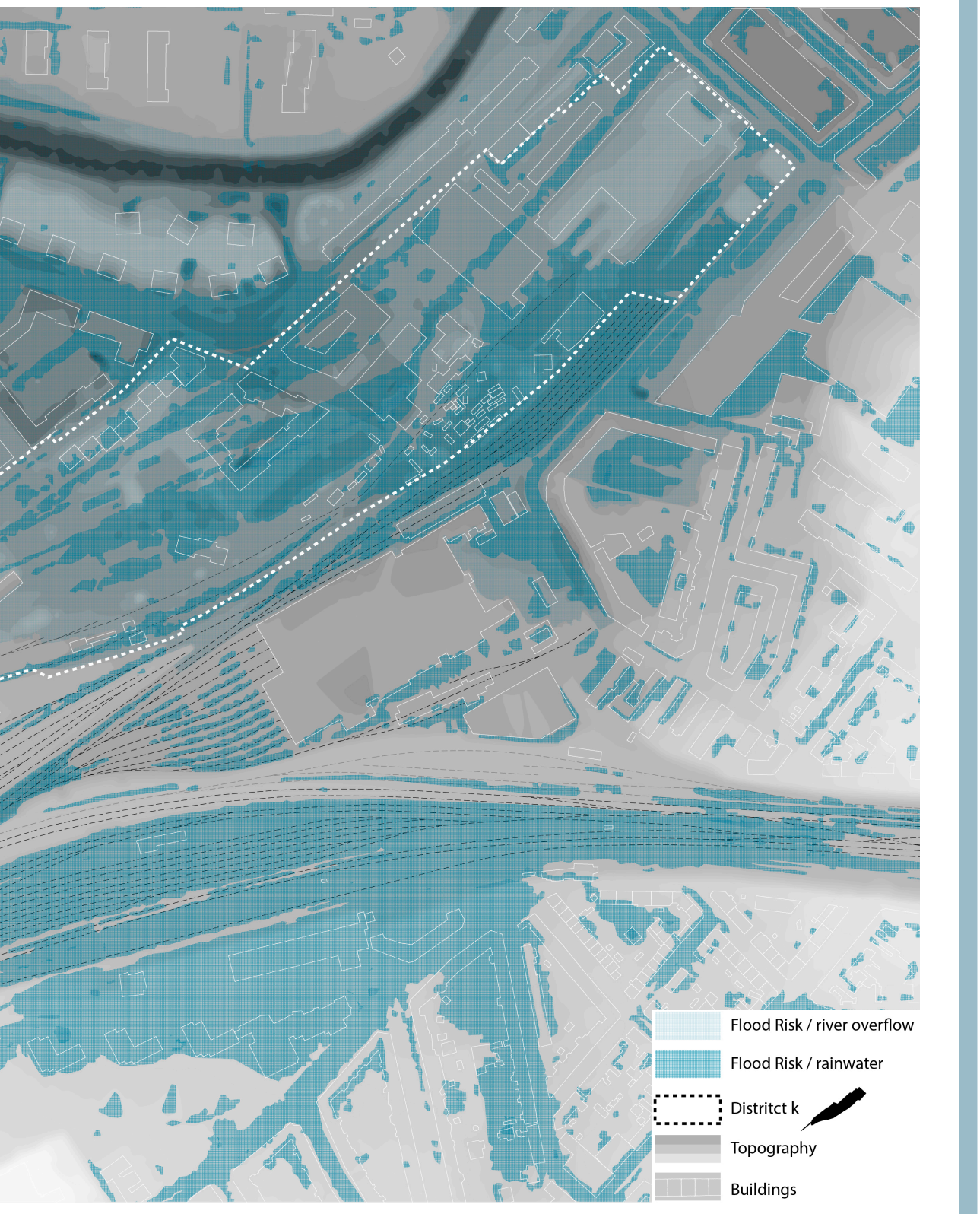
Aarhus Å & Lowlands
A valley in transition



Map #3

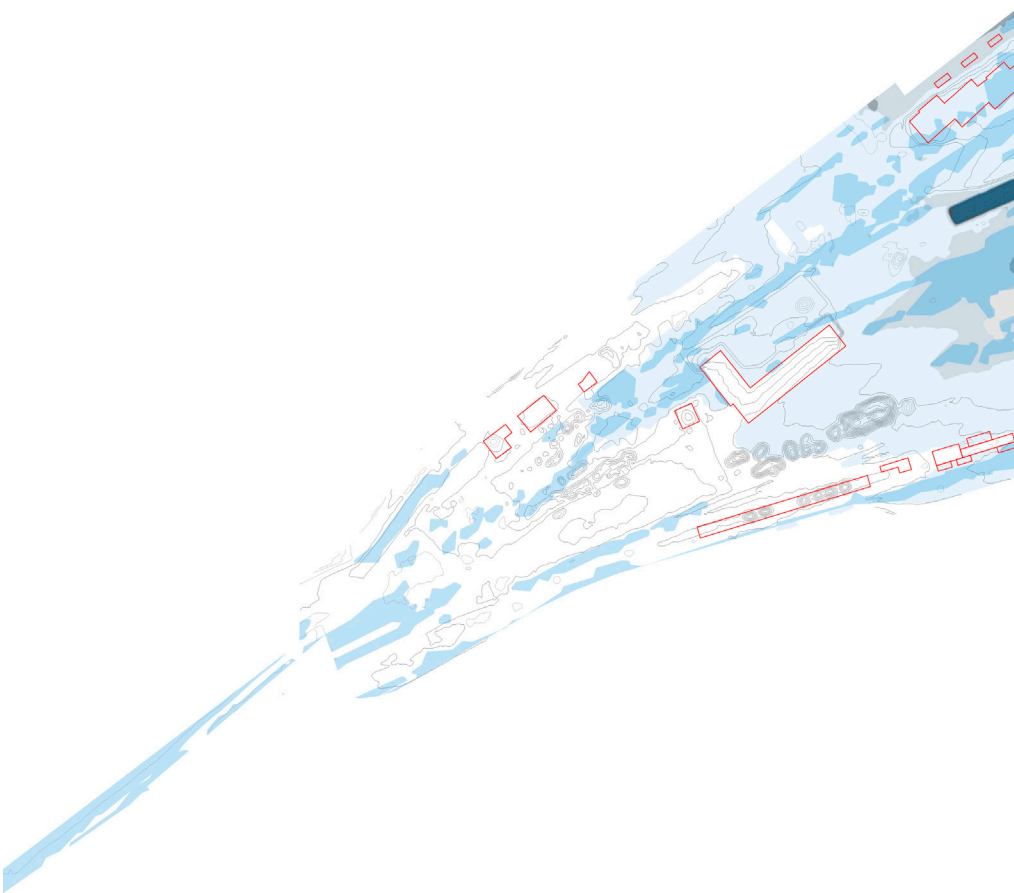
Microtopo
& floods

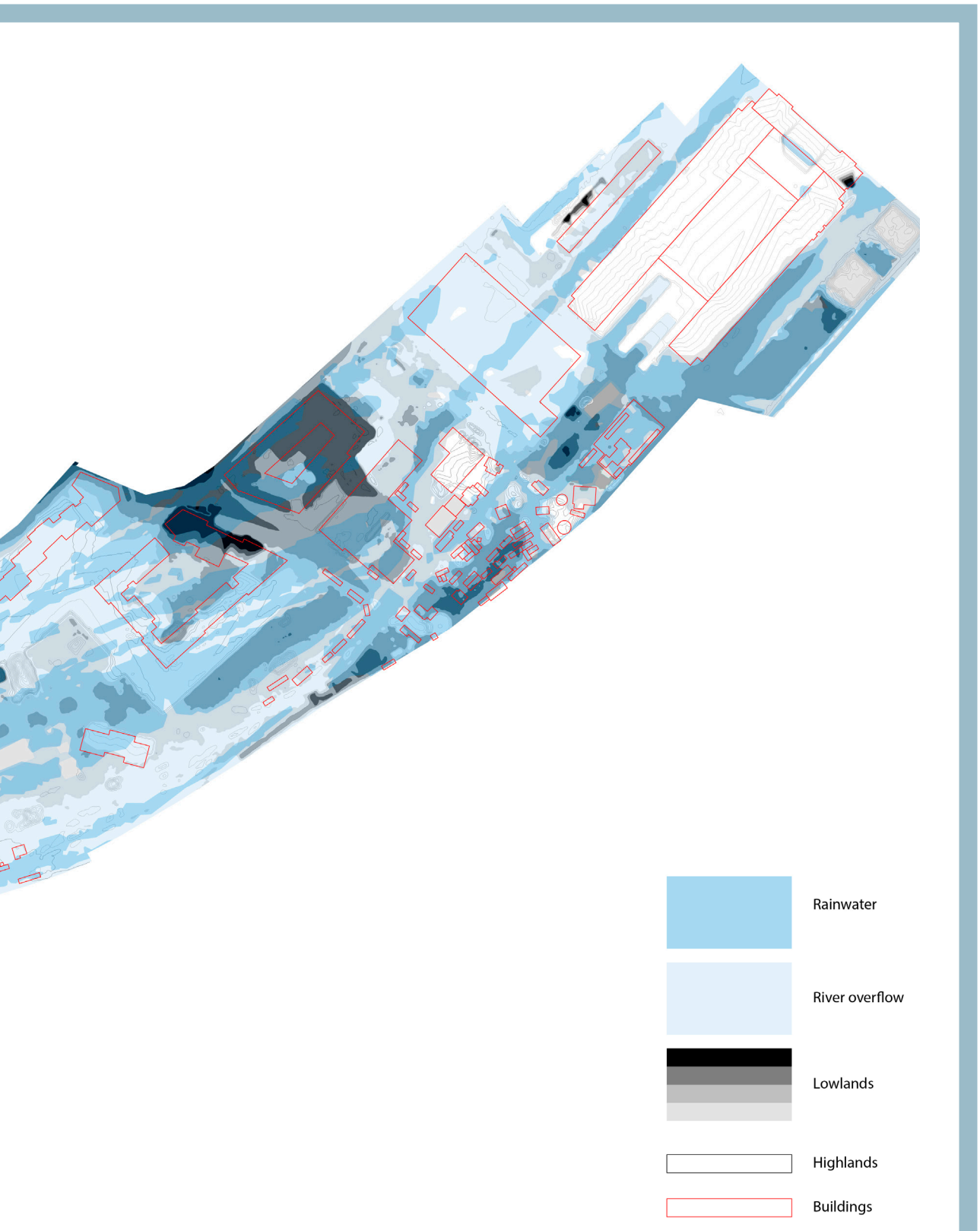



Flood Risk / river overflow
Flood Risk / rainwater
Distritct k
Topography
Buildings

Map #4

District K




Rainwater
River overflow
Lowlands
Highlands
Buildings

Gardeners of X, September 2024 © coloco

Overview of the interventions in (X)

From the beginning of the project, close communication with (X), both online and offline, centered around creating natural spaces within the cultural village, with the goal of translating their initial ideas into a process that led to three participatory initiatives.

As mentioned, the research focused on the presence of water in a context where, unlike in other places, its abundance is considered a problem. The contribution of the University of Liège, as mentioned in the previous pages, which studied the context of Aarhus and conducted detailed mapping of the area and its "lowlands", was crucial in identifying areas for intervention and providing a solid research framework for the projects.

During the first workshop session in May 2023, we had the opportunity to explore the location and Aarhus, thanks also to the visits organized by the (X) team. The days were structured to allow us to become familiar with the space, their vision, and their projects, in order to develop initiatives that best meet the needs of the space and its members and align with the program's philosophy.

In September 2023, we returned for the first action, which involved planting trees and carrying out guided plantings, as well as creating a political art installation by the collective Todo por la Praxis.
In June 2024, the final workshop session focused on the seeding and widespread planting of plants in the project area. It was an opportunity to strengthen the relationship with (X), as well as among partners and various participants in the initiative.

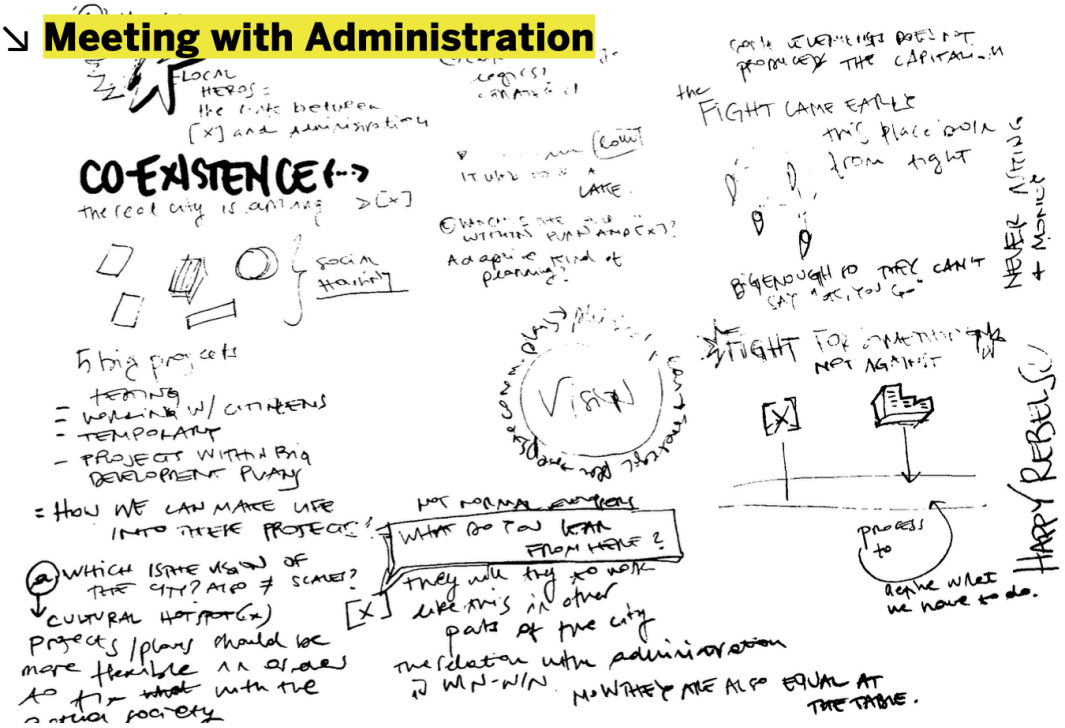
The pictures and images in this chapter are from
© Institute for (X), Manifatture Knos, coloco, Todo por la Praxis, Inge Moody

Relation with
new buildings
NO EGO
Relation with
the soil

margins
borders

↘ Inputs and key words

↘ Meeting with Administration



How can we think about the long-term nature of this climate crisis?

How will our habitat transform, and ultimately, who are we in the forest?

Here, more than elsewhere, freedom seems to guide urban planning, enabling tomorrow what seemed impossible yesterday.

Who are you in the forest?

Creation of a Collective Project for the Renaturation of the Common Landscape

Institute for X develops creative and activist artistic and economic activities within a network of containers along a railway line in Aarhus. The foundation of this spontaneous colonization is an embankment that has evolved into meadows or gardens. Imagining the long-term common landscape of Institute for X, a forest, is a counterpoint to the adaptation and flexibility that organize the creative spaces.

The long-term establishment of Institute for X has allowed for the development of synergistic intervention methods with institutions, primarily the municipality of Aarhus, and collaboration in the urban planning process through its experimental contributions.

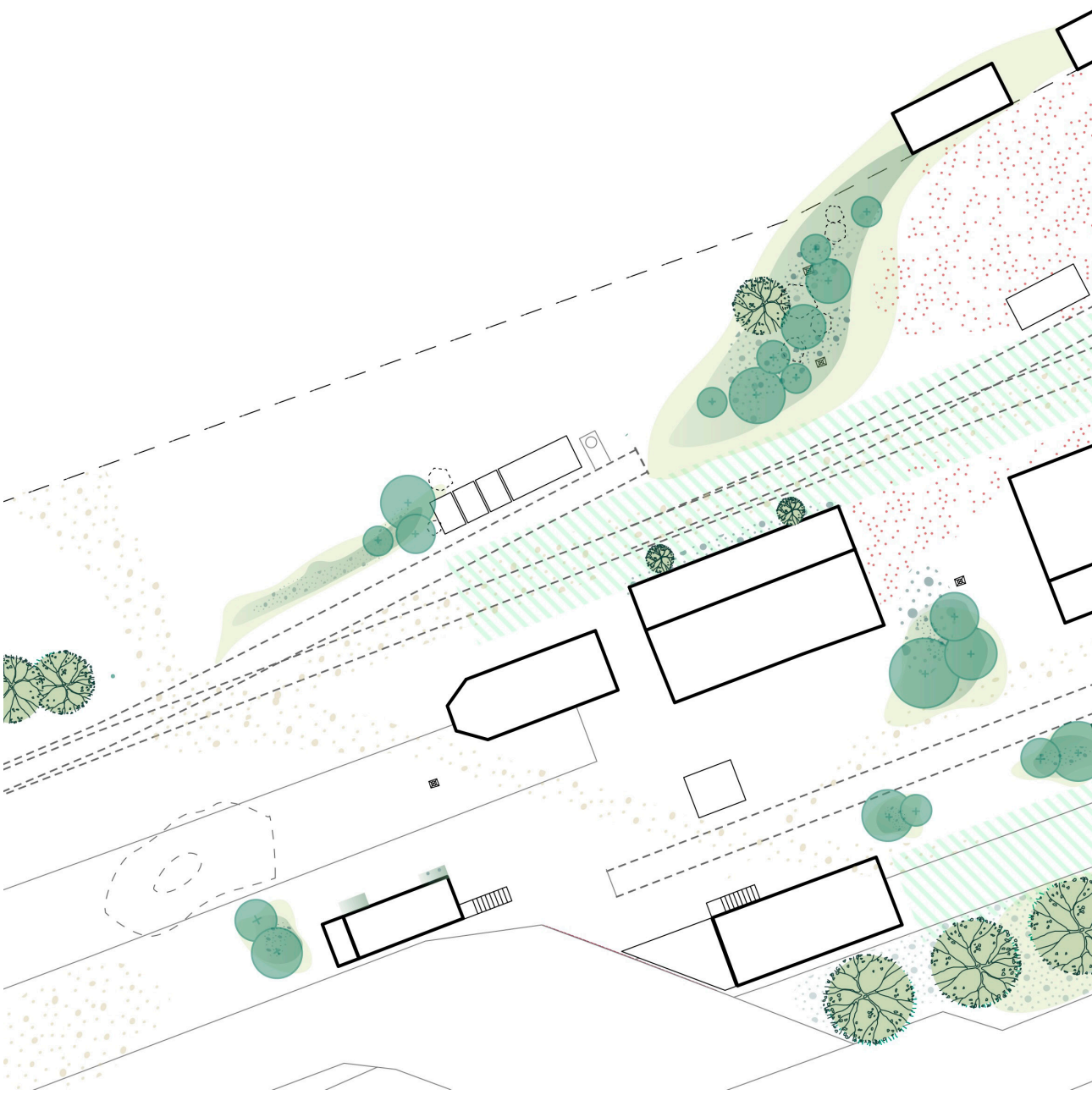
The project has taken root, settled, while maintaining its mobility and transformative capacities. “Who are you in the Forest?” poses a long-term collective question: what landscape do we want to inhabit? What relationships with the living do we want to cultivate? Making all residents and participants aware of this responsibility as Planetary Gardeners guides the action proposals of the three collective construction workshops.

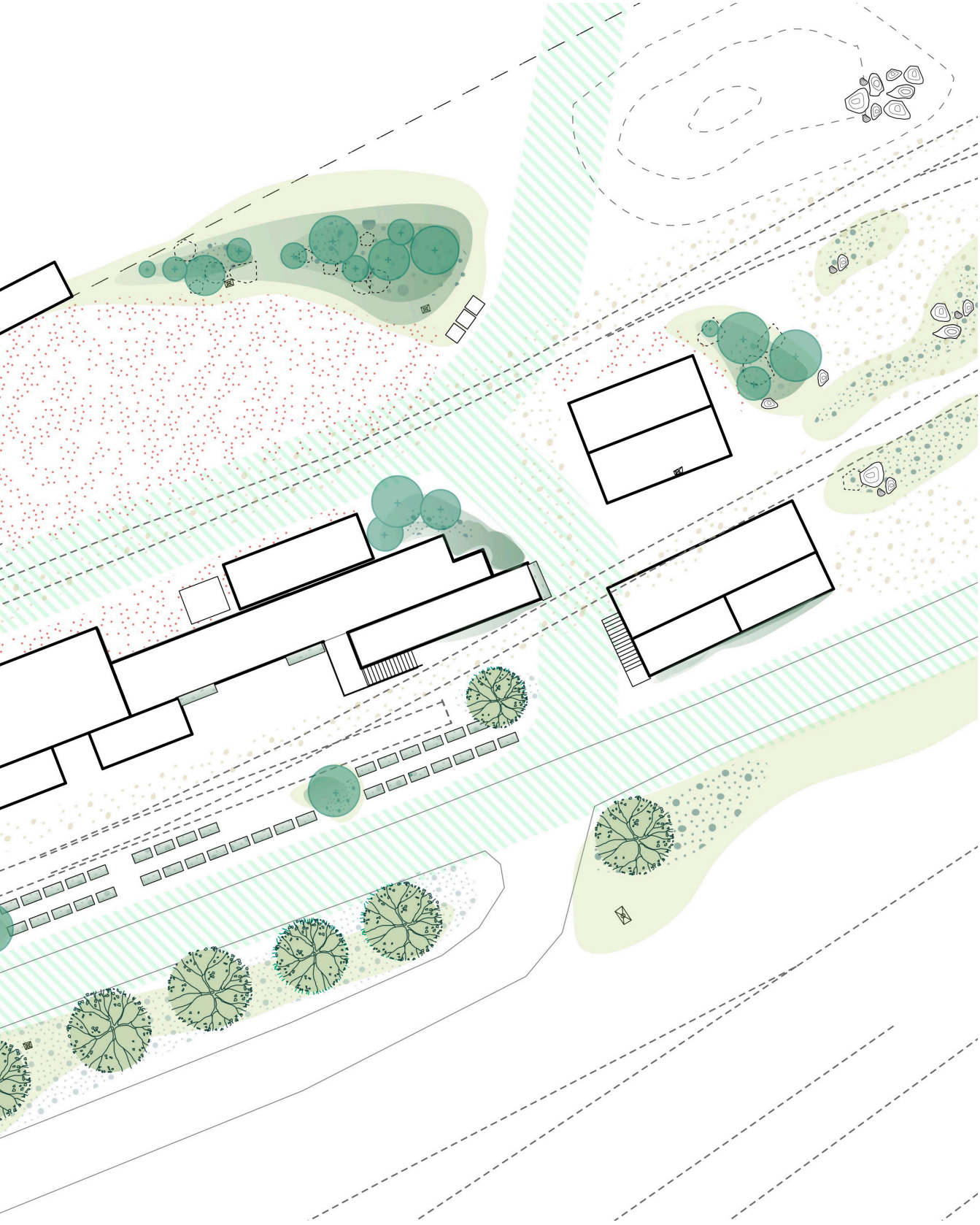
During this season to think and sow for the coming decades, it is necessary to imagine a common landscape, made of balances between voluntary interventions and laissez-faire. Here, the Third Landscape is a deliberate decision, finding a place for indecision as a form of resistance against the advancing urban front. Grouping together artists, neighbors, and urban planning officials leads to influencing and inspiring each other through differences, in a sharing context characteristic of Danish culture, where common sense, sharing, and synergy seem more important than the conflicts that animate many urban situations in independent cultural centers, often born from a logic of resistance.

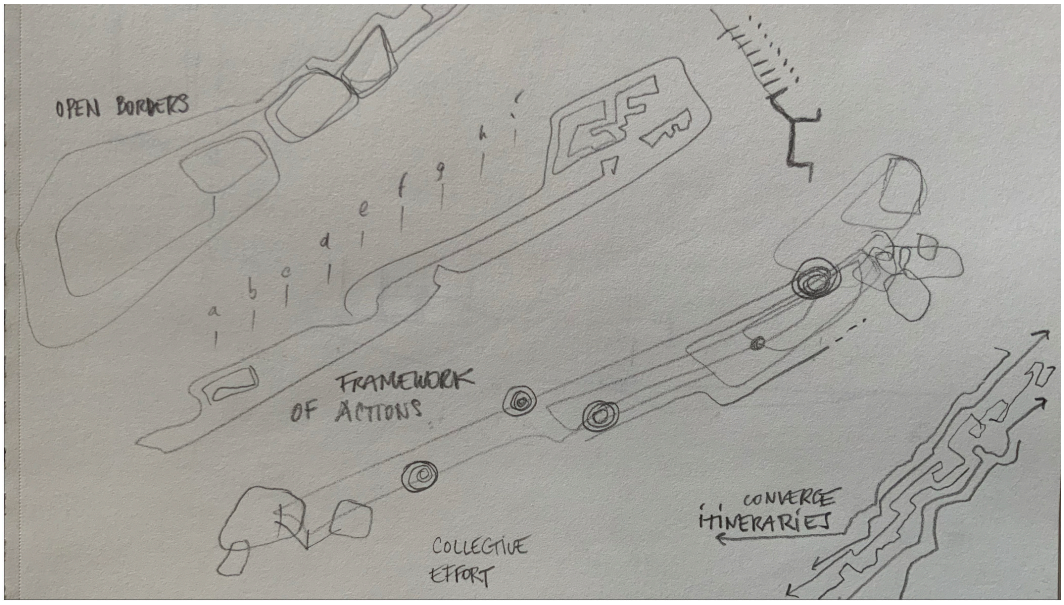
Here, this collective intelligence questions the living on its resilience and long-term evolution, the hardest thing to imagine!

INSTITUT FOR

GARDERNERS OF (K)






OPEN BORDERS
a
b
c
d
e
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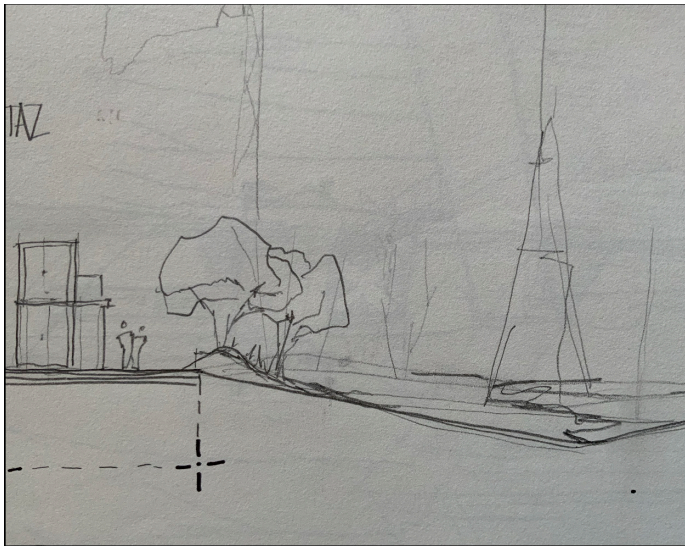
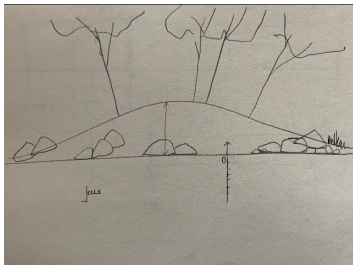
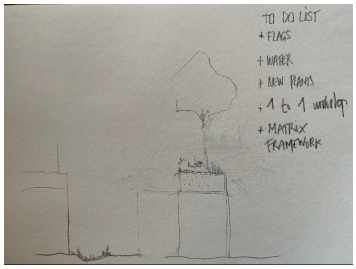
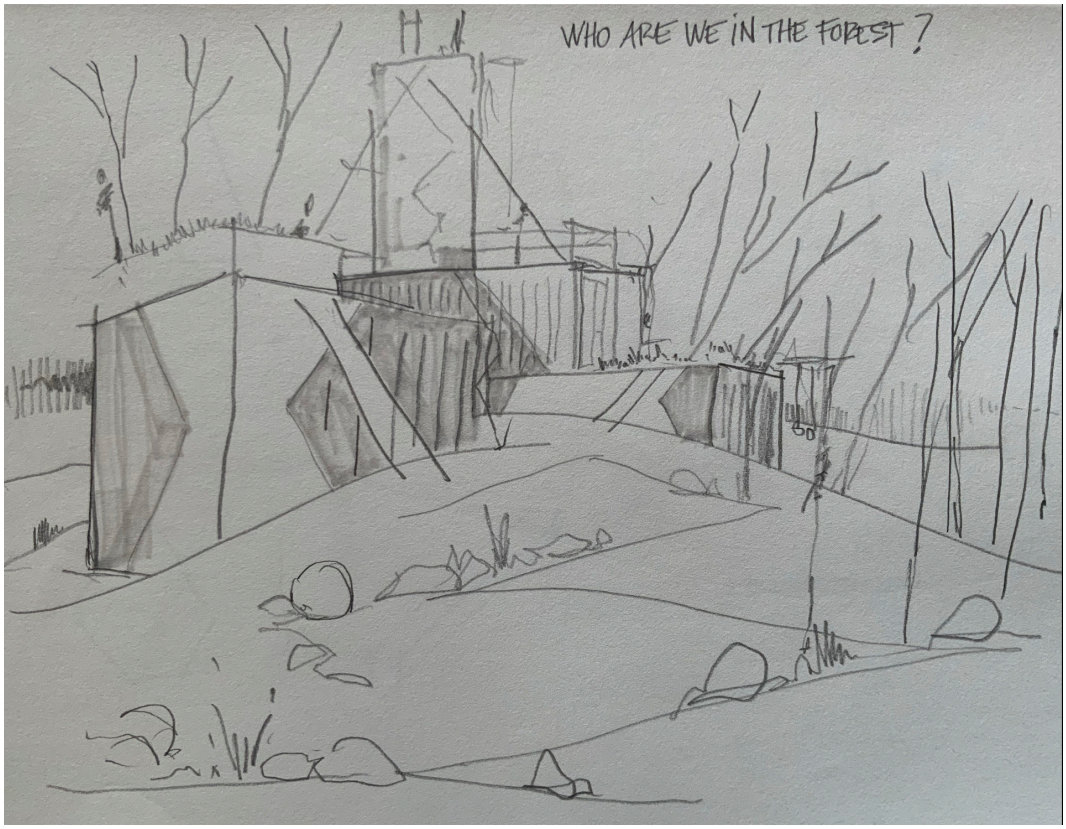
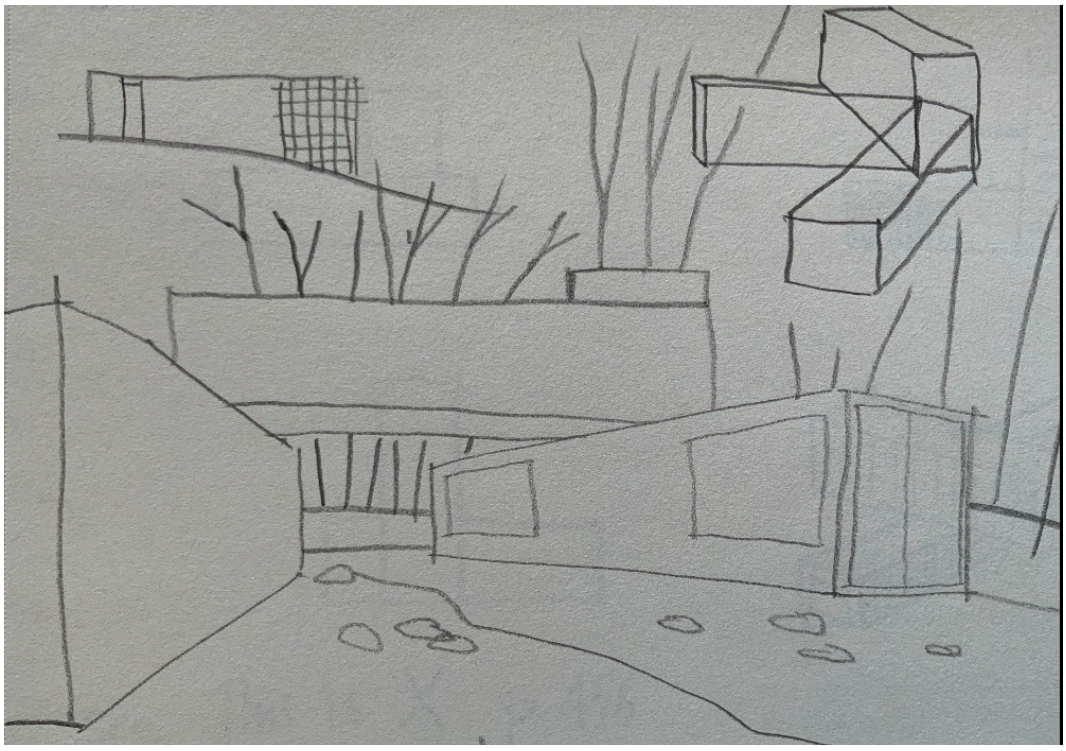
g
h
i
FRAMEWORK
OF ACTIONS
COLLECTIVE
EFFORT
CONVERGE
ITINERARIES


TAZ



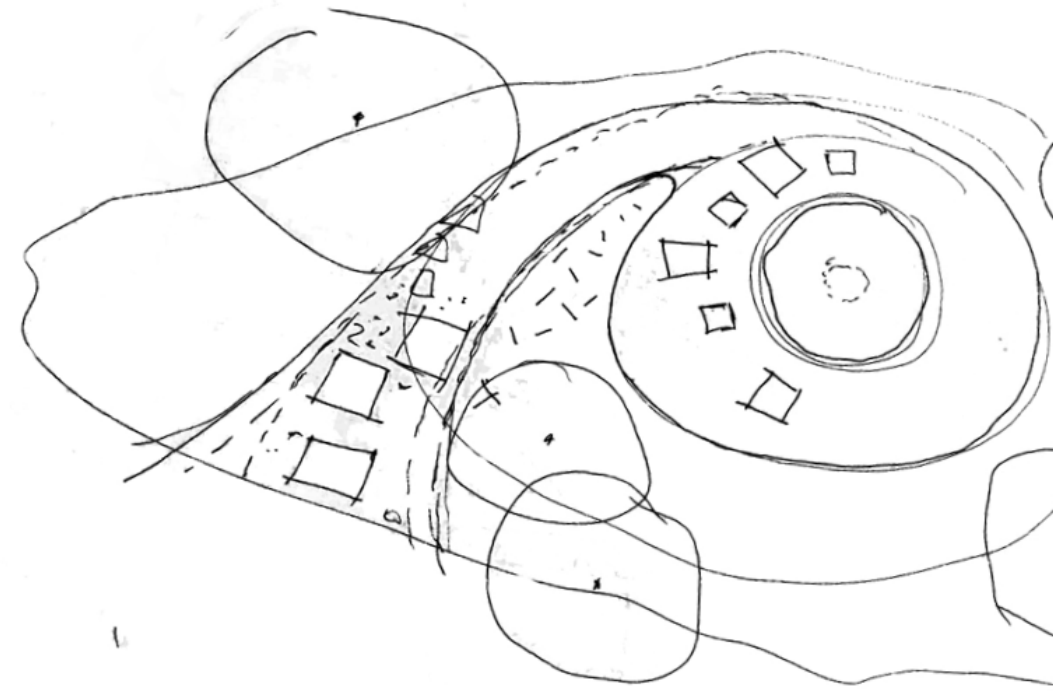

TO DO LIST
+ FLAGS
+ WATER
+ NEW PLANTS
+ 1 to 1 workshop
+ MATRIX
FRAMEWORK

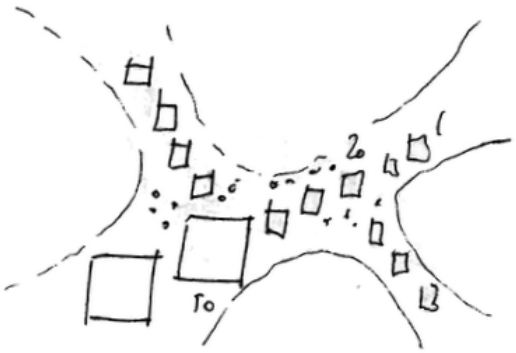

WHO ARE WE IN THE FOREST ?

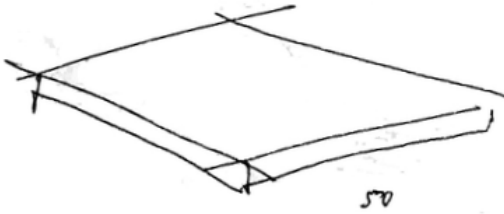


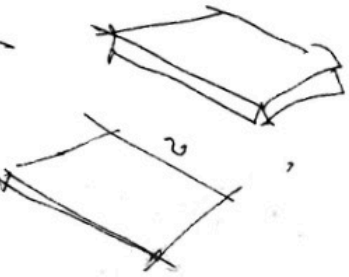
SITE N°1 - VIKINGS' PLAZA

PRINCIPLE OF VULCANO



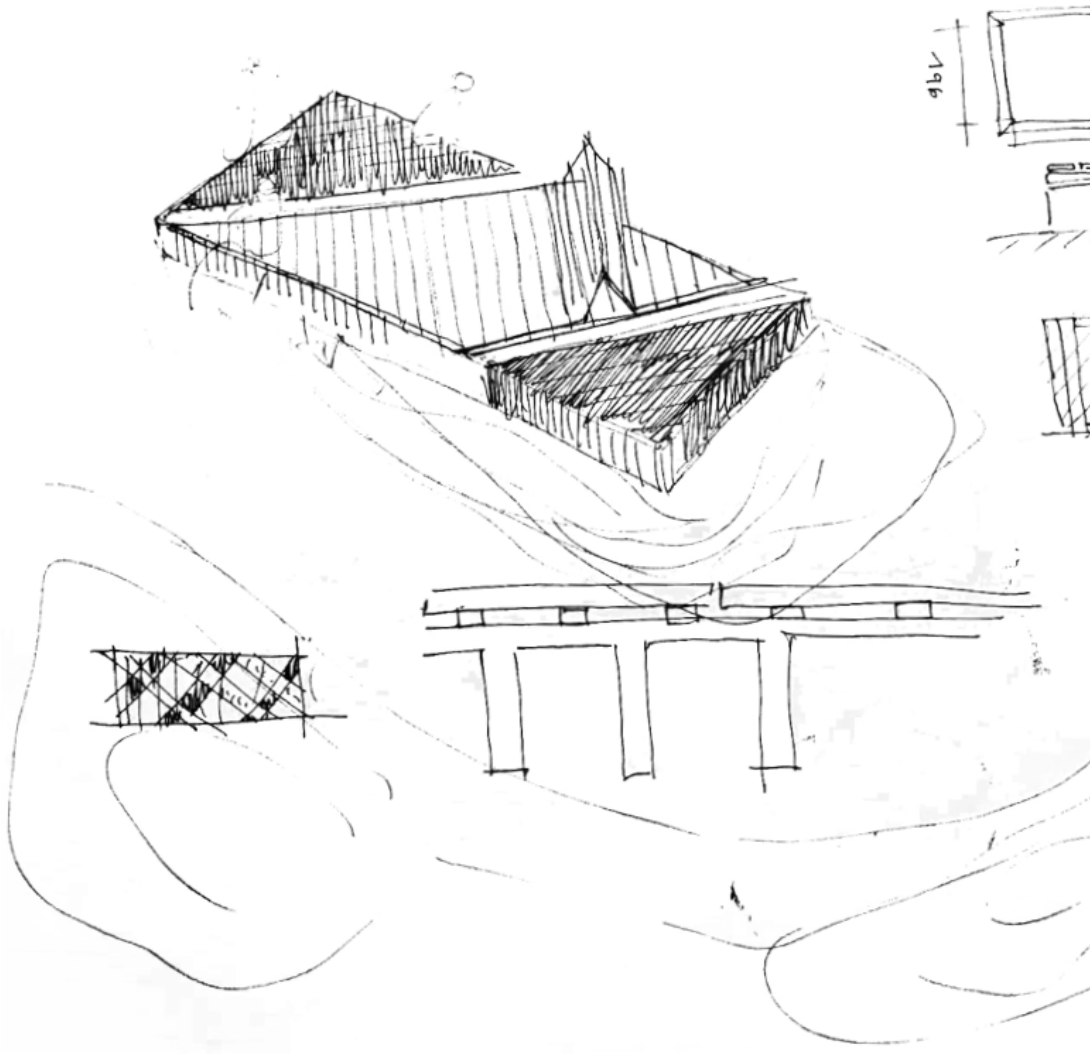


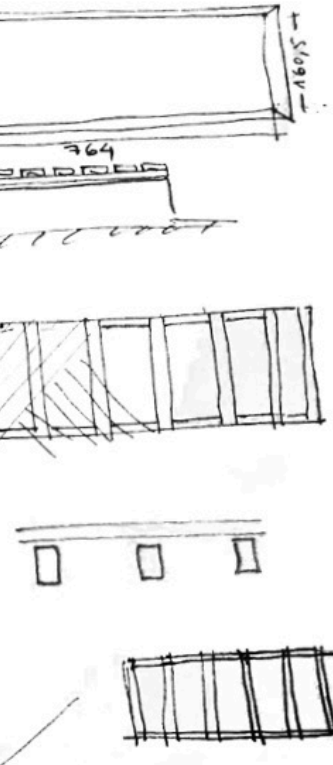


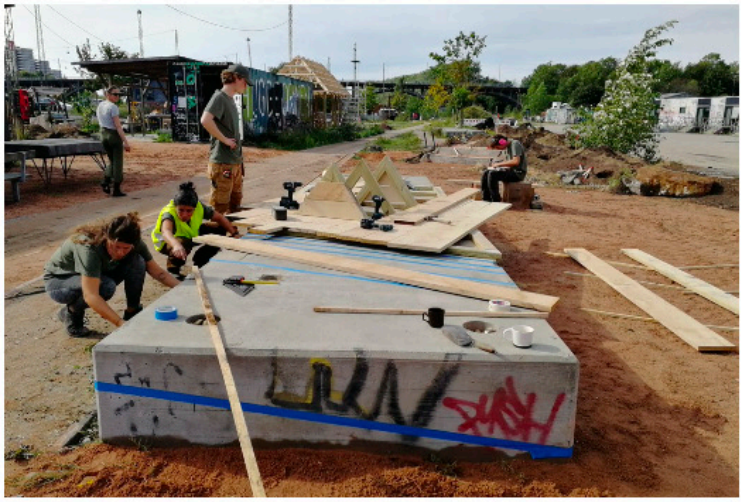


SITE N°1 - VIKINGS' PLAZA / THE CARPET OF X

PRINCIPLE OF THE CARPET





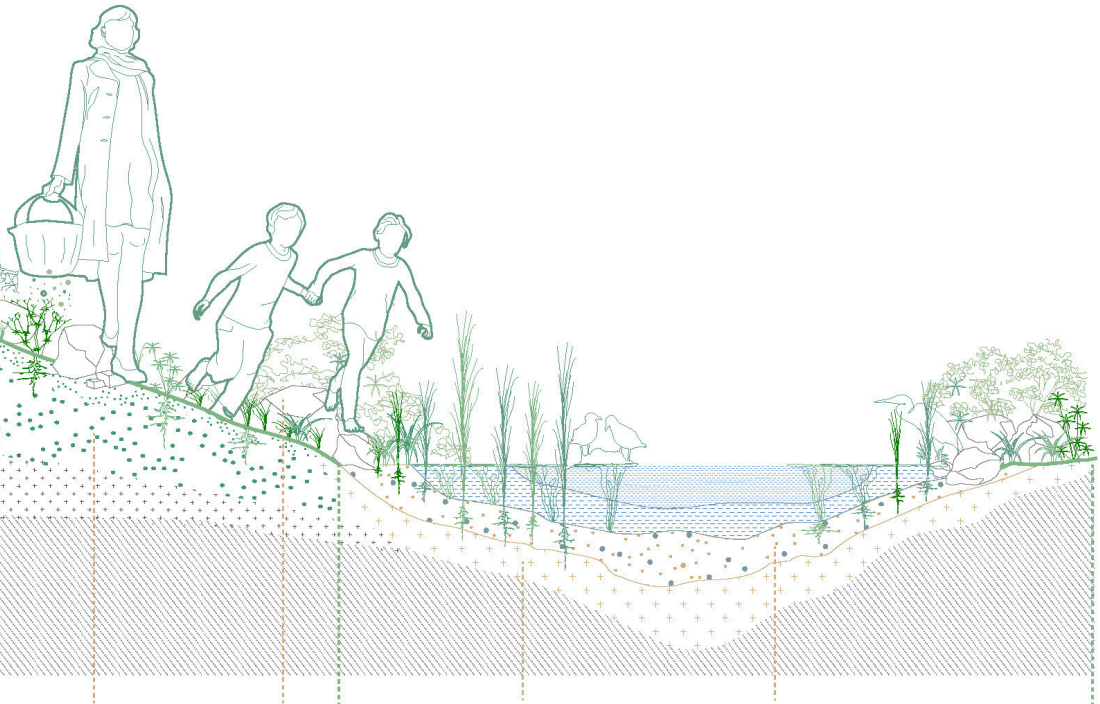


SITE N°2 - CONTAINER'S GARDEN

PRINCIPLE OF THE GARDEN

Singels sten 30-70 mm
Bosted for Sjældne
Edderkopper
Træ sveller
Skæver
10-15 mm
Jord blanding og
teglknus
Eksisterende lag
DSB Skrab
Imitation af det
gamle gods areal
Skovbrynet

Tegnet af
institut for (X)
og BDK



Engen

Imitation af post industrielt område
Den våde eng

Thinking about environmental sustainability also means analyzing the contexts and a of today's Europe...

