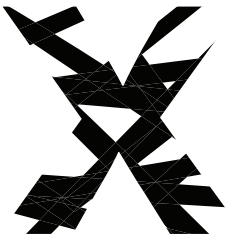

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What Is an Urban Imaginary? The Role of Urban Imaginaries for Urban Studies and Creative Interventions in Urban Spaces

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Abstract
From medieval city views to contemporary urban imaginaries, imagination has always played a major role for outlining human understandings of urban life. Just recently, urban studies, urban planning, and artistic research have re-discovered imaginary approaches to urban lifeworlds as viable stimuli for urban transformation and social critique. In order to find pathways for sustainable development, creative strategies and imaginations of collective utopia have become a vital source of inspiration for urban planning and architecture. Interdisciplinary, inclusive approaches to create urban utopia have become central to thinking and writing about the urban as a shared imaginary matrix for collective sensemaking. This article provides a selective overview of the role of urban imaginaries from the Middle Ages, to the 20th century, and on to contemporary perspectives on urban spaces. In this brief tour d'horizon the potentials of images, imaginations, and utopian perspectives on urban life are sketched out for exploring and ultimately designing places of urban cohabitation. As an introduction to this journal issue on the role of urban imaginaries for creating liminal spaces for social change and critique, this article also aims to describe the use of creative strategies and urban imaginaries for urban studies, urban transformation projects, and artistic interventions in urban spaces. The articles in this issue demonstrate the multifaceted nature of urban imaginaries in contexts as diverse as exhibition design, visual anthropology, urban studies, and virtual/augmented reality. Adopting different imaginary perspectives ultimately paves the way for understanding urbanization as a utopian project, a collective struggle, and a manifestation of collective will, which continuously produces tangible and intangible outcomes. Processes of planetary urbanization, therefore, also inspire us to reflect on social, economic, and cultural co-evolution and participation on a global scale. This way, urban imaginaries become blueprints for social change, critique, and societal innovation.

Keywords
urban imaginaries; city views; arts-based research; urban creativity; planetary urbanization.

1. Introduction

In recent years, in areas such as urban planning (Borén and Young, 2015; Vivant et al., 2015), placemaking (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010a), and conceptual discussions about space (Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Jessop, 2018), the possibilities of urban imaginaries appear as almost ubiquitous features of contemporary approaches to urban studies and the transformation of urban spaces. Adopting different imaginary viewpoints, is widely understood as a method to think and write about space, establishing new perspectives to analyze or structure spatial environments (Lindner and Meissner, 2019). In this context, urban imaginaries have been used to research and conceptualize urban spaces from fresh angles and with unexpected outcomes (Barone and Eisner, 2012). Consequently, by adopting different imaginary perspectives, it becomes possible to derive a multitude of spatial concepts, reflected in spatial theories and human approaches to their lifeworlds (Van Manen, 1990).

In the context of urban studies, Brenner and Schmid (2021) have demonstrated, how perspectives on urbanization can

be de-centered, if we imagine urban spaces differently. Based on the works of Henri Lefebvre (1991, 1996), they frame urbanization as a process of societal co-development and co-creation tied to economic, social, and cultural practices emanating from different forms of human co-habitation, with every person holding the 'right to the city' (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 147). In this sense, urbanization becomes a way to re-imagine human evolution from a point of social, economic, and cultural becoming based on intensified social interaction in structures of lived urbanization. As a method for social critique, imaginary perspectives lend themselves to scrutinize the status quo and create pathways towards a different world (Lindner and Meissner, 2019). This way, urbanization also means to create collective utopia for a dignified life as an urban citizen with equal access to collective goods. While equal rights and access to collective goods are increasingly under threat globally, advancing urbanization also offers development perspectives to countless people, while creating innovations to solve social, economic, or ecological problems. Questions surrounding the worldwide progress of urbanization, hence, are not trivial, in the light of collective challenges ahead (Keil, 2018).

If we expect the challenges of sustainable co-habitation in urbanized, densely populated areas to be intricately linked with the development of the world in the Anthropocene, and if ways to resolve questions of sustainability involve the collective problem-solving skills of all its citizens, should we not put a collective effort into imagining a livable future for all? Is it, hence, not time to include collective imaginations in shaping a collective future and to continue the process of urbanization as a form of societal co-development? And finally, would it not be wise to employ creative strategies from the worlds of art, design, literature, or film for shaping collective imaginaries and influencing the future of societies worldwide?

After a wealth of texts, including methodological and theoretical meditations, have been published on imaginary approaches to space, particularly urban spaces, this journal issue sets out to describe different projects from the fields of architecture, design, contemporary and digital art, visual anthropology, and urban studies, which discuss or contest the spatial order of the urban status quo, open up spaces for reflection and critique, and intervene in systems of socio-political order. In this issue, we want to highlight the potentials of different imaginary approaches to urban spaces for creating new lifeworlds, for altering perceptions and conceptualizations of space, for reframing or redefining social issues, or for subverting established systems of power. The contributions to this issue show, how we can think differently about urban spaces and how we can decenter entrenched implications of contemporary urbanization by intervening in imaginative ways.

2. A Short History of Images and Imaginations of 'the Urban'

Citing the famous example of several historical wall paintings in her book 'A Distant City', Chiara Frugoni (1991) describes, how the 'Government of the Nine' in medieval Siena used depictions of government principles, city life, and the town's residents for demonstrating the effects of good and bad governance (fig. 1-3). The paintings visualized the consequences of just rule, on the one hand, and the dangers of bad governance, on the other, while emphasizing the role of the rulers and their principles of judgment. The fate of the city was seen as intertwined with the qualities of its government, depicted in the form of imaginations of what city life would look like in a best- or worst-case scenario.

According to De Certeau (1988), cities were facts of everyday life, on the one hand, but emerged as concepts of principled governance during the Middle Ages, on the other, turning them into places to be studied, planned, and built according to the vision of their rulers and decision-makers. The city as a concept follows a certain ratio, a mode of thinking that renders the urban assemblage conceptually conceivable. "Linking the city to the concept never makes them identical, but it plays on their progressive symbiosis: to plan a city is both to think the very plurality [emphasis in original] of the real and to make that way of thinking the plural effective [emphasis in original]; it is to know how to articulate it and be able to do it." (De Certeau, 1988, p. 94) The city as a space to be governed was, hence, always intertwined with practical, strategic, or political considerations as well as with ethics of reasoning that were expected to

Figure 1. Ambrogio Lorenzetti – Allegoria del Boun Governo (1338-1339). Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=23689438.

Figure 2. Ambrogio Lorenzetti – Effetti del Buon Governo in città (1338-1339). Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=23689357.

Figure 3. Ambrogio Lorenzetti – Allegoria del Cattivo Governo (1338-1339). Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7f/Lorenzetti_ambrogio_bad_govern._det.jpg.

make cohabitation possible, while at the same time serving the ruling classes.

Referencing the work of historian Ferdinand Opll (2017), the imagination of the city, as a space to be governed and to be represented in different contexts of (public) reception, was always also tied to its image, e.g., in historic city views. The first city views of urban agglomerations in the Middle Ages created a sense of place (of being there) as well as a representation of space (a system of spatial references) (De Certeau, 1988). Accurate depiction was, at first, not the main focus, but the graphic description of a structured environment, a territory of influence, of historical events, or cultural identification, and its representation to the ruling classes and their citizens (Opll, 2017). With the advent of different reproduction techniques, the urban masses could increasingly gain access to views of different cities from multiple perspectives and buy them for decorative or educational purposes. The perspectives shown were often inaccessible to common citizens—or anybody at all—so that the graphic depictions literally created a fresh view of the city and held the potential to imagine habitual places anew. Hence, the path from image to imagination created new possibilities for thinking about urban life, originating in the pictorial transformation of space in the eye of the beholder.

In a historical analysis of the origins of visual techniques in geography, Cosgrove (2008) shows how, from cosmography to chorography and finally geography, the techniques of envisioning different aspects of socially shared spaces created imaginary horizons of collective existence, documented its environments, and made these insights communicable. Historical paintings of cities and landscapes opened spaces of shared vision for all, who took part in the exercise of seeing and imagining spatial environments. Consequently, collective imaginations of what life could be or where it would lead, also entailed exercises in shared vision, which were closely linked to techniques of (graphic) representation.

Around the year 1500, e.g., Jacopo de' Barbari depicted Venice from a perspective, which was physically inaccessible (floating out above the Adriatic Sea), but visually imaginable

Figure 4. Jacopo de' Barbari – City View of Venice. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jacopo_de%27_Barbari_-_View_of_Venice_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg?uselang=de.

(fig. 4). By reproducing this aerial city view from ground perspectives, he created one of the best-known historic representations of Venice, full of symbols referencing the city's rich history and vibrant sea trade. The work famously exemplifies, how new views of urban spaces can be created from imaginary points of view, altering the perception of everyday life in the city.

Writing about the image of the city and the emergence of the perspective plan in the 16th century, Lucia Nuti (1994) even speaks of the invention of a representational language that was of practical, aesthetic, but also strategic interest, e.g., in the case of war. It was of vital interest to many rulers of this time to have truthful and relatable representations of cities and regions at their disposal to deduce practical decisions for strategic action or city planning. Hence, the emergence of images and imaginations of the city as a point of reference for urban planning and governance always also had practical implications.

With the advent of ever more truthful representations, spaces could be mapped to perfection and with it the principles of governance, as the law and its representatives reached into the last corners of empires or, thereafter, nation states (Foucault, 1995). The spatialization of human environments, over time, also became a matter of exerting institutional power attached to them via the legal system. Territorializations of space under various principles of government, over time, led to the multi-level systems of governance we know today (Bache and Flinders, 2004). Changing perspectives of vision or the mechanics of relating vision to social action can, however, transform common understandings of governed spaces and contest the social status quo, just like the emergence of the first city views altered perspectives on habitual spaces of urban cohabitation.

3. The Image of the City in Urban Studies

The role of shared imaginations of the urban was also recognized in publications in the field of urban studies as a nascent

research field in the late 20th century. In his seminal work 'The Image of the City' Kevin Lynch (1960) traced shared imaginary structures of urban spaces, to research how individuals and collectives conceived mental images of their neighborhoods. By taking the viewpoint of users of urban spaces, these imaginary maps could then form the basis for processes of urban development and renewal. With a similar goal in mind, William H. Whyte (1980) investigated 'The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces' to determine their meanings for urbanites and to re-imagine the priorities of urban planning processes. A simple change in perspective proved effective for shifting the boundaries of thinking about urban spaces and their use. In 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' Jane Jacobs (1992) focused on everyday urban places and their role for weaving the social fabric of life in the city. In a countermovement to top-down planning processes that were the norm at the time, she put places of everyday life first, and created new angles for imagining city life from the ground up.

From a planning perspective, Venturi et al. (1988) demonstrated in 'Learning from Las Vegas' how graphic methods can be employed to re-conceptualize urban agglomerations and trace their development. Graphic analysis of city views and urban structures served as tools to create new perspectives, re-thinking urban development strategies and the uses of urban space. A few decades later, Atelier Bow-Wow (2000) created graphic representations of Tokyo buildings for an analysis of the multifaceted architectural approaches to construction in tight urban spaces. The images showed a great diversity of use cases and sparked new imaginations about the malleability of space as an urban development tool.

These examples highlight, how practical uses of space, their representation, and imagination influence each other in a recurring cycle of planning, living, and practice, described by famous sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1991). Likewise, urban spaces are not only used, lived in, or built with functional aspects in mind. Space and its meanings are also always socially produced and, therefore, heavily invested with personal or social imaginaries that make spatial surroundings understood and open them to interpretation and appropriation. Consequently, space reflects the shared life stories and personal histories of its users that make up the totality of potential spatial perspectives or the lived "simultaneity of stories so far" (Massey, 2005, p. 9). Examples from the world of literature identify urban spaces as matters of fiction, with multiple layers of meaning, re-framing the facts and facets of urban life (Döblin, 1965; Dos Passos, 2000). Fact and fiction, thus, complement each other in lived chronotopoi or collective narratives, which lead from the past to the future (Bachtin, 2014; Holloway and Kneale, 2000). The chronotopoi of shared urban spaces are, therefore, always narrated, practiced, planned, and projected at the same time, for shared narratives on space allow its users to author meaningful pathways through space and time as socially shared contexts of co-existence.

Hence, the image of the city—narrated, visualized, or imagined—guides human approaches to urban lifeworlds in never-ending cycles of collective co-production, which ultimately manifest in physical environments, but emerge from a constant process of (re-)imagining, (re-)enacting, and (re-)dimensioning of collective mappings, images, and imaginations as markers for social life, mirrored in representations of shared environments.

4. Some Contemporary Perspectives on the Role of Urban Imaginaries

After Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid (2015) have supposedly done away with all spatial limitations for thinking about 'the urban' and coined the term 'planetary urbanization', one can wonder, what this term involves and how it makes urban space as a conceptual matrix accessible. They describe urbanization as a "problematique" (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p. 168) to frame processes of social, economic, and cultural transformation, based on Lefebvre's (1996) notion of the 'right to the city', which grants every citizen the right to participate in processes of social co-development, enhanced by, but not limited to, co-habitation in densely populated areas. Every place on earth bears some relation to 'the urban' and, hence, cannot be excluded from planetary processes of urbanization, which, consequently, should not be understood as the result of societal progress, but as a concept that ties different places around the world together in continuous processes of co-evolution. The authors use the term 'the ur-

ban', as compared to 'the city', to highlight its boundarylessness and to free spatial thinking of traditional urban/rural divides. In other words, they introduce a conceptual perspective, which de-centers urban imaginaries towards an integrative view of space, subject to ongoing processes of planetary urbanization.

From another point of view, and in a sharp critique of scholars of planetary urbanization, Ruddick (2017) points out that urban imaginaries have been created manifold and in different forms – in such great numbers that imagining the urban anew has almost become a banal, everyday practice. On the other hand, she grants Lefebvre's (1996) concept of the 'right to the city' the power to re-think urbanization from a perspective of active participation, describing a collective process of co-production of urban spaces. From this perspective, 'the urban' can be interpreted as a manifestation of collective will, guiding society on shared paths along different dimensions of progress. On an everyday basis, shared imaginaries need to be created and communicated in areas as diverse as public health, arts, science, commerce, or politics, informing each other to spark new ways for collectively thinking about urban life and its consequences.

Theorizing meta-theoretic approaches to space, Bob Jessop (2019) has argued that spatial actors need spatial imaginaries to make sense of their surroundings, spatial practices, past experiences, and ultimately their lives, going forward, to reduce complexity, on the one hand, and to find themselves in structured life-worlds, on the other. "All spatial imaginaries are selective, however. Those adopting a given imaginary cannot see what it cannot see without requisite sensitivity and self-reflection on the implications of adopting one or another spatial imaginary." (Jessop, 2019, p. 48) Spatial imaginaries, therefore, enable persons to meaningfully exist in the world and, at the same time, limit their vision to predefined, albeit adaptable spatial schemata. They appear as prerequisites for structuring and interpreting human lifeworlds, defining collective strategies and tying spatial practices to tangible outcomes. Without spatial imaginaries, the socio-spatial production of space would run into the void and people could hardly make sense of existing socio-material assemblages and their transformations in time. Specific spatial rituals, shared spatialized knowledge, and common spatial formats ensure the tempo-spatial patterning of space as a result of shared socio-spatial understandings. Likewise, shared imaginaries orient collective action and guide spatial strategies, while providing access for studying collective approaches to space and their inherent meanings in their respective historic or cultural context.

To take inherent multiplicities of potential spatial imaginaries into account is, following Lefebvre (1996) and Brenner and Schmid (2015), key to providing participatory rights to everyone taking part in processes of urbanization. In other words, collective visions of 'the urban' need to be established, so they can be practiced and lived. Addressing multiple urban imaginaries in urban planning and development can ensure that processes of urban co-creation involve large parts of the population in the collective negotiation of shared approaches to urban space (Borén and Young, 2015; Vivant et al., 2015). This, in turn, can prove effective for using urbanization as a tool for revolutionizing socio-spatial systems of power, starting from the urban sphere (Hardt and Negri, 2000). The totality of urban imaginaries will therefore reflect the multiplicity of potential meanings inherent to urban spaces, which can be addressed in urban studies, politics, arts, or architecture, in order to think about the possibilities of 'the urban' as a process of co-creation, including its tangible outcomes.

Brenner (2018) stated that new maps, mappings, images, and imaginations of 'the urban' would be needed to address its various forms and formations as well as to understand the accelerating interconnectedness of different spaces. He cites Harvey (1996, p. 403), pointing to the need for sketching out "possible urban worlds" and their implications, or, in his own words, "alter-urbanizations" (Brenner 2018, p. 15), inherent to the urban status quo, but often excluded or suppressed by current forms of socio-spatial organization. From first human settlements to complex concepts of space, Jessop (2018) infers that socially shared spatial imaginaries provide collective principles of spatial knowledge, enabling individuals and collectives to access their lifeworlds in meaningful ways. In turn, spatial imaginaries obtain a vital role in creating, communicating, and transforming these principles as well as their

socio-material implications, forming an important part of the continuous process of the production of space.

Collectively shared imaginaries mapped to spatial surroundings enable common understandings of social lifeworlds, collective sensemaking, and continuity of socio-spatial assemblages, while providing the basis for social change and critique. Shared spatial imaginaries necessarily also include imaginations of 'the urban' as a matrix for collective thought and action by a multitude of constituents living in or referring to urbanized areas (Schnell and Spiegelfeld, 2020). From this perspective, 'the urban' serves as a framework for collectively producing a multiplicity of shared perspectives inherent to the totality of imaginations attributed to the urban sphere as a collective imaginary matrix. In other words, 'the urban' or 'the city' (formerly separated from its hinterland by city walls) comprise an infinite multiplicity of collective imaginations of what socially produced spaces can imply, how they can be structured, or how they may function. The social production of space is, therefore, carried on by the continuous (re-)narration, (re-)creation and (re-)enactment by its constituents (citizens who take part in the collective endeavor of urbanization as a process of co-creation). From a perspective of shared imaginaries, 'the urban' can be understood as a continuous social process, aiming at the utopian development of a space of co-habitation and co-evolution, emanating from densely populated human agglomerations and reaching into the farthest corners of the world (Brenner and Schmid, 2015). Urbanization describes the process of this development from a perspective of social participation as well as economic, cultural, and political co-evolution. Its impact on the planetary sphere, therefore, implies continuous socio-spatial becoming.

Urban agglomerations as compacted spaces of human co-habitation, continuously creating imaginary matrices for socio-spatial sensemaking and co-evolution, then, lend themselves as interactive laboratories for exploring the development of socio-spatial assemblages over time, referring to different contexts of shared meaning and imagination (Schnell and Spiegelfeld, 2020). In this sense, urbanization as a collective concept for co-evolution, exhibits the potential to derive specific imaginary assemblages from the fleeting multiplicities of meaning and imagination reflected in urban spaces to address social complexities as well as salient issues and problems. Of course, these potentials and processes are not limited to the urban sphere, but compact spaces of inherently shared meanings, coinciding with centers of social, political, and economic power, seem to provide rich ground for (re-)defining and (re-)thinking past, present and future in their relations to space from a perspective of societal (co-) development.

