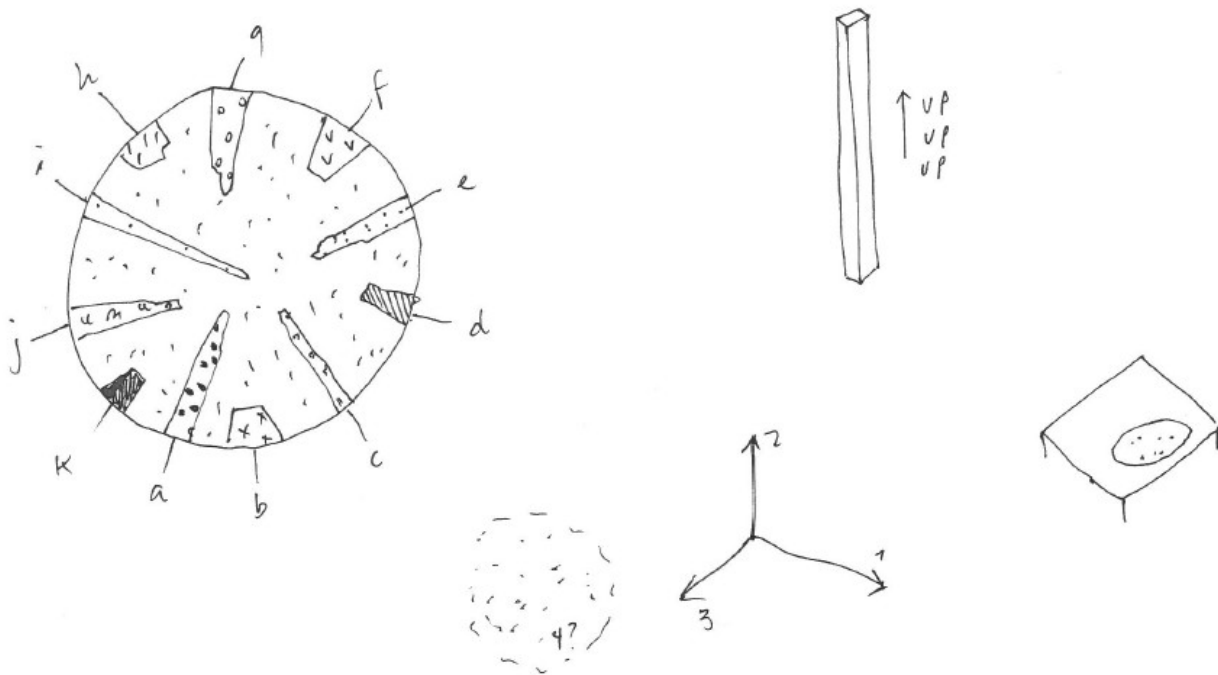
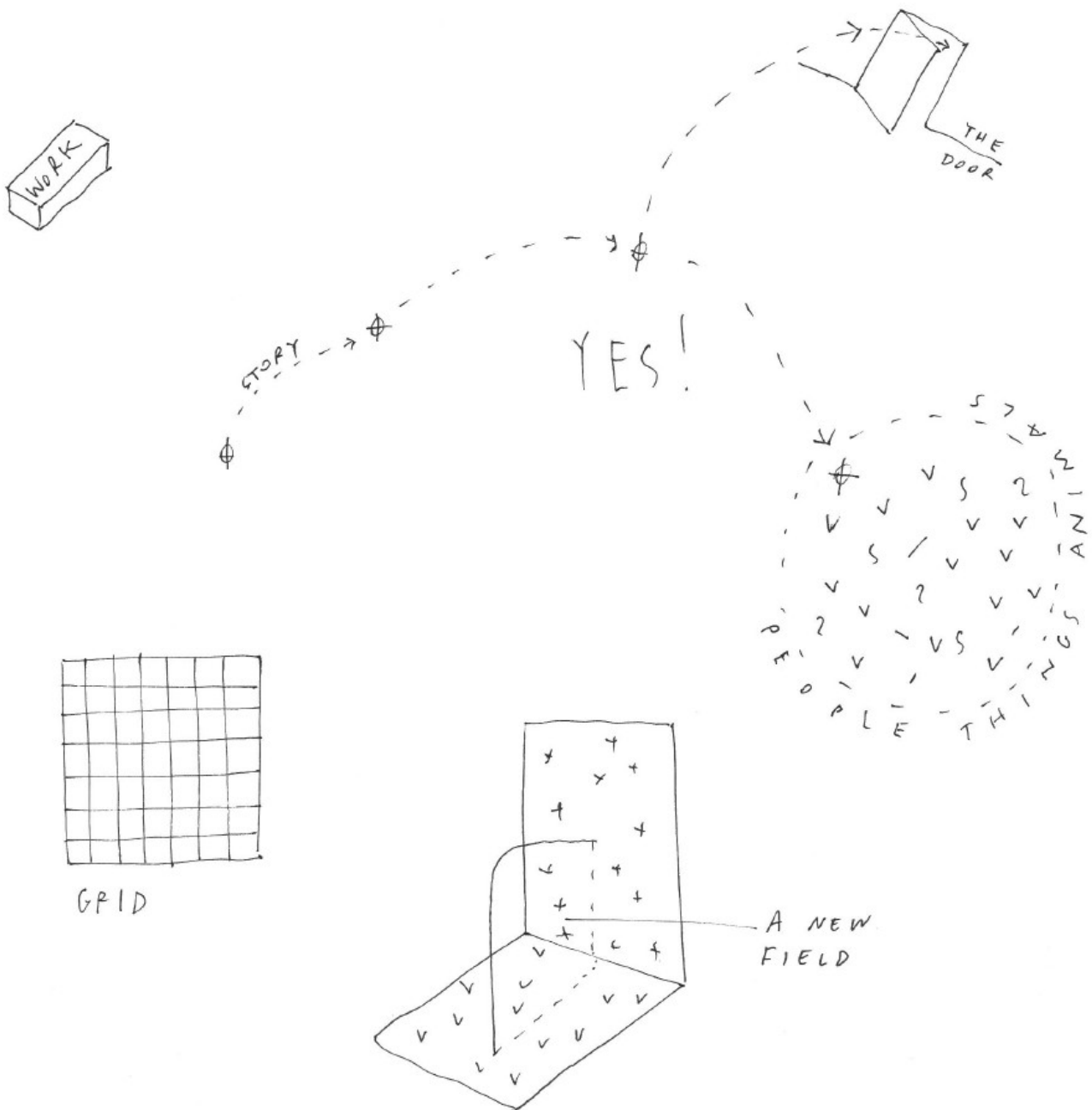




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92 A LAST QUOTE

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Preamble

This work will deal with the city. With the things in the city and with the people in the city and with other people.

The project will be an exploration of a urban territory through diverse methods.

The studied space itself is a square in the third district (Landstrasse) of Vienna. It is not a particularly well-known place. As in many other places in the city, nothing really important seems to happen, yet it has a certain meaning for its inhabitants. There is a church, a primary school, a playground, some small shops and some restaurants.

I plan on investing all resources in observing it.

The research will deal with the everyday life of anonymous spaces in cities. What constitutes a lived space and the subjective meaning of places.

Some of the tools I will employ are often used by architects and urban planners but in this one case it will not be in order to plan or build anything. The aim is to create a body of knowledge for the sake of it.

What do I hope to understand? How a city works, how I live in it and how other people do, how do we deal with each other and our environment. How are these places we pass by constituted.

Since I was allowed to wander the streets of my hometown on my own I never stopped analyzing the urban environment and studying the city while walking

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around. The streets are where I feel the best. I enjoy learning shortcuts and knowing about hidden squares, I could spend hours everyday just looking at complete strangers and trying to figure out what they are about. I like walking lazily under the trees in posh districts, strolling through old commercial boulevards, drinking beers sitting on the benches of the working class neighbourhood squares and rush through the red-light district, looking to the front and saying no to anyone whispering to my ear: “hash? cocaïne?” .

It was not until I came to Vienna though that I started gathering theoretical input regarding cities. And I slowly realized that I knew already a lot, I had spent years building up my own theories while walking. Of course, I had read three books on urbanism: Jan Gehl’s classic *Life between buildings*, a book by Richard Rogers I never gave back to the person who borrowed it to me and Koolhaas’ *Delirious New York*. Besides, the great influence for this work and for life for more than 15 years are some Situationist pamphlets I stumbled upon many years ago.

Writing this text has been an opportunity to read and to take all these things more seriously.

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Previous Projects (related to the work)

nubebatida. fanzine. 2006/2007. A publication launched with 9 friends, self-published, self-financed, extensively distributed. Contained guides to districts in Valencia in the form of dialogues between two imaginary characters, walking around and discovering strange corners in the city.

the red flood. intervention in public space, urban utopia. 2010. children playgrounds, adult playgrounds, questioning the zoning practices in urban parks, very influenced by Bourriaud's *Esthétique relationnelle* and parkour.

about vienna. publication. 2013. a dictionary of words connected to the city.

encounters. performance. 2010. a small living room in a corner of the old city of Valencia. sharing the mediterranean lifestyle, inviting people passing by to drink wine and sit with us.

picnic. multiple performance and research. 2014. having picnics on the road on Mariahilferstrasse shortly after its pedestrianisation. exploring the possibilities of picnicking as a research method.

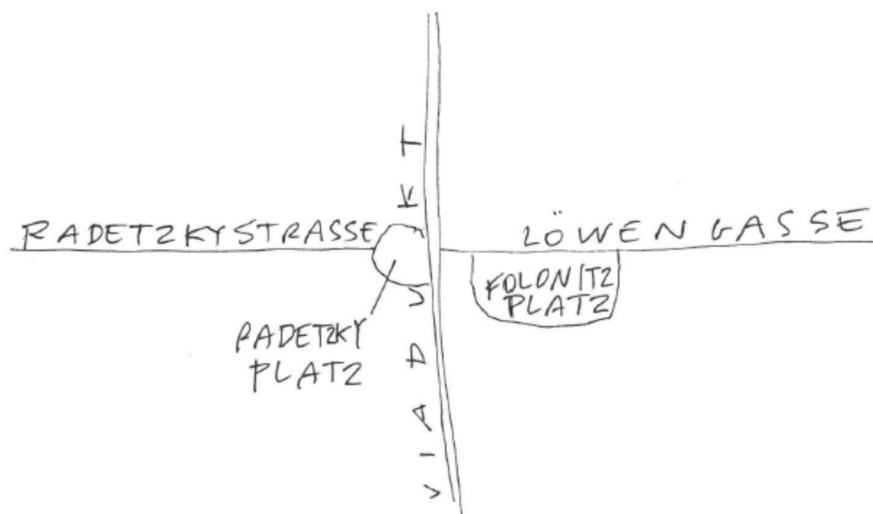
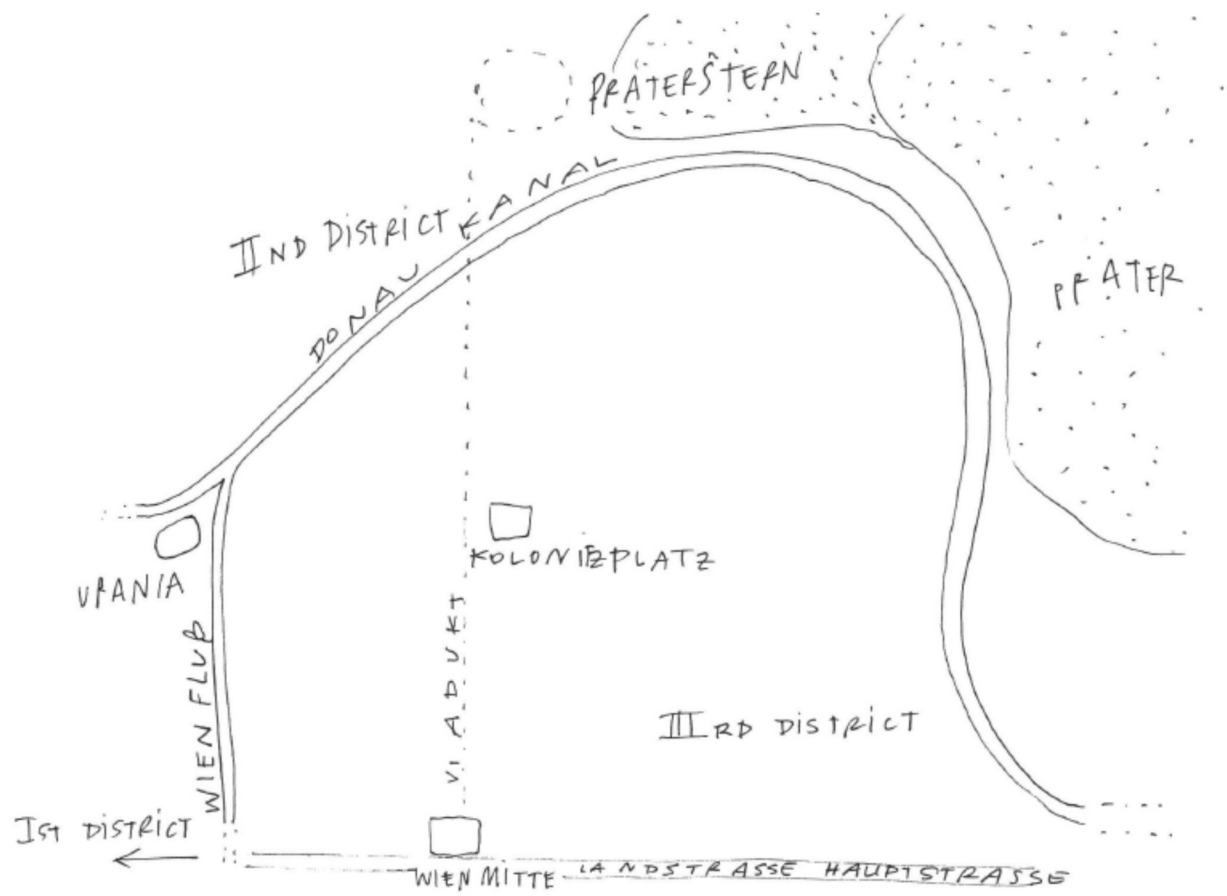
myplace. non-participatory research. 2013. observing and communicating the area surrounding the suchthilfe center on the Gürtel. how to design for excluded segments of the population? how to include heroin and methadone users in city planning?

kitchen. workshop. 2012. open air kitchen as an exchange space.

2050. publications. 2014. building utopias using bureaucratic language.

for images and more info on
previous works :
www.matildeigual.eu

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Introduction

Georges Pérec (p.122 *Espèces d'espaces*)

We won't ever be able to explain or justify the city. The city is there. The city is our space and we don't have any other. We were born in cities. We grew up in cities. It is in cities that we breathe. When we take the train it is in order to go to another city. There is nothing inhuman in a city, except maybe our own humanity.

Nous ne pourrons jamais expliquer ou justifier la ville. La ville est là. Elle est notre espace et nous n'en avons pas d'autre. Nous sommes nés dans des villes. Nous avons grandi dans des villes. C'est dans des villes que nous respirons. Quand nous prenons le train c'est pour aller dans une autre ville. Il n'y a rien d'inhumain dans une ville, sinon notre propre humanité.

The study of the urban poses difficult questions. First of all there is no clear definition of the notion of *urban* and many disciplines (urbanism, sociology, geography) claim expertise in the field.

The borders of what is considered urban studies and economy, architecture or even literature are blurry.

If we follow the ideas of Lefèbvre the difficulty arises from the fact that the urban is all that we know, that is, a notion as vague as society. Our whole socio-economic system derives from the rise of the city as the main form of human environment.

According to Lefebvre, only philosophy and the arts could have the capacity of synthesis required to tackle

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the urban, bringing together parcellary knowledges to a totality, to create a whole out of this combination of practical-sensible and ideas that is incorporated into the notion of urban.

Given the broadness of such a task I decided to focus on a single space, clearly delimited and that I could visit as often as possible. This place will be the center of gravity of the project, the point where all the research should attach itself.

I chose a square, the Kolonitzplatz, since these are the public spaces with the most “airy” use.

Program for the project

In order to explore the complexities of the Kolonitzplatz and social urban space I have taken three approaches.

I propose an account of ideas around three distinct topics: square, borders and everyday life. This structure offers three outlooks on public space, from the very real and familiar square - we all think we know what we mean when we say *square* - to the much broader concept of everyday life.

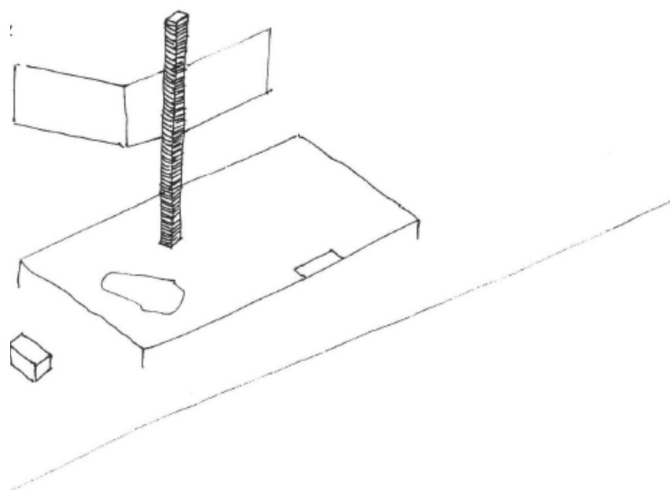
Each of these issues is addressed on three levels: an attempt at defining the notion; a sort of dialog with the authors I have been reading and how they connect the topic to the broader theme of public space and the urban; finally each chapter concludes with a series of texts and illustrations bringing together the experience of Kolonitzplatz and the idea of public space.