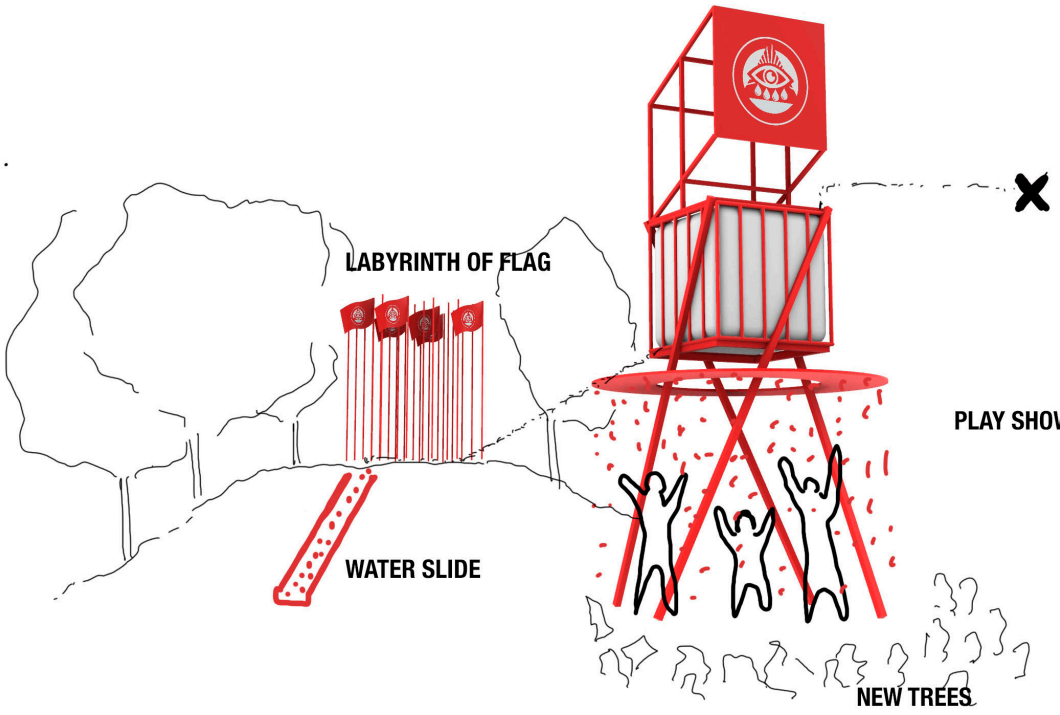
Collective knowledge and critical thinking activate new transcultural subjectivities.

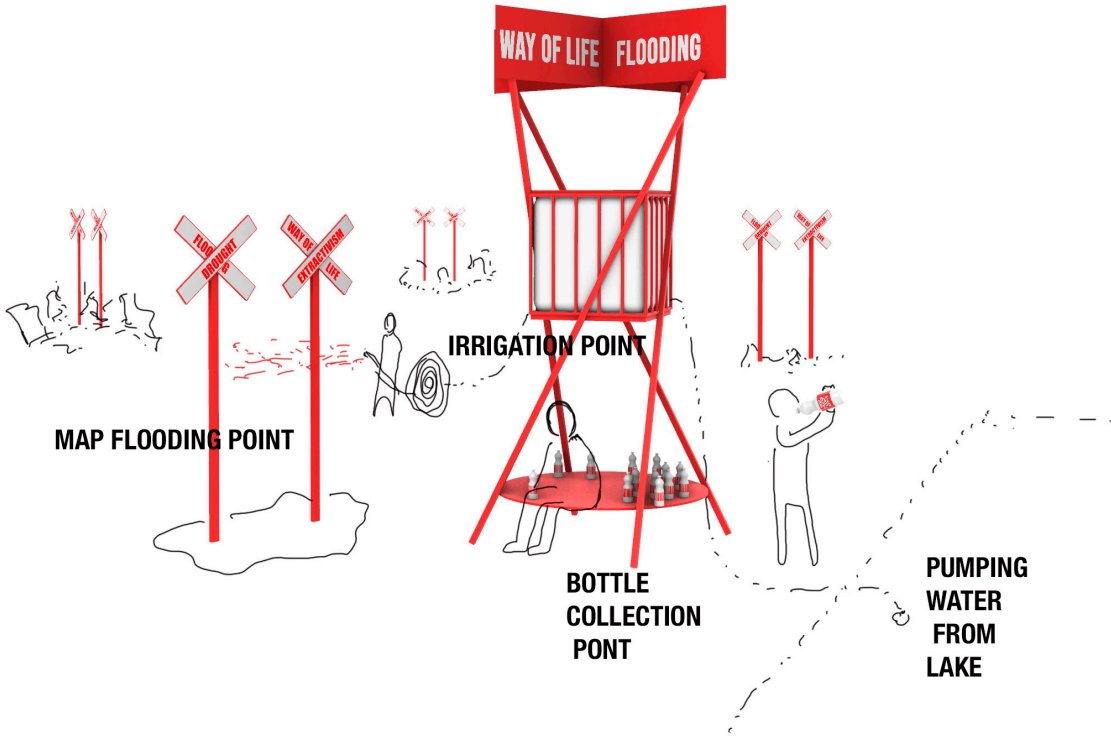
Capitalism's Tears

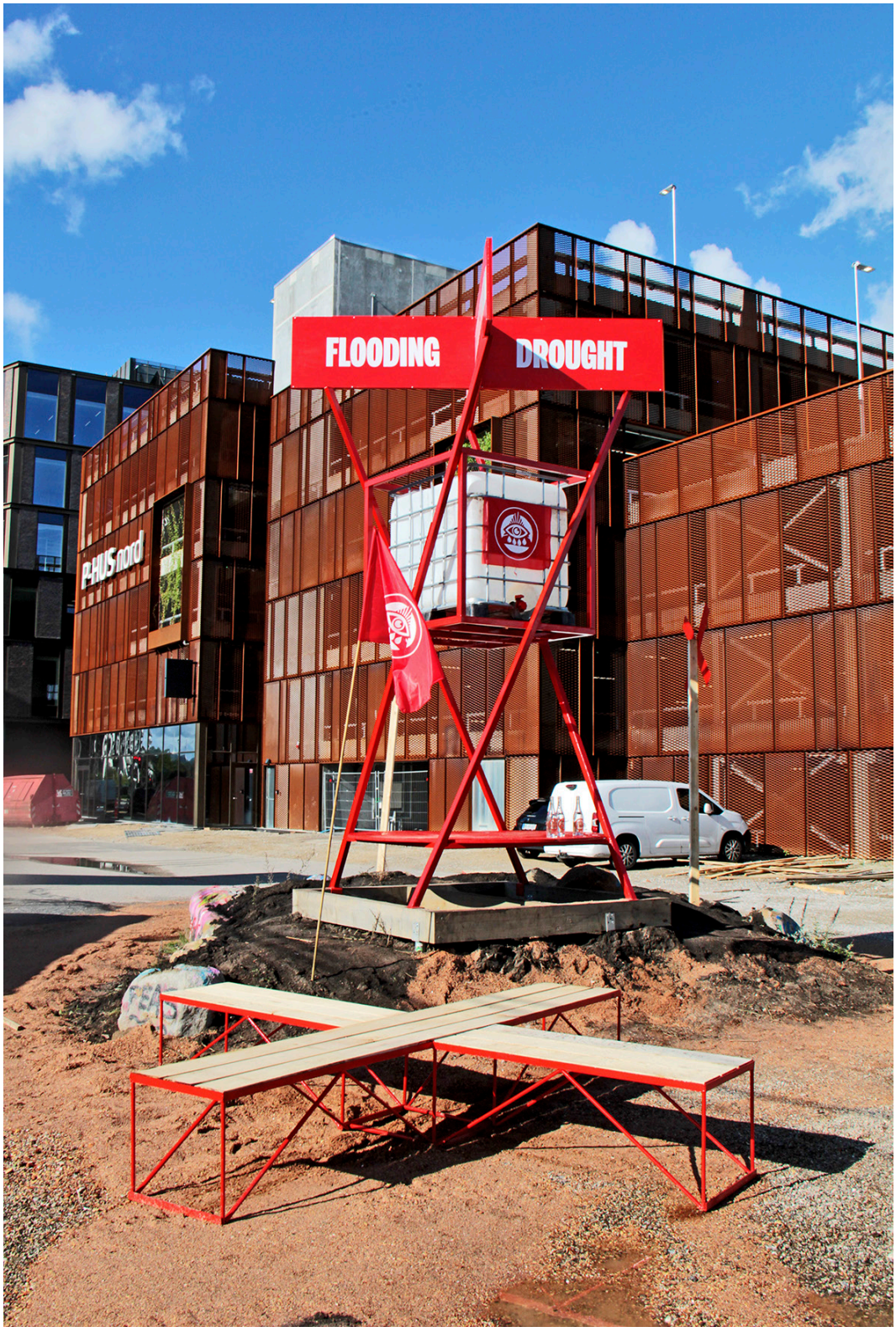
The climate crisis is inevitably linked to the neoliberal model that prevails in the countries we inhabit. It is its main cause, and its consequences have an impact on the social inequality gap. The natural disasters we frequently witness, such as the drought caused by neo-extractivist, hinder access to drinking water for a significant part of the world's population, affecting not only their ecosystems but also their ancestral cultural practices.

These issues are the conceptual basis of this project that brings together a series of elements of agitation, centered on a large-scale critical device whose function as a rainwater reservoir serves to irrigate the garden that will grow around it, built by Coloco and a series of gardeners. Its location responds to the context in which the center is located: a country where there is no shortage or difficulty in accessing water, but on the contrary, there is so much rain and abundance, that the problem of the space, located in a former train station of low and earthen soil, is that it floods every time it rains intensely and extensively.

This environmental contradiction that happens to them, invites us to remember and point out through the piece, that the lifestyle of the "first world" is the one behind these inequalities that affect the global south, and that, although it is necessary to solve the problems of environmental sustainability of these places, we cannot do it without forgetting our various privileges and their consequences. The installation was accompanied by a graphic that was printed with the collaboration of agents who are part of the center and other participants of the project, in flags, posters, and stickers, which were deployed on-site spontaneously, in addition to water bottles representing the metaphor of the installation. The device has been left at the disposal of the space so that they can activate it in its original function, symbolizing a radical stance on the problem.


LABYRINTH OF FLAG
WATER SLIDE
PLAY SHOW
NEW TREES


WAY OF LIFE
FLOODING
DROUGHT
EXTRACTIVISM
WAY OF LIFE
IRRIGATION POINT
MAP FLOODING POINT
BOTTLE
COLLECTION
PONT
PUMPING
WATER
FROM
LAKE


FLOODING
DROUGHT
PLHUS nord

DROUGHT
EXTRACTIVISM
FLOODING
WAY OF LIFE

WAY OF LIFE
EXTRACTIVISM

Stanica Truc-Spherique

A railway station in the middle of a roundabout

Stanica is one of the first independent cultural centres in Slovakia. The original building and the surrounding area of the old, but still functional, railway station Zilina - Zariecie, urrounded by the Zilina viaduct, has been a combination of an independent cultural space, an art laboratory and a collective of activists since 2003. The space is run by the NGO Truc Sphérique that continues a story of a small station where the local residents use and used to cross their paths. The NGO Truc Sphérique started in 1998, while Stanica was only open in 2003. As a civil association, they experimented a non-hierarchical governance. This concept is still under revision as they would like to pass the management to a new generation.

Today, Stanica connects people from near and far, progressive artistic, cultural and educational activities with communities and public. The cultural center belongs to the Trans Europe Halles network. Furthermore, in Slovakia, they are co-founders of Antena - a network for independent culture.

Since 2011, Truc Sphérique has been engaged in the reconstruction and operation of another cultural space in our town - Nova Synagoga. Nova Synagoga is the European modern architecture monument from 30's designed by German architect Peter Behrens. There are more then 300 activities happening at Stanica and Nova Synagoga annually.

Stanica is a human and green island surrounded by tons of concrete, viaduct, highways, and industrial area. It is not an isolated island – they are part of local and international networks. They are are a place for various local communities. Stanica is a place of freedom and respect.

Co-existence in Stanica

What if weeds were our best friends? So-called weeds are considered undesirable because they are "invasive." But what if we looked beyond their behavior and appreciated them for their unparalleled ability to survive in the most difficult conditions? Weeds are pioneers that bring life to inhospitable places.

Stanica Žilina-Zárečie is a vibrant cultural center, hidden under a major highway interchange. In a country where public spaces are often privatized, Stanica is creating open places where diverse communities can meet and thrive. Enveloped beneath a large motorway interchange, the station is one of many third places that teem along the endless concrete infrastructure.
Stanica has developed a beautiful and smart strategy to work with and within the spaces of the highway, transforming it into a covered public space by utilizing its capacity to collect precious water (giving birth to a new, unexpected garden).

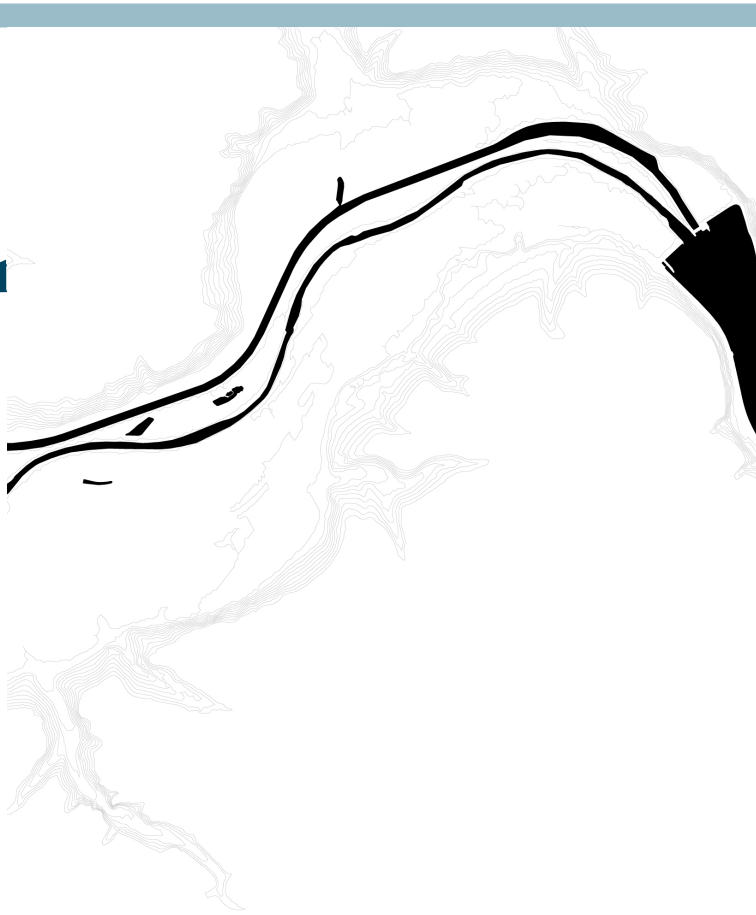
The RTL project could extend and upscale this precious knowledge/capacity/imagery to other spaces along the highway. Starting from the parking lot in front of Stanica Station to the whole roundabout space and potentially the entire urban highway, this could lead to the construction of new living and "wild" continuities for humans and non-humans. Highways, often following and running parallel to rivers and water bodies due to topography, could together create urban and territorial gardens offering new "public" spaces for humans/non-humans, reconnecting the city to its rivers, and storing precious water for future droughts. Žilina's highways could become connectors rather than barriers, places of flourishing biodiversity rather than neglected fragments.

It is there, beneath the interchange, that artists, residents, members of the Romani community, and so-called weeds live side by side. Called invasive, these plants are pioneers that, like our friends at Stanica, make previously inhospitable places habitable. The interventions in Žilina aimed at understanding, with the local community and with water stolen from the bridges, how to facilitate these pioneers in transforming barren spaces into places open to a new coexistence among living beings.

Stanica kultúrne centrum

Maps of Stanica and Zili

Part of Research WP2
by Université de Liège
Unité de Recherche
en Architecture URA



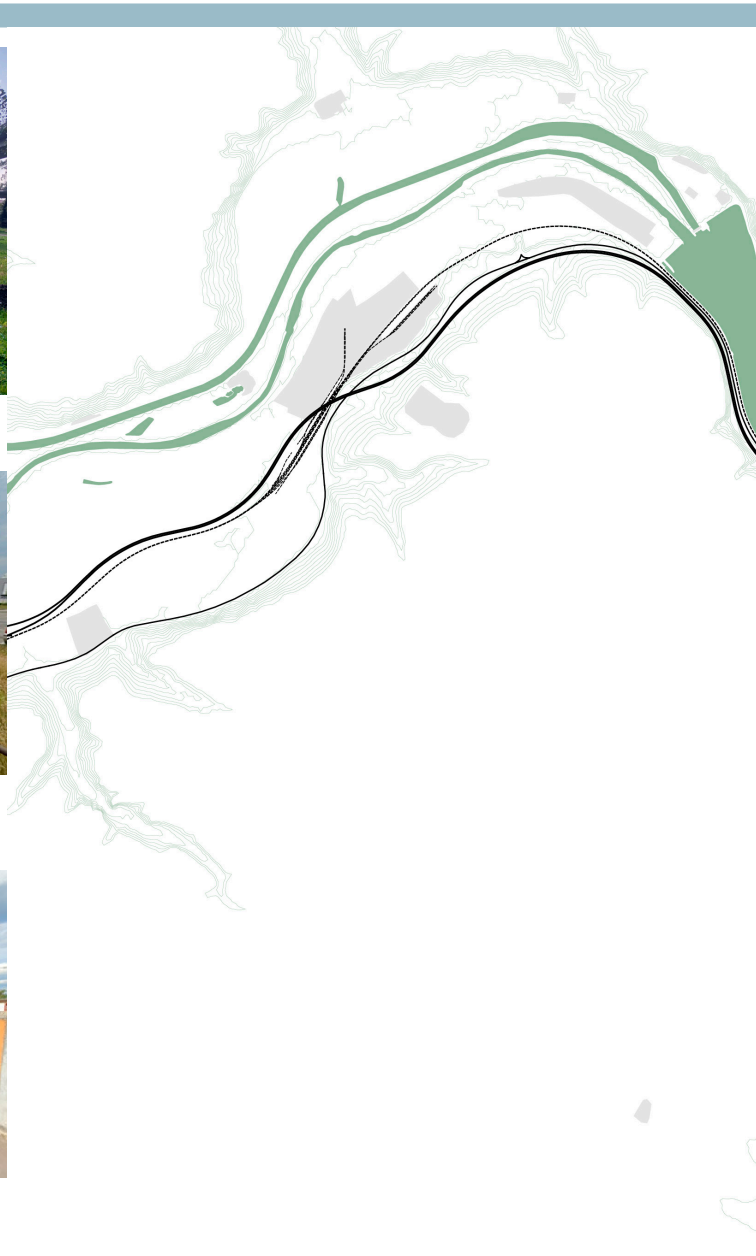
© Prof. Martina Barcelloni Corte and Thil

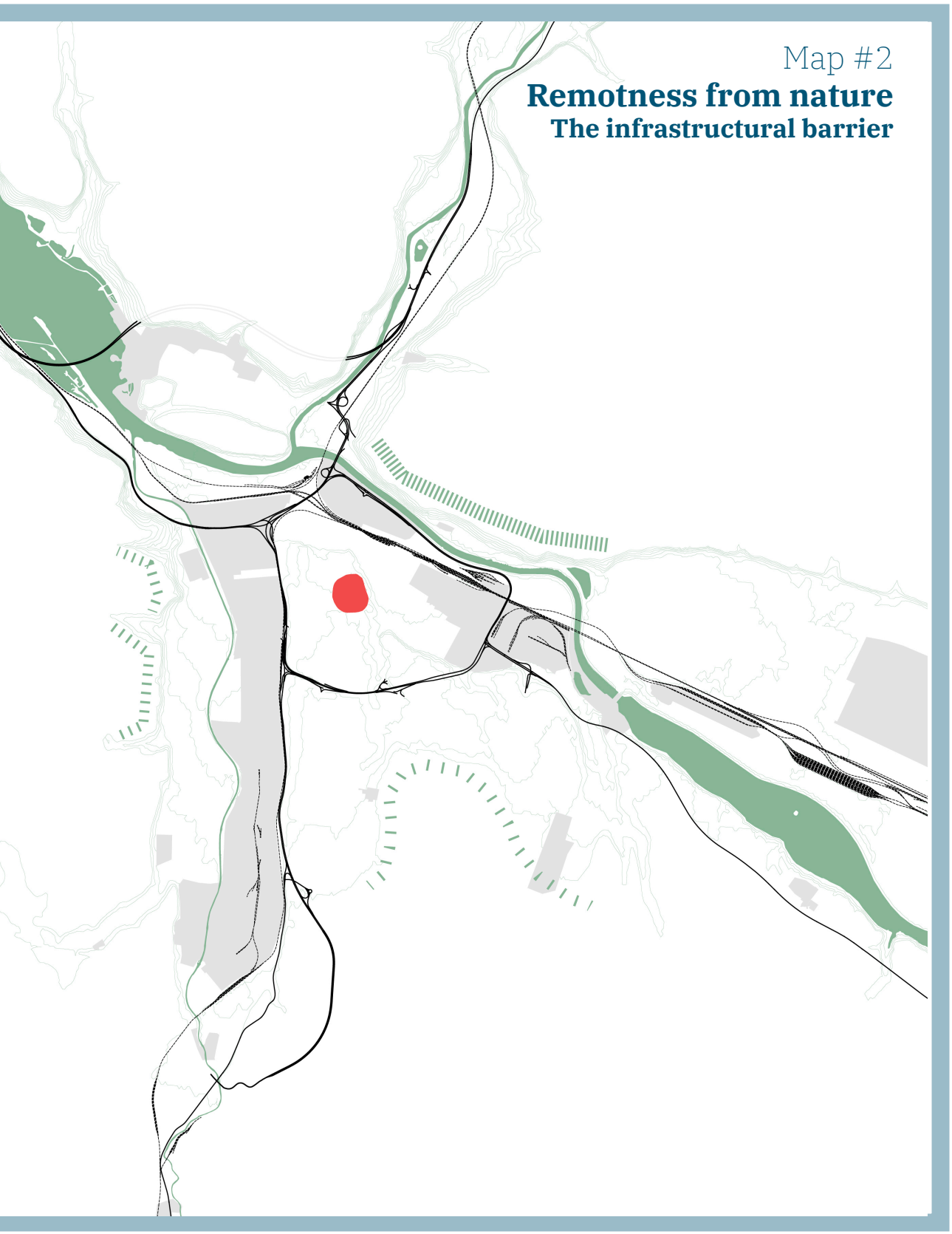
Map #1

Lowlands and main landscape elements

TESCO

ČADCA
TERCHOVÁ
583
200 m

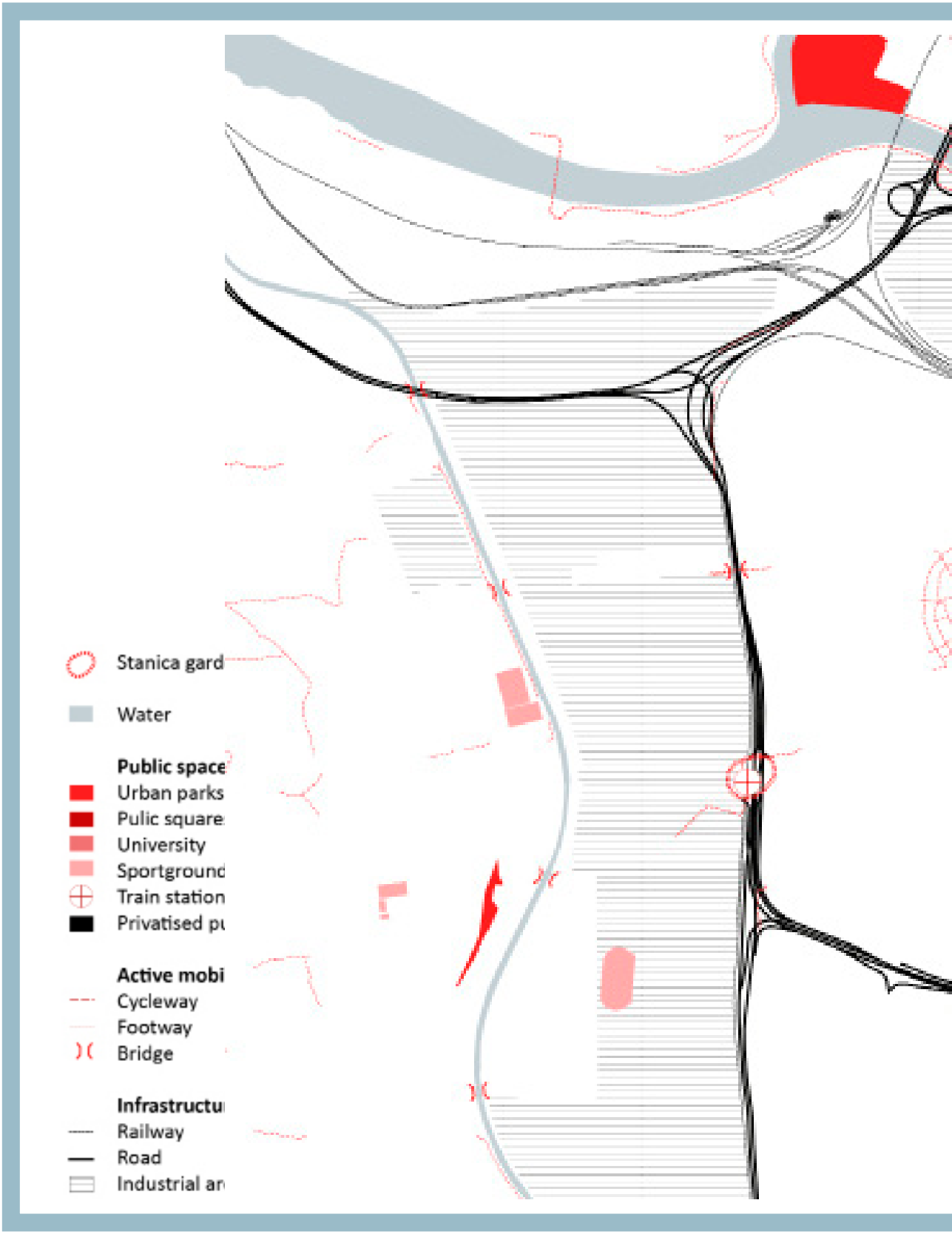




Map #2

Remotness from nature

The infrastructural barrier


Stanica gard
Water
Public space
Urban parks
Pulic square
University
Sportground
Train station
Privatised pu
Active mobi
Cycleway
Footway
Bridge
Infrastructu
Railway
Road
Industrial ar

Map #3

Zilina's Fragmented Public Space

Stanica area
Water
Public space
Urban park
Pulic square
Hospital & U
Sportground
Train station
Active mobi
Cycleway
Footway
Bridge
Infrastructu
Infrastructu
Location for
1
2
3
4

Map #4

Revealing the infrastructural garden

Overview of the interventions in Stanica

Encompassing experimentation, reevaluation, and sustainable practices in the vicinity of the cultural center Stanica, the participatory initiatives included: tree planting, revitalizing neglected areas, ideation sessions, and grassroots DIY endeavors. These activities involved a range of workshops, dialogues, and partnerships involving RTL academics, activists, cultural operators, and the wider community. Stanica was a 20-year-old project. The design of the building and its surroundings had been developed during several previous workshops, but the ecological aspect only recently became Stanica's priority.

The RTL project accompany the process of rethinking it. Local participants and the community contributed ideas about abandoned places, problematic areas, empty spaces, and places of imagination.

Various inspiring individuals and project leaders from abroad were invited to deliver presentations and engage in discussions, gathering fresh insights. The autumn 2023 edition was dedicated to finding inspiration, understanding the local context, meeting a multitude of inspiring individuals, and creating opportunities for unexpected collaborations and synergies.
The spring 2024 workshop focused on the practical application of ideas from autumn 2023, emphasizing direct experimentation at Stanica and its surroundings. It was important to involve the local community and stakeholders, and, at the same time, to left sufficient space for spontaneous ideas during the workshop.

The pictures and images in this chapter are from
©Stanica, Manifatture Knos, coloco, Todo por la Praxis, Mariia Hryhor, Alfréd Blaško and David Cartwright

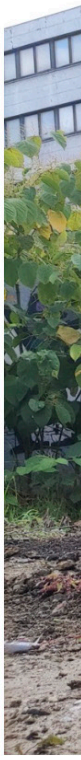
An Invitation to work and Respect Life at the Stanica Cultural Center that has a long history of hosting performances, alternative culture, and a population that, sometimes rejected from the formal city, finds refuge there.

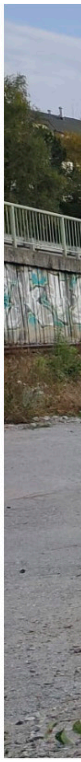
Weeds are welcome
Burína Vítaná
Coloco's intervention

"We imported them from Asia, America, or Africa in our frenzy to exploit the planet and trade. They quickly thrived with astonishing vitality in our environments ravaged by urbanization and artificialized by all the agricultural and industrial "developments." Now, we label them invasive, even dangerous, and they must be uprooted, sometimes destroyed. These devil's weeds, these flowers of evil – as they have been dubbed over the years while we created the ideal conditions for their spread and mutation – have become scapegoats to explain environmental disorder and our resulting anxieties: air pollution, freshwater scarcity, and so many other dangers we currently face. Water primrose, tree of heaven, ragweed, butterfly bush, Japanese knotweed, mugwort, to name just a few, are they really plant pests?" Thierry Thévenin, The Plants of Chaos.

The observation of this contradiction during the initial surveys of coloco with the TXP collective and the Scuola del Terzo Luogo shaped the project convictions. "No One is Stranger," we proclaimed loudly, inviting botanists and ecologists to present knotweed to us and talk about these invasive plants as migrants we do not want to welcome, see, or understand... The parallel was immediate between plants and humans: how to accept diversity, how to engage in understanding the Other through an artistic proposal? Months of debate, discussions, and mutual learning to reclaim a piece of abandoned public space, chase away the real invasives – cars – and create a common public square. Coloco seeks here, through concrete action, to build synergistic relationships between development and pedagogy, learning by constructing new relationships between living beings. Thus, Stanica extends into the expanded public space with an anti-monument, Burina Vitaná / Weeds Welcome, which invites everyone to occupy the public space through play!

okrem
vozidiel
ŽSR





GENERAL AXONOMETRIC

A place that welcomes cultural diversity, Stanica poisons its soil and destroys knotweed (Fallopia japonica) with herbicides... How can we avoid killing?

Gilles Clément asks when we discuss the future of planetary landscapes and the directions to take to respect life and its invaluable diversity.

Weeds are welcome
Burína Vítaná
Todo por la Praxis' intervention

As a derivative of their work "The Garden of bad herbs", which was based on building an analogy between wild plants and political, sexual and racial dissidence, Todo por la Praxis developed a project based on the work of the cultural center itself. One of the things they linked to the work was the fact that Stanica welcomes cultural and social manifestations of all kinds, without discrimination, which might not have the same welcome in other places in the city. A context that speaks about a territory where there is still a lot of resistance to diversity; in addition, in the city and the space, there is a great need to eliminate a spontaneous weed that grows everywhere because it is considered invasive.

That is why TXP designed and built, together with local workers, a political playground that critically positions itself in favor of sexual dissidence based on its analogy with these invasive herbs, a sort of refuge for these diversities. The actions that are invited to be carried out around the sculpture enhance the active role of the space in this defense since it is installed on a garden of wild herbs planted by Coloco and various collaborators, which represents these dissidences against the meaning of a normative and heteropatriarchal garden. It has a climbing wall for children and adults, and a swing that hangs from its extension, which is crowned with the text in local language: Weeds are welcome. This is how TXP approached sustainability in this space, building a metaphor that validates the "weeds" as necessary and protagonists of our cultural ecosystem, both human and non-human.

rum
Café-bar

BURINA VĚANÁ

Co

mmunitism

Hmm. We're having

A new agent claiming for new spaces for new communities

Communitism reclaims unutilized heritage buildings of Athens to be revived through creative commoning. By practising community and art, alternatives to existing structures emerge.

Communitism started its cultural activities in 2016 in a neoclassical building at Kerameikou 28, Metaxourgheio. The association is an open community of creative professionals exploring communal practices. The sociocultural center functions as an open lab where communities develop symbiotic relationships and continuously test new practices. Communitism creates models for the revival of cultural heritage, establishes local and international synergies, and develops educational and artistic projects to promote their vision. They encourage public and private building owners to share responsibilities in preserving cultural heritage, viewing collaborative artistic expression as a generator of common knowledge. They believe space can influence behavior and transform character.

Art is used as a methodology to encourage individuals to become active citizens through common practices. Inspired by civic use principles, Communitism ensures accessibility, usability, fairness, inclusiveness, and common decision-making in space use and care.

One main activity was the clothing freeshop Zoristirio, providing clothing to refugees and the homeless. It was deemed unsustainable as it couldn't generate income. The "Rebuilding to Last" project aimed to renovate the space into a sustainable hub for upcycled fashion for young creatives. This evolved into a circular economy model where unwanted clothes were upcycled and sold to fund further workshops and events.

In March 2023, Communitism was notified that the building was sold and had to evacuate by June. They moved to the nearby Votanikos neighborhood and developed a strategy to purchase a building in Metaxourgheio, symbolically reclaiming space for the city's creatives. The phrase "Rebuilding to Last" thus gained a deeper meaning for the community.

ΠΡΑΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΠΛΕΚΤΗΡΙΟΥ
SOFIPLEX
Π. ΣΑΡΗΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ Κ. ΣΙΑ. Ο.Ε.
28

ΤΡΕ9563

Co-existence in Communitism

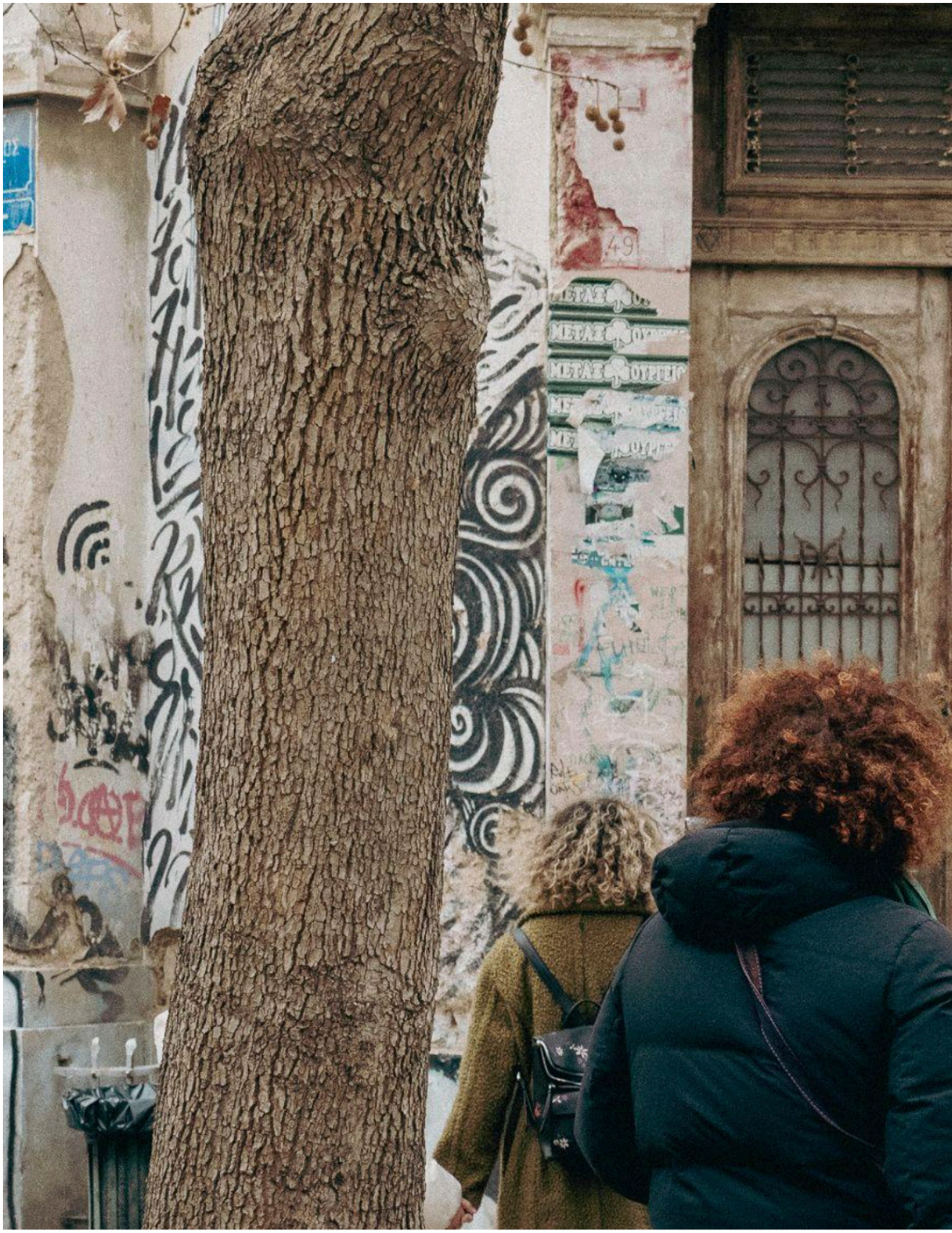
Gentrification has a bad reputation and rightfully so as it is often associated with inflated home prices and displacement of neighborhood previous residents who have lived there for generations. Yet, can this kind of transformation hold opportunities too? Also whitin this framework, how can we transform our places in a way that they welcome all living beings, human and non-human, rather than exclude them?

