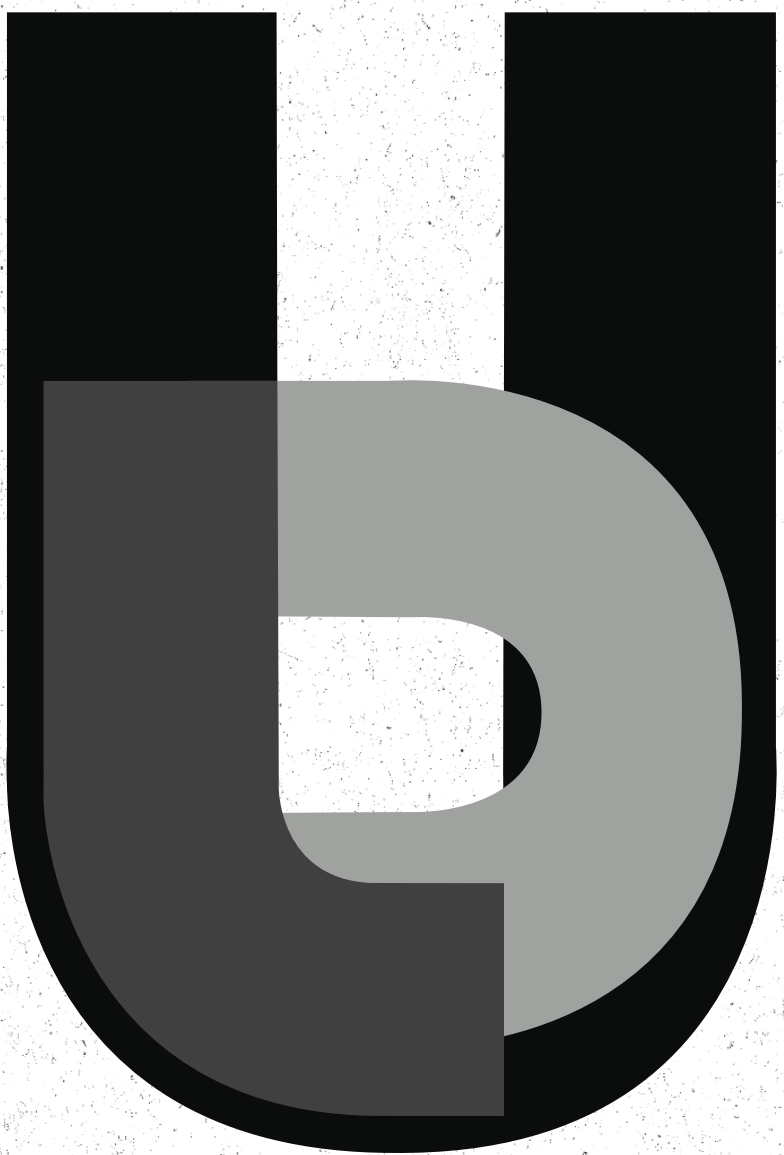
SOCIALIST & POST-SOCIALIST URBANISATIONS



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SOCIALIST AND POST-SOCIALIST URBANISATIONS

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The city of Tallinn – the location of the conference Socialist and Post-Socialist Urbanisations: Architecture, Land and Property Rights (Urban and Landscape Days XI, 8 – 11 May, 2014), on the occasion of which this issue of U journal is published – is regularly seen as post-socialist. Due to its half a century-long history as a capital of one of the republics of the Soviet Union, but also considering the ways in which it has developed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, such assessment is justifiable. Since 1991, the city has experienced suburbanisation, segregation and gentrification, developed a Central Business District, multiple shopping malls and other car-oriented developments, employed culture and festivals as tools of regeneration, and so on and so forth. Undoubtedly, it has increased its similarity to cities in Western Europe and departed from the ways it was organised under the Soviet socialist regime. Yet, despite those processes, the city also keeps its 'socialist' features and produces paths and developments that are quite unexpected. A 'post-socialist city' is a complicated phenomenon. 'After 20 years of transformations...' – as articles discussing post-socialist cities, which we interrogate with a Benjaminian eye in this issue, tend to start – it is time to reflect on what 'post-socialism' means.

Is every Central and East European city 'post-socialist'? Is 'post-socialism' a stage that passes? Are there cities that are still 'socialist'? Are there cities that are 'post-socialist' but not in Central and East Europe? Is every object of architecture from the period of socialism 'socialist'? Is architecture 'post-socialist' simply because it was built in a particular moment of history? No, no, yes, yes. But it could also be 'yes, yes, no, no'. It all depends on how we define 'post-socialism'.

If 'post-socialism' is defined as a spatially and temporally bounded entity that contains cities with the Soviet past, then the latter perception would be held. If 'socialism' in post-socialism would be considered an idea with various manifestations around the world – if transformation instead of transition is the frame of thinking –, the former assessment would hold true. The conference and the U special issue both want to challenge the entrenched understanding of 'post-socialism' that locks the notion into a region and a temporal period. This is done conceptually by noting complicated borders of these dimensions, but also by revisiting value judgements associated with 'socialism' and 'post-socialism'. The conference and this issue develop the challenge along three thematic foci: architecture and urban planning, property rights, and land use and landscape.

Architecture and urban planning

Many seeds of today's architectural and planning thinking have been planted in the socialist period. Historically, modernism and socialism developed hand in hand. Yet the roots of 'post-socialist post-modernism', to take one example, can be traced back to the 1970s, if not earlier. This raises questions about the relation between the architectural dissent under socialism and the post-socialist architecture mainstream. In some instances, the value of buildings and urban plans from the socialist period is being rediscovered today. What exactly is valued and re-evaluated: the forms or the ideas? Which aspects of socialist urban planning and architecture persist and what is to be learned from (which?) discarded ideas of socialist urban planning?

In his contribution, Łukasz Stanek presents an account of exporting architectural labour from socialist Poland to Africa and the Middle East. Despite the Iron Curtain, Polish (post-)modern architects and the large state firms that employed them, quite successfully navigated the channels of architectural production between the First, Second and Third world. Complementing Stanek's geo-political challenge to the notion of socialist architecture, Tauri Tuvikene analyses projects for the construction of large car spaces in Tallinn, devised in 1960s and 1970s, and traces the similarities with the planning strategies of motorised societies of the capitalist West. Similary the text by Kaija-Luisa Kurik and photo essay by Kaur Maran offers an insight into temporal ruptures showing five architectural examples where the end of the socialist marked the end of a certain form or an ensemble.

The quote from Mati Unt's now-classic novel Autumn Ball (1979), which has been unfortunately eclipsed by the vapid, widely advertised, cinematic adaptation (2007) and is practically inaccessible in English, supports the

three contributions. The extract presents the inner thoughts of a fictional architect of Mustamäe, Tallinn's housing estate from the 1960s, who ponders the questions of progress and nostalgia, equality and happiness.

Property rights

The transfer from state ownership to private ownership is a well-known account of the post-socialist transformation. While the development of capitalism proclaimed hope for all, it has also led to injustices. In Estonia, for instance, with the re-creation of private property rights in the land market, and reversing the hierarchy of use and ownership, new conflicts and inequalities were created in the same moment that the old injustices were being expiated. Although a new generation of post-socialist activism has appeared on the horizon, privatism is challenged predominantly at the level of access and life-style. The value of community and public spaces is accepted by a wide array of actors, but the more controversial issue of ownership and property rights is often left untouched. What are the everyday mechanisms and scientific theories that assign to private property rights a hallmark of a natural law? What are the counter-mechanisms and theories that introduce different subjects of the property: state, public, commons, or communities? What are the diverse and unexpected manifestations of transformed property rights?

A series of photos and video-stills by Liina Siib looks at the dialectics of owning and disowning of space, as it is manifested in the everyday practices of women, mostly Russian-speaking. Accompanied by the commentary of Triin Loks, the contribution highlights gender and ethnic inequalities in a society turning its socialist reality into the capitalist one with, yet, concomitant existence of the two. Maroš Krivý presents a short selection from his art-research project New Coat of Paint, which started to wonder about the process of repainting housing estates in colourful patterns. For this issue, a text-based composition probes into what can be called a 'governmentality by colour', a manifold process of pitching individual distinction against old-fashioned universality, as it is manifested in architecture and urbanism in the cities of Central and Eastern Europe and beyond.

Land use and landscape

Post-socialist spatial patterns of land use have been categorised, mapped and GIS-ed; post-socialist urban landscapes have been photographed, walked about and talked. Much less has been said, however, about the ways in which normative ideas about correct and incorrect land uses, about ugly and nice landscapes, have been formed and developed. In what ways are value judgements structured around socialist and post-socialist land uses and landscapes? What are the origins of today's prominence that we assign to an urban leisure function, of the idea that cities should be beautiful and enjoyable, of our sense for the 'landscaping' of urban space? Looking at landscapes raises questions of different modes of production and ways of representation. What does it mean to exclaim that 'there is nothing' in an industrial waterfront, that a marketplace is 'without use'; what are the consequences of classifying these places – often in one and the same sentence – as 'underdeveloped' and 'having potential'? How can emptiness itself be an instrument of private speculation, preventing more democratic ways of utilising land?

Antje Heuer and Stefan Rettich bring forward these questions in relation to the problem of shrinking urban landscapes manifested in many regions of East Germany. They note that physical landscapes are always also landscapes of property rights, observing how material 'relics of the socialist city' can be redeemed by other 'relics of the socialist city', that is, public-oriented forms of planning. Francisco Martinez and Jürgen Rendl introduce their ongoing ethnographic workshop, in which graduate students interrogate the Balti Jaam marketplace in Tallinn. Framing the workshop output as a possible proposal for counter-intuitive intervention, the authors portray the place as an 'ant nest' that is a seismograph of post-socialist changes. Raina Lillepõld presents samples of her graduate work in an urban research studio, in which she traced and mapped the removal of Lenin statues in Estonia in the early 1990s. In this issue, Lillepõld offers the reader revealing diagrams that document the ways in which the former locations of the statues were carefully redesigned after their removal.

This issue of U is a collage of previously published or exhibited works, original submissions, older, unpublished writings, and reflections on ongoing research. As a way of stressing that collage can be a fully-fledged medium of thought on the one hand, while warning that post-socialist thought has been often satisfied with pasting together sedimented ideas on the other, but also highlighting that the thought itself is architectural, landscaped and subjected to conflicting property claims, we also present ourselves a paper in which not one letter is ours: it is fully composed of thirty-five introductory sentences that we found in the vast academic literature on post-socialism.

FAREWELL FROM THE SOCIALIST CITY?*

ANTJE HEUER, STEFAN RETTICH,
KARO Architects, Leipzig

'capitalist city = term used in the world of liberalism, profit-making and the power of capital; socialist city = term used in the world of socialist democracy and the power of the people Construction is synonym with learning process!'

Notes from a Dresden Technical University lecture course on urban design, 1982

The old must give way to the new – in the centre of Halle (Saale) in the mid-1980s as well as in 1969 when the village of Passendorf fell victim to the urban extension of Halle-Neustadt.

** The article was published in a catalogue of the DAM (German Architecture Museum), 2010/11.*

We're somewhere in East Germany in the year 2007. The bronze bust of Wilhelm Pieck which once stood in the suburbs, has been replaced by rustic wooden benches on which school children eat their sandwiches during breaks. They know they have heard of the first GDR president, but don't remember exactly what it was. In the city centre, ten storey 1960s housing blocks are being sold and will have to make way for the huge shopping centre projected by a property developer for this site. Prior to demolition, the blocks have been veiled in painted lengths of textile material, gaudily colourful shrouds so to speak. These buildings – erected with total disregard for and contrary to the

historic urban fabric, had yet been full of everyday life and certainty of the future. They were meant to demonstrate the unity of industrial construction and socialist architecture and to 'differ fundamentally from the chaos spreading in the centres of capitalist cities…',[1] as Walter Ulbricht put it. However, architects of his time only gave them a condescending smile.

1. Walter Ulbricht, Städtebau und Architektur. In: Deutsche Architektur, 8 (1959), vol.12, p. 646.

The political and ideological, economic and social framework conditions for the socialist city no longer exist. In this sense, it is dead and only lingers on in architectural fragments as souvenirs of recent East German history, some of them as pieces of evidence of modern urban planning, but even more as extremely endangered heirlooms of an historic experiment that has been declared a failure. And yet – though the debate on the qualities and deficits of the socialist city (if it happens at all) is mostly concerned with three dimensional examples (e.g. in cases where an ensemble of GDR modernism is threatened with disappearance), it is not only a discourse on enclosed or built up space, but also touches on the very character and foundations of society. All talk of giving up the socialist urban model therefore also means the dismantling of socialist ideals. People have rejected these, at least temporarily, and found them generally unsuitable for shaping the design of a new societal order and its structural expression.

A brave new world in the making: Halle-Neustadt in the 1960s.

The City as a Built Model of Society

The socialist city is regarded as the attempt to translate a societal model into built space. It may be understood as the architectural-ideological answer to political, economic and social/societal problems. In a free interpretation of socialism[2], one might therefore see it as a three-dimensional model of a just distribution of national economic riches, as promoting social cohesion, restraining processes of individualisation, warding off individual and social alienation, eliminating political powerlessness and curbing unrestricted private ownership and right of disposal of means of production as well as real estate.

The experiment begun in East Germany after World War II consisted in developing such a design. Political decisions[3] laid the foundations for this, formulated among others in the 'Sixteen Principles of Urban Planning' and the 'Reconstruction Law', which regulated society's – the people's – right of disposal of property. Over forty years, the attempt at substantiating Marxist-socialist philosophy through building produced a number of different models. The idea of the socialist city is therefore now associated with

2. See Thomas Noetzel, Sozialismus. In: Metzler Philosophie Lexikon, Begriffe und Definitionen, p. 484, 1996. (English: See Encylcopedia Britannica, vol. 23 Macropedia, pp. 535 ff. on Marxism, and vol. 27 Macropedia, pp. 393 ff. on Modern Socio-Economic Doctrines and Reform Movements. 15th edition, London etc., 1997.

3. The 'Sechzehn Grundsätze des Städtebaus' and the 'Aufbaugesetz' (both 1950) were two of the three resolutions the GDR government passed on building on its territory. The third reso-lution was the 'Beschluss zur Industrialisierung des Bauens und weiteren Entwicklung der Typisierung' (Resolution on the Industrialization of construction and the further development of serialization, 1955).

the reconstructed and restructured war-destroyed centres of Dresden or Magdeburg, with the new city of Eisenhüttenstadt or urban extensions in towns such as Hoyerswerda or Schwedt near big industrial centres, and – not least – with 'The Slab', as the large panel housing satellites in or outside big cities were called (e.g. Berlin-Marzahn, Halle-Neustadt, Leipzig-Grünau). The socialist city – that is parade grounds and metre-high stone fists, but also the infant daycare centre in the former villa of an upper middleclass factory owner.