To build up the work, I chose to read three of the most classic urban studies works published in 1961, 1968 and 1980. Jane Jacobs' *The death and life of great American cities*, Lefèbvre's *Le droit à la ville* and De Certeau's *L'invention du quotidien*; as well as most of Georges Pérec's works.

The choice of topics has been heavily influenced by the choice of authors. But the choice of authors is a consequence of the advice given by teachers over the years based on my personal interests.

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Drawing 1: Kolonitzplatz



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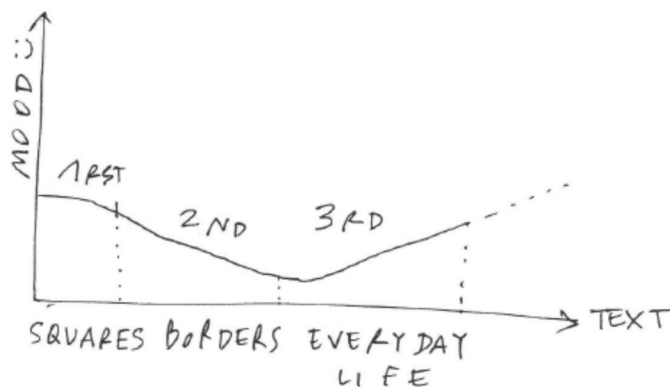
Lefèbvre (p.36 Le droit à la ville)

On one side, a concept without content or a concept without content. Or we state that "the city," the urban reality as such, does not exist, but is merely a series of correlations. We suppress the "subject". Or we continue to affirm the existence of the global; we approach it, we identify it, whether starting from extrapolations in the name of the discipline, or by relying on "an interdisciplinary" tactic. We do not grasp it. Except through an approach that transcends divisions.

D'un côté, un concept sans contenu ou des contenus sans concept. Ou bien l'on déclare que "la ville", la réalité urbaine comme telle, n'existent pas, mais seulement des séries de corrélations. On supprime ce "sujet". Ou bien on continue à affirmer l'existence du global; on l'approche, on le cerne, soit en partant d'extrapolations au nom d'une discipline, soit en misant sur une tactique "interdisciplinaire". On ne le saisit pas. Sauf par une démarche qui transcende les découpages.

The structure of the text

Greek tragedy: falling asleep in between 1st act and the 2nd act and crying in between the 2nd and the 3rd.



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Fact, fiction, literature

Imagination takes a large part in this work.
Invented places or stories about people, secret

A word cloud of urban planning and architectural terms, arranged in a roughly triangular shape. The words are in various sizes and orientations, creating a sense of movement and interconnectedness. The terms include: HISTORY, IMPROVISED, URBAN MATERIALS, TIME, PLANNING, STORIES, CATASTROPHE, SYNTHESIS, ANIMALS, EVENTS, TIME, ELEMENTS, LIVED PLACES, POLITICS, PEOPLE, FUNCTION, ENCOUNTERS, OPEN, MUCH, AROUND, NOTHING, RHYTHMS, SEGREGATION, TACTICS, FRAGMENTS, ACTIVITIES, THINGS, BY DESIGN, STORIES, CITY, OPPORTUNITIES, INTEGRATION, VOID, EXCHANGE, VALUE, OTHERS, RELATIONS, BORING, BUILDINGS, EXCLUDED, PROGRAM, IDEAS, DIFFERENT, THE GRID, EVERYDAY, IDEOLOGY, STRATEGIES, HUNTING, STRANGERS, PRACTICES, BORDERS, ANALYTIC, TOO MUCH, HISTOY, and PUBLIC.

However different the result, a key reference while starting to write the texts have been the stories of Italo Calvino and Borges. Even if I don't share their aesthetic preferences, their descriptions of dreamy urban landscapes and cities are among the best writing on architecture.

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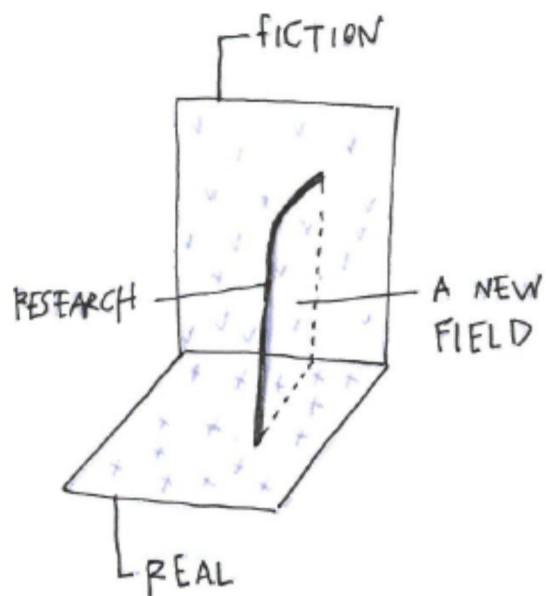
Among the latest novels going through my hands, most of them have somehow changed the way I look at the world and at cities, Proust's descriptions of Paris during the 1st World War in the last volume of *À la recherche du temps perdu*; in Barea's *La Forja*, the misery of the poor districts in Madrid at the beginning of the XXth century, but also the freedom children have to play any kind of game (even violent ones) is appalling; Robert Walser's wandering characters, always in between boredom and euphoria reflect the way I feel in the city.

Pèrec (p.119 Espèces d'espaces)

Do not try too fast to find a definition of the city; it's too big, it has every chance of being wrong. First, take inventory of what one sees. Identify what is sure. Establish basic distinctions: for example, between what the city is and what the city is not.

Ne pas essayer trop vite de trouver une définition de la ville; c'est beaucoup trop gros, on a toutes les chances de se tromper. D'abord faire l'inventaire de ce que l'on voit. Recenser ce dont on est sûr. Établir des distinctions élémentaires: par exemple entre ce qui est la ville et ce qui n'est pas la ville.

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Chapter 1 - Squares

What is a square?

1.

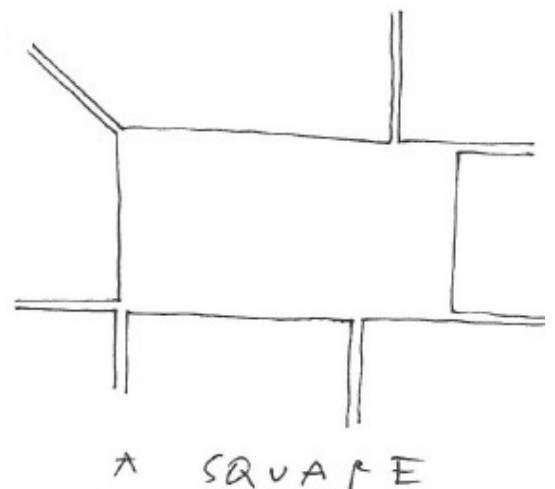
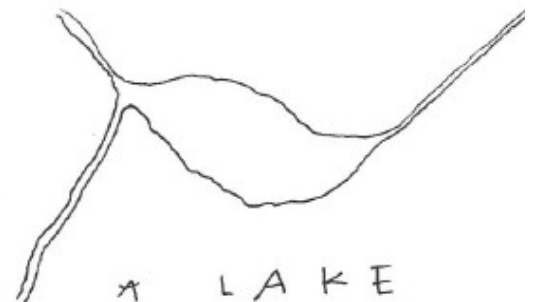
Squares are a type of urban public spaces. Squares are formal open spaces surrounded by buildings. They are open and have clear limits, usually four. A square is a planned open area in a city, usually or originally rectangular in shape. An outcome of zoning regulations, building budgetary constraints. *Platz*, *Piazza*, *Plaza*, from Latin *Platea*, from Greek *Plateia*, a broad way or street.

2.

They are traditionally located in the center of towns. In bigger cities they are not necessary in the center but they still are elements of centrality, things are organized *around* them. In most cases squares are at a crossroads, at the meeting of two or more streets.

3.

Typically located next to a religious center or a palace. Surrounded by small shops (bakery, meat shop, clothing stores). There is often a monument, memorial, statue, well or fountain in its center. They are usually flat hardscapes. Located opposite an administration building or any other major landmark (memorial, cathedral). A street intersection with a statue.



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4.

Squares host community gatherings. Squares are used for open markets, music concerts and other events requiring firm ground. They are a place for public spectacles, entertainment and celebrations. At times of crisis or feasts, it was the space where a large crowd might gather. A square can be any gathering space on a street or between buildings. The living-rooms of the city.

1 + 2 + 3 + 4.

An empty space surrounded by buildings, some of them might be representative. The empty space, commonly a flat surface paved in stony materials can present landmarks: fountain, monument. And can be furnished with items to make the stay more comfortable: benches, lamps, trees (for shadow and aesthetic). It may also include other urban elements placed simply because there is enough free space to do so, such as phone booths, postboxes, electricity boxes...

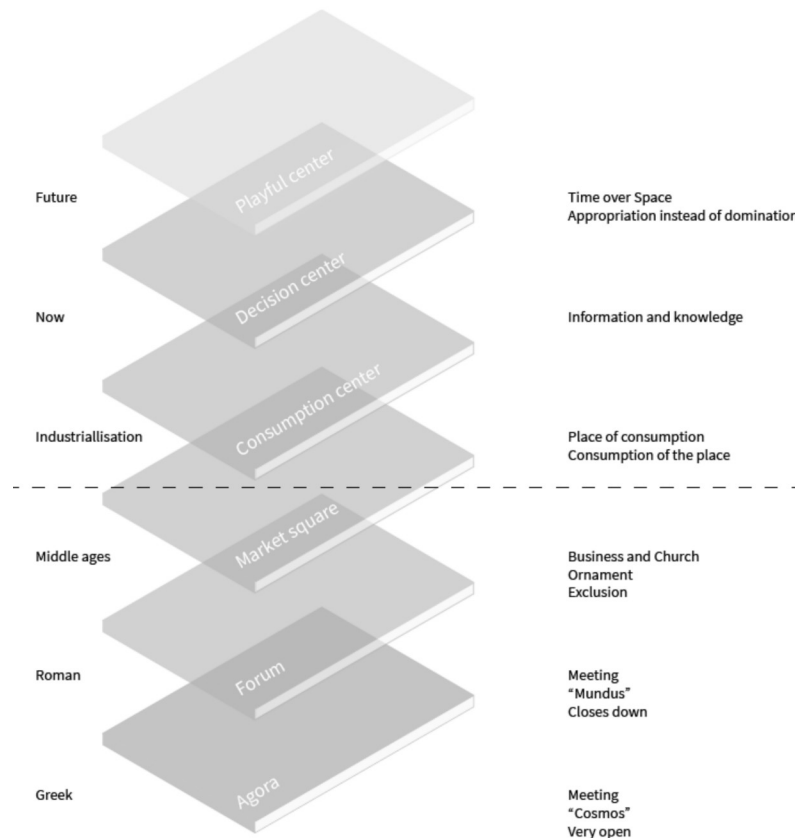
It can incorporate functional elements related to open-air activities: a sport area, a children's playground, and more and more frequently an area devoted to dogs. In some squares, wooden tables offering space for social gathering of small groups willing to eat or play cards or any other board game (chess, backgammon) complement the ubiquitous benches.

Among all the elements present on top of the flat surface of the square some are built in, some are attached to the surface (but could be removed), and only a few, benches and tables at most, can be moved around.

The limits of such a square can either be roads or directly the buildings surrounding it. The square can be more or less open to the traffic.

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A historical approach to the square



Drawing 2. Historical layers of the square

In the ancient city, greek and roman centrality is attached to an empty space: the agora and the forum. A square, a place prepared for meetings.

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How does it relate to the urban?

Are squares useless?

From the historical overview of the use and meaning of squares in Europe we can wonder whether neighbourhood squares, public spaces without a specialized offer in leisure are needed at all. This kind of open spaces in cities hold little power for achieving centrality, they remain extremely local, they don't appear in any guide, and in the case of the Kolonitzplatz its main focus, the church, has lost its unifying capacity. The neighbourhood square type is outright uncommercial and unsellable, not working in the exchange value system.

Have these squares become useless in today's world? And if not what could be the role(s) of such places? How can they adapt to the present conditions?

exchange value/ use value

Neighbourhood squares are very often empty, unused or at least, under-used. Compared to other land use in the city, they are not efficient. After all, what's the point of coming together in public?

According to Jane Jacobs, the neighbourhood square has little to offer unless it becomes a rarity. She is pointing, mainly, at the overabundance of undefined small parks and squares in urban developments. A square is not a solution to a badly planned district, and the value of a square is not in itself so to say, but in its life. Somehow it is an issue of offer and demand, and the demand is apparently not looking for outdoor places where one just goes to to spend time. Jacobs offers two possible paths to solve this: to create specialized squares, offering a particular use, like sports facilities. Or to promote the temporary occupation of spaces in the form of events, feasts, carnivals, markets, concerts...

public space and consumption

It is often said that malls are today's squares. Commercial spaces fulfill in some aspects a similar purpose of offering a place to spend leisure time. However, these are not public spaces, and the access is not granted to anyone or anytime. Their primary role is

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consumption (even if it is often subverted by the users going there to watch other people). I would even say that consumption is for many people just an excuse to go to a mall, the primary goal being to spend time surrounded by unknown others and having things to look at. The industry has understood it, offering small events and filling the malls with other activities.

revolts and feasts

Still, squares, even the neighbourhood ones, are used and needed, and often appropriated for activities which wouldn't find a place in more controlled spaces. Illegal or semi-legal activities as well as noisy ones (children playing) find a spot in squares. If their purpose is not sanctioned, squares may give an opportunity for appropriation by the users, for creative empowerment. But I have to admit this happens seldomly.

occupying the squares

The same uselessness which bothers planners and urban thinkers, as well as the lack of monitoring by the authorities, allows for unexpected uses in particular circumstances.

In the last years we all have witnessed a different use of squares. Tahrir, Taksim, Zucotti, Syntagma (what a great name!), Sol, are now familiar names for anyone following the news. The occupation of public space by citizens protesting against the way their states are organized became a global phenomenon and the spots chosen as a stage were all squares.

The case I know the best is the one in Spain. During the spring of 2011, all over the country, main squares in all major cities were taken over by, mostly young, people. The so-called living rooms of the city were transformed in camps for protest where some would live in tents and many would visit daily. Besides the concrete political demands, another aspect was important: being together. Many people who would come to the squares during these months, had little ideological reasons to do so, they went there because something was going on. There was life, other people to talk to, the chance for multiple encounters and exchanges, it was a free evening plan to attend. And so, indeed, special committees in charge of extra-activities (from yoga to concerts) were organically put into place besides the more traditionally political ones such as assemblies.

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When the big occupations were dismantled by force, assemblies dispersed and were organized in neighbourhood squares, thus prolonging the movement, albeit in a less spectacular way.

Coming together, being together with others is what most protesters remember the most. Having a place to chat with strangers from other paths of life, and getting a feeling of belonging to a greater community was for many a new experience. The tales from friends, not only from Spain, but also from anywhere else with occupied squares are quite similar in underlining the value of being able to grasp, by spending time together, what the word society can mean.

That this happened in squares, in the wake of the XXI century, is in my opinion, somehow proof that undefined, public, open spaces, can be useful, and very much so. But that is a different story.

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Regarding Kolonitzplatz:

Materials:

stone
bricks
wood
metal

Animals:

pigeons
dogs
stray cats
squirrels (if trees)
rats
sparrows

A tale of two squares

Right next to the Kolonitzplatz, just across the Viadukt there is another square. Radetzkystrasse crosses Löwengasse and both streets turn around. In a way Radetzkystrasse becomes Löwengasse and vice-versa. The square is named after Radetzky too, and the place is vibrant and noisy for Viennese standards, cars rush right through the middle coming from five different streets and tramways loop around, the S-Bahn roars when passing by, up on the viadukt, and there is people. Coming in and out of the supermarket, a small Spar where there is always a queue at the Kassa. Carrying heavy bags outside, the ones who just buy energy drinks, the ones who buy a couple of semmeln filled with gouda and salami, maybe gurken too, the ones with the smoothie and the mango and the avocado and the dark bread, the ones who just bought ten liters of milk and the ones who buy mozzarella, tomatoes, minced meat, pasta and onions. The hours I have spent queueing at that supermarket are worth 5 ECTS points at the sloppy sociology university I would like to attend one day. I analyze shopping carts and calculate the prices, supervise how much they could have saved if choosing the cheapest option and evaluate why they wouldn't. I know the five guys who sit on the bench outside the supermarket, never all together, but still a group. Beer cans on the floor, in the morning already keeping up. Once I sat in front of three of them for a while and they were discussing music, one of them was very much into it and he explained that his dream would be to live in the Musikverein. He was showing a recording on his smartphone of a recent concert and he praised repeatedly the conductor, calling him by his first name as many people do when they want to imply they are connoisseurs of a particular field and they call a Nobel prize by his nickname.

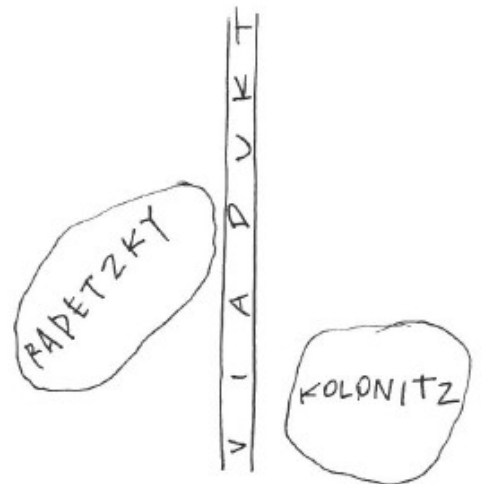
There is also a big clock in the middle of the square, in a pedestrian island, it is one of those cube-shaped ones, with four clocks, one on each side, I instinctively check it daily, even when I wear a watch.

