

The Neighbourhoods University – Programme, Action and Form as reciprocally dynamic process of an educational urban 1:1 Model.

Christopher Dell, Bernd Kniess*, Tabea Michaelis and Ben Pohl

Faculty of Urban Design at HafenCity University Hamburg. * Project contact



Fig. 1. The experimental building site of the UdN “Hotel?”

With the above title we propose a lecture performance with four intermingling and related subsets. The performance will be structured as a randonnée in a series of takes.

SUBSET#1: Bernd Kniess

Build it! Run it! Give it away!

The “Neighbourhoods University” (UdN) and its “Hotel?” as a method.

Over a period of five years the “Neighbourhoods University” (UdN) is taking an exploratory approach to develop and test contemporary forms of education at the intersection between culture, knowledge and urban development (Fig.2). Launched in the Hamburg district of Wilhelmsburg in 2008 as an experimental set up by the Urban Design faculty of HafenCity University Hamburg in cooperation with the IBA Hamburg, the project puts questions around the fields of education, urban research and design into an iterative practice. A disused building has been brought to life again using a

low budget, 1:1 scale on the basis of its programmatic usage and relation to the neighbourhood. This allowed examination of the process of transformation in terms of the existing architectural, social, cultural and economic fabric of the European city.

The final phase of the project merged its academic approaches with that of “hotel operations” (Fig. 1, 3).

The “Hotel?” therefore asks a methodical question and figures as a metaphor for the superimposition of functions, acting as a vehicle to maximize the overlapping hybrid networks of students, scholars, neighbours, local activists, guests and municipal officials to open the UdN as a discursive space for the negotiation of current, site-specific and global issues of urban development and transformation processes.



Fig. 2. Students at work. Building the kitchen-foyer.



Fig. 3. Intercultural Hotel Kitchen

SUBSET#2: Tabea Michaelis

Showtime Wilhelmsburg.

An Artistic Research Approach to the Programmatic Space of Possibilities in Wilhelmsburg

“Spaces for possibilities” arouses varying fantasies and yet retains an abstract quality. It is precisely because the object of my research is an extremely dynamic structure that I believe the appropriate research approach is a situational one. This involves re-combining different theories and analytical methods. Following Bruno Latour and Actor-Network Theory and drawing on Michel Serres and the “Randonnée” approach, I track down spatial work nets and associative sequences. For their evaluation, I immerse myself in the cyclical coding processes of Strauss/Glaser’s Grounded Theory. The “Randonnée” stretches out like an Ariadne’s thread through the different measures, modes and times. It takes the “path of extravagance” (Serres) and improvises. I communicate with human and non-human actors by following the sunflower seed-eating inhabitants or the tattooed cars (Fig. 4) in my research field. The “Randonnée” provides me with a previously undreamt way of reading relational space, one that is poetic and at the same time analytical. It presents every day life as it is experienced through the pictures and symbols which accompany it, the space of the ‘inhabitants’, of the ‘users’... (Lefèbvre) in new dimensions. “L’espace vécu” (ebd.) of the Elbe Island is

conceptualized through various codes, such as “Tarrying - Platforms” (Fig. 5), “Window messages”, “Balcony - use methods”. Randonnez!



Fig. 4. Tattooed Cars



Fig. 5. Showtime Wilhelmsburg

SUBSET#3: Ben Pohl**Working Worlds – Exploring Wilhelmsburg.
A performative videographic approach.**

Some of the most urgent issues of inter- and transdisciplinary attempts are communication, trust, mutual respect and recognition. Hence a common language and shared meanings between the “experts of the everyday” and among the various disciplines, related to urban planning, design and architecture is both demanding and a demand. The talk will focus on experimental performative methods of a radically inverted understanding of participation and its potential to produce shared meanings, trust, respect and a common language of practice in the inter- and transdisciplinary context of the Neighbourhoods University and the UD Master’s Programme. We will rely on the case study of “Working Worlds” (Fig. 6) – a one-week videographic inquiry exploring the worlds of work and labour of Hamburg-Wilhelmsburg – and reflect on our practical experiences in relation to N.K. Denzin’s theoretical thinking around “Performative Ethnography”. The explorations resulted in reflexive expressions and made worlds of work visible and audible to an audience of neighbours, municipal officials and academics alike. The micro-cyclical process also helped our students to develop skills and self-confidence in the field of qualitative research practices, as well as to establish live personal relations, trust and mutual respect within the neighbourhood.



Fig. 6. Working Worlds. The Kismet bakery

SUBSET#4: Christopher Dell**Knowledge forms of Enabling.
Live Diagrammatics and an improvisational perspective**

The project “Neighbourhoods University” (UdN) contains many layers of research. One specific layer is concentrated on the project’s own meta-structure or grammar. How is the project’s relationality structured and what parameter and methods are central to its specific mode of organising? How is it possible to organise knowledge in such a way that it enables the actors to produce knowledge while being engaged “live” in performative processes? Evidently, it has long since become standard repertoire to speak of a ‘logic of space-producing actions’ in the context of knowledge creation and formulation and to consider urban practices and their representations as a means to a conceptual understanding. However, how to describe the specific forms of knowledge production of such practices and their representations still remains a challenge.

Not only does this affect the reading of epistemic structures of space production. Moreover we ask: what definition of action is connected to this diagrammatic reorganisation of knowledge? In this respect the interdisciplinary set-up of the UdN can be read as an exercise to introduce improvisational thought into the analysis of the urban as a performative process (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Wilhelmsburg Orchestra

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Team UdN at HCU-Hamburg: Prof. Bernd Kniess (Programme Director), Dipl.-Ing., M.Arch. Benjamin Becker (Programme Development and Construction Management), Dipl.-Ing., M.Sc. Stefanie Gernert (Project Coordination), M.Sc. Ben Pohl (Research Associate)

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