Spatial imaginaries tied to urban spaces, finally, hold inherent transformative potential, in a sense that they consistently and repeatedly overcome traditional capitalist-functionalist paradigmata, and constitute a persistent force for analyzing, (re-)contextualizing, and actualizing inherent potentials of urban spaces with the aim of creating new experiences, connections, social relations or experiments for the ongoing project of socio-spatial transformation that is urbanization (Brenner and Schmid, 2015). In a radical re-imagination of what 'the urban' implies, traditional structures of sensemaking can be de-centered and urbanization can become a motor for spatial transformation and social empowerment (Schmid, 2018).

5. Arts-based Strategies for Researching or Transforming Urban Utopias

Henri Lefebvre (1996) already demonstrated the potential of processes of urbanization for creating collective utopia, an idea that Brenner and Schmid (2015, 2021) extended to the entire planet. As a multi-level, multi-scale concept, urbanization radically integrates social means of production, social relations, and social spheres, especially in densely populated areas, while putting the notion of shared urbanity—the realization of collective utopia—at the center. At this point it also seems evident that the role of artists, designers, architects, or other creatives is not limited to commenting or enhancing existing views on social realities, but to incite, invent, and search for new utopias to be realized. Consequently, artistic strategies play an active role in unearthing possible meanings and potentials of contemporary urbanity and in describing how they can be translated into spatial environments and new forms of co-habitation (Barone and Eisner, 2012; Bobadilla et al., 2019).

Arts-based approaches to city planning highlight the potential of creative strategies for informing traditional processes of urban development (Vivant, 2018; Vivant et al. 2015). The integration of artists and creative workers in urban transformation projects can point out alternative uses of space and create pathways for sustainable spatial transformation (Kullmann, 2015; Kullmann and Bouhaddou, 2017). Collaborative placemaking projects can spark collective will for urban renewal and ensure citizen participation (Courage, 2021). The integration of artists and creatives in re-thinking and renewing urban spaces can be seen as a vital source for creating cultural capital as well as social and economic stimulus (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010a, 2010b). Finally, works of art can comment on, critique, or expand upon the status quo of shared urban worlds, as the abovementioned works of literature have shown (Döblin, 1965; Dos Passos, 2000). Baudelaire's (1868/2001) 'Les Fleurs du Mal', e.g., commented the (albeit largely negative) effects of urbanization, while comics in the early 20th century were a vivid source of inspiration for urban planning, accompanying the transformation of American metropolises (Davies, 2019). GeoGraphic narratives, in our days, have fused the mapping of spatial environments with their re-narration in comics so that the map becomes an active medium for communicating a sense of place (Peterle, 2021).

Gandy (2005), in his meditations on Cyborg Urbanization, points out how fictional works, especially from the 1980s, have shaped common notions of urbanity, including their possible forms and effects. Keil (2018) explains, how the idea of 'the planetary' has become an empty shell, used to pursue the spread of capitalist structures of production, while artistic imaginations and urban imaginaries populate the in-between spaces of ever-growing urban assemblages. Tuan (1991) investigated how language serves to create, communicate, and potentially transform the character of places in everyday language as well as in academic discourse. Creative perspectives on urban spaces have, therefore, always played a crucial role for reflections on the condition of urban dwellers, while opening pathways for creating and altering collective utopia.

As a motor for socio-spatial transformation and critique, arts-based strategies have proven effective for commenting on the urban status quo and tackling salient issues or problems, reflected in the urban sphere. Adopting imaginary viewpoints, combined with arts-based approaches, in urban research can de-center traditional notions of urbanity and open liminal spaces for social critique and spatial transformation (Lindner and Meissner, 2019). Gandy (2019), e.g., explores, how ecological imaginaries, reflected in different forms of art, defined conceptualizations of urban nature and their role in urban development since the advent of industrialization. Zubiaurre (2019) describes how chewing gum on the streets of Mexico City forms part of an art project, while at the same time providing data for researching urban social practices. Lin (2019) demonstrates how urban imaginaries can be transformed through artistic strategies, inspiring reflection, and critique of the urban status quo. In a similar approach, Simpson (2019, p. 234) analyzed how the materiality of Macau's newly paved streets in the style of a traditional "calcada Portuguesa" plays into the production of an urban space for consumption and tourism. Employing ecological, technological, or economic imaginaries of 'the urban' in creative or artistic research strategies, in turn, holds great potential for analyzing and critically reflecting on the inherent meanings of urban spaces and their transformations in time. Hence, creative approaches to urbanization can point towards new perspectives for growth, serve as tools for criticizing the status quo, or highlight areas of concern, which formerly went unnoticed. They may identify possibilities for change and create liminal perspectives for transforming urban spaces into places for social integration and co-evolution.

In this sense, we want to present several articles in this issue, which demonstrate how creative approaches to urban spaces, collective projects in community building and the arts, artistic interventions in virtual/augmented reality, as well as projects in the fields of design, architecture, and urban planning can promote the creation of spaces for social critique, societal change, and new imaginations of the urban as a collective endeavor.

Acknowledging different sides to and different strategies towards altering public perceptions, transforming urban spaces, or creating new urban imaginaries, we want to follow Brenner and Schmid's (2015, p. 178) notion that:

The urban is a collective project—it is produced through collective action, negotiation, imagination, experimentation, and struggle. The urban society is thus never an achieved condition but offers an open horizon in relation to which concrete struggles over the urban are waged. It is through such struggles, ultimately, that any viable new urban epistemology will be forged.

We understand the contributions to this issue as an active involvement in collective processes of urban transformation as the creation of liminal spaces for social change and critique, to potentially inform future processes of urban planning, artistic interventions, and conceptualizations of urban spaces. Especially, we want to emphasize the role of different creative and artistic strategies for creating liminal spaces for political involvement and social inclusion, while infiltrating spatialized structures of power. In this sense, we present a spectrum of possibilities in this issue, to understand space not only as an imaginary matrix for collective sensemaking, but as a medium for change and intervention in existing socio-spatial assemblages.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Future Playgrounds. How to Digitally Expand the City. Augmented Reality (AR) Art-pieces in Public Space

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Abstract
Distractions and disruptions of attention, induced by mass and social media, have become an omnipresent part of our everyday lives. Constantly online and with a device at hand, remote and digital technologies seem to shape people's behaviour more than surrounding architecture does. Even our urban tissue has become a tagged metaverse driven by chronic hyper-efficiency, simultaneity and equanimity—an accumulation of lonely humans staring into their phones. Do we still have the possibility of a collective virtual and material urban space, a shared experience, settled in built and unbuilt space alike, both beneficially interwoven into each other? In this article I will present selected works from my artistic and academic practice using Augmented Reality (AR) as a medium in an urban context. On this basis I want to discuss how our cities expand into the virtual realm through digital media and, on the other hand, I would like to demonstrate how urban space could be enhanced through playful virtuality. Conventional digital interactivity, historically rooted in video-games, is driven by protocols and efficiency. Conversely, it seems that the absence of a protocol is what conceptually differentiates playing from gaming: playing implies invention and learning, while gaming is about performing preconceived rules. Playfulness is, therefore, understood as a form of interaction capable of constituting and shaping identity and thus proves a valid method to liberate chronic hyper-efficiency-driven urban fabrics.

Keywords
arts-based research; augmented reality; digital interaction; playfulness; urban space.

1. Introduction

In this article I will exhibit selected works from my artistic and academic practice using the medium of augmented reality (AR) in different contexts. I will also discuss Rafaël Rozendaal's (2001–2019, 2012, 2020) work, which was a major inspiration for creating new understandings of digital space and materiality as presented in this paper. On this basis, I want to discuss how digital media pushed our cities into their 'expanded field' (Krauss 1979) and, on the other hand, I want to show how urban spaces could be liberated from capitalist compulsion and enhanced through playful virtuality.

We are living in the age of the digital and the virtual. This has been made inevitably clear by the Covid-19 pandemic and the accompanying preventive measures such as smart working, health tracking, distance teaching, zoom parties etc. It could be said that digitalization instigates a profound and irreversible change in the way we live together—it has transformed society already and will do so even more in the future. No wonder, the 2021 Venice Biennale poses the question 'How will we live together?' (Sarkis, 2021). Melissa Gronlund (2017) confirms that digitality and the Internet have become integral parts of our everyday lives and, thus, have also entered the art world, drawing a distinction between the Internet of the 1990s and the Internet of today. In the mid-2000s four revolutionary developments led to

an unstoppable growth of social media: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and the iPhone as the first smartphone (Gronlund 2017, p.2). Since the advent of social media, we have been evolving towards a 'metaverse', a term that first appeared in 1992, coined by Neal Stephenson (1992) in his novel 'Snow Crash', describing a collective and collaborative virtual space. This shift towards virtuality, the demounting of reality and the tendency towards immateriality have already happened in the field of art throughout the 20th century. Also, the theoretical topic of virtuality has been treated in numerous works of art and thought models. Among others, Peter Weibels (1990, 2015) work, both theoretical and artistic, plays a central role in this discourse. Originally, the spatial experience of humans was body-centred. Da Vinci's Vitruvian man or Le Corbusier's Modulor are just two examples from the history of architecture, where engineers or architects tried to find an anthropometric scale of proportions. Thus, this is not unproblematic, as Federica Buzzi (2017, 'The Modulor Man and other dummies') points out: "Situated within a certain Western humanistic programme that goes back to Protagoras 'Man, measure of all things' then revived by Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, Le Corbusier's Modulor is an updated version of this masculinist and ableist universalism."

According to Peter Weibel (1990), a machine-based spatial experience emerged with industrialization, and since the information revolution (telephone, telefax, television and internet) we can speak of a media-based spatial experience and architecture. Initiated by the technology of telecommunication and thereafter enhanced by the massive expanse of digital data space, demand arose to shift fundamental concepts of architecture such as materiality, gravity and volume towards the virtual realm. Stephan Doesinger's (2008, pp.16–19) 'bastard space' as well as Weibel's writings on 'disappearing architecture' (Flachbart, 2005, pp.12–15) and 'machine or media-based spatial experience' (Weibel, 2015, p. 31) present theoretical approaches, in which materiality/ physicality and -digitality are not understood as separate, but are interwoven, interconnected, and merged into one. Therefore, I would like to pose the following question: Do we still have the possibility of a collective virtual and material urban space, a shared experience, settled in built and unbuilt space alike, both beneficially interwoven into each other?

2. Rafaël Roozendal

Understanding the digital not as a self-contained realm but as yet another layer of the reality-complex we live in, is an approach embodied, among others, in the work of Rafaël Rozendaal, a visual and digital artist who attracted attention by using the World Wide Web as his canvas (Jordan, 2017). Rozendaal programmed a vast set of pleasing homepages (Rozendaal, 2001–2019), each based on one distinct effect. Sometimes the pages are responsive to the visitor's behaviour: by clicking s/he might subdivide the canvas or trigger the program to perform the assigned artistic action. In any case, the interaction is rather meditation-like—there is not much to do on Rozendaal's pages—on the contrary, visitors get decelerated and find themselves observing and enjoying. "Art is a place for reflection and contemplation. Quiet, calm, staring. Trying to observe without too many thoughts. (...) We are used to viewing art that way, but the internet is a different place. The internet is fast paced, jumping from link to link, from impression to impression". (Roozendaal, 2020)

'Quiet, Calm, Staring' (2020) was the title of the first exhibition on the online portal of Amsterdam-based upstream gallery. Rafaël Rozendaal selected 13 websites by different artists that do not require interaction or provide information but are endpoints. Visitors find themself decelerated, in a quiet space, a safe space, that seems protected from the constant information and sensory overload characteristic of the internet. On the contrary, those are spaces capable of offering calmness.

Social Media and therefrom constant distractions and disruptions of attention have become not only an omnipresent part of our everyday lives, but even our urban tissue has become extended by digital layers of information: We navigate the city, constantly online; we are using dozens of Apps to access the public transport schedule, unlock a car or call an Uber. We share our location; we check opening hours and ratings. At the same time electronic billboards, automated lights, sometimes even acoustic announcements attract our attention and guide us. Through data we talk to the city and the city talks back to us. But this communication is mainly driven either by the idea of hyper-efficiency or serves to persuade us to consume. Also, it is characterised by multiple

Apps running in simultaneity and delivering information in equanimity, until we run out of battery and therefore often seems rather exhaustive, especially on a visual and perceptual level. Time Square NYC is definitely one of those places, which best exemplifies this over-stimulation; even more impressive, in this context, seems one short moment of respite at the dead of night:

Between 41st to 49th streets, just before midnight around 100 of the iconic electronic billboards display digital works of art for 3 minutes, from 11:57 pm to 12:00 am. "Midnight Moment is the world's largest (...) digital public art program." (Time Square, 2022) A new artwork is presented every month. The program has been running since 2012 and has since showcased the work of over one hundred contemporary artists. In February 2015 Rozendaal presented his work 'much better than this': Two faces, depicted as brightly coloured silhouettes, are kissing each other. With each kiss, one of the silhouettes—the one, which initiated the kiss—is changing its colour. Exhibited during Valentine Season, through its simple but compelling visual language, the work aimed at addressing the viewer regardless of social and economic background, ethnicity, or education. This way—by using digital media—the artist created visual stillness and a moment of emotional contemplation at one of the busiest places worldwide: An artistic proposal for emptied virtual spaces, where digital or virtual space is used to reduce sensory overload.

Rozendaal's (2010) first attempt to bring the Internet into physical space dates some years back, to his idea for the open-source project 'BYOB'. The first BYOB event was organised by Anne de Vries & Rafaël Rozendaal in Berlin. They invited 25 artists to 'bring their own beamer' (projector) and collectively populate space for one night with projected digital content. Thereafter, BYOB was repeated many times around the globe.

I find Roozendaal's investigations in the creation of visual stillness or togetherness within the digital realm relevant to my work, as they imply an interest in perceptual processes and the construction of space through digital media. Furthermore, Roosendaal's work shows how virtual spaces offer opportunities to occupy space that is free of regulatory restrictions, established by institutions or markets.

Average screen-time is globally increasing, "teens spend up to 9 hours" (AACAP 2020) a day in front of their phones. This clearly shows the scale of virtual space: it will soon exceed the physical, built space and, therefore, has entered the conceptual realm of architecture. Consequently, we need new perspectives on built and unbuilt spaces, where both can be advantageously interwoven.

3. Other Matter

Does architecture always need to be physical? Which ways of spatial expression, embodiments, extension and new awareness can be achieved and designed through digital media? And what role could Augmented Reality (AR) play in (re-)programming space, especially in exhibition design and contemporary, virtual design methods?

I approached these questions in the course 'Other Matter', conducted together with Bence Pap and in collaboration with students from various departments at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna during the summer term 2021. We wanted to investigate the possibilities of the population of virtual and augmented space in a playful use of digital technologies, in this case AR. We looked at different notions of immaterial architecture in order to develop ephemeral, audio-visual objects, structures or installations, which are able to enter into a dialogue with the existing architectural context and echo new experiences or new ways of perceiving space. The existing spatial context was 'the Heft', a deserted iron ore plant in Carinthia, Austria, with a built extension, an impressive steel-glass-construction erected on the occasion of the Carinthian Provincial Exhibition between 1993 and 1995, which is today considered a central work in architect Günther Domenig's oeuvre. Due to its vacancy over several decades, a unique situation of sculptural and architectural overlaps as well as overgrowths by nature have emerged. In the course, groups of students were asked to develop a space-bound AR-exhibit. Each group was asked to accentuate one of the many layers or histories of the place and investigate possibilities of how the interface design could foster involvement in a way that is playful, intuitive and low-thresh-

old. The exhibits were shown as part of the exhibition Günther Domenig: DIMENSIONAL @ Heft/Hüttenberg (2022), curated by me. Likewise, the slightly dystopian and definitely post-anthropocentric effect of the building was accentuated by the interventions of the students. Each group selected a specific location, which, on the occasion of an initial field trip, was digitally documented and reconstructed in 3D to let the new ephemeral figurations, designed by the students, properly blend into the existing structure. The portals to those space extensions were black and white QR-codes, positioned on delicate pedestals, consisting only of a box-wireframe out of reinforcing bars. They could be scanned and viewed via the visitor's phone camera, whose paths got disrupted and their attention drawn to specific contextual layers (Video Link: https://youtu.be/xz2tf01Zv1U).

The Project Cyber Nature for example recalls Domenig and Huth's project Medium Total (1970–1973): a cellular membrane that adapts to its environment. Alina Logunova, Peter Marius, Tomaz Roblek and Adam Sinan created a colourful animation climbing up the walls inside of one of the two blast furnaces. The graphical language of the animation (see Figure 1) is based on the original drawings by Domenig and Huth (1969–70) in direct reference to Medium Total the project expresses a cybernetic nature that creates a new dynamic layer on top of the existing physical structure and thus the project sensitises the recipient for the multitude of layers of ruins, architectural structures, and nature found at the Heft.

In the other blast furnace a lens-like installation by Martin Eichler, Martina Moro and Dunia Sahir could be seen, which draws the visitor into the atmosphere of the original function of the building—an iron ore plant—by making the chemical reaction of iron ore perceivable through their audio-visual AR-installation 'the last iron lung'. Their project (see Figure 2) draws attention to the life cycle of the non-human entity of the furnace and how it shaped and continues to shape the local ecosystems. They treated the furnace as if it was alive. In their project description they explain, how the chemical reaction active during iron production could be compared to the act of breathing of living organisms, because oxygen is introduced from the bottom to ignite the melting iron, while CO2 is emitted on top, producing pollution.

Figure 1. 'Cyber Nature'. Source: Alina Logunova, Peter Marius, Tomaz Roblek and Adam Sinan

These installations showed a deep connection to the place, a kind of territoriality or relation to the place, where they were meant to be installed. They are place-making or better place-establishing, as, by telling alternative (hi)stories, they create new access points and hence a new understanding for the existing space. Interestingly enough, the developed projects also could be relocated to be exhibited at the Angewandte Festival 2021. The works managed to carry the special atmosphere and the different layers of identity of the Heft to Vienna.

Figure 2. 'The Last Iron Lung'. Source: Martin Eichler, Martina Moro and Dunia Sahir.
Video Link: https://youtu.be/UUAIthkr8XA

4. Flying Eyes and Other Works by Eva Schlegel + 2MVD

'Flying Eyes' was a public exhibition at Museumsquartier (MQ) Vienna in Summer 2022 showing a set of AR sculptures (see Figure 3) developed by the artist Eva Schlegel in collaboration with 2MVD. Scattered around the exterior space, those sculptures were playful and engaging, drawing visitors in by their apparel.

According to Doesinger (2008), conventional digital interactivity evolved mainly through (video)gaming and, due to its technical limitations, is historically limited to a fixed set of possible actions. This induces a behaviour, which is following a strict protocol and, therefore, reduces creativity. Conversely, it seems that the absence of a protocol is what conceptually differentiates the action of playing from gaming: Playing implies invention and learning, while gaming is about acting according to preconceived rules.