Though the architectural designs were partly similar in both East and West Germany, they differed in terms of the conditions under which they were produced, and in the 'identities' created through them. What distinguished the socialist city positively from West German or West European cities, was not only the aesthetic guises of East German architectural modernism, but above all designs that – in terms of structure, space and philosophy – were directly linked to the political system.

For one thing this offered the chance to build on state-owned and therefore often vast sites, without having to pay free-market-controlled property prices, and to do this through politically initiated and centrally planned processes. For another it represented a thinking which could be called idealistic: faith in the power of the collective and in the need for subordinating individual interests to those of the community; equality for all and the desire never to lose sight of the welfare of society as a whole. Even though it was almost impossible to translate these ideals into reality, they took root in people's minds and contributed considerably to people's sense of identity, albeit a 'reflexive' self-understanding, critical consciousness[4] marked by doubts, which resulted from constant comparisons between East and West Germany, between ambition and actual achievement. After all, the reality of the socialist city included a good deal of short supplies and arbitrary acts of central planning authorities.

4. See Simone Hain, 'About Confectioners of Towers and Bakers of Rye Bread: The Built Environment of the GDR'. In: Two German Architectures 1949-1989 (exhibition catalogue), ifa Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart, 2004, pp. 26-39.

Dismantling of ideas after reunification, here of the sculpture 'The Fists' on Riebeckplatz (Ernst Thälmannplatz in GDR times) in Halle (Saale), 2003.

Changed Complex of Problems

With German reunification, the increasingly felt political and economic helplessness of socialist experimenters first ended in general perplexity and want of concepts on the part of East German politics, which also spread to other areas of community life. The rejection of political despotism and the misguided developments it initiated, among them economic and ecological developments, again ended in the 'chaos of the capitalist city'. Only much later were the urban redevelopments during the first years after reunification to be seen as a social and historic-political patchwork which did have qualities, but at a time when buildings and spaces were already lost.

Housing blocks 'Am Brühl', Leipzig, from the 1960s …

… in early 2007 artistically wrapped by Fischer Art to draw public attention to this ensemble. The wrapping was unsuccessful, as the redevelopment project requires the demolition of the old buildings.

Changes in political ideas are generally carried forward by replacing leading persons in communal administrations. The new old ideal of the European city was to be the heir of the socialist city, with the 'Planwerk Innenstadt Berlin' (Planning Work Inner City Berlin, 1996) as godfather. This proposal, all too often misinterpreted as a spatial plan, served as a guiding motif for urban design, supported in its credibility by the fact (rightly lamented by East Germans at the time) that the GDR had almost totally neglected the historic centres of its towns and cities. The typical European city is a city whose inhabitants – as the owners of its small-scale properties – selfconfidently take an active part in determining its fate, but in the GDR, after forty years of socialism, the political and economic foundations of this type of European city had disappeared.

Yet long before urban design concepts are geared towards rearranging urban spaces, it is the question of ownership, in conjunction with political and economic structures, which determines the appearance of our cities. The Kohl administration created tax depreciation programmes to mobilise West German capital for the 'Reconstruction East'.[5] In a certain respect, these triggered the closingdown sale of the socialist city. Every construction project benefited, indiscriminately, from the garage for two cars to the shopping mall. In the early 1990s, the maxim 'restitution before compensation' led to many protracted disputes (often decided through court proceedings) between former and present owners or among communities of heirs.[6] This is why empty lots and buildings in the city centres could not be sold for a long time and blocked urban redevelopment and spatial planning (and some are still unsold today). Often the new private proprietors no longer come from the city itself or from East Germany, and ownerships multiply when old residential buildings are divided into marketable 60-square-metre condominiums.

Larger sums mostly go to the suburban 'intermediary city' where properties are to be had more easily and cost less. Innercity spacious residential ensembles are no longer profitable; urban spaces are again meant to be cosy and comfortable, instead of transporting ideas or setting up ideological signs. Enormous over-production is rampant as regards all types of buildings. The sites of the large council housing estates, however, still the property of municipal housing companies, burden communal budgets with great numbers of buildings in disrepair and burdened by old debts.[7]

At the same time, the apparent individualisation, i.e. private ownership and development, of the country's built environment – for forty GDR years unwanted and restricted – led away from socialist times and brought forth a class of new proprietors which – for its size in numbers – moves to the wrong place, to the urban surroundings. In contrast to developments in West Germany, suburbanisation in East Germany contributes greatly to innercity buildings losing residents on a massive scale and to serious demographic and economic urban shrinking processes.

Almost over night, the former workers' and peasants' state becomes a structurally weak region with high unemployment and 'economic refugees'. People all over the country moved to where they found work in the few centres of economic power. This meant that many East German city centres became patchworks of islands of growth and shrinkage amid increasingly extensive 'areas under observation'. The East German exodus was accompanied by natural losses of population: while before 1989/90, birth rates in East Germany totalled a statistical average of 1.9 children per woman and sometimes sank

5. After reunification, the German government introduced the Special Tax Depreciation East which enable property buyers to apply for a 50 per cent depreciation on the buying price, including subsidiary costs and freely allocable over a period of five years.

6. A total of about 2.1 million cases of restitution claims were filed. See Joachim Tesch, Klaus-Jürgen Warnick, Staatliche Wohnungsversorgung und kapitalistischer Wohnungsmarkt. In: BdWI Forum Wissenschaft 2/2004.

7. In the GDR, the construction of new housing blocks was funded via longterm loans from the GDR state bank. Amortisation and interest rates were not paid by the housing companies, but by the communes and the state budget respectively. Following the end of the GDR and the privatisation of its state bank, accounting balances actually turned into a mountain of 'old debts' which housing companies now have to pay back to commercial banks. On average, every new flat in East Germany was burdened with a debt of DM 15,000. This meant that, on entering the new market economy, East German housing companies were in fact bankrupt. – See Matthias Bernt, Fiktive Werte.

below 0.8 after that. At present, figures are on the rise again, but birth rates in East Germany are only slowly adapting to those in the Western German states.[8]

Reality as a Resource

Due to the factors mentioned above, there are more than 1.3 million empty flats all over the eastern federal states. The problem of housing the masses – an old social issue and demand of the workers' movement – has thus practically solved itself by itself. It took some time for the phenomenon of empty flats to filter into public consciousness at the beginning of the new millennium, not least owing to younger architects and urban planners who understand the interdependence of social and spatial developments as a whole and are starting to formulate new theoretical models for new urbanist situations.

Kolorado Neustadt[9], the CarambolePrinciple[10], the Core Plasma Model[11] or the Improvisation Principle[12] are all examples of new spatial and social models dealing exclusively with existing structures and calling for an non dogmatic approach to the urban everyday. These models propagate the principle of a pragmatic ideal city. All of them imply criticism of rigid traditional notions of space which, due to the fact that cities are increasingly 'punctured' by gap sites, are beginning to adapt to those spatial concepts of classical Modernism, albeit in a strange new way. Space is about to flow again, this time without any politico-ideological superstructure. The unintentional amnesty for open, modernist spatial images is based on processes of shifting and concentration in a 'globalised' world.

Looking at the present demographic and economic situation, it seems very unlikely that a general equality of living conditions will ever be achieved. Planners must therefore try to qualify differences and organise exchanges between the different spaces. Planning can no longer only be concerned with built space, i.e. architecture, but will also have to deal with creating and ordering spatial relations, i.e. social space. Here communication plays an essential part and, in a certain way, returns to the aspect of reflection about the relationship between the individual and the community, about the state of society as a whole which is closely related to the state of our own 'good life'. Recent theories therefore aim for flexible, changeable spaces which embrace both cultural and participatory practices. The city of tomorrow is not the construct of individual artistic architects, but must be permanently adaptable and negotiable.

Conflicting spatial images herald the emergence of complex, global networks and relations, but also of pluralism and freedom in this new age. At the same time, these images require partially changed habits of perception (just like the 'intermediary city' does) for their beauties to be discovered. Exciting urban-and-rural collages cannot be had just like that, they are not easily transmissible and even less easily translated into reality. Money is always scarce and another obstacle is the lack of consciousness and the will to distribute public funds purposefully and to monitor how they are used.[13] In addition, the funds provided by the 'Urban Restructuring East' programme are in fact mostly used to fend off bankruptcies of communal housing corporations or to demolish redundant buildings, and only to a minor extent to revitalise and enhance urban areas.[14]

8. However, birth rates in Germany of 1.32 (east) and 1.37 (west) are still fall below the rate of 2.1 children per woman, necessary to maintain present population figures.

Misguided developments in the 1990s: suburbanization of the surroundings and a leap in scale in Leipzig itself.

9. Markus Bader, Christof Mayer: Kolorado Neustadt. Aktive Diversifizierung und situative Praxis im Stadtumbau. In: IzR 3/4 2006 – Stadtumbau in Großsiedlungen, Bonn, 2006.

10. Urs Füssler, Das Carambole-Prinzip, Arch+, no. 166, Aachen, 2003, pp. 16–24.

11. L21: Kern & Plasma. In: Schrumpfende Städte, vol. 2 – Handlungskonzepte, pp. 220 f. Ed.: Philipp Oswalt, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2005.

12. Christopher Dell: Prinzip Improvisation, Cologne, 2002.

13. While communal, federal state and central governments together spent 2.6 billion euros of public funds in eight years on the 'Urban Restructuring East' programme, the German government, in the same period, paid out roughly 80 billion euros for the so-called Eigenheimpauschale, or owner-occupied home lump sum subsidy, which supports the construction lobby and middleclass citizens, but contributes to 'urban sprawl' in the countryside and to depopulating inner cities. See Philipp Oswalt's introductory essay in: Schrumpfende Städte, volume 2 – Handlungskonzepte, p. 13. Ed.: Philipp Oswalt, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2005.

14. In Saxony, for example, 80 percent of the programme's funds are used for demolition work and only 20 percent for urban revitalisation.

The Carambole Principle: As if the reality of the city could be distorted just a little by the notions it inspires (from: Urs Füssler, 2003).

On the other hand, existing property rights often block the use of empty sites for public purposes. The site border represents the invisible, legal barrier and with it perhaps the most important political task. Without giving citizens the chance to acquire and utilise empty sites and buildings, the potentials of 'shrinking cities' will not be able to unfold. Initially debated measures, such as a progressively rising property tax, revaluation of properties in line with current market conditions or property exchange pools are no longer an issue in the official public debate. The example of Leipzig and other cities, which made private properties available for temporary public use via so-called allowance contracts, have been the exception. The city continues to belong to the land register and the (sometimes cooked) books of the property owners.

Of course, even global capital has discovered Germany, and here mainly the low cost East German property market. Today you may learn of the existence of a new owner, and tomorrow you will hear that the house, company or hotel chain has again changed hands and now belongs to yet another investor. In these regions you will be able to buy an entire street block for the sum a residential and commercial block costs in one of the large European agglomerations. In what way the development of property portfolios will affect urban development, remains to be seen.

With the return of the capitalist society, the nature of a village, town or city is again determined by marketability. We must not let them be reduced to this quality alone. For 'the good life' we urgently need the relics of the socialist city – and not only its spacious public squares and iconic buildings of the 1960s. The least we need is reflection on and questioning of the role of private ownership and the discussion of social cohesion. The post-socialist city is like a seismograph that indicates future developments and, just like its predecessor, remains a testing ground.

AUTUMN BALL

Architect Maurer knew very well that the city in which he lived [Mustamäe, a Soviet housing estate] was an invention of the twentieth century. ... Maurer also shared the opinion that the creation of a new town was inevitable. One had to get rid of the evils of the previous formation. Le Corbusier and his numerous followers in all the countries of the world explained why the old town grew outdated ... The new towns had to be different ... The dark, dirty courtyards would disappear. Air and sunshine would be accessible from all sides. ... [However,] [b]uilding new towns came up against amazing, quite unpredictable obstacles. ... For example, at the beginning of the fifties, a real new town was built in the United States, in St. Louis. It sprang up on the site of a former dirty suburb. It was designed by the finest architects. ... [But] [f]inally, the new town was almost empty. ... The attempt to change society and living conditions in the USA was reported to have ended in the municipality's decision, in the mid-seventies, to blow up the abandoned dreamtown which had got out of control. This was the people's answer to their benefactors! ... Maurer observed with astonishment how the architects of the new generation despised the City of the Sun ... He remembered the sadness of a celebrated architect who liberated the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro from its squalid favelas and erected instead of them a beautiful, spacious, functional satellite town. Never again would hot-blooded samba rhythms ring here, the famous architect had sighed. And they hadn't. But the architect made his choice. He preferred human happiness to the samba. Had the choice been wrong? Maurer asked himself indignantly. Would it be better to prefer the samba to human happiness? Down with Mustamäe! Let's dance the *tuljak* between the vendors' stands on Stroomi Beach. This was what the new generation of architects wanted to do in Maurer's opinion ... And they said the senseless large fields between the dull monsters that were the buildings were neither nature nor street, neither places nor spaces, neither roads nor squares. One could neither relax nor stroll there, neither lie down nor take a breath of fresh air, and the only idea they really seemed to suggest was that of drinking. Architect Maurer knew very well that not everything had turned out perfectly at Mustamäe. ... [But] Maurer hated nostalgia. ... He preferred the Sun to the Moon.

MATI UNT, Estonian writer, essayist and theatre director (1944-2005).
Excerpts from: (1985 [1979]) The Autumn Ball. Scenes of City Life [Sügisball] (Tallinn: Perioodika), p. 85-91.

UNFINISHED SOCIALISM: FIVE IMAGES FROM TALLINN

Text: KAIJA-LUISA KURIK, *Mphil/PhD student in Manchester School of Architecture*
Photos: KAUR MARAN, *freelance photographer*

Tallinn is easy to read – different eras and ideologies are drawn out in space with extraordinary clarity. This also applies when looking at the spatial heritage of socialism. Modernist ideals characteristic to Soviet planning that envisioned a city functioning like clockwork, where everyday life takes place in well organised micro districts and fast public transport moves masses between factories and home, have stretched the borders of Tallinn both towards the East and West. Building Mustamäe, Lasnamäe and Õismäe within a few decades is an example of the large scale visions characteristic of Soviet planning, the same could be said about the fairly radical large scale transport planning (look at Tauri Tuvikene's text).

