

## **Politics of Design Workshop**

### **Abstracts**

**Burak Asiliskender, Erciyes University**  
**'Re-creating the self and nation in a factory'**

Industrialization, as an achievement of modernization, re-constructed the identities with reacting on economy, social dynamics and space. In the beginning years of Turkey, industrialization was closely linked the ideology of the authorities that re-constructed the national form and identity under the aim of modernization. It was aimed to renovate whole life styles and stereo types by revolutions. Moreover, Turkish State established industrial sites, as a part of the modernization. They also built residences, cultural spaces and sportive fields with factories, in a 'modern' architectural order and outlook. It could be easily said that transformation process and its approach was leaded, instead of remaining the change on its own. Thus, the identity of space, urban form and social order were modified by the industrial settlements in Anatolian cities, founded under the ideology based on creating transformation and providing the development, with their economic effects, and their very new spatial context. From this point of view, it could be evaluated that industrialization was used for creating transformation with its effects on space and demographic order in a figurative contrast to traditional environments and order.

In a retrospective view, this study was intended to evaluate the contradiction on the transformation process of space and social order, due to the state-based industrialization in Turkey. The policy and ideology that affected the industrialization process in Turkey was criticized, first. International calls of and technical supports were assessed. According to these conceptual outlook, this study was determined a detailed discussion from a case of the Kayseri city, which state-based factories were firstly founded, between 1930 and 1970. Spatial and social transformations were evaluated from the development of the urban form and housing. Social and cultural activates and habits of daily life were also examined to articulate the chance on the identities and the society. In the case, urban development of the Kayseri was observed to identify the transformation. Besides these, the avant-garde forms and spaces of these industrial establishments and their housing settlements are examined. According to this survey, their urban and spatial orders are compared with traditional environment to clarify the effects on space and its construction. Although, their housing forms are not only observed as a spatial or cultural artifact, but their urban pattern characteristics and spatial qualities are also examined. Moreover, cultural and social activities are discussed as well as housing types and their usage, for evaluating the change on identity of the people and their relationships.

According to these, the role of the authority, power, citizenship, multiplicity, breaking the homogeneity, othering and re-production of the identity phenomenon were criticized from laborers and their foreigner positions in the society. Transformation on social order and space were also evaluated.

**Ralf Brand, MARC and Sara Fregonese, Royal Holloway University of London**  
**'Architectures of (de)radicalisation in Beirut'**

Social (de)polarisation is not an a-spatial or a-material phenomenon, however, poor attention has been given in the social sciences to the material context in which socio-political tension "takes place". Although STS is increasingly engaging with the built environment, accounts of how the built environment mediates socio-political tension remain minimal (Fregonese and Brand 2009).

In polarised or polarising cities, sources of political controversy often do not exclusively lie in ‘traditional’ dimensions of political discourse (debate, official statements), but are embedded in mundane domains such as urban space, design and infrastructure. This is particularly true for Beirut. Its urban fabric emerged complexly divided after the civil war (1975-1990). After a decade of ‘Pax Syriana’ and relentless reconstruction, between 2005 and 2008 it re-experienced political shock, stalemate and standoff before stability recently returned. This process had visible reflections in the urban environment, but particular urban environment choices were also made to mend (or at least soothe) societal divisions.

The paper complements traditional conceptions of politics as something pertaining to the realm of discourse and official debate, by accounting for the materialities that constitute polarised and polarising urban societies. In doing so, it engages STS theoretically and methodologically with political controversy in contested cities. Based on fieldwork photographic data and interviews with a number of Beirut’s residents, politicians, built environment professionals, academics, and associations representatives, the paper presents a range of cases where accounting for and negotiating the built environment enters both polarisation dynamics as well as de-escalation attempts by a range of actors.