The AR-sculptures were created as an exemplary case study for the AR-App Wikar. The study was first shown in October 2021 in Palermo at Spazio Incolto ai Cantieri Culturali alla Zisa (see Figure 4). The Wikar App was developed by the Advanced Visualisation Lab of the National Centre for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Cyprus Institute, der DARIAH uDigiSH Working Group and BEAMY.space. The App aims to offer a platform to various cultural institutions, to add historic and speculative cultural information layers to a specific venue in a city. We were in direct contact with Colter Wehmeier, who programmed the App, in order to develop and extend the App for an art use case.

2MVD is a collaboration between Damjan Minovski and me, founded in 2017 in order to develop speculative spatial projects at the boundary between technology, art, design, film, and architecture, while connecting architecture with innovations and advances in the field of digital technology. Our work has been shown in galleries and at Design and Film festivals in Austria as well as internationally.

Figure 3. 'Flying Eyes'. Installation at MQ in Vienna. Source: Eva Schlegel & 2MVD; Foto© eSeL.at - Lorenz Seidler

Figure 4. 'Ice White', 'Nebula' and 'Read me'. Installation view at Spazio Incolto. Source: Eva Schlegel & 2MVD, Foto © Damjan Minovski

Eva Schlegel's (1994–2022) work focuses on the concept of space, immateriality, and the relationship between image and language. It is often concerned with perception and cognition processes or, more precisely, their failure. In her blurred photography (2002) she confronts the viewer with the inability of seeing in focus or she deprives the text of legibility by blurring text (1994). But despite this deficit at first glance, Schlegel is rather interested in how much information is inscribed in the underlying visual and spatial structures and, thus, remains visible. In the context of the bespoken study, those moments of perceptual failure were translated into AR-sculptures.

'Black Holes' and 'Ice White' are both ephemeral spheres, approximately 2–3 metre in diameter, floating one metre above the ground. You can enter them and be completely surrounded by them. When inside, you see the world through the work, which acts as a filter, visually distorting or defragmenting the surrounding environment. 'Black Holes' is a matte black surface, which has an animated texture with vivid circular perforations. The perforations grow or shrink continuously and, thus, Black Holes becomes an animated mask, blending fragments of the surrounding space in and out (see Figure 5).

'Ice White' is based on the concept of refraction. The sphere has an icy texture, somewhat like a frosted window. It is transparent and you can see through it, but the image is not clearly visible. It is distorted by a shader script that alternates the information collected through the device's camera (see Figure 6).

Figure 5. 'Black Holes'. Source: Eva Schlegel & 2MVD, Foto © Damjan Minovski

Figure 6. 'Ice White' at the Stadtgarten in front of Kunstraum Dornbirn. Source: Eva Schlegel & 2MVD, Foto © Valerie Messini

The work 'Read Me' (2021) deals with the (in)ability of grasping words, the transience of time, and the immateriality and beauty of poems. All the works cited above were meant to be exhibited in a public space. Besides MQ Vienna, they were exhibited at Palermo Spazio Incolto and in Dornbirn in front of CampusVäre and Kunstraum Dornbirn.

The App needs to be downloaded, but it is free. Thus, it has a low-threshold for access and holds a potential for inclusivity, as possible viewers do not get scared by highly priced tickets and artworks closed off behind museum doors. The works proved to be very easily accessible and also involving. The fixed installation of the QR-codes established a stable position and orientation of the virtual objects, perceivable in the same way through any phone and by any user. This way, all visitors were navigating the same space and hence a communal experience could emerge. This became obvious as we could observe the visitors lively engaging, taking pictures, moving around or simply indulging in the viewing experience. But more than for taking selfies, the installation became a place for the collective discovery of funny visual alterations of the self, the works would produce. As the App also incorporated a Photo-Button, it was an important part of the project to create an urge to take a picture. And of course, we wanted to design this experience to be pleasing, and to be rewarded by a good image.

The work both functions as a lens—when inside—and, on the other hand, when seen from the outside, as an object that enters in relation with the human body (see Figure 7). Some objects are moving, hence, the user can chase them or interact with them.

For the abovementioned exhibition at 'the Heft', Eva Schlegel, Damjan Minovski and I developed two site-specific works, or better adapted two of the existing sculptures to the spatial and contextual framework. In 'Read Me Heft' (2022), we respond to the history and structural condition of the Heft: ghostly, cloud-like ephemeral and transparent texts tell the story of …. the site (see Figure 8). Texts fly away, like memo-

Figure 7. 'Inspecting Eyes'. Source: Eva Schlegel & 2MVD; Foto © Martina Moro
Video Link: https://youtu.be/4OCih5G7QYQ

Figure 8. 'Read Me Heft'. Installation view. Source: Eva Schlegel & 2MVD; Foto© Valie Messini

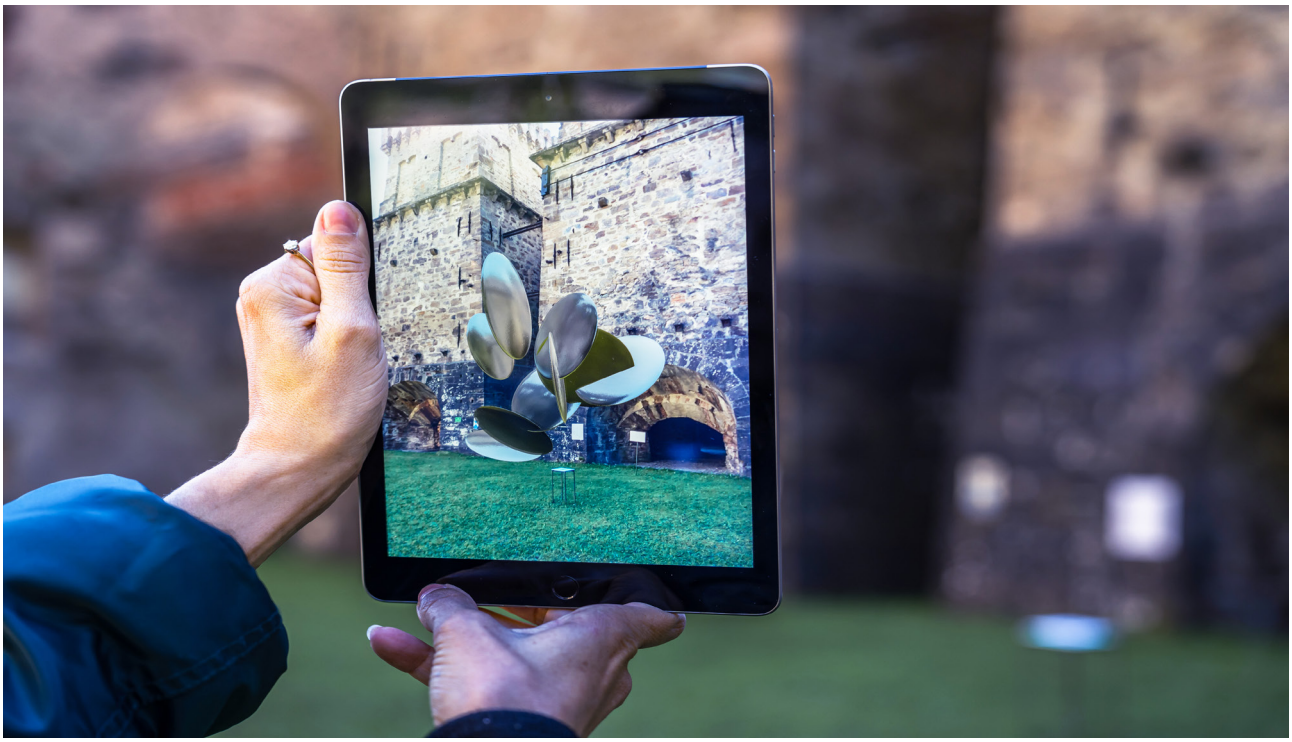

Figure 9. 'Shifting Blades'. Source: Eva Schlegel & 2MVD; Foto© Maria Wawrzyniak

ries, but are still readable, describing the evolution, and decay of this impressive architecture and the subsequent intervention by Günther Domenig.

The second sculpture, 'Shifting Blades' (2022), is floating in front of 'the Heft's' entrance: a huge, gravity-defying sculpture made of shiny steel, a reference to iron mining. The metal circles, weighing tons, move and (re-)configure themselves continuously. They mirror and reflect their surroundings in their movement (see Figure 9). With the help of a smartphone App, viewers can experience the space digitally. The App includes a photo function, so visitors can capture and share the experience photo- and video-graphically and perpetuate the history of the place.

5. Digital Twins

The work 'Digital Twins' (2MVD, 2022) is an investigation of a media-centric spatial experience, which, again, follows the theoretical approach described above, in which physicality and digitality are not understood as separate, but as merged into one (see Figure 10 and 11). We (2MVD) used digital design tools to populate and expand material space through visual effects that put a focus on the notion of interaction and artificiality. On an aesthetic level, the term 'digital nature' lies at the core of this work: We are interested in the interconnections and antagonisms of mathematical and natural shapes. Another main focus was the investigation of spatial perception in digital space as well as the possibilities and potentials of interaction with digital, virtual objects. We tested different forms of spatial implementations and interactivity to encourage diverse modes of interplay.

To view those augmentations, we developed the AR-application 'afx–isi' (2MVD, 2022): Through a smartphone the user can explore virtual art-pieces or scenes freely with what is called 'six degrees of freedom', which refers to the freedom of movement in space, and allows for a combination of translation and rotation in three perpendicular axis. The experience was designed to be spatial, architectural, and interactive. There was a focus on bridging the gap between physical and virtual space. Each virtual piece had a physical reference object present in space. Some of those objects were displayed horizontally and framed by roll cars, thus movable. By moving the roll car, you could also influence the digital twin's position. The position and appearance of the virtual art-pieces can be fine-tuned to blend seamlessly with the physical environment. For 'afx–isi' all exhibits can be processed in several steps to allow for high visual fidelity within the technological constraints for/of mobile devices. As trigger objects, a diverse set of graphics is used, which are abandoning the conventional QR code aesthetics. To develop the graphics, we had to learn how the program sees or reads an image. We learned that they had to contain bold lines and large, asymmetric colour patches to ensure legibility.

In the exhibition, an additional virtual layer becomes tangible—immaterial, sometimes floating sculptures and new spaces, seamlessly integrated into existing brick walls or attached to material objects scattered in the exhibition space (see Figure 12–14). We want to address a supposedly banal question: What is the difference between materiality, virtuality, and reality? We want to tighten the threads between the immaterial and the physical to overcome this dualism. Therefore, we invite you to interact and explore the relations between what is there and what you see, between the human and the non-human, between you and the other… and make kin.

The building of relations between the human and the non-human, "the ontological inseparability of intra-acting agencies" is the fundamental notion of Barad's (2007, p.333) Agential Realism, and it is what they[1] calls intra-action: For the author, no phenomena nor objects exist, as such, anteceding their intra-action. They only pop into existence through and because of bespoken intra-action, which implies. Basing their argument on QFT and quantum indeterminacy, Barad looks at measurements, which they describe as "world-making: matter and meaning do not pre-exist, but rather are co-constituted via measurement intra-actions".

Digital Twins (2022) turned out to be very engaging and interactive. At the exhibition opening the empty exhibition space

1 Barad uses the pronoun 'they'.

Figure 10. 'Digital Twins'. Exhibition view at Magazin. Source: 2MVD; Foto© Simon Veres

Figure 11. 'Digital Twins'. Exhibition walkthrough at Magazin. Source: 2MVD; Video© Damjan Minovski

was full of creatures commonly identifiable by a rectangular device in one of their hands. New patterns of movement and behaviour started to appear, sparked by the interaction with these otherworldly beings.

For Judith Butler (1988, pp.519–531), performative acts are constitutive of reality as identity, being bodily and social reality, is created through performative acts. The author points out that "[f]or both Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty, the body is understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities." (Butler, 1988, p.521) For her, the process of embodiment is a process of performative creation of identity. This leads to an understanding of body and identity, that does not refer to something ontologically or biologically given. Identity is therefore not fixed, stable, nor given. Identity is performed and thus open.

Figure 12. 'Murrex'. AR-screenshot / installation view at Magazin. Source: 2MVD; Foto© Valie Messini

6. Conclusions

In this article I present three art projects from my own practice, which all share the use of the medium of AR and the public space as a domain. I understand those three projects as attempts to create a liminal space for an inclusive art experience and, hence, a new approach to urban creativity and collective (intra-)activity. Especially, I want to focus on the potential of virtual space as a space for free thinking that is non-monetized and open to all. Its exploration is relevant to create an understanding for the use of digital urban space, its qualities and materialities. Thus, with this article I seek to illuminate the effects of digitalization on the perception of spaces and objects in urban contexts.

'Other Matter', developed together with students of the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, showed how AR can be used to make the hidden or forgotten identity of a place visible. Art and its processes and reflection can also be understood as an ontological effort, as an act of (self)recognition. While 'Other Matter' is augmenting a place on an epistemological level, the works developed with Eva Schlegel are also approaching the ontological potential of AR as a medium. We developed sculptures, which act as tools for observing the surrounding environment, the self, and the other through and in relation to the virtual objects. Also, the created works offered an element of aesthetic attraction, creating interest and fascination on the users' side. The users enjoyed engaging with the virtual pieces, also in small groups of two or three. This demonstrates, on the one hand, that the work has decelerating qualities similar to the works of Rafael Roozendaal, mentioned in the first section as a reference to user behaviour and created/implied spatial qualities. On the other hand, the work facilitates communication and community creation.

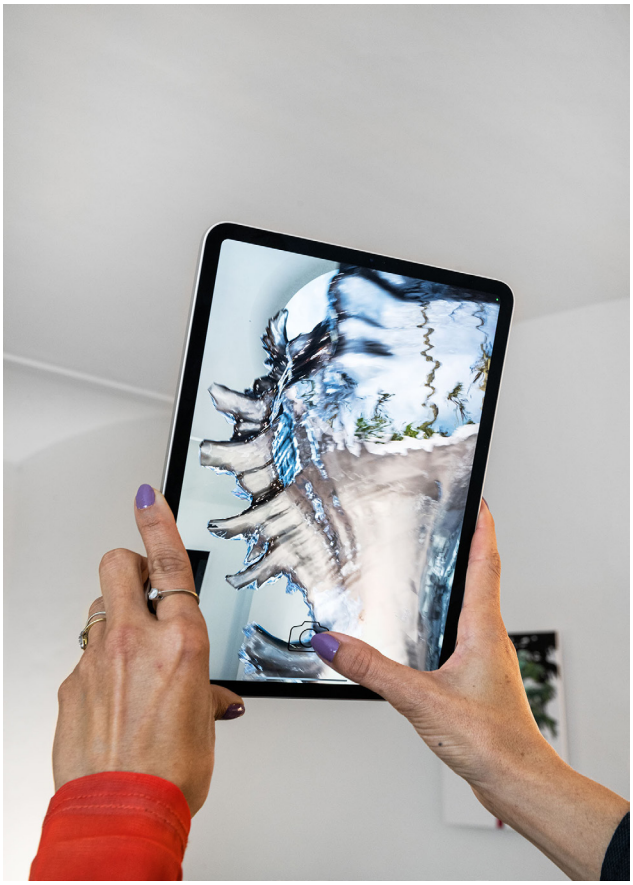

Figure 13. 'Jellyfish'. AR-screenshot. Source: 2MVD; Foto© Valie Messini

Figure 14. 'Murrex'. Installation view at Magazin. Source: 2MVD; Foto© Simon Veres

Coming back to the notion of playfulness and following the abovementioned concept of intra-action (Barad 2007), we could speak of playfulness as intra-action, where the action and the actor reciprocally constitute each other. Building on the experience acquired in the preceding projects, in 'Digital Twins' we fully focus on interaction, as per experimenting with different modes of involvement. By giving greater importance to the physical 'twin', we wanted to bind the virtual even more to the physical. The tracker objects gained a distinct visual appearance by abandoning the generic QR-code. The exhibition design had to take into account not only the experience of the human visitors, but also the methods of perception of the device. Similar to biological systems they have their own requirements to successfully navigate a room. In the case of 'camera tracking' the lighting conditions and visual features of the room had to be tested and adjusted against this. This was necessary to ensure the perfect interweaving of the virtual with the physical, which proved crucial for tricking the brain into establishing credibility through visual experiences. Unexpectedly, once established, the exhibition visitors—mainly young architects and artists—tried their best to trick the App: they catched virtual objects from the second, less well-lit room and dragged them to places they were not meant to be, thereby creating spatial impossibilities. Anyhow, taking computer perception into account follows this same Baradian train of thought and introduces 'intra-action' as a method into the design process. Intra-action understands agency as not an inherent property of an individual to be conducted, but as a dynamism of forces (Barad, 2007, p.141), whereby the apparatus and the artist are equal-

ly involved into the same process.

The exhibition also showed that even though the work takes a critical position towards social media, it performed extremely well in the realm of social media. The installations all proved to be a lot of fun and very fotogenic, and were, thus, widely shared on instagram. AR proved to be a relatively low-threshold medium and, if displayed in public space, it appears to be accessible to art lovers in the same way as to residents and passers-by with other contextual or cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless, the experience offered is mainly a visual experience. It is not inclusive towards people with severe visual impairment. The visual could be complemented by acoustic signals, again excluding another social group. For now it remains unclear, if and how far completely non-ableist technologies will develop. Addressing more than one sense at the same time could be a possible strategy to diminish exclusion. This also offers an artistic challenge: To offer an equally accessible experience, when perceived only acoustically or visually or both audio-visually, seems to challenge the accuracy of immersive spatial expression and this would demand a separate artistic study in audio-visual perception. Also, the possibilities of long-term distribution of AR artworks remain unstable, as they are highly dependent on the IOS and Android platforms and their future development.

In the conventional social media use case, the body becomes inactive and only the eyes absorb the frenetic and completely two-dimensional information feed. In this case, the device, or social media in general, can become a separating or distancing factor to the surrounding space. As exemplified in the above examples, I want to argue, that AR, on the contrary, can induce a great feeling of presence in physical space, as it mainly works like a loupe enabling spectators to envision an enhanced version of the space, which is actually, physically surrounding them. It engages the body in movement, as the objects are geolocated and no virtual navigation interface is provided. Therefore, the visual feed on the display always corresponds to your physical point of view. This is crucial to tie virtual and physical space together and, hence, induce spatial presence. This presence also lies at the root of sparking collective engagement in virtual AR spaces and opening liminal spaces for urban creativity.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Spatial Collage and the Viewers' Gaze – An (Un)Pleasant Journey. The Life of Stefan Edlis after HIM

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Abstract
The exhibition 'An (Un)Pleasant Journey. The Life of Stefan Edlis after HIM' brought Maurizio Cattelan's sculpture HIM to the Jewish Museum Vienna and referred to an indelible part of collective European history from the perspective of the eponymous collector's life story. In this context, Margula Architects realized an innovative exhibition concept for the sculpture, without 'putting it on a pedestal', integrating a very specific museum space, references to different times and places in the life of Stefan Edlis and a notorious piece of contemporary art in a unique design solution. Their spatial installation guides the viewer's gaze through space on an imaginary journey through the collector's life from his emigration to the US in 1941, to successful plastics manufacturer, and finally to famous art collector. The exhibition and the narration of Edlis' life story revolved around 'HIM', one of Cattelan's wax-sculptures, as an example of the collector's approach to contemporary art, also mirrored in the documentary 'The Price of Everything' directed by Nathaniel Kahn. By adopting the concept of spatial collage Margula Architects combined multiple references to different time-spaces, mediated via fragments of design history. A rich spatial narrative was interwoven with the museum's venue, drawing visitors in, guiding them through space and referring to Stefan Edlis' eventful life. Together with the museum's curatorial team, Margula Architects realized a unique exhibition setting for a controversial piece of contemporary art, conceptually challenging traditional notions of exhibition design, while striving for new horizons for communicating meaning, emotions, and history in space.