Metaxourgeio, previously thriving by a number of creative communities, had recently become one of the epicenters of gentrification and touristification of Athens. Despite during the last young creatives of the city turned it into the epicenter of collaborative artistic practices, right now there are around 163 abandoned historical buildings.

However, being right next to the historical center of Athens, it has also attracted the interest of international real estate investors. Communitism is on a mission of claiming space for the inhabitants and creatives that are now being displaced, within the abandoned historical buildings of the neighborhood, also marginalised by the prevailing historical narratives.
As gentrification is bringing the city to a polarization that it has never experienced before, we aim for a culture of respect and coexistence.

After being expelled from our cultural center of 6 six years, Communitism is now setting up a new space, Kookooli, a cocoon meant to nurture our vision. We invite you to make it together, through collaborative practices designed to bridge social gaps and inspire creativity. Here, where everything is mixed, diverse and ready for new uses, we will try to think andexperiment with new practices of reusing materials and spaces in a circular economy perspective.

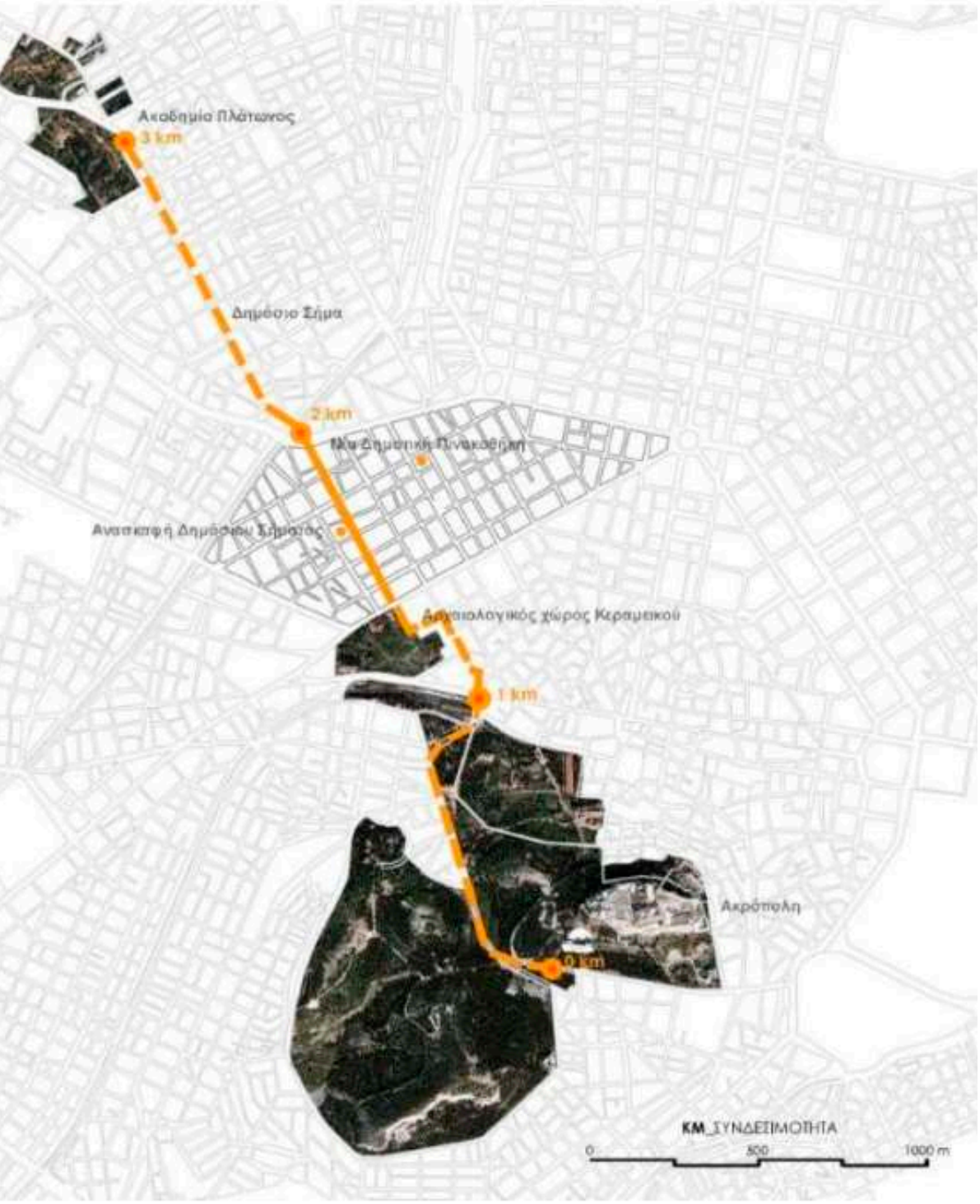
Our hope is that the ongoing gentrification can be an opportunity to a transformative process towards places that are more welcoming to all living beings, instead of more and more exclusive and exclusionary. “Communitism reclaims unutilized heritage buildings of Athens Through creative communing. By practicing community and arts, alternatives to existing structures emerge”.



ΜΕΤΑΞ ΟΥΡΙΟ
ΜΕΤΑΞ ΟΥΡΙΟ
ΜΕΤΑΞ ΟΥΡΙΟ
YO
CRU
TOYOTA

Maps and images of Athens

Part of Communitism's Research


Ακαδημία Πλάτωνος
3 km
Δημόσιο Σήμα
2 km
Νέα Δημοτική Πινακοθήκη
Ανασκαφή Δημόσιου Σήματος
Αρχαιολογικός χώρος Κεραμεικού
1 km
Ακρόπολη
0 km
KM_ΣΥΝΔΕΣΙΜΟΤΗΤΑ
0
500
1000 m

Collectives advocating for the right to housing

ΠΑΝΩ
ΚΕΡΔΗ

ΣΤΕΓΗ ΓΙΑ ΟΛΟΥΣ
ΣΤΟΙΒΑΖΕΤΕ ΤΟΥΣ ΠΡΟΣΦΥΓΕΣ
ΣΕ ΑΜΠΑΡΙΑ ΚΑΡΑΒΙΩΝ
ΚΑΙ GOLDEN VISA ΔΙΝΕΤΕ
ΣΕ ΤΡΑΣΤ ΕΠΕΝΔΥΤΩΝ

ΓΕΙΤΟΝΙΕΣ
ΓΙΑ ΤΟ ΔΙΚΑΙΩΜΑ
ΣΤΗ ΣΤΕΓΗ
ΜΑΣ ΠΕΤΑΝΕ ΣΤΟΝ ΔΡΟΜΟ
ΒΓΑΙΝΟΥΜΕ
ΣΤΟΥΣ ΔΡΟΜΟΥΣ
ΣΠΙΤΙ ΜΟΥ ΜΕΣΑ!

Communitism's goal is to create a dynamic, inclusive environment that reflects the collective efforts and creativity of the community, ensuring the space remains vibrant and relevant.

Overview of the interventions in Communitism

Communitism has acquired a new space that requires revitalization to continue its community advocacy and oppose urban speculation. This new center, named Kookooli (Greek for Cocoon), is designed to nurture our community as it heals and reorganizes towards our ambitious goals. The "Rebuilding To Last" initiative has now been infused with the concept of our ecosystem asserting its rights in the city, and the space has been redesigned to communicate this powerful message. While Zoristirio remains a key objective, it now features prominently within the public areas of Kookooli. Here, Communitism will engage its audience and collaborators through a range of cultural and educational activities.

The new space in Votanikos will implement a circular economic model: small donations of clothes will be collected in the café, larger donations will be gathered in the reception area, and items will be prepared for upcycling in the workshop and courtyard. The upcycled clothing, along with secondhand items, will be displayed and sold in the café and Zoristirio mezzanine, generating funding for further workshops and events.This project connects deeply with the city's evolution and aims to support underrepresented communities within the city center. During the first workshop, our focus was to support this vision by familiarizing ourselves with the city and neighborhood, engaging with the local community, and understanding the historical and cultural context.

In May, we returned to furnish the new space, reusing materials from our previous building and repurposing items discovered along the way. This process highlighted the importance of sustainability, showing how discarded materials can be given new life. By embracing the impermanence of objects and their varied uses, we explored a culture of care for both territories and communities. This approach fosters a deeper connection between the space and its users, encouraging a sense of ownership and responsibility.

The Kookooli project exemplifies how thoughtful design and active community involvement can transform neglected spaces into thriving hubs of activity and engagement, setting a precedent for other urban initiatives and fostering a sustainable, resilient community that values its heritage while looking towards a shared future.

The pictures and images in this chapter are from
© Joe O'Connor

47

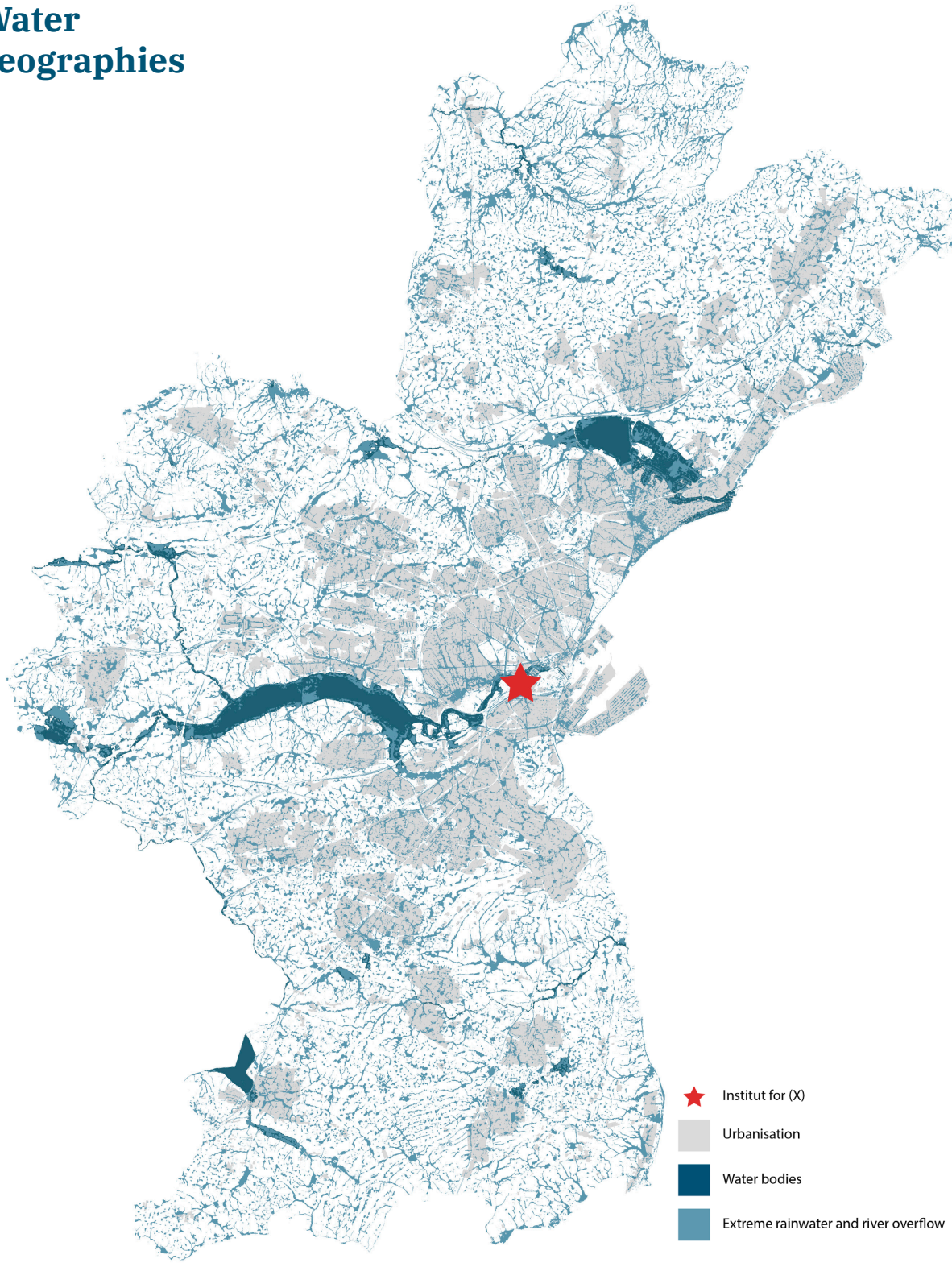
LIMBO

Appendix A

Maps of Institute for (X) and Aarhus
Part of Research WP2
by Université de Liège - Unité de Recherche en Architecture URA

© Prof. Martina Barcelloni Corte and Thibault Marghem

Water geographies

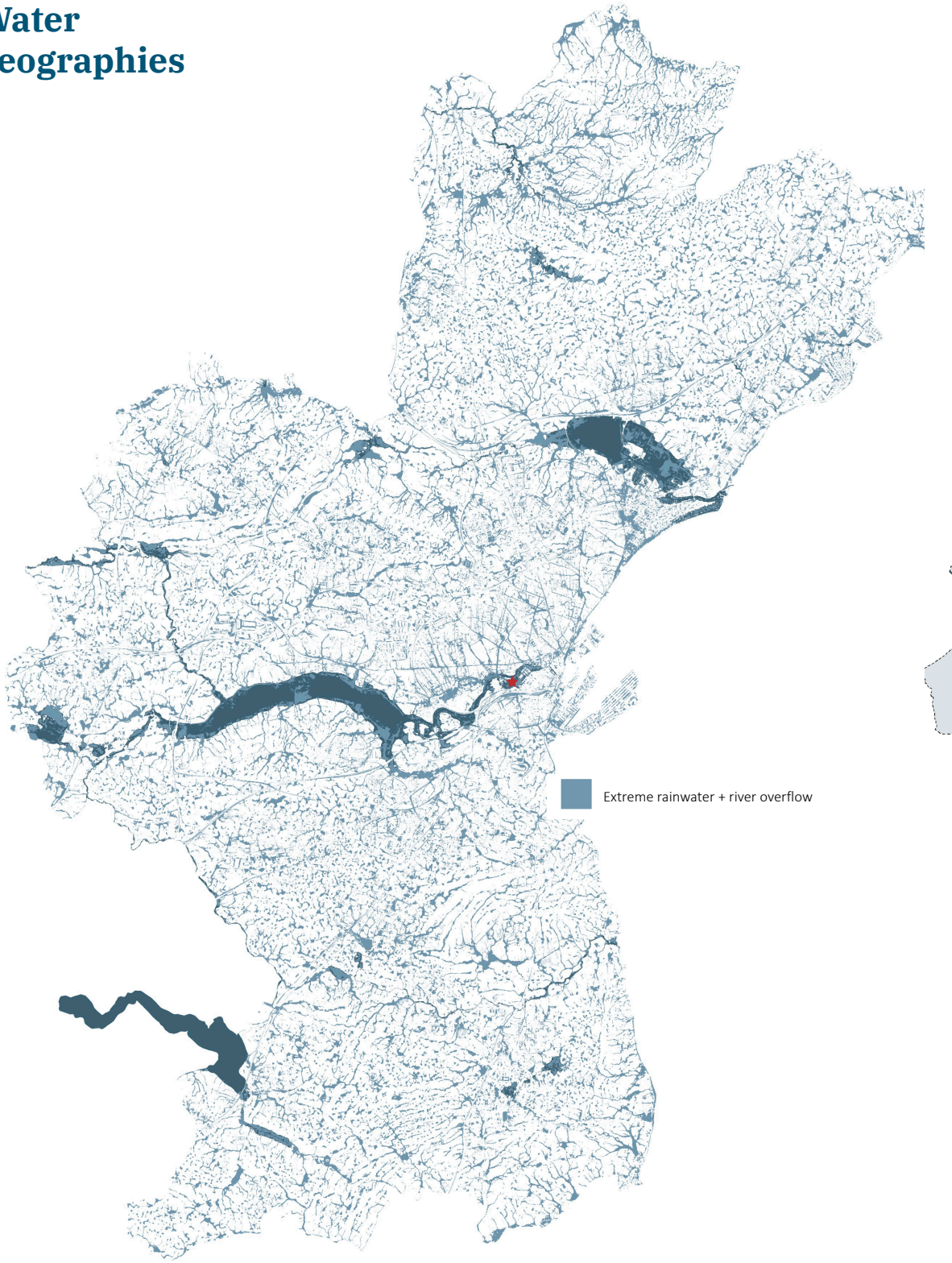


“The problem is, we’re trying to keep seawater out of the city with dykes and dams against storm surges and rising waters, and at the same time, with new buildings and hard surfaces, we’re preparing for flooding problems in the event of strong rain events. In short, we’re moving towards a bathtub effect where the water meets the city.

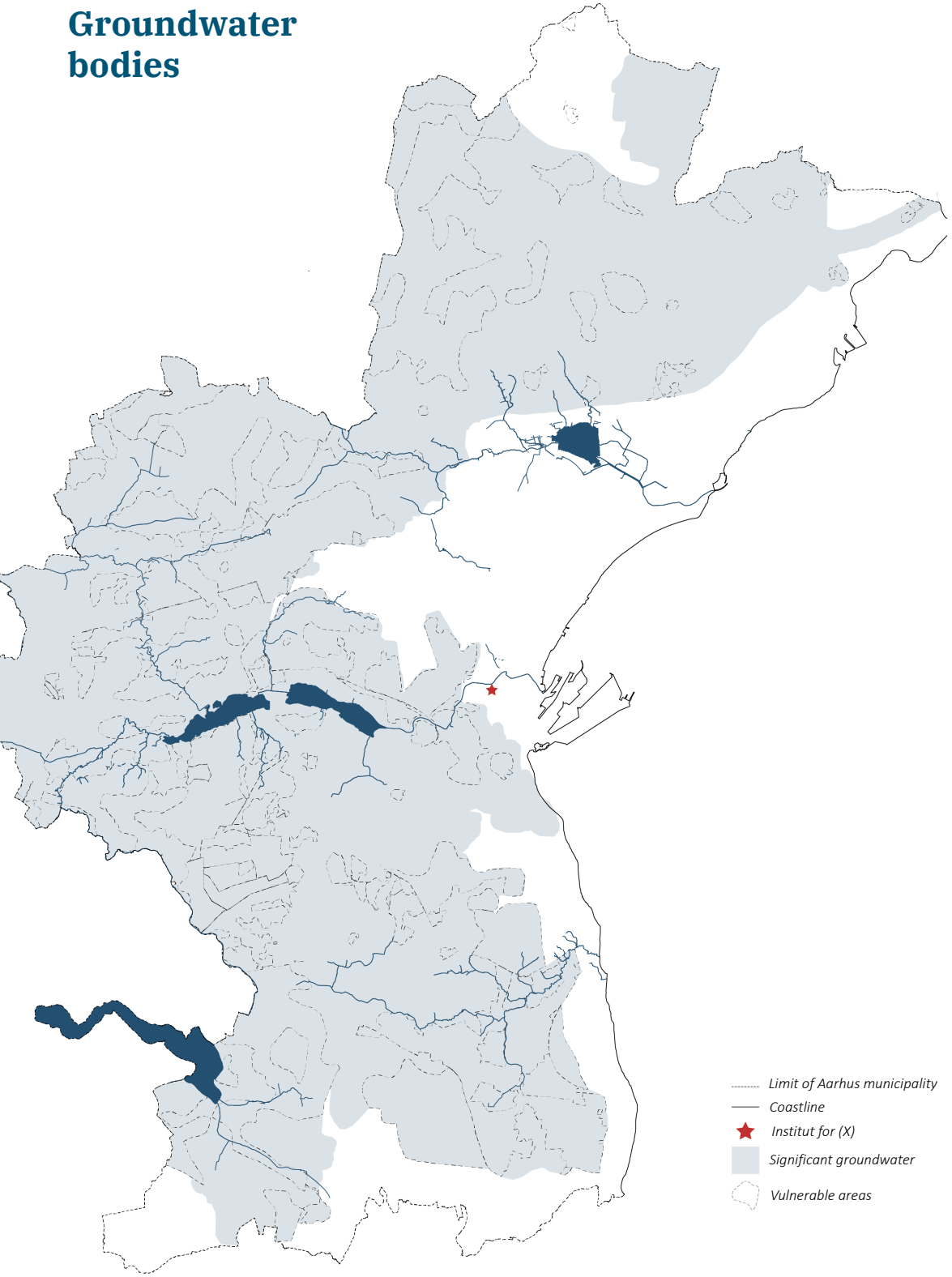
One of the reasons for this is that, especially since the 19th century, we have developed effective means of controlling water which, among other things, have opened up new possibilities for urban planning and development, detached from the characteristics of the landscape and water links.

With climate change leading to more (extreme) rainfall and rising sea levels, this now presents long-term challenges.

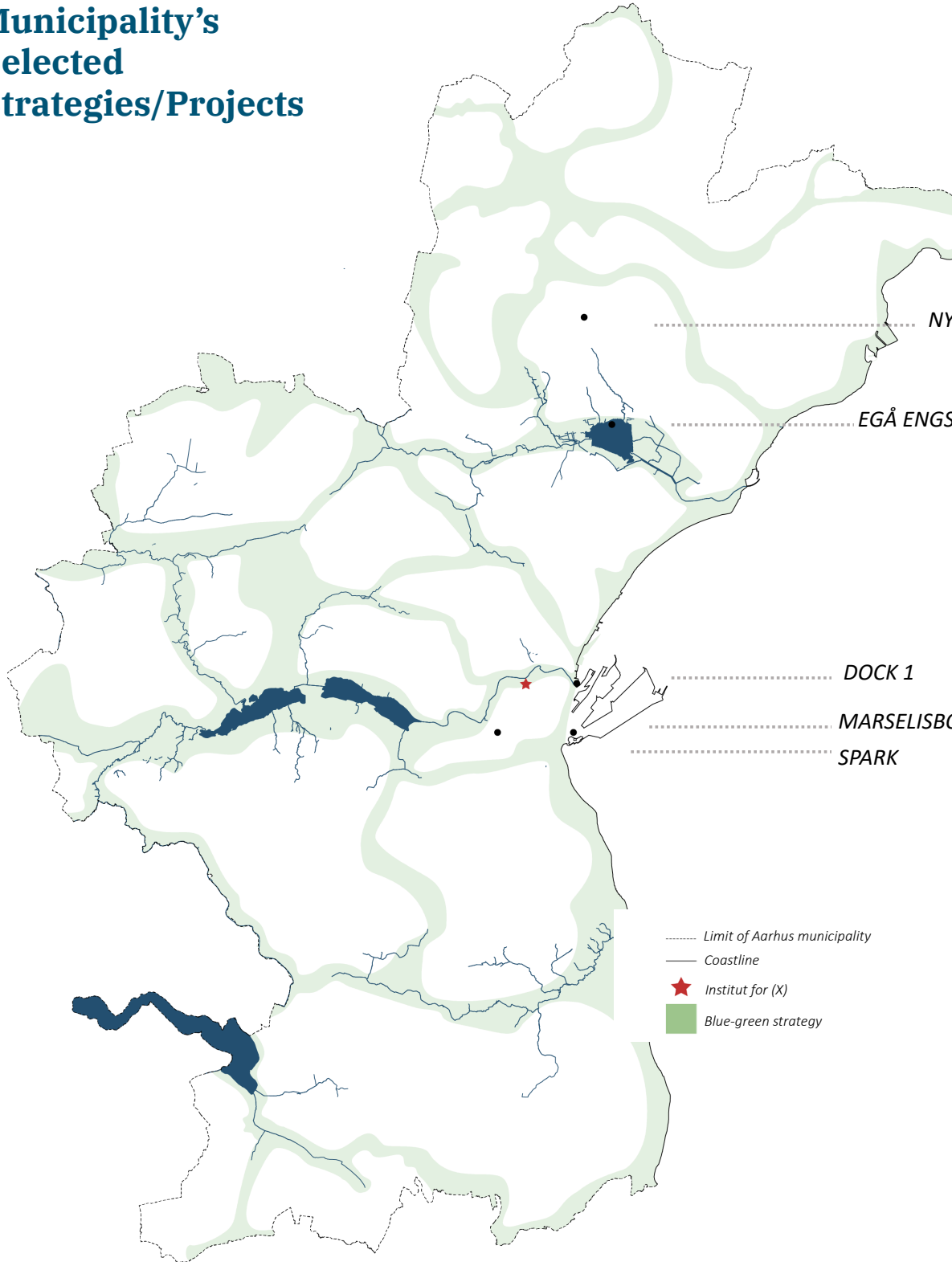
Water geographies



Groundwater bodies



Municipality's Selected Strategies/Projects



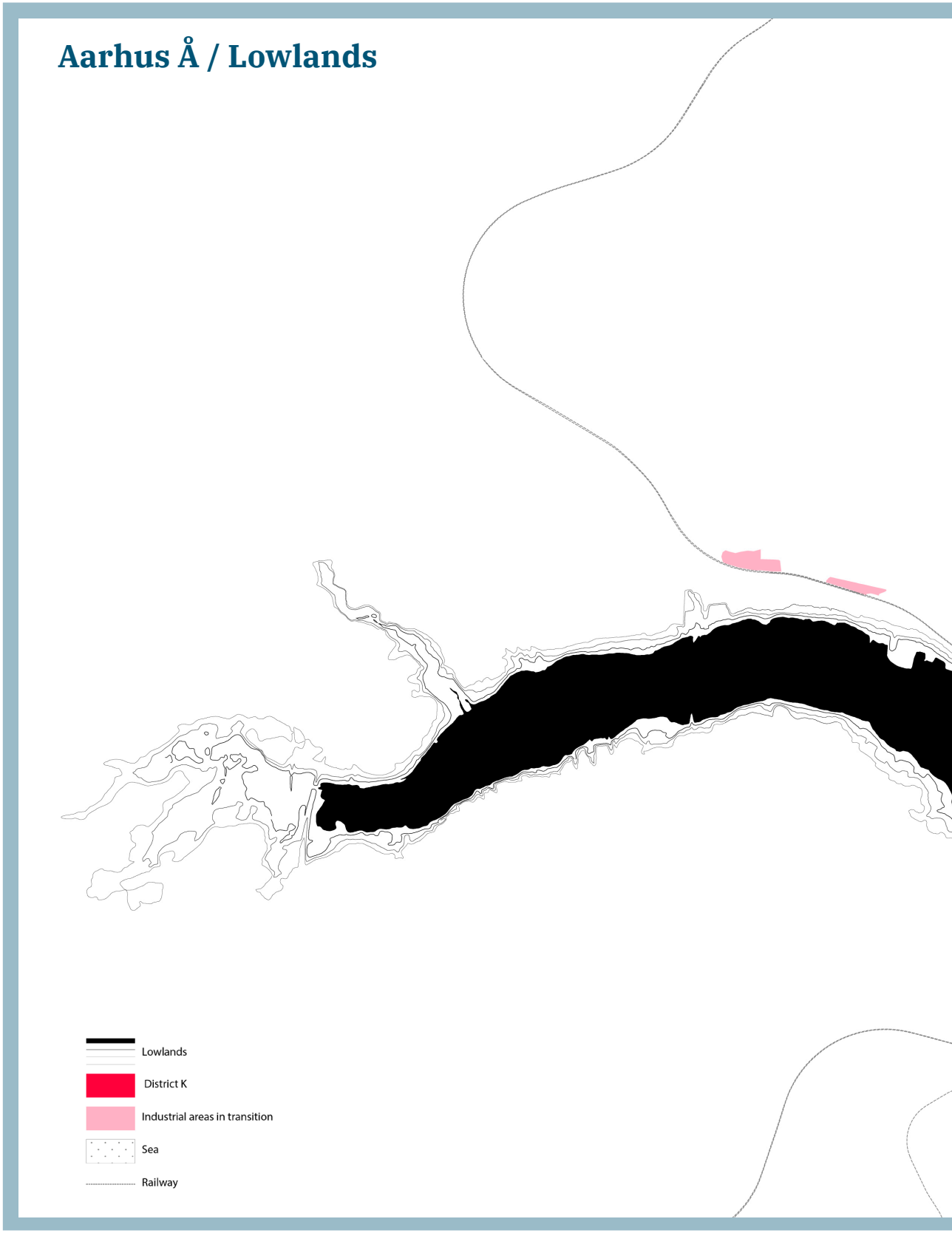
VE

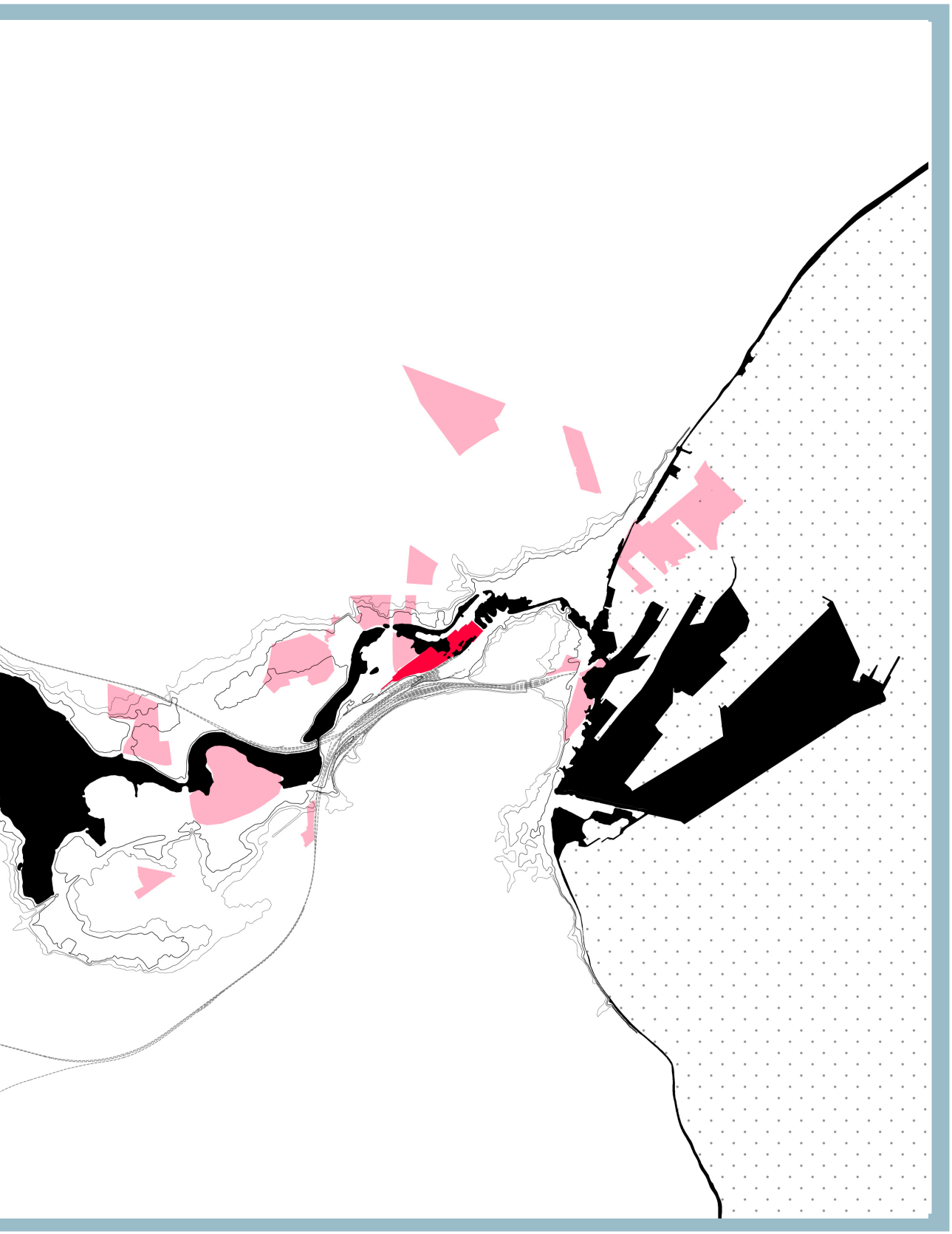
SØ

ORG

“The **main blue-green structure** is the long-term vision for creating a coherent network with positive development in the green and recreational areas of the city, in the landscapes close to the city and in the open countryside, and where we also manage increasing rainfall.
Urban development **must respect landscape structures**. The main blue-green structure will form the backbone of future development, ensuring that current and long-term natural conditions help to define the limits of urban development.
At the same time, the main blue-green structure will help to ensure that, alongside urban development, we can **create space to unify meeting places**, while providing space for water, nature and biodiversity and new recreational connections. Landscapes must become cities, and this must be done in interaction with climate adaptation within the existing city and in areas close to cities.

Aarhus Å / Lowlands

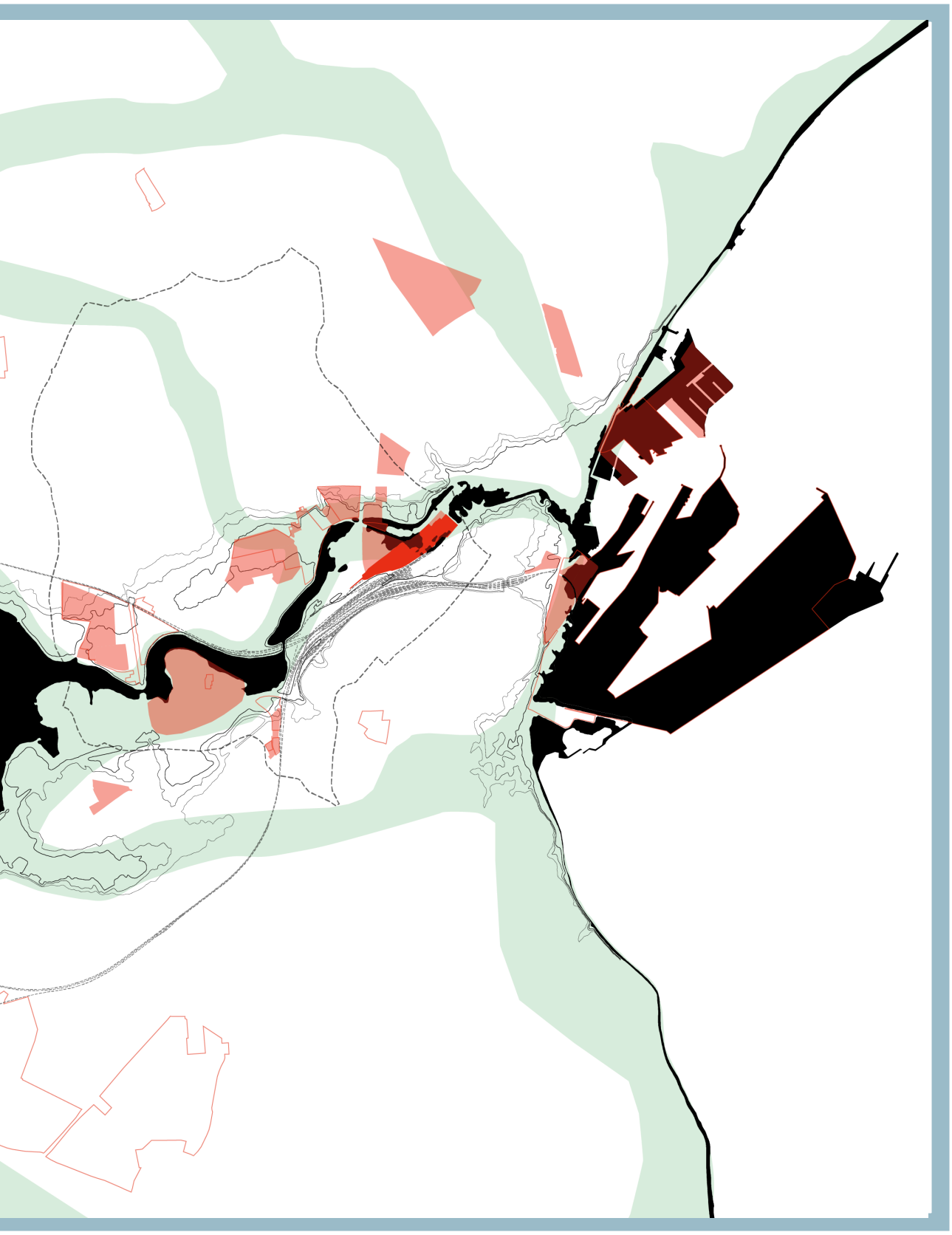




Water geographies

Extreme rainwater + river overflow

A valley in transition
District K
Blue-green mesh
Industrial areas in conversion
Industrial areas
Subwatershed



Corridors

Subwatershed
Disctrict K
(X) park
Water
Wetlands
Green spaces
Wooded areas
Blue-green mesh