The specifics of Soviet planning derive from land ownership. All the land belonged to the state, and architects, the ones who of course were approved by the regime, had quite a bit of liberty in designing large-scale projects with multiple parts. Soviet Tallinn was planned through general plans, first of which was created in 1953 and second already in 1961–1962.[1] Those general plans envisioned the urban development for the next 30-35 years and set the main parameters for building in the city. More detailed plans resulted from various planning projects. Already the first general plan saw the importance of Tallinn as a seaside location and looked for solutions for connecting the city centre with the coast, planned a new city centre and mobility solutions. Transport corridors in the city were planned to be radial. The second general plan, the so called 'The plan of Great-Tallinn' focused more on large scale housing estates – during the planning period the number of inhabitants in Tallinn grew considerably (from 283 071 in 1959 to 478 974 in 1989). The Soviet period was a time when Tallinn went through the quickest changes and grew the fastest.

When whatever kind of regime changes for another, a certain permanently temporary state remains. Projects that have not been finished will be replaced with new visions, but ideas that were never realised continue to live on in discussions that tend to resurface again and again and are expressed in the small-scale spatial absurd – a staircase, that leads nowhere, or design of contemporary architecture that follows the trajectories of former visions. The 1990s were characterised by opposition to Soviet spatial developments, and people wished to replace planning solutions that derived from socialist ideals with a more Western space. This type of opposition was supported by the very quick growth in private property. Exactly these sort of interruptions or changes of direction in spatial development create contrasts and shifts, tighten the atmosphere of the unfinished, and further emphasise the spatial complexities of Tallinn.

The photo reportage is looking for signs left behind by never fully realised Soviet planning projects and asks how unfinished transportation networks, a district centre, central square, a street and radial promenades influence contemporary spatial experience and planning. We have chosen five examples that are all significant in their own right.

RÄVALA AVENUE - A LINK BETWEEN TWO MAIN ROADS.
Rävala avenue was designated to become a significant central axis already in the first general plan. Together with Teatri square, that was to be designed in front of Estonia Opera House, it would have become an important trajectory for movement in the city centre. In the second general plan the avenue was drawn longer towards West, so that it would connect two radial main roads - Pärnu and Tartu road.[2] This connection was planned to be finished with the building of a new opera house on Tõnismäe. An architectural competition was even organised, but a satisfactory plan was never established and the idea, which would have also included demolishing a significant number of wooden houses also did not find support among the local inhabitants.
It seems, however, that the plan is still alive. The extension of Rävala avenue continues to be in the general plan of Tallinn today as a necessary connection on the East and West axes. On 2014 a building by Pluss architects will be finished in the end of Rävala avenue that in its form seems to consider the opportunity of the cut through being built one day (Photo). The project description states 'So that the person moving in the proximity of the building would sense the continuation of urban space on the perspective Rävala avenue, the main block of the building has been lifted on the level of the 5th floor.'

VIRU SQUARE - NEW HEART OF THE CITY.
In 1945 Viru square was designated to be the new main square of Tallinn. The idea continued throughout the rule of Stalin. A competition for the design of the square, however, was only organised in 1962. When in the beginning of the Soviet period the area was envisioned as a central square hosting parades and meetings, then by that time the vision had somewhat changed. Actually, it was even suggested that the area could be partially or fully built up.[3] However in the project for planning and housing in Tallinn this solution was set aside. The project saw the area not as built up, but rather as a new centre of public life and business. Parades and meetings took place on the Freedom square and at the Maarjamäe memorial.[4]
In the contemporary urban space Viru square is missing - the notion 'Viru square' continues to be used, but there is no square in the classical sense. With the building of Viru shopping centre in 2004 the area gained a new direction of development. It has become one of the main business and shopping areas in town. But the motive of a public square resurfaces from time to time as a card against building further commercial buildings and increasing car centric traffic.

MUSTAMÄE - THE FIRST BEDROOM SUBURB.

The development of industry and the exponential population growth after the second world war increased the need for housing. Planning industrial open plan suburbs was initiated. The construction of Mustamäe started in 1962 and envisioned was an open plan large-scale housing estate combined of micro districts with 4-9 storey housing. Every micro district would include the necessary public and commercial functions and green spaces. The centre of the district was planned to be in the area between Ehitajate road, Mustamäe road and Keskuse road. In 1970, architect Raine Karp made a detailed plan for the area, but it never reached the stage of a building project. The district centre was seen to include a large cultural centre with a 1000 seat cinema, library, dance hall, restaurant with 350 places, hotel, café and diner and a shopping centre. Next to that an administrative high-rise building would have been built.[5]

This fate is characteristic of a number of large-scale housing projects, in Tallinn and elsewhere. Many public buildings and centres of micro districts have been left unfinished, foremost because of rushed construction.

In conditions of the ever increasing demand for housing, apartments would be built, but never the communal functions. Because of this, the image of these districts being foremost bedroom suburbs has deepened.

Today, the planned central area is a green space with playgrounds and sculptures. People have learned to use the park through initiatives of the local municipality. However, it seems that near where Mustamäe meets Nõmme there is no real need for a green space like that. It is difficult to pin down in space where would be the centre of contemporary Mustamäe - more social focal points are gathered around the Tallinn University of Technology and various shopping centres. Planned micro districts don't function especially because of the lack of public facilities.

LASNAMÄE AND A STAIRWAY TO NOWHERE.

Lasnamäe is the newest of the panel housing districts in Tallinn. The main roads were planned to be excavated into the ground and Laagna road was finished according to that plan. In 1978 the transportation scheme project for Tallinn was approved and this also included a tramway. The construction started in 1988 and even the rails were placed.6 This was a year before the singing revolution and for various reasons the project was never finished. On Laagna road today the tramway is marked by stairs that in the middle of the road seem to lead nowhere, and the idea of a tramway continues to live on in articles published time and time again, with titles such as 'The high speed tramway of Lasnamäe will be built in five years' (2004)[6] and 'Tallinn promises that the speed tramway will be built by 2017' (2011).

VIRU HOTEL AND LINNAHALL - OPENING TALLINN TO THE SEA. Interestingly, opening Tallinn to the sea has developed into an unsolvable problem for over half a century. Access to the sea was a central topic already of the first general plan in the early 1950s and the topic is more and more actively dealt with today.

Viru Hotel, the first high-rise in Tallinn, opened its doors in 1972. Linnahall was built for the yachting competition of the Moscow Olympics in 1980. Both of these buildings are part of a programme of recognising Tallinn as a seaside location. Linnahall is the first building that gave inhabitants an opportunity to connect the sea with the city centre, and for that it is significant. As a connection between Viru Hotel and Linnahall, a wide pedestrian boulevard was planned that would take you straight to the sea from the Viru square. Linnahall was planned to be surrounded by a seaside park.

Today this vision can be sensed when standing on top of Linnahall and looking towards the Viru Hotel - there are wide stairs that seem to be a little bit too grandiose in relation to the streetscape they lead into. Two significant examples of modernist architecture are distinct from the surrounding built environment that originates from various periods of time.

Permanently temporary

Stalled or never finished projects are definitely not just characteristic to the Soviet period. Similar examples are plentiful even in contemporary Tallinn – to name a few, the building of the Estonian Academy of Arts or the new building for the urban government come to mind. In today's space the unclear faith of these objects is expressed in temporary uses: temporary contracts for petrol stations, car parks or some other 'flexible' solution seems to fill the gap. What makes the visions of the spatial planners of the Soviet Union distinct is their scope – unfinished projects include centres of housing estates, large roads, transport corridors, a boulevard and a planned central square.

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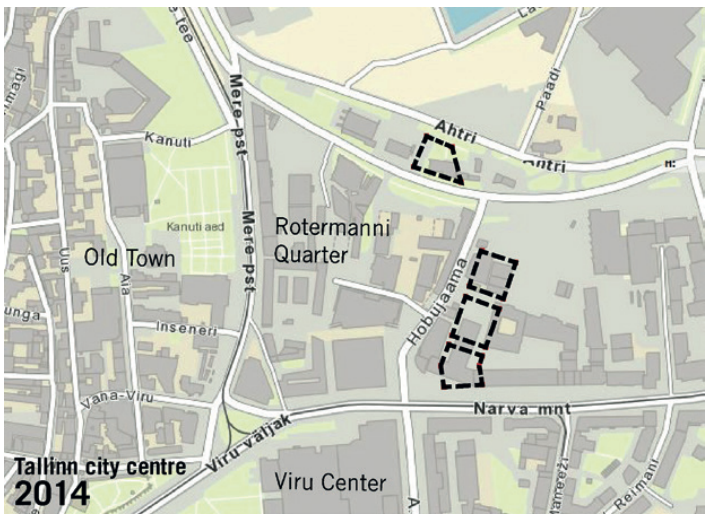


Maps by Regina Viljasaar.

UNFINISHED SOCIALIST 'AUTOPIAS'

TAURI TUVIKENE, *PhD candidate at the UCL Department of Geography*

This article offers some insights into another aspect of unfinished socialism. Drawing from the material that emerged as a by-product of my doctoral research on post-socialist parking politics in Tallinn[1], the article considers the complications of seeing the Soviet era as 'socialist' or as necessarily different from the 'West'. The point in discussion here are spaces of the automobile.

The private automobile is hardly the element that is seen as characteristic of socialist cities. Rather, space designed for the mass use of this transport mode conjures up images of cities in the USA, Oceania or Western Europe. Similarly, the end of the Soviet Union marked the increase of car ownership and use in Estonia and among other former Soviet societies, whereas the importance of public transport concomitantly dropped. Yet, while the trend is unquestionable, there are numerous instances when the Soviet urban planning positioned access for cars in an important position. A motorway and a large parking garage – the examples here – are both associated with the ideological dominance of private cars in the West. American historian Cotten Seiler in his book 'Republic of Drivers' shows how the ideology in the USA positioned the construction of motorways as characteristic of American freedom in opposition to the socialist restrictions on cars. Yet, mass-scale car spaces emerged also in socialist societies, even if just in visions.

Of course, the existence of those ideas might not mean much. It could just signify how modernism has swept all over the world, with similar ideas taken up in Western Europe, the USA as well as in the Soviet Union. However, that would not capture the whole meaning of those (imaginary) spaces. Eventually, it is interesting that a Soviet society was dealing with the problem of accommodating car traffic while the level of individual car use was minuscule and the ideological position of cars controversial. Moreover, when the Soviet era ended, and car use increased significantly with the ideology of private car ownership much more explicit and vocal than in the Soviet time, the city government did not follow up on the plans devised under the conditions of socialism. This lays at least partial support to an assertion that private automobiles had an

1. Since 2010 in University College London, supported by the Archimedes Foundation, the Estonian Cultural Endowment and the Estonian Students' Fund in USA.

important position in the imaginations of urban planning also under the Soviet collective ideology. We need to be careful, therefore, in assuming a clear-cut distinction of socialist urban thinking from the rest of the world.

Parking garages in the city centre

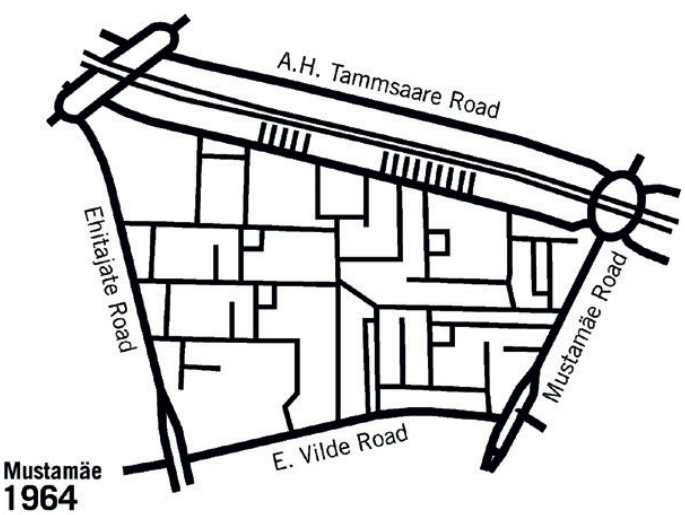
In late 1970s and early 1980s, the city of Tallinn considered the expansion of public transport in the city centre.[2] The idea was to introduce a high-speed tram system with stations positioned underground. However, the same plans (from 1978 and 1983) also recommended the construction of large multi-story parking garages in the centre. The picture above four such four-storey buildings with 400 parking spaces right next to where the contemporary main shopping area in the city centre is. The Soviet plan actually recommended more parking spaces in parking garages than there is in that area today (despite the large facilities that the shopping centres have constructed to accommodate cars). The plan also recommended numerous other multi-storey parking garages which all remained unfinished in the Soviet era.

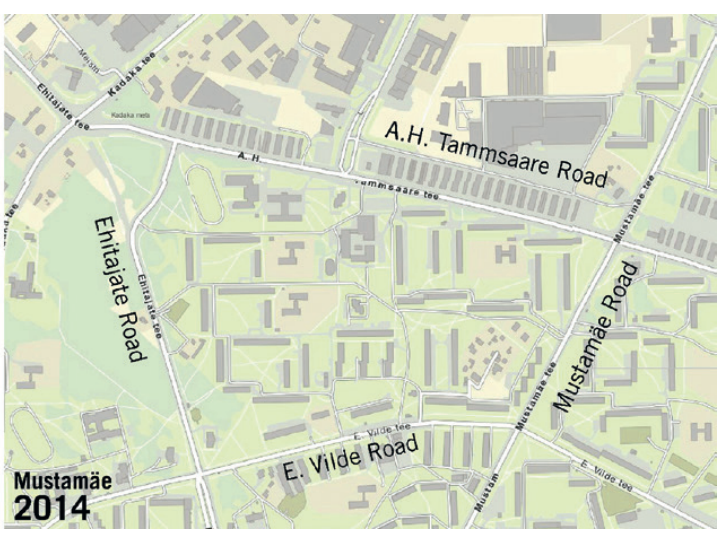
2. Eesti Riigiarhiiv. ERA.T-14.4-6.3978. Kompleksnaja Transportnaja Shema Tallina (1978).