The square is messy and it is often pretty sunny, I have heard people saying it is a southern oasis, and I have to agree that the noisiness of traffic makes it attractive to

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me. I wonder if that is why out of four restaurants, three are leaning towards a mediterranean flair. There is Menta, a trendy place, with a very sunny terrasse, beautiful furniture, decent coffee and overpriced food. There is Garage 01, under the viadukt, this one is newer, it's run by argentinians or spaniards, or a mix, and it's cheaper and a bit less designed, the food is rather cheap, but the crowds of these two places are similar. The other day a friend of my flatmate described these places as being too hipster to be truly hipster, I guess he meant there is not much irony in them, these two bars really want to look trendy. Another Lokal is Wild, it has been there since before the last war at least, I know because they give away free postcards with old photographs of the façade printed on them and the one I took was taken in the thirties. Wild is traditional. People who go to Wild are traditional. Still these traditional, quite posh old people get funnier than the crowd in Menta. They laugh so loud it is hard to have a proper conversation. Anyhow, their Biergarten is vast and stays many months, it's crowded for lunch, it's half-busy for dinner, except before christmas, then, many offices and gangs of civil servants (being raised exclusively by people working for the public administration I always think I can almost smell them) seem to like it for their corporate parties. The fourth restaurant is a pizzeria, and I forgot its name, the pizza is good, the prices are fine, the waiters make good jokes, it's almost always empty. I don't know why, but I also don't go there. They did something to their outdoor space, and it didn't work out, a certain arrangement of plants in pots and a heavy net of umbrellas. In one of the corners there is a BIPA, they sell both beauty products and cleaning appliances for the bodies and for the houses. Everything is fuchsia pink. In the center of the square, a Würstlstand. They also sell kebabs. I have only bought beer and soda. Next to it, two benches were a group of old people sit quite often.

And then crossing the Viadukt, there is Kolonitzplatz.



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A letter describing Kolonitzplatz as a friend to a friend

Hey my dear,

I want to introduce you to my newest friend. Not that she is shy, she is just so. You know how some people appear to be boring, and then they are but somehow through effort one manages to appreciate them.

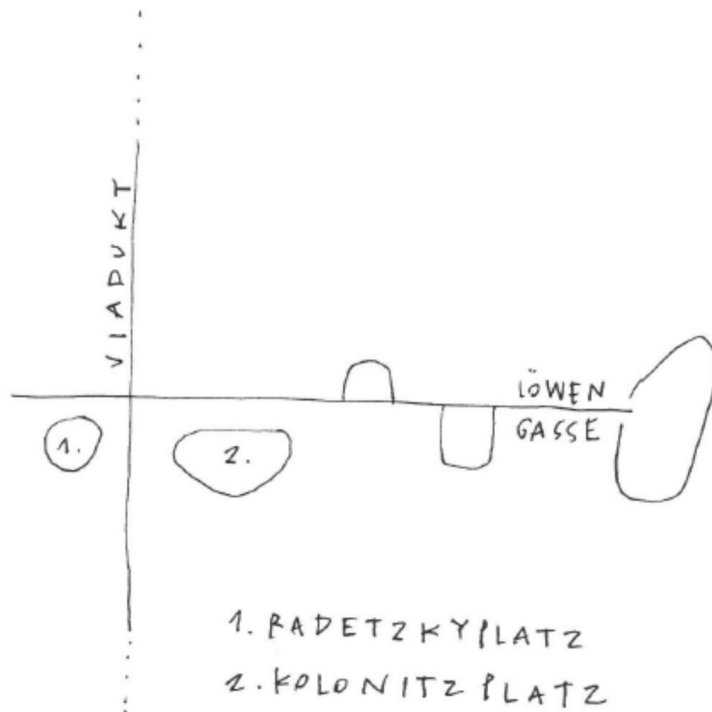
She is like that, or she has been like that to me. I enjoy the company of rather silent friends, they let me think out loud, and there are few things I enjoy more than monologuing (I am afraid that is not a word). I can tell you that most of those quiet can become fairly interesting, they sometimes shut me down too, their silence looks like wisdom and reminds me that, after all, common sense might be a quality. Some people can't stand this, they feel judged and ashamed. The quietness makes them realize how futile the search for constant stimuli is. She, the square, is indeed square, but not puritan or moral or anything. Even if there is a church. Churches are lately quiet too, I have heard they used to be loud and imposing and their power would make people afraid and feel bad about themselves. To me they are a safe presence, not because they might protect me, but because I don't feel they want anything from me. This might be again be very different for someone raised as a catholic, but I wasn't. The church on the square is just old, imposing because it is big, but it doesn't shout at me, it doesn't make me want to scratch my pockets and spend the few coins I can find. It is not telling me that I should contribute to it, or that I'd better get to work.

Nothing in the square makes me anxious, it is so hard lately to find a place where I can be properly bored. The other friends of the square seem to enjoy the same qualities, the elder are here at rest, this is a place that they can understand, things are where they are supposed to be and nothing blinks. The children just care about having enough surface to run on, and some other kids to fool with. The teenagers want their corners where they can roll their joints in peace, where people would finally leave them alone. The dog walkers walk around at night, when it is dark and anyone not walking a dog becomes a suspect, a dealer. But the dealers stay near the phone booth. This sounds quite limited and unambitious, right. But I am so too, grand thoughts don't come to my mind, and anyways, we are all quite limited, Are there no disruptions, is your friend never angry, or has been your friend ever consumed by passionate love. I knew you wanted to ask that. You are

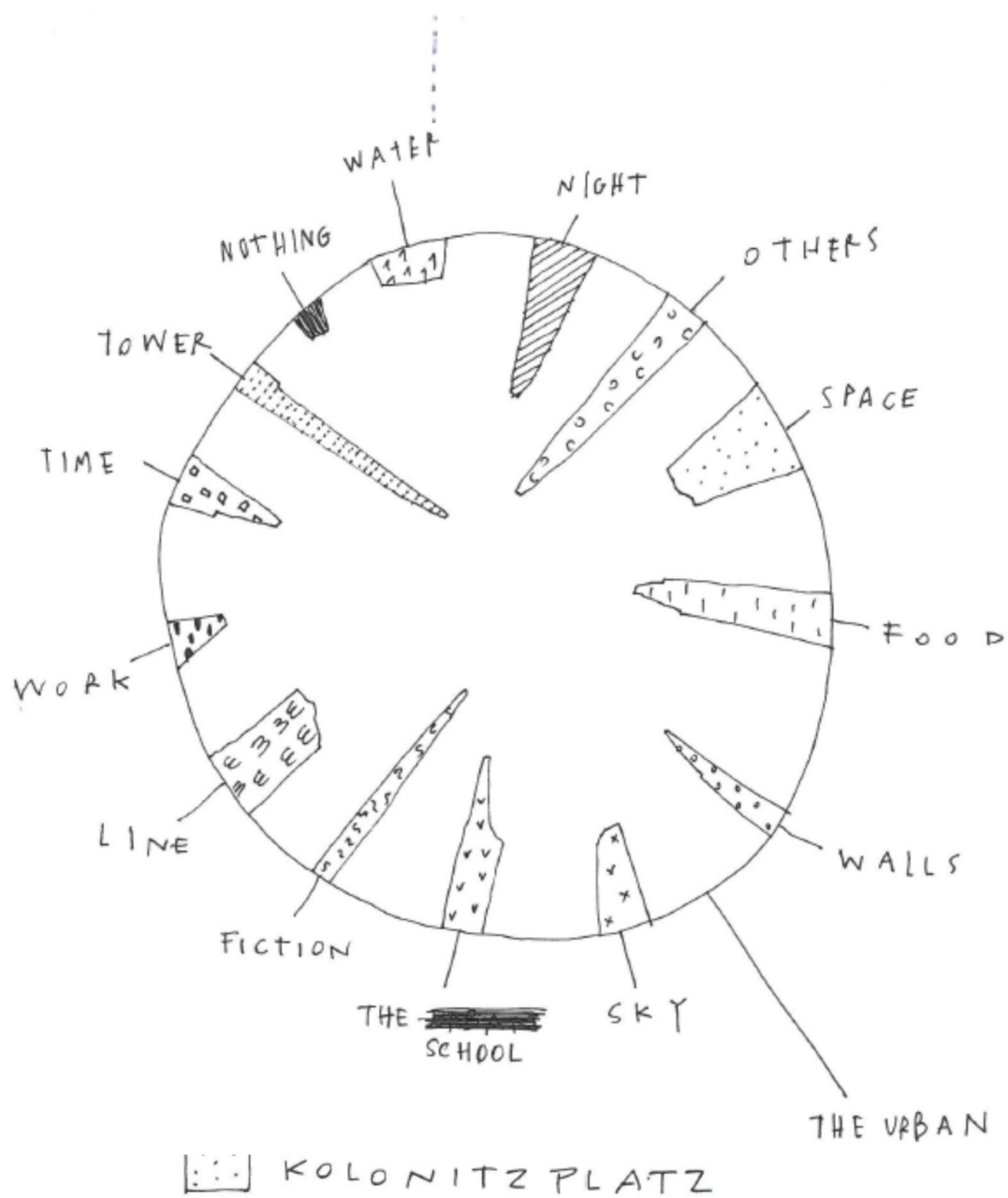
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always in between euphoria and desperation. She tries, she does try from time to time. But she is more into a kind of passive resistance. I know it sounds like the bullshit you've heard once from this other friend of mine who entered the opus dei. And it might be a bit so, more affirming and negating at the same time than truly resisting.

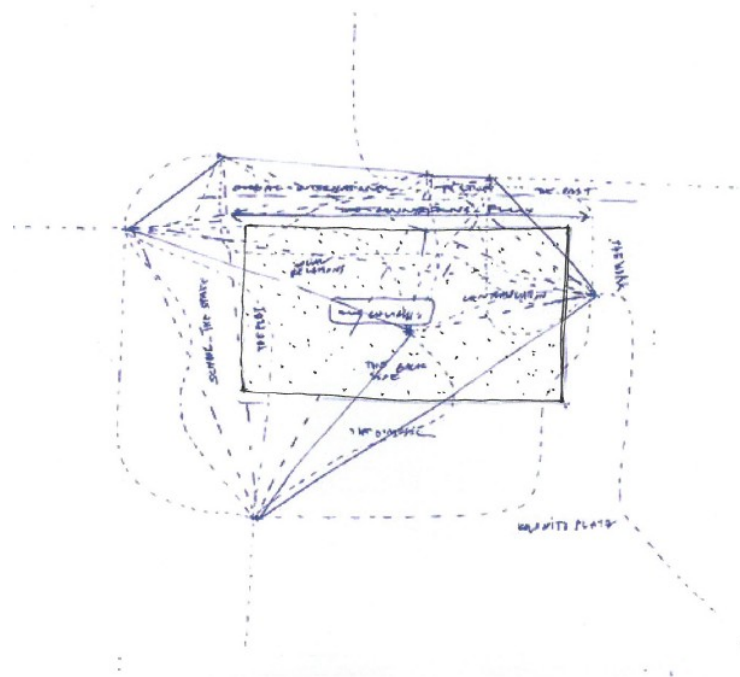
But anyways, there will always be people who need that. Right?



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- REFERENCE POINTS
- PATHS
- HEAVY FLUX
-  KOLOMITZ PLATZ

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Chapter 2 - Borders and segregation

What is a spatial border?

An attempt at defining 3 levels of limits:

Physical borders

Here I refer to the built elements designed to act as separations in space. These borders are tangible and have been decided upon consciously, usually by designers and architects. Some of these borders, like the facades of the buildings surrounding the square are clear limits, they are the very condition for the square.

Not all physical borders are as evidently perceived as limits as a wall is. A wall we cannot trespass. A high fence is quite similar since it also can't be crossed. Walls though, usually made of opaque, solid materials (bricks, stone) don't allow us to look through them, most fences let us see beyond them.

Small fences, easily crossable and changes of pavement act as borders too: even if they don't prevent us from doing anything, their physical presence acts as a marker of a limit.

Designed borders might have the role to differentiate functions in space, to signal prohibitions (forbidding access to certain areas), but also to achieve intricacy, a certain diversity of views and paths. They may hold then a functional role, but also an aesthetic purpose. They can be felt as imposed, but also as an offer for intimacy.

Functional borders

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If physical borders are a design issue or a consequence of a historical layering of designs, functional borders are a matter of strategy, often manifested in physical borders or in an arrangement of elements through design.

Functional borders are decided upon a program (a series of practices through which the space is appropriated), by the authorities.

The operation consists in dividing spaces and assigning different functions to each of them. Within the limits, certain activities will be encouraged or even enforced, others will be forbidden. This parcellation of spaces is to be found at any scale, from housing units to regional development plans. A scientific point of view is privileged in this approach.

One element, such as a children playground, may create per se a functional bordered area. The element placed in a certain spot marks the space, and brands its surroundings.

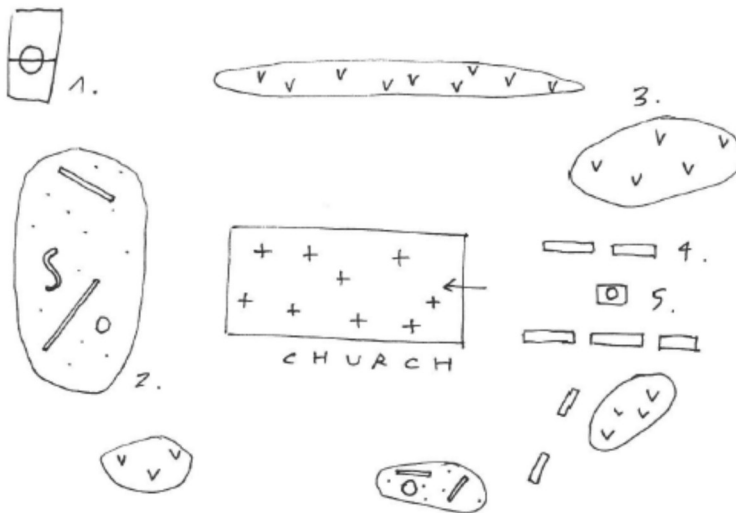
Spontaneous segregation

If the two previous categories are defined by choices, spontaneous segregation seems to simply happen. It is an unplanned separation of people's and activities. Top down planning can't be blamed for all the spatial differentiations and for all spatial forms of exclusion. To some extent segregations seems to occur naturally. Groups of people gather together, some areas tend to attract certain groups. Some groups or individuals repel other groups, some others act as a magnet. There are also different kinds of segregation. Some groups identify themselves as a group, for instance friends or family members, teenagers belonging to a certain subculture, acquaintances who enjoy spending time together. They know each other. Some other groups come together because they share a certain task (children caretakers, dog-walkers). They might not know each other, they might be very different, but the shared task gives them coherence. Other groups keep apart because they find communication easier among themselves, that is the case of migrants sharing a mother tongue. Finally, some groups or individuals, notably persons without a fixed residence, substance abusers, are often not welcomed by other groups, and

and things happen

over time, their spaces might even be avoided by others.

Some groups can share the same space at the same time, without ever really mixing, some groups do share the same space but never at the same time, and thus never see each other, they can just see the traces left behind, some groups don't share the same spaces with some other groups, and only by accident and not without conflict do people from these two groups, usually invisible to each other, meet.



1. SPORTS
2. PLAYGROUND
3. GREEN/TREES
4. BENCHES
5. FOUNTAIN

and things happen

How does it relate to the urban?

The two first types of borders rely on a fragmentation of knowledges, a scientific-bureaucratic expert compound. The problem is not whether this is good or bad, but rather that such planning decisions are presented as being the truth. The state tries to mediate and organize our needs by programming spaces. These operations are carried out by different groups of experts who are supposed to fulfill the wishes of masses. This takes us to the question of how to design for others (others we do not know). One way of knowing people we don't know is to rely on statistics. However, planning and building the city according to statistical data often can't address the complexity and the contradictory nature of social needs. It is a difficult and complex task, due to the scale and the diversity of the urban.

De Certeau (p.XLIV L'invention du quotidien)
(Statistics) reproduce the system to which they belong to. They leave out the proliferation of stories and heterogeneous operations that compose the patchwork of the everyday.

(La statistique) reproduit le système auquel elle appartient et elle laisse hors de son champ la prolifération des histoires et opérations hétérogènes qui composent les patchworks du quotidien.

Lefèbvre (p.95 Le droit à la ville)
The need for security and for openness.
Les besoins sociaux ont un fondement anthropologique; opposés et complémentaires, ils comprennent le besoin de sécurité et celui d'ouverture, le besoin de certitude et le besoin d'aventure, celui d'organisation du travail et celui de jeu, les besoins de prévisibilité et d'imprévu, d'unité et de différence, d'isolement et de rencontre, d'échanges et d'investissements, d'indépendance (voire de solitude) et de communication,

and things happen

d'immédiateté et de perspective à long terme. [...] des besoins spécifiques, que ne satisfont pas les équipements commerciaux et culturels plus ou moins parcimonieusement pris en considération par les urbanistes. Il s'agit du besoin d'activité créatrice, d'oeuvre (pas seulement de produits et de biens matériels consommables), des besoins d'information, de symbolisme, d'imaginaires, d'activités ludiques. À travers ces besoins spécifiés vit et survit un désir fondamental, dont le jeu de la sexualité, les actes corporels comme le sport, l'activité, l'art et la connaissance sont des manifestations particulières et des moments, surmontant plus ou moins la division parcellaire des travaux. Enfin, le besoin de la ville et de la vie urbain ne s'exprime librement que dans les perspectives qui tentent ici de se dégager et d'ouvrir l'horizon. Les besoins urbains spécifiques ne seraient-ils pas besoins de lieux qualifiés, lieux de simultanéité et de rencontres, lieux où l'échange ne passerait pas par la valeur d'échange, le commerce et le profit? Ne serait-ce pas aussi le besoin d'un temps de ces rencontres, de ces échanges?