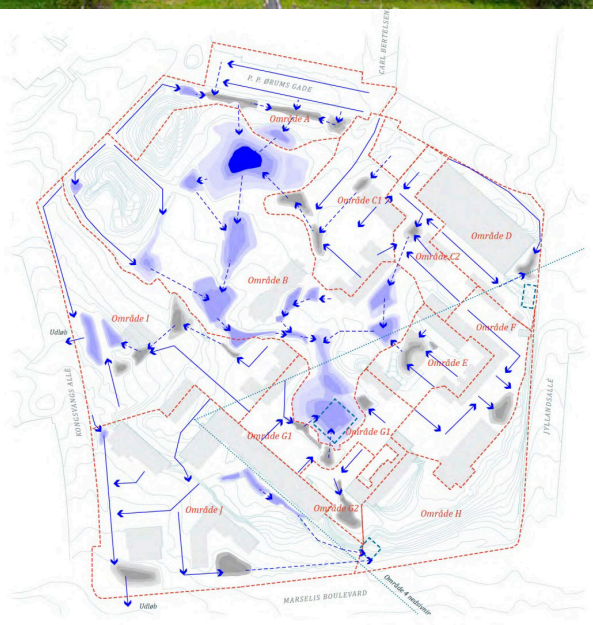
Impervious/sealed soils

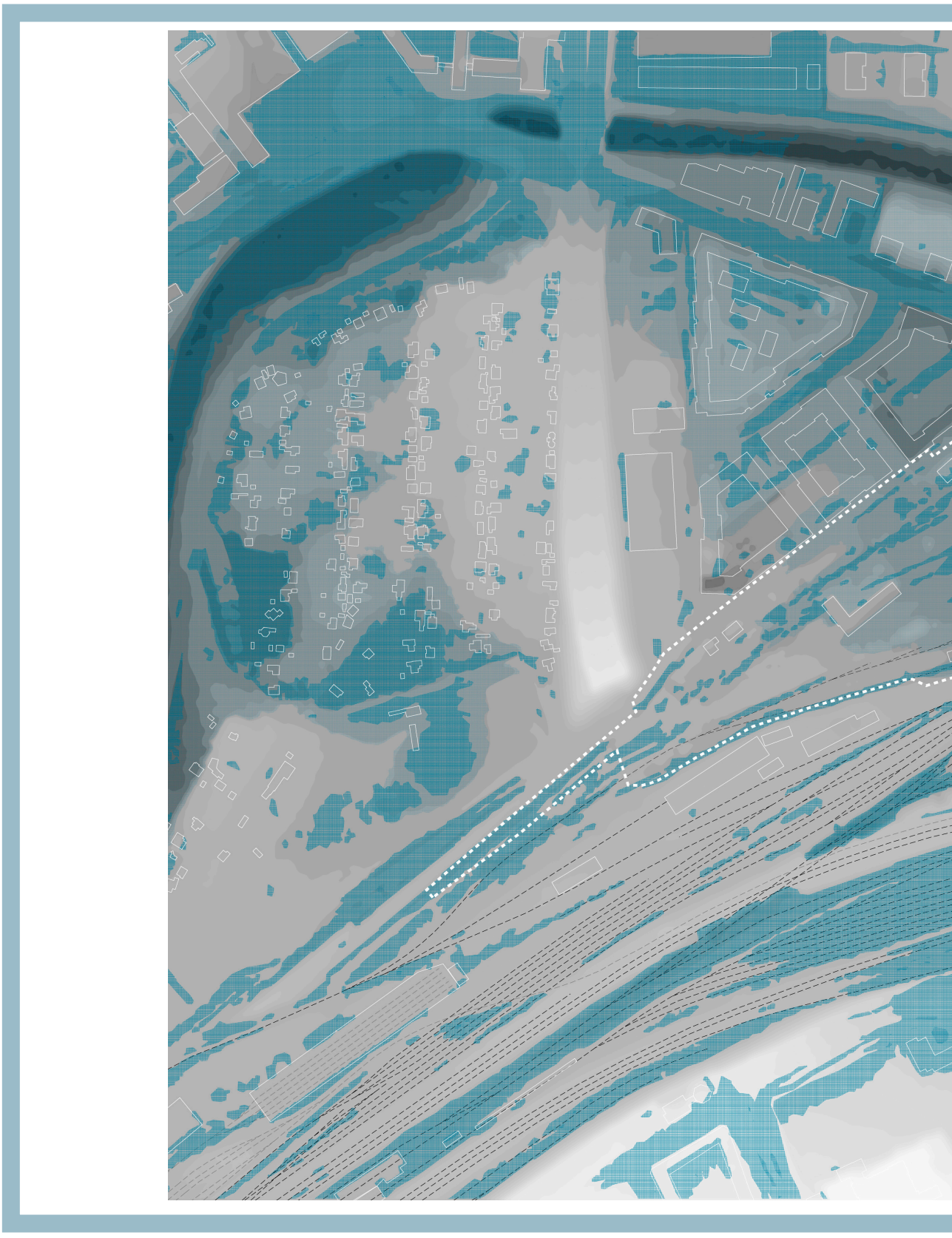
Water Geographies

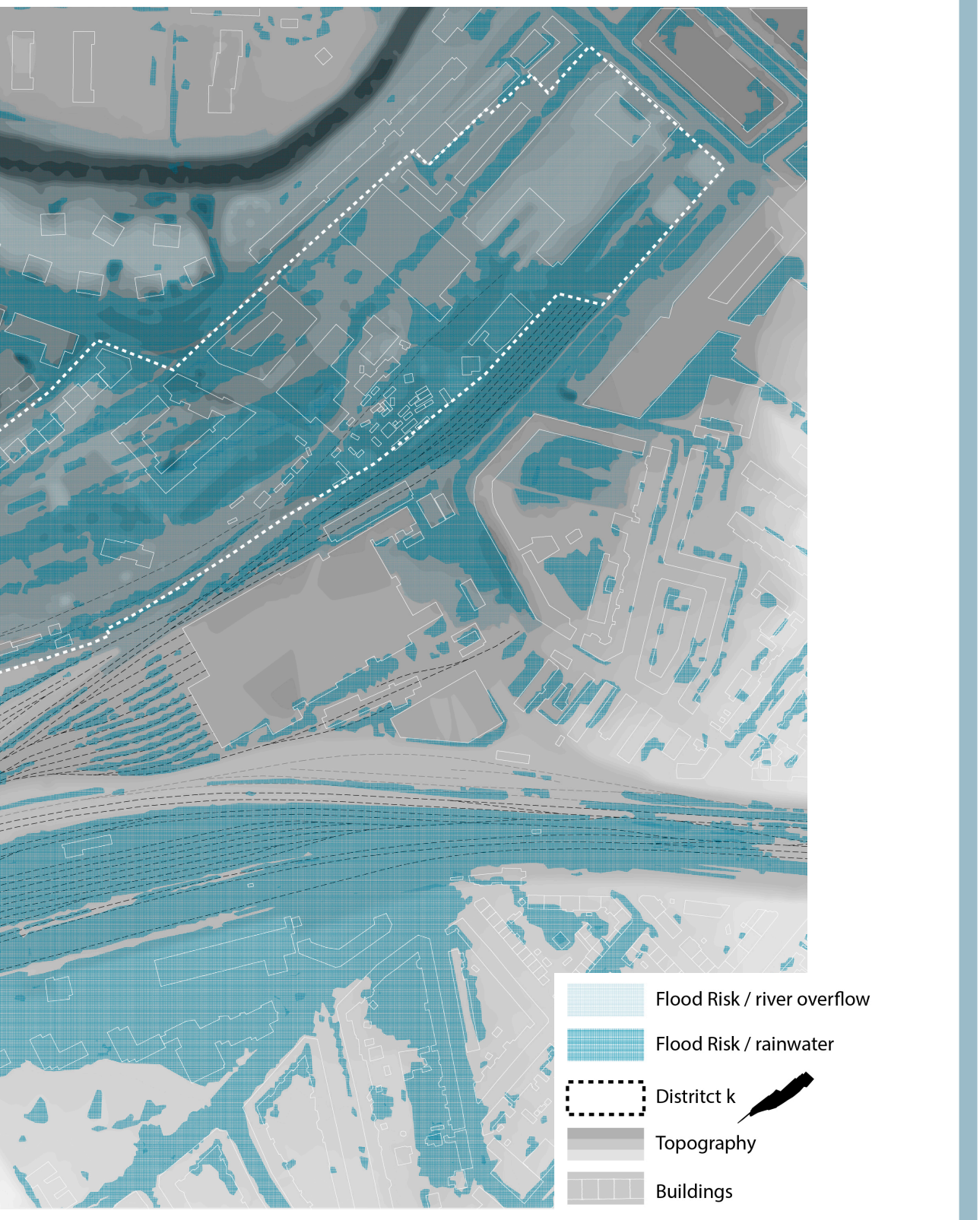
Subwatershed
Disctrict K
(X) park
Floods (rain, river and laks)

NYE

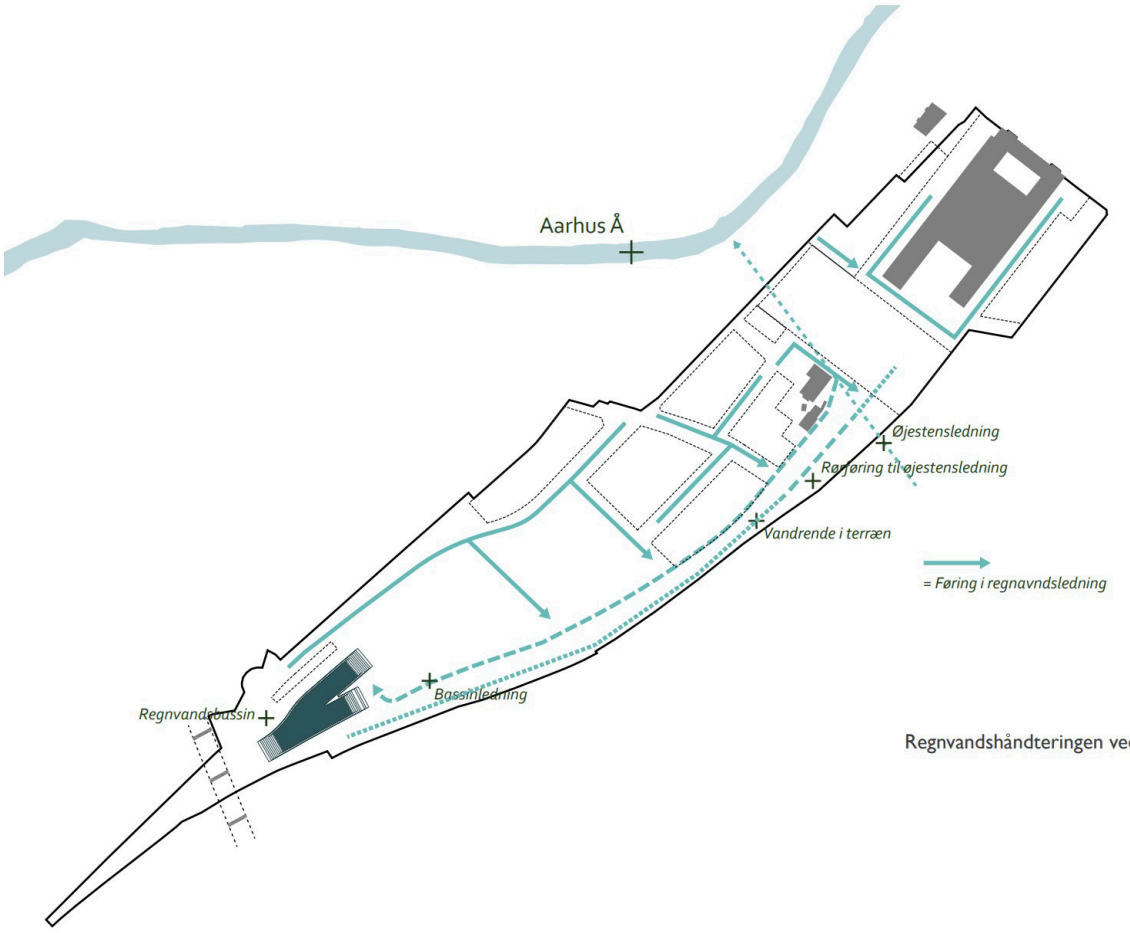
SPARK


K. F. BRUMS GADE
CARL BERTELSENS
Område A
Område C1
Område D
Område C2
Område B
Område I
Udløb
Område F
Område E
KONGSVANGS ALLE
JYLLANDSALLE
Område G1
Område G1
Område J
Område G2
Område H
Område A nedsivning
MARSELIS BOULEVARD
Udløb

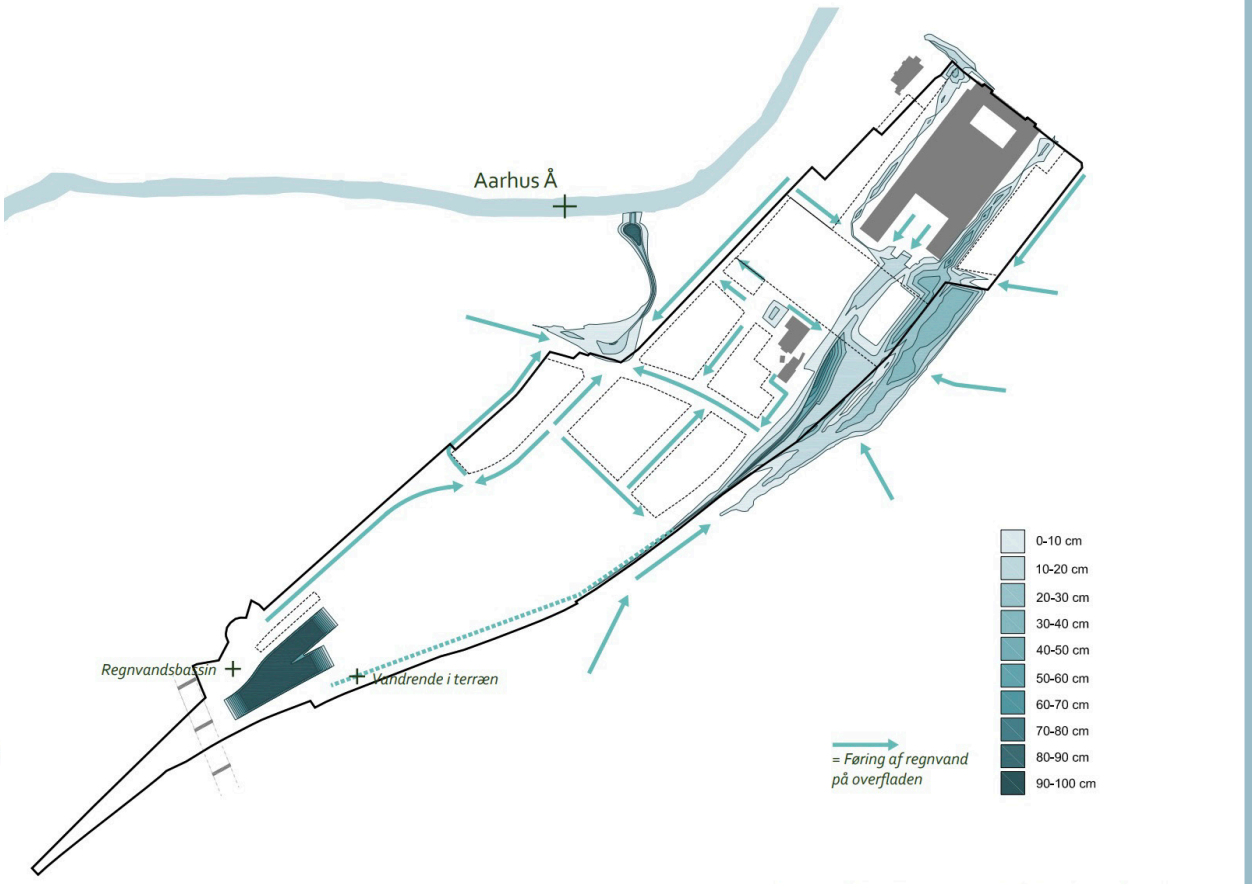



Flood Risk / river overflow
Flood Risk / rainwater
Districtct k
Topography
Buildings

Municipality Strategy



Regnvandshåndteringen ved hverdagsreg



Regnvandshåndteringen ved skybrud med skybrudsveje

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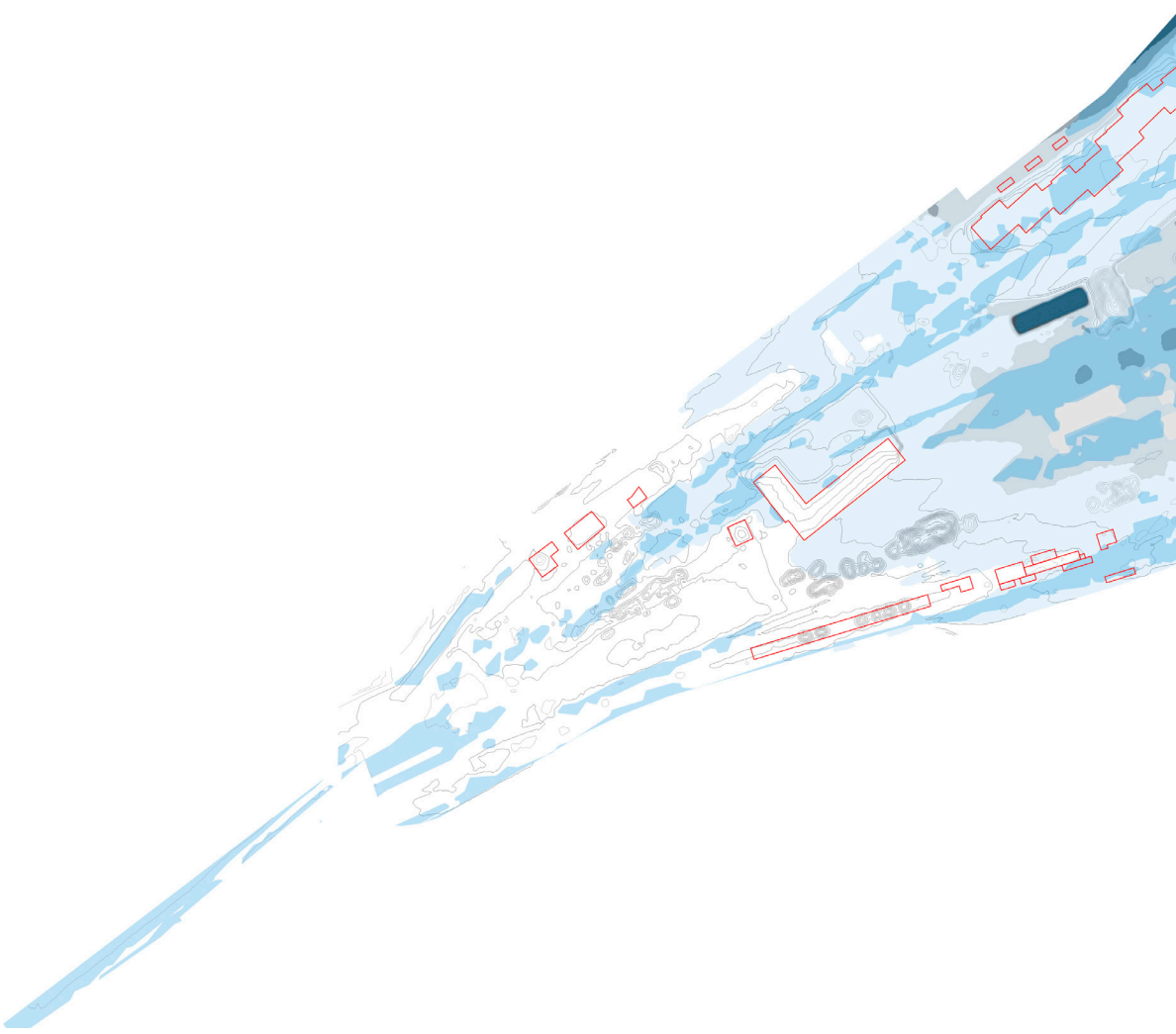
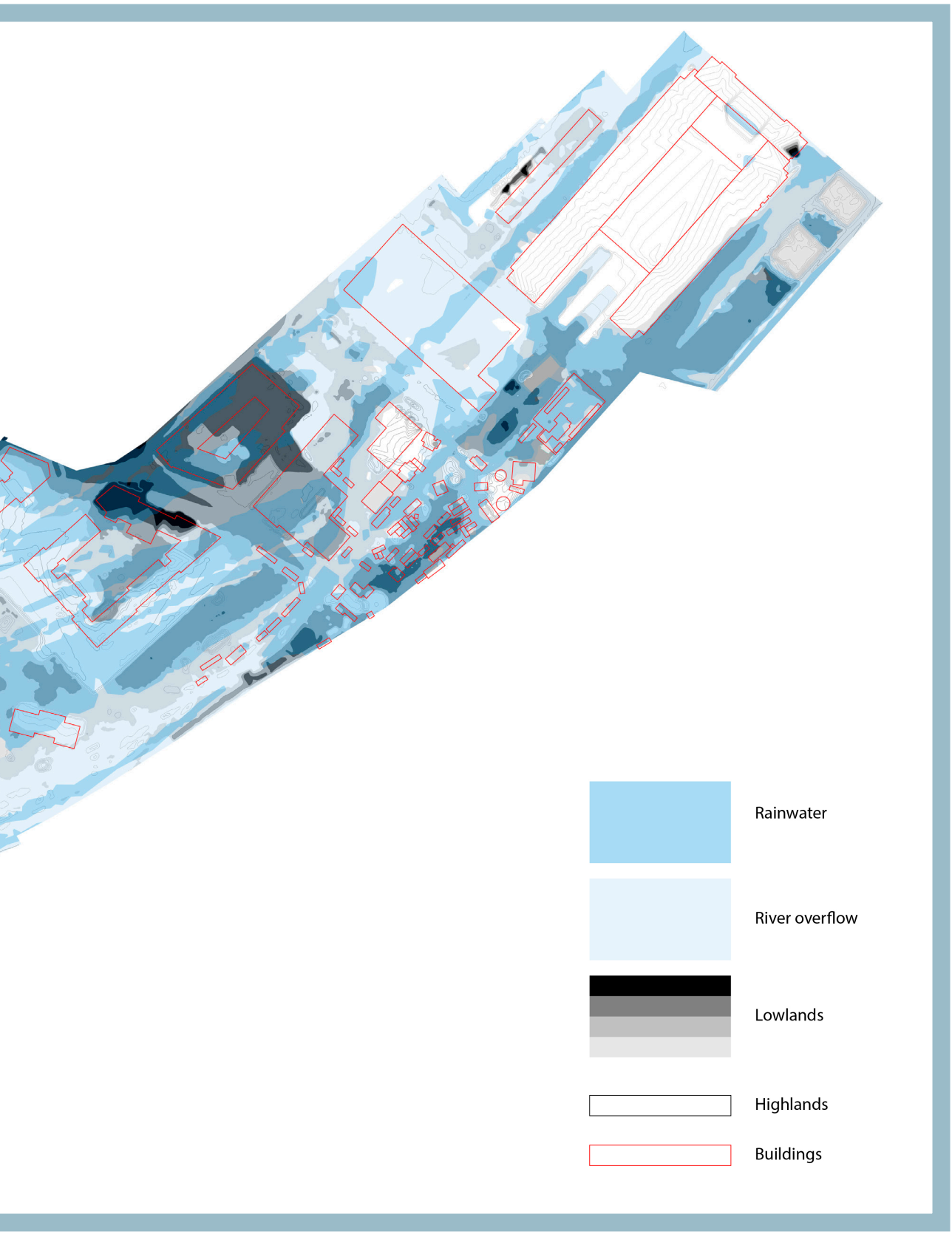
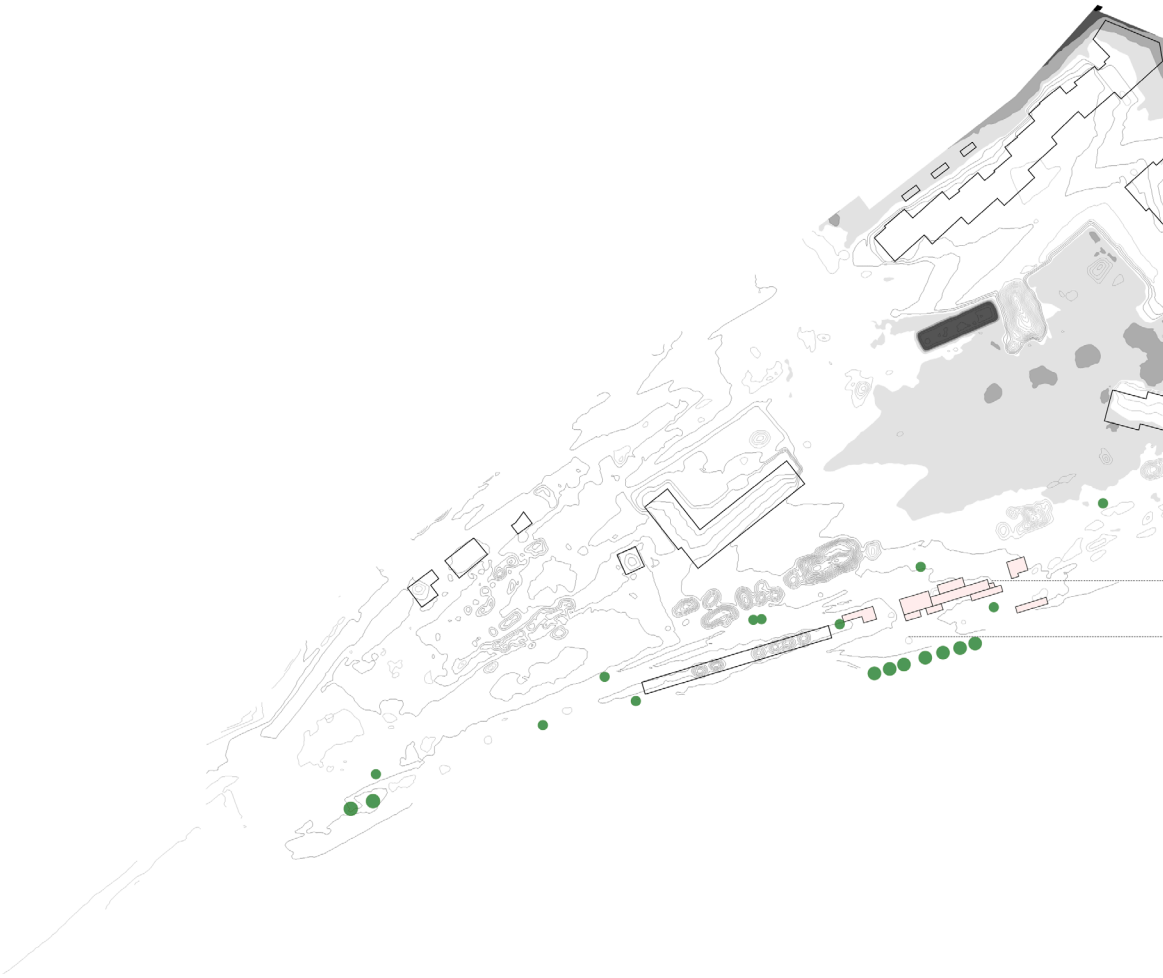
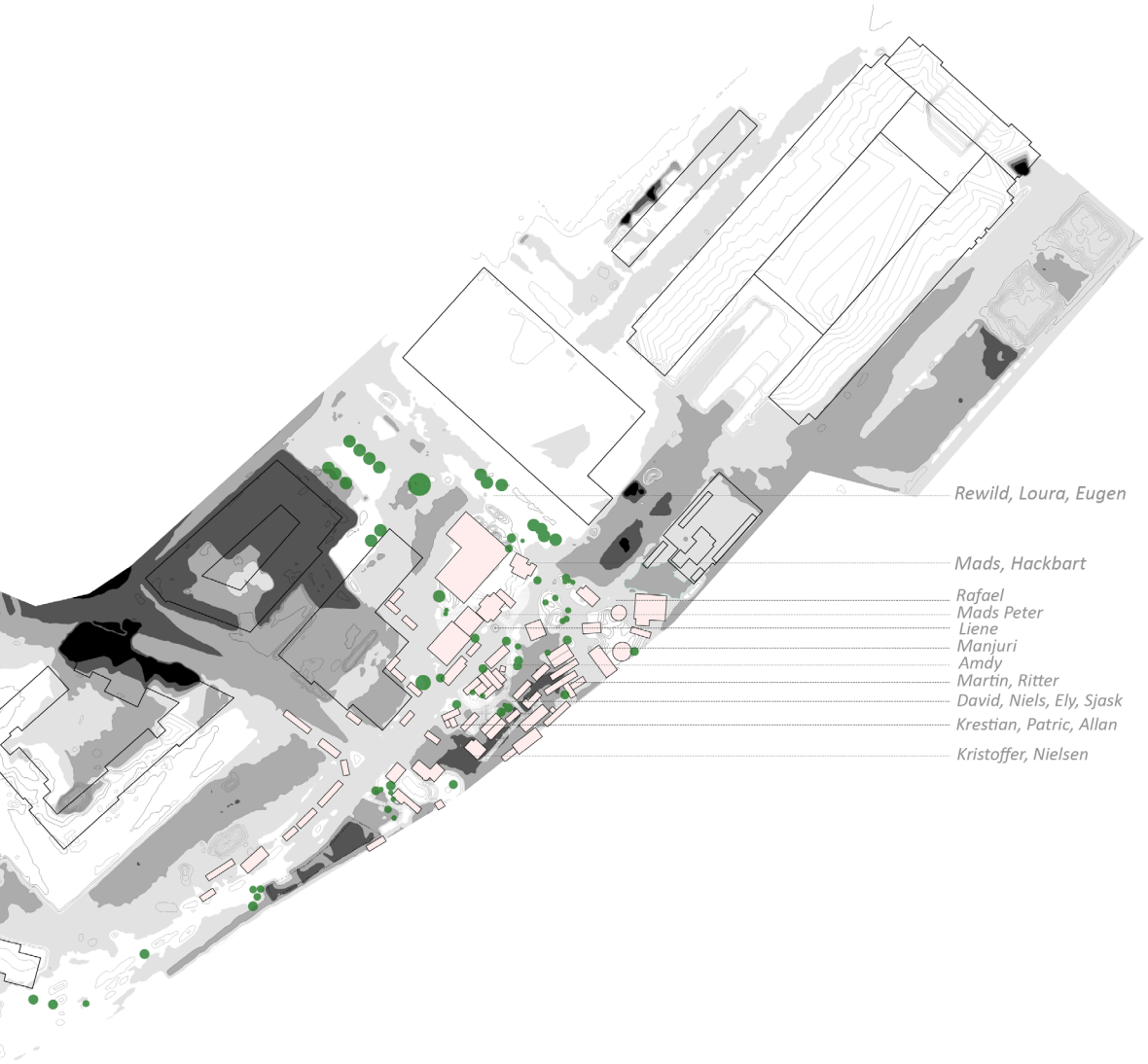



Rainwater
River overflow
Lowlands
Highlands
Buildings

Gardeners of (X)
in process..

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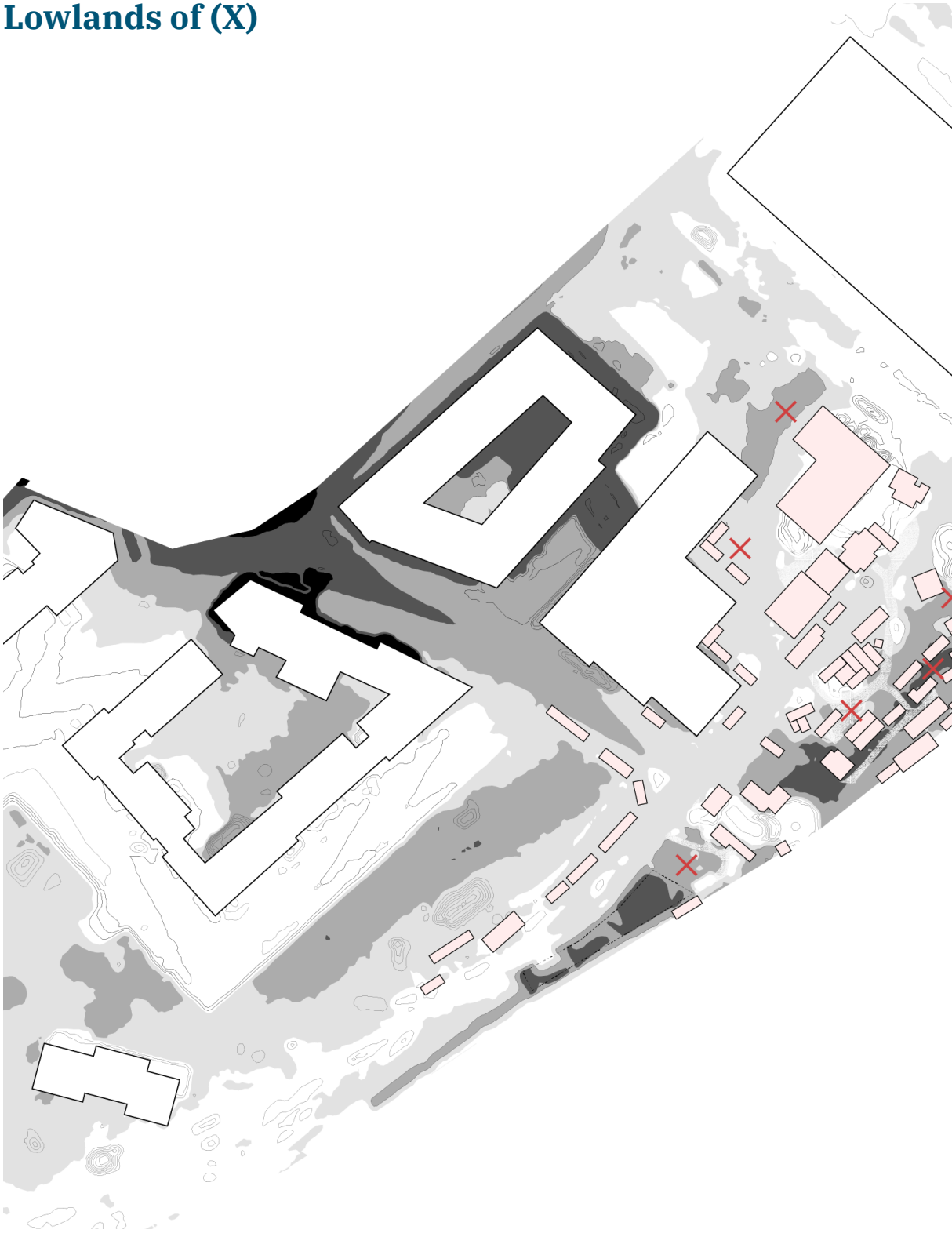
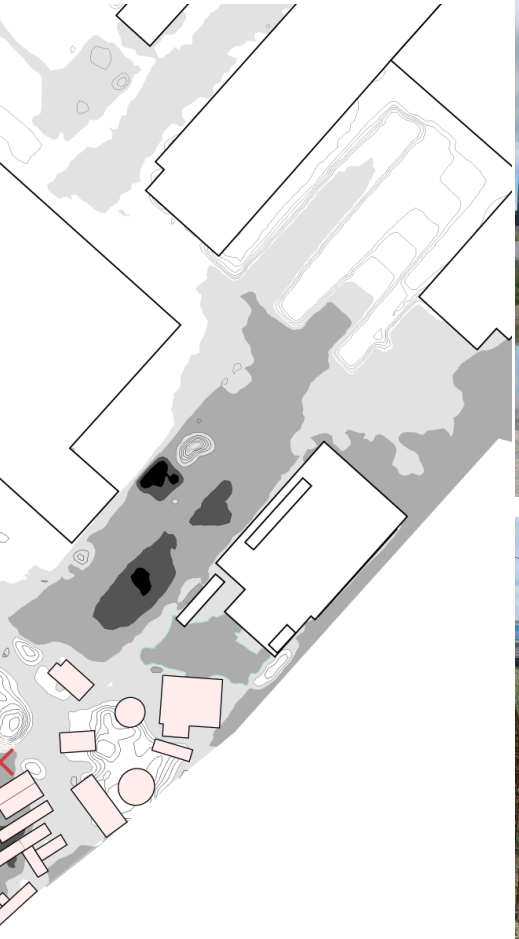
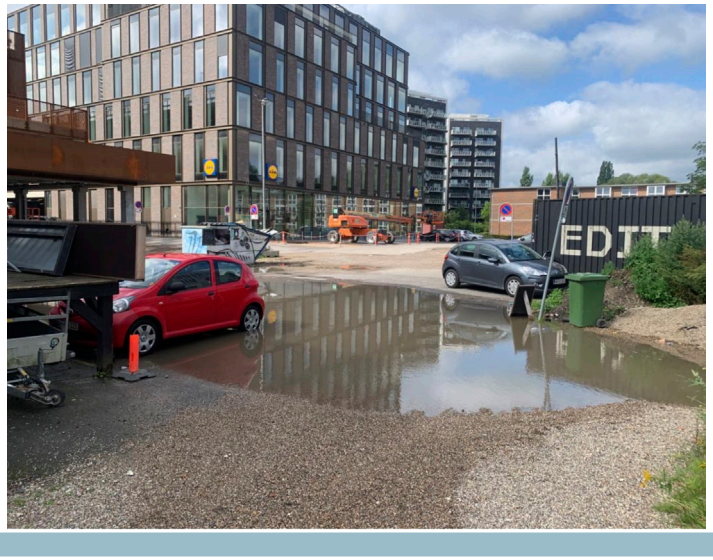
Mads, Hackbart
Rafael
Mads Peter
Liene
Manjuri
Amdy
Martin, Ritter
David, Niels, Ely, Sjask
Krestian, Patric, Allan
Kristoffer, Nielsen
Bea, Og, Clement
Vark, Drengene

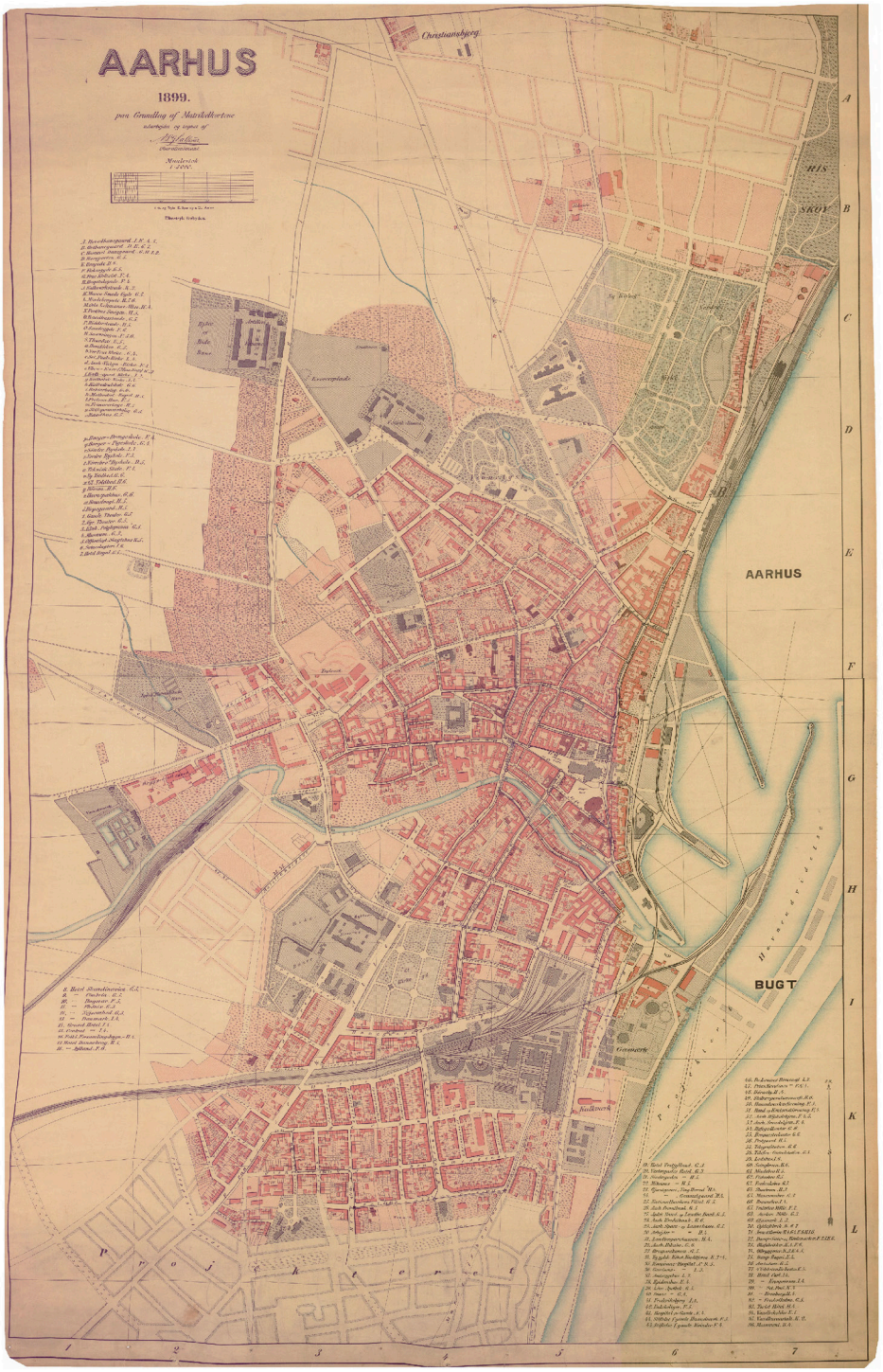
Lowlands of (X)