A proposed motorway in a housing estate (Mustamäe)

It is widely known that socialist cities were urbanised by adding large-scale pre-fabricated housing estates. Much less considered is their traffic planning. However, it is in regard to this aspect that interesting connections occur with older 'Western' planning ideas such as Clarence Perry's 'neighbourhood unit' (1929) or Le Corbusier's 'Ville Radieuse' (1933). The fragment of a plan[3] (below left) depicts the neighbourhood planning structure similar to that presented by Perry: namely, internal roads are planned for limited traffic while arterial roads surrounding the trapezoidal living area have to accommodate an extended amount of car traffic. The roads meandering between apartment buildings could be seen as forms of cul-de-sacs. But even more significant than these is a motorway shown on the upper part of the picture. This urban motorway was planned to connect different parts of the city but has been left unconstructed to its full extent imagined in the 1960s. The contemporary four-lane road in that location is a mere feeder road of the initial plan. Similar motorways and multi-level junctions were proposed in other parts of the city but these have largely remained unconstructed.

3. Eesti Riigiarhiiv. ERA.T-14.4-6.8748. 'Tallinna Mustamäe IV Mikrorajooni Hoonestamise Eskiisprojekt' (1964).

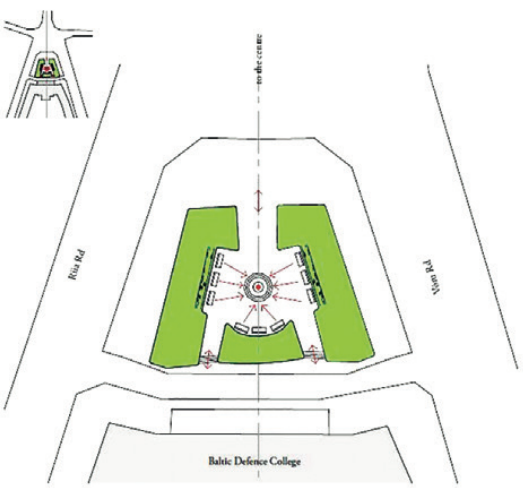




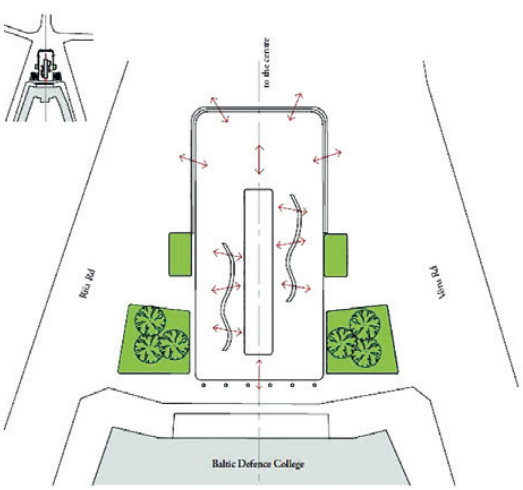
INTERPRETING THE VOID: POST-SOCIALIST URBAN PLANNING AFTER MONUMENT REMOVAL

RAINA LILLEPÕLD, *MA student, Estonian Academy of Arts*

After the removal of their soviet statues, the locations, which mostly occupied prominent sites of Estonian urban centres, were transformed. The re-designs were not uniform though, as some places were altered very little, others were thoroughly transformed and in some cases the void, created by vanished monument, is still evident. Here are three examples of different interpretations.



The site in Tartu with Lenin monument.



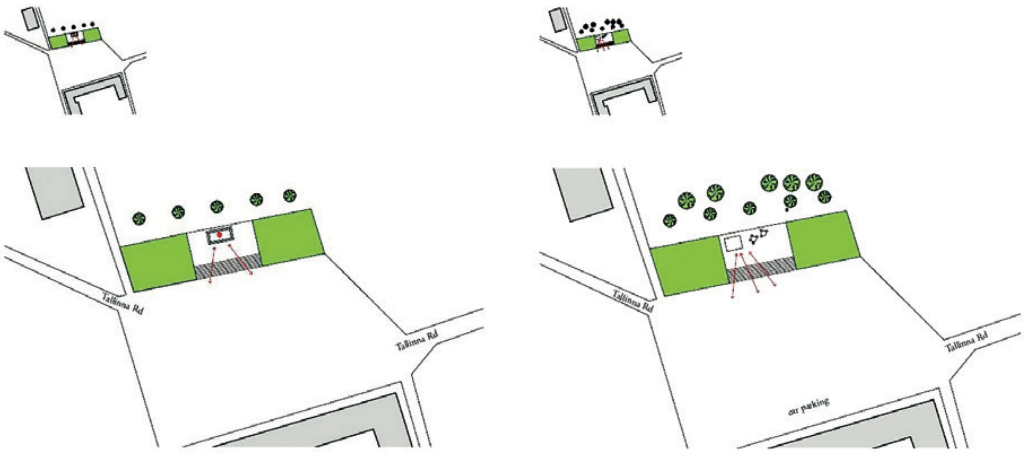
The site in Tartu after Lenin monument was dismantled.

Tartu

The statue of Lenin in Tartu stood in front of the Estonian Agricultural University building (between 1952–1990) on a triangular shaped square between the Riia and Võru roads. Originally the square was designed as a central focus, creating views to the monument. There were seats arranged around a raised decagon where the statue was placed on a plinth, and in order to reach the university building, one had no choice but to circle around it. After the Lenin monument was dismantled, the building at the south side of the square was taken over by the Baltic Defence College in 1999 and the square in front of it was transformed. The former central focus of the site was changed. The square was re-designed on a prolonged axis - the focus moved away from the centre into the direction of the main building. The flag-posts placed parallel in front of the classical portico increase the focus towards the College building. The new layout is furthermore extended with two long snaking seats and an oblong shaped fountain cavity. Around the fountain there are steps that direct movement towards the roads. The area has regained the ceremonial sense as originally designed at 1939.

Narva

The Lenin monument in Narva was situated on Peetri Square - quite an open place due do the fact that the buildings on three sides were reduced to rubble during WW II and never rebuilt. The monument (erected in 1957) was placed onto a large platform on the north side of the square with wide steps leading up to it. The robust granite parapet in front of the statue, where the communist party-bosses greeted parading crowds, was added in the 1980s. Narva was the last town in Estonia were the Lenin statue was taken down (21st December 1993). The location of the monument has remained nearly untouched. The central pedestal is gone but the steps and raised platform where the monument once stood remain the same. There used to be hedges lining the monument site, but as they got overgrown, the local municipality removed them. There is a small cafe-kiosk operating on top of the platform with a few tables overlooking Peetri Square, which mostly serves as a parking



← ← The site designed in Narva for the monument.

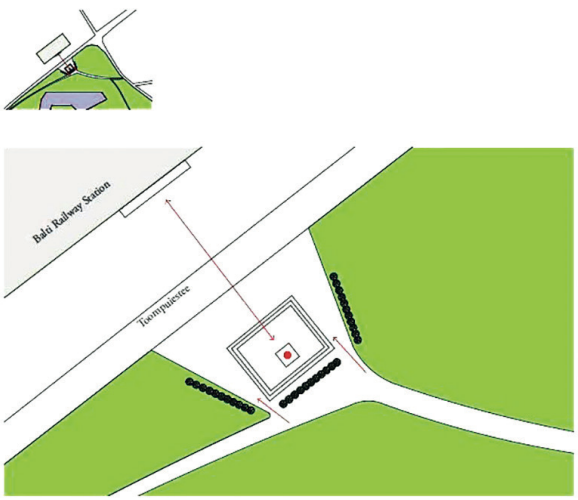
← The monument site with café on top of the pedestal.

lot. The trees that were planted when the monument was designed have become overgrown, thus making the platform embraced by greenery. The site is still quite grandiose, especially in contrast with the modest, temporary kiosk in place of the statue.

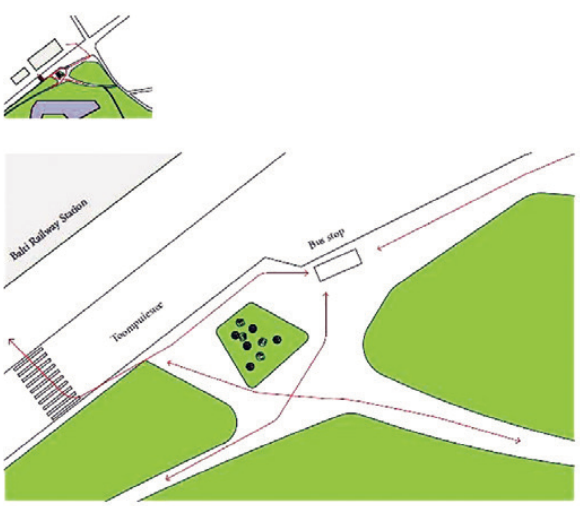
Tallinn

Opposite the Baltic Railway station there were two soviet era monuments: Stalin (1950-54) and a memorial for 1st December coup of 1924 (1974-1994). Stalin's statue could be seen straight from the main entrance of the original Baltic Railway building. The same principal was used for the memorial. For the latter, the site of the monument was slightly raised in order to create a more powerful effect of the ensemble. Nowadays the site does not bear any memory to the monuments as it is redesigned in a way that references to the monuments have been erased completely. The area is levelled and covered with some loose gravel and rocks as well as randomly planted shrubs and plants (most likely the concrete foundation is still lying underneath). The former monument location seems now rather mundane and even unnoticeable. There is rather busy tram stop and car parking lot next to it further de-glorifying the place. The central axis from the monument site to the station is also no longer in use, as people do not cross the road straight from that site anymore but use an underground tunnel or a pedestrian crossing further away.

So, there has been many different ways to transform the urban landscape after the soviet monuments were removed. Narva is the case where very little has been done to the site as if something could be placed back on the raised platform at any time, whereas Tallinn and Tartu have both implemented different approaches in order to claim back these sites. Tartu has transformed the square, interpreting the site as their 'own' by creating a prominent place using quite opposite methods of design, whereas Tallinn has adopted the never-been-there approach.



The monument site in Tallinn having straight view from the entrance of railway station.



The monument site being incorporated into the park.

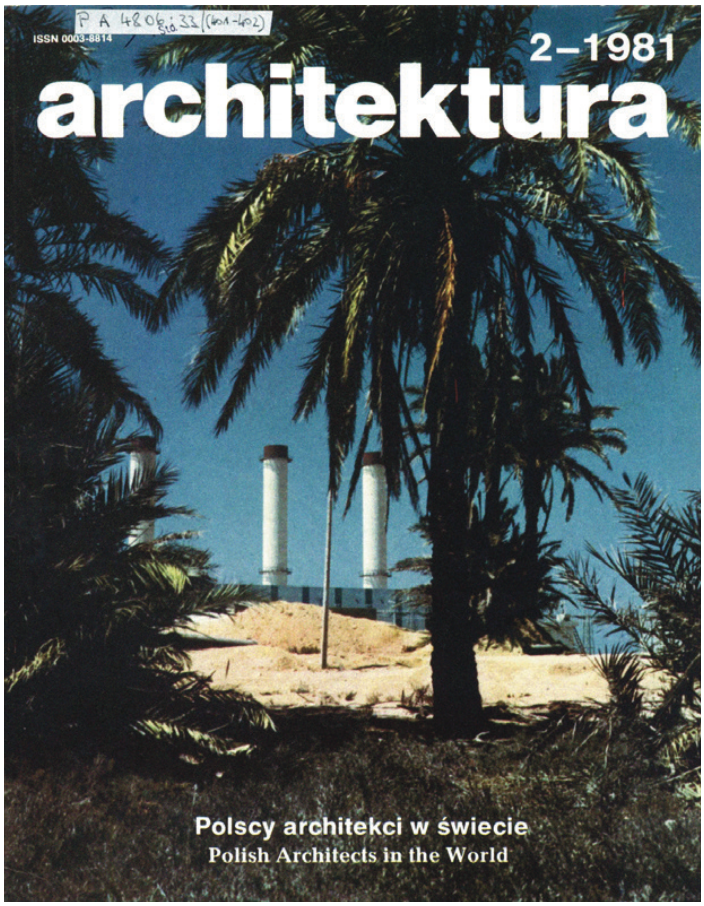
BUILDING EXPORT FROM SOCIALIST POLAND: ON THE TRACES OF A PHOTOGRAPH*

ŁUKASZ STANEK, *lecturer, Manchester University*

In February 1981, the main Polish architecture monthly Architektura [Architecture] dedicated an issue to 'Polish architects in the World' [pic. 1]. While the presentation of designs delivered by Polish architects abroad was not rare on the pages of Architektura, the dedication of a whole issue to this topic was unprecedented. With an economic crisis hitting the country, the editors returned to the pride of socialist Poland: the export of architecture and urbanism. Capitalising on the post-war experience of the reconstruction of Warsaw, Gdańsk, and the construction of new towns such as Nowa Huta and Nowe Tychy, Polish architects and planners had been much in demand since the 1960s and their commissions included such key projects as the master-plans of Baghdad and Aleppo; administrative buildings in Kabul; museums in Nigeria; the trade fair in Accra and governmental buildings in Ghana; followed in the 1970s by large-scale research projects such as the General Housing Programme for Iraq and the regional plan and urban plans of the Tripolitania region in Libya.

Strikingly, none of these high-profile projects is featured on the cover of Architektura. Instead, the full-colour image chosen by the editors was a rather surprising one: on the first plan one sees several palm trees; on the second something between a building site and a beach—a lot of sand in any case; and on the third, where one would expect the blue sky meeting the sea, one discerns an object with three white large chimneys which could be an ocean liner but is, more probably, an industrial facility.

How to make sense of this choice? Were the editors dreaming about being on a sunny cruise when preparing their February issue in the midst of Polish winter? Without discounting this option the cover also seems to convey something of the ambiguous atmosphere surrounding the work of Polish architects on foreign contracts. These contracts for them, meant not only the possibility of realising projects, getting away from the grim reality of socialist Poland, but also the rare opportunity to travel and to earn significantly more than it was possible to earn back home. All this resulted in a combination of admiration



1. Cover of Architektura 2, 1981, 'Polscy architekci w świecie/ Polish Architects in the World'.

and jealousy among their peers, and perhaps it is this marked irony that the cover of Architektura is referencing.