Other ways of finding out about the needs and desires of people we do not know can be more direct. Participatory processes or referendums are the most used methods.

Regarding borders and segregation, Henri Lefebvre distinguishes as well three different levels which can take place simultaneously or not:

- spontaneous (coming from received ideas and ideology, unwanted, unplanned)
- voluntary (establishing separated spaces)
- programmed (planned)

These categories parallel the ones I defined previously, however, Lefebvre seems to disregard the concrete, material reality of borders.

The programmed borders, pushed from above in the shape of infrastructures and zoning regulations, are what constitutes the tangible part of what De Certeau calls the grid. This grid is superimposed on the city, as a matrix containing everything we see. It carves and distorts what was there before. It is the place of the strategies and programs, of the strategists and of power (State, Church, corporations). Organized and put into place by teams of experts. Functional. As if they knew better than us what we need.

and things happen

Whether spontaneous segregation is a problem or not depends largely on the degree of inclusion/exclusion observed, the difficulty to move from one group to another, and ultimately the idea each of us has on how a good and just society should be (or if this should even be a collective aim).

We can accept it as a natural, somehow organic, organization of social relations based on affinities and thus understand spontaneous segregation as a product of freedom. This position tends to be linked to a liberal ideology. On the other side of the spectrum, Lefèbvre and De Certeau argue that social stratification reflected in urban spaces mirrors the ills of our system: the general alienation. For Jacobs, who is socially oriented but definitely not a marxist, segregation is indeed an ill, which can somehow be improved through a more careful planning. She puts a bigger blame on the idiocy of planners and bureaucrats obsessed with a bird's eye perspective onto the city and completely unaware of the reality of the urban life, than on capitalism.

Lefèbvre (Le droit à la ville)

We cannot affirm that group segregation stems from a constant and uniform strategy of those in power. It is not directly a projection of the institutions neither the will of the powerful. Segregation is even often fought against by the institutions. And still one can observe it everywhere.

Even when a series of actions and plans are brought together in order to promote spaces where different social layers and classes would mix, they instantly separate again.

If spatial segregation is not wanted, why is it so pervasive? Why do practices go in this direction?

Lefèbvre (Le droit à la ville)

In spite of good intentions, for theoretical reasons and for social and political causes, practices move towards segregation. On the theoretical level, analytical thought separates, cuts, divides. Analytical thought fails when reaching a synthesis is needed. Socially, politically, class strategies (conscious or unconscious) aim at segregating.

The State and the companies try to absorb the city. The State and the companies, in spite of their differences, converge toward segregation.

and things happen

In this chapter we have explored the different types of borders and limits, from the obvious brick wall to the invisible borders segregating social layers.

We have also identified some of the origins of these divisions and the will or lack of to solve them.

In the city, because of the sheer density of life and the heterogeneity of ways in which people live, ideological tensions clearly manifest themselves in space in more or less subtle ways. Obeying often to codes a stranger wouldn't be able to recognize at first glance.

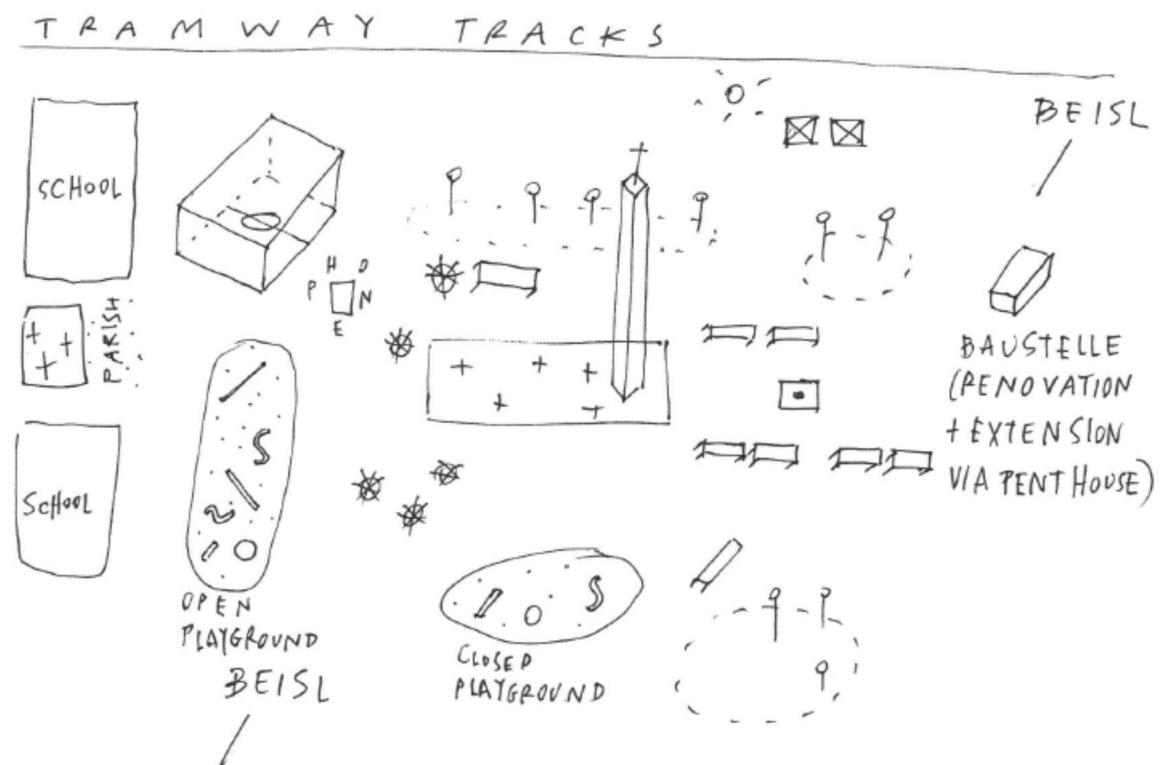
Spatial segregation is a bad sign. If urban life is worth something, it is due to the opportunities for encounters and the surprises coming from the unknown. If urban life closes up to these events, what is the point of living in cities?

De Certeau (p.XXXIX. L'invention du quotidien)

If it is true that everywhere the surveillance grid extends itself and gets precise, it is urgent to find out in which ways society as a whole cannot be reduced to it. Which ways of doing shape the counterpart on the side of the consumers (or dominated), of the silent processes organizing the sociopolitical order.

and things happen

Regarding Kolonitzplatz:

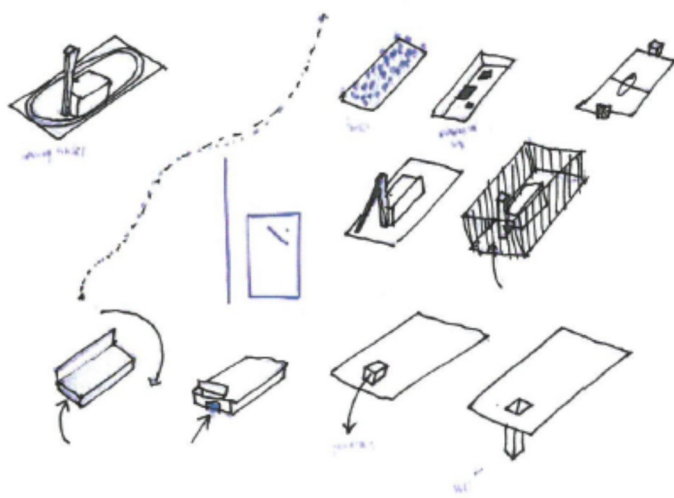


and things happen

Elements

- . tramway tracks
- . a church
- . a parish (part of the church)
- . a primary school
- . two playgrounds (one open, one closed)
- . a small sports-field (fenced)
- . a small fountain
- . two phonebooths
- . trees
- . benches
- . big pots with plants
- . grass
- . lamps
- . trash bins
- . two construction sites
- . a comics shop
- . a chinese restaurant
- . an asian take-out restaurant
- . a small kebab shop
- . a bigger kebab shop
- . a video store
- . two traditional Beisl
- . a paper shop
- . a newspapers agent and tobacco shop
- . an ice-cream shop
- . a lottery store
- . a supermarket (Zielpunkt)
- . a small publishing house
- . a hairdresser salon for dogs
- . an electrician's shop
- . a mobile phone store

and things happen



OPENING HOURS

ICE CREAM SHOP : 9 - 19

TRAFIK : 10 - 18

ZIELPUNKT : 8 - 19

TAKE AWAY : 12 - 23

KOLONITZ BEISL : 10 - 20

PAPER SHOP : 15 - 19

COMICS SHOP : 11 - 17

VIDEO STORE : 11 - 18

MOBILE SHOP : 12 - 19

KEBAB SHOP : 9 - 21

and things happen

The Story of the ice-cream shop

On Löwengasse there is a small-looking ice-cream shop.

It is a deceiving place.

First of all, it is not small at all, it is deeper and broader than it seems. As one enters, a square shaped room with few tables and even fewer chairs appear, the interior is always dark, and it takes a while until the eyes of the customer get used to the dim light of the café. The room is empty, it will remain empty most of the time. A man might be behind the counter, he rarely smiles and barely speaks. If he is not visible, he is not far, in the storage room, maybe. Probably though, he will be in the second room.

There is a second room.

It goes unnoticed since it is always, invariably, closed to the outside during the day. During the warm summer nights it is sometimes, albeit rarely, open. In the second room everything happens. To the second room, we know we are not invited. The door is often open, but they don't care, you won't understand their discussion anyways. Four to five men, some very old, some in their fifties. They sip coffee (or is it tea) and smoke in a never ending conversation flow. There are many tables, the neon light harsh shining, cheap glossy pine wood chairs everywhere. On the walls, yellowish promotional pictures of ancient Italian towns.

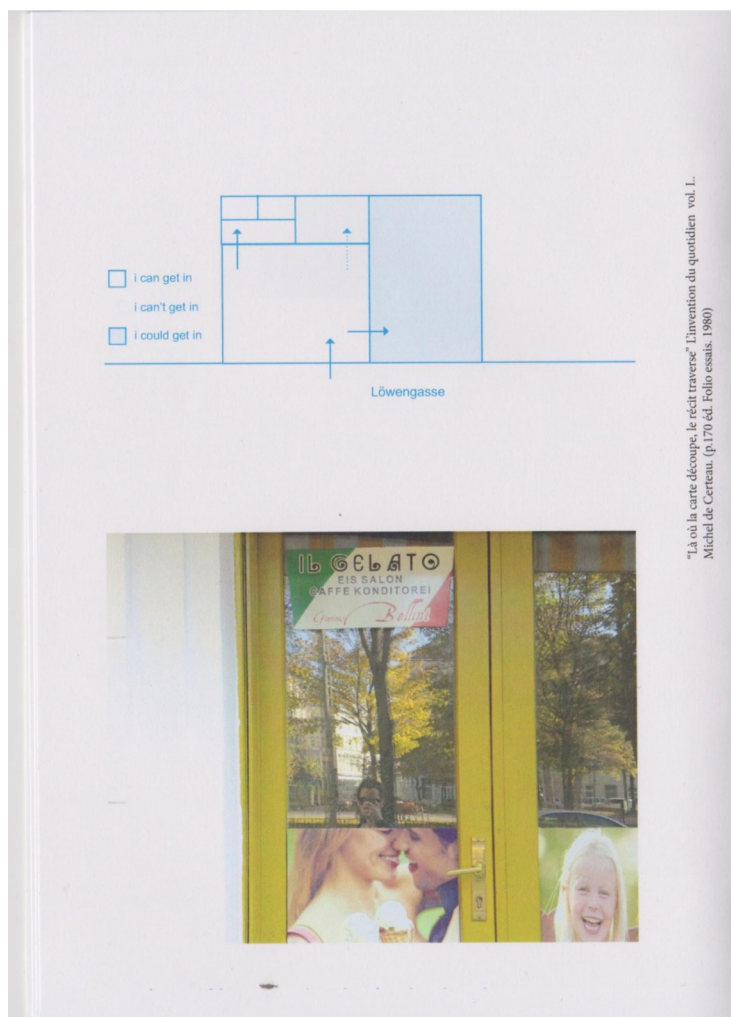
Il Gelato, that's the name one can read on the sign.

It is really only a name, at least in winter. The ice-cream selling period is rather short at Il Gelato, it starts at the end of april and by october it is over. During the summer period, between 4 and 6, children coming back from school scream and shout and cry and beg their parents and grandparents and caretakers for ice-cream. They tend to prefer the cones to the tubs. Sadly, since balls fall easier from a cone.

and things happen

Il Gelato, written in ugly characters over a green, white and red background.

The italian flag, the italian name, the italian pictures, the italian produce. That's about it. No one here is coming from Italy. There is nothing Italian at Il Gelato. The customer wonders why then the flag, the name and the pictures. The customer wonders how far the imposture goes. The customer doesn't know much more about the truth behind the italian façade.



The story of Sinan and his friends

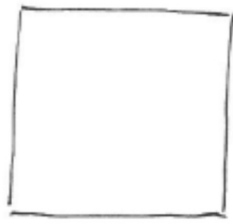
We used to come here, right here, see, there, there is “Sinan” written, can you see it? Oh, well, Sinan, he was writing his name all over the place, if you have a look around you'll see. So, yea, not that we would have a particular spot, but we were always on this side, near the phone booth or the football field or, you know on these three benches here. I was never the first to come, never ever, I don't think so. So I don't know when the first ones would come, but I'd say it was pretty regular, unless something spontaneous would happen. At 7 I was always here already, when the bells of the church start their “bang,bang,bang”.

Sometimes we would play football, actually most of the time, at the beginning. That's how I met most of the guys. I knew S. from school, we went right there to that school. We were friends and stuff, our omas were also friends, they used to come here to look after us every day after school. So, S. I knew, and M. his brother too. But I never liked M. because he was a bit dumb. So, the thing is, back then I was hanging out mostly with people from the gymnasium, and then I kind of stopped coming. I imagine starting that thing with Selima also changed the game for me. They still play football over there. Sinan also doesn't come much, I think. Not that I know much about his life, in the last two years I might have seen him maybe twice. But my grandma, who is indeed still coming to Kolonitzplatz to take care of my nephews, would always report when Sinan was there, and lately she didn't.

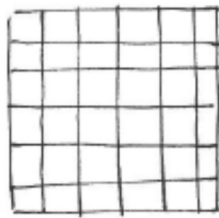
and things happen



and things happen



S Q U A R E



B O R D E R S



E V E R Y D A Y
L I F E

Chapter 3 - Everyday life

What is everyday life?

I chose to focus my attention to a restricted and concretely defined public space, following the thesis that small details might bring a deeper understanding when confronting such a vast topic. I tried to stay very close to the ground.

If we can not build our decisions on statistical data. And if designing spaces for people we do not know is necessarily very complicated and entails plenty of mistakes, an interim option - certainly not final - may arise. To observe the lives of others as much as we are allowed to, and thereby attempt to capture the city. Not to jump to conclusions, nor judge, nor expect from this exercise any instant enlightenment. Just an exercise in observation, with the same question always on the horizon: How can we live better together? I became an attentive spectator of the small movements of life unfolding. The square is a great spot for looking at things.

The usual practices of ordinary people, their routines, their walks, their gestures. Any everyday activity. To run away from the spectacular as much as possible. Fleeing grand theories. Try and be true to what we do see. Everyday life consists of activities and moments usually considered meaningless and

and things happen

undeserving to be described and analyzed. Makeshift calculations and tiny traditions we keep private. Still, this is indeed the kind of theater we seek when we go outside to hang out or sit on a bench or on a terrace. We do not expect anything special to happen, but the daily flows amuse us enough to make it worth spending time outside.

Everyday life is the time spent in-between activities we deem important.

Time gains importance if we look into the everyday life, if we focus on the lived spaces. The life of a place is not at all the same not at by day or by night, when the employees leave for work or when the schoolkids conquer the playgrounds. The public space being everyone's and no one's lends itself to tactics. It is used when the opportunity presents itself. Somehow a kind of hunting behaviour looking out to see if anything is going on.

Everyday life both crushes us with its routines and makes us feel that we are here and now in the minor decisions and tiny details. And it is ours. That's the thing you can not not have. You might not have a working life or a social life or a family life. You might not have a *vita activa* or have a *vita contemplativa*. You might not have a happy life, or not have a miserable life and have a life not worth being told. But an everyday life we must have.

The square is a void, not even a container. And since the days of the Volkfests are over, we go to the square to do nothing. Or almost nothing. Except for the dealers, the priest, the gardeners and the maintenance managers, the activities of the others in the square are like nothing. To chat casually, to look at how kids play, to play, to walk leash in hand until the dog relieves its needs, to get some sunshine on the face, to be outside

and things happen

not to be alone inside, to be there because there is nowhere else to be.

How does it relate to the urban?

Lefèbvre (p.123 *Le droit à la ville*)

The urban center brings already movement to the people of the city, the unexpected, the possible and the meetings. Either it is a spontaneous theater or it is nothing.

D'ores et déjà le centre urbain apporte aux gens de la ville du mouvement, de l'imprévu, du possible et des rencontres, c'est un theatre spontané ou ce n'est rien.

So, what is the daily life? It is the living space of ours. It is the ways we do the things we have to do. And according to de Certeau it is our only partial escape (still within) the total control to which we are subjected to. Lefebvre on the other hand distinguishes between a daily life he qualifies as miserable. And an urban life, or the urban, which comes close to De Certeau's everyday life notion, although a lot more ambitious.