ELSE MARIE PADES PLADS

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Havnepl.
Bulværk
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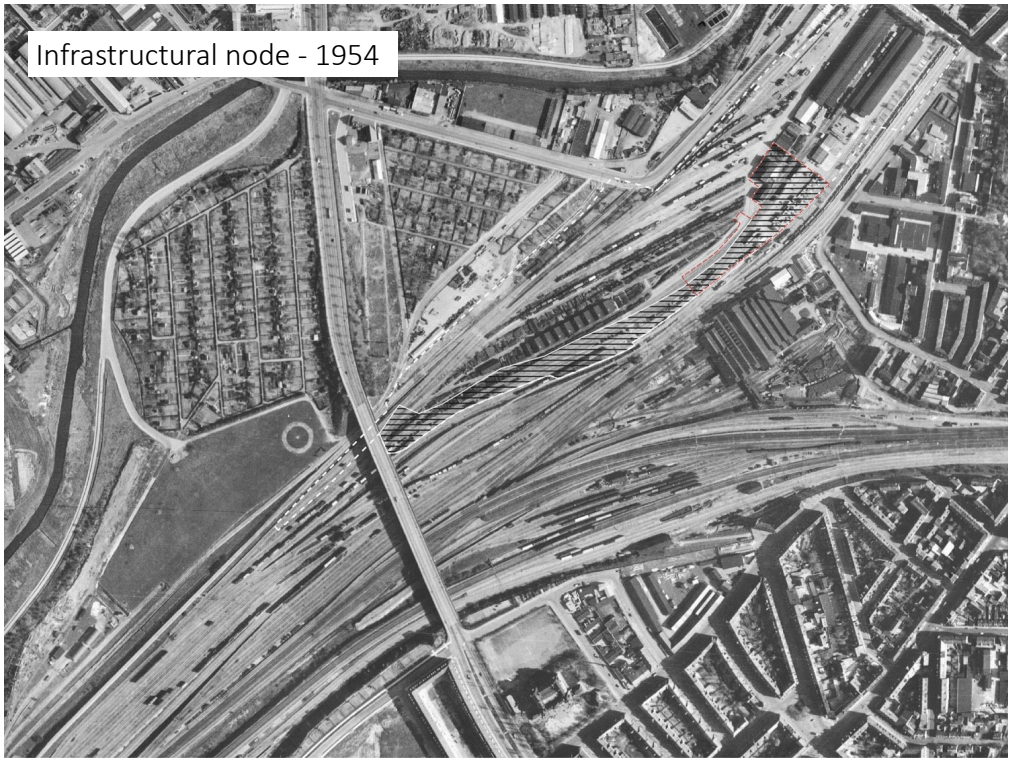
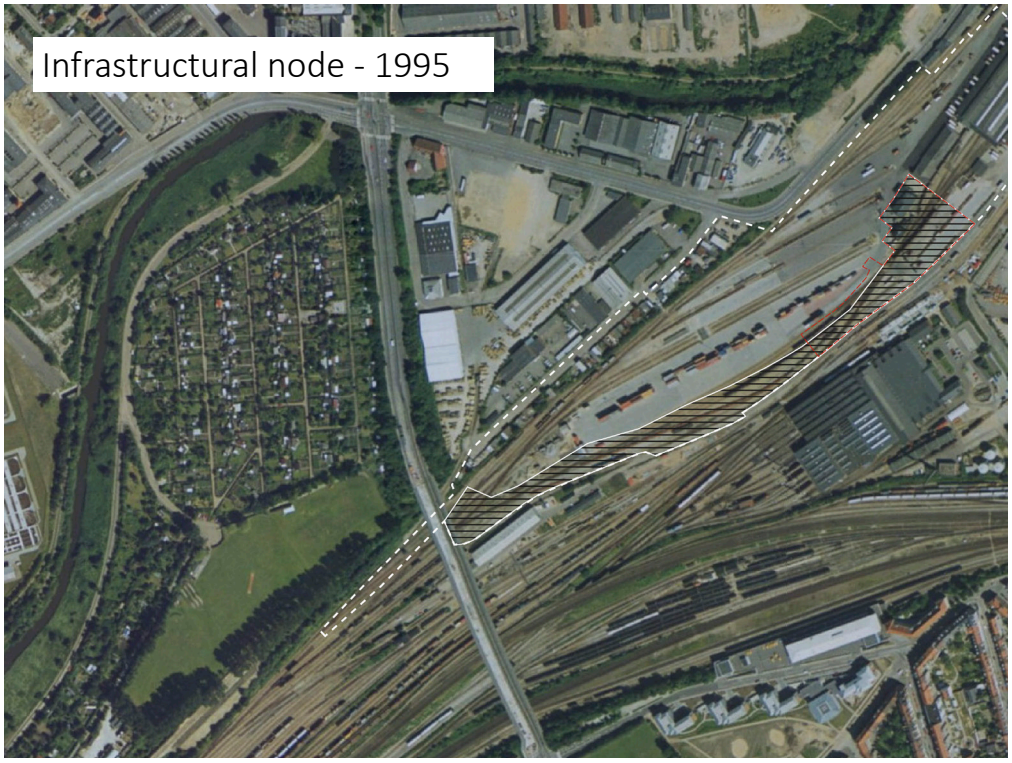
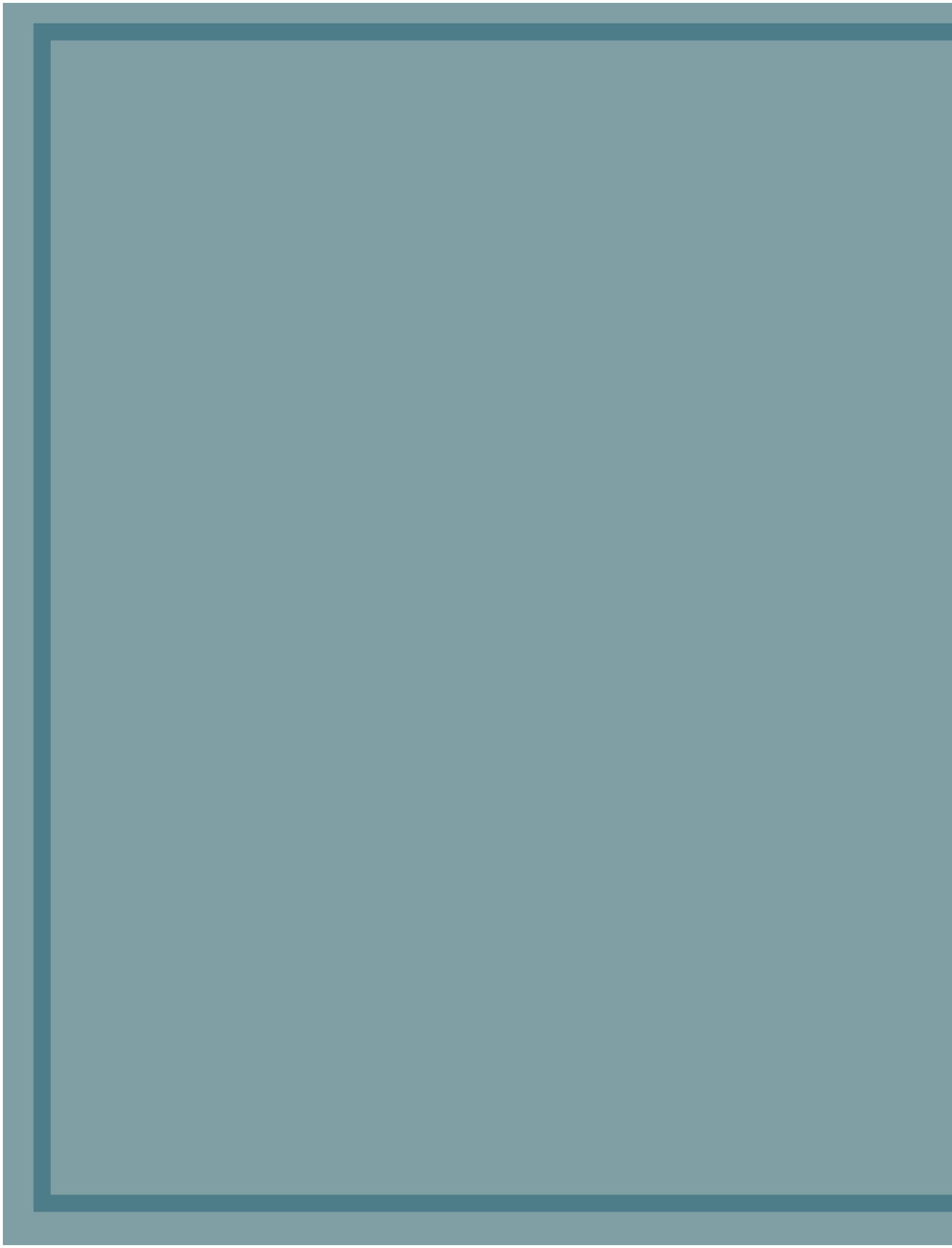
Havnepl.
Bulværk


Infrastructural node - 1954

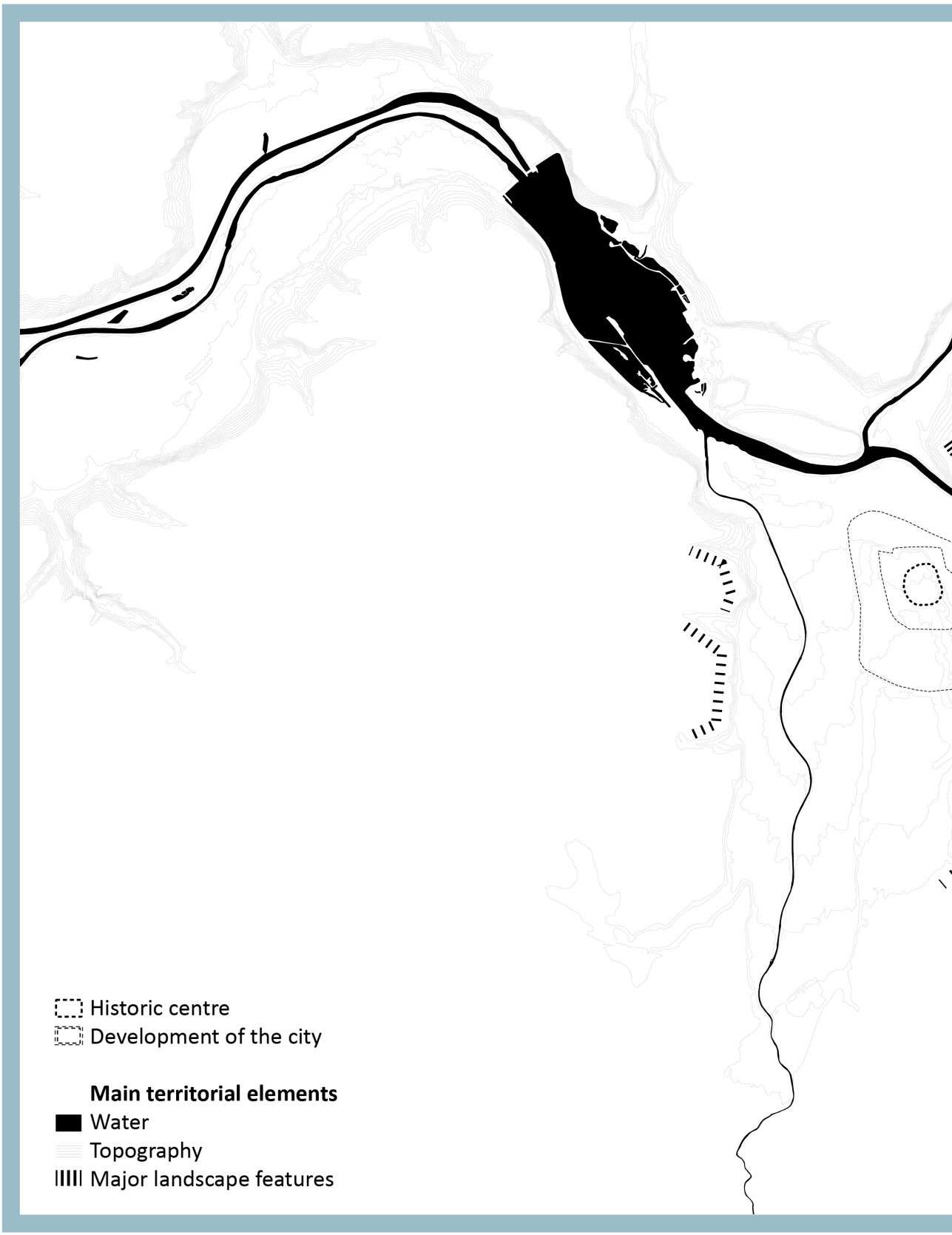

Infrastructural node - 1995



Appendix B

Maps of Stanica and Zilina
Part of Research WP2
by Université de Liège - Unité de Recherche en Architecture URA

© Prof. Martina Barcelloni Corte and Thibault Marghem

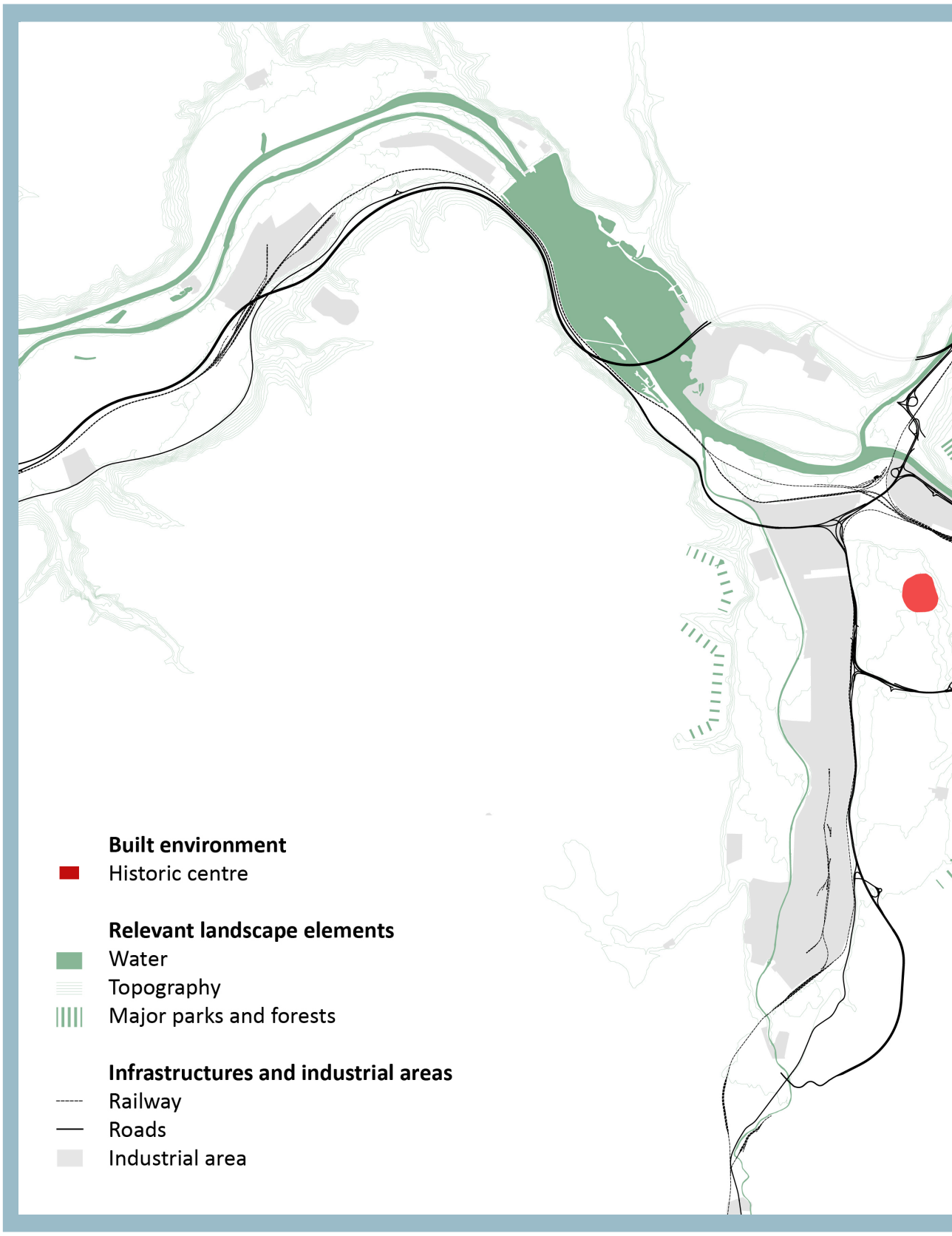

Historic centre
Development of the city
Main territorial elements
Water
Topography
Major landscape features

Lowlands and main landscape elements

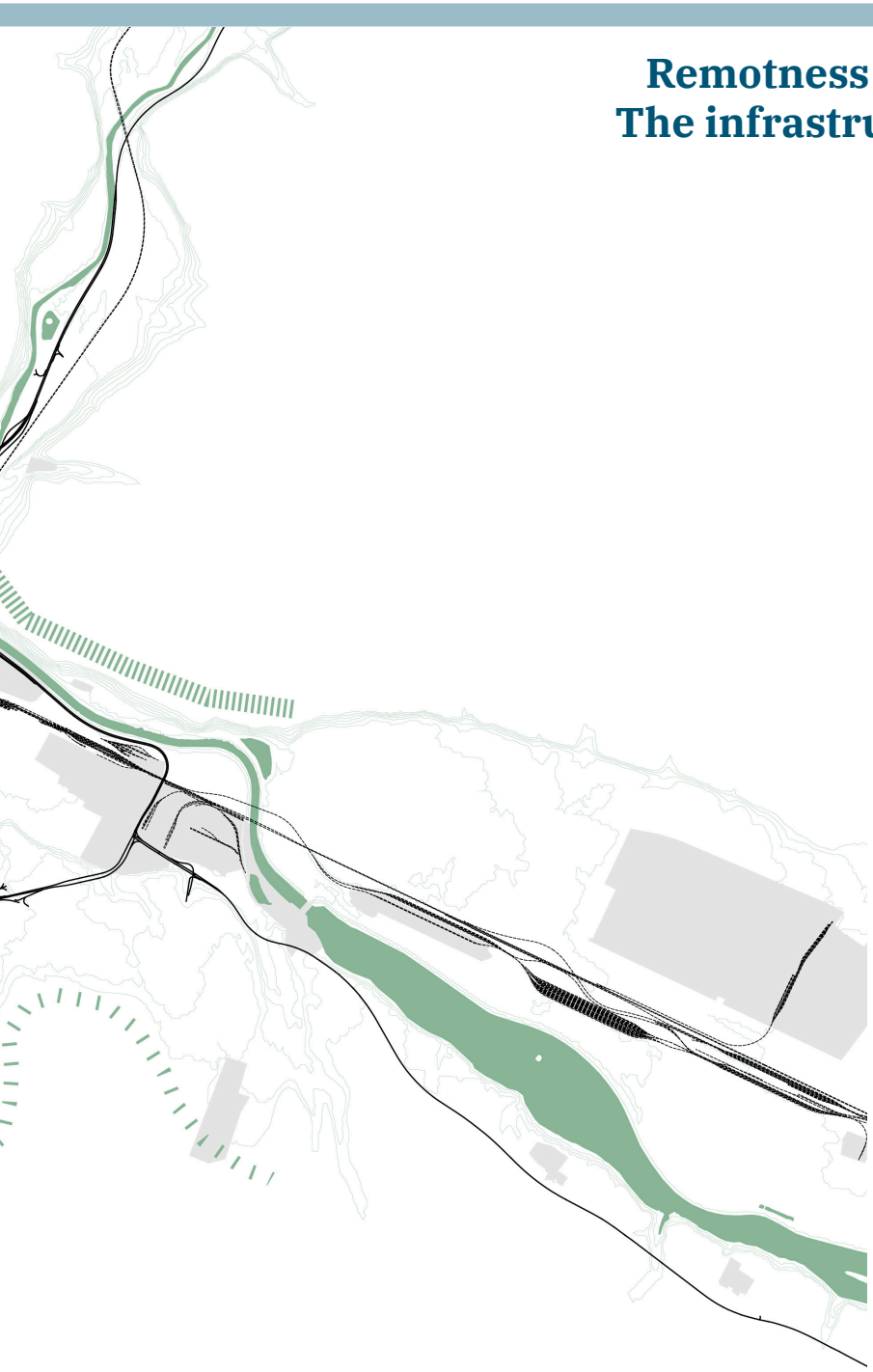
1936

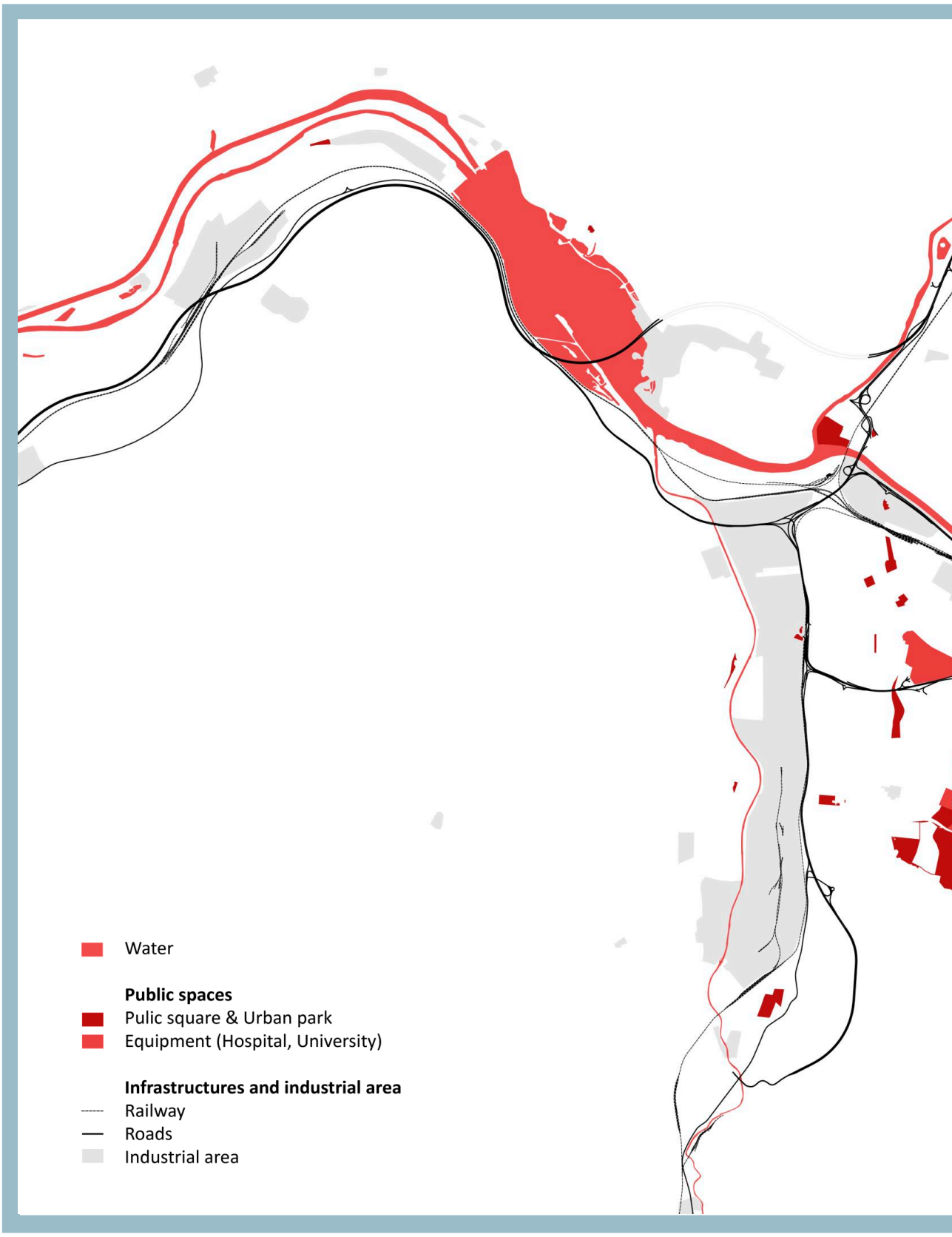
A CHANGING REALATION TO NATURAL ELEMENTS

Zastranje
Zadabno
Budatin
WAAG FL.
SILLEIN
(ZILINA)
(ZSOLNA)
Canal
Teplička (Fl.)
Salzium
Hafner
Rasckau - Oderberger Bahn
HRUŠČIN
ŠIBENICE
Barik
Mala Dielc
Veľki Dielc
Breznik
Mala voda
Mois
Mois-Lucka
Tmone
KOPANICA
Rosina (Fl.)
Brezova
Visnjove (Fl.)
Strmjave

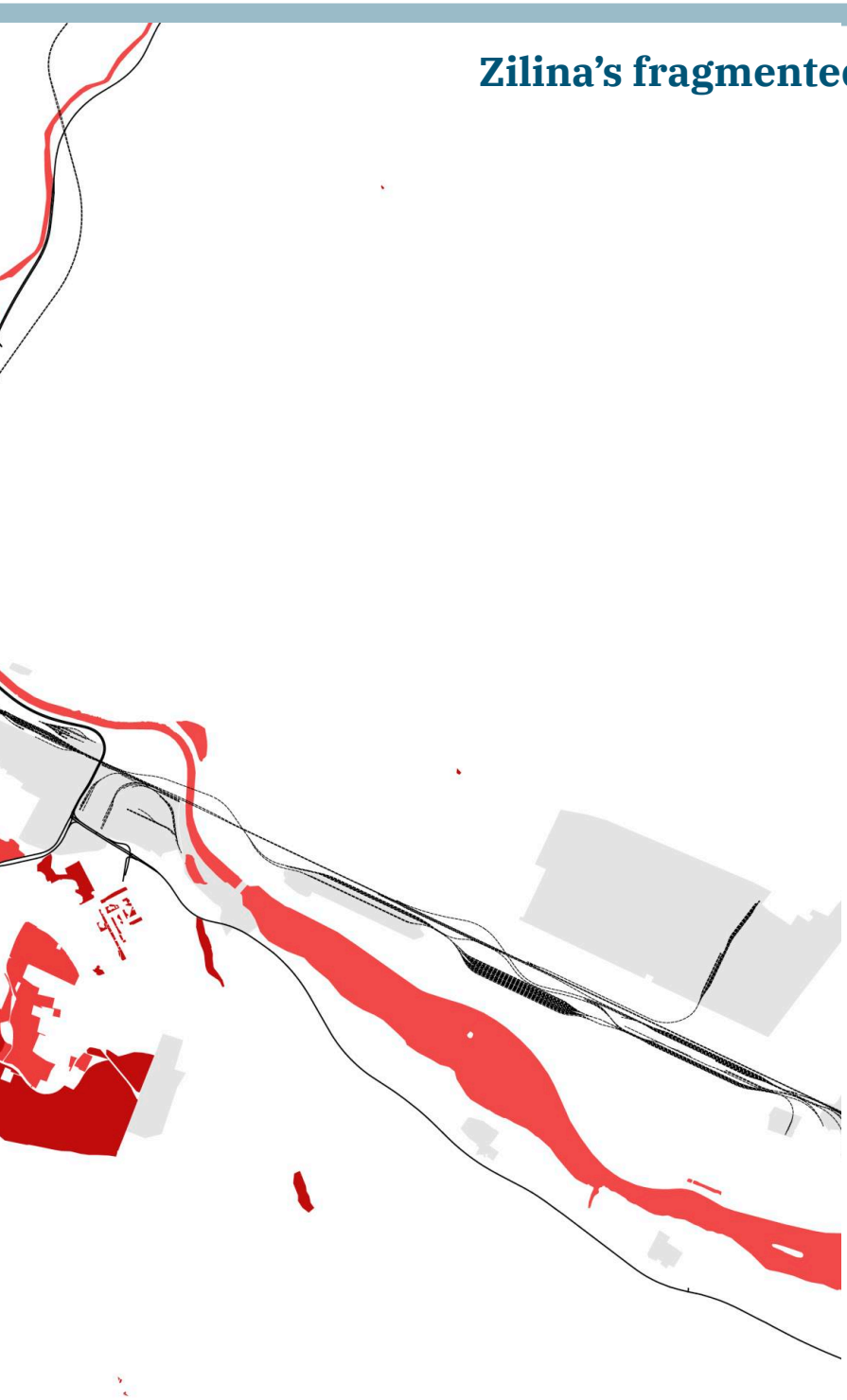

Built environment
Historic centre
Relevant landscape elements
Water
Topography
Major parks and forests
Infrastructures and industrial areas
Railway
Roads
Industrial area

Remotness from “nature”
The infrastructural barrier

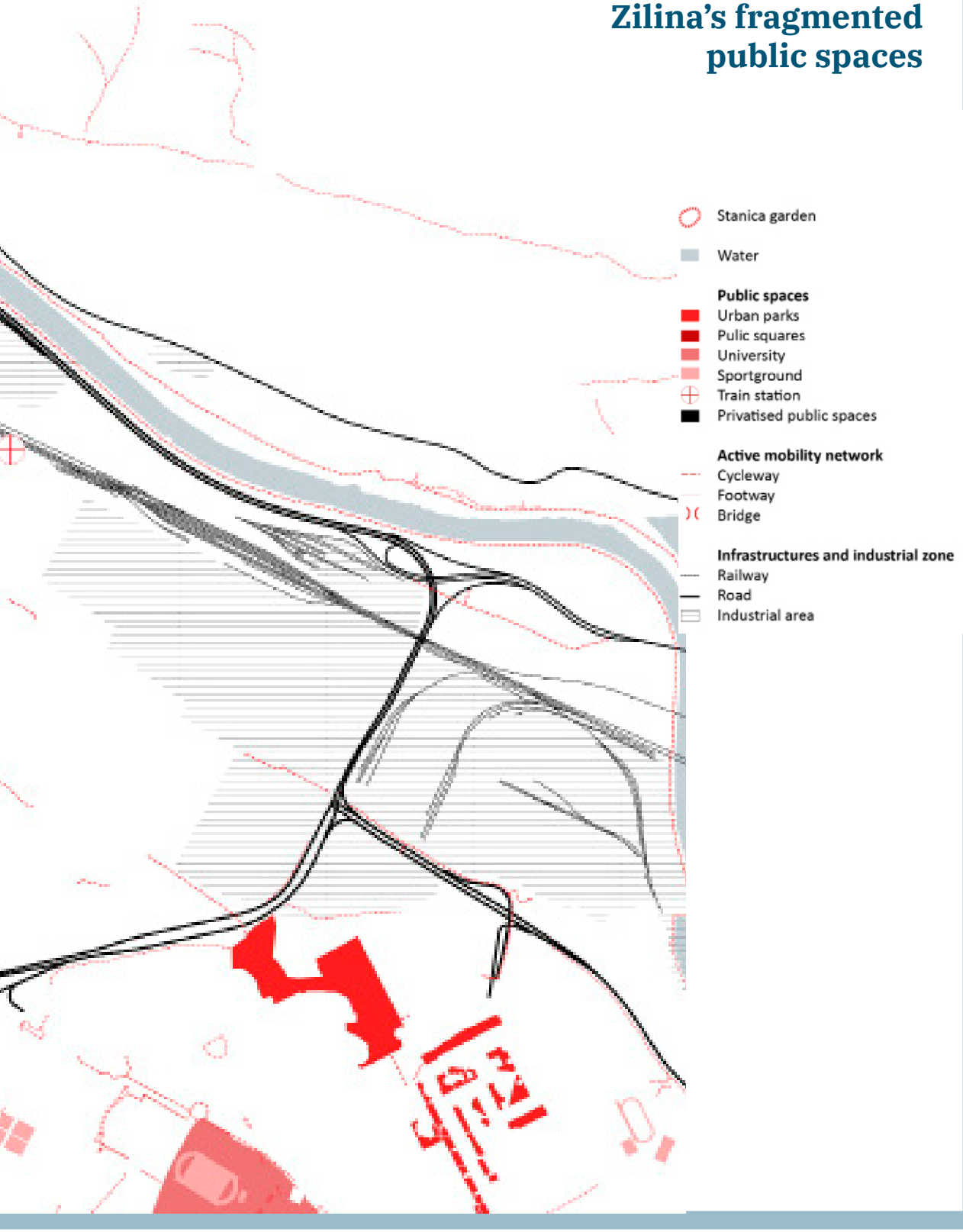



Water
Public spaces
Pulic square & Urban park
Equipment (Hospital, University)
Infrastructures and industrial area
Railway
Roads
Industrial area

Zilina's fragmented public spaces



Zilina's fragmented public spaces



BILLA
C&A
CCC
DATART
VIÁŠ EXPERT NA
FINANCOVANIE BÝVANIA
PSS

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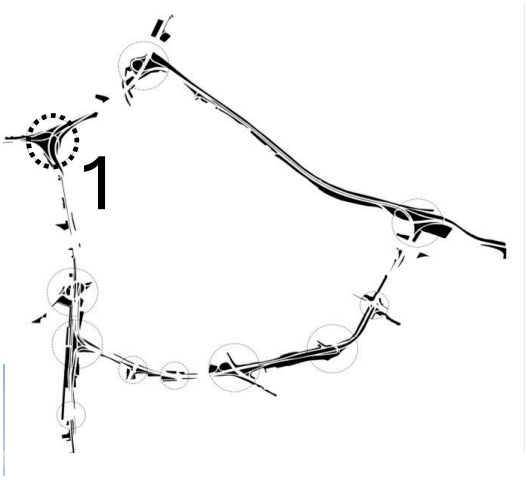
10
1
2
3
4
5
Stanica area
Water
Public spaces
Urban park
Pulic squares
Hospital & University
Sportground
Train station
Active mobility network
Cycleway
Footway
Bridge
Infrastructure space
Infrastructural garden
Location for inventory

Revealing the infrastructural garden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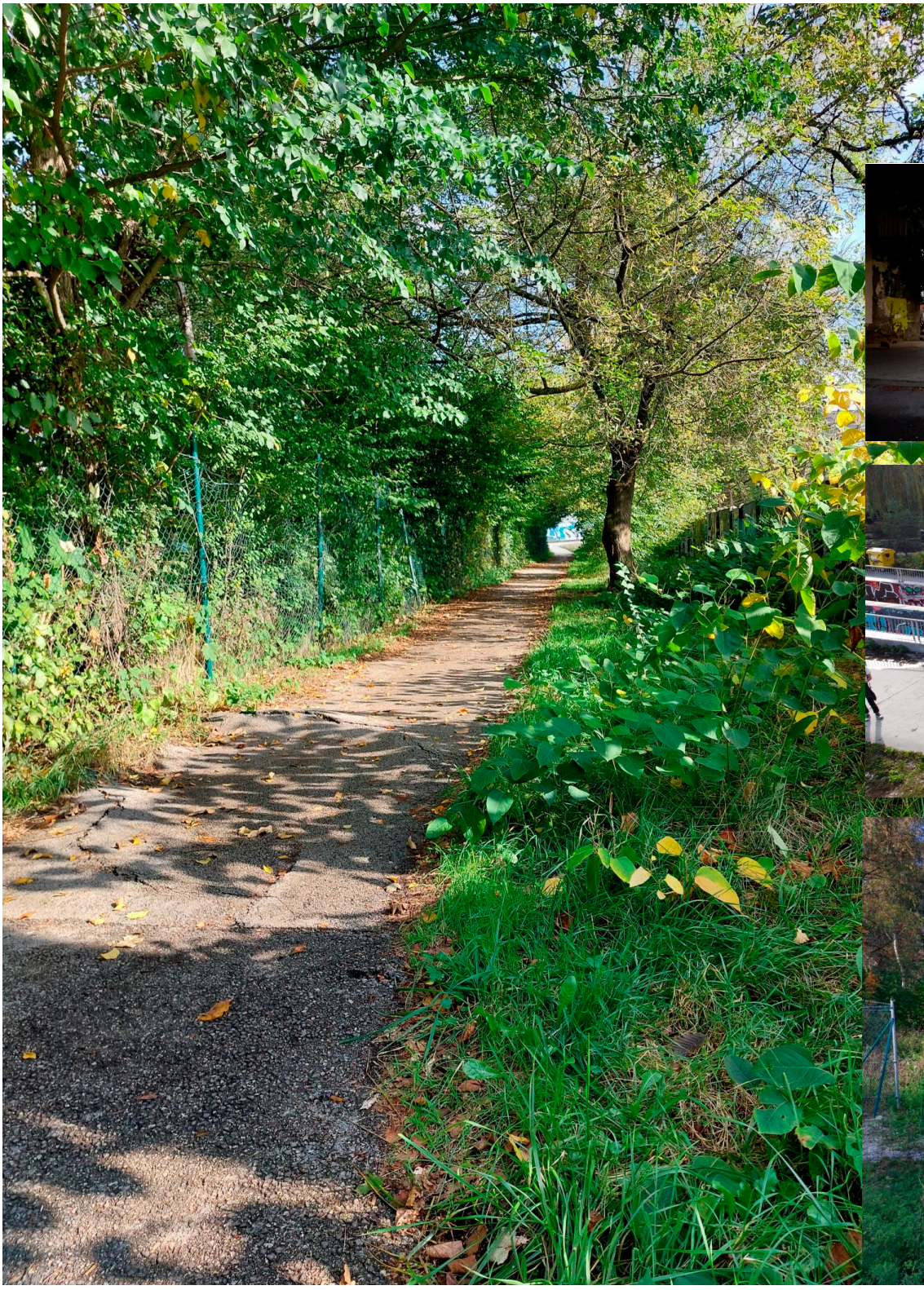

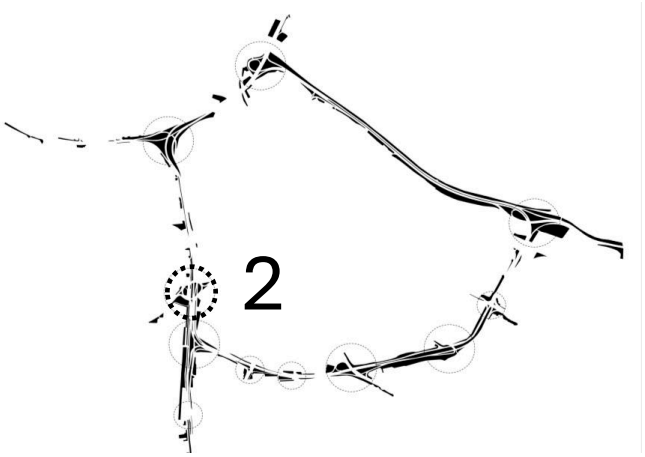
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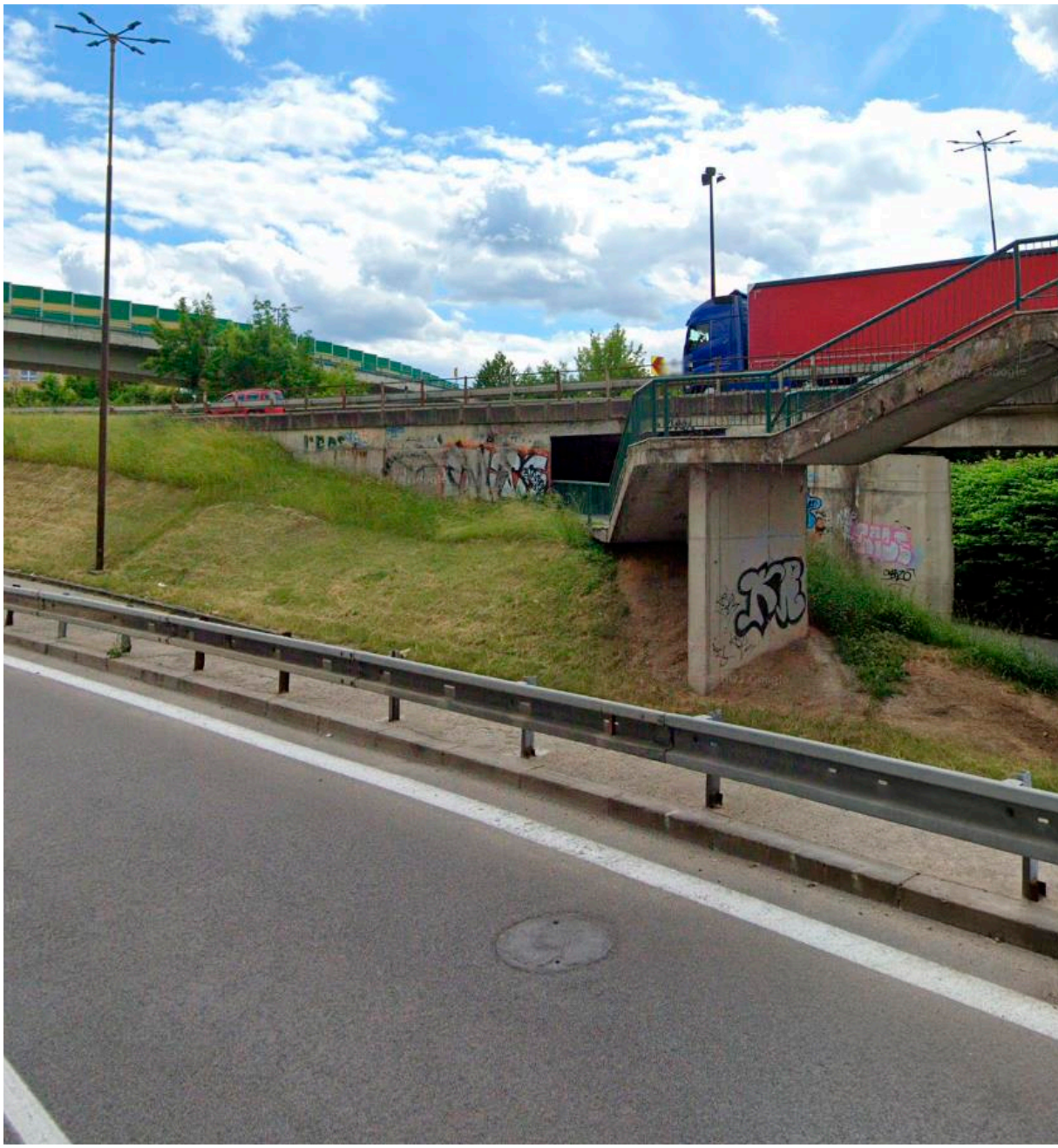