But what is it the building shown on this cover? Architektura is not of much help here, but a visit to the archives of the International Trade Fair in Poznań offers the answer to this question. After the Second World War this fair – which during the Second Republic (1918–1939) fashioned itself as a showcase for architectural experimentation – became one of the most important hubs for trade between enterprises from the socialist block. The journal Polish Fair Magazine, published in Polish, English, French, and Russian, features the building from Architektura. The 3rd issue of 1979 reproduces the facility in black and white and the shot makes it clear that the building does not stand in a jungle but rather on dunes covered with scarce vegetation [pic. 2]. The picture does not have a caption, but it was included in an article presenting Polish export projects in Libya – a country which since the revolution of 1969 and the proclamation of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in 1977, became one of the most important trade partners for Poland and several other countries in the Eastern Block. The text lists two neighbourhoods in El Marj,

En Libye...

Les exportations polonaises de travaux du bâtiment vers la Libye ont été inaugurées en 1966 par la construction de deux quartiers de la ville El Marj — situés près de la ville Barce détruite par un tremblement de terre (photo à gauche). Le contrat comprenait la construction des maisons, des immeubles d'utilité publique et des rues avec leur infrastructure complète.

A l'heure actuelle, les entreprises polonaises sont spécialisées dans la construction d'exploitations agricoles, de maisons d'habitation, de routes et de ponts, dans la construction d'unités énergétiques, que dans la livraison et le montage de réservoirs, services de consulting.

Les exportations polonaises de travaux du bâtiment vers la Libye sont réalisées par les entreprises de commerce extérieur BUDIMEX, DROMEX et POLIMEX-CEKOP — soit directement, soit dans le cadre de la sous-traitance pour le compte de firmes étrangères — ainsi que par POLSERVICE.

BUDIMEX

Entreprise de commerce extérieur du bâtiment a été la première en Libye.

La construction intégrale des deux quartiers de la ville El Marj sont l'oeuvre de BUDIMEX

BUDIMEX a réalisé, dans les années 1972–1977, la construction de 600 maisons, 1200 exploitations agricoles et 600 km de routes intérieures, de même que sur les travaux liés à la construction de la centrale électrique de Benghazi et de la station de captage d'eau l'accompagnant.

Actuellement BUDIMEX réalise les contrats relatifs à l'extension de la centrale électrique de Benghazi, et aux travaux de construction de la centrale électrique de Homs (édifiée en consortium avec des firmes occidentales) comprenant les travaux du bâtiment, le montage des installations électriques ainsi que le montage des appareillages de contrôle, et à la construction de 950 fermes agricoles.

Les specialistes polonais à l'étranger

15

2. Magazine polonaise des foires 3 (54), 1979, p. 18. Archiwum Międzynarodowych Targów Poznańskich (Poznań).

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IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA...

IN LIBYA...

IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY...

3. Polish Fair Magazine 3 (62), 1981, p. 14, Archiwum Międzynarodowych Targów Poznańskich (Poznań).

constructed in the late 1960s near to the city of Barca, which had been destroyed in an earthquake; the text also mentions numerous infrastructural and engineering projects as well as services offered by various Polish firms. One of them was BUDIMEX, responsible for 600 houses, 1200 agricultural farms, 600 km of roads and two power plants in Libya, including an already completed one in Benghazi. It must be this power plant that made it to the cover of Architektura; which is confirmed by the caption in other another issue of the Polish Fair Magazine (1/ 1981), where the building pops up again, now in full colour, cropped to a square format.

In the 3rd issue of the Magazine of the same year, the photograph reappeared again, but now in an advertisement, not for BUDIMEX, but for another important form of foreign trade – Energoexport – which, as the advert states, specialises in 'power plants and industrial objects' built together with Western firms [pic. 3]. Advertisements like this, viewed from the perspective of the present, hint not only at the complex networks of dependency between state firms in socialist Poland, but also at their various forms of pragmatic cooperation with Western firms; this does not quite fit the picture painted by the dominant discourses in architectural historiography which view the Cold War through the prism of East-West competition. The best account of the political economy behind the building in Benghazi can be found in the BUDIMEX files at the Archiwum Akt Nowych [New Files Archive] in Warsaw. In these files, some of the Libyan counterparts of the Polish firms are revealed; they show that the management of the company was under pressure to improve its performance on the international market. This was inscribed into a shift in the motivation for the export of architecture and urbanism by the Polish regime in the 1970s. Since the late 1950s the objectives had been predominantly geopolitical ones, feeding off the support of the post-colonial states from the Khrushchev administration and stabilising the post-war order in Europe; however, this changed in the next decade. With the recognition of the Polish borders by West Germany and with the necessity to pay off loans granted to the regime in Warsaw by Western financial institutions, the economic objectives started to prevail over the political ones. Yet while Polish technology became more and more outdated, it was labour – and intellectual labour in particular – which became a key export commodity for Poland.

4. Magdalena Łabęda, 'Budowa elektrowni Bengazi II w Libii' [The construction of the power plant Benghazi II in Libya], Inżynieria i budownictwo 15, 1977, p. 169.

5. 'Elektrownia w Bengazi (Libia)' [Power plant in Benghazi (Libya)], in dossier no. 387 (Empacher Wojciech), Archiwum Stowarzyszenia Architektów Polskich (Warszawa).

Mgr inż. MAGDALENA ŁABĘDA
Politechnika Warszawska

Budowa elektrowni Benghazi II w Libii

Budowy elektrowni w Benghazi podjęło się, w drodze przetargu, międzynarodowe konsorcjum, w skład którego wszedł (z udziałem 48,5%) polski „Budimex". Polacy wykonali głównie roboty budowlane. Z uwagi na szczególne warunki budowy i ciekawe rozwiązania techniczne, informacje o tych robotach zasługują chyba na opublikowanie.

Lokalizacja elektrowni i charakterystyka terenu

Elektrownia została zlokalizowana w odległości 15 km od miasta Benghazi nad brzegiem morza śródziemnego, na wydmach porosłych gajami palmowymi i bagnach porytych wysuszonej przez słońce trawą. Teren płaski, wzdłuż morza przekształca się w pagórkowaty o charakterze wydmowym. Różnice wysokości sięgają do 9 m. Działka przeznaczona pod budowę, o powierzchni 300 tys. m², graniczy z morzem na długości 800 m. Prace niwelacyjne wykonano na obszarze 170 tys. m². Przemieszczono 300 tys. m³ gruntu. Projektowane rzędne terenu wynoszą, ponad poziom morza, +4,50 m w części południowo-zachodniej, +6,00 m w północno-wschodniej oraz +3,00 m w północno-zachodniej.

Tam gdzie pozostał teren ukształtowany przez naturę, wydmy są porośnięte częściowo przez krzewy winorośli. Polski wykonawca zrobił wszystko, aby zachować możliwie jak najwięcej z istniejącego drzewostanu. Pozostawiono np. stare wysokie palmy.

Charakterystyka obiektu

Kompleks obiektów elektrowni wyposażonej w trzy turbiny kondensacyjne z generatorami o mocy 60 MW każdy oraz dwie turbiny przeciwprężne z generatorami o mocy 30 MW każdy, obejmuje również zakład odsalania wody morskiej zaopatrujący w wodę pitną miasto (rys. 1). Wzniesione obiekty można podzielić na budynki oraz na lądowe i morskie budowle inżynierskie.

● *Budynek główny* o kubaturze 130 000 m³ i długości 100 m składa się z: a) części środkowej — podpiwniczonej, pięciokondygnacyjnej o żelbetowej konstrukcji monolitycznej wykonanej z betonu B300-i-350; b) turbinowni stanowiącej nawę boczną o szerokości 22,5 m i wysokości 23,5 m — zaprojektowanej w konstrukcji stalowej i wyposażonej w suwnicę o nośności 60/20 MG; c) kotłowni stanowiącej drugą nawę boczną o szerokości 24 m i wysokości 21 m, zaprojektowanej też w konstrukcji stalowej (rys. 2).

W przyszłości przewidziane jest powiększenie długości budynku.

Turbiny parowe są zasilane z kotłów opalanych olejem ziemnym. Obieg wody jest otwarty, tzn. jest ona pobierana z morza i zrzucana z powrotem do morza kanałem zamkniętym.

● *Stacje* uzdatniania wody wykonano z prefabrykatów żelbetowych.

● *Pompownie* wody obiegowej jest budynkiem składającym się z części nadziemnej o kubaturze 9000 m³ oraz części podziemnej o poziomie posadowienia —6,60 do —8,71 m. Część podziemną zaprojektowano ja. — sztywną skrzynię żelbetową; część nadziemną zaś — jako konstrukcję prefabrykowaną, szkieletową o siatce słupów 5,5 × × 16,0 m. Dźwigary żelbetowe o długości 15,5 m i ciężarze 19,5 MG wykonano jako prefabrykaty na specjalnie przygotowanym do tego celu placu, w pobliżu obiektu. Pozwoliło to na uniknięcie ich przewozu. Zastosowano beton B380. Obiekt jest wyposażony w suwnicę o nośności 8 MG.

● *Budynki* socjalny i warsztatowy, o kubaturze 11 000 m³, zaprojektowano jako żelbetową prefabrykowaną konstrukcję szkieletową. Część socjalna jest dwukondygnacyjna. Strop nad parterem jest żelbetowy, monolityczny. Warsztat jest wyposażony jest w suwnicę o nośności 5 MG.

● *Magazyn*, o kubaturze 21 000 m³ i powierzchni 3100 m², ma również żelbetową, szkieletową konstrukcję prefabrykowaną o siatce słupów 8 × 8 m.

Budowli inżynierskich jest kilka. Należą do nich:

● *Zbiorniki oleju* — cztery o pojemności 10 000 m³ każdy oraz jeden o pojemności 500 m³. Zbiorniki są odgrodzone

Rys. 1. Zakład odsalania wody morskiej dla miasta Benghazi

Rys. 2. Elewacja budynku głównego z płyt „Hunter Douglas"

INŻ. i BUD. 169

6. 'Elektrownia w Benghazi (Libia). Elewacja budynku głównego' [Power plant in Benghazi (Libya). The façade of the main building], in dossier no. 1254 (Siennicki Maciej), Archiwum Stowarzyszenia Architektów Polskich (Warszawa).

ELEKTROWNIA W BENGHAZI /LIBIA/
Elewacja budynku głównego

Elektrownia w Benghasi / Libia /

From a country of proletarians, socialist Poland was becoming a proletarian among countries, having not much to sell but labour.

If for the Polish regime the Benghazi power plant was, first at all, a commodity, it could have been also looked at with an aesthetic gaze. In the archive of the Polish Architects Association (SARP) in Warsaw, among the hundreds of dossiers of Polish architects, there are two that contain photographs of the power plant. These images, together with a set of schematic drawings of the plant and the administrative building, are to be found in the dossier of Wojciech Empacher, who claims in the accompanying CV to have designed the power plant in Benghazi together with a colleague K. Goliński. A different photograph of the Benghazi plant was included in the dossier of the architect Maciej Siennicki, who lists in his CV the 'architectural design and the collaboration on the working design of a power plant in Benghazi' but he does not mention the names of his collaborators, as he is himself not mentioned in the dossier of Empacher.

The CVs of the two architects reveal that their paths crossed at the Warsaw state architecture office (BISTYP), and this explains the distribution of authorship for the power plant. This office specialised in more typical projects like industrial plants, but it also contributed to the most innovative architecture in 1970s in Poland, such as the central railway station in Warsaw or the 'Spodek' auditorium in Katowice.

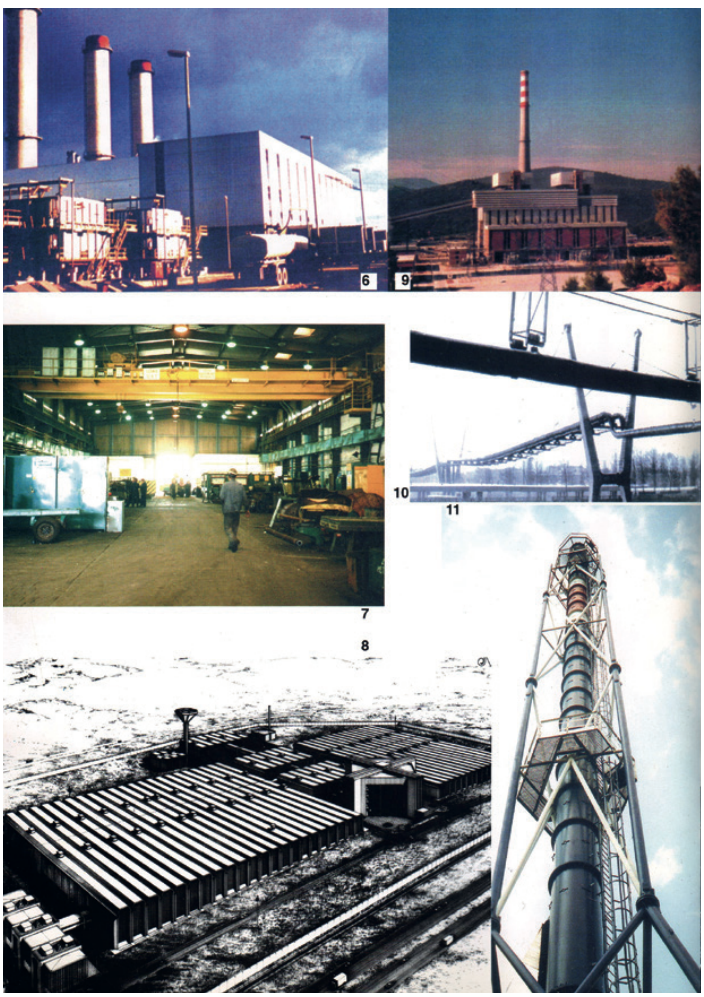
Tracing references to BISTYP in journals specialising in building technology and construction allows one to add a new set of images of the Benghazi plant to the ones gathered so far. An article published in the journal Przegląd Budowlany [Building Review, 10/ 1976], which featured numerous articles by Polish engineers sharing their experiences of building in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, is

illustrated by a photograph of sedimentation plants, and the article shows a black and white snapshot of the power plant, centered on its large volumes and three chimneys, surrounded by an array of technical equipment, vehicles, sheds, and vegetation. Yet the most complete account of the plant can be found in a paper from Inżynieria i budownictwo [Engineering and construction, 15/ 1977] which includes an account of the site, the technological specification of all buildings and facilities, but also the organisation of the building site and the terms of the contracts between all the firms involved, including West-German but also French, Dutch and British firms providing materials and equipment, as well as the Belgian supervisor. The article also gives an account of the most interesting technical solutions that were utilised, for example the sun-protective finish on the roof and on the facades – all of them illustrated [pic. 5].