Keywords
spatial collage; exhibition design; contemporary art; Stefan Edlis; Maurizio Cattelan; Jewish Museum Vienna

1. Introduction

To find a spatial solution for a complex exhibition topic is always a great challenge to architects, exhibition organizers and lenders of artworks. In the exhibition 'An (Un)Pleasant Journey. The Life of Stefan Edlis after HIM' (Spera and Vocelka, 2022) Margula Architects endeavored to make exactly this happen: To present a sensitive topic, in a sensitive space to a sensitive audience, while respecting the artist, the owners of the artwork and the community that could refer to the presented exhibition piece as potentially scandalous and an affront to their world views. In this case, we are talking about the presentation of Maurizio Cattelan's sculpture 'HIM' in the Jewish Museum Vienna, a place dedicated to reflecting the multifaceted history of the Jewish community in Vienna in the light of the social and political situation of the early 21st century.

The sculpture was lent to the museum for the time of the exhibition (initiated and curated by museum director Danielle Spera) by Edlis' wife and co-collector Gael Neeson with the aim 1) to tell a story of the collector's life, based on Edlis' Viennese emigration passport issued in 1940, and donated to the museum in 2022, 2) to mirror his ambition as a collector, and 3) to show a controversial piece of art in a place sensitive to questions of race, religion, and political persecution.

The late Stefan Edlis purchased the work 'HIM' in 2002 from his friend Maurizio Cattelan and kept it in his office library, opposite to his emigration passport, which he kept in an office desk, not only as a reminder of his personal life story, but also of the goals he attained and the great fortune he acquired in the USA after fleeing persecution by the NAZIs in WW2. In this sense, the work refers to his life trajectory from persecuted Jew to successful plastics manufacturer to avid art collector, which has, i.a., been the subject of the film 'The Price of Everything' about the workings of the art market as an inspiration to collectors and art aficionados, but also as a machine for money-making and the diffusion of principles for aesthetic perception. It certainly could be said that, as with most art collectors, Stefan Edlis had a very personal relationship to art, the artists he collected, and the artworks in his collection.

Still, 'HIM' obtained a special status and it was up to Margula Architects to set the scene for its presentation at the Jewish Museum Vienna. This text sets out to document the process of exhibition planning, the conception of its architecture, its installation on site, its presentation, and conceptual implications after realization. To work with Cattelan's sculpture 'Him', one edition of which sold at Christies for USD 17.2 million (Christies, 2016), and to present it in a place dedicated to representing topics surrounding Jewish lives, art, and culture in the heart of Vienna was a special honor as well as a delicate matter, in terms of politics, public perception, and museum architecture. In the end, a visual language had to be found that reflects the life of the collector, the value of the presented pieces as well as their historical and symbolic meaning. Therefore, in the next sections we will try to sketch out the process that led from the idea for the exhibition to its full realization in spring 2022.

2. A Brief History from Early Exhibition Spaces to Exhibition Design in Vienna

In the city of Vienna historical references are hard to escape, with the entire city serving as a huge open-air museum that presents to the interested observer different architectural styles within short distances, abound with historical clues that make up the palimpsest of Viennese urban space (Siebel, 2004). Art and its exhibition spaces are said to be inherent parts of Viennese city life, and from art chambers to art salons and magnificent imperial museums, the evolution of artistic life and the presentation of art in the city was long dominated by the high aristocracy (Beßler, 2009).

While early art chambers were conceived to reflect the sophistication and extravaganza of their owners, often reuniting a conglomeration of memorabilia, craft pieces of exotic provenance, and a variety of artworks, 'good taste' and its reflection in a well-sourced collection became increasingly fashionable in certain social circles in imperial Vienna and other aristocratic houses in Europe in the 19th century (Klonk, 2009). Thus, owners of artworks began to develop a sense for 'collecting' and presenting their collections in appropriate, increasingly pompous spaces. The emperor of Austria took it upon himself to create the most grandiose places for showing art, while increasingly opening them to the public. In the context of Viennese city development after 1848, various cultural institutions, such as the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna (KHM) and the Vienna Opera, were erected in the place of the demolished city wall, to bridge the newly created open spaces and connect the inner city to the former suburbs. The emperor thus followed an international trend to present formerly private art collections to the public and let them take part in exercises of aesthetic perception, instead of locking the works away in dusty storerooms. The presented artworks should first and foremost attest to the formidable taste of the ruling class, but also open a space for aesthetic indulgence and enjoyment to the public. A process of democratization of aesthetic taste and consumption had thus begun in an era that saw unprecedented progress in areas as diverse as architecture, fine arts, design, and many more (Thun-Hohenstein et al., 2015).

In the late 19th century, the emergent bourgeoisie created their own (exhibition) spaces and claimed their position in the dynamic space of artistic (re-)presentation and aesthetic perception. Consequently, the exhibition of art pieces and their public reception were increasingly separated from their former exclusively aristocratic context and adopted by the bourgeoisie seeking to demonstrate their social rank and exquisite taste. Collecting, exhibiting, and living with art had become an exercise in educated citizenship, highlighting

the value of the individual and its position in society (Witt-Döring, 2015). From private salons to public museums and art galleries, the 19th century saw an unprecedented enthusiasm for art and presented a wealth of newly created exhibition spaces (Von Hantelmann et al., 2010).

Also, over time, the focus of exhibitions shifted from emphasizing the exquisite taste of the owner, to the artwork and, finally, to the artists, as exemplary figures of artistic production and aesthetic refinement (Klonk, 2009), who were, around 1900, celebrated as the new stars of the Austrian society. Progress in fine art, applied art, architecture, or literature, combined with unseen technological and social changes, contributed to a rich field for aesthetic evolution in early 20th century's Vienna that is still referenced in contemporary artistic production. The emergence of the white cube as a place for the presentation of artworks was, according to Von Hantelmann (2012), a reaction to the increasing individualization of society, both highlighting the artwork on display and the role of the viewer an independent citizen. The Vienna Secession was exemplary in this evolution, as, aside from its still impressive exterior, it held exhibition spaces largely stripped of ornaments (Kapfinger, 2012).

The venues for the presentation of artworks, hence, developed from overly decorated places of social representation, to 'purified' spaces of aesthetic perception, seemingly leaving social markers behind, while placing the focus on the artwork and the artist. Of course, this short outline of the history of exhibition spaces, cannot account for the myriad parallel and often contradictory developments that took place over centuries, but it highlights their evolution towards the seemingly neutral space of the white cube as a template for exhibiting.

Within the complex development of exhibition spaces, Austrian architect Friedrich Kiesler held an exemplary position, as he, from the 1920s on, started to incorporate extravagant viewing apparatuses into exhibition and stage design, creating immersive viewing experiences in historic Viennese interior spaces (Goodmann, 1988). In his work he decoupled

Figure 1. Slow Sculpture. Spatial Collage. © Margula Architects (2008)

exhibition displays as distinct installation objects from the surrounding space, which could be used in any setting and stand alone as independent objects of exhibition design. Friedrich Kiesler's approach represents a coherent tool to unite diverse objects of art in a thematic curatorial narrative, in order to present them to an inquisitive audience. With this shift, Kiesler presents the artwork on an exhibition display rather than in a neutral exhibition space and thereby guides the viewers' attention in an exhibition narrative that captures the audience in an immersive viewing experience. Exhibition architecture, in this sense, was not only supposed to guide people through space, but to create an exhibition experience based on aesthetic perception mediated by exhibition design. The role of exhibition architecture, as reflected in the work of Margula Architects, is to create a place for aesthetic viewing experiences based on the socio-historic context of the artworks, the curatorial narrative, and the exhibition space, by guiding the viewers gaze through the exhibition.

3. Some Examples

In recent years, Margula Architects have created exhibition architecture for some of the largest Viennese museums, i.a. Belvedere Vienna (2022), KHM (Haag and Sharp, 2018), or the Vienna Secession (2020). Also, they were part of the 11th Venice Architecture Biennial (Betsky, 2008; see also fig.1). As shown in the pictures below (fig. 2-7), Margula Architects strive to overcome the ubiquitous white cube setting for exhibition design and create rather narrative, engaging settings, which take the architecture of the exhibition venue into account, accentuate the works of art in their spatial and thematic context, adhere to the strictest security guidelines, and create spatial narratives that cross-reference historic and thematic elements in the exhibition and its spatial surroundings. The perfect example for this practice is the KHM exhibition 'Spitzmaus Mummy in a Coffin and Other Treasures', curated by Wes Anderson and Juman Malouf (Haag and Sharp, 2018; Mattiacci, 2019). In the exhibition Anderson and Malouf put a wealth of historical museum pieces on display that were selected from the KHM's vast repository.

Figure 2. Spitzmaus Mummy in a Coffin and other Treasures. Photo: Andrea Rosetti © Fondazione Prada

Figure 3. Spitzmaus Mummy in a Coffin and other Treasures. © KHM

Figure 4. Spitzmaus Mummy in a Coffin and other Treasures. Photo: Andrea Rosetti © Fondazione Prada

Figure 5. Dalí – Freud. Photo: Johannes Stoll. © Belvedere, Wien

Figure 6. The Age of Dürer. Photo: Johannes Stoll. © Belvedere, Wien

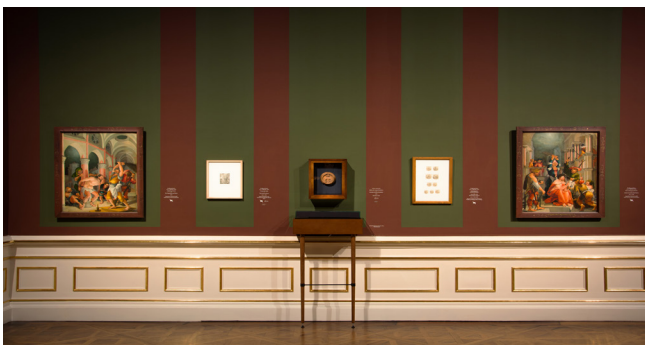

Figure 7. The Age of Dürer. Photo: Margula Architects. © Margula Architects

Figure 8. Heinrich Edlis in front of the house at Schönbrunner Straße 138, ca. 1936. Private property of the Edlis/Wassner and Motz/Warburton families

The museum architecture (as shown in fig. 2-4) 1) highlighted the exhibited pieces, while 2) structuring the exhibition spatially and thematically, 3) applying a color code system that referenced the architecture of the KHM, 4) integrating highest security standards into the displays, and 5) realizing an integrated architectural concept that guides visitors though the exhibition in an aesthetic spatial narrative, reflected in its various architectural elements. Likewise, the exhibition 'Dalí – Freud – an Obsession' (see fig. 5) made use of Kiesler's conception of free-standing art displays, which were arranged in a red and pink interior (Moravec and Zeiss, 2021), creating a cozy feeling by referencing Persian rugs that Freud used to have in his office and consulting room (Freud Museum London, 2018). It also creates the feeling of being inside a womb (Hintermeier, 2022).

The exhibition 'The Age of Dürer – Austria at the Gate of the Renaissance' (see fig. 6 and 7) deals with art at the end of the medieval times on the verge of the Renaissance. Here, Margula Architects work with the medieval clothing theme of the Mi-Parti, where fabrics of different colors were combined vertically. This technique creates stripes, which can also be read as banners that remind the viewer of the artwork's period. For the exhibition, the colors were picked to match the paintings and objects in the room and make them stand out more than they would on a white wall. Meanwhile, the vitrines and podiums were designed to match the interior of the baroque exhibition space (Belvedere Vienna, 2022).

In the design process Margula Architects work with space, instead of merely working in it, re-formulating spatial settings by combining thematic and historic references of the works on display with engaging exhibition architecture and the architectural context of the exhibition venue. In this sense, the supposedly neutral container of the white cube is transformed into an exhibition setting, which is engaging the visitor, while creating an immersive viewing experience.

4. An (Un)Pleasant Journey. The Life of Stefan Edlis after HIM

The exhibition 'An (Un)Pleasant Journey. The Life of Stefan Edlis after HIM' took place from April to October 2022 and was to be installed in the Jewish Museum Vienna's smaller exhibition space of 42 sqm. It was planned to reflect Stefan Edlis' life story from persecuted Jew in Vienna to famous art collector in the USA and centered on two exhibits: Edlis' emigration passport from 1940 and Maurizio Cattelan's ingenious sculpture 'HIM'.

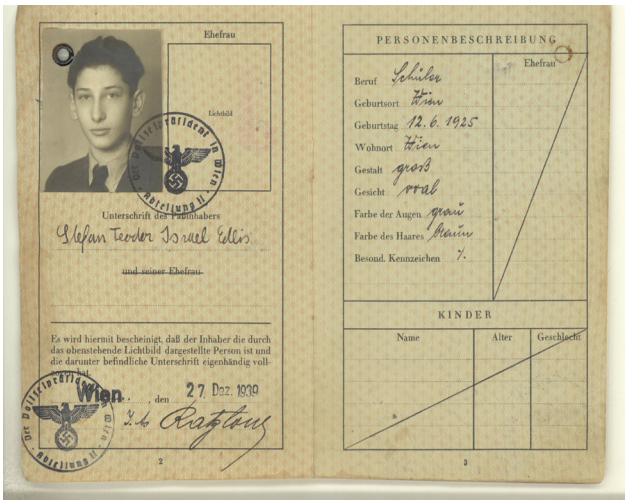

Figure 9. Stefan Edlis' passport with the forced first name 'Israel'. JMW

Figure 10. Stefan Edlis and Maurizio Cattelan. Private property of Gael Neeson

The Edlis family, who had arrived in Vienna from Munkacs in todays' Ukraine, lived at Schönbrunnerstraße 138 in Vienna until 1941 (fig. 8), when the deadly intentions of the ruling Nazi party became all too apparent. After having their passports stamped with the letter 'J' (fig. 9) for 'Jew' and facing increasingly dangerous circumstances in their newfound home Austria, Edlis' mother took one of the presumably last chances to legally exit the country and emigrated to the United States with her three children, where they arrived in New York. In the USA, Edlis joined the US Navy and was deployed to the Japanese island of Iwo Jima. He quickly gained citizenship and opened his own enterprise, Apollo Plastics, which produced, among other things, spare parts for electronic devices and plastic tools, and quickly earned him a vast fortune.

After separating from his first wife and mother of his two children and selling his company in 2000, he decided to take on an exciting new career path in a completely different field: He started to collect contemporary art and, together with his new partner Gael Neeson, built an impressive art collection. However, the pair imposed upon themselves one rule: No more than 100 artworks and 40 artists were to be included in the collection so that, after completing their initial goal, they had to decide which artwork or artist to drop, whenever they wanted to extend their collection.

Over the years the pair amassed an impressive collection, which earned them a place in the artworld documentary 'The Price of Everything', directed by Nathaniel Kahn, where relationships between artists, artworks, collectors, and the art market were explored. His newfound profession also earned Edlis the friendship of many artists, among them Maurizio Cattelan, whom Edlis knew personally since 2001 (fig. 10). Edlis bought 'HIM' for USD 250.000 in 2002, which was manufactured by the famous wax figure sculptor Daniel Druet. He placed the sculpture in his library, close to his work desk in his office in Chicago, where the work remained until his death 2019 (Spera and Vocelka, 2022). Because of his strong emotional ties to the city of Vienna and the social relationships he had still entertained with the Old Continent, Gael Neeson donated Edlis' emigration passport to the Vienna Jewish Museum, upon his wish, and decided together with museum director Danielle Spera to organize an exhibition re-narrating Edlis' life story, revolving around the donated passport and Cattelan's sculpture 'HIM'. In the process of exhibition planning, Margula Architects were selected to create the exhibition design and stage the exhibition pieces in the museum's small exhibition room.

5. Exhibition Design – the staging of 'HIM'

The initial idea was to transform a neutral exhibition space into a setting that emanated the atmosphere of Edlis' private rooms and to enchant the viewer in a spatial narration of his life story. The architectural concept for the exhibition included 1) the reenactment of the display of the sculpture in Edlis' office library in Chicago, 2) references to architectural elements of Viennese Gründerzeit houses, constructed in late 19th and early 20th century, and 3) the integration of the wonderful interiors of the Vienna Jewish Museum, notably the classicist ceiling.

Figure 11. Floor plan of the apartment, drawn by Stefan Edlis from his childhood memory, 2018. Private property of Gael Neeson

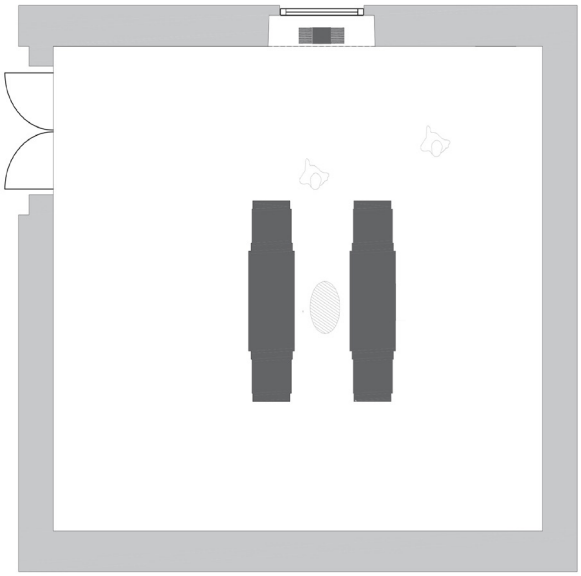

Figure 12. Floorplan Margula Architects © Margula Architects

The goal was to combine elements of Stefan Edlis' life in the exhibition design, including his escape from Vienna, his newfound life in the United States and his activity as a collector, in an architectural staging of 'HIM' and its organic integration into the museum's spatial setting. Hence, a spatial narrative was to be designed and to be mapped to certain spatial and symbolic markers, which highlighted the socio-historic meaning of the exhibition pieces in the context of Stefan Edlis' life and his approach to collecting art. In short, familiar spaces (Edlis' library, his Viennese home, the experience of emigration) were to be symbolically integrated with the museum setting, while pointing to the inherent complexity and uncanny presence of Cattelan's work 'HIM'.

Below we see a rudimentary plan of the Edlis family's former home in Vienna, which they had to leave in 1941, sketched out by Stefan Edlis shortly before his death (fig. 11). The late collector obviously remembered his Viennese apartment in great detail, including the room layout and furnishing. Even the proportionality of the rooms can be traced from his exact depiction of the window axis.