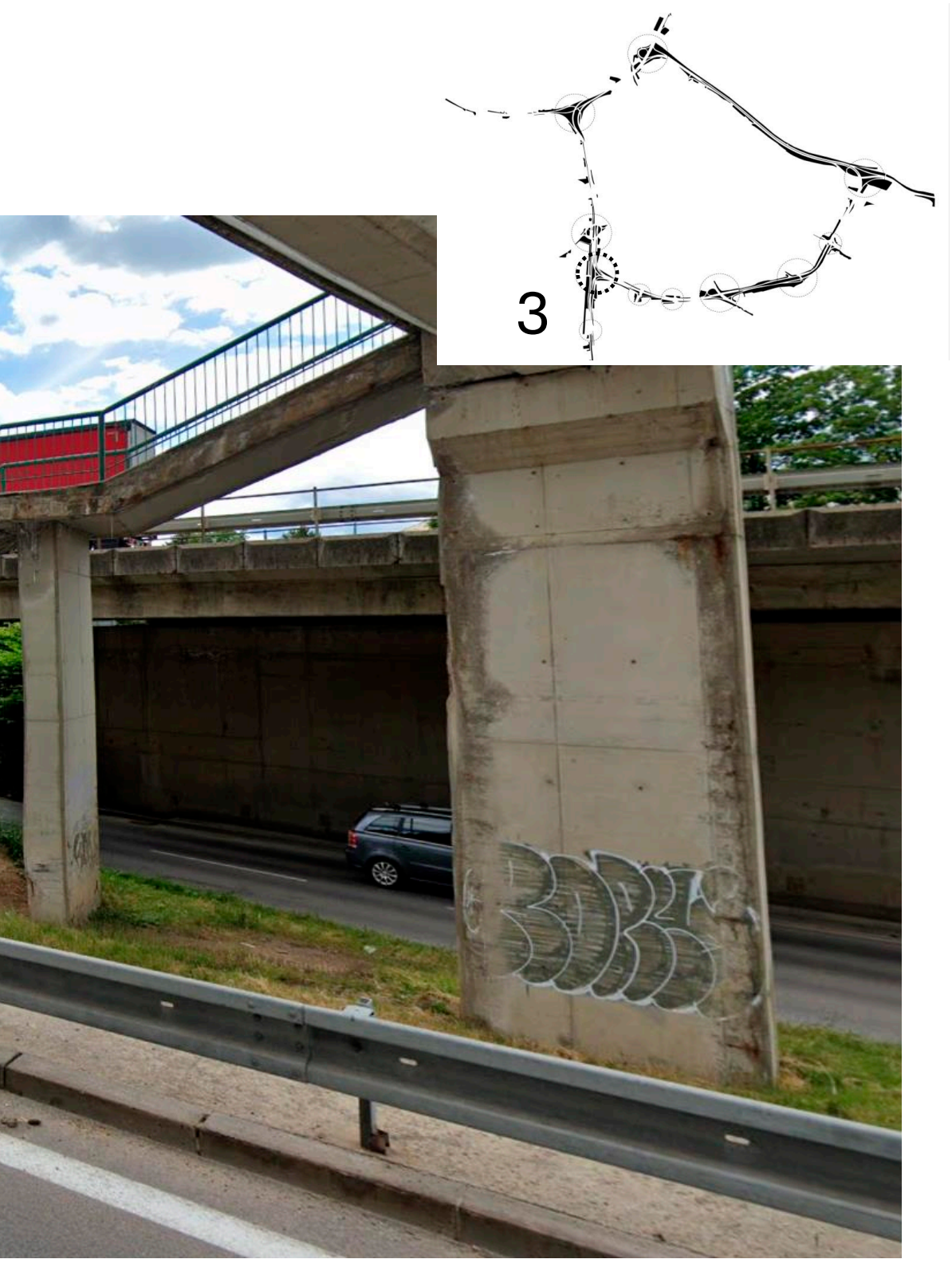
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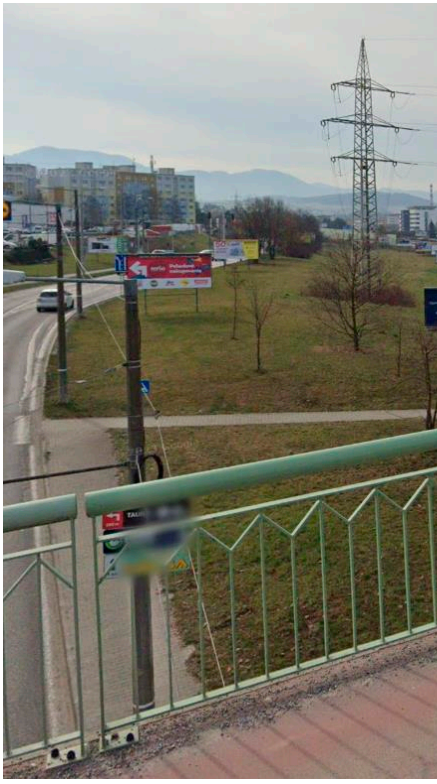

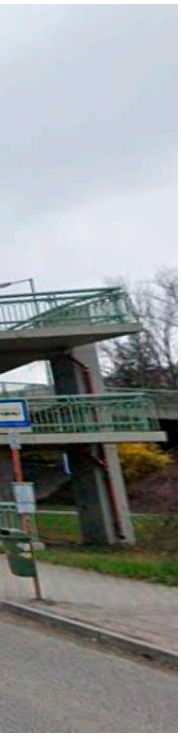

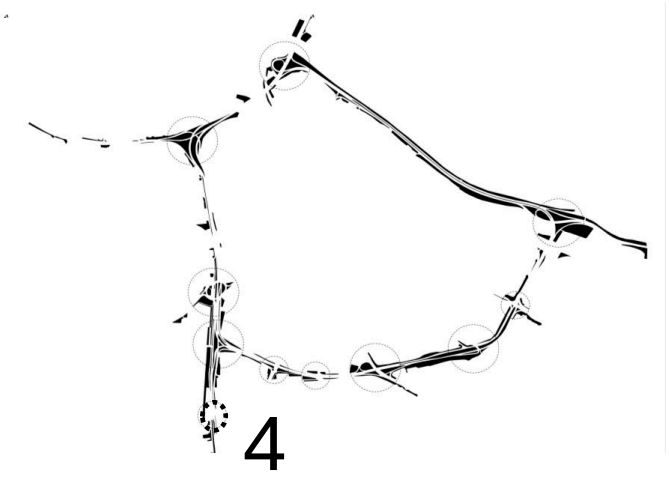

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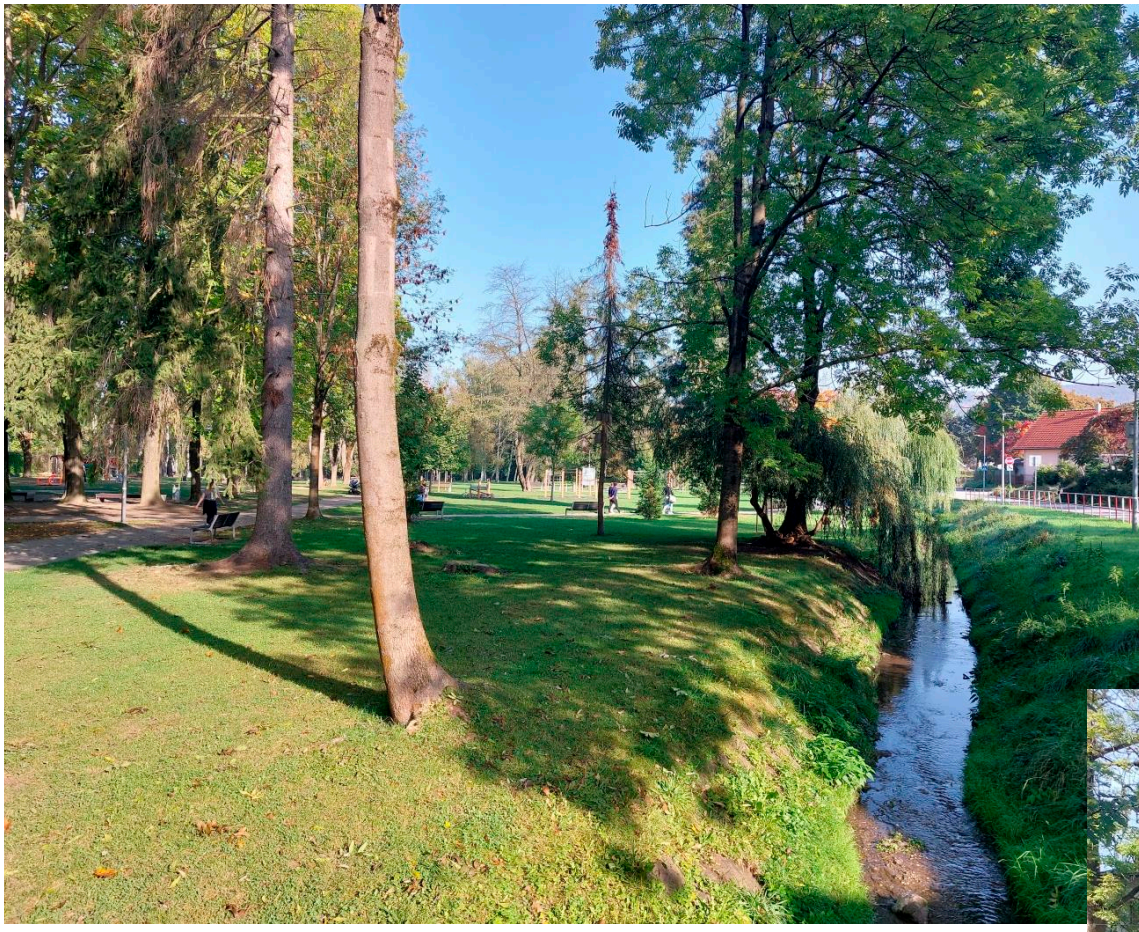

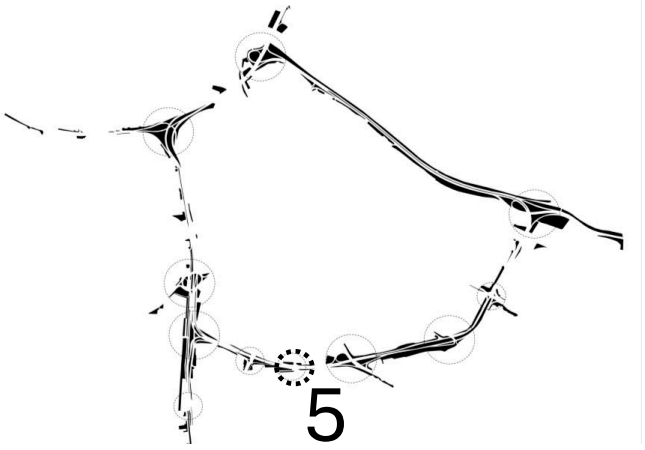
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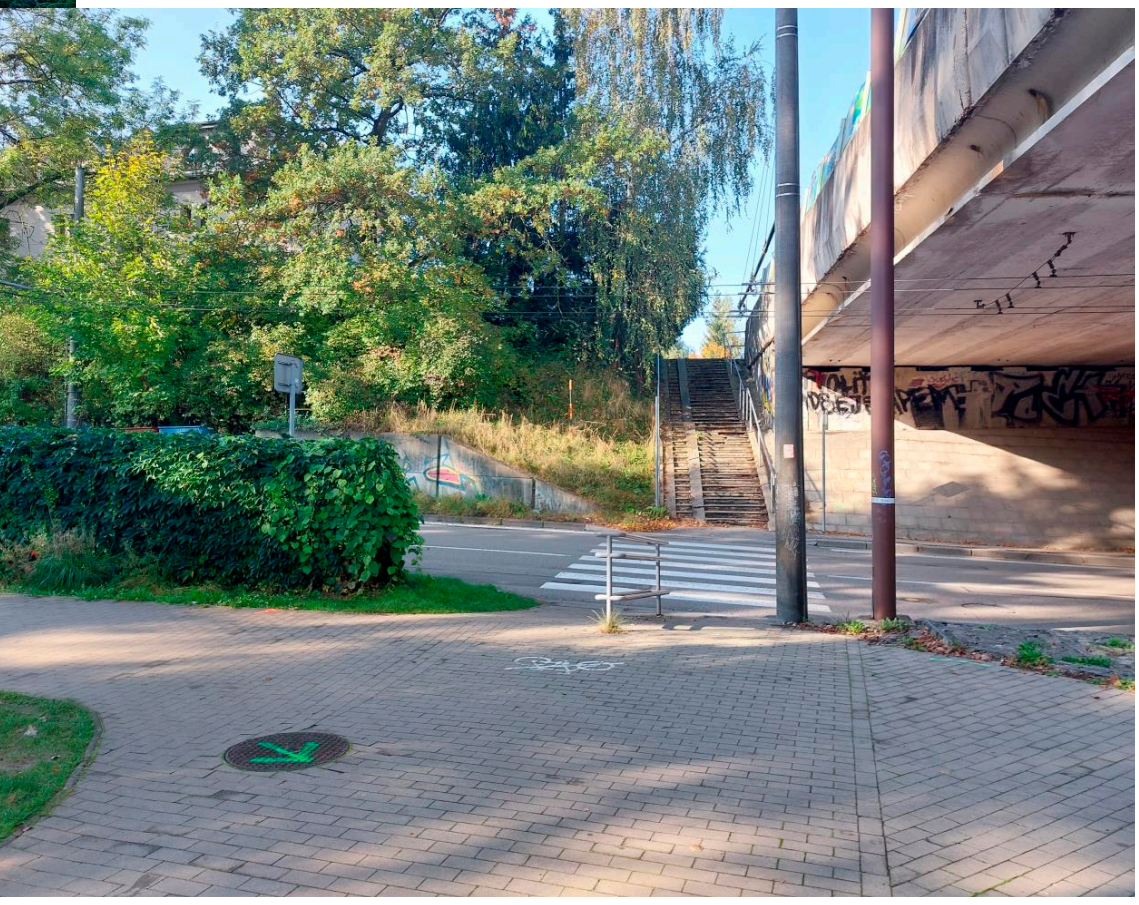

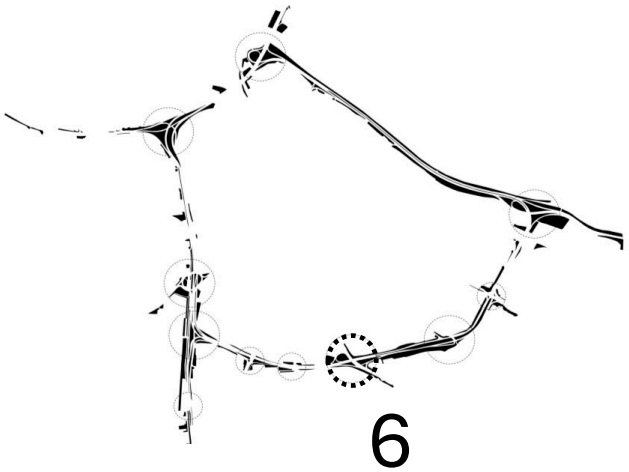

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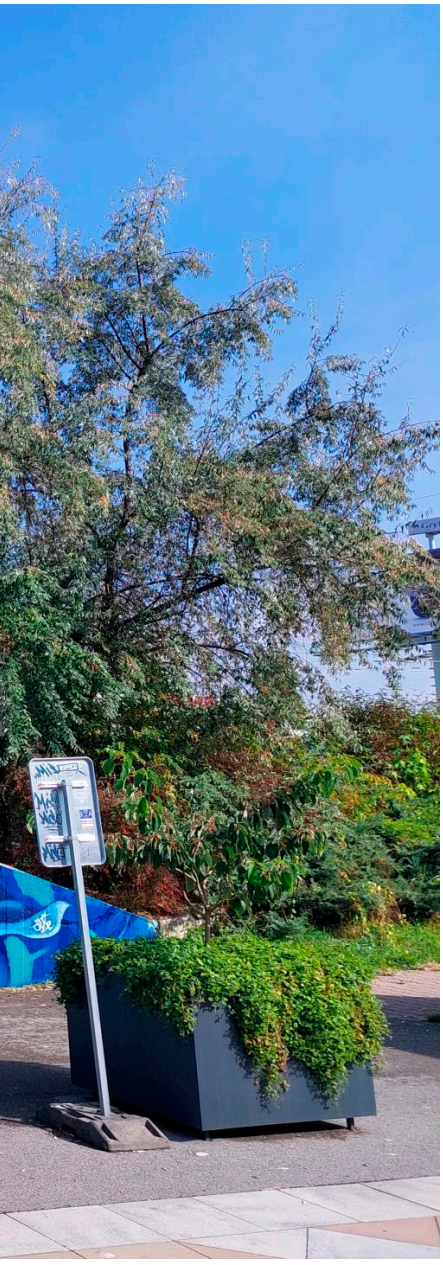

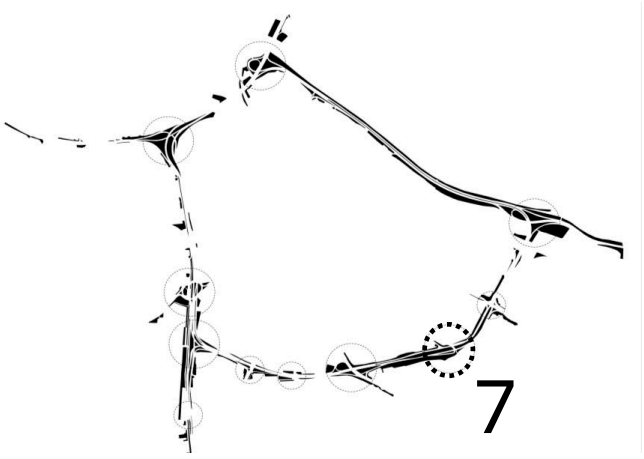
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TESCO
Na Horevaži
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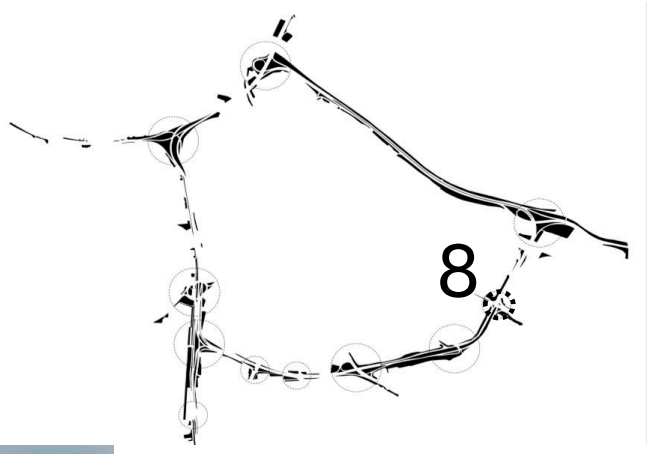
super zoo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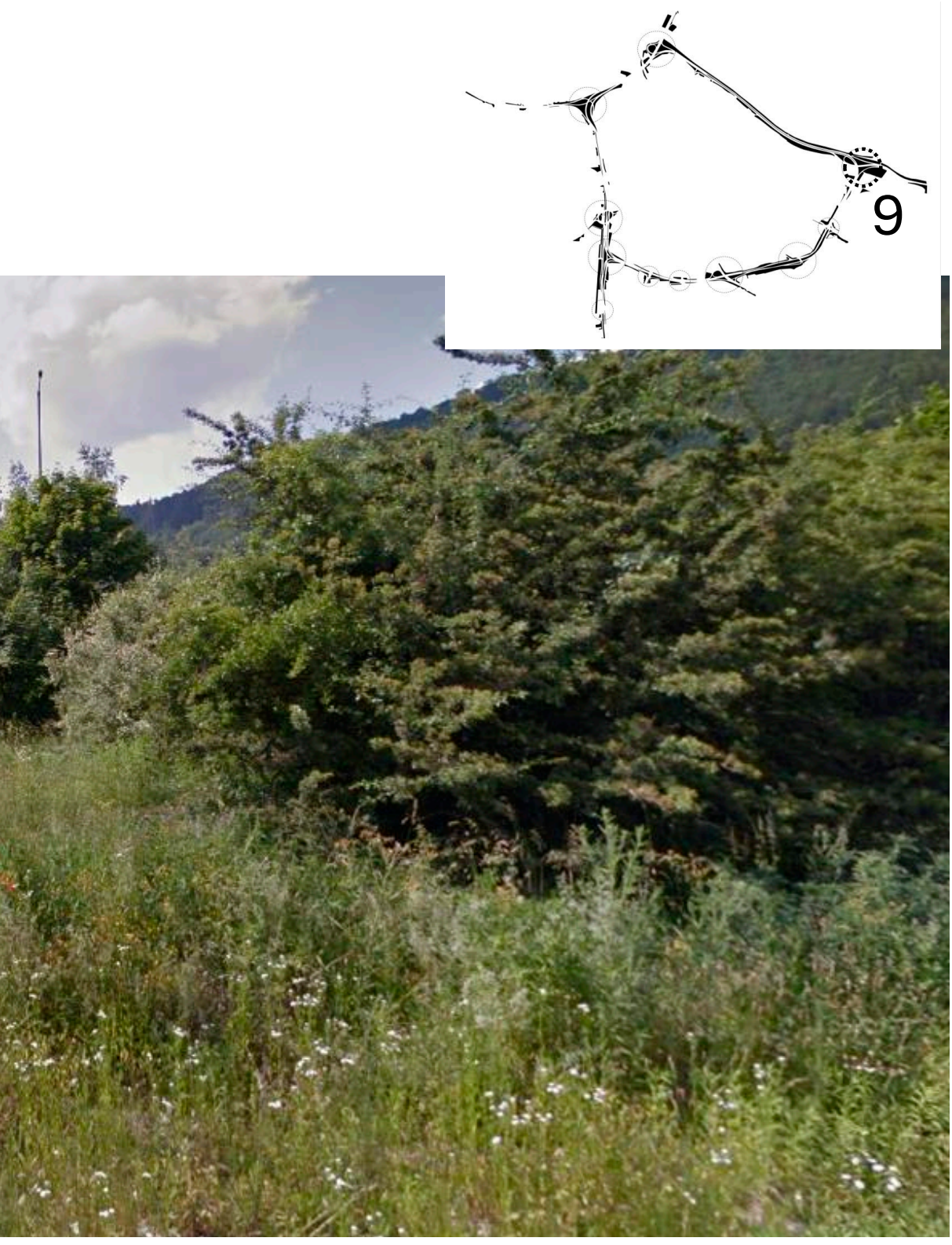
To community (and place)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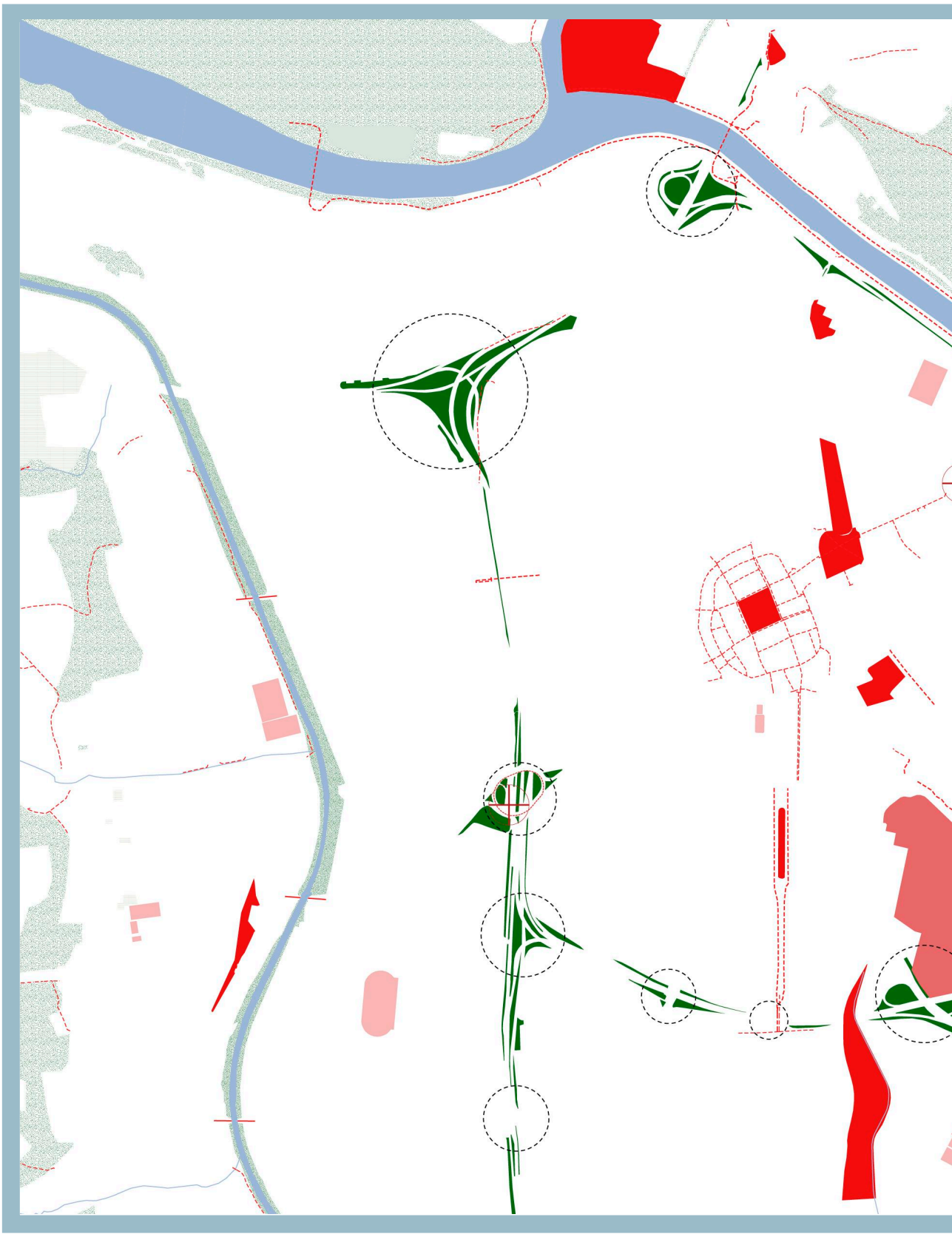
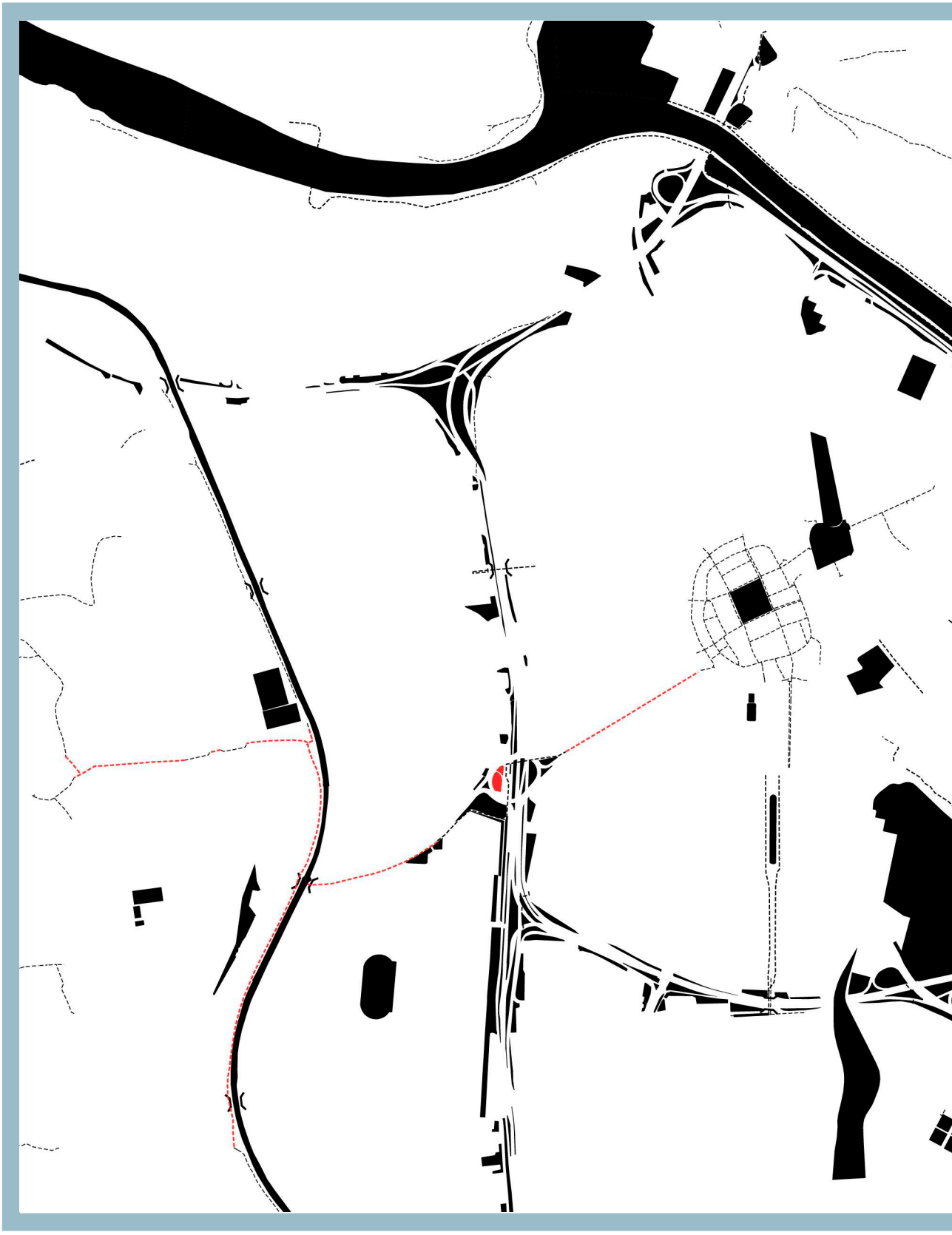




Rebuilding continuities between the City and its “natural parc”

TEH: Building a Cultural Regeneration Project for Europe

ROADMAP & TOOLKIT

Pubblication #3
ROADMAP & TOOLKIT
«(Re)building to Last» Project
WP2

Julie's Bicycle & Université de Liège *(Unité de Recherche en Architecture URA)*

Liège 31.07.2024

#3

Colophon

Publication realised for the «Rebuilding to Last» Project and part of the Research WP2. Members of the team : Chiara Badiali (Julie's Bicycle), Tenaya King (Julie's Bicycle), Prof. Martina Barcelloni Corte (URA, Uliège), Thibault Marghem (URA, ULiège).

THIS TOOLKIT offers a range of reflections, dreams, and exercises to support the visioning and decision-making on how we make tomorrow in our cultural built and unbuilt environments.

PART 1 **WE ARE HERE (WHY ARE WE)?**

Reflection 1 : Why are we?

Reflection 2 : Longer Horizons, or Time, Time, Time

Reflection 3 : New European Bauhaus

PART 2 **READING YOUR SPACE AND YOUR COMMUNITY**

Exercise 1: Read Your Present Space

Exercise 2: Maps and Data

Exercise 3: Experiences

Exercise 4: New Coexistences

PART 3 **HARVEST**

Exercise 1: From endless possibilities to possible beginnings

Exercise 2: Dreaming further

Exercise 3: From the inside to the outside

Exercise 4: Agents of Change

PART 4 **EVOLVING AND MAKING**

Reflection 1: Leaving things unfinished (or Time, Time, Time)

Reflection 2: A Circularity Forecast (or Matter Matters)

Reflection 3: Longevity (or Time, Time, Time Part II)

Reflection 4: New European Bauhaus Compass, Revisited

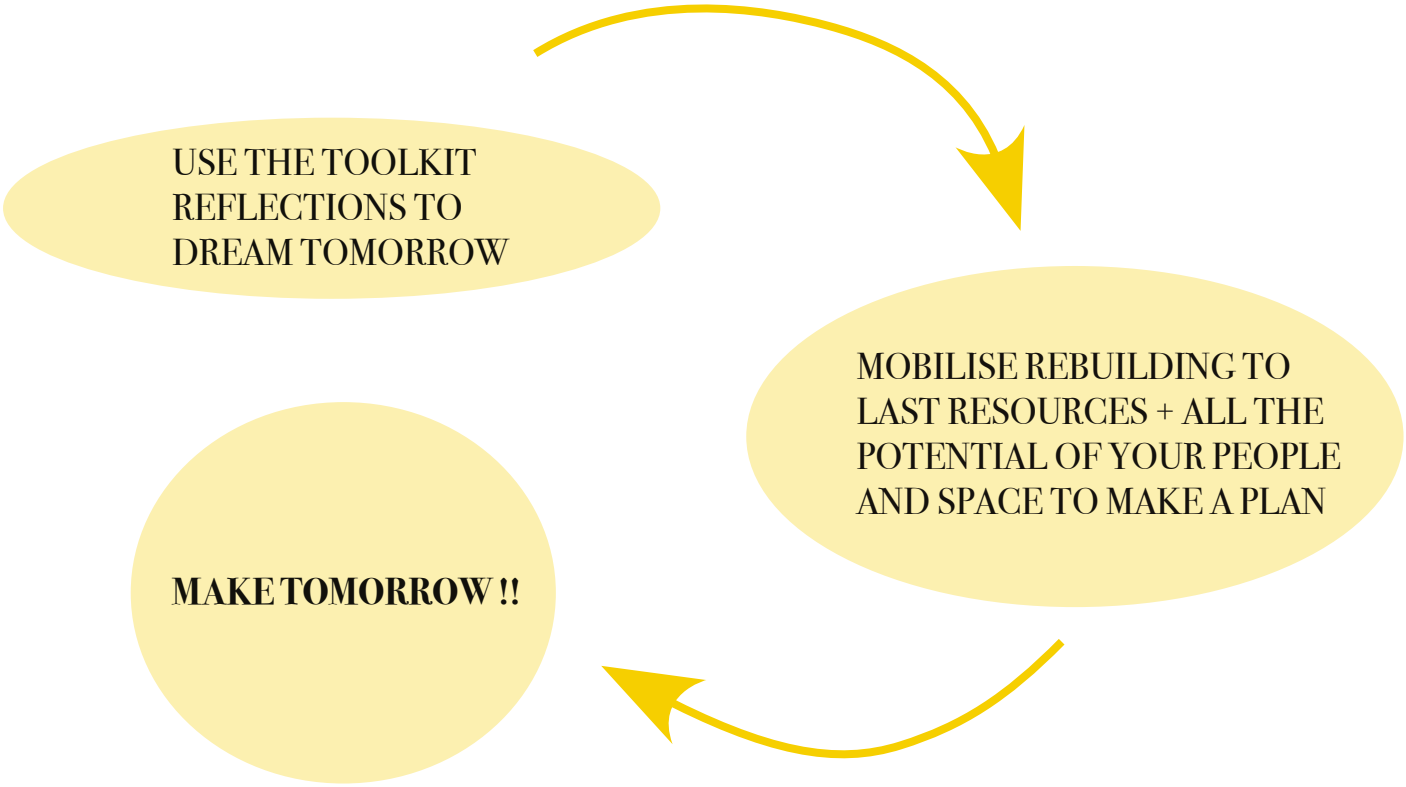
ANNEX **FORCING THE READING**

PART I WE ARE HERE (WHY ARE WE)? is an open-ended reflections and imaginations at the start of a project. These will help you think big, dream your vision, and feel your way into what matters.

PART II READING YOUR SPACE AND YOUR COMMUNITY consists in a series of information-gathering exercises to help you understand and reimagine your space. They will encourage you to see and understand your space through different lenses: from where and when energy is used, to where and why people feel comfortable, and how much (or little) space is shared with the more-than-human.

PART III HARVEST approaches to start planning and prioritising your building project(s), to help you create a roadmap for what can happen now, tomorrow, and in the future and what next steps you need to take. Considering your spheres of influence, and how the physical environment you create can ripple to have an impact beyond your walls, fences, or 'borders': encouraging you to think big(ger) about how your work can support fair climate transitions.

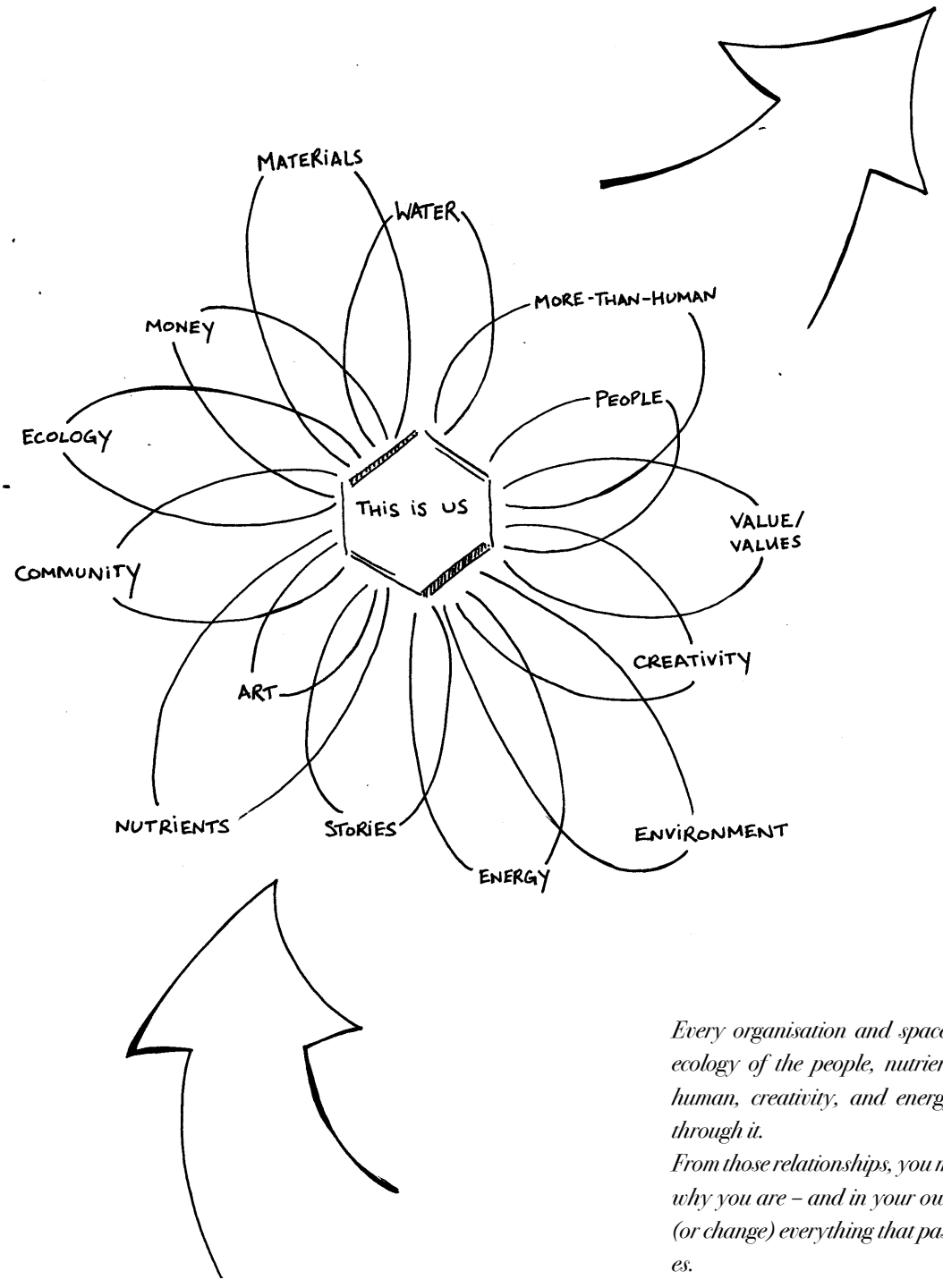
PART IV EVOLVING AND MAKING prompts as you turn your ideas into action to test plans, find opportunities to make additional connections, and find a balance between complexity/uncertainty and the North Star of your vision.


USE THE TOOLKIT
REFLECTIONS TO
DREAM TOMORROW
MOBILISE REBUILDING TO
LAST RESOURCES + ALL THE
POTENTIAL OF YOUR PEOPLE
AND SPACE TO MAKE A PLAN
MAKE TOMORROW !!

PART I
WE ARE HERE (WHY ARE WE)?

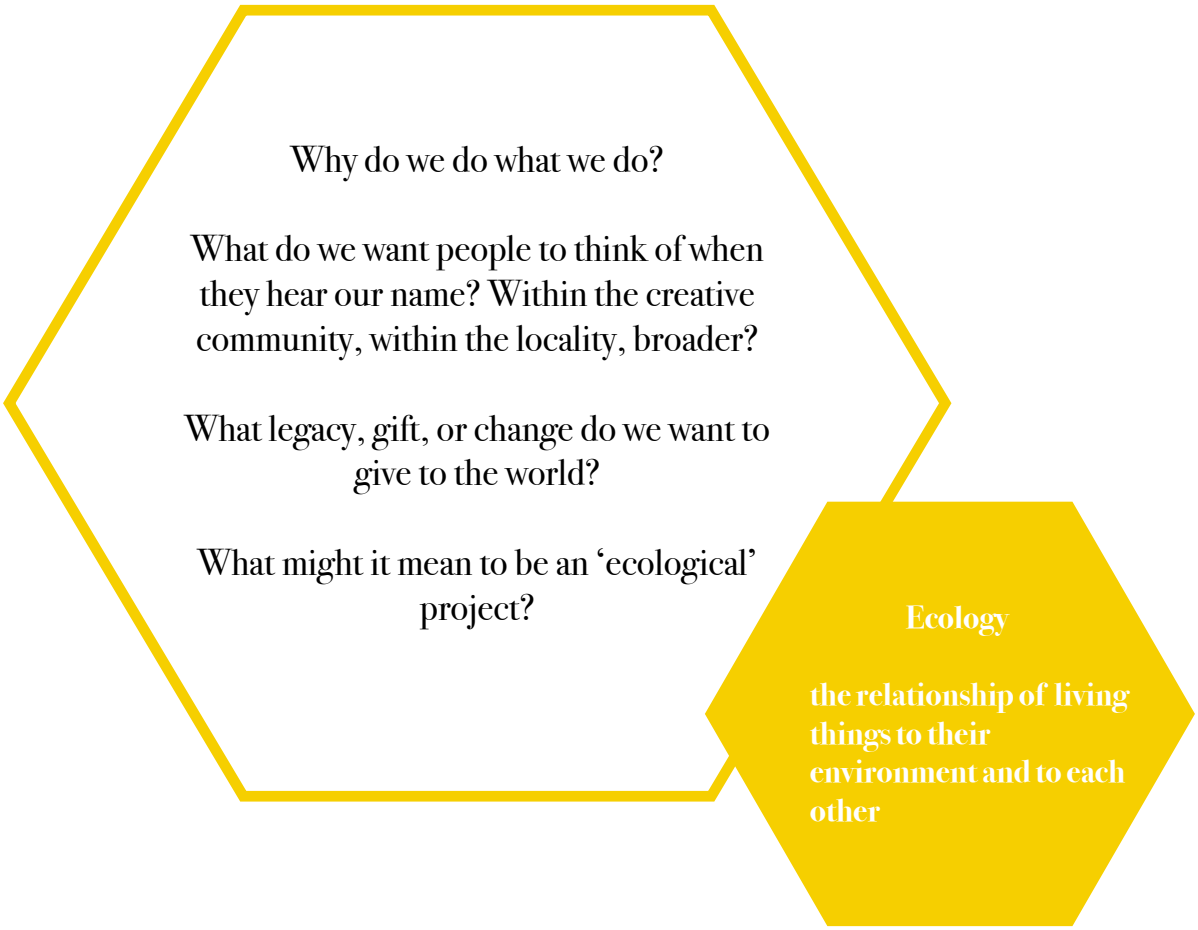
A series of reflections and imaginations for the start of (re)building: (co-) visioning a future..