The photographs from the SARP archive are very different. Probably taken by the architect himself, the photographs in the Empacher dossier frame the abstract quality of some architectural details and the rhythms of the façade, in contrast to the complexity of pipes and conductors [pic. 6]. The images of the power plant Siennicki enclosed in his dossier – under a dramatic clouded sky, lit by a sharp light that emphasises the volumes and the lines on the facades – are signed in an elegant typeface ('Power plant in Benghazi [Libya]. Façade of the main building') [pic. 7]. Both sets of images aim to persuade the viewer that the building is a piece of architecture: a claim which was instrumental to the objective of both architects submitting their work to the SARP in order to be granted the status of working 'creatively', which came with specific tax benefits during socialism. Evidently, in order to make the argument about the creative labour of the architects, their photographs exclude any other type of labour involved in the process, including that of technicians and engineers, let alone that of the Polish and Libyan workers employed on the construction site.

Curiously, the very same photograph reappears in the promotional folder of the architectural firm Dona from the early 1990s. The gaudy folder, typical for the first wave of advertisements entering Poland after the end of socialism, shows a collage of designs delivered by the three partners Zbigniew Kargol, Janusz Przychodzki, and Wiesław Rzepka. The power plant in Benghazi appears here in the company of several projects in Nigeria, including embassies, university buildings, offices and industrial plants. This time the image is less the proof of an aesthetic achievement and more a demonstration of the capacity of the partners to control large-scale commissions in free market conditions, collaborate with Western firms, and use modern technology: a capacity gained during the work on export contracts.

7. The Bengazi power plant in the promotional folder of 'Dona LLC,' Zbigniew Kargol, Janusz Przychodzki, and Wiesław Rzepka, early 1990s.



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THE FIRST SENTENCES OF POST-SOCIALISM

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It has long been argued that the logic of socialist urbanisation in Eastern Europe produced a somewhat different type of city from those in Western regimes.[1] For several decades, urban geographers of East-Central Europe have asked themselves whether there was such a thing as the ''socialist city'': a city whose spatial characteristics were sufficiently different from those of its counterpart in the developed capitalist world (especially in Western Europe) as to warrant the very existence of the term ''socialist city''.[2] Urban living had a particular significance in the formerly centrally planned countries: on the one hand, it facilitated the fulfilment of ambitions for industrialisation and signified progress, and on the other hand it encouraged collective rather than individual identity with the aim of creating a socially just society.[3] Socialist rule stifled markets and often left store shelves bare.[4] The collapse of state socialism placed the urban planning systems of Central and Eastern European countries in a state of flux.[5] A celebrated postsocialist anecdote suggests that 'socialism was the longest and most painful road from capitalism to capitalism'.[6] What is happening in a central European city whose socio-spatial structure, urban life and culture have been heavily influenced by a totalitarian political regime and a centralised command economy during the Communist period?[7] Until the early 1990s, the process of urbanisation in extensive parts of Eurasia took place under conditions of central planning.[8] Central and Eastern European (CEE) cities have been under a centralised command economy for periods varying from 45 to 75 years.[9] Modern wars and revolutions (whether violent of peaceful) have more than once transformed European political boundaries and structures.[10] In 1989, European socialist countries crossed into a new ideological category of post-socialism.[11] 1989 was an extraordinary year, a year when the world watched breathlessly as the Berlin Wall fell and, one by one, the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe tumbled – a year which truly changed the face of the world.[12] One of the most enduring images of the twentieth century was the dismantling of the Berlin Wall.[13] It was 'the final nail in the coffin of the modem ambitions' for Bauman, 'the last nail in the coffin of any sort of Marxist credibility' for Harvey, the 'end of history' for Fukuyama, and '[t]he triumph of liberalism, of capitalism, of the Western democracies over the vain hopes of Marxism' for Latour.[14] The demise of socialism ushered in a radical process of transformation in the economies, politics and societies of all post-socialist states.[15]The crash of the socialist system sent shockwaves throughout the economies of the Central and Eastern European countries.[16] The collapse of state-socialism in 1989/90 generated a far-reaching social and economic transformation in Eastern Central Europe.[17]

The postcommunist world is of interest for several reasons.[18] The early years after the fall of communism were marked by a focus on political and institutional change.[19] After the collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe the socialist concepts of

growth and development were replaced by capitalist concepts of growth and development.[20] Following the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, one of the first priorities of the reform governments was to transform the system of ownership.[21] The transformation of socio-economic life which began in post-socialist countries at the end of the 1980s manifested itself first of all in the cities.[22] Segregation reshapes residential landscapes in post-socialist countries.[23] One of the most notable processes of metropolitan restructuring occurring in Eastern Europe since the end of communism in 1989 has been that of suburbanisation.[24] In the cities of East Central Europe high-status gated residential enclaves emerged after the collapse of communism symbolising the new dimensions of social segregation brought about by the post-socialist transition.[25] Is increased socioeconomic residential segregation a necessary consequence of the introduction of market reforms and of the increase of income inequalities in the formerly socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)?[26] Most of the literature on privatisation in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) has concentrated on the introduction of macro economic strategies and institutional reform with very little having been written about the impact of privatisation on individual households.[27]

Eastern Europe has been through a turbulent period of transition since 1989.[28] In the last fifteen years, transition economies in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States have experienced highly dramatic change in political, economic and social terms.[29] Arguably, post-socialist transformation, understood as the economic, political, institutional and ideological changes associated with the discarding of 'communism' or 'state socialism' and the embracing of 'capitalism' in Central and Eastem Europe, has been taking place for at least twenty years.[30] For more than twenty years, CEE countries have faced similar problems in political, economic and societal systems.[31] The centrality of ‘capitalism’ to discourses of post-socialist transition is now widely acknowledged.[32] Fifteen years after the sudden collapse of the socialist system, half of the Central and Eastern European countries that bravely toppled their communist regimes announced the successful completion of their transition to market-oriented democratic societies.[33] With the accession of 10 post-socialist states to the European Union and the steady approach of the twentieth anniversary of the events of 1989, we hear more and more calls for the end of post-socialism.[34] The questions I am concerned with are both historical and futuristic.[35]

This paper is in its entirety composed of first sentences collected from academic literature that takes post-socialism as its subject. The collection of sentences is organised into a coherent narrative, which, in its form and in its argument, ressembles the forms and the arguments of the literature it draws from. At the same time, the repetitive rhythm dramatises narrative archetypes that are produced and reproduced in this literature.

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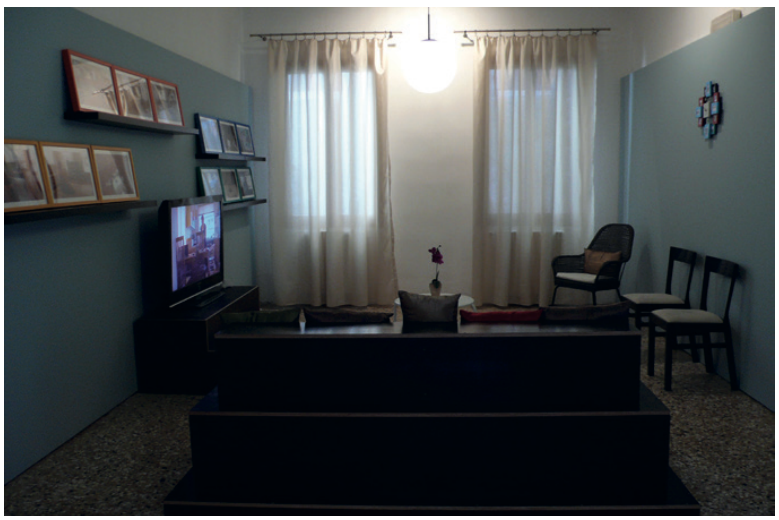
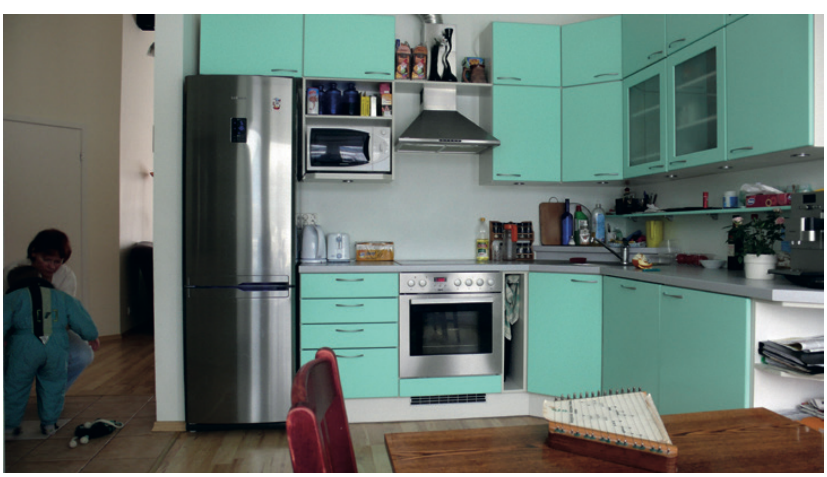




Liina Siib
A Room of One's Own (2011)
2-channel video 11'30'
Soundtrack compiled by
Hans-Gunter Lock and Liina Siib.

A Woman Takes Little Space
(2007–2014)
Digitally edited analogue colour photography, digital photography, pigment ink print 30 × 45 cm

A Woman Takes Little Space
(2007–2014)
Digitally edited analogue colour photography, digital photography, pigment ink print 30 × 45 cm

Liina Siib
Unsocial hours (2011)
2-channel video 10'40'
Voice actor: Tarmo Männard
Sound edit: Hans-Gunter Lock and Liina Siib
Collection of the Art Museum of Estonia.

THE SPACE-TIME ENVIRONMENT IN LIINA SIIB'S ART PROJECT 'A WOMAN TAKES LITTLE SPACE'

TRIIN LOKS, *freelance art critic*

'Life in a post-Soviet country must be very frustrating'

Comment from the guest book of the Estonian pavilion at the 2011 Venice Biennale

Liina Siib's art project 'A Woman Takes Little Space' represented Estonia at the 54th International Venice Art Biennale in 2011. It is a multifaceted project, consisting of photographs, videos and site specific art mediums. Siib focused on the relationship of her subject (women) to their environment, taking a closer look at the spatial and social practices that exist in the society and the outlets which have been perpetuated in various layers of human activity.

I will place the emphasis on the last word of the title of the project 'A Woman Takes Little Space' – space. Since the entire project has a documenting quality, the current state of the post-socialist society of Estonia and the everyday living environment of the so-called ordinary person has been 'frozen' in Siib's works. I choose the title work 'A Woman Takes Little Space'[1] for my analysis, and I will also deal with the works 'A Room of One's Own'[2] and 'Unsocial Hours'[3]. The biennale project also included 'Averse Body'[4] and 'Apartness'[5].

In literature, the moods that prevailed in the Eastern European (early)post-socialist society have been evoked by Tõnu Õnnepalu. His novel 'Piiririik' ('Border State') does not reveal the exact origin of the protagonist, but it is known that he was born in a former Soviet Union republic in Eastern Europe, why not Estonia. He comes from 'an array of poor and dark states that feebly lament their stillborn history'[6]. The term 'border state' symbolically entails the undefinable status of the state, standing somewhere between the East and the West. The protagonist has settled in Paris (i.e. the cultural capital of Old Europe), but he is tortured by issues of identity: while wishing to fit into the Western welfare society and trying to renounce his background, he is unable to fully carry it out. His memories keep tearing him back to that bleak (Estonian) land of which he is ashamed.

Even though 'Border State' was written in 1993, it is still relevant, creating a telling background to Liina Siib's works, which outline the borderline and unstable nature of the contemporary Estonian environment. Siib has recorded her works in a relatively short period of time, yet they are surprisingly distinct from one another, oscillating between two poles. A parallel with a roller coaster, or even the hilly landscape of southern Estonia comes to mind, with the rising and falling road making your stomach turn but offering a peculiar thrill at the same time. Francisco Martínez in this issue has also highlighted the incoherence of the post-socialist society, comparing it to a bastard body where each part is growing according to its own will and in different directions without being subject to central control.[7]

The living environment is changing slowly, but these changes all the more honestly reflect the developmental processes in the society, creating transitions, combinations and contrasts between the past, the present and the future. The developments in post-socialist

countries are different, but what they have in common is a consensual note that they were part of the socialist bloc and it is post now. It is difficult to find a new footing when one great ideology collapses. In the Soviet regime, the future of the city was written down in a specific form, whereas in the following period, there was no single leading ideology. On the one hand, there is a constant retreat from the socialist legacy in the urban setting and meeting of immediate needs. On the other hand, in recent years, a certain nostalgia for all things 'from the Soviet times' has been spreading, which in turn means treasuring the past. Therefore, the general picture is rather inconsistent and diverse, which is also evident in Siib's works.

The photo series 'A Woman Takes Little Space' features images that fully comply with our understanding of a successful society, side by side with images that look exactly like photos from the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (with improved colour quality), yet belong to this day. This way, the keywords in the environments recorded by Siib are 'Euro-repairs' and a suburban one-family residential home with a contemporary plan, yet also old factory buildings and the forgotten corner shops of Lasnamäe. Between these two extremes, there is a borderline area, a mixture of old and new, different memory images. The assembled result could be described as a postmodern collage.

Siib's works reflect the link between the relationship of space and people and social conditions. For instance, the so-called weaker (in this case, women and ethnic minorities) are driven to the margins: Siib has recorded women working in less prestigious positions and in poor conditions; in terms of living conditions, however, it is the ethnic minorities that 'take little space'. The latter is linked to developments in the ESSR. With the directing of labour, (mostly Russian-speaking) immigrants from the USSR were resettled in newly-built residential regions and industrial areas. However, with the rebuilding of capitalism in the 1990s, entire economic sectors were reorganised. Having lost their jobs and not speaking the now compulsory national language, the immigrants felt increasing uncertainty. On the one hand, this situation drove them to the margins in the social sense, but it also confirmed their isolation in the spatial sense: the Russian-speaking population lives in residential blocks located outside the city centre. In general, the sites that have a strong air of socialist heritage are also the sites that no one wants to deal with and where everything unimportant or problematic in the eyes of the society is shoved into. These sites do not carry the image of a successful Estonia, instead they are marked and problematic.