The floor plan of the exhibition shows two bookshelves standing next to each other with Cattelan's HIM in the middle and Stefan Edlis' passport presented in a window niche opposite to the sculpture (fig. 12). The setting re-enacted the layout and atmosphere of Edlis' office library, combining it with the historic paneled ceiling of the exhibition space, architectural references to Edlis' life in Vienna, and an illustrated narrative of the collector's life story on the walls around. To re-create an authentic historic feel without directly copying Viennese interior pieces, the bookshelves were designed to reflect various eras and their style features. In addition to aesthetic aspects, the bookshelves also fulfilled a security function, preventing viewers from touching the sculpture from the side, while also incorporating an alarm system.

The initial designs for the bookshelves can be seen below in fig. 13. The materiality of the objects as well as the chosen color scheme (depicted in fig. 14) optically related the various elements of the exhibition and integrated them in a common design approach. The goal was to condense multiple socio-historic references into a spatial collage, which stands for

the collector's oeuvre as much as for the different periods of his life and the inherent meanings they communicate. In this sense, the staging of 'HIM' should not be understood as an exercise in historical placemaking, but as the authoring of a tempo-spatial assemblage, which vividly re-narrates and integrates multiple historic trajectories in a single room, while reflecting the life of the famous collector and his agenda.

To visually diminish the size of the devilish figure on display, Margula Architects chose to use elements of Viennese modernity that stretch the vertical axis of the bookshelves towards the ceiling and connects it with the sculpture on display below (fig. 18 and 19). Additionally, the re-enacted library exhibits protruding shelves, with round and brightly colored edges that accentuate the horizontal axis, while drawing attention to the bookcase itself (fig. 15). While re-creating the setting of Edlis' library in Chicago, the horizontal plane structures the visual field of the spectator, mimics a real bookcase with mockup books—even a representational version of 'Psychopathia Sexualis' by Austrian psychologist and neurologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing that also could be found in Edlis' office (fig. 17).

The color of the bookshelf, finally, references the paneled ceiling and lets the viewers gaze glide vertically, while the horizontal structure of the shelves and the proposed direction of access to the exhibition room guides the visitor horizontally. With Stefan Edlis' life and his path from émigré to famous collector narrated on panels on the walls clockwise, arrows were installed on the floor on Cattelan's orders, which guide the visitor in counterclockwise direction to the back of the shelve. Here, the ingenuity of the exhibition design, combined with Cattelan's sculpture and his instructions for the visitor's access, comes to the fore: Entering the room in full view of the bookshelves' sides, full of mockup books and the fake copy of 'Psychopathia Sexualis', the faint outlines of a person, hidden between the shelves, can be perceived.

Approaching the back of the shelf, with its distinct horizontal lines and protruding edges that reach from the floor to the top of the furniture piece, a tiny figure, seemingly a child in a somewhat outdated suit enters the field of vision. A figure kneeling, shy and hushed. After passing the long side of the shelf and finally having walked all around to the front, we at last see 'HIM' in front view. Slowly a silent feeling of creepy surprise takes a hold of us, and we realize, that, opposite to Stefan Edlis' passport in a window niche (fig. 16) re-created from a traditional classicist design, which references the ceiling's geometry, inconspicuous and seemingly absent minded, with a slightly cross-eyed gaze and harsh features, kneels a miniscule version of Adolf Hitler (fig. 18 and 19).

To have Adolf Hitler kneel in the small exhibition room of the Vienna Jewish Museum to pray for forgiveness opposite to Edlis' historic emigration passport stamped with the letter 'J' seems like a risky project. The sophisticated combination of exhibition architecture and implied safety measures with the surrounding architectural elements of the exhibition space and their integration in a matching color scheme, results in a rich spatial collage that draws the spectator in and highlights the exhibition piece in the light of a multifaceted life-story reflected in the museum space.

The multifaceted spatial narrative traces Edlis' transformation from Jewish youth in Vienna, to marine, to entrepreneur, to famous art collector and involves Cattelan's sculpture, the architecture of the building, and a site-specific intervention that accentuates certain architectural elements. The socio-historic context of the sculpture on display cannot be

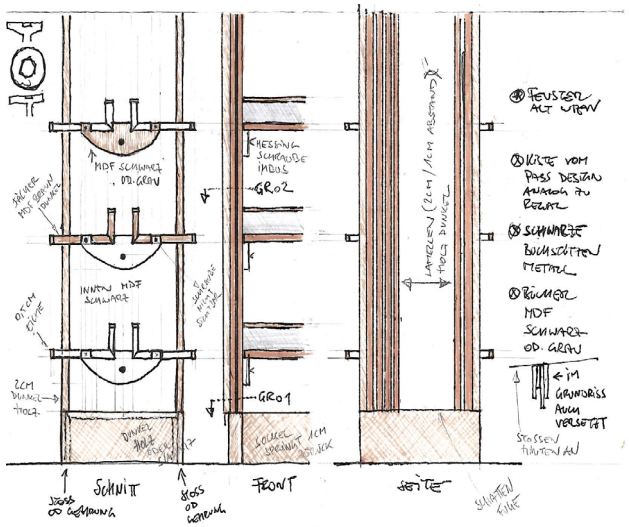

Figure 13. Design study © Margula Architects

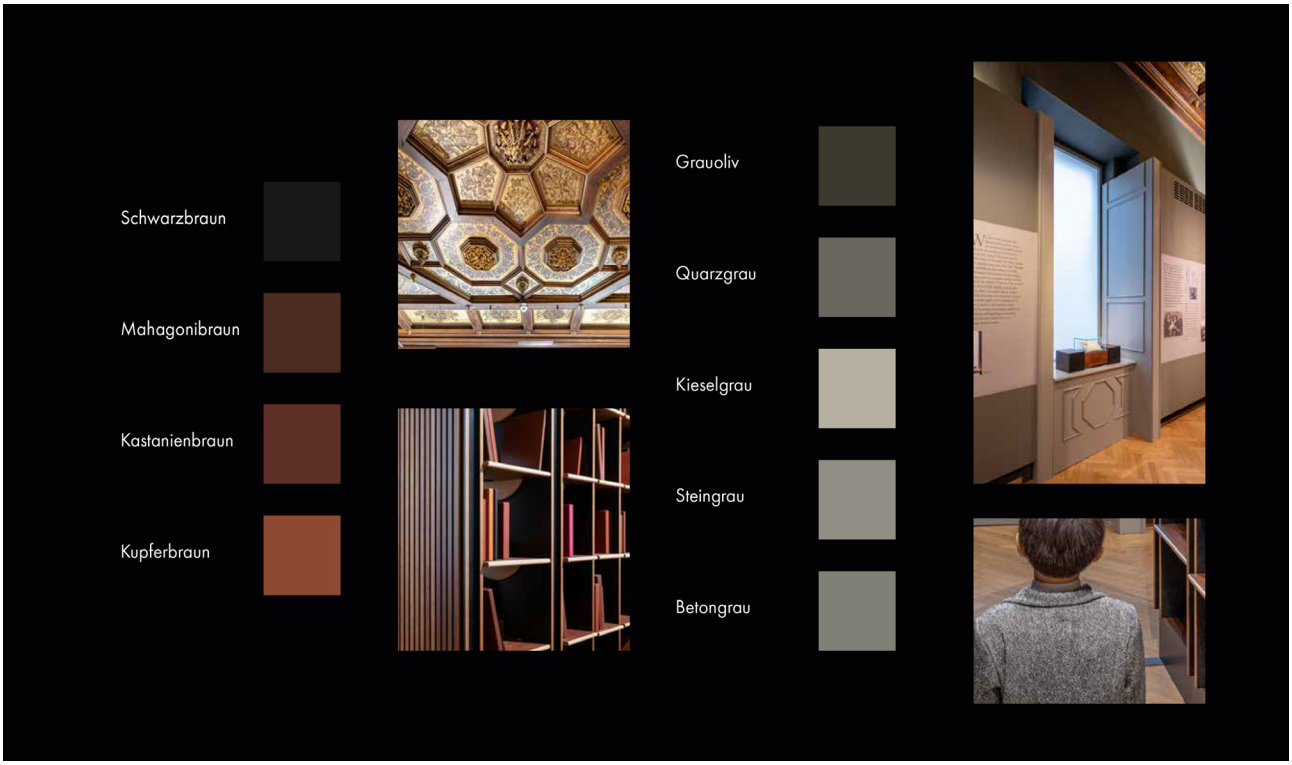

Figure 14. Color scheme. © Margula Architects

denied and neither its symbolism. Its daring presentation in a place dedicated to the reflection of Jewish life and culture shows how the complexities of Jewish histories can be re-framed in the contemporary discursive sphere. In this sense, discourse can be re-conceived in space, taboo issues can be reframed, and aesthetic perspectives on historical events can be created. Above all, the presentation at the Vienna Jewish Museum shows how a combination of architectural features, together with careful exhibition design can guide the gaze of the viewer to create a visual narrative that at the same time seduces the visitor, while accentuating the work on display and communicating its rich history.

6. Spatial collage as a strategy for exhibition architecture

By exemplifying Margula Architects' approach to exhibition design in the staging of HIM at the Vienna Jewish Museum, we want to re-create the process of assembling a spatial collage, which references different historical events, personal experiences and shared time-spaces, which still reverberate in Vienna's historic architecture.

In her seminal book 'For Space' (2005, p. 9) Doreen Massey has described how spatiality can be understood as a network of intersecting narratives or as the sum of myriad 'stories so far', which in their totality, represent the multiplicity of spatial meanings and their possible trajectories from the past to the future. Margula Architects now attempt to translate elements of these stories, some collectively and some individually shared, into coherent, enticing, and involving exhibition architecture. History is, here, not only understood as a socio-cultural backdrop or repository for sourcing material or references for exhibition design, but as an active matrix of collective imagination, which is re-created, re-invented, and re-formulated by active intervention in a collectively shared space of memory and aesthetic perception (Lindner and Meissner, 2019).

To tie together multiple strands of history, represented by objects, signs and symbols, in an architectural setting, also means to create an architectural chronotopos (Bachtin 2008; Holloway and Kneale, 2000) reflected in a spatial col-

Figure 15. Jewish Museum Vienna. Photo: Simon Veres. © Margula Architects

Figure 16. Jewish Museum Vienna. Photo: Simon Veres. © Margula Architects

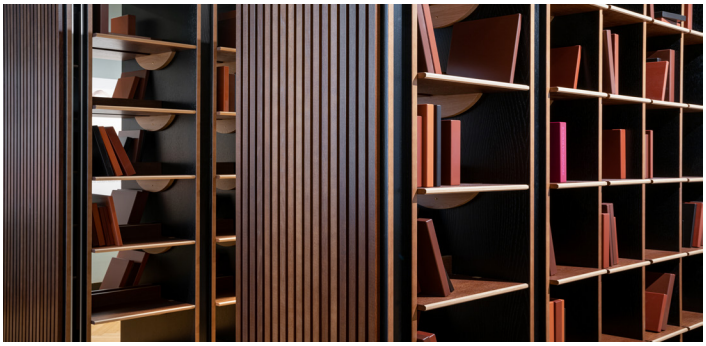

Figure 17. Jewish Museum Vienna. Photo: Simon Veres. © Margula Architects

Figure 18. Jewish Museum Vienna. Photo: Simon Veres. © Margula Architects

Figure 19. Jewish Museum Vienna. Photo: Simon Veres. © Margula Architects

Figure 20. Jewish Museum Vienna. Photo: Simon Veres. © Margula Architects

lage that re-unites different time-spaces in a particular place. The architectural interventions by Margula Architects highlight the work on display, emphasize elements of the museum architecture, re-narrate the life story of collector Stefan Edlis, and integrate all these elements in an enchanting exhibition setting that takes the viewers gaze as a starting point for visually (re-) narrating history as an aesthetic experience. Spatial collage, in this case, describes a concept for combining and re-arranging various references to a shared cultural space in a specific exhibition project. Space is, therefore, understood as a malleable matter shaped by the viewer's mind, mirrored in and accentuated by exhibition design and the presented art pieces. Architectural references guide the viewer through space and make the context of the exhibition understood, through an all-encompassing spatial experience. The weaving together of different socio-historic time-spaces via architectural references and spatial collage, then, results in a rich canvas to interpret and dive into the exhibition matter at hand.

Following Deleuze and Guattari's (2005) concept of the 'Rhizome', specific museum settings can be understood as tempo-spatial assemblages, opening potential for reflection and personal inspiration. In the present case, numerous references to different phases in Edlis' life served as spatial markers for connecting different strands of time. In this context, spatial collage creates a wealth of interlinked references, which make socio-material assemblages understood in their respective cultural or historic context, while at the same time making them accessible to the viewer.

Exhibition architecture, thus, becomes an active part of spatial narratives, which highlight certain elements of shared history to present us with a rich body of references, from which to make up our own mind. Margula Architects presents these worlds in a way that allows the viewer to become part of a collective narrative and find her/his own position in a meshwork of socio-cultural meanings. In this sense, we are all part of a shared chronotopos, constantly (re-)narrating the world

around us. The work of Margula Architects reminds us that we are all part of history, and that we all work together to collectively re-enact it in the light of current events. Margula Architects' exhibition architecture exemplifies how the presentation of artworks and architecture are interwoven to an extent that they both form part of shared narratives, re-enacted in space and pointing towards our collective future.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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The Potential of Creativity in a Local Agenda 21 Process: Experiences from Vienna`s Zentrum Favoriten

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Abstract
In scientific debates and international documents on sustainable development, creativity, art, and culture hardly play any role. Consequently, in the Local Agenda 21 framework on strengthening civil society initiatives creative forms of expression are not mentioned. In this article, we explore the process of the Agenda group 'Favoriten for Girls, Girls for Favoriten', which successfully increased the visibility of girls in public space. For the success of this initiative, creativity was important in two ways: First, different forms of artistic expression were used, such as music, painting, dance, theatre, e.g., in a creative competition or in different festivities. Second, the exchange between members of the Agenda group, other persons involved in the process as well as people outside the Agenda process enabled forms of co-creation – such as the renaming of a Favoriten square or the decision to build a Girls' Stage. We conclude that more attention should be paid to the potential of creativity to achieve a sustainable future and that creativity, arts, and culture should be included in future versions of the Agenda 2030 framework.

Keywords
Local Agenda, creativity, co-creation, girls, public space, Vienna Favoriten

1. Introduction

In programmes and reports on sustainable development adopted at the level of the United Nations, creativity, art, and culture hardly seem to play any role for building a sustainable future. Most recently, the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) failed to add 'culture' as the eighteenth goal to the Agenda 2030 on sustainable development goals (O'Connor, 2022). The same neglect can be observed in conceptualizing societal transformation towards sustainability (Griefahn, 2002; Kroismayr, 2022; O'Connor, 2022).

In connection with sustainable urban development, this is particularly astonishing as arts and culture have played a significant role in urban renewal and planning practices since the 1970s and 1980s in the United States and from the 1980s and the 1990s onwards in mainland Europe (Martinelli et al., 2010; Andres, 2011). Moreover, since the end of the 1990s, creativity, art, and culture were promoted as engines of economic development and innovation under the label of 'cultural and creative industries' (Florida, 2005; Peck, 2005). While the potential of arts and culture for economic development was widely recognised, it had so far been disregarded in the field of sustainability.

In this article we will explore the role of creativity, art, and culture in sustainable urban development by undertaking an urban case study of a Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) initiative in Vienna's tenth district, Favoriten. In Vienna, citizens are encouraged to bring in their ideas for sustainable development on a district level in a rather controlled and restricted

way (Novy and Hammer, 2007; Novy et al., 2010). The LA 21 office in the district serves as a supporter and mediator between citizens, district politicians and the city administration (Binder-Zehetner and Heintel, 2018). Although the potential of cultural and art-led creativity is not mentioned in the framework of LA 21 (Kurt and Wagner, 2002), civic initiatives often make use of creative forms of expression. In this paper we use the term creativity in two different ways: First, we relate creativity to classical genres of arts and culture, such as music, painting, dance, theatre, sculpture etc., second, we relate creativity to different forms of co-creation, i.e., acts of co-production carried out by a group of people (cf. Gaspar and Heintel, 2022).

As a case study, we discuss the example of the Agenda group 'Favoriten for Girls, Girls for Favoriten'[1], a group that has successfully advocated for its cause: to increase the visibility of girls in public spaces. We came across this interesting initiative during a project on cultural initiatives in *Zentrum Favoriten*, a quarter in Vienna's tenth district, *Favoriten*,[2] where we have been doing research for two years. In order to understand the process of this Agenda group in greater detail, we conducted interviews with members of the Agenda group, staff members of the Local Agenda Favoriten, and a former district politician between August and October 2022. In addition, we evaluated the documentation of the process on the LA 21 website and participated in a number of events of the Agenda group.

This article is structured in the following manner: First, we describe *Reumannplatz*, the public square where the initiative concentrated its activities, focusing on its infrastructure, demography, and image. Second, we provide an overview of the activities of the Agenda group 'Favoriten for Girls, Girls for Favoriten'. Third, we focus on the creative practises of the process and their overall effectiveness in increasing the visibility of girls in public space. Fourth, we discuss the empirical findings and their implications for a better understanding of the relationships between culture, urban development and sustainability.

2. Reumannplatz

Reumannplatz in *Zentrum Favoriten* is situated in a former working-class quarter and *Gründerzeit* neighbourhood with many buildings constructed before 1945. With its 27,000 sqm, *Reumannplatz* is the largest square in the district, which highlights its significance in the wider context of Vienna's urban space. Due to its size, it is not apparent that *Reumannplatz* is a central public transport hub with an underground station, several regional coach-line termini, and an underground parking facility. Rather, its dominant feature is its design as a park with trees and benches. On the eastern side of the square lies *Amalienbad*, a big public bath, which was built in the 1920s – at that time the most modern public bath in Europe. On the western edge of the square several well-established shops are located such as *Tichy*, a well-known ice cream parlour. Adjacent to it there are a pharmacy, a hairdresser's shop, and a jewellery store, which have been in business for many years.

Reumannplatz is used by heterogeneous groups of people, who spend time there – families, youth groups, retirees, unemployed persons, homeless people etc. Since the turn of the millennium many migrants moved into the area and, therefore, the share of inhabitants with Austrian citizenship dropped below 50 percent within the last two decades. Residents in this area often have limited financial resources and their net income is the third lowest in Vienna, while the unemployment rate is above average.[3] Population density around Reumannplatz is five times higher than the average in the entire tenth district (Gruber and Jauschneg, 2016). Due to these conditions, *Reumannplatz* is of enormous importance for residents fleeing constrained private housing situations, which makes it an intensively used square.

1 https://www.agendafavoriten.at/projekte-detail/maedchen-gestalten-den-reumannplatz-p.html

2 The research project was funded by the Jubilee Fund of the City of Vienna for the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (WU).

3 The statistical figures are based on data from MA 23 (Municipal Department for Business, Labour, and Statistics) and on the authors' own calculations.