Lefèbvre (p.91 *Le droit à la ville*)

Here is a everyday life job well cut into fragments, transportation, private life work, transportation, private life, leisure.

Voici une vie quotidienne bien découpée en fragments travail, transport, vie privée, loisirs.

Lefèbvre (p.93 *Le droit à la ville*)

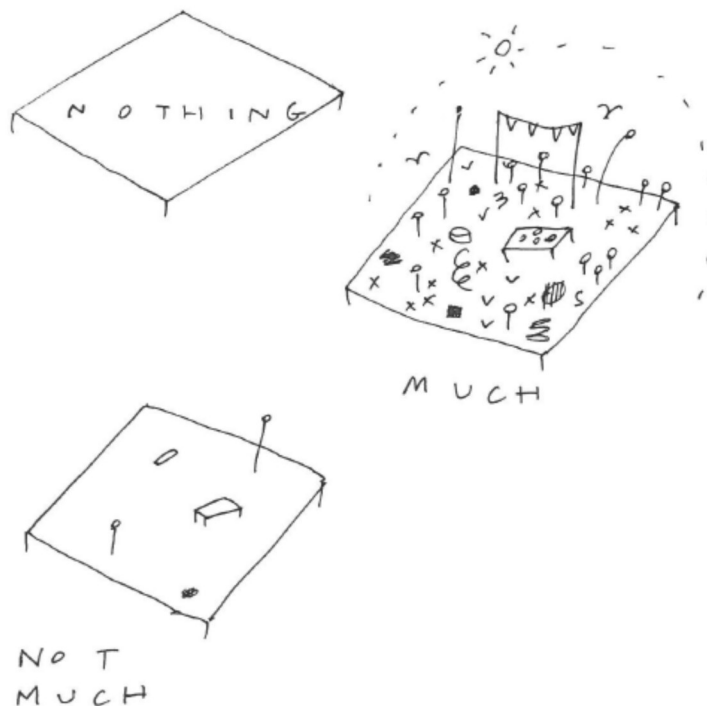
Urban society, the set of actions occurring over time, favoring a space (location, location) and privileged by it, at times signifier, at times signified. A different logic from that of the goods.

La société urbaine, l'ensemble d'actes se déroulant dans le temps, privilégiant un espace (site, lieu) et privilégiés par lui, tour à tour signifiants et signifiés. A une logique différente de celle de la marchandise.

and things happen

Somehow, both Lefebvre and De Certeau agree that the actions of the inhabitants in their everyday life (ie, not when they try to change things or to subvert purpose the established order) are worth taking into account. That these routinary uses of the city in practice hold the essence of what the urban means.

Furthermore, Jane Jacobs in her book provides detailed descriptions of what people do in public space. She pays special attention to the ways in which they do or do not establish relations among themselves and with the things around them. Through her careful observations she comes to a similar finding to the one of the two French thinkers. She believes that design and intentions are definitely not the most important (her chapter on city parks is very insightful). Most crucial, according to Jacobs, are the things that happen in space. For her, the everyday life show is everything we ask from public urban life: watch people go, people being different, doing unexpected things. She observes that those spaces where more things happen and in which the things that happen are more interesting and attractive are places that inhabitants can appropriate.



and things happen

nothing

and things happen

De Certeau (chap.3 L'invention du quotidien)

There is a certain strangeness in the quotidian which remains hidden. The gap between the spectacles of the global strategies and the real opacity of local tactics.

Il y a une étrangeté du quotidien qui ne fait pas surface, ou dont la surface est seulement une limite avancée, un bord qui se découpe sur le visible. La disparité entre les spectacles des stratégies globales et l'opaque réalité des tactiques locales.

De Certeau (p.LI L'invention du quotidien)

The thousand ways to set up a reliability under the situations experienced, that is to say, to open a possibility to live them by reintroducing the plural mobility of interests and pleasures, a way to manipulate and enjoy.

Aux mille façons d'instaurer une fiabilité dans les situations subies, c'est-à-dire d'y ouvrir une possibilité de les vivre en y réintroduisant la mobilité plurielle d'intérêts et de plaisirs, un art de manipuler et de jouir.

What happens when nothing happens.

This could be an accurate description of many neighbourhood squares. Everyday life itself, without much mess, without disaster. The boredom of the everyday. The theater of details. The infraordinary.

Pérec, in a very short text titled *Approches de quoi?* manages to express quite well the importance of paying attention to the little nothings of ours, rather than to the big headlines ready for consumption. And how extremely difficult it is to talk about these things which are everywhere around us and in us. The arduousness of describing the all too common things, the stuff we think we already know too well, so well we don't even see them.

B O R I N G
N O T B O R I N G
B O R I N G
N O T B O R I N G
N O T B O R I N G
B O R I N G
N O T B O R I N G
B O R I N G

and things happen

The everyday, doing nothing and how to be an expert
of the everyday

To observe the everyday the expert needs much patience. And many hours to spare. And to stay in the street, just watching. Letting time pass, for the only way of looking at the daily events is through time. Thus the method of the everyday life expert closely resembles everyday life in that it seems to be nothing. The only expectation being that the nothingness will fill up, like days get filled with moments and pass this way.

THE EMPTY SQUARE
IN THE COLD

The everyday life of the squares is hanging out. Jane Jacobs calls the kind of people swarming in the squares at all hours, which can enjoy days sitting on a bench for no one expects them nowhere else: "leisure indigent". We all know who they are: the unemployed, the vagabonds, the retirees and many of us when we do not know what to do about our days. They are the native tribe of squares.

Hopeful / no ambitions

Thus, daily life appears to be our only resource when it comes to escape of the grid, if only momentarily. The short span of time where we replace exchange value for use value. The closest to our practical-sensitive reality, and after all the only thing that is ours and we can not not have. This notion seems to contain very little hope or optimism, even less ambition, almost resigned if not defeatist.

However, is the everyday really so unambitious? Close observation of it could, as Perec says, open doors in the understanding of our truth. According to De Certeau it could help us resist and fight the socio-political order and it is key in building a city.

With this in mind, spending hours watching life go by seems a much more important activity, right?

THE EIGHT HOURS
OF WORK AT THE
SUPERMARKET
(ZIELPUNKT)
(NOW CLOSED FOREVER)

and things happen

MISSING THINGS
MISSED PLACES

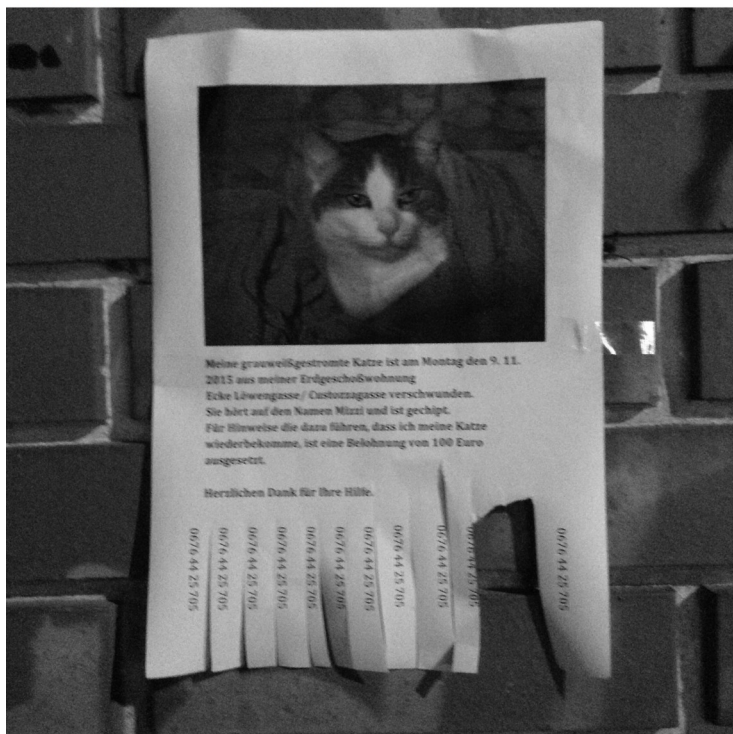
and things happen

Regarding Kolonitzplatz



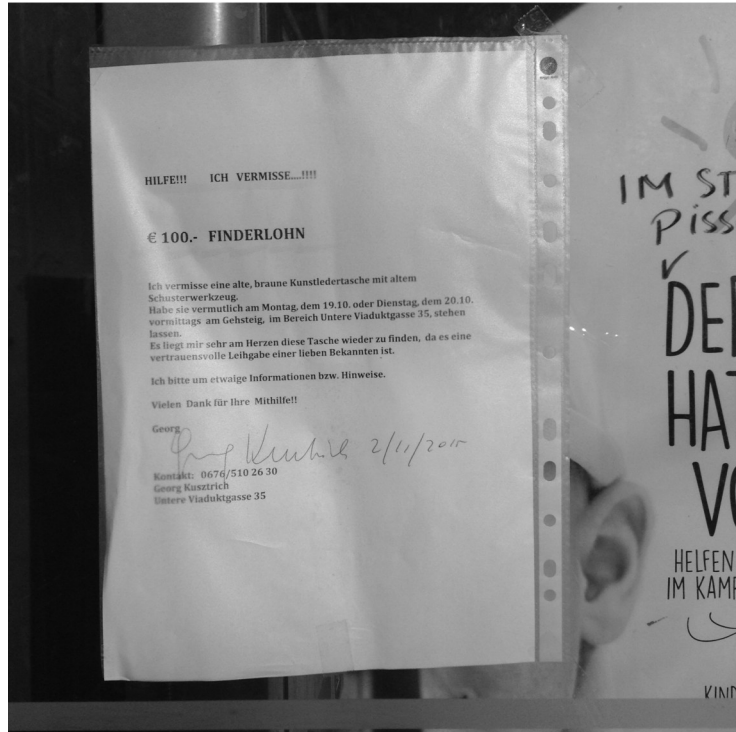
Lost woman ^

Lost cat v



and things happen

Lost bag v



and things happen

some notes at the beginning of the project

They are not doing sports, no hobby or project here. They might have no money, they might not feel they fit a coffee place, they might not be welcomed in bars, they might be too high to do anything else, they might be too old to do anything at all.

Kids are playing, caretakers watch them, dog owners walk their dogs, workers drink their Spar Budget Energy drinks, swallow their sandwiches, teenagers talk, compare things displayed on their phones, roll joints, small dealers sell weed in the phone booth, teens play football. I drink a coffee (1,50) at the ice cream shop while trying to establish connections between said ice-cream shop and late capitalism.

17:10- 17:30/ 23.10.2015

A red-haired girl wearing a tracksuit cycles around the church on a green bike. Two of her little friends try to fix a skateboard.

On one side of the church, on the stairs, five young teens from turkish families (only one of them looks older than 15) are talking while standing.

Three younger girls are learning to ride a skateboard.

Now the girl with the green bike is followed by two skateboarders (a boy and a girl) and two other small girls who have no vehicle and instead carry dolls. They all throw themselves running into the church, a man carrying a backpack quarrels. When the man goes away, the kids enter the church and they get out running and shouting scared half a minute after.

Now they get in again, they look terrified, they have left the skateboards outside.

Three old armenian-speaking men, two of them wearing a cap, stand, hands in their pockets, next to a bench in a corner of the square.

The kids are going crazy.

On the other side of the square, an old turkish man with a cap is sitting on a bench with a younger bald man wearing sports

and things happen

clothes, they talk a lot and both of them nod to each other constantly.

Sometimes someone passes by the square. Walking fast.

A young woman with a scarf passes by, two men smoking pass by and one of them makes a piece of paper wet in the fountain, they sit down on a bench, not far from where I am sitting. Both of them have a beard, one is rather blondish while the other is generally very dark.

A girl goes by on a scooter, she went in the other direction a few minutes ago, now she is carrying a box with big letters printed reading: zalando (it's a company which sells clothes online).

This reminds me that I too went out to pick up a box from the postal office.

A stylish young couple, talking in english. He carries a small designer trolley.

An old lady (mal teñida de pelirroja) drags a giant trolley suitcase, she walks next to her friend, a woman with her hair in a bun and sunglasses who is carrying three suits in their drycleaners' sheath.

The three old armenian men are still talking.

29.10.2015

Went to Zielpunkt, rather empty. Some kids playing in the playground area.

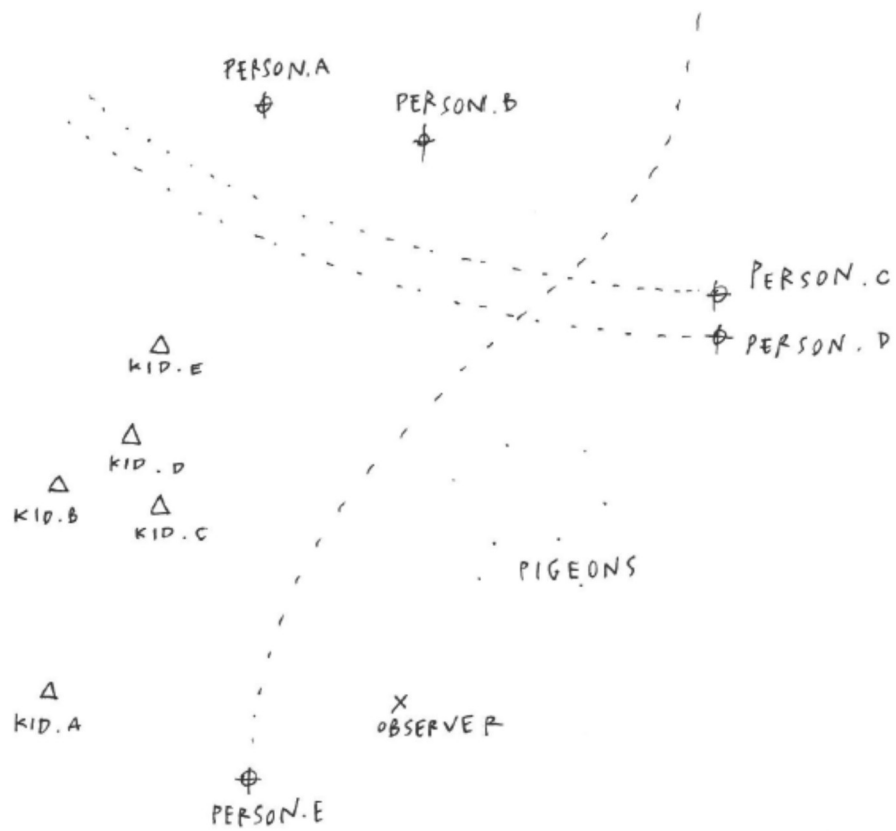
and things happen

Kolonitplatz at 7 pm (snowstorm). 06/01/2016. A report
from a friend.

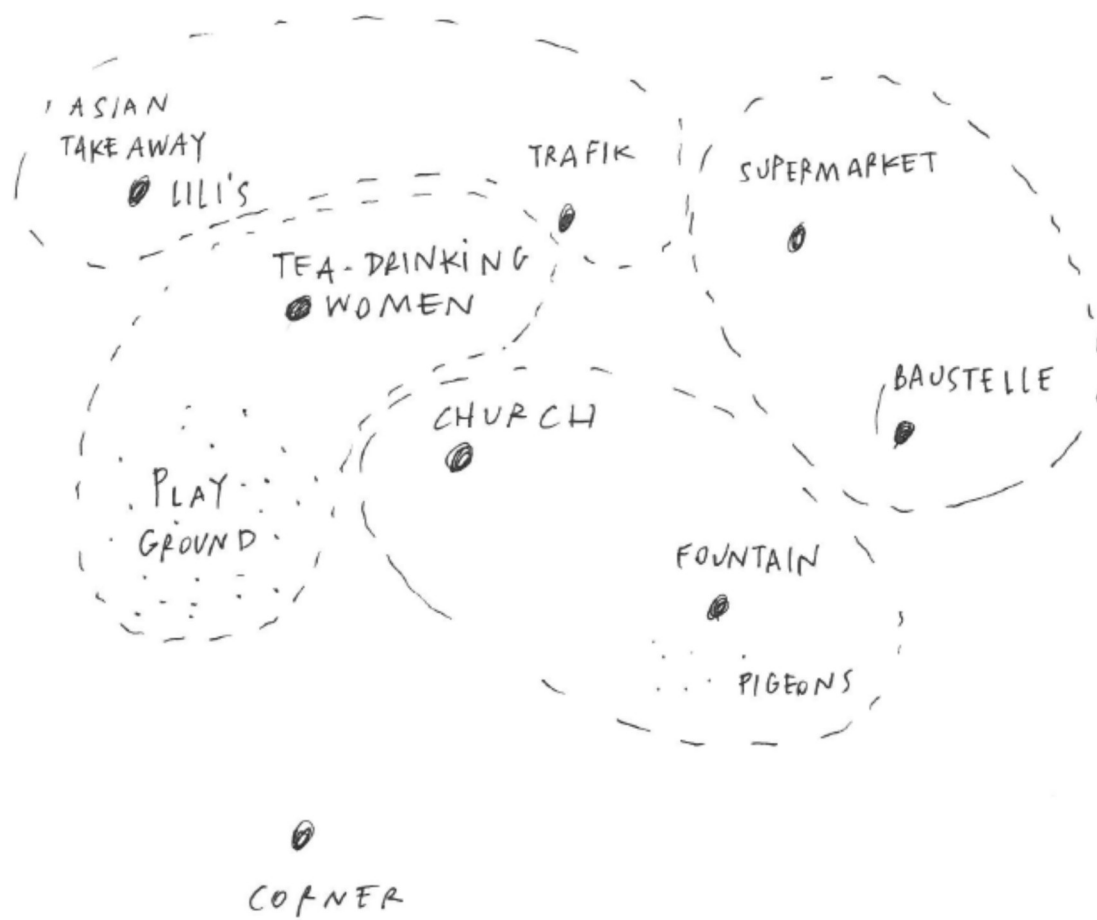
*A. is going to buy a pack of cigarettes at the Trafik on the
Kolonitzplatz. He comes back and reports:*

*There were a couple of people passing through the square. I
have identified maybe a russian couple, speaking a slavic
language. Then there was a man with a dog around the
fountain. A woman reading this kind of newsletters in the
vitrine of the church. On the wall which somehow borders the
church, next to the school, there was a man leaning against
the wall trying to organize his stuff. Everything is snowy, but
the pathways around the church have been cleaned and the
space around the fountain not. Which could indicate that that
area is not part of the church. Or maybe the employee is just
a bit lazy. I didn't see any snowman. There is this christmas
tree with the lights on it lit. That's it.*

and things happen



and things happen



Authors in conversation

Georges Pérec

French writer. Born in Paris, grew up during the second World War. He studied history and sociology, worked most of his adult life as a librarian in the archive of the neurophysiology department of the CNRS (the french national scientific research center), specialized in medical research.