If Liina Siib's work 'Unsocial hours' did not have hidden clues that it was filmed shortly before 2011 (for instance, the price tags of pastry have prices in both Estonian kroons as well as euros), one might think that it is filmed much earlier: all technology and rooms, also the clothes of people are part of the past. The images circulated in the media usually present a sleek and shiny Estonia, whereas 'Unsocial hours' features people in their everyday situations and environments that are usually left unreported. Only the clips about hospital staff show a contemporary environment. However, a hospital is an institution that is carefully upgraded (EU standards being the keyword). Also, the offices and trendy shops in 'A Woman Takes Little Space' demonstrate an accordance with the modern Western ideology and therefore, the readiness to take on the future.

In her project 'A Room of One's Own', the author presents young families in suburban residential houses and also highlights the attempt of Estonia to rid

1. A Woman Takes Little Space (2007–2011) exhibited 40 different documentary colour photographs at the Venice Biennale (the size of each item was 30 × 45 cm), recording women in their work environments.

2. A Room of One's Own (2011) was a work combining a video (11' 30") and a room installation that took the title from Virginia Woolf's essay A Room of One's Own. The room design imitated a household and the television placed in it showed a video about housewives living in the newly developed suburbs of Tallinn, interspersed with clips about women dancing at an outdoor concert in the winter.

3. Unsocial hours (2011) was a video installation (10' 02") with two screens side by side showing four documentary videos in sync: in one, the bakers of a night shift were making pastry, on the screen next to it, the pastry was sold on the Balti railway station market; the second pair consisted of videos about people eating pastry in a café in Lasnamäe and by the staff of the Pelgulinna maternity hospital. The videos were accompanied by a male voice loudly announcing the names of the various kinds of pastry.

4. Averse Body (2007) was a video and room installation (45' 53") consisting of interviews with 11 prostitutes of Tallinn, played over footage of Tallinn by night, shot from a window of a taxi, with the artist asking them whether they like their bodies, their voices, how their clients feel about their bodies, have they ever been dumped, what they would like to change about themselves, etc.

5. Apartness (2008) was a photo and room installation. A room presented as a bedroom had two beds and a bedside table with a mirror between them. Above both beds, there was a large photograph of a middle-aged woman (139 × 94 cm).

6. Tode, E. (2003). Piiririik. Tallinn: Tuum. p 12.

7. Martínez, F. Postsotsialismi ahistus. Veel kümme aastat hiljem. Vikerkaar 2013, nr 3, p 78.

itself of the past and create something new. Anu Kannike has described how the 1990s brought about a restructuring of the private sphere and a reshaping of it to fit contemporary European standards. In a way, it was a rite of passage, where the interior design dictated by the former regime was replaced with a new, westwards-looking model.[8] In addition to the 'EU repair works', a suburban (semidetached) house is also a sign of the times. Suburbanisation, that picked up pace in Estonia especially in the noughties, is linked to the restructuring of post-socialist space. The series 'A Room of One's Own' highlights this phenomenon well. Siib also imitated the style of the residential houses depicted in the video at the exhibition venue of the Venice biennale, presenting a home, which we have come to understand as average, as a staged production. Her presentation of a living room with a large television, sofa and knick-knack has an alienating effect. Liina Siib has commented on the work as follows: 'The Estonian woman wants to live the American dream, but to achieve that, she goes to work in the city, her children go to the kindergarten in the city, because there are not enough places near their home, the nearest shop and even bus stop are several kilometres away.'[9] However, one must keep in mind that it is a dream, not reality. Reality itself is a hybrid that blends together the dream and actual practical needs.

8. Kannike, A. Privaatsuse otsinguil. Üksikisiku strateegiad ja kultuurimuutused Nõukogude Eestis. – Constructed Happiness – Domestic Environment in the Cold War Era. Võistlevad õnned – elukeskkond külma sõja perioodil. Ed. M. Kalm; I. Ruudi. Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2005, p 83.

9. Soomre, M-K. Liina Siib: ruum defineerib naise. Postimees 18.06.2011.

What is served up as the ideal and what many young families are striving for looks like an empty bubble to an outsider, leading one's thoughts to the bank loans too large to pay back, taken out to acquire the desired suburban home. The fact does not make it any less desirable: it is a life model that is promoted in current (Estonian) society. Therefore, the value of space depends on the accompanying ideology, which gives it a certain meaning: the space itself is neutral by nature, it gains value and meaning through the power relations surrounding it. By presenting certain spatial notions as the only right and true ones, a demand for them is increased, which, in turn, reproduces this ideology. In one of his interviews, Foucault has summarised that the truth is not a universal phenomenon located above us, outside power relations – on the contrary, the truth is linked to certain procedures of a certain society, and therefore changing in time and determined by the historical and social context.[10]

10. Krull, H Järelsõna. A. Fontana; P. Pasquino, Michael Foucault. Tõde ja võim. Vikerkaar 1992, nr 3, p 52.

A disruption has taken place and the period following it has been called post-socialism, which tends to imply a negative judgement, like the comment from the guestbook of Liina Siib's project ('Life in a post-Soviet country must be very frustrating'). I am moved to ask 'Why?' There is no blood or violence in these works, they are also not 'depressing' views. Rather, the photos are colourful and bright, young families and women living calmly at their daily pace. One could agree that the project deals with a delicate subject: minority groups, discrimination and prostitution. However, these keywords are known in both the West as well as East, in socialist, post-socialist, capitalist and also post-capitalist society – they do not signify anything positive anywhere. This assessment probably comes from the attitude that different is strange and therefore automatically negative. Here, it is the case of creating opposites, which can be viewed in the light of performative utterances that have the 'ability' to create what it names: by affirming something we are simultaneously negating something else. Therefore, creating opposites is an important strategy for self-creation – one must find something or someone that repels. A certain phenomenon is explained by its negative, bringing the latter to life in this way. This is how post-socialism and (post)capitalism (i.e. the West) contrast, the latter being the dominating side and by contrasting with it, the negative is created. To avoid this contrasting and prejudices related to his

Liina Siib
Apartness (2008)
Venice Biennale exhibition view.

origins, the protagonist of 'Border State' lied that he was Swedish when going out. Estonia tries to count itself among the Nordic countries and shake the legacy of socialism and the 'Eastern bloc' status - as if a mere verbal group could change the status of a country.

As a photographer, Liina Siib has skillfully recorded what is 'in the air': without verbalised comments, she has managed to capture something that is characteristic of a post-socialist society. She has honestly recorded examples of both successful Estonia as well as the so-called second Estonia, providing a cross-section of current life in Estonia. The photos show an unevenness, rootlessness, but also the attempt to find a firmer footing in the future. Indeed, it is probably the multilayered quality radiating from 'A Woman Takes Little Space' that speaks to people: namely, the post-socialist urban experience is hectic, one can see and experience a lot within a kilometre. Siib began her photo series 'A Woman Takes Little Space' in 2007 and continues it to this day. In this way, it is a historical document, which offers an opportunity to watch the changes (or stagnation) in a young country.

Entrance to the Jaama turg.
Common Stand at Jaama turg.
December 2012.
Photos by Francisco Martínez.

EXCAVATIONS TOWARDS THE FUTURE WITHIN THE MARKET OF BALTI JAAM IN TALLINN

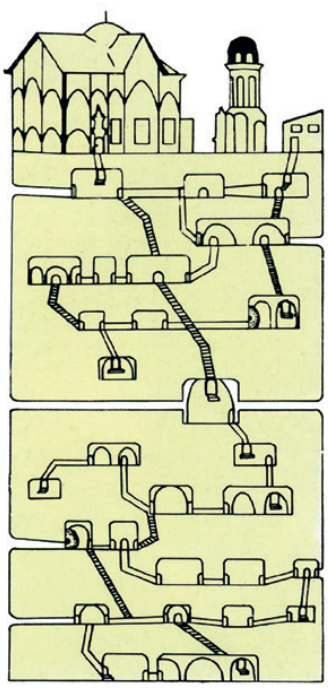
FRANCISCO MARTÍNEZ and JÜRGEN RENDL[1]

Like the underground city of Derinkuyu in Turkey, post-socialist bazaars are constituted of wormholes that dig into social amalgamation. In these sites of exchange, past, present and future are intensively played out through objects and interactions. Overall, markets are privileged sites for ethnographic excavations. Participant observation in post-socialist bazaars is an ephemeral commemoration, a collaborative process and a balancing act of transience, revealing the complexity of our social exchanges.

In this short piece, we are presenting the ongoing work of the course on urban ethnography taught in the MA programme of urban studies in the Estonian Academy of Arts. During the course, we explore a deep time-scale, combining the study of vernacular activities with long-term processes and spatial articulations. During the first sessions, we developed the threads the students follow during their own research projects. They are dealing with a broad range of questions regarding the realm and flows of people and items as well as the built environment and aspects of legal grey areas.

The range of items sold at post-socialist bazaars are very varied: from jewellery to food, art, music, spare technology, expired goods, winter clothes, pieces of vehicles, souvenirs, second hand clothes, handicrafts, tobacco, lingerie and a great amount of junk. Conceptions of authenticity, tradition, uniqueness and origin are contested there everyday; hence the relevance to socially excavate into post-socialist bazaars. In spite of the appearances, globalisation and capitalism are intensively negotiated and translated in these sites. For instance, we can see this latent intercourse in the items displayed at the stands, many of them coming from Poland, Russia and China. However, the different routes followed by these objects are not that evident, as well as the reasons why people keep coming to these bazaars. By taking this site of consumption as a wormhole,

1. Francisco and Jürgen might be presented as dilettantes and practitioners, who, at times, are invited to teach something like 'Post-socialist Urban Ethnography'. We thank the editors for their comments on the essay and encouragement.



The underground city of Derinkuyu.
Image from www.american-buddha.com.

we have access to entanglements of production, logistics and finances that are socially embedded unequivocally.

Since their very origin, these bazaars have been providing services and goods that are not channelled by the state or the prevailing economic system. In this sense, open-air markets are not an opposing force to modernity or capitalism, or a residue of history, but a social infrastructure that fills the gaps and failures of late-modernity. Indeed, post-socialist bazaars raise questions about social integration and language skills. Many of the workers in the market speak only Russian; some others suffer current judgements of 'human obsolescence' or simply have not managed to adapt to the radical and shock transformations of the last decades.

From the survival functioning that characterised these sites of exchange in the late eighties and early nineties (a period characterised by shortage and turmoil), they evolved into a space of inclusive co-habitation, whereby minor communities and marginal individuals find not only a refuge but also a sense of belonging and a door to access the city centre. Situated in communication hubs, these sites of exchange function as a space of inclusion for precariously positioned groups: from elderly residents to stroll to racial minorities to wander without fear.[2] Post-socialist bazaars still provide a social glue and cultural air, enhancing, through public interactions, feelings of empathy and difference.

To study all this in 'the most IT-innovative country' might sound like a paradox, or at least, out of place, according to what official discourses proclaim about the Estonian society. Historically, post-socialist open-air markets have been under attack by formal institutions, urban planners and financial speculators. For instance, Silk and Wallace remark that these bazaars were already suspiciously regarded by communist regimes, as a site of 'parasites' that do not produce anything 'real'.[3] Likewise, Ruta Aidis denounces the amount of prejudices associated with these markets, 'seen as especially dangerous and immoral places'.[4] This is the case also with the Balti Jaama Turg (known as 'the Russian market' among the expat population). As discovered in one of the activities of our course, the negative associations of the 'Russian' market are often exaggerated and sourced by people who do not go there.[5]

Pachenkov et al. note how dialectics of private and public are represented through objects and people in post-socialist bazaars. These spaces are ambivalent and have a taste of sorrow and regret; on the one hand, because the presence of many people there is forced. Yet on the other hand, these sites allow precariously positioned individuals to find camaraderie and reciprocity.[6] Kaneff puts forward 'uncertainty' as a common feature among all these markets; uncertainty because of several reasons: being directly affected by the experienced political disruptions, suturing abjections of high-capitalism; being detached from local institutions; and due to the attitude of the vendors (who rely just on themselves, or on the near community of relatives).[7]

In the mid of our course, we have encountered an unexpected bitter-sweet situation. Balti Jaama Turg has been bought by Astri real estate owners of the Lõunakeskus, one of the biggest shopping malls in Estonia. The fate of the market has advanced into a higher degree of uncertainty. Rumours about the construction of a shopping mall on the site are being spread. So far, Kairi Kivi, a board member of the real state company, has announced a plan to have commerce there as a primary industry and to preserve 30% of the actual market. Their first measures will be to improve the overall look of the bazaar and its surroundings. Other investors nearby have also planned similar strategies: for instance, transforming the water tower building into a gallery, with offices and a café.[8]

2. Hüwelmeier, G. (2013). Post-socialist Bazaars: Diversity, Solidarity, and Conflict in the Marketplace. Laboratorium. Russian Review of Social Science 5, 1: 52-72.

3. Sik, E., Wallace, C. (1999). The Development of Open-Air Markets in East-Central Europe', International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 23, pp. 715-737.

4. Aidis, R. (2003). Officially Despised Yet Tolerated: Open-air Markets and Entrepreneurship in Post-socialist Countries. Post-Communist Economies, Vol. 15, No. 3. 461-473.

5. In March 2014 we made a dozen of informal interviews on this regards with people around the market, getting mostly positive and neutral responses. Critical views were often related to the current shape and material decadence of the market, rather than against the activity or the site itself. Negative associations were, to a great extent, based on comments from relatives or news published in press alerting of the 'dirtiness' of the market and 'dangerous' people who frequented the site. In another exercise, vendors and clients were interviewed, obtaining a particularly positive response and identification with the market.

6. Pachenkov O., Voronkova L. (2009). New Old Identities and Nostalgias for Socialism at St. Petersburg and Berlin Flea Markets. In Ingo W., Schroder & A. Vonderau (Eds.) Changing Economies and Changing Identities in Postsocialist Eastern Europe. Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia. Series. Lit Verlag, pp. 191–216. Also: Pachenkov, O. & Berman, D. 'Spaces of Conflict and Camaraderie. The contradictory logics of a postsocialist flea market'. In Cross, J. And Morales, A. Street Entrepreneurs: People, Place, & Politics in Local and Global Perspective. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 201-223.

7. Kaneff , D. (2002). The Shame and Pride of Market Activity: Morality, Identity and Trading in Post-socialist Bulgaria. In R. Mandel and C. Humphrey. Markets and Moralities. New York: Berg. P. 33-53.