The area in general, as well as *Reumannplatz* in particular, is struggling with a bad reputation. Poverty, the high share of Turkish migrants and recurring media reports about criminal incidents spurred negative outside perception. For several reasons this is likely to change in the coming years: First, there are two adjacent urban development areas, one already largely completed (*Sonnwendviertel*) and the other in the final planning phase (*Neues Landgut*), which are attracting residents with higher income. Second, in the immediate vicinity, the pilot project *Supergrätzl* is currently being implemented, which is inspired by the now famous superblocks of Barcelona. Third, *Reumannplatz* itself was redesigned between 2019 and 2020, with additional flowers, trees, and seating facilities. On this occasion, forth, an open-air stage was built, which was named 'Girls' Stage'. In our view, the stage has the potential to attract attention beyond the confines of *Favoriten* and could serve as an event location, where, amongst others, women initiatives from all over Vienna would be able to organise events. The construction of the stage is largely owed to the Agenda group 'Favoriten for Girls, Girls for Favoriten', which is the topic of the next chapter.

3. The LA 21 Process of the Initiative 'Favoriten for Girls, Girls for Favoriten'

At the end of 2013, Favoriten was Vienna's sixth district starting a LA 21 process, with citizens joining together in so-called Agenda groups and pursuing projects promoting sustainable development in the district. The opening event took place in the festive hall of Favoriten`s administrative centre, where first proposals for projects were collected and organised according to their general topic. The issue of better visibility of girls in public spaces was brought forward by a teacher from a school in *Zentrum Favoriten.* She became aware of the subject through a survey conducted by a class she taught in mathematics and gymnastics. In a project that combined the two subjects, pupils took notes in the adjacent park at different times, on who used it and when. In principle, this was supposed to be a mathematical exercise. An analysis of this simple statistical inquiry finally showed that after four o'clock in the afternoon the boys came to the park in larger numbers and claimed the football pitch for themselves, while mothers with kids and older girls with their younger siblings left the area. These results led to some discussions in the class. The teacher reported the outcome of this small study to the headmistress of the school, and when they were informed about the opening event of the Local Agenda in the district, they both saw an opportunity to bring the issue to the table. And indeed, at the meeting the deputy district mayor picked up the issue and spoke in favour of the proposal.

This opening event was also attended by an art therapist, who became aware of the event because she lived in the street, where the office of the Local Agenda Favoriten was located and had seen the announcement in the window display while passing by. She had been active in autonomous women's groups for a long time and had gained international experience in feminist projects, for example in Sweden. The empowerment of girls and the creation of opportunities for them to participate in public space was very important to her. When a second event was held to substantiate the ideas for the project and get real commitment, she joined the group. Nine Agenda groups emerged from this event. The Agenda groups were afterwards invited individually to the office of Local Agenda Favoriten in order to further concretise their projects. At that point a headmistress of a primary school in *Zentrum Favoriten* joined the group. She was informed about the formation of the Agenda group by the mathematics/gym teacher, who knew how important this cause was to her. Finally, the Agenda group was made up of four women: a teacher, two headmistresses and an art therapist.

In 2014, they met several times, developing a concept in cooperation with the staff of the Local Agenda Favoriten. In this phase they received the information that *Reumannplatz* would be redesigned after the extension of the U1 metro in 2017. This opened a window of opportunity. Ideas about activities went in two different directions. On the one hand, the question of safety was addressed as a crucial concern: How can girls feel safer at *Reumannplatz*? On the other hand, the members of the Agenda group were convinced that girls should have a voice in redesigning the square.

To promote safety in the public sphere, a Safety Party at *Reumannplatz* was organized in January 2015. The organisation of this party and other subsequent events was based on a certain division of tasks: the headmistresses advertised the

party in their schools and in the headmasters' meetings of the tenth district. The Local Agenda Favoriten invited organisations, which suited the Agenda groups' intentions to empower girls in public space. There was a continuous exchange between Agenda group, Local Agenda Favoriten, and district politicians in the so-called steering group, where each party is represented by a delegate. Support was also provided by district politicians whenever necessary. In case of the Safety Party, the local police and Vienna's public transport operator, Wiener Linien, were both contacted by the deputy district mayor. Both provided tours at the square and discussed with participating girls, how to behave, when they felt unsafe or threatened. The local head of the Favoriten police department also conducted a survey with the girls, asking them, in which places they felt uncomfortable and why? Consequently, the district organised a trimming of bushes, so that it was easier for the girls to see what was behind them. Furthermore, additional lights were installed.

To give girls a voice in the redesign of the square, a competition, calling for creative input and ideas, was launched in different schools in the district. Schoolgirls were asked to create drawings, collages, and sculptures of what *Reumannplatz* should look like, so that they would feel comfortable and enjoy being there. More than hundred schoolgirls between the ages of six and fifteen took part in the competition and submitted seventy proposals for redesigning *Reumannplatz*. Numerous submissions were shown in an exhibition in *Volkshochschule Favoriten*, the local adult education institution, which was ceremoniously opened by the district mayor. From September onwards, the drawings, collages and sculptures were also exhibited at Favoriten's administrative centre.

Two days earlier, the first Girls' Party took place at *Reumannplatz*. While the Safety Party was exclusively reserved for girls, this time also boys were allowed to participate, as the Girls´ Party had stirred the boys' curiosity and their desire for participation. At this event, several organisations from the district participated and offered information, food, and learning games. However, the schoolgirls also came up with their own activities. With two hundred fifty pupils from five schools, this festival was very well attended.

Afterwards, the Girls' Party was repeated every year, except 2020 and 2021, when the pandemic prevented it from being held at *Reumannplatz*. As Table 1 shows, both the number of participating schoolgirls and -boys, as well as the number of cooperative organisations and partners increased steadily with a peak in 2018 of more than five hundred pupils. This was the first time a leased stage was set up at the Girls' Party and a fashion show was organised with clothes donated from a nearby clothing company. The large number of participants almost exceeded the available space at the square. Therefore, in the next year the party returned to a more manageable size, this time focusing on dance and theatre. In addition to the Girls' Parties, other events were organised, such as a Winter Party to make girls visible in public space also during the cold season. All activities of the Agenda group finally resulted in the construction of a Girls' Stage in 2020, when *Reumannplatz* was finally redesigned. The next section is dedicated to the various creative activities that turned a small "Mickey Mouse Project" with the modest aim of "wanting to do a little something" into the very first Girls' Stage in Vienna, as the elementary school headmistress summarised the whole process.

4. Analysis of the Creative Practises in the LA 21 Process

In this chapter we reflect on two sets of creative practises, which played a significant role in the process at different times. As we will present them in chronological order, we have to switch back and forth: Traditional forms of creative expression such as drawing, theatre, dance etc. were important components of the Girls' Party and other organised events (see 4.2) and in workshops which took place on various occasions during the LA 21 process (see 4.2 and 4.5), while communication among the members of Agenda group and other persons involved in the process as well as people from outside stimulated ideas opening up new perspectives within the project. In this respect we analyse the 'level of diversity' within the Agenda group (4.1), the circumstances, which triggered the idea to rename *Reumannplatz* (4.3) and the decision-making process to build a Girls' Stage (4.4).

Date	Actions of the Agenda group	N° of participants	Cooperation partners	Types of creative-artistic activities
01-2014	Formation of the Agenda group			Designing a logo
12-2014	Start of the creative competition	100		Drawing, handicrafts
01-2015	Safety Party	280	Police, Samariterbund, Wiener Linien	
06-2015	First Girls' Party	250	Food X, Community Cooking, Police, Samariterbund, Volkshochschule (VHS), Wanderklasse	Theatre play, dance workshop
06-2015	Exhibition of the creative competition	100	VHS	Drawings, collages, sculptures
05-2016	Painting activities at the district Agenda office	35		Painting of benches and tables for Reumannplatz
06-2016	Second Girls' Party	350	Community Cooking, Fair Play, MA 48, Mobility Agency, Police, Samariterbund, Tanz die Toleranz, VHS, Wanderklasse, Vienna Youth Centres, Wiener Linien	Presentation of painted benches and tables, opening of *ReuMÄDCHENplatz*, dance workshop
12-2016	Winter Party	250	Community Cooking, Samariterbund	Wishes written down and attached to a string
06-2017	Third Girls' Party	400	Community Cooking, Goshin Jitsu Wien, LYMA, Mobility Agency, Open Bookshelf, Samariterbund, Tanz die Toleranz, VHS, Wanderklasse, Wiener Linien.	Circus and dance workshops
09-2017	Rail Poem	120	Tilia	Phrases written on rails
06-2018	Fourth Girls' Party	500	C&A, Community Cooking, Goshin Jitsu Wien, MA 48, Mobility Agency, Police, spacelab_girls, Offene Burg, FK Austria Wien, VHS, WiG, Wanderklasse u.a.	Fashion show, creative workshop, theatre workshop
10-2018	Workshop with girls on designing the Girls' Stage	25		Inserting decorative elements into the graphical draft of the stage
06-2019	Fifth Girls' Party	250	European Theatre	Theatre and dance workshops
10-2019	Flashmob for World Girls' Day	50		
2020	Construction of the Girls' Stage			
2020-21	Ongoing events, partly digital			
2022	Ongoing events of the Agenda group.			

Table 1. Overview of the Agenda group activities.

4.1. The Composition of the Agenda Group

The Agenda group was relatively small as it initially consisted of only four women. It was just large enough to be called a group at all, as one group member remarked. The background of the members, however, was interesting: Three women had been working in compulsory schools for many years, two of them in leadership positions. They were used to applying an institutional logic in the form of rules and regulations. This contrasted with the experience of the fourth group member, who had spent many years of her life in autonomous women's groups. She referred to this in the interview by pointing out that the atmosphere within the Agenda group was new to her and described it as 'less utopian', compared to the autonomous women's groups. From an external perspective, however, it could have been precisely this confluence of different worlds that significantly contributed to the success of the Agenda group. The teacher and the headmistresses successfully managed to provide direct access to the schoolgirls and, with the permission of the superior school authorities, they were able to combine activities of the Agenda group with daily school routine. One headmistress had the permission to report on activities such as the creative competition, the Girls' Party etc. at the headmasters' meetings of the tenth district and ask them to think about, which teachers from their schools would be interested in joining the project. This way they were able to involve a large number of girls, which generally is an important objective of the LA 21 process (Schnepf and Groeben, 2019). In contrast, the art therapist was used to working with girls on a direct and individual level and was very critical towards the whole societal system. For her, it was normal to question institutional frameworks. These different approaches complemented each other in an ideal way and contributed to the success of the Agenda project.

4.2. Forms of Creative Expression

The Agenda group's activities started with a creative competition, in which girls were expected to portray their visions of a redesigned *Reumannplatz*. The decision to launch a creative competition also aimed at reaching as many girls as possible. Painting, drawing, or collages are creative forms of expression that can be applied by all age groups. This allowed all classes from the compulsory school segment to take part in the competition. Moreover, it was not necessary for the schoolgirls to know *Reumannplatz* very well, as they could portray any square of their imagination they would like to hang out at. However, it can be assumed that most children knew Reumannplatz, because of the very popular ice cream parlour *Tichy*. Overall, three primary schools, three secondary schools, and a polytechnic school submitted 'creative contributions'.

The Agenda group's art therapist supported the competition by holding a number of workshops in the office of Local Agenda Favoriten with girls from a nearby after-school club. For her, it was very stimulating to work with the girls. The objects created by them were very colourful, sometimes several metres high and made on a scale of one to ten, mostly out of clay or paper-mâché – among them a snail-shaped construction into which girls also built a cave to retreat to or to hang out in with friends. Other girls worked on other objects such as the creation of a fountain.

Creative forms of expression also played a major role in the events at *Reumannplatz*. The girls themselves prepared programme items by staging small plays or showing dance performances. The association *Tanz die Toleranz*, which positions itself at the interface of art and social concerns, worked with the girls on forms of dance expression, regardless of their talents and experiences. Spacelab_girls, an institution of the Vienna Youth Centres, held workshops, where the girls could try out their handicraft skills. On one occasion, the *Offene Burg*, a department of *Burgtheater*, one of the oldest and most prestigious public theatres in Austria, was present at the Girls' Party and offered theatre workshops.

In addition, smaller events took place, also making use of creative elements, for example at the Winter Party, when the girls were asked to write down their wishes, which were then attached to a string. Another creative activity was the Rail Poem, which was organised within the framework of a citizen participation process. Before the rails of the tram were removed, the girls wrote down wishes and messages on them (see Figure 1).

4.3. A Second Name for the Square

When the square was built in 1872, it was originally called *Bürgerplatz* (German for 'citizen square'). It was renamed *Reu-*

mannplatz in 1925, the year when Jakob Reumann died – the first social democratic mayor and the first mayor of Vienna elected by universal suffrage. He governed from 1919 to 1923 and hailed from Favoriten. The second syllable of his name, '-mann' means 'man' in German. A project, in which girls were at centre stage and actively altered the square, e.g., by painting the benches and tables, prompted the art therapist to reflect on the name of the square: "I thought to myself: we can't name everything with 'Mann' now". She spoke about this with friends, including a colleague at work, who expressed the opinion that the syllable 'Reu' should also be gotten rid of. In the end, however, 'Reu-' was kept, and '-mann' was replaced by 'Mädchen', meaning 'girls' in German. When the deputy district mayor heard of the idea, he was immediately enthusiastic about it: "We'll do it right away". And in June 2016, the *ReuMÄDCHENplatz* was opened by the district mayor at the location (see Figure 2), where the coloured banks and tables had been placed. The right-wing party (FPÖ), which had gained many seats in the district council since the last election in 2015, protested against the decision and tried to ridicule the initiative by accusing the governing Social Democrats of 'gendering' the square. However, it was a play on words that was meant to illustrate the visibility of girls on a symbolic level. The square kept its name and only the site of the Girls' Party was renamed. However, this creative and at the same time humorous idea, developed by the art therapist in discussions with friends, has, in any case, generated much publicity for the project, as not only the district mayor and her deputy attended the opening, but also Vienna's city director for education joined the event.

4.4. The Decision for a Girls' Stage

In the creative competition launched in schools in 2014, the most frequent proposal for redesigning the square was a girls' centre or a kind of café, exclusively reserved for girls. This was inspired by the vacancy of an adequate locality, the Expedit, which was owned by Wiener Linien, Vienna's public transport operator, and had served as a changing and common room for their employees. There were talks to move this building to the edge of the square. However, this plan came to nothing and a relocation of the Expedit was rejected for financial reasons. By the end of 2017, Local Agenda Favoriten compiled a documentation report about the activities of the Agenda group and the outcomes of the creative competition. On the first page the following motto was proclaimed: 'Vienna/Favoriten gives girls a stage!' (Local Agenda 21, n.d.). And below: '*ReuMÄDCHENplatz* as a stage (And of course also usable for all others!)' (ibid.). On page 9 the proposals of the girls for the redesign of the square were ranked according to how often certain ideas were brought up. A stage for girls topped the list, although none of the drawings and collages showed a stage as such. However, many of the girls' proposals described activities that classically take place on a stage, such as music, dancing, theatre, or cinema.

In the preparation phase of each Girls' Party with its many artistic-creative parts in the programme, the desire for a stage was repeatedly expressed by the Agenda group and the staff of the Local Agenda Favoriten. Moreover, the elementary school headmistress's partner, who was a radio moderator, also got involved in the LA 21 process. Moderation as a form of presentation, which he brought into the LA 21 process as a topic, might have further solidified the idea of a stage. In the end, the dynamics of the process itself as well as the cancellation of the plans to turn the Expedit into a girls' café gave rise to the decision that a 'Girls' Stage' should be erected at *ReuMÄDCHENplatz*. Support for the idea of a Girls' Stage on behalf of the Local Agenda Favoriten, the will of the district council to increase the visibility of girls in public space, as well as the financial feasibility of its implementation finally led to the construction of Vienna's first Girls' Stage.

4.5. The Involvement of the Girls in Designing the Stage

In October 2018, the Agenda group organised a workshop in cooperation with an architect and a project manager from MA 49, in which more than twenty-five girls took part to share their ideas about the design of the stage and its usage. The latter was described by the ten- to fourteen-year-olds unanimously: there should be singing and dancing taking place on the stage. Concerning stage design, they came up with ideas such as messages and slogans to be written on the stairs, advocating the empowerment of girls, as well as a clear signboard above the stage. The girls worked in groups and visually depicted their ideas in a basic construction sketch for the architect (see Figure 3). All the girls' proposals and ideas were discussed with the architect and the project manager,

Figure 1. Girls writing on rails. Source: Local Agenda Favoriten.

Figure 2. Opening of ReuMÄDCHENplatz. Source: Local Agenda Favoriten.

both impressed by the creativity of the girls. Some of these ideas were adopted. For example, the name 'Mädchenbühne' (Girls' Stage) was visibly anchored in the skirting board of the stage. Also, the wish to cover the stage with a tarpaulin was realised in construction. Unfortunately, the tarpaulin was so badly damaged after just one season that it had to be removed. All in all, girls were part of a collective decision-making process, which was taking their ideas into account and contributed to the final design of the stage.

5. Conclusion

The Agenda group 'Favoriten for Girls, Girls for Favoriten' has initiated a project that can be considered a great success. Within the framework of the LA 21, this is rather the exception than the rule. As the Local Agenda in the district is financed by the city of Vienna and the district government, oftentimes only those projects are supported that are of direct use to local politicians. In principle, this is in line with democratic rules and the prerogatives of representatives in liberal democracies. However, research shows that bottom-up social innovations, like the LA 21 process, often focus on niche topics that are environmentally and socially acceptable, are restricted to symbolic politics and, hence, often remain in the localist trap (Frings and Kunz, 2006; Kazepov et al., 2019; Novy et al., 2009). Furthermore, many LA 21 processes sparked rather small-scale projects that could be implemented successfully without the participation of local authorities (Gehrlein, 2004; Wolf, 2005).

In our case study the ambition of the Agenda group to increase the visibility of girls in public space has received the full support of district politicians. Fortunately, the Agenda group was formed at a time when the most important square of the district, *Reumannplatz*, was to be redesigned in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the Agenda group was able to focus its activities on a specific place and specific actions: In this context, artistic-creative elements have been playing a prominent role. First, a creative competition was launched in schools and around one hundred girls between six and fifteen years showed in seventy 'art works', what they would like to happen in the redesign of *Reumannplatz*. Festivities were organised at *Reumannplatz*, such as an annual Girls Party, and other events, celebrating creative forms of expression such as dance, theatre, painting, writing, and handicrafts.

In addition, the LA 21 process itself was characterised by creativity-friendly (pre)conditions. The composition of the Agenda group proved to be very 'creativity-enhancing', as the members brought different strengths to the table: Access to schools opened the LA 21 process to a wider audience and addressed the pupils as active participants. The witty idea of renaming the square *ReuMÄDCHENplatz*, inspired by a distinct feminist perspective, contributed to the project's publicity. The parties and events at the square finally directed the plans of the Agenda group, the Local Agenda Favoriten, and the district council towards the idea of establishing a Girls' Stage, which was in line with the Agenda group's intention to increase the visibility of girls in public space.

The lively exchange within the group as well as with persons from outside contributed to fresh ideas and generated important impulses for the project. This process of co-creation, which implies that decisions are made collectively, also guided the workshop, in which the girls brought in their ideas about the final look of the stage. They were directly involved in the decision-making process as their drawings provided the basis for discussions, which resulted in a collectively negotiated decision on how the stage should look and, hence, an empowering experience for the girls.