He considered himself a realist writer, in that he used to write about very specific things belonging to his own lived experiences, to his memories or to collective memory. He tried to leave out of his detailed descriptions, enumerations and classifications all discrimination and judgement. His writings are often considered to be both simple and transcendent. Pérec's interest in the everyday life was shared by his contemporaries (Roland Barthes, the members of the Collège de Sociologie), although they would not tackle the subject from a literary point of view as he did. Critics point out that this interest for the common places and the non-place, and choosing to write about the insignificant and about the things we usually don't remember stems from his traumatic losses during his childhood. In his writings details are always more important than the whole and the physicality of the real imposes itself over meaning and use.

In *Espèces d'espaces* his taste for the observation of the distribution of things in space is particularly evident. He describes how people position themselves in space,

and things happen

how things and events are placed in the space they find themselves in. Through these spatial relations Perec reflects on the subject and on memory as a tool for identity. His work *L'infraordinaire* is a good example.

Besides he often used metatextual elements such as drawings and pictures, and lists and catalogues.

Among his experiments with writing Perec uses fragmentation. His texts are often divided in small portions as a way to take the reader closer to the process of writing.

Reading list:

Espèce d'espaces (1974. Galilée, Paris)

Les choses (1965. Juillard, Paris)

Lo infraordinario (1989. Translation 2008. Impedimenta, Madrid)

Penser/ Classer (1985. Hachette, Paris)

La vie mode d'emploi (1978. Hachette, Paris)

Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien (1975. Bourgois, Paris)

Henri Lefebvre

French marxist philosopher born in 1901. A prolific and unorthodox thinker, he was particularly interested in the rural and the urban environments.

One of Lefebvre's most important contributions to social thought is the idea of the "critique of everyday life". Lefebvre defined everyday life dialectically as the intersection of "illusion and truth, power and helplessness; the intersection of the sector man controls and the sector he does not control". The everyday was in short, the space in which all life occurred, and between which all fragmented activities took place. It was the residual.

Lefebvre argued that everyday life was an underdeveloped sector compared to technology and production, and moreover that in the mid 20th century, capitalism changed such that everyday life was to be colonized—turned into a zone of sheer consumption. In this zone of everydayness (boredom) shared by everyone in society regardless of class or specialty, self-critique of everyday realities of boredom vs. societal promises of free time and leisure, could lead to people understanding and then revolutionizing their everyday lives. This was essential to Lefebvre because everyday

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life was where he saw capitalism surviving and reproducing itself. Without revolutionizing everyday life, capitalism would continue to diminish the quality of everyday life, and inhibit real self-expression. The critique of everyday life was crucial because it was for him only through the development of the conditions of human life—rather than abstract control of productive forces—that humans could reach a concrete utopian existence.

Lefebvre takes as his starting-point and guide the details of quotidian experience: an experience colonized by the commodity, shadowed by inauthenticity, yet one which remains the only source of resistance and change.

Lefebvre's argument in *The Production of Space* is that space is a social product, or a complex social construction which affects spatial practices and perceptions. This argument implies the shift of the research perspective from space to processes of its production; the embrace of the multiplicity of spaces that are socially produced and made productive in social practices; and the focus on the contradictory, conflictual, and, ultimately, political character of the processes of production of space.

Lefebvre's work on everyday life was heavily influential in French theory, particularly for the Situationists, as well as in politics.

Reading list:

Le droit à la ville (1968. Anthropos, Paris)
Critique de la vie quotidienne (excerpts)
The production of space (excerpts)

Henri Lefebvre, *Love and struggle: Spatial dialectics* by
Rob Shields (1999. Routledge, New York)

Michel De Certeau

French Jesuit born in France in 1925. He studied Philosophy, his work combines history, psychology, social sciences and philosophy.

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L'invention du quotidien begins by pointing out that while social science possesses the ability to study the traditions, language, symbols, art and articles of exchange that make up a culture, it lacks a formal means by which to examine the ways in which people re appropriate them in everyday situations.

This is a dangerous omission, Certeau argues, because in the activity of re-use lies an abundance of opportunities for ordinary people to subvert the rituals and representations that institutions seek to impose upon them.

With no clear understanding of such activity, social science is bound to create nothing other than a picture of people who are non-artists (meaning non-creators and non-producers), passive and heavily subject to received culture. Indeed, such a misinterpretation is borne out in the term "consumer". In the book, the word "user" is offered instead; the concept of "consumption" is expanded in the phrase "procedures of consumption" which then further transforms to "tactics of consumption".

The most influential aspect of *L'invention du quotidien* has emerged from Certeau's distinction between the concepts of strategy and tactics. Certeau links "strategies" with institutions and structures of power who are the "producers", while individuals are "consumers" acting in environments defined by strategies by using "tactics". In the influential chapter "Walking in the City", Certeau asserts that "the city" is generated by the strategies of governments, corporations, and other institutional bodies who produce things like maps that describe the city as a unified whole. By contrast, the walker at street level moves in ways that are tactical and never fully determined by the plans of organizing bodies, taking shortcuts in spite of the strategic grid of the streets. This concretely illustrates Certeau's argument that everyday life works by a process of poaching on the territory of others, using the rules and products that already exist in culture in a way that is influenced, but never wholly determined, by those rules and products.

Reading list:

L'invention du quotidien (1980. Gallimard, Paris)

Jane Jacobs

North-American urban thinker and activist. Born in Pennsylvania in 1916.

In her most important work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (published in 1961), she strongly opposes urban renewal strategies in the U.S. in the 1950s. She criticized fiercely urban planners and called urbanism a pseudoscience. According to Jacobs, urbanists applied ideal schemes to the real city, destroying thus public space, she puts a special blame on zoning decisions. She used new and interdisciplinary methods to understand how cities (mainly New York) function. Her ideas on grassroots movements and self-organization in urbanism were later very influential. She argued that towns were live ecosystems, and advocated ideas such as "mixed use" development and bottom up planning.

Her studies are based on careful observation of her own environment, her writing is clear and easily understandable and manages to communicate the complexity of urban life surprisingly well.

The most influential chapter for this work has been the one on neighbourhood parks, in which Jacobs challenges the reader to "consider city parks deprived places that need the boon of life and appreciation conferred on *them*." Parks become lively and successful: "because of functional physical diversity among adjacent uses, and hence diversity among users and their schedules." Jacobs offers four tenets of good park design: intricacy (stimulating a variety of uses and repeat users), centering (a main crossroads, pausing point, or climax), access to sunlight, and enclosure (the presence of buildings and a diversity of surroundings).

Jacobs warns against "frittering away money on parks, playgrounds and project land-oozes too large, too frequent, too perfunctory, too ill-located, and hence too dull or too inconvenient to be used."

Reading list:

The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961. Random House, New York)

Conclusions

Doing something or doing nothing? Doing nothing to do something afterwards?

Non-participatory observation. No intervention in-situ. Not changing anything on Kolonitzplatz.

My observations have led to an interpretation of the Kolonitzplatz, which I intended to be as personal as possible. I have appropriated the space by absorbing it, through a long-time obsession with it, I now own it in my head, but it is still not mine. I could intervene on it, for a short time. I could create an event, make it livelier, make it spectacular for a while, mix with the others and attempt to create a community.

I won't do any of that. For several reasons.

For mostly I don't have enough time, I believe any participatory project has to be accompanied by a long-term engagement, otherwise it won't work, and it will be a lie. Building up a network of acquaintances and invest others in a project is a slow process.

I definitely didn't want to use people for this project, it is not something I feel comfortable with. And I do think participation, if not taken seriously enough, is somehow using other people's energies, talents and hopes for one's purpose.

Choosing non-participatory methods and practices has also been a matter of character. Not being a particularly outgoing person, if it comes to involve others I prefer to do it when I am already working with a group, a group of people I know well, which can expand, with time. Besides, I am here, still, an outsider, which gives a good

and things happen

starting point for observation but not a great one for actual action.

Finally, it has to do with the square itself, I don't feel there is a need coming from its users to form a community, precisely because there is nothing particularly wrong about it. In my experience the best communal actions take place in a situation of struggle, and I don't think it is the case here.

Regarding an intervention on spot, the answer is even easier, I just didn't feel like it. I planned to do so, to do some guerrilla style actions, to disturb the nothingness of the square. But then again, what for? Isn't it enough as it is ? It could be interesting, sure, to displace the benches (anyhow, people do so already), to add some writings on the walls, to place fake posters, to perform with my own body. I decided not to.

This position of doing-nothing won't last forever though. But taking some time for just looking at things and reading has been very formative. As a trained architect my gaze is made to spot potential, I scan the city looking for places which could be improved. I do have many grand plans for the Kolonitzplatz, some are simple, some are outright crazy. That is why this exercise has been one of constraining in a way, of unlearning a certain thought process: quick look at a situation, fast judgement, urge to solve and fix and adapt and plan, sketching, polishing, submitting, ideally building, ideally changing people's lives, ideally making them happier than they ever thought they could be.

list of ideas for the Kolonitzplatz

- + removing all fences
- + add diversity to the floor surfaces
- + expanding the playground
- + make the surface "hilly", more relief, more fun
- + paint all benches in a bright colour
- + remove the large flower pots, they are ugly
- + invite children to paint the floor
- + make the football cage less "cagey"
- + add some wooden cabins, and tree houses
- + plan concerts with the priest
- + in summer, transform it into a camp
- + open air kitchen
- + have a workshop where neighbours can build the furniture, paint it bright
- + change the use of the church, make an indoor adult playground out of it

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- + build a small dépendance for the ice-cream shop near the fountain. Design it as a temporary pavilion, colourful, out of semi-transparent plastic, play chillwave music and sometimes Celentano
- + every wednesday water games at the fountain, like they do in Versailles
- + with powerful projectors, transform the church building in a yellow glowing entity. Is it Eliasson or is it on fire?
- + a slide coming down from the church tower

Those people weren't any crowd, but a trio of people who I had the impression of knowing very well. After pricking up my ear and listen attentively, I heard Rimbaud say that he was tired trafficking of slaves and would give anything to get back to poetry. Wittgenstein was feeling very sick of his humble job as a nurse in a hospital. Duchamp was complaining about not being able to paint and having to play chess everyday. The three of them were complaining bitterly when Gombrowicz, who seemed twice their age, entered. He told them that the only one who needn't regret about anything was Duchamp. He, after all, had left something monstrous -the painting-, which was convenient not only to be abandoned but also to be forgotten forever.

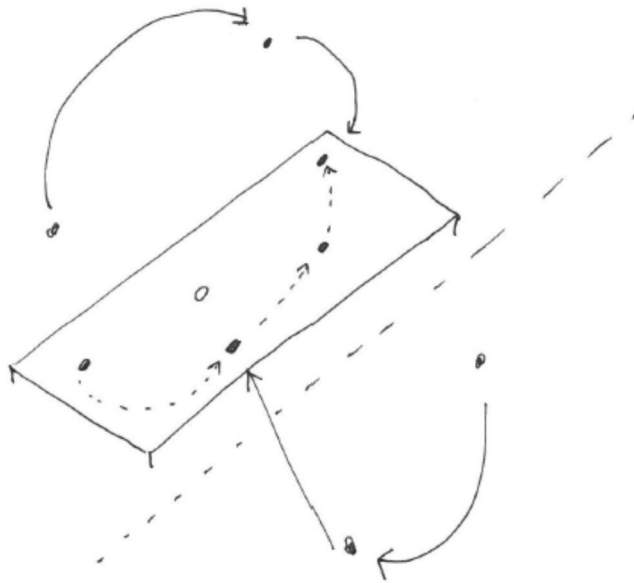
- I do not understand, master -said Rimbaud-. Why only Duchamp has the right not to regret?

- I have already said," responded Gombrowicz with great sufficiency and pride.

Since in poetry or philosophy there is still so much to do, but neither you, Rimbaud, nor you, Wittgenstein, have nothing to do anymore. Why not to recognize, once for all, that the paintbrush is an ineffective tool? It is like undertaken the unmeasurable cosmos full of sparkling lights, with a simple toothbrush. No art is so poor in expression. Painting is not more than renouncing everything you can not paint.

Enrique Vila-Matas (Bartleby & Co. 2000)

and things happen



and things happen (epilogue)

An artistic installation. That is the temporary end of this obsession with the Kolonitzplatz. A displaced appropriation.

Lefèbvre (p.125 Le droit à la ville)

To make art serve the urban doesn't mean at all to decorate urban spaces with art pieces.

Back to the style, to the oeuvre, that is to the meaning of the monument and of appropriated space in the Feast, art can prepare "structures of charm".

The future of art is not artistic but urban.

The right to the oeuvre (to participate) and the right to appropriation (different from the right to ownership) are implicit in the right to the city.

Mettre l'art au service de l'urbain, cela ne signifie pas du tout enjoliver l'espace urbain avec des objets d'art. Revenant au style, à l'oeuvre, c'est à dire au sens du monument et de l'espace approprié dans la Fête, l'art peut préparer des "structures d'enchantement"

L'avenir de l'art n'est pas artistique, mais urbain.

Le droit à l'oeuvre (à l'activité participante) et le droit à l'appropriation (bien distinct du droit à la propriété) s'impliquent dans le droit à la ville.

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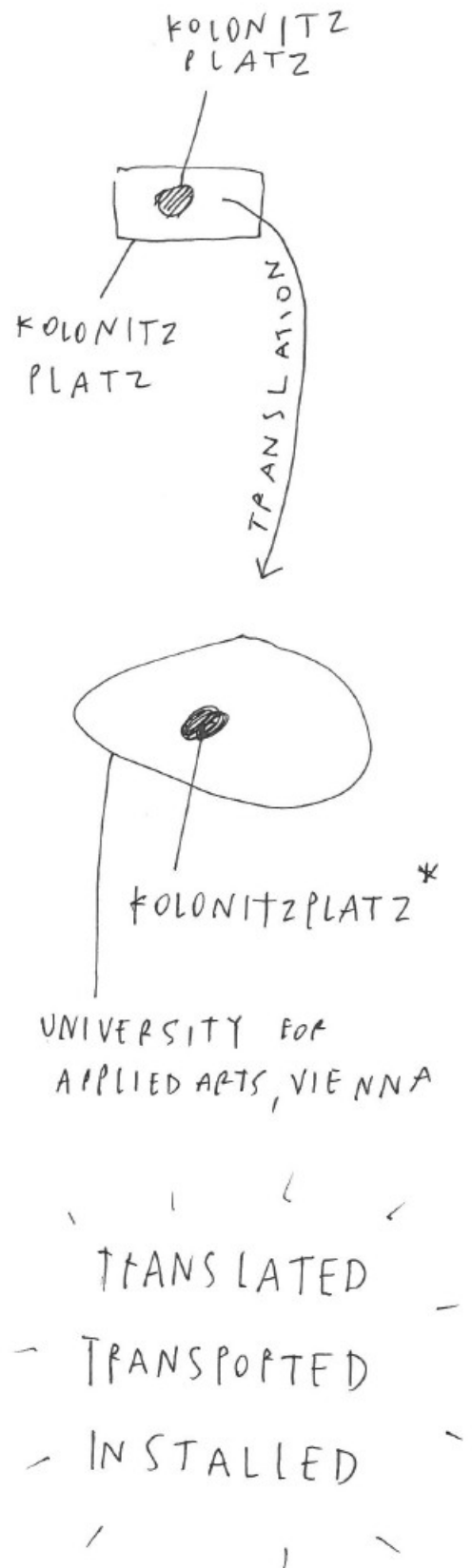
From “hanging out” to “installing”

Hanging out → collecting → sampling → installing

Hanging out in public space and creating and installing a spatial work in a private space are, in a way, complementary practices. Being almost opposed experiences, they can address similar topics. For instance, if we are to borrow De Certeau's ideas on tactics and strategies, “hanging out” would be a tactical practice: I don't have a proper, I am in someone else's territory, I can only take the opportunities given to me by the circumstances to create something. While, “installing” would be rather the opposite: I am producing a space, I plan it and organize it, it is somehow mine even if I don't want to, I apply my rules and I shape the space as I please.

By observing and spending time in the square I have collected elements and memories, and many associations. I have built mental maps of Kolonitzplatz daily, and in spite of having visited it regularly I still find gaps, I don't know exactly where to locate a certain shop, or I am unsure whether there is a tree there or not. If it's on the left or the right side that one can find two or four benches. Our spatial memory of lived places functions like that, we remember the stories, we recall a certain narration, we don't really see the map. The itineraries of our daily life are imprinted onto us as an elliptic tale, we jump from one place to the other mentally. Some parts just leave a more lasting impression on us, and then we keep on seeing them while many others we ignore completely - we realize very often to which extent this is true when talking to someone who takes the same path we do, but uses different reference points -. The substance for my work will be precisely these reference points, the spots my mind grasps first when thinking about what is there to be found in Kolonitzplatz.