**Vincent Calay, Université Libre de Bruxelles**

**‘Building vacuum: the political ghosts of car parking in a Belgian municipality’**

This paper is based on an ethnography of a public space master plan project in a Belgian municipality. It focuses on the first part of the project: the study of the removal of a public car park from one of a municipality’s main square. The paper describes how such a removal turns into a political issue following the planner’s engagement in a wide technical study about the building of a new car park. It details how the planner develops his technical hypotheses by knowing both their fictitious nature and their matter-of-fact effect on the municipality’s administration. Such an observation leads to approach the planner’s work as the making of a *paper architecture* that reverses its common definition as an aesthetic gesture. In this situation, paper architecture appears to be a *technical gesture* imagined and achieved to answer the public authorities’ call for expertise. Such a technical gesture is then described as the implementation of the municipality’s civil servants and representatives’ technical expectations based on the right for local citizens to park their cars in their neighbourhood. Therefore, the politics of the planner emerges as his capacity for engaging in a technical course of action by affecting it at different stages in order to make arisen new political issues about designing public space for a plurality of usages. Such a conclusion enables a further discussion about the relevance of those ethnographies to describe the *loci* of the political, especially when such works show its moves from public authorities to experts.

**Jeffrey Chan, University of California-Berkeley**

**‘The politics of improvisation in planning’**

Nothing goes exactly as planned. And when things do not turn out exactly as planned or when it is impossible to plan, planners improvise. Even when such improvisation is perceived to exist, planning theory has yet to outline a relevant concept of improvisation for planning. For this reason, a gap also exists on the politics of improvisation in relation to planning.

This is a gap I hope to bridge in this paper. In this paper, I raise three conjectures for the politics of improvisation in planning, and further, seek to visualize two of these conjectures (a & b) through the case of the Sydney Opera House. These conjectures on the politics of improvisation are namely,

- (a) The emergence of newly empowered and opportunistic stakeholders or agents because of the unanticipated, unforeseeable and sometimes, uncontrollable consequences of improvisation.
- (b) The emergence of new threats and blames following such consequences, which may take the form of a conflict between those whose interest lie in preserving an unworkable plan and those whose interest lie in provisional measures for feasible success.
- (c) The resistance against design as an imposition that neither provides the necessary affordances for its own successful functioning, nor is aligned to the autonomy of the user.

**Nora Colden, Martin Luther University**

**'Unpacking politics in architecture: inscription and de-scription of gender-specific relationships'**

The controversial debate on the role of built environment and its political impact on social realities recently made a comeback to the interdisciplinary field of STS studies. Nevertheless, the nexus between architecture, politics and gender is still widely unexplored here. The techno-feminist approaches of the 1980s which did look into this interrelation characterised architecture as a patriarchal, immanently political «oppressing machine». In contrast to this, I introduce a two-sided view on this reciprocal relation and analyse architecture as a socio-technical ensemble.

In my ethnographic research on an apartment building in Freiburg (Germany) planned by a group of feminist architects, I focussed on their political aim to create gender equality by means of «women-oriented» architecture. I followed two questions: Is architecture (gender-) political? What does «political» mean, if we also take into account transactions between human and non-human actors?

In order to grasp these transactions, my analysis concentrated on four moments based on Actor-network theory and the concept of mutual shaping of technology and gender: the gender-script written by the architects, its translations into architectural forms, the power of the architectural actors, and the de-descriptions of their inscribed instructions by the users.

By introducing an extended and procedural concept of politics and an anti-essentialistic notion of power, I am able to show that architecture doesn't *have* political power. Instead, it might be able to formulate directives and gender-specific role expectations in certain situations. Hence, the «political» is not to be located in architecture, but in networks between heterogeneous actors. Architecture *itself* does not possess the potential to create a society of gender equality.