Come together as a group and reflect on these questions.
This vision can be the foundation of project plans, future relationships, and conversations with internal teams and external partners – government, funders, architects, suppliers.



Every organisation and space exists in a connected ecology of the people, nutrients, stories, more-than-human, creativity, and energy ebbing and flowing through it.
From those relationships, you make what you are, and why you are – and in your own way, you metabolise (or change) everything that passes through your spaces.

REFLECTION 1: WHY ARE WE?



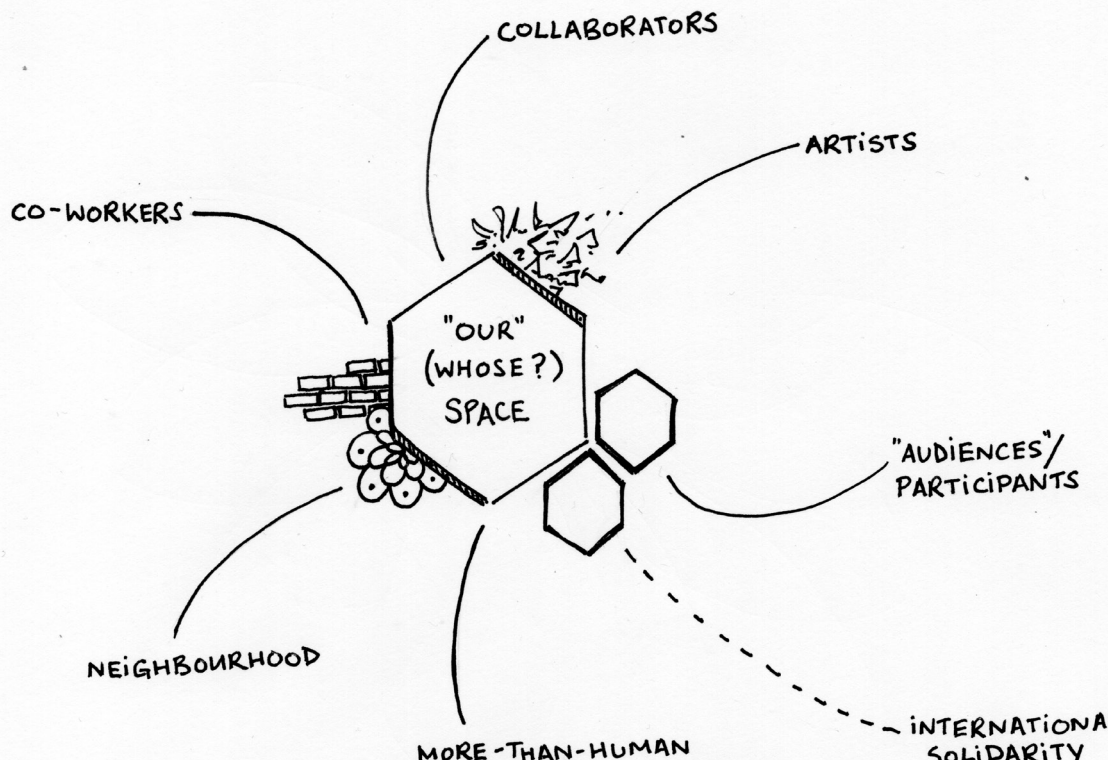
Possible Structure for Reflection 1

- Ask everyone participating to **individually undertake these reflections first**.
- **Come together for sharing**: what are the strongest commonalities? These are things to prioritise in project plans, to share with any partners or suppliers coming on board to make sure they share your vision, and come back to if you ever feel like you're starting to lose the 'why'.
- **Turn the questions upside down**: what is currently standing in our way? For example, why are we not currently an ecological project?

This is early in the process, so it's possible that no concrete project ideas emerge yet, but in case they do, keep a record of any specific project ideas, and if there is anyone on the team with the energy, skills, or interest to lead on them.

REFLECTION 2: LONGER HORIZONS (OR TIME, TIME, TIME..)

What might people need* or dream of from a cultural venue or space in **2030**?

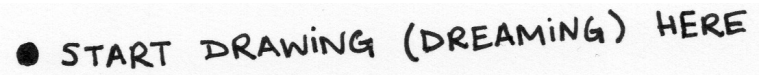


What might people need* or dream of from a cultural venue or space in **2050**?

*** A brief reflection on 'needs':**
Can needs overshadow and box in our dreams? Much of the debate about climate, nature, justice is also about where we draw this line from 'need' to 'want', what is luxury and what is necessity, and how we shape a more equitable world that meets the rights of human and more-than-human within planetary boundaries. In that sense, it might be useful to think of 'needs' in the context of those 'rights': freedom from discrimination, freedom of belief and expression of sentiments and ideas, access to education, health and well-being, food and nutrition, clothing, housing, medical care, participation in cultural life, clean air and water, healthy environment, etc. And how do we recognise, protect and support the rights of the more-than-human? As the world shifts, can we dream of spaces that support those rights in the places where we are? And can our dreams shift our perception of our 'needs' – and if so, in what directions?

*** A brief reflection on 'workers':**
'Workers' immediately brings to mind power relationships of employer and employed. Many of the members and stories from the Trans Europe Halles network are actively exploring alternative models of governance, collaboration, and cooperation – a future without workers but full of people that do things. At the same time, we have chosen to keep the word 'co-workers', acknowledging that many cultural centres do remain 'employers' and a solidarity with movements of workers' rights and labour justice is also a key part of climate justice.

What might a cultural venue or space in Europe working towards climate, justice, and nature transformations look like in 2030?



Possible Structure for Reflection 2:

- Opening : Ask people to prepare using the 'Forcing the Reading' Exercises (Annex). Depending on time, team size, an d skills or responsibilities, it may make sense for different people to lead on preparing and reading different background documents and bringing a summary to the workshop for Reflection 2.
- Closing : highlight anything you feel is already in place, and anything you feel your organisation or space could be very good at supporting. Think through:
    - *Your built space*
    - *Your 'unbuilt' space*
    - *Your neighbouring spaces*
    - *Your communities and neighbours*
- Do the reflections as a group. Are there any relationships missing?
- Keep a record of any specific project ideas, and if there is anyone on the team with the energy, skills, or interest to lead on them (or who should be involved).

REFLECTION 3: NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS COMPASS

The New European Bauhaus Compass is a guiding framework for designers, dreamers, project makers that you can use as a tool to shape your own ambition.

Created as an interdisciplinary initiative to support the European Green Deal, it offers a set of values (Together, Sustainable, Beautiful) supported by working principles (Participatory process, Transdisciplinary approach, Multi-level engagement) and descriptions of three levels of ambition for each.

This reflection can also be done again when project plans are more advanced, to identify where they are stronger, and where they are less strong – and whether there are any additional opportunities or changes to explore.

Possible Structure for Reflection 3:

- Ask everyone to read the New European Bauhaus Compass Values and Working Principles criteria and identify where your current space and working culture meets levels 1, 2, 3:

  USE THE COMPASS

- Share as a group:

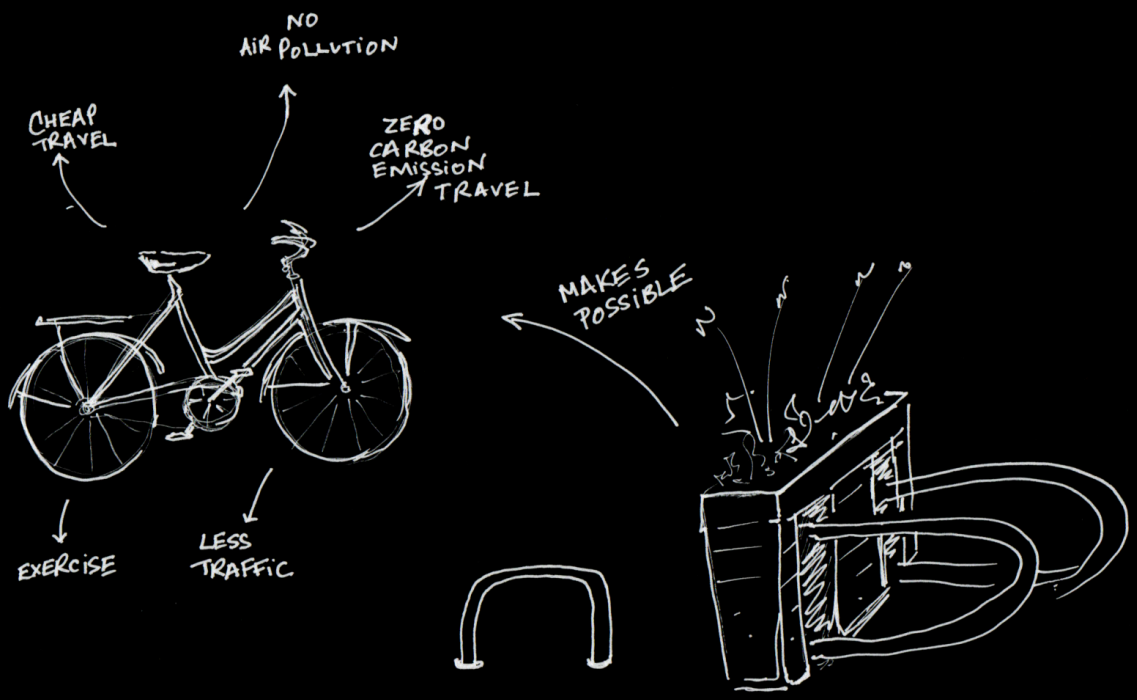
  Where are you currently strongest?

  Where are you currently less developed?

  How do they map across to the values and vision from Reflection 1?

- Based on this, what would be specific priorities for a building or rebuilding project, and what are some initial ideas on building these in?

- Keep a record of any specific project ideas, and if there is anyone on the team with the energy, skills, relationships or interest to lead on them (or who should be involved).


NO
AIR POLLUTION
CHEAP
TRAVEL
ZERO
CARBON
EMISSION
TRAVEL
MAKES
POSSIBLE
EXERCISE
LESS
TRAFFIC

Bike Stand

PART II
READING YOUR SPACE AND YOUR COMMUNITY

A series of information-gathering exercises to help you understand your space, and plan and prioritise your building project(s). To do as individuals, teams, organisations, communities.

What are seeds of a vision you want to create?

What feels harmful or at odds with your vision?

EXERCISE 1: READ YOUR PRESENT SPACE

A - Walk through your **existing space**. Include both your building and any open space / the inside and the outside..

What kind of **materials** is your space made from?
Are they local or traditional building materials? How are they changing the feel of the space (e.g. by absorbing heat, insulating from outside temperatures, or creating shade)?
Is there anything that feels immediately **wasteful or challenging**? This might be little things, like doors being left open for heated or cooled air to escape, or it might be big things, like too much concrete outside the building capturing and radiating heat.

What do you hear?
What do you see?
What do you smell?
What do you feel?
Who is here, and where and how are they using the space?

Are there any **spaces** that feel un-used or under-used, and are there any spaces that feel (too) busy?
How do different parts of the space connect to each other (and where do they feel separate)?
Does it feel comfortable?
Are there any places you feel uncomfortable, and why? Are these places that are regularly in use?
Where can you find **beauty** in the space? What feels in conflict with 'beauty'?

Do this at a few different times of day and when a few different kinds of event are running: not every moment is the same.

B - Walk through **your neighbourhood..**

What do you hear?
What do you see?
What do you smell?
What do you feel?
What are the connections between your space and the neighbourhood?

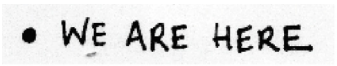
Do this at a few different times of day and when a few different kinds of event are running: not every moment is the same.

New Coexistences..

Repeat the above, but do it through the eyes of animals or plants.

EXERCISE 2: MAPS AND DATA

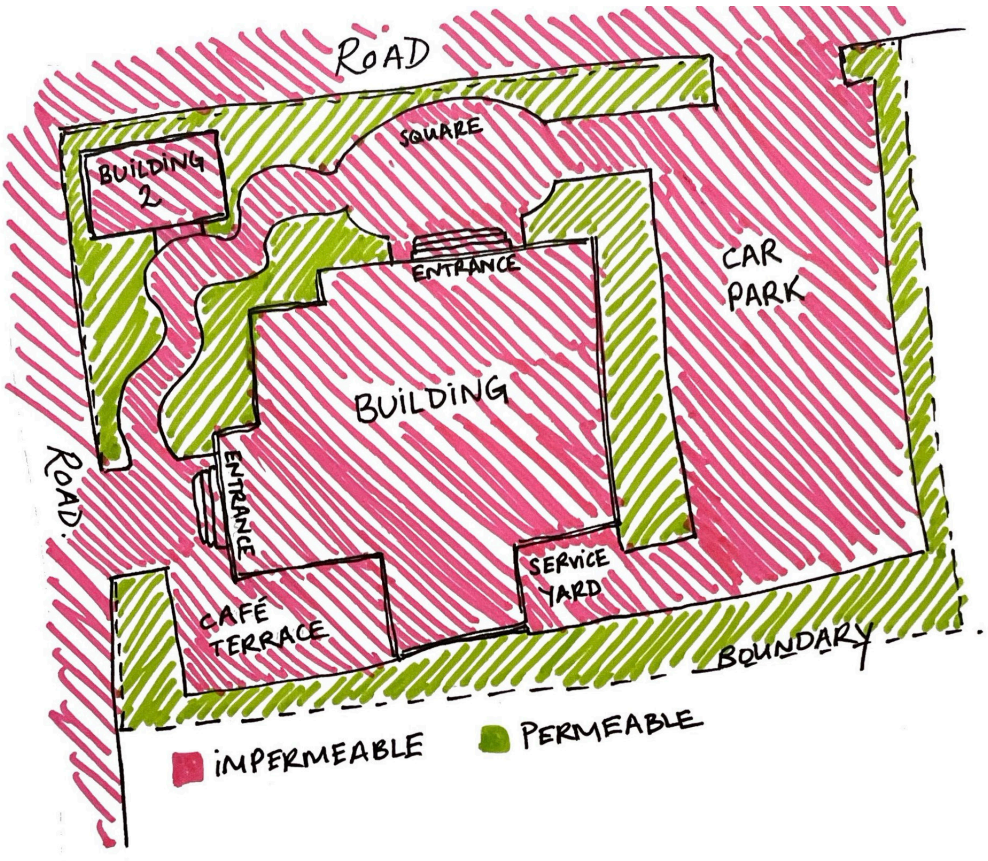
Map Your Space..



- Map the **shade and sunshine** of your spaces (interior and/or exterior) at a few different times of the day, for example: morning, high noon, sunset. If you have a longer planning period, also do this in different seasons. This is most easily done if you have an existing map of your space, but can also be sketched by hand.

- Do an **ecological survey**, either yourself or with the help of an ecologist. What other beings do you share your space with, and what species are present in your area? What do they need and what might they dream of?

- Use a floorplan for your venue or space to map out where **public spaces** are, and where areas are that are only open 'behind the scenes' / back of house. When are they in use, and when are they closed? It's especially important to understand this between day and night for venues and spaces that might host lots of different groups.



- Map the '**permeability**' of your ground: where and how can water drain or plants grow, and where is there hard covering or flooring (probably human-made)?

- Map your **human and more-than-human spaces**: where are there plants, other living species, soil, water, and other habitats? How do they interact? Which parts of your space are primarily designed for humans? When? Are there any spaces that are primarily given over to the more-than-human?

- For buildings, borrow a **thermal imaging** camera (or commission someone to come and do a survey) to understand where your space is leaking heat or cool. Thermal imaging cameras detect heat and turn it into a visual image. In some areas, these may be available through local authorities or community energy groups, in other areas, they may be tools held by energy auditors or others offering this as a service.

Add Data..

- For buildings, commission an **energy audit** if possible: what are the options for 1) improving efficiency through insulation, replacement of technologies, etc. and 2) replacing high-carbon technologies (e.g. gas heating) with lower carbon technologies (such as air source, ground source, or water source heat pumps)? If you are unable to commission an energy audit, there are plenty of resources available to support doing DIY surveys – see the **Theatre Greenbook** and **Julie's Bicycle Transforming Energy**, or look at any local net zero business networks or services offered through your municipality that might offer free support.

- Do a **survey** of your visitors, workers, partners, others regularly using the space: how are they travelling to you, and what are the barriers for them to use other forms of travel (e.g. walking, cycling, public transport)?

- Use your energy bills, water bills, and materials procurement and waste collection volumes to build a picture of your current **consumption**. Use a carbon calculator to convert this into greenhouse gas emissions. What are your most significant areas of impact?

Useful: Theatre Greenbook: Sustainable Buildings
Offers a 'home survey' tool to recommend possible technologies and investments

Useful: Julie's Bicycle – Transforming Energy
Offers free resources on energy management, including templates for undertaking a self-audit and night-time audit on energy use, and an equipment asset worksheet

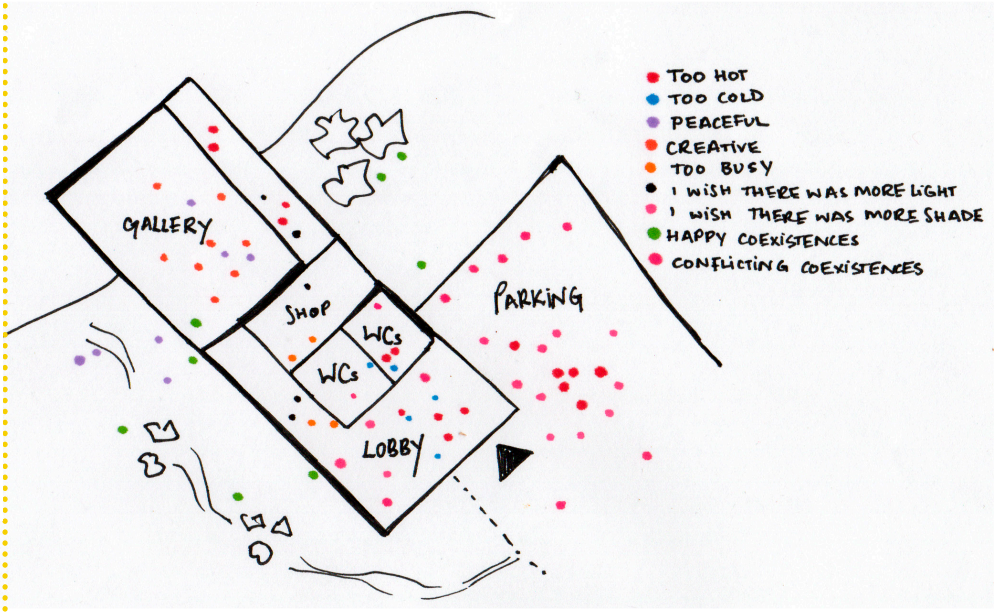
EXERCISE 3: EXPERIENCES

Speak to people working in, living around, and using the space. Try to speak to people who work in your space, artists, visitors, partners..

- We are setting out on an ecological project to change our space. What immediately comes to mind as things to address?
- How do you think our values and what our organisation means to you are expressed physically in our current space?
- What feels at odds in our current space, and the way we (can) use it?
- Where do you feel comfortable?
- Is there anywhere you feel uncomfortable (and what would make that better)?

Additional Possibilities for Exercise 3

- *Shared pinboard or magnet board for people to pin words and dreams*
- *Map of your site with different coloured stickers/dots, e.g. red for too hot, blue for too cold, yellow for too busy, purple for peaceful, orange for creative, black for 'I wish there was shade here', white for 'I wish there was more light here' , green for 'happy coexistences', brown for 'conflicting or unhappy coexistences'*



EXERCISE 4: NEW COEXISTENCES

This is a **creative exercise** that can be done to support all the others.

- In your team, send everyone to **explore your site.**
- Everyone's task is to identify a **more-than-human being** sharing your spaces and quietly sit and observe it for some time. Tree, flower, moss, lichen, mammal, bird, amphibian, microbe, or it might be a river: whatever catches your attention.
- Create a **sketch** (or poem, or other creative reflection) and bring it back to the group.

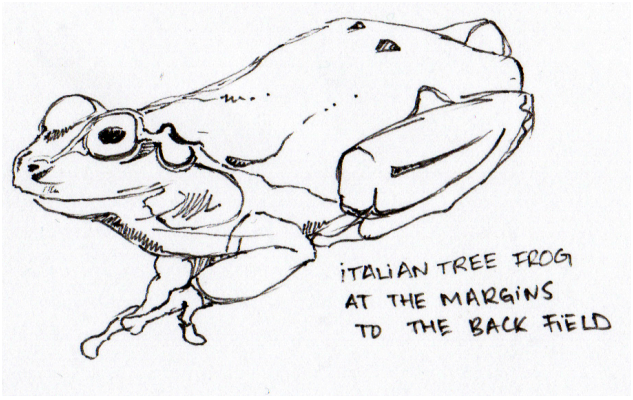
- *What is the variety you found? Where?*
- *What is giving these beings a home, and how could you help them thrive even more?*
- *How might you create more space for them?*

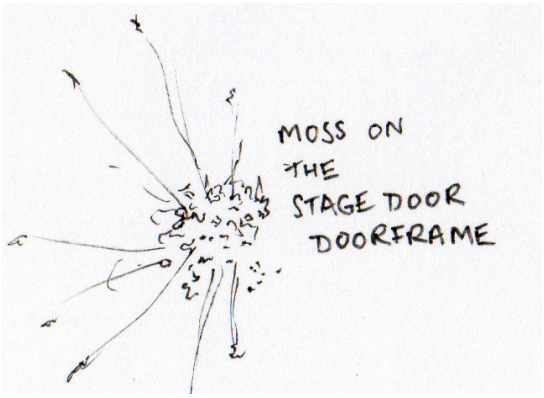
The more-than-human being becomes a companion for the person who sat with it. They are now responsible for carrying this voice into project planning meetings, and occasionally 'checking in'. (Be aware of what you cannot see: many of our fellow travellers are hiding, or only come out in the dark – this is where an ecologist can help).

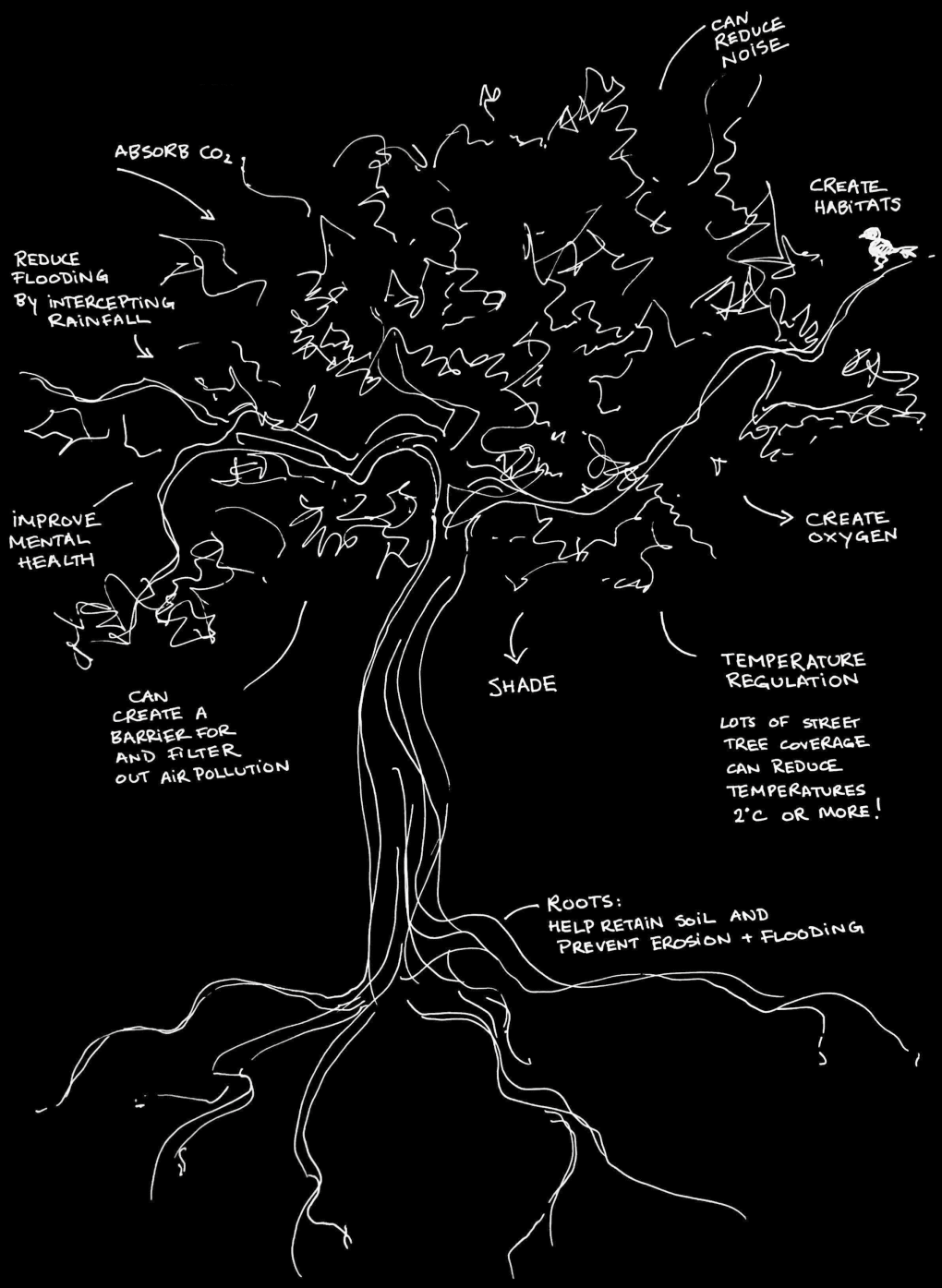
How do we create new coexistences?

As you make your way through today and step back into your work tomorrow, carry the voice of this fellow traveller on Earth with you.

My fellow traveller:






CAN REDUCE NOISE
ABSORB CO_2
CREATE HABITATS
REDUCE FLOODING BY INTERCEPTING RAINFALL
IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH
CREATE OXYGEN
SHADE
TEMPERATURE REGULATION
LOTS OF STREET TREE COVERAGE CAN REDUCE TEMPERATURES 2°C OR MORE!
CAN CREATE A BARRIER FOR AND FILTER OUT AIR POLLUTION
ROOTS: HELP RETAIN SOIL AND PREVENT EROSION + FLOODING

Tree

PART III
HARVEST

A series of exercises to help you revisit everything you've harvested in the previous reflections and start to select priorities.

EXERCISE 1: FROM ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES TO POSSIBLE BEGINNINGS

Use the Possibilities Cards..

Remove Concrete/Asphalt and Paved Areas

New Coexistences

Climate Risk - Flooding

Climate Risk - Overheating

Breaking up and removing concrete, paved areas, and any other kind of 'impermeable' ground cover reduces the risk of flooding by allowing water to drain into the ground. It additionally helps combat the 'urban heat island effect' (where heat is absorbed and radiated back out, leading to overheating in cities), and supports new coexistences by allowing soil to breathe and other things to grow. It's especially important in urban areas. If possible, try and find a new landscaping use for the waste rubble, for example in **Gabion Walls or Cages**.

Built - Large: * * * Unbuilt - Large: * * *

Cost & Complexity: Low

Green Roofs

Mitigation - Energy

Climate Risk - Flooding

New Coexistences

Climate Risk - Overheating

Green roofs involve adding a layer of growing medium to roofs, to plant climate-appropriate and low-maintenance plants, e.g. sedum, moss, perennials, wildflowers, grasses (and in some cases shrubs). Generally, they are only suitable for flat or low-angle roofs, and a structural engineer may need to check the roof can support the additional weight. Green roofs are particularly impactful for buildings in urban environments to help combat the heat island effect and create habitats for the more-than-human (and the potential to create a green oasis for humans, too). The co-benefits include acoustic insulation, temperature insulation, CO_2 absorption, and reducing problems with water run-off. This initiative can be combined with **solar panels** and basic **rainwater harvesting** to support irrigation.

Built - Large: * *(*) Unbuilt - Large:

Cost & Complexity: High

Print: *Rebuilding to Last* Possibilities Cards (Annex 2)

How to read the cards:

- Each card contains a title and a related short description of an **action/strategy**.

- Symbols at the top show the strategy's related **challenge/s** :

- **Mitigation – Energy:** reducing the carbon emissions from energy use, and supporting an energy efficient, renewable, and more democratic energy future
- **Mitigation – Mobility:** reducing the carbon emissions from mobility, and supporting active travel and public transport use
- **Circular Economy / Matter Matters:** reducing our unsustainable use of resources and contributing to a future where materials are reused and regenerated
- **New Coexistences:** creating a healthier relationship with our more-than-human neighbours and contributing to the regeneration of social and ecological systems
- **Climate Risk – Drought:** interventions to consider if you are in an area where drought is a high present or future climate risk
- **Climate Risk – Flooding:** interventions to consider if you are in an area where flooding (either surface, fluvial/river, or coastal) is a high present or future climate risk
- **Climate Risk – Overheating:** interventions to consider if you are in an area where overheating is a high present or future climate risk

- Strategy's **sites for action** are categorised as:

- **Built – Large:** for larger buildings with a floor area over 2000 m2
- **Built – Small:** for smaller buildings with a floor area under 2000 m2
- **Unbuilt – Large:** for large unbuilt / open outdoor spaces and environments
- **Unbuilt – Small:** for small unbuilt outdoor spaces and environments

Each strategy is then described by an **estimated impact** rating from zero stars (not applicable) to three stars (very important or impactful) to help prioritise actions for your site.

- Finally, an estimate of the **cost and complexity** of the strategy, from low to high.

Individual circumstances will vary, but the above should provide a starting point for reflection and discussion both in your teams and with any external funders, contractors, or partners.

How to use the cards:

Use the cards in two Stages, in Stage One, these cards can be used in two ways:

- The open-ended approach (V1) if you have no particular starting point or 'idea', and want to explore all your options
- The targeted approach (V2) if you already have a dream, priority or need and want to promote deeper conversations in this area

Identify which approach your group would like to take and play...

Stage 1 Reflection V1 – Open-Ended

Divide up the cards evenly among pairs or smaller groups (depending on the number of people). Within those pairs/groups, read the cards and pick any that 1) seem particularly important (and possible) based on the characteristics of your site or building and the priorities for climate action and adaptation you identified in other reflections, and 2) that feel exciting as part of the vision and values you dreamt together and with others during other reflections. Put any cards that seem irrelevant or not applicable to the side. Keep any you are unsure about, so you can bring them back to the larger group. Take turns to present the cards back to the whole group to open a discussion. In rounds, try to narrow down to two to five **important** cards and two to five **exciting** cards (any method might fall into both of these categories!).

Other questions you might ask:

- *Why is this being prioritised over other cards?*
- *How will it make impact and who will it impact the most?*
- *Are you just listening to the loudest voices in the room (would a different group of people – or your more-than-human companions – look at this differently)?*

You now have a plan of what to take forward.

Stage 1 Reflection V2 – Targeted

Maybe you have already identified a priority, need, or dream: a local climate risk that seems particularly pressing, something everyone has said is important (or needs fixing), or a dream that you want to follow – for example, around new coexistences, or playing an active role in a future renewable energy democracy.

Instead of starting off with all the cards, just select the ones that link to your priority, need, or dream and use those to start a conversation. What else might you dream with them?

Other questions you might ask:

- *Why is this being prioritised over other cards?*
- *How will it make impact and who will it impact the most?*
- *Are you just listening to the loudest voices in the room (would a different group of people – or your more-than-human companions – look at this differently)?*

Stage 2 Reflection – 'From low-hanging fruit to larger projects'

Organise the cards you've identified as most important and exciting (or the cards linking to your priority, need, or dream) in the following order:

1. What feels possible to achieve immediately, with the resources, time, and skills you already have?
2. What might take additional time and resources, but – with collective agreement and relevant permission from budget holders (if necessary) – feels possible in the short term? This might include things that can be built into your creative or learning programmes as artistic projects, or capital projects that can be done in stages.
3. What requires a significant amount of additional fundraising, technical expertise, and additional resource in a way that will need to be written into 2, 5, or 10-year plans? This might include significant capital projects that are necessary in the longer term to reach a near-zero-carbon world, such as replacing boilers/fossil-fuelled heating for larger sites.

For each card in each category, write out three next steps (and who will take them forward).

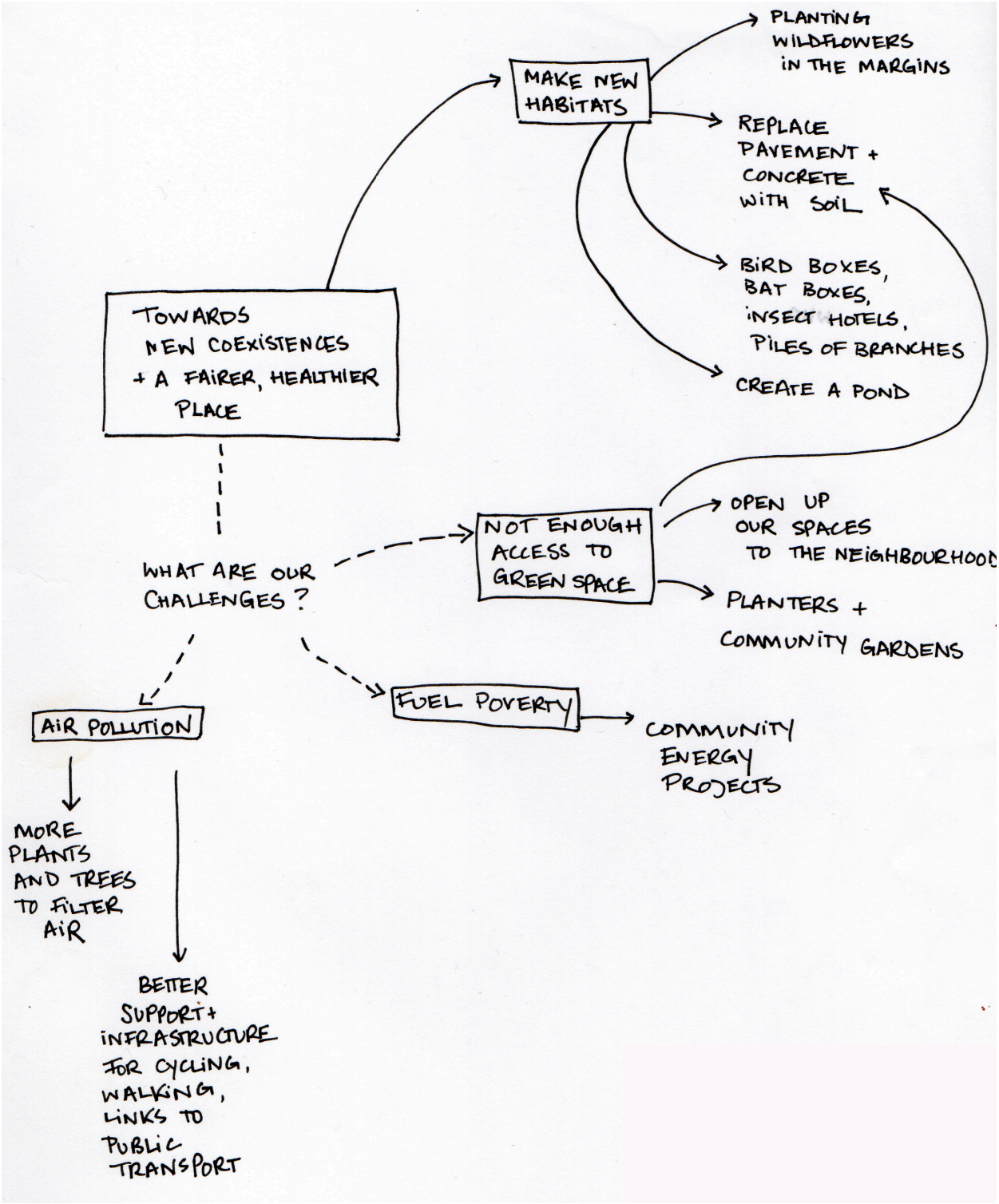
EXERCISE 2: DREAMING FURTHER

Look back and think about the **needs and dreams** in your neighbourhood.

How might your project contribute to a fairer, greener, healthier place?

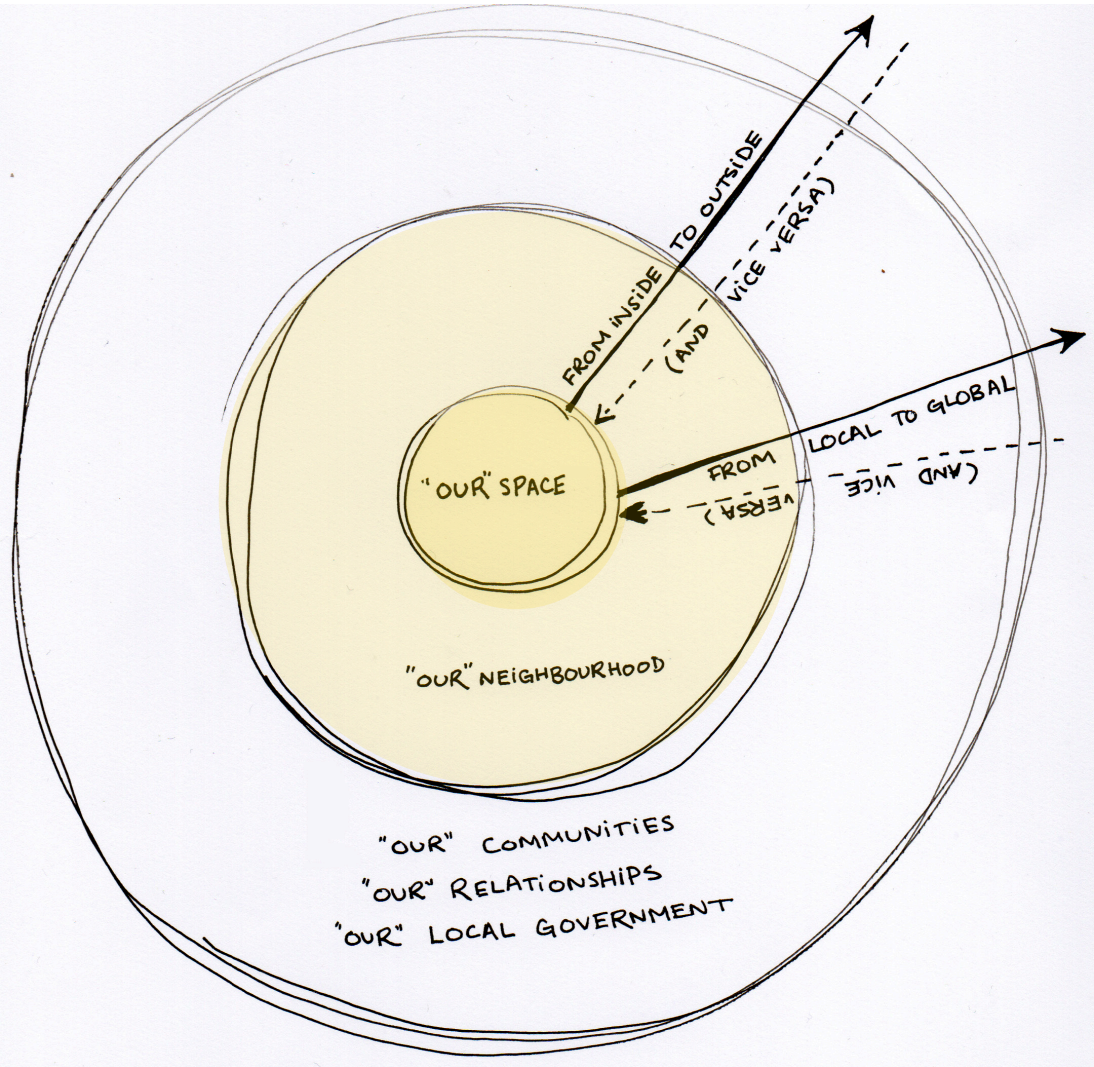
Map out your possible connections, and see if you find any **new ones**.