The question remains, how the stage will be used in the future to increase the visibility of girls and young women in public space. First, the Agenda group, with the support of the Local Agenda Favoriten, will continue its activities, organising the annual Girls' Party. Apart from that, the schools in the district will also have the possibility to use the stage for their own activities, at least once a month. From now on, the continuation of activities strongly depends on the initiative of teachers. It is unclear, to which extent schools will take advantage of this opportunity. Therefore, support by a professional would be helpful, coordinating in-school and extra-school activities, including those by feminist groups from all over Vienna, for further empowering girls and young women. Currently, no such supporting activities are planned, which might endanger the long-term viability of this social innovation project.

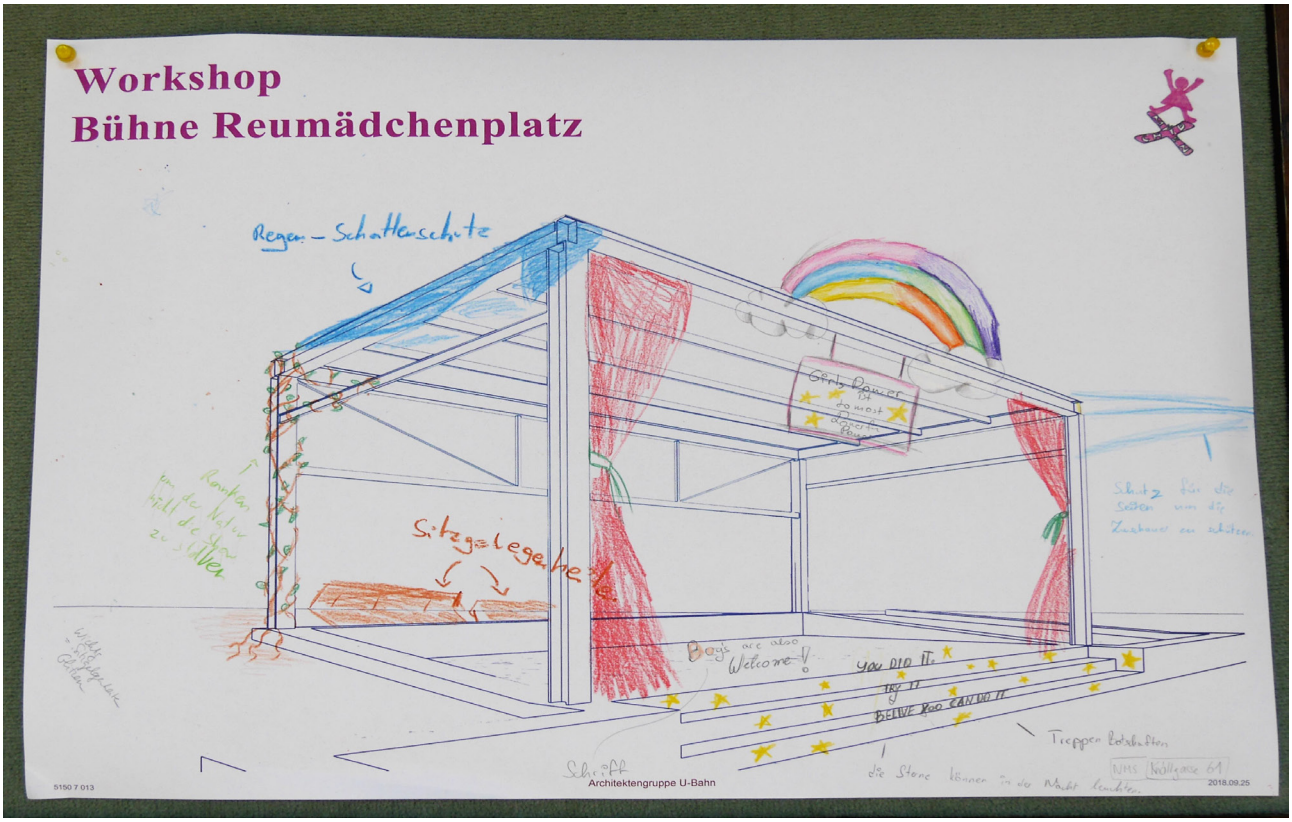

Figure 3. Proposal by the girls for the design of the stage. Source: Local Agenda Favoriten.

However, the district has decided to fund a regular music programme on the stage during the warmer seasons. For that reason, a new association was founded in 2022 with the aim of featuring music groups from various musical genres (funky-jazz, Klezmer, Austropop, Viennese songs, wind music etc.) on the stage. Two to three times per week bands will play one hour after the shops have closed. Keeping up with the idea of female visibility in public space, preference will be given to female artists, who can serve as role models for other girls, aspiring to transform traditional gender roles.

These free concerts in public space also enable residents and passers-by with low financial resources to participate in the cultural life of the city. Consequently, cultural needs of persons, who do not have access to mainstream cultural institutions, are addressed. Through regular music events, trust can be gradually built between the residents and the district government. This way, arts and culture can unfold their potential for social integration and strengthen social cohesion – the social dimension in the concept of sustainable development. As a result, it would be justifiable to include artistic and cultural forms of expression explicitly as an eighteenth sustainable development goal in future agendas of the international community.

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Conflicts of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Participatory Photography as a Tool to Spark Youth Participation, Empowerment and Active Citizenship

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Abstract
From October 18-26, 2022, Vienna-based civil society organisation *Cercle Libre - Association for Social Aesthetics* implemented 'Participatory Photography for Youth', a non-formal learning mobility project funded by the European Commission's Erasmus+ program. Under the guidance of a professional photographer, a group of 20 young people from capitals or larger cities in Austria, Armenia, Belarus, Jordan, Ukraine and Turkey gathered in Austria for a week to explore and co-create visual content inspired by the 11 European Youth Goals. The project was designed according to the principles of non-formal education such as learner-centeredness, emphasis on peer-to-peer learning, and critical thinking. It simultaneously served as a case study accompanied by ethnographic research, documenting the creative process of doing participatory photography. The aim of this paper is to put the project in a larger context of urban creativity, participation and active citizenship in order to examine how photography can be used as a tool for young urban global citizens to define and co-create spaces of participation, citizenship and empowerment. Research shows that young people participating in the project have a high motivation to shape their lives and lifeworlds and to strive to increase their level of participation in society. Participatory Photography is a useful medium of empowerment and social learning to raise young people's awareness on their unique vantage points in order to highlight potentials for social critique and active citizenship.

Keywords
photography; participation; youth work; active citizenship; empowerment; non-formal education.

1. Introduction - Participation and Active Citizenship

Empowerment of young people is one of the main meta-objectives of youth and social work in general, and more specifically of many European Union-funded youth programmes. In a broader sense, empowerment is understood as the process and goal of enabling individuals or groups to gain agency in their own lives and the decisions that affect them. It involves providing people with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to take action and make choices for themselves. Empowerment is a way of increasing people's confidence and self-esteem, and enabling them to shape their own futures. This can involve supporting people to develop and maintain mental health and wellbeing, to increase their competences and capabilities, to set and achieve their own goals, and to participate in their communities and in society as a whole. Empowerment can be understood as a key goal of many development, education, and community-building programs, as it can help create more inclusive and equitable societies and promote social justice, decolonisation and equality (European Youth Portal, 2022; EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership, 2022).

1.1. Youth Participation

Directly related to the notion of empowerment is the idea of participation. First and foremost, it is worth mentioning that *participation* is a term and concept used in various contexts and connexes such as politics and policies, citizen participa-

tion, urban planning, community organisation, inclusion and solidarity, and therefore denotes a wide range of meanings and definitions. Talking about participation is often directly connotated with debates about power structures and political decision-making processes (Crowley and Moxon, 2017; Kiilakoski, 2020).

In their groundbreaking work on creating urban spaces for youth participation in New York City, Kudva and Driskell (2009, p. 367) framed the term as follows:

Participation (...) is concerned with issues of power, and focuses its attention on the structures, processes, and methods through which power imbalances are alleviated (or not) and decisions are made with at least an attempt toward due consideration to the interests of those affected. What we recognize as 'participatory' depends on values, moral judgments, perceived goals, and intended outcomes.

For the purpose of this paper, regarding participation, we shall adhere to the context of youth work and youth engagement, with regards to their embeddedness in European youth policy and youth strategies. The European Union Youth Strategy is the framework for EU youth policy 2021-2027 and rests on the three main pillars Engage-Connect-Empower as fields of action: to *engage* young people, fostering their participation in democratic life and supporting civic engagement; to *connect*, as in providing structures and funds like the Erasmus+ programme to enable young people to meet; and furthermore to *empower*, supporting young people through high-quality, innovative and recognized youth work (European Commission, 2018, p. 3).

The Youth Participation Strategy[1] is based on this framework to foster youth participation in democratic life via the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. Both programmes are open to young people from the European Union member states and neighbouring regions, such as South East Europe, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and the 'Euromed' region[2]. A relevant support structure to mention in this context is SALTO Participation & Information [3], a think tank and resource centre for youth participation operating from Tallinn, Estonia, that "supports the capacity building of young people, youth workers, National Agencies in charge of youth programmes, the European Commission and other stakeholders in involving young people in decision-making processes'' (SALTO PI, 2019, p. 7) across Europe.

In the scope of European youth policy much work has been done by practitioners and scholars on the topic of youth participation (see f.e. the large body of publications by the EU - Council of Europe Youth Partnership; Farthing, 2012; Crowley and Moxon, 2017; Farrow, 2015, 2018; Kiiliakoski, 2020). As defined by the Council of Europe, "[p]articipation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society." Following the understanding of the SALTO Participation Resource Centre, youth participation can be defined as "a process where young people as active citizens take part in, express views on, and have decision-making power on issues that affect them." (Farting, 2012 cit. from participationpool.eu) Farrow (2018) provides a comprehensive summary on the three baseline factors of youth participation: It is, first of all, a continuous process of inclusion in decision-making structures; second, youth participation is always concerned with the redistribution of power; and last but not least, youth participation is taking place on various interdependent planes–local, national and global–and in individual as well as collective spheres.

The vital and active role of youth in participative consultation processes has also led to the formulation of the *11 Youth Goals*[4] as part of the European Youth Strategy 2021-2027. They are the result of a structured consultation process in

1 youthgoals.eu

2 https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/participation/ypstrategy/

3 https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/pages/glossary/euro-mediterranean-partnership-euromed_en

4 https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/participation/

the framework of the EU youth dialogue among young people across Europe, reflect the vision of young people and indicate fields of sustained action. They also served as a basis to the project design of the youth exchange project 'Participatory Photography for Youth'. The 11 Youth Goals are: 1. Connecting Youth with the European Union, 2. Equality of All Genders, 3. Inclusive Societies, 4. Information and Constructive Dialogue, 5. Mental Health and Wellbeing, 6. Moving Rural Youth Forward, 7. Quality Employment for All, 8. Quality Learning, 9. Space and Participation for All, 10. A Sustainable Green Europe, 11. Youth Organisations and European Programmes (European Union: European Youth Goals, 2019).

Kiiliakoski (2020) proposes a set of three conditions to be met in order to speak of youth participation: It requires having a recognized and legitimate role in the community, there needs to be action, and the action needs to be meaningful for participants. "Participation in a tokenistic form is insufficient if structures and power relations stand in the way of meaningful participation that leads to change.'' (Kiilakoski, 2020, p. 20) He also points out that "the task of youth [work] is to promote participation in and outside the practice of youth work." (Kiilakoski, 2020, p.1) In that sense, youth workers are the midwives of non-formal education for and with young people and their personal, social, and professional development towards active citizenship.

1.2. Active Citizenship

Active citizenship refers to the idea that members of a society have a responsibility to take an active role in addressing social and political issues, to contribute to the well-being of their community, and to work towards the common good. It is also seen as a way for individuals to exercise their rights and responsibilities as members of a democratic society. Moreover, it is concerned with being engaged and informed about the issues that affect one's community, and taking action to incite positive change (Council of Europe, 2010). This can involve engaging in activities such as voting, volunteering, participating in community events and civic society organisations, and advocating for social and political change. Similar to the notion of empowerment, active citizenship is often seen as a way for individuals to use their skills and talents to take ownership of and spark improvements in their lifeworlds in order to help create a more just and equitable society. I argue that a feeling of belonging and agency is prerequisite for identifying as an active citizen, whereas feelings of marginalisation or exclusion are detrimental.

Regarding recent developments in the participation of young people in all spheres of society and democratic life, new modalities of power, communication, and community organisation have given rise to a shift in how young people understand active citizenship. As I will further examine in the course of this paper, digitalisation and the widespread use of ICTs have broadened and diversified the playground for innovative forms and modes of participation and activism. Traditional, centralised forms of participation via long-term affiliations to interest groups, e.g. political parties or trade unions, have been replaced to a large extent by decentralised, short-term, conditional affiliations (Farrow, 2018, p. 19), often based on identity markers and causes like the fight for LGBTQA rights or against climate change. Informal, collaborative networks with a high outreach through social media allow for new forms of organising activism and uttering social critique. As Farrow (2018, p. 9) states:

[T]hrough social networks and community mobilisation, young people are developing leadership and outreach skills and confidence. Particularly by using new technologies, young people are developing new models of power, in which power comes from knowledge, peer coordination and the ability to inspire others to participate.

Hence, values, such as collaboration, radical transparency, open source, sharing and harnessing the wisdom and funding of the crowd, may translate into strong youth-led movements.

Despite these positive developments, issues of inequality concerning access to digital infrastructures, media literacy, and digital competences should not be neglected. In parallel, the question remains how and to what extent these movements penetrate and influence established structures of power and decision-making. Especially some of the participants of the youth project analysed in this article, for example from Belarus, reported not just harsh restrictions, but a

tremendous backlash on freedom of expression and the right to civic association and community organising, including youth associations, existed in recent years. Activists and civic associations have, in many instances, been forced to operate from abroad or in the underground. Some project participants asked not to be identified with their full names or with their faces visible on the photos for security concerns due to oppressive state apparati. Nevertheless, more and more young people are critical, creative, and active in finding and creating channels and outlets for promoting and advancing causes and narratives that matter to them.

2. Methodology

The methodological toolbox applied for this case study contained a mix of methods. As a mental framework for the process of preparation and data collection in the field, on the one hand, and for the process of evaluation and synthesis of insights, on the other, this article refers to the toolbox of '*Art of Hosting/Art of Harvesting conversations that matter*'(artofhosting.org, 2022). Art of Hosting & Harvesting is a participatory method and practice that can be applied in a variety of contexts and, as I find, also quite beautifully in a participatory research project. The toolbox is based on a set of principles that I will briefly outline below:

The Art of Hosting aims to create an open yet safe space and, by facilitating group processes, also to elicit and inspire a group's self-organising capacities. Furthermore, it is also based on an open attitude towards field participants, and a practice of holding space to bring up the issues that they consider relevant. In the context of ethnographic fieldwork in a youth project, these questions can include a) research-guiding questions; b) questions to the field participants (photographers, interlocutors, facilitators); c) questions to the material (field notes, photographs, videos, workshop content produced by participants) and d) questions of self-reflection.

The Art of Harvesting, on the other hand, structures the insights from the Art of Hosting process to illuminate and understand different types of results and their quality. Art of Harvesting implies to listen properly and actively, i.e. also reading between the lines, catching subtle nuances and also wondering what was not said and why; within the scope of possibilities and in the spirit of ethnographic participant observation, it can also mean feeding back, reflecting and reviewing observations, impressions, and interpretations in dialogue, thus generating new insights - or new questions. As outlined on artofhosting.org:

The Art of Hosting Conversations That Matter takes into account the whole process – all the preparations before the participants come together, what happens while they are working together, and how the results of their conversation – the 'harvest' – support next steps that are coherent for their purpose and context. (artofhosting.org, 2022)

Participant observation is a methodical approach very much in line with the *Art of Hosting* toolbox. It is also the most prominent and, until today, the most relevant ethnographic method. Participant observation is one of the primary methods in anthropology and constitutes an approach specific for this discipline. It is a participatory method in itself, where the researcher is embedded in the field for a certain period of time and/or repeatedly co-creates a dialogue with the field and its participants, while continuously self-reflecting his or her role in the process. Similar to the Art of Hosting and Harvesting, ideally, research observations and findings are fed back to the observed field participants in order to co-elicit insights and results (Flick, 2010).

In the scope of this research project, participation and observation happened on multiple levels at once. Questions to reflect on this notions were: Who in the project was (were) the participant observer(s)? Was it the project's facilitator in the role of educator and writer of this paper, who happens to be a social and cultural anthropologist trained in ethnographic methods, both visually documenting the creative working process of the group and harvesting the photographic outcomes of the project? Or was it the project participants, who took the actual visual footage in connection with the 11 EU Youth Goals?

Based on the notion that ethnography is per se a dialogue between researcher, field, and field participants, I argue that both approaches are correct. It is worth mentioning that the entire project design was based on the principles of non-for-

mal education, which is in itself participatory, learner-centred and includes the freedom of attendance and contribution to learning invitations, the self-made decisions of the learner, what the actual learnings were, and a strong emphasis on peer-to-peer learning. In that sense, the project design aimed at honouring the critical pedagogy approach of Brazilian-born educator and philosopher Paulo Freire. As Freire (2005, p. 72) outlined in his seminal book "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed", "education must begin with resolving the paradox of the instructor-learners, including the poles of contradiction that both the instructor and the learner belong together." The aim of education, according to Freire (2005), is to empower individuals towards self-authorship and emancipation. Similarly, ethnography is always embedded in social relationships and is constituted in dialogue with the field; the ethnographer's interest lies in personal practices and approaches to the matters at hand–in our case, the 11 EU Youth Goals and their creative expression by the young participants.

3. Participatory Photography

The project's objectives were to provide a space for values-based individual and social learning, exchanging perspectives, skills, and practical ideas, and to explore creative methodologies to foster participation and active citizenship among young people. Likewise, the project aimed at encouraging young people to act as responsible, active citizens and to strive for positive change in their environments. Through the medium of photography we attempted to raise awareness for the 11 EU Youth Goals and their impact on participants' urban lifeworlds in their country of origin. While upskilling participants' digital competencies through participant-led workshops on media literacy, essential photography techniques, and examination of modern digital tools and platforms, the young people empowered themselves to collaborate and co-create approaches and solutions to personal, economic, environmental, and social issues. Living and working together for nine days in a workshop-setting in a youth hostel in Lower Austria, the project fostered mutual understanding and critical discourse, social engagement, and exchange of perspectives on issues that mattered to them.

In the project, the participants were asked to select two to three youth goals, which were closest to their hearts. Afterwards, they teamed up in groups of three to four and took photos to visually reflect on the chosen topics. Examples include issues of gender equality, access to quality education, sustainability, or inclusive societies. They were free to go for all styles of photography, may it be street photography or creating sets with a rather stylized ambience, doing hair and makeup.