**Bart de Zwart, Eindhoven University of Technology**

**'Mapping matters: a tentative outline of the politics of regional design'**

Although more than two decades have passed since planning practice in The Netherlands embraced regional design as a germane area of attention to address the complexity of the contemporary urban condition and its planning issues, the actual implementation of supra-local plans has remained persistently problematic. Over time, designers seem to have successfully adapted their approaches to the spatial conditions of the regional scale, but meanwhile this is not always reflected by actualization of their efforts in development projects that are both visionary and feasible. Instead, planning professionals repeatedly encounter difficulties dealing with the numerous claims and powers that are wielded in the regional arena, causing projects to stall and processes to drift.

Rather than treating plans as the negotiated outcome of a deliberative process that is taking place within a confined policy arena, this research conceptualizes design as an intermediate object of negotiation in spatial development. More precisely, it argues that designs constitute a cognitive space that substantiates spatial coproduction, allowing knowledge to be transferred and meaning to be communicated. This function is hypothesized to spring from design's potential to accommodate varying beliefs, claims, and interests, as well as provide motives and incentives for action. Drawing on insights derived from social theory concerning the concept of 'reflexivity' a tentative theoretical framework is developed for evaluating the capacity of designs to mediate the complex multi-actor spatial production processes that take place at the scale of the urban region.

**Steven Dorrestijn, University of Twente**

**'The legacy of utopian design: design to guide and change user behaviour'**

Morality has become progressively delegated to our material environment. To acknowledge that human actions are always "mediated" by technology, would be to find the "missing masses of morality" in our post-modern culture. This claim by Bruno Latour was directed in the first place at sociologists, but deserves the attention of designers as well. It can help to understand how design can guide people's behaviour. In this paper I will try to gain a better understanding of this undertaking of integrating guiding and changing user behaviour in design methodology by sketching the larger historical background.

Using the insight of "technical mediation" I will investigate how three stages which especially stand out for their utopian social motivation: 1) Arts and Crafts with Willam Morris, 2) Modernism (International Style) with Le Corbusier, 3) *Gute Form* with the related social design theory of Gert Selle. Post-modern design has largely abandoned such a social program striving for utopia.

In utopian design the predominant "figure of technical mediation" frames the totality of technology as a "precondition for the good life". Around the second world war, the evaluation of technology changed from utopian to dystopian. In the absence of utopian social program for design the social impact of technology is often neglected. A moderate social program could focus not on revolution but on improving everyday use of products. To avoid the utopian programs and dystopian fears, it is however necessary to employ and further develop small scale figures of technical mediation like the "script" of Latour, or the recently proposed terminology of the "nudge" by Thaler and Sunstein.

**Ignacio Farías, Social Science Research Center Berlin**

**'The politicization of architectural practice: governmental and public entanglements'**

This article addresses the relationship between architecture and politics as an event. Instead of subsuming one to the other by focusing either on architectural translations of politics or on the inherent (cosmo/sub)politics of architectural design, politicization refers here to possible empirical entanglements of architecture and politics, two distinct types of sociomaterial processes. In order to follow and describe such politicization events, it seems necessary to expand the common focus on buildings as things towards commissions as *agencements*. On that basis, four politicization events occurring in the daily practices of one Chilean architecture office are described in some detail. The findings allow identifying at least two distinct modes of politicization, which involve governmental and public entanglements of architectural practice. Governmental entanglements, mostly deriving from public commissions, produce new exteriorities of the state, within which agency capacities to design territories and populations are negotiated and eventually distributed. Public

entanglements, stemming often from self-commissions, revolve and crystallize around new common goods, which are circulated in a public sphere to mobilize the state, private investors and citizens. The article concludes with a brief discussion on the architecturalization of such politicization events.