If you've done Exercise 1, look back at what you've identified as important and exciting: does it reflect the needs and dreams from Part I? **Is anything missing?**



EXERCISE 3: FROM THE INSIDE TO THE OUTSIDE

Considering your spheres of influence, and how the physical environment you create can ripple to have an **impact beyond your walls, fences, or 'borders'** and into the imagination, culture, and dreams of everyone who passes through your space.
And vice versa: how the possibilities of the neighbourhood might change your space and its possibilities.



For each of your chosen interventions and areas of priority, **map them from the 'inside' to the 'outside'** – from your space, to the people and more-than-human who will come through that space, to the systems and relationships you locate yourself in: what are the opportunities to think more generously, more connected?
How might you start linking to local to ever-larger spheres?

The following are some examples: *see how far and ambitiously you can push your imagination.*

From inside ——— **...to outside**

ENERGY

Energy efficiency retrofits: changing lighting, building fabric and insulation, etc. Generate renewable energy on site	Link with local community energy groups and let them use your space to install community-owneda renewable energy, or offer workshops on energy efficiency or installing solar PV	Use your project to change or challenge legislation, e.g. restrictions on solar panels on heritage buildings
Future-proof your space for changes in climate, for example, more ventilation or shading, adapted building materials suitable for hotter climates, more flexible uses of outdoor or indoor space in response to temperature extremes	Create spaces of refuge during more extreme weather e.g. how to become a 'heating' or 'cooling' community hub	Link with local government adaptation groups and extreme weather emergency response frameworks Explore creative responses to climate resilience and how cultural skills can support adaptation and 'rehearsing the future'

MOBILITY

Provide on-site facilities for locking up bicycles (ensure they are accessible for different kinds of cyclists) Install electric vehicle charging points on site Install signage that clearly shows nearby walking or cycling routes	Create space as part of bicycle lock-ups to host community workshops on bike maintenance Map local public transport connections and safer cycleways (and promote these on your website and as part of marketing) Map nearby EV charging stations and communicate these to visitors	Work locally to improve street lighting, or lobby for better cycleways or public transport Set up partnerships with local public transport companies to offer free or discounted travel

BIODIVERSITY

Create space on-site for planting of trees and plants

Create a community garden

Create, protect, maintain habitats for your more-than-human cohabitants across your site

Break up asphalt wherever you can

Work with ecology to improve the resilience of your neighbourhood to a changing climate (e.g. trees and soil to reduce the urban heat island effect, swales and other sustainable urban drainage to combat flooding)

Open up your green spaces to the neighbourhood and create opportunities for them to learn and be involved

Explore creating local circular systems, e.g. composting on site to use in your own space or offer to neighbours

Understand how your site fits into local and regional biodiversity strategies

Advocate for better access to green space in urban communities

Change governance models to give nature a seat at your board or decision-making table and share the experience with others.

MATERIALS

Create storage and/or workshop space on site to make more circular models of production and construction possible.

Choose construction materials that work with your environment (look to traditional building methods for inspiration).

Host makerspaces, repair cafes, and workshops to help your community and neighbourhood have hands-on involvement with a more circular economy.

Create partnerships and local reuse networks with other organisations in your neighbourhood for commonly used materials and equipment, or think ‘out of the box’ for how other forms of material and infrastructure might be repurposed.

Use your project to demonstrate and experiment with more sustainable building materials and approaches, invite local government, schools and vocational education centres to see them in action, partner with Universities to research and test.

EXERCISE 4: AGENTS OF CHANGE

Reflect on..

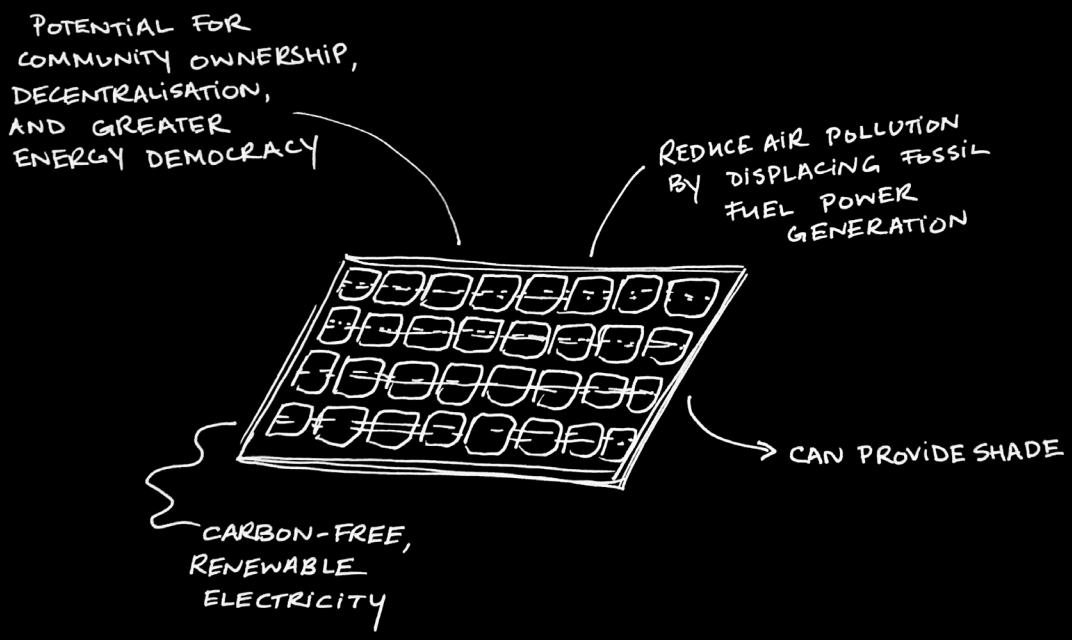
What **seeds of future dreams** do you have that can be nurtured and crafted from?

What are your **human, more-than-human, and non-human building blocks** from which you will make tomorrow?

This could be anything:
skills among your team or community,
built and unbuilt areas,
green or outdoor space,
thriving more-than-human neighbours ready for collaboration,
access to financial resources,
strong community ties or a strong relationship with your local government, etc.

It might be helpful to do this exercise for each of the important and exciting projects you've identified as part of Exercise 1 in this section. You can even combine the exercises, or do this one first: starting from your existing seeds of potential might change what feels exciting or important.

What or who is missing to bring our dreams one step closer to reality?


POTENTIAL FOR COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP, DECENTRALISATION, AND GREATER ENERGY DEMOCRACY
REDUCE AIR POLLUTION BY DISPLACING FOSSIL FUEL POWER GENERATION
CAN PROVIDE SHADE
CARBON-FREE, RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY

Solar Panel

PART IV
EVOLVING AND MAKING

Prompts to (re)visit as you turn your ideas into action to test plans, find opportunities to make additional connections, and find a balance between complexity/uncertainty and the North Star of your vision.

REFLECTION 1: LEAVING THINGS UNFINISHED (OR TIME, TIME, TIME)

Do you need to create a 'masterplan' for your site from the start, or can you develop and evolve in phases?
Is it possible to leave certain areas 'unfinished' and keep them open to possibilities?

Revisiting your priorities from the Harvest Exercise 1, map out possible 'phases'.

For example..

Start with :
'things we can do today with the skills, time, materials and budget we already have':
(Don't be tempted to exclude the big things entirely just because they seem impossible today.)

Work up to :
'things we need to make happen tomorrow (or the day after) even if it might take us several years to fundraise for them'.
(This might include big shifts, like removing all fossil fuel use from your site entirely.)

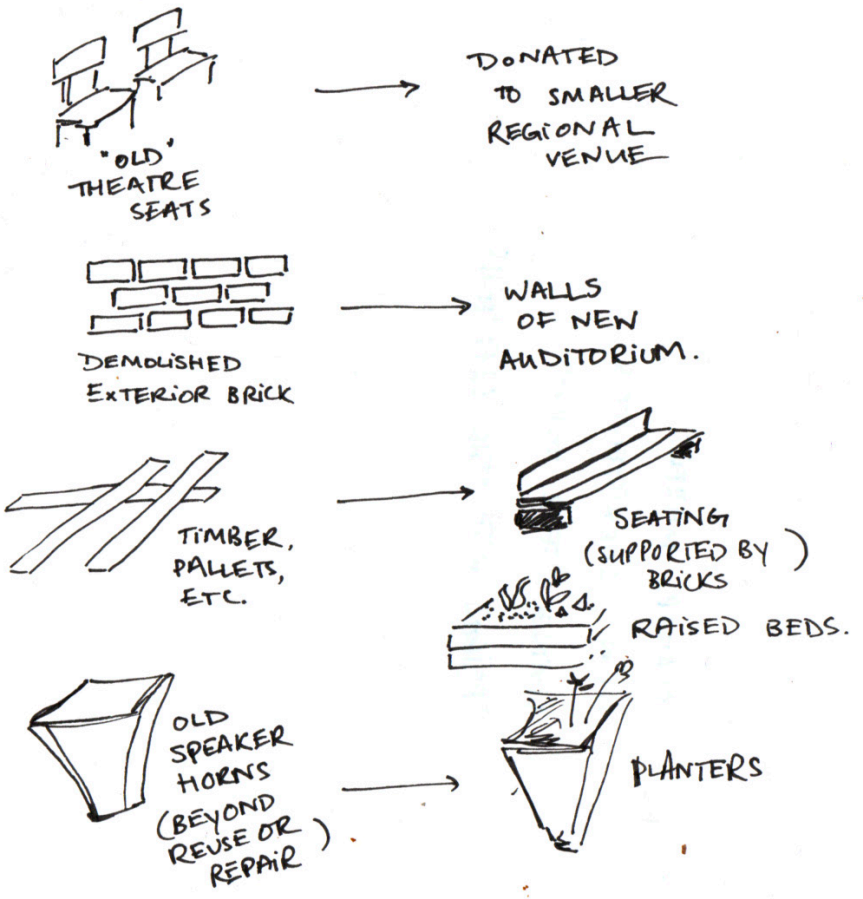
Against each phase, list at least one reflection or review you'd like to undertake at the end of it to come back to what is working, what could be better, and what the possibilities are.

REFLECTION 2: A CIRCULARITY FORECAST (OR MATTER MATTERS)

Once you have any kind of building project in place, do a **'circularity forecast'** with your partners, architects, and others involved in the project.

What materials will be 'demolished'?
What will happen to them?
How might they be reintegrated?
Who or where else might make use of them?

What new materials do we need?
Do they need to be 'new' or could they be repurposed from somewhere else?



REFLECTION 3: LONGEVITY (OR TIME, TIME, TIME PART II)

For every intervention or part of the project, whether natural or human-made, **think through:**

Who will be responsible for maintaining and caring for this?
What level of know-how will they need, including to get outcomes (or savings) promised?
How will we keep and maintain this knowledge among our team and people using the space (manuals, training, workshops, experiences, shadowing)?
What are we 'locking in' with our currently planned project – good or bad?

Thinking about our space **in 10 years' time...**

what will still be working perfectly?
What might be in need of a renovation, or change?
Is there any way to plan our project differently so this renovation or update won't be needed? What about in 20 years' time? 50 years' time?

REFLECTION 4: NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS COMPASS, REVISITED

The New European Bauhaus Compass is a guiding framework for designers, dreamers, project makers that you can use as a tool to shape your own ambition.

Created as an interdisciplinary initiative to support the European Green Deal, it offers a set of values (Together, Sustainable, Beautiful) supported by working principles (Participatory process, Transdisciplinary approach, Multi-level engagement) and descriptions of three levels of ambition for each.

Now that you have a planned project, revisit your specific project through the New European Bauhaus Compass. **Where could you push for more ambition and how?**

Possible Structure for Reflection 4:

- Ask everyone to read the New European Bauhaus Compass Values and Working Principles criteria and identify where your current space and working culture meets levels 1, 2, 3:

USE THE COMPASS

- Share as a group:

Where is the project currently strongest?
Where is the project currently less developed?
What changes might you be able to make to the project plan to strengthen the areas of the project that currently feel less developed according to the New European Bauhaus principles?

ANNEX I
FORCING THE READING

Exercise 1: **Weather Forecast: Risk and Resilience [Adaptation]**

Look up how what likely climate and ecological impacts your neighbourhood or region might experience (or is already experiencing), and how the weather is due to change.

What are the top 3 – 5 risks and changes to consider when (re-)designing your space? In some cases, these might be obvious (e.g. increased risk of surface flooding, urban heat island effect) while in other cases, it may be harder to identify the priorities. If you are struggling, discuss as a group and/or consider contacting a local climate adaptation expert or local government representative.

1.
2.
3.
(4....)

Exercise 2: **Action Needed [Mitigation]**

Look up your city or region's climate action and transformation strategy.

What are some top issues and targets your local government is focusing on?

Where are they highlighting the need for collaboration from civil society? And which do you think your space could contribute to?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
(7. ....)

Useful: Cultural Adaptations Toolkit: Adapting our Culture

Some more useful links/resources for Forcing the Reading

Adaptation

- European Environment Agency: Climate Change Impacts in Europe (supra-regional) https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/5f6596de6c4445a58aec956532b9813d/
- European Climate Risk Typology Interactive Map (regional): https://european-crt.org/index.html
- Climate ADAPT: Urban Adaptation Map (individual cities) https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/knowledge/tools/urban-adaptation

& your country, region, local government, national weather organisation may have more detailed climate adaptation plans and risk assessments down to neighbourhood level.

Understanding your neighbourhood: pollution

- European Environment Agency: European Air Quality Index: https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/air/air-quality-index/index

& also consider local pollution and environmental impacts relevant to your community – e.g. water pollution, near-by industrial or landfill sites.

BACKGROUND

MITIGATION: WHERE DO WE NEED TO GET TO?

We know we have to reach a goal of 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible (but in current EU policy targets, by 2050 at the latest) to stop climate change from getting worse. The detail of transition plans will look different in different places and for different people, but there are some shared goals anyone working in the context of European society can look towards. As cultural organisations, the question should not be 'what should our net zero target be' but 'how can we best support society-wide net zero transformations'. 'Net zero' is mainly about deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to 'near zero'.

What we should be orienting ourselves towards on a European level by 2050:

Energy: stop burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas)

- Phasing out all electricity generation that burns fossil fuels (such as coal, oil, gas)
- Generating all electricity from renewable sources (such as wind, solar, hydropower, geothermal) and building more decentralised, democratised energy systems
- Stop using fossil fuels for heating (no gas, coal, or oil): electrify using heat pumps, or connect to local heat networks
- Energy efficiency: using less to make the transformation easier, for example through insulation, more energy efficient equipment, and different working and living practices
- Increasing "active" travel like walking and cycling, and the use and availability of public transport
- Reducing the overall number of cars on the roads and make them smaller, and reduce overall km driven
- Cars, vans, buses, or trucks that remain on the road can no longer be powered by fossil fuels (diesel, petrol, LNG): everything needs to be electrified (so that it can be powered by the renewable electricity)
- Flying less: overall demand for flights in Europe has to stay the same, or better yet shrink. While there are emerging technologies to decarbonise air travel, these will not be ready at scale on the timelines we need to reach net zero

Materials, food, water, and land:

- Shifting to a majority plant-based diet. Reducing the amount of meat (especially beef) in diets to free up land for additional agriculture or ecosystem regeneration, and reducing/eliminating food waste.
- Stopping the overconsumption of materials and resources, which drives environmental degradation and labour abuses in the supply chain
- Following a 'Refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle' hierarchy and shifting towards a circular and sharing economy
- In countries that still operate landfills, stop sending food, timber, paper & any other biodegradable waste to landfill (where it produces methane as it breaks down)
- Regenerating nature, rewilding, protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, diversifying agriculture, restoring soils
- Stopping the pollution of rivers, lakes, oceans; reducing water waste and over-exploitation of fresh water

eople, justice, adaptation:

- Building places and making spaces that are more resilient to changing weather e.g. droughts, floods, increased heat. Reducing the urban heat island effect in cities
- Involving communities in regenerative practices
- Increasing access to open and green space for all, and shaping places that are healthy and free from pollution
- Recognising the rights of nature and the more-than-human – from animals and plants, to rivers, oceans, and mountains
- Creating ways for different people to participate in decision-making, and that take into account different lived experiences to build fairer, more equitable societies
- Recognising that climate action is about local as well as global solidarity, fairness at neighbourhood level all the way to communities at frontlines of climate change at the other end of the world: and that means anyone living and working in Europe needs to act more ambitiously and faster.

Upgrade or maintain Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning

Mitigation - Energy

Climate Risk - Overheating

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) are the largest energy users in most buildings, so it's always worth investing in maintenance (such as regular cleaning of filters) or investing in upgrades like better controls, more efficient motors, and variable speed drives. If you are replacing systems or installing new ones, explore opportunities for heat recovery or recirculation in how and where pipes are laid out. For larger buildings, a **Building Management System** can help improve how HVAC is used, although it still needs regular monitoring to make sure it is working properly, and (for example) not heating and cooling areas at the same time. Cultural buildings in Central and Northern European climate - where it has not traditionally been necessary - face difficult choices about installing air conditioning to respond to hotter summers. For example, what is the trade-off between the high cost of installation and the locking in additional electricity use against the number of days it may be needed? Can **Natural Ventilation** and **Design for Solar Shading** meet the needs? What about installing a **Heat Pump** system that can also provide cooling?

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small: ***

Unbuilt - Large:
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: Low - High

ANNEX II
POSSIBILITIES CARDS

Rainwater and Greywater Recycling

Circular Economy / Matter Matters

Climate Risk - Drought

Capturing and reusing rainwater or grey water (water from sinks, showers, washing machines, etc) reduces water stress and costs. Using large water butts/containers to collect rainwater for use in the garden or washing outdoor areas is easy and cost effective. Integrated grey water recycling systems can be complex and expensive, so may be only relevant in areas of high water stress or if you have a large public building that uses large volumes of water. You will need to consider where the reused grey water can be used safely: for example, flushing toilets is more straightforward, but using grey water for irrigation may mean treatment/filtration, and/or paying attention to what kinds of products are used.

Built - Large: **
Built - Small: *
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Small: *

Cost & Complexity: High except small DIY rain-water collection e.g. in barrels/containers

Solar Photovoltaics / Solar Panels

Mitigation - Energy

Climate Risk - Overheating

Solar PV installations convert sunlight into renewable electricity for use on site or for exporting back to the grid. Payback periods will vary depending on local climate conditions. In colder climates, focusing on energy efficiency first may make more environmental sense, but solar PV installations also send a strong visible signal towards a more renewable future. They additionally offer relationship opportunities with community energy groups and local energy democracy movements. 'Bifacial' solar panels which let through light, or panels mounted on glass, may also offer opportunities to combine shade (e.g. over walkways, foyers, or conservatories) with energy generation.

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small: *
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: Medium

Design for Solar Shade

Mitigation - Energy

Climate Risk - Overheating

The use of external structural elements or trees or vegetation to 'shade' exposed and southern-facing areas of buildings (especially glass or minimally insulated walls) can reduce heat in indoor spaces (and associated energy need for cooling in some climates). In unbuilt areas, structures or vegetation can be designed to provide shade for the human and more-than-human occupants of the space. This is most important in hot climates, for buildings with lots of windows/glass, and in urban environments at risk of overheating. Some solar shade can be low-cost or temporary, like putting up awnings. Consider the Design for Solar Gain card at the same time to determine if your solution can use solar passive design principles across all seasons, such as window eaves that shade from the sun in summer, but are set at a particular angle (depending on the latitude) so the sun can hit the window when it's at a lower angle.

Built - Large: **
Built - Small: **
Unbuilt - Large: **
Unbuilt - Small: **

Cost & Complexity: Low - Medium

Improving Insulation and Building Fabric

Mitigation - Energy

Reduce heat lost through walls, windows, roofs, doors, and floors by improving the building fabric. Install insulation, double- or triple-glazing for windows, and/or draught-proof doors and windows. It is essential for buildings of any size, and especially important in colder climates to reduce the energy demand for heating. The cost and complexity can be high for heritage protected buildings. If insulation is not possible in the short term, extra effort and time resource should be invested in energy management and engagement (e.g. how and when spaces are used, heated and cooled; encouraging people to wear additional layers, etc).

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small: ***
Unbuilt - Large:
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: Low - High

Design for Solar Gain

Mitigation - Energy

Design building layouts so spaces with high occupancy are located where they will be exposed to sunlight and can 'gain' warmth, reducing the need for heating. This is more important in colder climates, and may need additional design to avoid the risk of overheating spaces. Consider the Design for Solar Shade card at the same time to determine if your solution can use solar passive design principles across all seasons, such as window eaves that shade from the sun in summer, but are set at a particular angle (depending on the latitude) so the sun can hit the window when it's at a lower angle.

Built - Large: **
Built - Small: **
Unbuilt - Large:
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: High

Use of Natural Building Materials

Circular Economy / Matter Matters

Climate Risk - Overheating

Natural building materials are often lower embodied carbon, i.e. they have less impact to produce, and some even store carbon. Many emit fewer toxic volatile organic compounds, so they contribute to cleaner air quality. Finally, recognising and learning from traditional architectural methods and materials in your region (or from bioregions with traditionally similar climates to the coming changes you expect to see in your region) can help you build 'with' your environment and take advantage of what in some cases are thousands of years of experience of what materials regulate temperature, or are suited to drought or wet conditions. Examples include hempcrete or limecrete (as alternatives to some concrete uses), cob or other forms of clay/earth (very good at insulating and regulating humidity), timber-based construction (which 'stores' the carbon in the timber), straw bales, cork, or the use of sheep's wool, flax, or other natural fibres as insulation. For larger project, additional planning permissions may be needed, and learning from existing natural building materials networks in your region will be invaluable. There are also many smaller types of project, like structures in any garden/open space that lend themselves to a DIY approach and community engagement (e.g. building a cob oven with visitors, or an outdoor auditorium/classroom). In short, for whatever you are planning to build, explore natural building material options first.

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small: ***
Unbuilt - Large: **
Unbuilt - Small: **

Cost & Complexity: Low - High

Green Walls and Facades

Mitigation - Energy

Climate Risk - Overheating

New Coexistences

Greening walls and facades can be done through either: 1 – self-attaching plants attaching directly to facades, 2 – trellises or wire systems installed for climbing plants, or 3 – living wall systems constructed from planting boxes, felt, etc. Living wall systems can be expensive and very high maintenance, including requiring lots of irrigation and addition of nutrients to remain green. Consider if this approach is right for the climate of your site, based on the suitability of low-maintenance and/or drought-resistant plants. The plants provide insulation for buildings, habitats for the more-than-human, and contribute to cooling the environment and combating urban heat island effects. Co-benefits include acoustic and temperature insulation for both inside and outside spaces, air purification, and CO2 absorption. They may be particularly suitable for fences/walls facing roads as a barrier for air pollution. This initiative is best combined with basic **rainwater harvesting** to support irrigation.

Built - Large: *
Built - Small: *
Unbuilt - Large: **
Unbuilt - Small: **

Cost & Complexity: Medium - High

Green Roofs

Mitigation - Energy

Climate Risk - Flooding

New Coexistences

Climate Risk - Overheating

Green roofs involve adding a layer of growing medium to roofs, to plant climate-appropriate and low-maintenance plants, e.g. sedum, moss, perennials, wildflowers, grasses (and in some cases shrubs). Generally, they are only suitable for flat or low-angle roofs, and a structural engineer may need to check the roof can support the additional weight. Green roofs are particularly impactful for buildings in urban environments to help combat the heat island effect and create habitats for the more-than-human (and the potential to create a green oasis for humans, too). The co-benefits include acoustic insulation, temperature insulation, CO2 absorption, and reducing problems with water run-off. This initiative can be combined with **solar panels** and basic **rainwater harvesting** to support irrigation.

Built - Large: **(*)
Built - Small: **
Unbuilt - Large:
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: High

LED Lighting

Mitigation - Energy

Replace lighting fixtures with energy efficient LEDs to significantly reduce electricity use, reduce demand for ventilation and cooling (since LEDs waste less energy as heat), and reduce the need for maintenance (since bulbs need to be changed less often). Prioritise areas of high usage first – e.g. house lights, foyers and public areas, emergency lighting, toilets, offices, and outdoor and architectural lighting. These will have shorter payback times than less-used lights such as stage lighting. Payback times will depend on the number of lights to be replaced, operating hours, and local electricity costs, but will usually be as low as 1-2 years. For outdoor/external/architectural lighting, consider and balance need against light pollution on both humans and your more-than-human neighbours – this impact can be reduced through e.g. shading and angling light downwards. Also consider installing **Automatic Sensors** for LED lighting.

Built - Large: *** Unbuilt - Large: *
Built - Small: *** Unbuilt - Small: *

Cost & Complexity: Low

Building Management System

Mitigation - Energy

Install or upgrade a building management system (BMS) to centrally and automatically control heating, ventilation, and air conditioning. This is most suited to large and complex buildings, but beware: a BMS alone does not necessarily lead to energy savings. A badly programmed BMS or one that is not user-friendly, or over-specified/too complicated for how and by who it will be used may create additional issues. Design the system together with your current building/facilities manager, ensure a custom manual is provided as part of the installation, and write follow-up visits into the contract (6 months and one year, in different seasons) to check the BMS continues to be programmed and operating as it should.

Built - Large: *** Unbuilt - Large:
Built - Small: * Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: Medium

Solar Water Heating /

Mitigation - Energy

Using solar energy collected via panels or tubes to heat water for use in showers and taps (and sometimes for heating). This is most effective in warmer climates, though will still make a difference in summer months in colder climates. In colder climates and/or for larger public buildings, it is unlikely to meet entire demand but can still be used to reduce the need for other forms of energy.

Built - Large: *** Unbuilt - Large:
Built - Small: *** Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: Medium

Automatic Sensors

Mitigation - Energy

Using motion sensors, such as Passive Infrared (PIR) sensors, or daylight sensors to automatically control lighting. Especially useful in areas of variable occupancy, like toilets. May also be relevant for some areas of outdoor lighting (when installing outdoor lighting, be aware of light pollution and reduce this through e.g. shading and angling light downwards). Also consider the safety and accessibility needs of your space and its users. Can be installed at the same time as **LED Lighting**.

Built - Large: *** Unbuilt - Large: *
Built - Small: *** Unbuilt - Small: *

Cost & Complexity: Low

Upgrade or maintain Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning

Mitigation - Energy

Climate Risk - Overheating

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) are the largest energy users in most buildings, so it's always worth investing in maintenance (such as regular cleaning of filters) or investing in upgrades like better controls, more efficient motors, and variable speed drives. If you are replacing systems or installing new ones, explore opportunities for heat recovery or recirculation in how and where pipes are laid out. For larger buildings, a **Building Management System** can help improve how HVAC is used, although it still needs regular monitoring to make sure it is working properly, and (for example) not heating and cooling areas at the same time. Cultural buildings in Central and Northern European climate - where it has not traditionally been necessary - face difficult choices about installing air conditioning to respond to hotter summers. For example, what is the trade-off between the high cost of installation and the locking in additional electricity use against the number of days it may be needed? Can **Natural Ventilation** and **Design for Solar Shading** meet the needs? What about installing a **Heat Pump** system that can also provide cooling?

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small: ***
Unbuilt - Large:
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: Low - High

Heat Pumps

Mitigation - Energy

Climate Risk - Overheating

Heat pumps work by transferring natural energy from the ground, air, or water into heat that can be used for hot water and heating systems. Some can also be used as air conditioning. When installed correctly, heat pumps deliver more energy in kWh for your building than the kWh electricity used to run the pumps – they are super efficient! They work best when buildings are well insulated. Combining heat pumps with other interventions including better insulation, green roofs, solar panels and solar thermal systems offers the greatest promise, but comes with additional cost and complexity. Given the urgent need to electrify buildings to reach net zero, replacing any gas boilers or other fossil fuelled heating like oil should be a priority for any new or one-off big capital and retrofit projects, especially in regions where district heat networks are not widespread. Longer-term plans may be needed for venues and buildings already in operation. Water source heat pumps are only really possible if your building is located near a body of water; while ground source heat pumps may need extensive excavation work to be installed.

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small: ***
Unbuilt - Large:
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: High

Join a District Heating Network

Mitigation - Energy

District Heating Networks redistribute heat from a large central source to individual homes and businesses through a network of insulated pipes. The heat is often 'waste' heat from another process. District heat networks are large-scale developments: check with planning offices whether any are being developed in your neighbourhood.

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small: ***
Unbuilt - Large:
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: N/A (generally only possible if a heat network is being developed locally)

Remove Concrete/Asphalt and Paved Areas

New Coexistences

Climate Risk - Flooding

Climate Risk - Overheating

Breaking up and removing concrete, paved areas, and any other kind of 'impermeable' ground cover reduces the risk of flooding by allowing water to drain into the ground. It additionally helps combat the 'urban heat island effect' (where heat is absorbed and radiated back out, leading to overheating in cities), and supports new coexistences by allowing soil to breathe and other things to grow. It's especially important in urban areas. If possible, try and find a new landscaping use for the waste rubble, for example in **Gabion Walls or Cages**.

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small: ***
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Small: ***

Cost & Complexity: Low

Reduce Parking

Mitigation - Mobility

A huge amount of our public space is given to cars. Reducing your car parking spaces (especially in cities and areas with better public transport connections) can shift more people to arrive at your space using other means, and free up more space for humans and more-than-humans to play and rest. Some cities are allowing 'parklets' – car parking spaces turned into small parks or seating areas. You might also have an opportunity to Remove and Break Up Concrete to help with better drainage (reducing flood risk), reduce heat gain, and create more space for the more-than-human. When reducing parking, prioritise any remaining parking for people with accessibility needs.

Built - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Built - Small: ***
Unbuilt - Small: ***

Cost & Complexity: Low

Bicycle Storage and Lock-up

Mitigation - Mobility

People are much more likely to cycle to your space if they know there will be somewhere to store and safely lock up their bicycles. Create storage somewhere on site (e.g. a shed for your co-workers, enough space in the cloakroom) and/or bicycle stands. Some places use giant planters to provide the 'anchoring' for bicycle stands (especially where it is not possible to fix them directly into the ground). While creatively designed bicycle stands can be beautiful and fun, don't forget about function: bicycle stands should be usable by everyone, including by non-standard bikes, such as those used by disabled cyclists. In many cases, traditional 'Sheffield' stands (large metal loops) are best. Consider how you could design a shelter or other decorations around them, and how you can incentivise or promote cycling to your space.

Built - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Built - Small: ***
Unbuilt - Small: ***

Cost & Complexity: Low

On-Site Electric Vehicle Charging

Mitigation - Mobility

While the overall goal is to reduce car and van use, you can support the shift to more electric vehicles by installing charging on site if you have space/ parking. This is especially important in rural areas or places where there is less public transport available and people are more dependant on their cars. It also opens up future opportunities for more touring with electric vehicles: productions and artists are much more likely to choose this if they know they can recharge on site.

Built - Large: **
Unbuilt - Large: **
Built - Small: **
Unbuilt - Small: **

Cost & Complexity: High

Better On-Site Storage and Equipment

Mitigation - Mobility

Circular Economy / Matter Matters

By designing useful storage on site and investing in good lighting and audio equipment, you can reduce the need for lots of new materials being purchased repeatedly, and for visiting artists to have to transport their own.

A word of caution: storage can quickly fill up with unused things and/or nobody knowing what is there. Introduce an inventory or plan, and regularly review it. You also need to tell visiting artists and partners what they can borrow and use from you.

Built - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Large: *
Built - Small: *
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: Low - High

Better Pathways and Signage to Public Transport Connections

Mitigation - Mobility

Improving signage and helping to direct people along well-lit and accessible pathways can improve the experience of those using public transport and build awareness. This is especially important if you have a larger space, or if local public transport stops are further away from your site. Depending on how many stops and connections are available, consider displaying last connections in any foyer, toilets, bars, or as people are leaving the space if you put on late night programming.

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small: **
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Small: **

Cost & Complexity: Low

White Paint

Mitigation - Energy

Climate Risk - Overheating

White paint can help reflect sunlight and heat and reduce the risk of overheating. This is best used in very hot areas, and if you have a large area of flat roof, paved ground, or walls facing the sun. Consider combining with **Design for Solar Shade**, **Green Walls**, and/or **Raised Planters and/or Community Gardens.**

Built - Large: *
Built - Small: *
Unbuilt - Large:
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: Low

Raised Planters and/or a Community Garden

Circular Economy / Matter Matters

New Coexistences

Raised planters and/or community gardens are a brilliant way to create small habitats and/or space for people to engage with green space and the more-than-human – they also look beautiful and can cool areas when it's hot. You may also be able to grow things to support an on-site café or restaurant: even if you can't grow all your own, plants like herbs and edible flowers are among the easiest to add to your menu. Raised planters can easily be built from re-purposed timber and other materials, and are a particularly suitable choice for smaller spaces with limited other outdoor green space. The main consideration is who will do the gardening and maintenance. There is an opportunity to combine with **rainwater harvesting**/barrels and **composting** on site.

Built - Large: *
Built - Small: **
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Small: **

Cost & Complexity: Low - Medium

Bird Boxes, Bat Boxes, Insect Hotels

New Coexistences

Bird and bat boxes offer nesting sites for birds and bats. 'Insect hotels' are built to offer lots of spaces for insects to hide, live, and thrive in – the design may vary depending on what species you'd like to support (for example, solitary bees). They are easily made from DIY and repurposed materials including timber, twigs and branches, etc. If you have a large unbuilt space, you can also support habitats for insects and amphibians by leaving piles of branches when doing any maintenance or gardening work. If you are creating habitats for bats or other nocturnal species, consider how much light pollution is coming from any architectural lighting.

Built - Large: **
Built - Small: **
Unbuilt - Large: **
Unbuilt - Small: **

Cost & Complexity: Low

Trees, Wildflowers, Hedges

New Coexistences

Climate Risk - Drought

Climate Risk - Flooding

Climate Risk - Overheating

Trees, hedges and wildflower meadows all offer habitats for the more-than-human. Trees (and any other plant) can also help reduce overheating in urban areas from the 'urban heat island effect', and absorb air and noise pollution. Hedges and/or rows of trees are especially powerful along the boundaries of your space, especially if you are near a road and/or trying to reduce noise from reaching neighbours. Don't cut back trees or hedges during bird nesting season. If you have limited green space, focus on small opportunities, for example planting native wildflowers on verges and other small areas instead of grass. Don't cut back wildflowers in spring when they are most needed by pollinators like bees and other insects: signage for visitors can explain why, and educate visitors on biodiversity at the same time. The roots of trees, shrubs, and hedges can also help 'hold' soil in place and reduce the risk of erosion and/or landslides, which may be a consideration in more rural areas. Finally, trees and hedges can help reduce the risk of flooding. Plant the right plant in the right place: for example, in places at risk of drought, look for drought-resistant species.

Built - Large: **
Built - Small: **
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Small: ***

Cost & Complexity: Low - Medium

Swales, Rain Gardens,

New Coexistences

Climate Risk - Flooding

Swales are shallow, plant-filled channels that are used to collect, slow down and direct water run-off, and in some cases help infiltrate water back into the soil. They can also help filter out pollution from water. Rain gardens are similar to swales, but rather than channelling water, are planted in shallow basins to slow the flow of water. Retention ponds work on a similar principle, providing more water storage capacity to catch surface run-off during rainfall.
These solutions can be created where there is already a natural depression in the land, by digging out a new one, or by building embankments. Swales are relatively easy and fast to install, while retention ponds may require more work (and space). They are particularly important in urban areas where there is limited opportunity for water to drain in heavy rains, and in other areas at high risk of flooding. Smaller swales and rainwater gardens can be especially effective along paths, roadways, or car parks. They also create new habitats for the more-than-human.

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small: *
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Small: *

Cost & Complexity: Low - Medium

Natural Water Treatment System

Circular Economy / Matter Matters

Climate Risk - Drought

New Coexistences

Natural treatment of grey water or sewage on-site can reduce health hazards, reduce strain on city water treatment systems, and allow for greywater to be safely used in other areas (see **Rainwater and Greywater Recycling**). Natural solutions can also provide habitat for more-than-human and include reed beds, willow filters or constructed wetlands. Make sure to check local requirements and restrictions on safe water treatment.

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small:
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: High

Ponds and Wetlands

New Coexistences

Climate Risk - Drought

Climate Risk - Flooding

Ponds and wetlands can provide much-needed habitat for the more-than-human, remove significant amounts of carbon from the atmosphere, and reduce flood risk. They are especially important in urban areas, to purify runoff water and absorbing excess water during heavy rainfall. Ensure your pond or wetland incorporates native and climate-resilient plants to support the local ecosystem and improve biodiversity.

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small:
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Small: *

Cost & Complexity: Medium - High

Low-Flow and Push Taps

Circular Economy / Matter Matters

Climate Risk - Drought

Efficient taps ensure water is not left running or used unnecessarily. This reduces energy costs and water usage. Ensure accessibility requirements are still met with any taps installed. For existing builds, determine if sensors can be used to retrofit existing taps (instead of completely replacing taps).

Built - Large: **
Built - Small: **
Unbuilt - Large: **
Unbuilt - Small: **

Cost & Complexity: Low

Public Water Fountains

Circular Economy / Matter Matters

Climate Risk - Drought

Water fountains encourage visitors to your space to bring their own water bottles, instead of buying plastic ones. They are often simple to install and maintain, and the water run-off can be used to water small nearby gardens. Ensure adequate signage or website information to encourage the water fountain use, and design the fountains for all accessibility requirements.

Built - Large: *
Built - Small: *
Unbuilt - Large: *
Unbuilt - Small: *

Cost & Complexity: Low

Natural Ventilation

Mitigation - Energy

Climate Risk - Overheating

Natural ventilation works with wind, temperature, and the physical shape and orientation of your building to passively (i.e. without the use of energy) create air movement. For example, cross-ventilation with openings on opposite sides of your space that draw through air, or stack ventilation, where cooler air is introduced at a lower level, rises as it heats up, and leaves through openings at a higher level (especially suited for open spaces like atriums). When well-designed, natural ventilation reduces the need for energy use and maintenance. It's best suited for breezy and dry climates, but the exact recommendations will depend on your site, local climate and climate trends, and the shape and material (and size) of your building. Some passive ventilation types can also be combined with heat recovery systems. Combine with **Designing for Solar Shade** and an effective **Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning** system to best control temperature while using less energy.

Built - Large: **
Built - Small: **
Unbuilt - Large:
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity: Medium

Composting

Circular Economy / Matter Matters

Composting is the 'recycling' of organic materials like food or plants/vegetation into fertiliser (and energy. in anaerobic digestion systems). Systems can be easy to implement if your local area offers composting collection, or if you can compost on site and use the compost on your own outside space or share it with gardeners, community gardens, or even farms in your neighbourhood. There are multiple composting options (e.g. worm farms, Bokashi bins, commercial composting partnerships) depending on the size and needs of your space. It can support other environmental initiatives – for example, compostable shipping wrapping is much more impactful if there is composting available at your site.

Built - Large: ***
Built - Small: **
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Small: **

Cost & Complexity: Low

Gabion Cages / Gabion Walls

Circular Economy / Matter Matters

Climate Risk - Flooding

New Coexistences

Gabions are cages (usually made from galvanised steel wire mesh) filled with materials like stone, brick, and/or broken-up concrete. They can be used to reduce or prevent erosion on river banks, shorelines, and soil slopes and/or as decorative walls and elements in outdoor space. They can offer habitat for different more-than-human species in the cracks between the rocks, and can also slow down rainfall from reaching the ground as it filters through. You can often find rubble and other materials to fill gabions from local skips and building sites (or maybe you will have some from your own building works).

Built - Large:
Built - Small:
Unbuilt - Large: ***
Unbuilt - Small: **

Cost & Complexity: Low

Dream your own...

Built - Large:
Built - Small:
Unbuilt - Large:
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity:

Built - Large:
Built - Small:
Unbuilt - Large:
Unbuilt - Small:

Cost & Complexity:

Built - Large:
Built - Small:
Unbuilt - Large:
Unbuilt - Small:

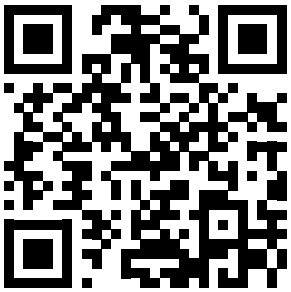
Cost & Complexity:

TEH: BUILDING A CULTURAL REGENERATION PROJECT FOR EUROPE

Small atlas of cultural shifts, strategies and prototypes to keep down to Earth

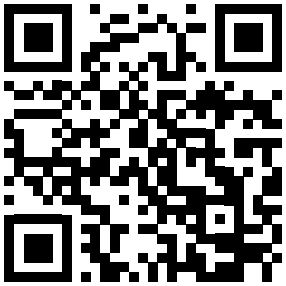
October 2024 Edition

Other digital content connected to the Rebuilding to Last project



E-courses on TEH website

www.teh.net/resources/



Videos from Participatory Architectural Interventions

vimeo.com/transeuropehalles

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