I chose the term Participatory Photography to describe the process of eliciting visual data in a photographic reflection of participants' lifeworlds in an on-site participatory setting. In this process, participants took both the roles of observers and creators: On the one hand, they were observers of different forms of urban cohabitation, as mirrored in the context of the 11 EU Youth Goals, creating pathways for urban transformation and societal critique. On the other hand, they created the data to reflect on their life in their city of origin and expanded on possible spheres of influence to incite the potential for activism and critique to achieve societal change. In the course of the project, participants were invited to initiate, organise, and contribute to workshops, group exercises, discussions, and individual reflection techniques to collectively make sense of the participatory process. This way they acquired a space of empowerment and an understanding of current potentials for active citizenship, framed by the 11 EU Development Goals. At the end of the project, participants created an online exhibition to publish and disseminate the project outcomes among their peers, stakeholders, and policy-makers.

It is important to note that the project participants' local political realities included current situations of war, a constitutional monarchy, autocratic state systems with strong anti-government, pro-democratic movements, relatively young, post-socialist democracies, and long-established, stable democracies. Hence, a multiplicity of personal and political views were shared in the project, reflected via photography and other forms of communication, refined in different forms of community exchange, and finally disseminated in an online exhibition. Participatory Photography served as a tool to elicit collective approaches to participants' lifeworlds,

political opinions, and perspectives for social change and empowerment. As observers, participants were invited to expand on issues that mattered to them, initially led by the framework of the 11 EU Youth Strategy, and to highlight potentials for social critique and active citizenship.

4. Results of the Participatory Photography Process

During the project implementation week in October 2022, a large body of visual data was created by the participants with regard to the spheres of action, reflected in the 11 EU Youth Goals. As the participants, who worked together in teams, were free to choose, which of these areas mattered most to them, it became evident that some of the youth goals resonated with almost all members of the group, regardless of age, gender, national or religious affiliation, or other markers of identity. These were, first and foremost, a 'sustainable green Europe', 'gender equality' and 'inclusive societies'. In some cases, participants have been actively involved in the respective fields in their home environments, before taking part in the project, in roles such as activists, educators, volunteers, youth leaders, makers, or community builders. Some of the participants were more or less newcomers both to taking an active part in their communities and to attending an Erasmus+ project. Almost all project attendees were living in capitals or larger urban areas, however, as some of them were born and raised in rural settings, the youth goal 'moving rural youth forward' also elicited many reflections, discussions, and, subsequently, visual works. Throughout the creative process, the project facilitators assisted a deeper reflection of the young people's sense of agency and empowerment. It is equally noteworthy that, during the process, the participants started to create works on a range of topics not explicitly mentioned in the framework, such as domestic violence and peacebuilding.

Below we see a couple of pictures that the participants took during the Participatory Photography process. Figure 1 shows a photo on the Youth Goal 'Equality for all Genders'. The team described their intention for taking this photo with the wish to express a need for accepting and acknowledging their common humanity above all markers of identity.

Figure 2 shows a photo, related to the Youth Goal 'A Sustainable Green Europe', by Talin Abuwardeh. By choosing soil in human hands as a subject, participants in this team expressed a feeling of care and responsibility that should guide our perspective towards a socially and ecologically sustainable evolution of society.

In figure 3, a black-and-white photo, an empty basketball field in front of a forest is depicted, which the participants described as an expression of unused opportunities with regards to the Youth Goal 'Moving Rural Youth Forward'.
In figure 4, the team created a photo of a female hand stopping a male fist to describe a reference to domestic violence.

The Participatory Photography process was accompanied by a number of auxiliary exercises, designed by the researcher-facilitator team, to allow participants to get to know each other and foster team-building, while getting familiar with essential photography techniques. In another exercise the teams created a common community contract, coming up with their own community guidelines on how they want to communicate respectfully, self-organize tasks, or use shared spaces, materials, and devices. In one reflection exercise, participants were invited to write a fairy tale on their experience with themselves (as a human or non-human figure) and other people in the group during/in the course of the project. The fairy tales were afterwards shared in the forum.

Furthermore, the process was complemented by workshops designed according to the principles of non-formal education: Approaches of embodied learning and exercises, e.g., from Augusto Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum Theatre' (MacDonald and Rachel, 2000) toolbox deepened and integrated the understanding of what participation means for individual participants in a social setting and shared space. In a guided process for/towards approaching online activism, participants assembled digital toolkits for photo-editing and easy-to-use graphics design, while testing their potential for creating a campaign promoting sustainable practises in schools and youth organisations. The whole process was accompanied by discussion groups and harvesting circles for maximising the reflective potential of the teams and the group as a whole.

Figure 1. Untitled (On Gender Equality). Source: Participatory Photography Collective, 2022.

Figure 2. Untitled (On Sustainability). Source: Participatory Photography Collective, 2022.

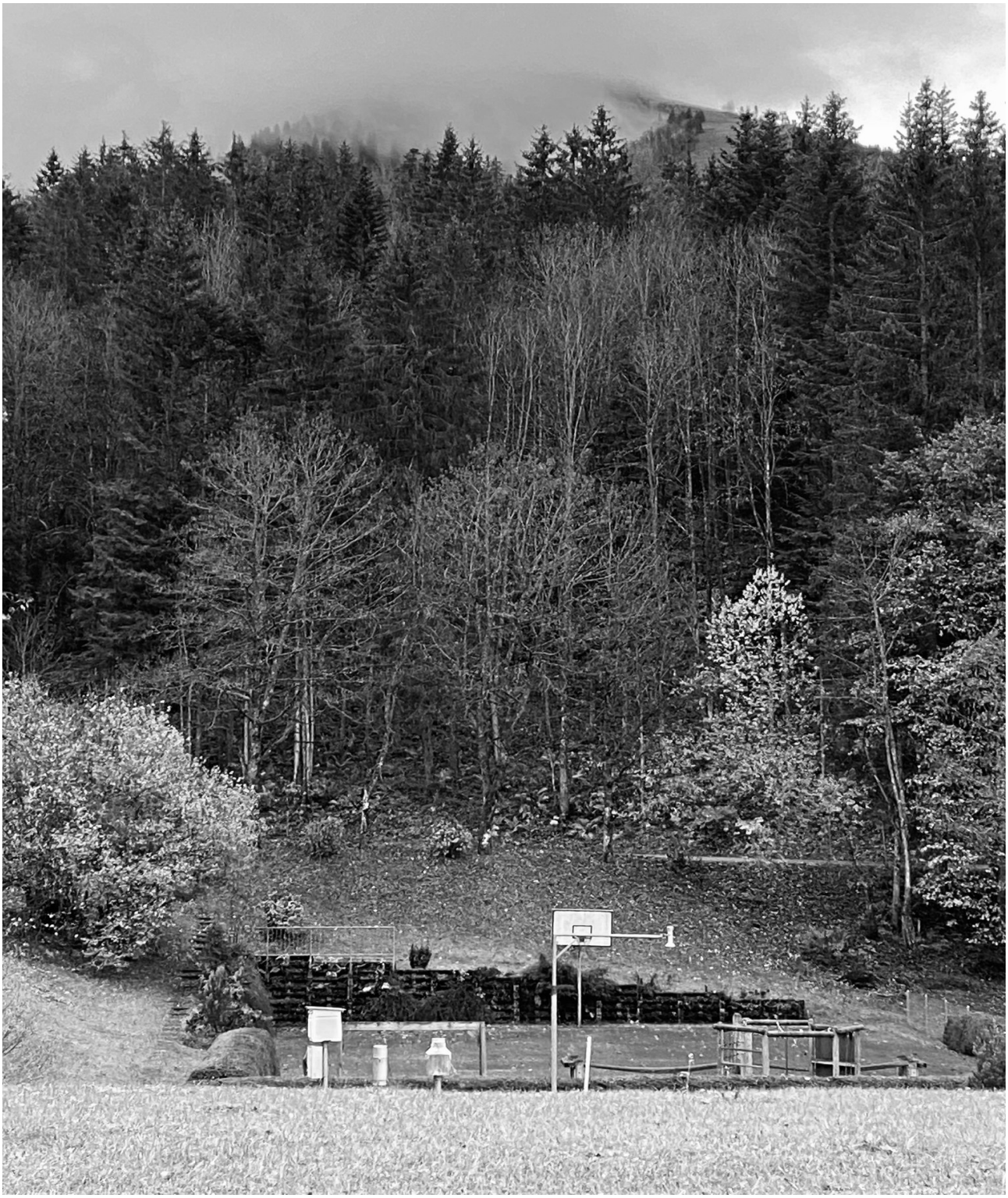

Figure 3. Untitled (Moving Rural Youth forward). Source: Participatory Photography Collective, 2022.

Figure 4. Untitled (Stop Domestic Violence). Source: Arpi Hovhanissyan, 2022.

Concerning the 11 EU Youth Goals, the participants agreed on their relevance, however, they also concluded that they were rather broad ideas and needed adjustment according to local realities and contexts. The participants emphasized that daily topics of concern, such as the war on Ukraine or the energy crisis, often overshadowed the broader ideals of the Youth Goals. Also, these events were detrimental for the mental health and wellbeing of some participants.

As a road to empowerment they wished for more awareness of the relevance of participation in civic life among their less engaged peers. All in all, the process showed the high interest of young people in active citizenship and helped to increase their understanding of the potentials of participation.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

From a standpoint of applied visual anthropology, the youth project served as a case study for inciting and documenting the potentials of participatory photography and the accompanying workshops as tools for reflection, identification, and self-empowerment, based on the 11 EU Youth Goals.

The researcher-facilitator documented the daily programme with fieldnotes, photographs and recorded video material, which was then played back to the group. I, as a researcher, was able to observe how the participants related to the frameworks of European Commission policies from a grassroots perspective. They were able/inspired to formulate strategies for change, utter critique, and assert their voice. They created not only abstract knowledge but also aesthetic and emotional accounts of their worldviews. In a self-reflective process, the researcher-facilitator entered into a dialogue with the group of participants and, through the hosting and harvesting practice, helped to co-create insights for the collective creative endeavour of defining and living youth identities in Europe.

From the perspective of Paulo Freire's educational approach of Critical Pedagogy as a 'praxis of freedom' (Freire, 2005), the process served to unearth the political potential of non-formal and peer-to-peer learning processes and enabled the participants to utter their worldviews and understand themselves as empowered global citizens. Through the workshops, the individual and collective reflection and the participatory photography process, the participants understood their agency from a perspective of active participation in the local and subsequently global sphere.

To conclude, Participatory Photography–the creative group process of eliciting visual data in a reflection of participants' lifeworlds in an on-site participatory setting–turned out to be a useful medium to raise young people's awareness of their unique vantage points for observing their lifeworlds. Moreover, it helps spark empowerment and a feeling of common humanity to co-create and shape the world they live in. By locating the self in an active part of one's lifeworld, on an individual, local and global level, Participatory Photography served as an empowering tool to define their spaces of agency. At the same time, it is a powerful means for young people to exert social critique and co-create activist content.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Considerations between UX Heuristics and Physical Space*

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*Inspired in Urban Creativity 2020 online conference talk of Jon Yablonski Multidisciplinary designer, speaker, writer, and digital creator based in Detroit, author of Laws of UX: https://youtu.be/UihDLNS-RLk?t=2827

The book description to Jon Yablonski's seminal book 'Laws of UX – Using Psychology to Design Better Products and Services' describes the current prerequisites in the scope of digital interface design, as follows: "An understanding of psychology—specifically the psychology behind how users behave and interact with digital interfaces is perhaps the single most valuable non design skill a designer can have. The most elegant design can fail if it forces users to conform to the design rather than working within the 'blueprint' of how humans perceive and process the world around them. This practical guide explains how you can apply key principles in psychology to build products and experiences that are more intuitive and human-centered."

The subtitle "Using Psychology to Design Better Products & Services" hints at the fact that psychology is transversal to every human, thus can be applied not only to digital experiences, but to any form of design. This mindset provides the basis for the following considerations on relationships between UX Heuristics and physical space.

"A heuristic technique, or a heuristic, is any approach to problem solving or self-discovery that employs a practical method that is not guaranteed to be optimal, perfect, or rational, but is nevertheless sufficient for reaching an immediate, short-term goal or approximation." (from Wikipedia). Thus, heuristics as a technique is agnostic regarding its digital or non-digital usage.

Nevertheless, in the scope of possible/imaginable generic applicable ideas, there are some specific heuristics that, maybe, can be used to mediate between digital and analog worlds, in terms of UX heuristics.

Jacob's Law
Users transfer expectations they have built around one familiar product (or space) to another that appears similar. Existing mental models must be taken into account for designing new solutions, to help users to focus on the task rather than on learning new models.

This idea is present, e.g. in architects' good practices, in the sense that a spatial design is a narrative that uses, amongst other things, voids and mass, inside and outside as a language. Within this narrative, past experiences are taken into consideration and are translated into spatial structures and appearances. Also, design standards (as in Neufert and Christopher Alexander) are very useful for all public space design and are, hence, a very developed area of knowledge that, here, connects also with fields such as engineering or ergonomics.

Also Jacob's Law along with Personas are useful to allow the user to decide her/his individual rhythm for learning new models, instead of imposing a new reality to be decoded, including the possibility to shift to a new model at a later moment or to shift to the previous one, if needed. In terms of spatial design, this option will usually be more difficult to apply in physical space than in the digital realm.

For example, designs for moving urban furniture exist for a long time and are considered good practice, but still implementation is very limited due to high maintenance costs. Maybe, by introducing layers of buffers in the design process, users can be integrated in the project via participative processes or simple updates of the project's progress. See also Roger Hart's (1992) Ladder of Participation, which defines the following stages of the participation process: Manipulation; Decoration;Tokenism; Assigned but Informed; Consulted and Informed; Adult-Initiated; Shared Decisions with Children; Child-Initiated and Directed; Child-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults. (ref: Hart, R. A. (1992). Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship. Florence, Italy: United Nations Children's Fund International Child Development Centre.)

Peak-End Rule – Daniel Kahneman

Daniel Kahneman did an experiment with hot and cold water, which proves that psychologically, people are not able to derive a representative average of physical or emotional experiences, but instead mainly consider extreme values and the development of their experience over time, especially towards the end. (ref: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIC-Sa9Rny0)

Knowing how to use this rule when designing both a physical or digital project is essential. Naturally, this usage changes according to the kind of project and, in this case, to apply the rule spatially can be a very interesting challenge.

The digital sphere can influence spatial design and vice versa. For example, Mailchimp became aware of the most stressful moment of its service for customers, which usually occurs when people press the send-button for a newsletter. Hence, in their online experience design, they illustrated the successful completion of sending the newsletter with an empathetic animation of a 'high five' by their mascot (Freddie the Chimp).

In physical space there can be similar benefits, e.g., after a lang way up the hill to a medieval city-center, where we oftentimes find benches and trees to rest in a public square after ascending. So, organically, urbanists took the user experience into account, when designing spaces that were expected to be enjoyed and lived, instead of merely used.

Identifying the emotional peaks (good or bad) and the end points (e.g., on top of the stairs) allows designers to deal with them with care and delight, which will give character and emotional meaning to the actual user experience in digital and physical spaces alike.

User Journey

The task of mapping the emotional experience of the use of some service, product or space is typically called user journey. Shape and layers of these mappings can differ substantially according to the case study, depending on to how the passage of time, usage, and intended outcomes are associated with functional aspects. User journey mapping usually involves the creation of 'personas', that help to create empathy with the 'pains' and 'gains' of the particular type of use. NNg defeniition (ref: https://www.nngroup.com/articles/journey-mapping-101/) - A journey map is a visualization of the process that a person goes through in order to accomplish a goal.

An experience map, as an antecedent to a user journey map, is used for understanding general human behavior; in contrast, a customer journey map is more specific and focused on a particular business or product. As all the other examples given in this article, it is agnostic, regarding the digital or analog nature of the object of study, so the concept's application to the physical space comes very naturally.

The process of creating a map incites conversations on the case at hand and presents an aligned mental model to the whole team. The result of the mapping exercise is also an easy way to explain the process of digital and physical design to others; it reveals opportunities to address customers' pain points and alleviates fragmentation in the project process.

Hick's Law

The time it takes to make a decision, increases with the number and the complexity of choices available. Hence, look for simplicity of an experience, be direct. The mind is

a finite resource; our working memory transports experience from the immediate past, and the more information you have, the less you can focus. Conversely, if you remove some information, you can improve your focus.

So, when transporting this law to a spatial context, you can understand why sometimes we forget things, when we are moving through very stimulating spaces. For instance, the spatial feeling, the touch, sound, smell or visual impressions that we have in an elevator, will influence the actions that occur after the ride. Likewise, the information that is charged into our brain is challenged by stimulations to the senses, when we walk the streets. So, by focusing on emotional or sensual experiences in the design process we can influence user's behavior and create wholesome, efficient, yet inspiring experiences.

Some nice examples of a good usage of this law in the digital realm are onboarding experiences that teach you operational principles in a few steps and incite learning by doing. In a physical, spatial context, for example, bricolage centers work as a grey area between use and action, as they give the tools for doing it yourself (more about DIY here ref: Wolf & McQuitty (2011). Understanding the Do-It-Yourself Consumer: DIY Motivation and Outcomes. Academy of Marketing Science Review).

The process of communication must be clear, and excess information should be eliminated. Information can provide delight, when used in a meaningful and measured approach. In physical design we can take inspiration, e.g., from IKEA's business model (building partially) as a good example of the reduction of information for the sake of clear and simple instructions.

By reducing information and focusing on the most important tasks at hand, we can see DIY as a way for understanding complexity, while solving it at the same time.

Card Sorting

Designers and planners have their preferences, and card sorting helps to avoid that designers project their personal mental models on a particular project. Also, it is a very useful tool for organizing information in a way that people can find what they are looking for. Usually, content is structured based on what makes sense to the city council or to private owners, not necessarily on what is preferable to users.

Card sorting is a highly useful technique in information architecture; it is used to understand how users think about specific content. Translating it into spacial design terms can work in three main directions: first, as a methodology for understanding the future space's, for understanding the mental model underlying the space to be designed; second, to understand how information about and within spaces it is distributed, and when and why it will be useful; third, spatial elements transfer information between each other. Card sorting, therefore, can help designers, architects or planners to better understand and produce psychogeographical maps (ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychogeography).

Concluding notes

First, this essay aims to point out the relevance of the cross pollination from different disciplines, related to umbrella terms such as user experience, urban design, architecture or urbanism. This awareness and the interlinking of different topics, methods and viewpoints, generates specific fields of interest, new research frontiers and new approaches towards designing digital and/or physical experiences that can improve the connection between overall applied performance.

Second, my text can also be read as a note about progressive enhancement: Design, first and foremost, aims for the lowest common denominator*, which is an excellent way for achieving the best output.

(note of the note)* User experience, design, architecture and urbanism have evident historical connections, which are in themselves sometimes not fully understood. An example of this can be found in the the ideas of, e.g., Walter Gropius or Adolf Loos. Progressive enhancement, to design first for the lowest common denominator, is a prime examples of this. Both concepts are essential to primordial ideas of design, connected with industrial revolutions, between wars, patterns of consumption and the production of consumer goods. But nowadays, re-adapted for digital and web design, entering the realm of digital spaces, these ideas look fresh, but, unfortunately, they also show us, how self-referential the internet is increasingly becoming, allowing for the dissemination of partial certainties and fragmented ideas in a new guise.