

FOCUS
MEETINGS OF
THE NETWORK

THE ROLE OF THE ARTS AND CULTURE IN URBAN PROCESSES



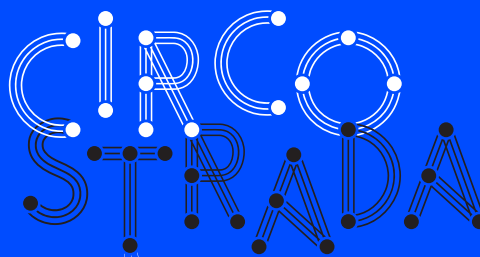
The second Open Nordic gathering of urbanists and city planners, artists, researchers and academics, students, community organizers, politicians and activists, discussed alternative urban strategies and practice. The three-day Lab took place between April 6-9, 2016 and it gave an overview of both current European and Nordic trends and experience.

ARTCENA

Coordinator of the network, ARTCENA is the new French National Center for Circus Arts, Street Arts and Theater, born from the alliance between HorsLesMurs and Centre national du Théâtre. Founded in 2016 by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, it works towards the development of these fields through activities of documentation, resource, and counseling for both professionals and the general public.



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European Network
Circus and Street ArtS

This report was
written by **Kathrine Winkelhorn**
and edited by
Circostrada.

Since 2003, Circostrada Network works to develop and structure the fields of circus and street arts in Europe and beyond. With more than 80 members, it contributes to build a sustainable future for the sector by empowering cultural players through actions of observation and research, professional exchanges, advocacy, capacity-building and information.

FOREWORD



The second Open Nordic gathering of urbanists and city planners, artists, researchers and academics, students, community organizers, politicians and activists, discussed alternative urban strategies and practice. The three-day Lab took place between April 6-9, 2016 and it gave an overview of both current European and Nordic trends and experience.

One of the overall aims of the Nordic Urban Lab (organized in the frame of Copenhagen Metropolis Lab 2014 and Gothenburg 2016) is to drive forward new methods of planning with culture.

Focus Meetings are a new format introduced by Circostrada aiming to examine crosscutting and interdisciplinary themes in partnership with members of the network. Following each Focus Meeting, Circostrada publishes an online critical report both in English and in French.



SPEAKERS




- **Trevor Davies**, artistic director of Københavns Internationale Teater in Copenhagen (DK)
 - **Eric Corijn**, cultural philosopher, social scientist, social and cultural geography professor at Vrije Universiteit in Brussels (BE)
 - **Phil Wood**, writer and independent consultant in intercultural governance and public administration (UK)
 - **Franco Bianchini**, professor of cultural policy and planning at University of Hull (UK)
 - **Maud Le Floc'h**, founder of pOlau - pôle des arts urbains (Centre for research and experimentation on arts and urban planning) in Saint-Pierre-des-Corps (FR)
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PARTNERS

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OPENING REMARKS

“How can we maintain a social balance in our cities and what kind of society will we provide for the next generation?”

Conny Brännberg

At a speed never seen before in human history, human beings all over the world are moving into cities. How do cities cope with these challenges and how do we make liveable cities? Not only are we challenged by migration from countryside to city. A series of issues are at stake, which cities need to handle and take care of. How can cities deal with issues such as climate change, terrorism, refugees and inequality? How can cities cohabit with a variety of cultures and thus become truly cosmopolitan? How do we plan to meet and include everybody to make a we out of segregation? These were the main issues being discussed in Gothenburg and Borås and this article is a summary from the Lab with a focus on the keynote speakers.

The regional minister of culture, Mr. Conny Brännberg gave a brief talk about how everyday life has changed from 1880 to nowadays. He mentioned his grandmother who lived in the same house all her life and knew everybody in her village. Nowadays many of us never even talk with our neighbours. *“How can we maintain a social balance in our cities and what kind of society will we provide for the next generation?”* Through this statement Mr. Brännberg encapsulated what the Lab was all about: planning our cities for the next generation.

