

# **“TEMPORARY COULD BE PART OF THE FUTURE, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY IT IS VERY MUCH PART OF THE PRESENT”**

## **An interview with Hella Hernberg**

Ephemeral, temporary, and tactical urbanism are some of the keywords of contemporary architecture and planning. Temporary initiatives for cultural purposes are increasingly used for creating meaningful places, drawing attention to shortcomings and livening up the streetscape. Helsinki is a city that, while sometimes being called over-regulated, has managed to also be on the forefront of urban activism and experimental creative projects. Perhaps one does not exclude the other. A good example of that is the Paviljonki project planned, built and programmed within the World Design Capital 2012.

The Pavilion was an open-to-all space, located between the Museum of Finnish Architecture and the Design Museum, which offered a cultural programme curated by Demos Helsinki. The Pavilion showcased Finnish architecture and also served contemporary Finnish cuisine. Designed at Aalto University's Wood Programme by Pyry-Pekka Kantonen, it exhibited the latest in Finnish design. Now that the programme is over we hope to look into what happened and what remains, exploring what kind of effect on a city can a temporary project like that have. Insight is given by the editor of the book "Helsinki Beyond Dreams", and artist and a designer Hella Hernberg.

Just to mention in the beginning - I'm not a representative of the World Design Capital organisation or Paviljonki, so can't really answer on their behalf, I am just writing my opinions of the Paviljonki as its user. It's important not to confuse those, just to make sure. I have been realising a WDC project as an independent entrepreneur/designer/individual and could possibly have realised the project even without WDC.

### **What makes an idea on paper come to life in a real city?**

The ideas presented in my own project, Helsinki Beyond Dreams, are typically not those that are born on paper, but rather in people's discussions and through the collaboration between creative individuals. However, creating any ideas is easy and realising is often not that easy. I think one needs to have a clear vision, be persistent and believe in their goal, then find the means to travel towards that goal and walk through any obstacles they find on the way.

Paviljonki really filled a kind of gap in many ways. It discovered a potential location, which had been just a parking lot but nevertheless very well situated. It also filled a "program gap" in providing an arena for many activities that would maybe not have happened without the place. I think the program was very cleverly engineered, in the way that it combined a large variety of activities (from yoga, craft meetings to concerts



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and seminars of all kinds) for different kinds of audiences, and therefore it succeeded in being a proper urban place where people meet and find interesting things. It was a combination of pre-defined program and events that anyone could propose. Also the Paviljonki building was really nice and well made, and **something worth visiting** as itself, which I think contributed in the success of the place.

### Could temporary be the future?

Temporary could be part of the future, but I think more importantly it is very much part of the present. Temporary uses are a way to **react fast** to current conditions, and therein lies often their charm. However, they can be included in longer-term planning processes, too, and they can bring an important level of **flexibility**, and also be a tool to test and develop new ideas for the future in a not-too-serious way, which can bring forth unprecedented opportunities.

### What happens after the programme is over?

Well, there are a lot of activities going on in many parts of the city and Paviljonki was not the only venue in Helsinki. Perhaps the WDC year with its rich program has contributed to that people are realising the **potentials in the city** in a new way and realising that they can be active themselves, in producing the city where they wish to live. I think Paviljonki has been important arena for this, but the process of **active citizenship** has roots that go much deeper than World Design Capital.

MORE ABOUT PAVILIONKI: <http://issuu.com/wdchelsinki2012/docs/paviljonki1>



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