8. Kukk, K. (2014). Tallinna Balti jaama turu piirkonna väljanägemine paraneb. ERR, 11. March 2014.

The abuse of 'culture' for speculative profits is not new at all.[9] However, we find a couple of interesting paradoxes in the case of Balti Jaama Turg. Nowadays, Tallinn has two square metres of shopping floor space per inhabitant, with this figure appearing among the top four in Europe, yet with new malls soon to be opened (i.e. in Lasnamäe) and extended (i.e. Ülemiste) the figure will be increased.[10] Likewise, some other open air markets are emerging simultaneously in Tallinn, counting with institutional support yet selling vintage pieces, handicrafts and organic food, and more related to festivals (Nõmme turg, Uus Maailm 'pop up' activities, Raekoja plats…).

Post-socialist bazaars display many of the hallmarks of gentrification, because of both: attracting certain people to certain quarters, while 'inviting' some others to move away. As pointed out by Maruyama and Trung, traditional open-air markets are evolving into two different types: one concerned with freshness and safety, which is more formal and has the middle and high class as a target. The other, rather ignored by authorities, is left alone in its functioning, tending to materially and economically depauperate. Consequently, just low-income shoppers show up there and the vendors suffer an increasing pressure from financial forces against their activity (or more concretely, against their occupation of this central space). Maruyama and Trung conclude, however, that these two marketplaces serve different segments of consumers, thus they might be complementary and not necessarily produce gentrification.[11]

Accordingly, we suggested our students to also include the designer market at Telliskivi in their research.[12] With its orientation being different to the one of Balti Jaama Turg, it offers a promising territory to find comparisons and contextualise the developments in a broader spatial and time scale. Following the historian Karl Schlögel's proposal of a division between 'hot locations' in the making and 'cold locations' that are consolidated,[13] Telliskivi today rather evokes the latter, while the bazaar around the station still bears the characteristics of an ant nest, a hot location in transformation, entropic in its post-socialist condition.

Many of the concerns announced in the book 'A User's Guide to Tallinn' (2002) about the increasing segregation in Tallinn and the detachment of the centre from the rest of the city have been already accomplished.[14] Modestly, we propose to declare the Balti Jaama Turg as 'living' heritage of both post-socialism and late-modernity. In our understanding, this market is heritage-in-the-making, encompassing a material and immaterial value and speaking to future generations. This site of cohabitation and exchange can be considered as a sort of seismograph that mirrors and drives societal changes from the bottom.

The Balti Jaama turg is not a ruin or a monument, but a space of interaction and a gate to the city centre. Therefore we believe that the market is needed and should be legally and economically supported from the city hall when facing speculative takeovers. The survival of this street market depends upon a public initiative to improve its current shape and standards. Its authenticity relies only in its active and accessible functioning. Hence, it should be preserved, yet not as a motif to decorate a shopping mall, but in its own inclusive and informal functioning – as an open process of becoming heritage (in its own letting be).[15]

It is not true that if a public space is closed down, another one will appear. Sites of interactions and social inclusion should be protected, as oases are from the advance of the desert.

Product presentation at the market. Photo by Jürgen Rendl.

9. See Krivý, Maros (2013). Don't plan! The notion of 'culture' and transformation of obsolete industrial space. International Journal of Urban and Regional Studies. Also Colomb, C (2012). Pushing the Urban Frontier: Temporary Uses of Space, City Marketing, and the Creative City Discourse in 2000s Berlin. Journal of Urban Affairs. 34, 2: 131-152.

10. Tallinn has been called 'The Promised Land of Shopping Malls'. See Baltic Business News. 25.10.2013.

11. Maruyama, M. and Trung, L. V. (2010) The nature of informal food bazaars: Empirical results for Urban Hanoi, Vietnam. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 17, 1-9.

12. The outcome will be presented at the end of workshop-studio, hopefully in the form of a brochure. Probably, an exhibition about the 'street market aesthetics' will be also organised.

13. Schlögel, K. (2003). Reading time through space. On the History of Civilisation and Geo-Politics. München: Hanser. P. 292.

14. Kurg, A. and Laanemets, M. (2002). A user's guide to Tallinn.

15. Pétursdóttir, P. (2013). Concrete matters: Ruins of modernity and the things called heritage. Journal of Social Archaeology, 13, (1), pp. 31-53.

NEW COAT OF PAINT

MAROŠ KRIVÝ, *Invited Professor of Urban Studies*
Faculty of Architecture Estonian Academy of Arts

I

I want to invent colour relationships, and not limit myself by photographing only natural colours.[1] Foreign visitors to cities in socialist countries employed recurring tropes of unsightliness, greyness, and monotony in their descriptions.[2] Colour is, in other words, a complex visual language that combines subjectivist aspects to human experience with a system of shared meaning acquired through language.[3] With the introduction of monochrome, we witness the abandonment of conventional attributions for the 'meaning' of colour in favour of the pure materiality of colour.[4] An accountant has won €1,000 for his photo entitled, 'Colour your life', which shows a girl sitting on the asphalt, smiling up at the camera surrounded by colourful chalk drawings.[5] In the building up of a given surface by the ego, it is no longer so much the subjective experience that dominates, but rather the objective demands of colour.[6] Form without colour is like a body without a soul.[7] Is it conceivable that architecturally fascinating compositions would remain largely unaffected as far as their spa-tial quality is concerned if they were covered with different colours?[8] The simultaneous presence of two colours at the same place in the visual field is impossible.[9]

II

It was the completest and most desirable bedroom ever seen. The walls were whitewashed as white as milk.[10] Whitewash is extremely moral. Suppose there were a decree requiring all rooms to be given a coat of whitewash. I maintain that that would be a police task of real stature and a manifestation of high morality, the sign of a great people.[11] To replicate the monochrome with a different colouring would be to destroy the heterogeneity of organising principles that is the basis of adaptability.[12] The members are divided over the somewhat stark black-and-white aesthetic, but I feel that it contributes to what gives the space its philosophical aura.[13] A single, colourless ray.[14]

III

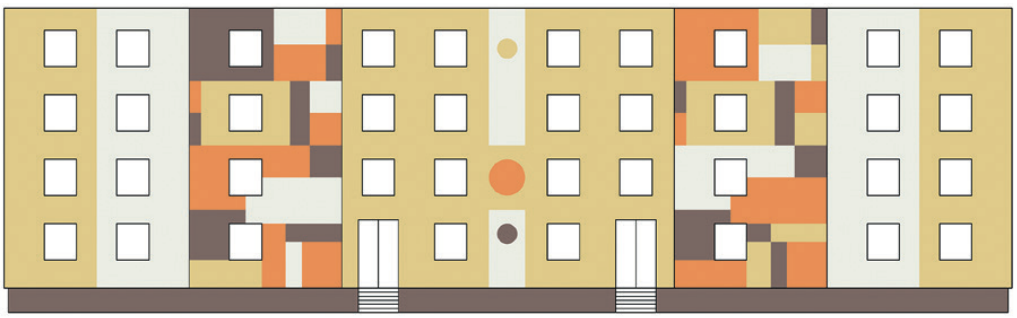
Not distinct enough to be deemed a colour, grey is often defined as neutral or dull.[15] It is as though somewhere there is a vast hole through which colour and print is leaking out leaving an increasingly grey and black world that makes for a drab colourless environment.[16] We do not want to build any more joyless houses, or see them built. Colour is not expensive like moulded decoration and sculptures, but colour means a joyful existence. As it can be provided with limited resources, we should, in the present time of need, particularly urge its use on all buildings which must now be constructed.[17] Ancient empires, autocracies, despotisms, old and new tyrannies – all are monochromatic worlds, while democracy is multicoloured.[18] The range of pure unbroken colours again falls over our houses and delivers them from their dead-on-gray.[19] Finding the right colour combination is undoubtedly the crucial first step in making a city safer, healthier, cleaner and generally more user-friendly for its inhabitants.[20] Colour also has another role, it must bind together.[21]

IV

Blue is a beautiful colour and is also soothing for the eyes.[22] The authorities feel pink is the way to go for residents to feel proud of their town again.[23] Our leader has decided that the theme colour of the city will be sky blue because the motto of the new government is 'the sky is the limit'.[24] If he did not paint the town red, he would probably have preferred to paint it all the colours of the rainbow, as in a medieval picture.[25] Deprived of toys he fondles the light glinting off a bunch of keys. He becomes the infant fetishist of patchwork.[26] When the sun shines through the prismatic glass, it throws colours on the white surfaces, which is very pleasing – and also gives pleasure that the architect thought to add this touch for us.[27] The directors of the ritual must ensure that all processes in it are elementarily comprehensible. Anyone who does not understand the text, must grasp the action; anyone for whom the action is alien must be captivated by the colourfulness of the spectacle.[28] The city spreads out like a sea of colour, as proof of the happiness in the new life.[29]

V

The truth of architecture is now located in its visible outside rather than its hidden interior.[30] And you know that there's an inside in there. Even though the colour is beige or ochre, or green or dirty yellow or yellow-grey, or milky brown – or even silver. It doesn't matter. Because you know once you're in there – it's black. You just know it.[31] Guests had to leave fingerprints in the entrance and were advised to dress up as the factory-workers, meaning mostly grey, or in colourful clothes received in a parcel from the West.[32] This aesthetic taste is ostensibly very open, very inclusive – and in this sense also genuinely democratic. But it in fact rejects everything universal, uniform, repetitive, geometrical, minimalist, ascetic, monotonous, boring – everything gray, homogeneous, and reductionist.[33] One colour is exchanged for another simply because the one was old and the other new.[34]



Maroš Krivý
Obvodová 22-24, Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic
from the series 'Facade Studies' 2013
inkjet print, framed 29,5 × 39,5 cm.

1. Michelangelo, Antonioni, quot. in Gandy, M. (2003) Landscapes of deliquescence in Michelangelo Antonioni's Red Desert, Transactions of The Institute of British Geographers 28.2, 218-237, 225.

2. Smith, M. B. (2010) Property of Communists. The Urban Housing Program from Stalin to Khrushchev. Northern Illinois University Press, Illinois, 181.

3. Gandy, M. (2003) Landscapes of deliquescence in Michelangelo Antonioni's Red Desert, Transactions of The Institute of British Geographers 28.2, 218-237, 226.

4. Buchloh, B. (1986) The Primary Colors for the Second Time: A Paradigm Repetition of the Neo-Avant-Garde. October 37, 41-52, 44.

5. Anon. (2010). Colour your life: Cairo accountant wins first prize in photo competition. See: enpi-info.eu/mainmed.php?id_type=1&id=23268&lang_id=450

6. László Moholy-Nagy, quot. in Jarzombek, M. (1999) A Prolegomena to Critical Historiography. Journal of Architectural Education 52.4, 197-206, 197.

7. Owen Jones, quot. in Edwards, C. (2011) Interior Design: A Critical Introduction. Berg Publishers, Oxford, 147.

8. Mattens, F. (2011) The Aesthetics of Space: Modern Architecture and Photography. Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 69.1, 105-114, 107.

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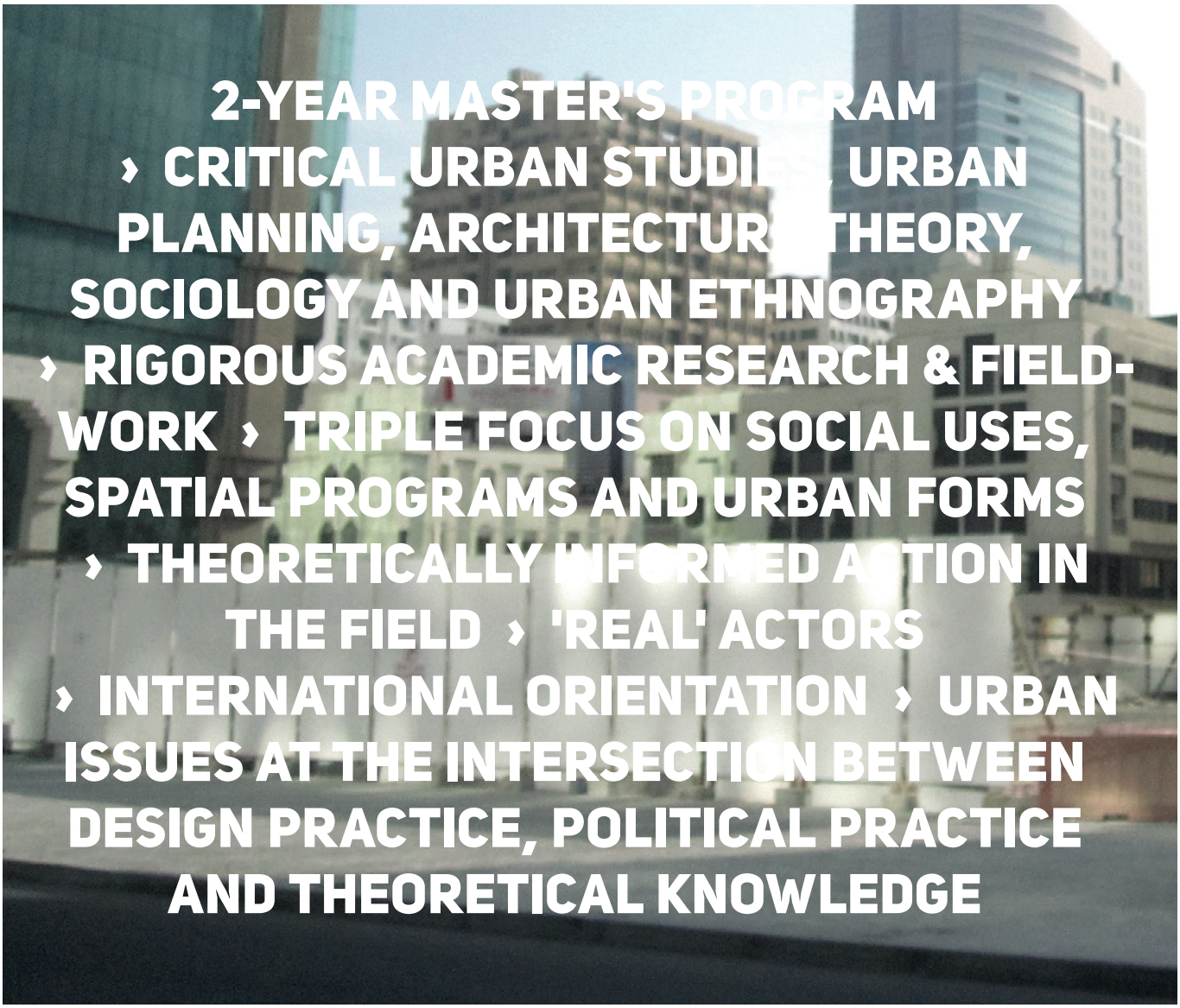

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