NORDIC URBAN LABORATORY

Some 160 people were gathered to discuss cultural planning. *“Nordic Urban Laboratory is a loose network and we believe there is a need to collect experience and it’s vital to do this on a Nordic level”* Trevor Davies said. *“Perhaps we need a more precise terminology like collaborative urbanism, activist led urban generation or temporary urbanism as Peter Bishop talked about in Copenhagen 2014”*. No matter what, we need to retune the cities to whatever lies ahead. Davies shed light on an interesting approach. Since 1999 Architect, Jes Vagnby, have had the responsibility to create the architectural framework for the Roskilde Festival¹.

Through involving and enabling people, pecking at their emotions, curiosity and intellect and creating good interfaces in participatory processes, Vagnby has created the architectural framework as a series of collective processes. In this way the framework has become a catalyser for social interaction and invention and the festival so to speak functions as an urban laboratory for some two weeks of the year. Vagnby defines it as *“Democracity”*. We have to start

at the grassroots level and then the political process might begin. If a music festival can do it, a number of cultural organizations might be able to do it as well, Trevor Davies stated.

¹<http://www.roskilde-festival.dk/>

“Nordic Urban Laboratory is a loose network and we believe there is a need to collect experience and it’s vital to do this on a Nordic level.”

Trevor Davies

REFLECTIONS ON AND WAYS TO HANDLE THE GLOCALIZATION PROCESS

One of the key themes during the lab was the notion of globalization, migration and polarization. Can the cities save the world or is the world rather killing the city? The world is profoundly changing with more than 50% of the world's population living in cities. Most cities are coastal and we will have a sea level raise in many cities. In Mumbai 2/3 of the city is built on mangrove. This does put climate changes into perspective. In 2015 there were 545 cities with 1 million citizens and 14 cities with more than 20 million. In 2030 it is estimated that 750 cities will contain more than 1 million people. 150 of these big cities will be located in China. Cities are the centres of activity and innovation. These changes mean new geographies and a need to rescale the world to rework our mental maps. To Eric Corijn, this requires living together on differences and not on commonalities. In Europe that means living on less than 19 % of the territory with 60% of the people.

We still represent nations through flags and we are continuing to reproduce the same kind of white middle class people on TV. What we see is a documentation of the privileged (white) middle class. Other people are almost not visible and are not represented. In most of the European countries we are presently going through an identity crisis, which is expressed through a series of xenophobic parties popping up in Europe trying to reinstall the notion of a national culture. This is a severe issue for our cities that we need to deal with.

Since more people are living in cities, Corijn sees a shift from building countries to building cities. The basis of a common identity is that it can withstand changes over time. It is territorial bounded and it says: within this area we are more or less of the same kind. This is the image being built from the political establishment. In Belgium we have two «national identities», but with cities it's different. In cities one can imagine a common destination and cities does not have strong identities. The city does not have a clear-cut border and it does not stop anywhere. It's a much more subtle way of working and cities are always directed towards an imagined future.

In the metropolitan centres in the space of flows we need to re-think in mental maps. That has to do with our schools, universities etc. The system has to consider the notion of cultural planning and mental mapping. Today other traditions are entering into society. We have to learn to live with the differences and the cultural forms of shared regularity and the same kind of daily practices. Many countries are multicultural and we live with the same normalities; however, we do not meet everybody and what is needed is the following: to make a

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we out of segregation. One of the major challenges is to de-centre the cities and not least the communities from totalities in what Corijn calls the “*glocalisation process*”. We'll have to leave “the image” of the 19th century. We are facing severe issues as climate change, terrorism, refugees and inequality. In our interdependent 21st century world, nation states and international organizations are finding it more difficult to respond to the global challenges facing humanity. At the same time, cities are demonstrating a remarkable capacity to govern themselves democratically and efficiently, both locally and, in networks, globally. The first global summit is taken place in The Hague in 10-12 September 2016. The concept for a Global Parliament of Mayors is the work of the internationally acclaimed political theorist and author, Benjamin Barber and is the result of many years' research, distilled in his most recent book: *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities*.