Finally another aspect is that of trying to represent my lived experience of the square, to be able to communicate the knowledge gathered during this project. I have used two movements to do that. The transposition of Kolonitzplatz to another place where it will be exhibited and the translation of the reference points into an abstract version. This process mirrors the work on paper, moving from the real square, to the ideas of public space, back and forward.



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Some thoughts on installation art from the essay Politics of Installation by Boris Groys in the book Going Public (2010. Sternberg Press, Berlin)

p.63

A mass-cultural version of individual flânerie.

p.55

The artistic installation does not circulate. Rather it installs everything that usually circulates in our civilization: objects, texts, films...

p.58

The artistic installation - in which the act of art production coincides with the act of its presentation- becomes the perfect experimental terrain for revealing and exploring the ambiguity that lies at the core of the western notion of freedom.

p.55

The artistic installation is a symbolic privatization of the public space of an exhibition. The material support of the installation medium is the space itself. It invites the visitor to experience this space as the holistic, totalizing space of an artwork.

p.59

The visitor is here, so to speak, on foreign ground, in exile. The visitor becomes an expatriate who must submit to a foreign law - one given to him or her by the artist. Here the artist acts as legislator, as sovereign of the installation space- even, and maybe especially so, if the law given by the artist to a community of visitors is a democratic one.

p.67

So one can say that installation practice demonstrates the dependency of any democratic space (in which masses or multitudes demonstrate themselves to themselves) on the private, sovereign decisions of an artist as its legislator.

P.68-69

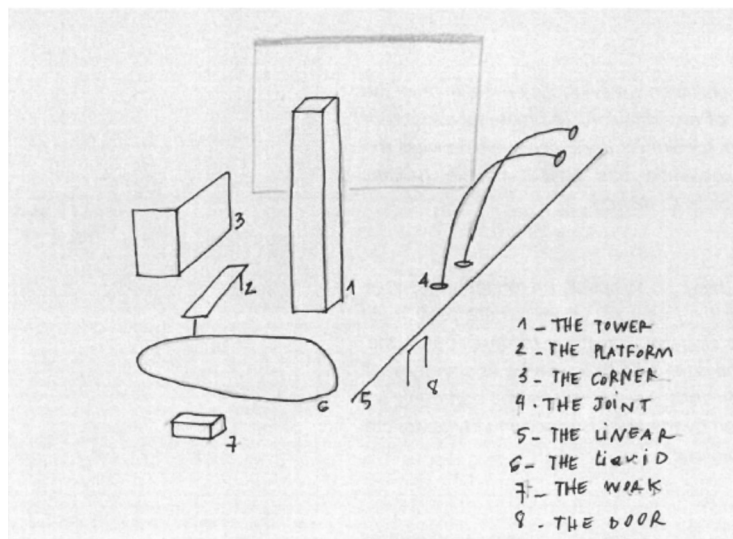
By taking aesthetic responsibility in a very explicit way for the design of the installation space, the artist

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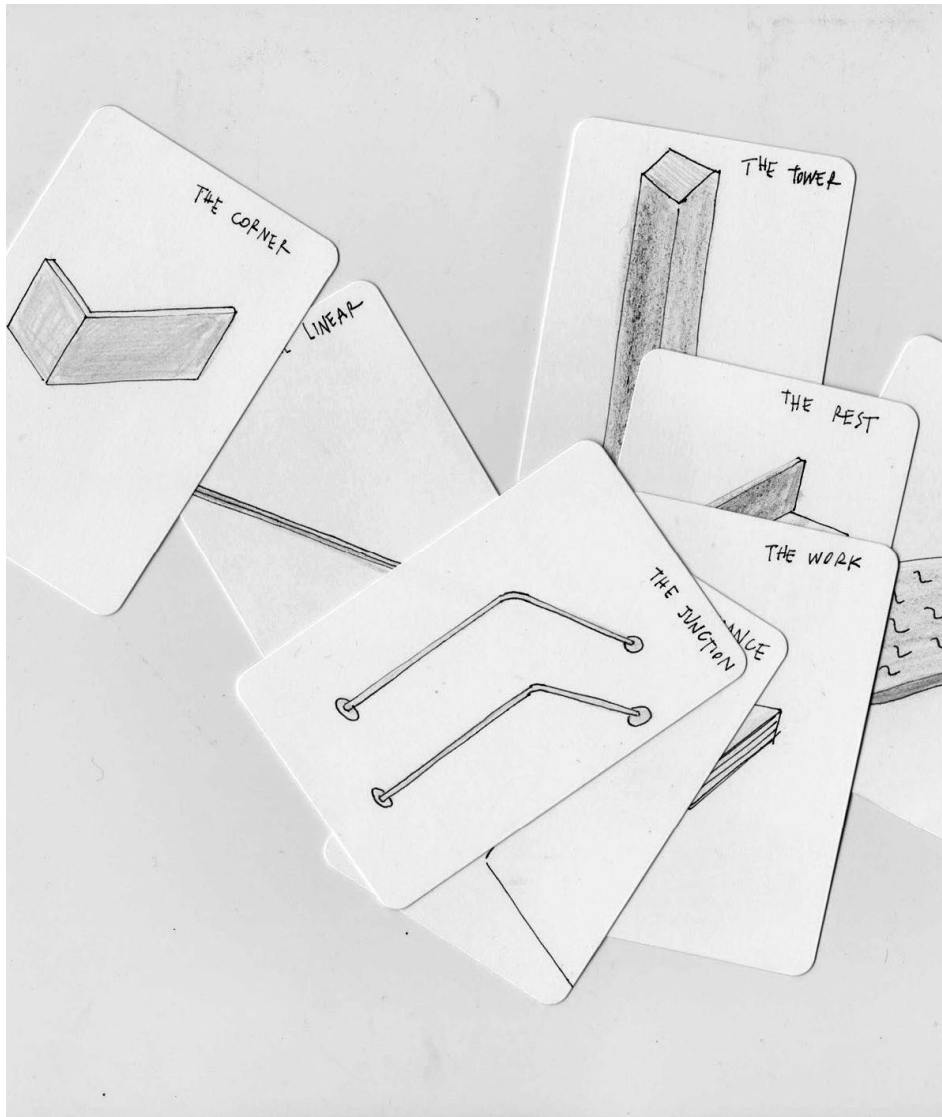
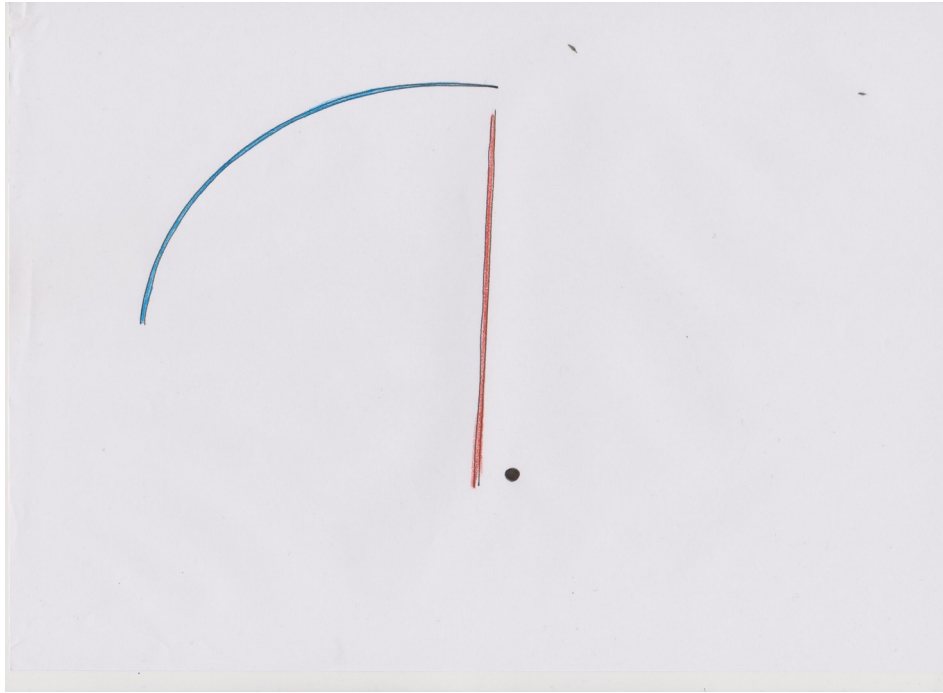
reveals the hidden sovereign dimension of the contemporary democratic order that politics, for the most part tries to conceal.

p.60

The art installation is not site-specific, and it can be installed in any place and for any time.



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Transforming elements. Sketches for an installation.

↑ THE TOWER / UP / ELEVATE

— THE PLATFORM / HORIZONTAL / STAYS

↻ THE CORNER / TURNS / SURPRISE

↗ THE JOINT / UNITES / TOGETHER

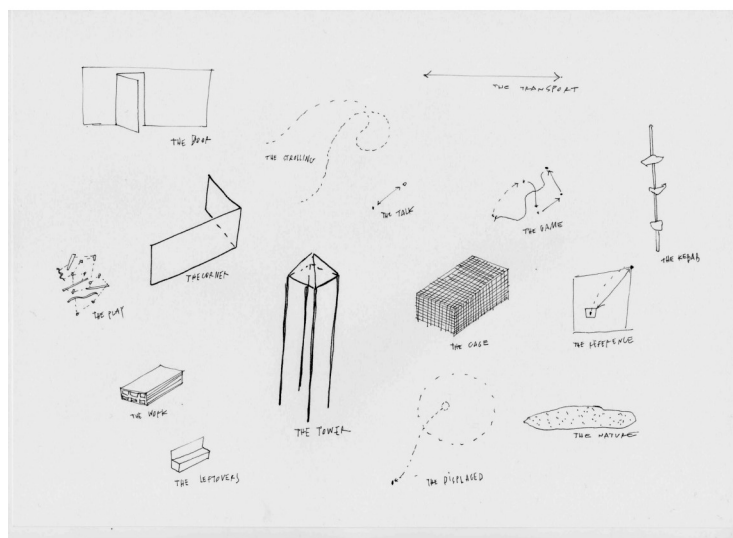
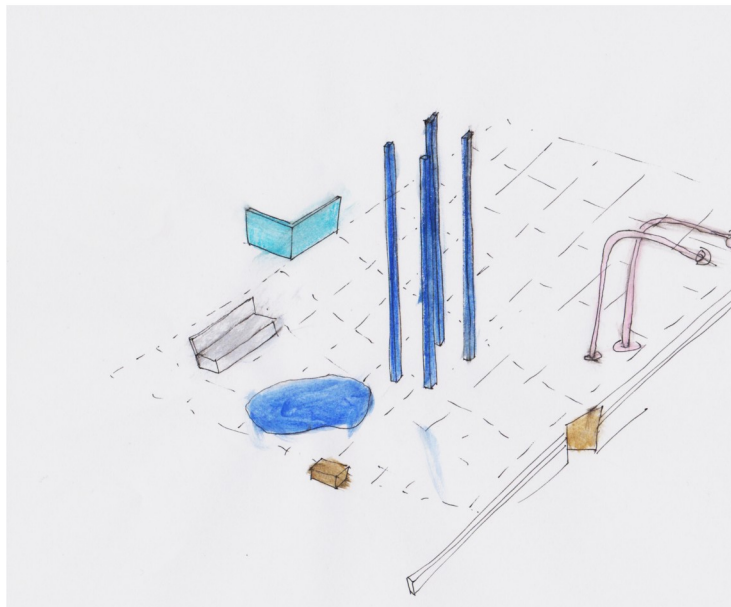
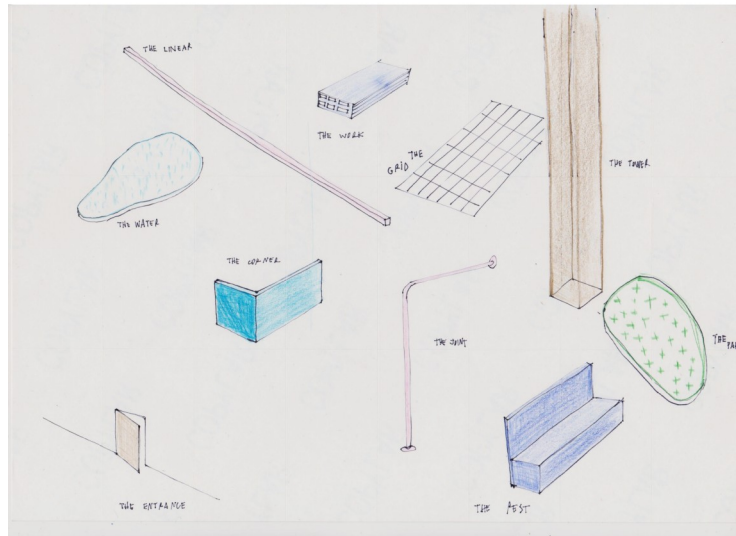
↗ THE LINE / CONNECTS / MOVEMENT