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Eric Corijn

THE COSMOPOLITAN CITIES

Does cultural planning still have the right answers? Is it even asking the right questions? We are experiencing massive changes very fast and nothing is being understood. Everything is mobile and nothing seems to be reliable. People are looking for security. Phil Wood sees a revolution in identity with many people having multiple of identities and the hybridization of identities is perhaps a possibility.

Culture is not simply a large and important sector of the economy. It's the «social software» that is badly needed to manage the complexity of contemporary societies and economies in all of its manifold implications. As such culture becomes increasingly a precondition of all kinds of economic value generating processes. With reference to Prof. of Cultural Economics, Pier Luigi Sacco, culture is no longer an aspect of free time use, but is entrenched in the fabric of daily life. We need a conceptual scheme that allows us to understand and capitalize the socio-economic effects of cultural participation. The new paradigms of cultural production do not necessarily use the market as the value-generating platform. *"I am not talking about a change journey, it does not work like that. Life is much more circular, it's systemic and we have to be prepared for unintended consequences.*

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Phil Wood

That's how life is"
Phil Wood says.

This is cultural planning and it's important what kind of word we use. One of the most used words is *problem*. Seeing some groups of people as pro-

blems put us into a different position. If you want to find problems you can see them all over. What we focus on becomes a reality and problems shape solutions. Planning for culture or planning with culture, or place making with culture. It's still not cultural planning. Investors have hijacked the notion of the creative city, where cool people are doing cool things. Planning

with a cultural sensibility is about real issues, real people this is what we need to. How can poor people be included, and what can poor people

teach us, so we genuinely try to mix with people who do not read spreadsheets and bullets point? Wood is referring to Prof. Leonie Sandercock, a leading urban planner. She talks about the spirit of place and about people bringing spirit to a place. This is something intangible and this point towards re-inventing a more poetic and spiritual language. The question is how can we re-enchanted disenchant places and how we can discover new phenomenon about the city? We want the playful city and we need spaces in our life with mystery, not control. The Nordic countries are going through a crisis of identity. How to perceive these cultural issues as something fruitful? We are seeing the death of the Rational City and its replacement by the Cosmopolitan City - the city of difference. If we are to achieve togetherness in difference the urban planners must respond.

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NEW APPROACHES TO CULTURAL PLANNING

Franco Bianchini discusses the notion of cultural planning: Why are 'cultural planning' and 'creative city' ideas no more mainstream in Europe? One of the answers is de-politisation. More often humanities are seen as troublemakers by populist parties, which have difficulties considering democracy and cultural values. A number of arguments coexist and this makes it difficult politically to navigate. There are four lessons that we can learn from the history of Creative Cities: local autonomy, state and private support for cultural activities, artisan spirit and risk taking, and intercultural fusions.

With a decline in risk taking and cuts in budgets the situation is different. *The Creative Town Initiative*, by Phil Wood, examined how people think, plan and act creatively in the city. It explored how cities could be made more liveable and vital by harnessing peoples imagination and talent. It sought to open up a "bank" of possibilities, from which, innovations would emerge. A key question is why this bottom-up initiative did not work and became institutionalized? Richard Florida's well-known book, *The Rise of The Creative Class*¹, switched the agenda and he developed a top-down for the elite rather than for everybody. That is a narrowing of the notion of creativity. The cultural industries became the creative industries on job creation, whereas the original notion was to give a voice to people who were marginalized in order to develop some network to politically change the politics of a place. Bianchini lists up some progressive responses to the crisis with mapping working as counterpoint to the populist: 1) entrepreneurial opportunities & desires, not just needs, 2) obstacles & constraints, not just opportunities, 3) gatekeepers, gateways, networks & collaborations, 4) local talent & creative & innovative milieu, 5) different moral, aesthetic, philosophical, organizational and policy concepts and styles, 6) making innovative links between different types of cultural resources and activities (e.g. the arts and sport).

Festivals do try to bring people with different backgrounds together to create a discursive approach where some kind of civic engagement can take place. As Phil Wood was emphasising, a more diverse mediascape is needed to ensure there is a self-representation for the underprivileged.

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Franco Bianchini

¹ Richard Florida : *The Rise of The Creative Class*, 2003

INCLUDING ART IN CULTURAL PLANNING

How art can regenerate and inspire urban development. Art invents concepts and detect signs of the time and put the finger where it hurts.

Maud Le Floc'h

With art and creation *pOla* uses cultural planning as their point of departure in working in the interstice with artists and planners and thus support the municipalities. *pOla* creates various tools, does research, makes residencies with the objective of creating conditions for cooperation between the art world and the sphere of urban policies. As such *pOla* is a research platform for urbanism from key artistic inputs and geo-artistic.

The fundamental question Maud Le Floc'h raises is how art can regenerate and inspire urban development. Art can open mindscape and dreamscape, art invents concepts and detect signs of the time, Le Floc'h says and put the finger where it hurts. Those capacities are smart for the city in any aspects.

Artists work as cross fertilizer between art and urbanism to strengthen culture as a territorial media and Le Floc'h argues that this is a new tool for territory transformation. In France, culture is included in a number of spheres they have a much more systematic approach within the cultural sector than in most European countries. *pOla* has developed a guide¹ that is already available online on their website.

¹<http://arteplan.org>

LESSONS LEARNED AND HOW TO GO AHEAD?

Dealing with the number of dilemmas that our cities are facing, there is a variety of conditions which must be addressed: it's a matter of how media is dealing with the other - the non-white privileged middle class to make other people represented on TV etc. It's a matter of how urban planners constructively understand to include artists in participatory processes and it's about how to address these issues politically. From *The Creative Town Initiative*, by Phil Wood, we do have some dense knowledge or know-how of creating more liveable and vital cities through using people's imagination. But it's also about how cultural planning, collaborative urbanism or activist led urban generation can be considered feasible and be included as part of a curriculum in universities.

RECOMMEND RESEARCH AND READING FROM THE SPEAKERS

- Cities on the Edge' project, Liverpool European Capital of Culture, 2008
- Projects on the Third Reich legacy, Linz European Capital of Culture, 2009
- Dr. Benjamin: If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities, 2013, Yale University Press
- Justin Beaumont & Christopher Baker, Postsecular Cities: Space, Theory & Practice, 2011, University of Manchester.
- Robert Hewison: The Rise and Fall of Creative Britain, 2014
- Graham Leicester: Transformative Innovation: A guide to Practice and Policy, 2016
- Noel Castree & Paul A. Chatterton: The point is to change it: Geographies of Hope and survival in an Age of crisis, 2010, Wiley Blackwell
- Edi: Diarmuid Costello & Jonathan Vickery, Art, Berg, 2007
- Robert D. Putnam: Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community, 2001
- Jerimy Rifkin: The Zero Marginal Cost Society: The Internet of Things, the Collaborative Commons, and the Eclipse of Capitalism, 2014, Palgrave Macmillian
- Leonie Sandercock: Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities, 1997
- Phil Wood & Charles Landry: The Intercultural City, Planning for Diversity Advantage, 2008, Earthscan
- Phil Wood & Clavin Taylor: Big Ideas for a Small Town: The Huddersfield Creative Town Initiative, Sage Journal, Nov 2004 Vol. 19 nr 4
- <http://cultureactioneurope.org/>
- <http://imagedeville.org/nos-projets/?event=0>
- <http://polau.org/ressources/plan-guide-arts-et-amenagement-des-territoires>

Cover

Gotheburg Bathing
Culture in Frihamnen
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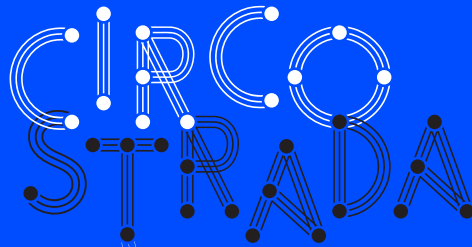
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