~ THE LIQUID / FLOWS / FREE

↓ THE SOLID / STAYS / WORK

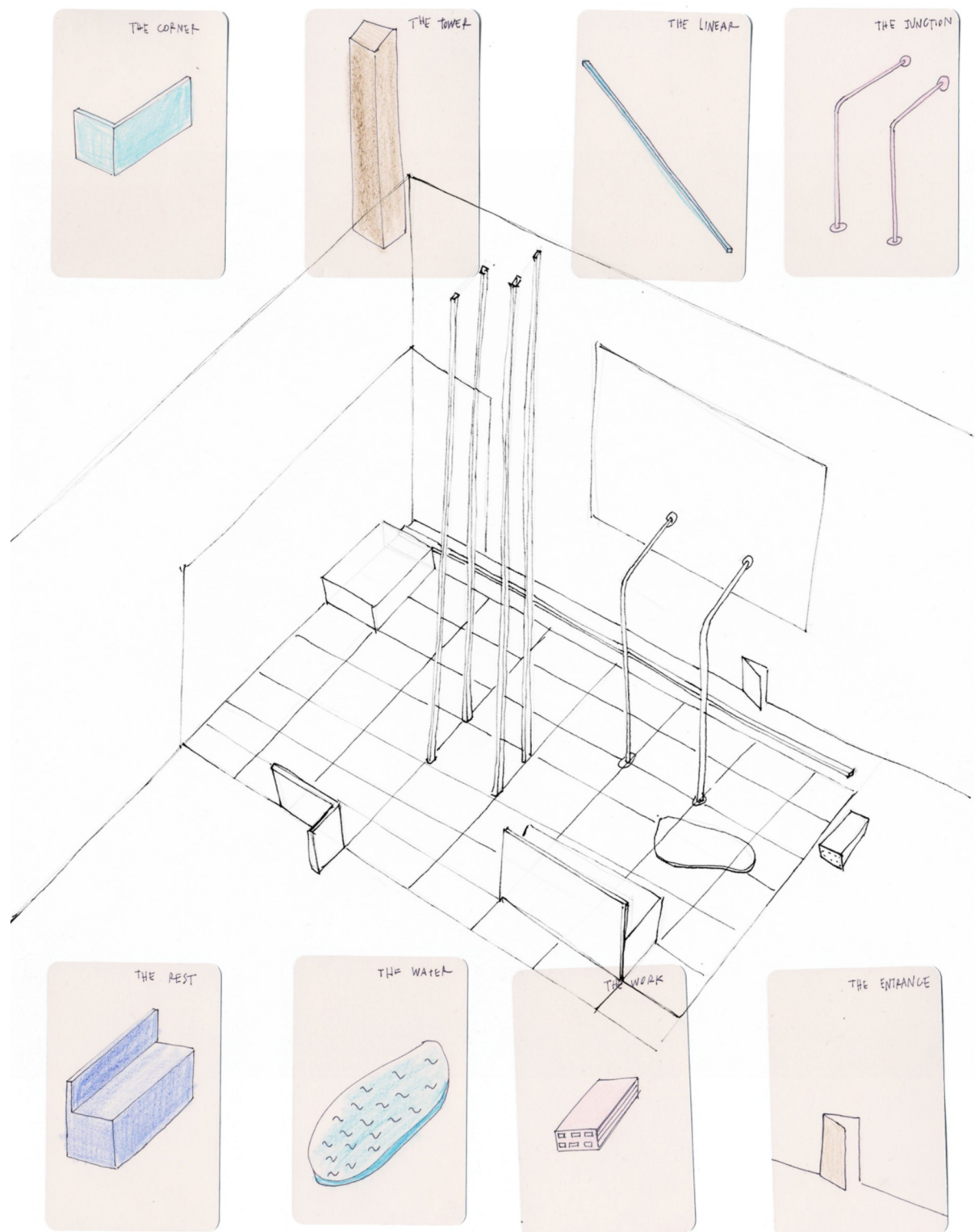
↗ THE DOOR / CROSSES / FICTIONAL

and things happen



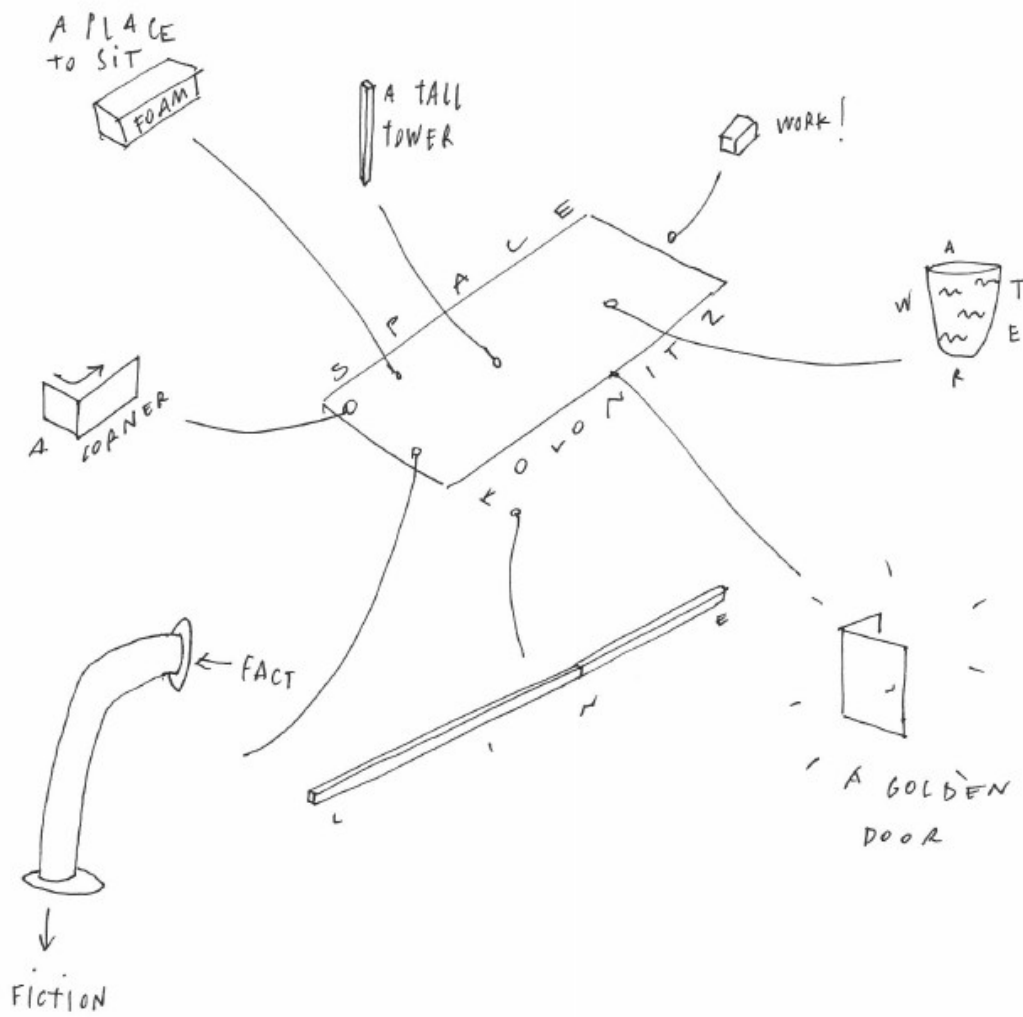
preliminary sketches

and things happen



a study of spatial composition

and things happen



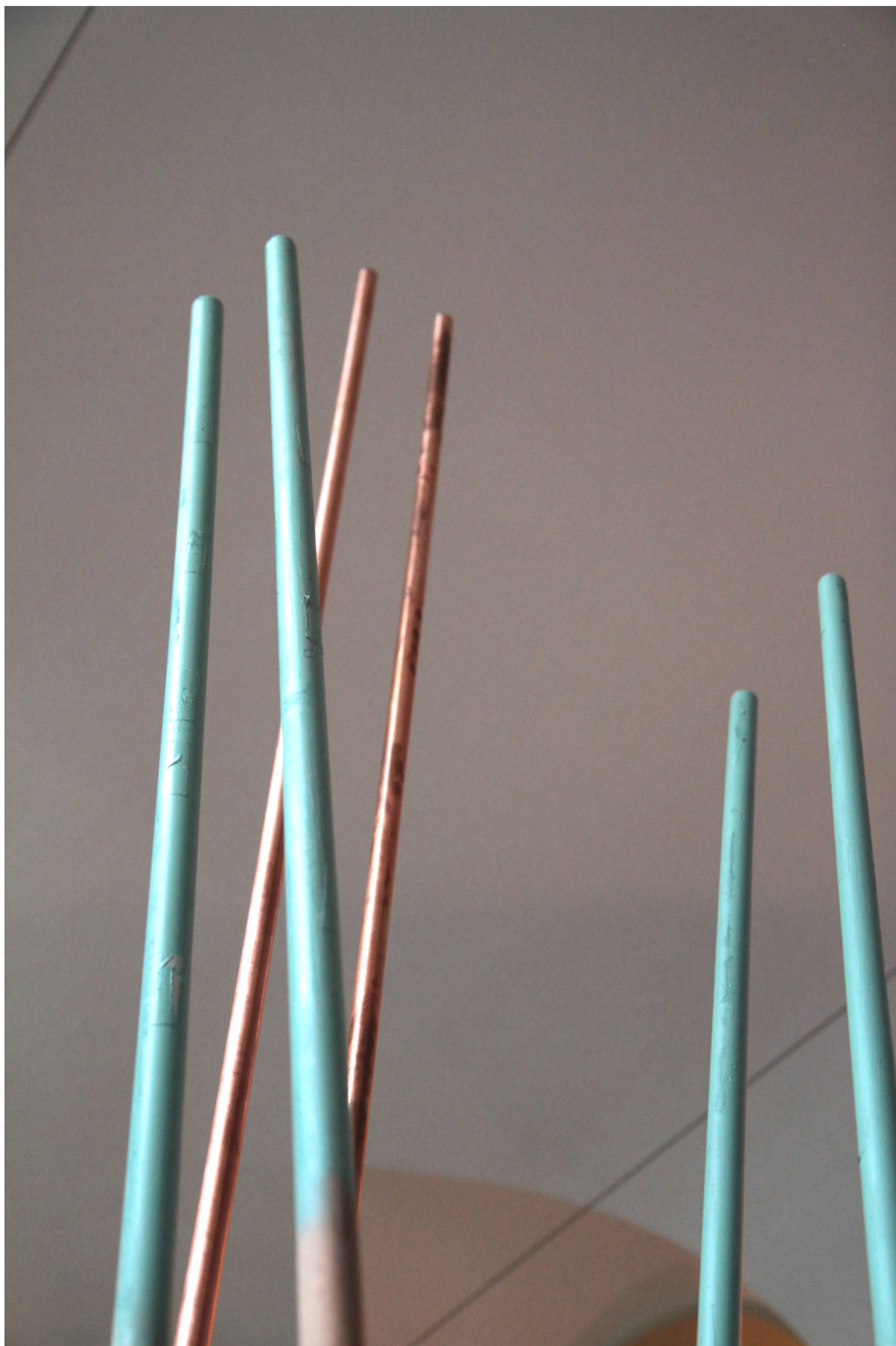
and things happen



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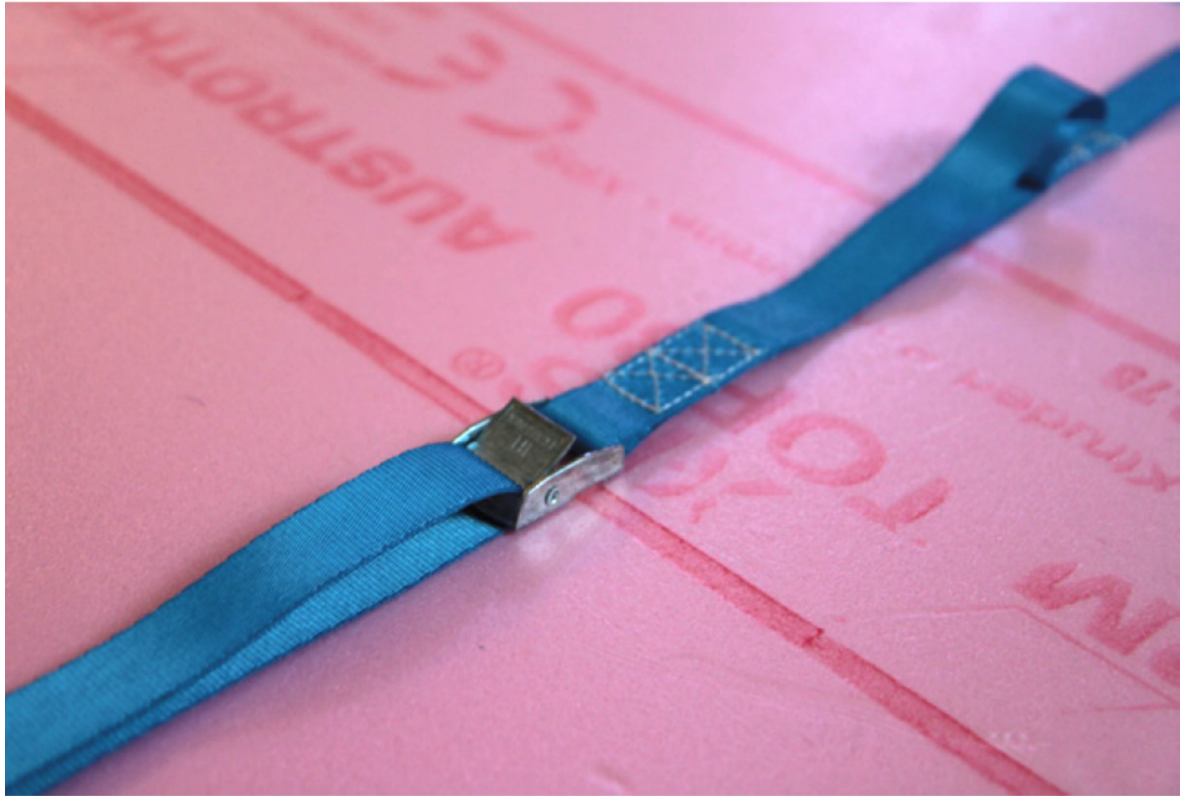
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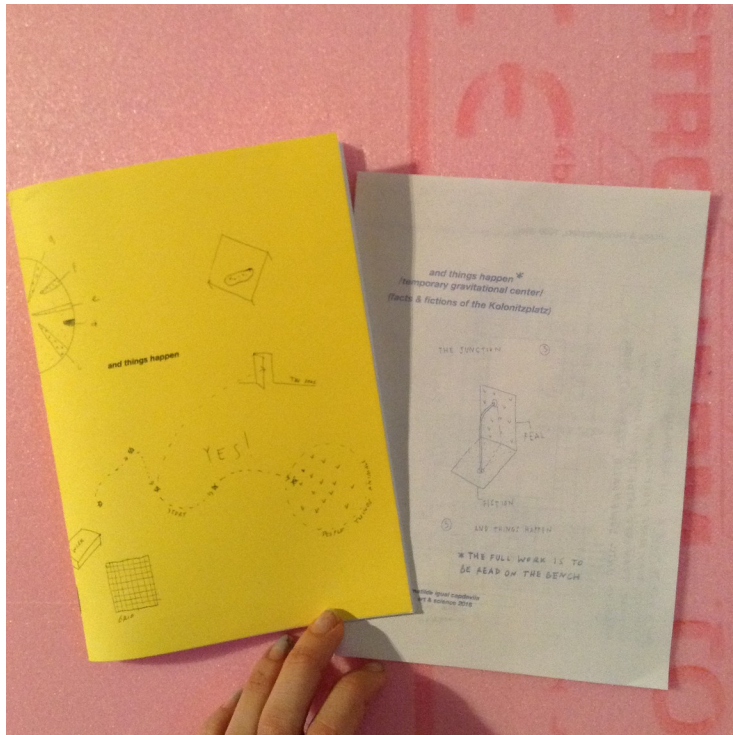
and things happen



and things happen



and things happen



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**References (names as I can remember of
people whose work might have had an
influence on this project)**

Gianni Rodari
David Harvey
Boris Groys
Robert Walser
Italo Calvino
Lina Bo Bardi
Lacaton et Vassal
Nicolas Bourriaud
Ethel Baraona
J. M. G. Le Clézio
Piotr Kropotkin
Marcel Proust
Catherine Clément
Rob Shields
Guy Debord
Franco Battiato
Georges Pérec
Rem Koolhaas
Michel De Certeau
Denise Scott Brown
Christian Boltanski
Sophie Calle
Paul Auster
Edwin Gardner
Walter Benjamin
Saskia Sassen
Mirko Tobias Schäfer
Javier Marías
Marc Augé
Emmanuel Carrère
Jane Jacobs
Claudio Magris
Ross Wolfe
Susan Sontag
Roberto Bolaño
Pieter Brueghel
and many others.

OTHER INFLUENCES :

MY FRIENDS, MANY TEACHERS,
PARENTS, SOME ACQUAINTANCES,
THE WHOLE INTERNET, SOME OTHER
PEOPLE, CARTOONISTS, THE WOMEN
WHO EAT & DRINK AT THE SQUARE
EVERY AFTERNOON.

AND THANKS TO ALL THE ONES WHO
HELPED ME :)

and things happen

Classes attended while in Vienna (most relevant to the work)

Art and Science (University for Applied Arts, Vienna).
Bernd Kräftner, Virgil Widrich.

*Urban Culture and Public Space - an introduction to
urban studies* (TU Wien). Elke Krasny, Rob Shields,
Sabine Knierbein, Jeff Hou, Tihomir Viderman.
New spaces of public concern.
Concepts and critique of the Production of Space.
Strategies and intervention of the production of space.
Public Life - towards a politics of care. Bodies. Place.
Matter.

*Tell Me About Vienna: Histories, Politics,
Cultures*(University for Applied Arts, Vienna). Mica Nava.

Fertigungstechniken für Installationen (University for
Applied Arts, Vienna). Hermanus De Jongh.

Gesamtkunstwerk: von Wagner zum Internet (University
for Applied Arts, Vienna). Boris Groys.

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thanks for reading

and a last quote.

Approaches to what? by Georges Pérec (first published in french in *Cause Commune*, n°5, february 1973).
Scans from *The Everyday Life Reader* by Ben Highmore (2001. Routledge, New York). Translated by John Sturrock.

instance writing a novel without the letter 'e' in it), much of Oulipo work has an evident everyday quality about it. Certainly Perec's most famous novel *Life: A User's Manual* (1978) can be seen as a novelistic version of the 'infra-ordinary' as it weaves together the everyday minutiae of a host of lives that are never reducible to such a vacuous epithet as 'ordinary'.

Further reading: Adair 1993; Bellos 1999; Highmore 2000b; Mathews and Brochie 1998; Perec 1987.

WHAT SPEAKS TO US, seemingly, is always the big event, the untoward, the extra-ordinary: the front-page splash, the banner headlines. Railway trains only begin to exist when they are derailed, and the more passengers that are killed, the more the trains exist. Aeroplanes achieve existence only when they are hijacked. The one and only destiny of motor-cars is to drive into plane trees. Fifty-two weekends a year, fifty-two casualty lists: so many dead and all the better for the news media if the figures keep on going up! Behind the event there has to be a scandal, a fissure, a danger, as if life reveals itself only by way of the spectacular, as if what speaks, what is significant, is always abnormal: natural cataclysms or historical upheavals, social unrest, political scandals.

In our haste to measure the historic, significant and revelatory, let's not leave aside the essential: the truly intolerable, the truly inadmissible. What is scandalous isn't the pit explosion, it's working in coalmines. 'Social problems' aren't 'a matter of concern' when there's a strike, they are intolerable twenty-four hours out of twenty-four, three hundred and sixty-five days a year.

Tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, tower-blocks that collapse, forest fires, tunnels that cave in, the Drugstore des Champs-Élysées burns down. Awful! Terrible! Monstrous! Scandalous! But where's the scandal? The true scandal? Has the newspaper told us anything except: not to worry, as you can see life exists, with its ups and its downs, things happen, as you can see.

The daily papers talk of everything except the daily. The papers annoy me, they teach me nothing. What they recount doesn't concern me, doesn't ask me questions and doesn't answer the questions I ask or would like to ask.

What's really going on, what we're experiencing, the rest, all the rest, where is it? How should we take account of, question, describe what happens every day and recurs every day: the banal, the quotidian, the obvious, the common, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, the background noise, the habitual?

To question the habitual. But that's just it, we're habituated to it. We don't question it, it doesn't question us, it doesn't seem to pose a problem, we live it without thinking, as if it carried within it neither questions nor answers, as if it weren't the bearer of any information. This is no longer even conditioning, it's anaesthesia. We sleep through our lives in a dreamless sleep. But where is our life? Where is our body? Where is our space?

How are we to speak of these 'common things', how to track them down rather, flush them out, wrest them from the dross in which they remain mired, how to give them a meaning, a tongue, to let them, finally, speak of what is, of what we are.

What's needed perhaps is finally to found our own anthropology, one that will

speaking about us, will look in ourselves for what for so long we've been pillaging from others. Not the exotic any more, but the endotic.

To question what seems so much a matter of course that we've forgotten its origins. To rediscover something of the astonishment that Jules Verne or his readers may have felt faced with an apparatus capable of reproducing and transporting sounds. For that astonishment existed, along with thousands of others, and it's they which have moulded us.

What we need to question is bricks, concrete, glass, our table manners, our utensils, our tools, the way we spend our time, our rhythms. To question that which seems to have ceased forever to astonish us. We live, true, we breathe, true; we walk, we open doors, we go down staircases, we sit at a table in order to eat, we lie down on a bed in order to sleep. How? Where? When? Why?

Describe your street. Describe another street. Compare.

Make an inventory of your pockets, of your bag. Ask yourself about the provenance, the use, what will become of each of the objects you take out.

Question your tea spoons.

What is there under your wallpaper?

How many movements does it take to dial a phone number? Why?

Why don't you find cigarettes in grocery stores? Why not?

It matters little to me that these questions should be fragmentary, barely indicative of a method, at most of a project. It matters a lot to me that they should seem trivial and futile: that's exactly what makes them just as essential, if not more so, as all the other questions by which we've tried in vain to lay hold on our truth.

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(all quotes have been self-translated, except when
stated otherwise)