**Uriel Fogué, Agency of Architecture and Fernando D. Rubio, Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change, Open University and Sociology Department, NYU**  
**‘General Vara del Rey Square: An experimental design for the construction of cosmopolitical neighborhoods’**

This paper presents a case study: an architectural design—a public space—, as an experimental device for building cosmopolitical neighbourhoods. The square, which will be built in the centre of Madrid, is designed to act as an interface to connect spatially and temporally distant agents (e.g. solar radiation, present and future human citizens, energy, rain water, garbage, capital) through a series of visualisation devices (that will make these agents co-present in the space of the square) and participatory and performative devices (that will enable these different agents to mutually influence one another). The case of General Vara del Rey Square (elii architects) will enable us to explore how architectural devices may be seen as forms of material politics that define and enact the clauses of a novel cosmopolitical contract. The square will also provide an empirical example of how design can be rendered accountable to different sorts of citizens (humans and non humans). Finally, the square will provide a model to evaluate the impact of the integration of technology in the public life of contemporary cities.

**Ulrik Jørgensen, Danish Technical University**  
**‘Healing architecture and design – the politics of new design visions and programs’**

This paper will present the challenges and experiences from Danish hospital planning that in recent years has been emphasising healing architecture as the guiding vision. This has lead to claims of installing new design approaches for the planning, construction and maintenance of new hospitals and has in radical ways changed the discourse on how hospitals are expected to function in the controversial relationship between cure and care. The visions related to healing architecture as design programs have been grounded in the evidence based medicine research but transformed and into the context of design, adding new elements to the architectural rhetoric and reasoning as well as bringing new elements in to the architectural planning and design processes.

The paper builds on detailed studies of the translation of the evidence based research traditions into the design discourse and into new approaches to bringing in views and articulated needs from often less heard actors in the hospital environment like patients and ground staff, who may have been objects in workspace design and logistics but often marginalised concerning the subtle impact of the hospital design on the healing process e.g. related to role of the patients identity, feelings, immune systems and engagement in active responses. The other source of the paper are studies of hospital planning and design in architectural firms and among hospital planners focusing on design practices and the translations of demands and visions into specific constructions and designs.

The program of healing architecture is on core and important example of a change in the politics of design and architecture bringing users and new visions into the design processes. This leads inevitably to controversies and conflicts within the design process between well established and often taken for granted assumptions and practices and the demand for new

ways of understanding space, situations, human interaction and the scripts and affordances inscribed in the objects of architectural design.

**Tahl Kaminer, Delft School of Design**

**‘Architectural efficacy: learning from radical sociology’**

In late 1960s, shortly before architecture turned to the populism of the postmodernist style, a last and urgent effort was made to outline a revolutionary architecture which could claim political agency. The effort gained particular prominence in France, in which architecture was caught up in the radical ferment and events of the period. Driven by young architects and students, the work produced by this loose movement typically interwove technological utopianism with radical sociology. The paper will outline two propositions outlined at the time, one from ‘inside’ architecture, the other from ‘outside’, following their search for architectural efficacy in the social and political realms. In the process, it will explain why the discovery of radical architectural agency by these propositions led to an impasse rather than an empowerment of the designer, encouraging the abandonment of this trajectory by later architects.

**Denisa Kera, National University of Singapore**

**‘Cosmopolitical “Kibbutzes”: from early visions of Academy of Games and Pleasures to present day Hackerspaces, DIYbio Labs and Citizen Science Incubators’**

Novel forms of community organised and financed science and technology labs revive the original idea on science, technology and public interactions envisioned by G. W. Leibniz in his famous “Odd Thought Concerning a New Sort of Exhibition (or rather, an Academy of Sciences ; September, 1675)”. In this original vision of the academy of sciences Leibniz ceases to discuss the advancement of sciences and technology in terms of metaphysical and philosophical issues of truth, limits of human mind or the nature of reality but defines science and technology by their ability to generate new ecologies of interest and influence, new institutions, networks and relations between different actors. Science, technology, business, art, entertainment, tourism are all part of an effort to raise human curiosity and wonder and transform the society. Leibniz's prophetic vision of cosmopolitics modelled after his ontology of monads and interactions between different scales is a reality today in the case of hybrid organizations such as Ars Electronica in Linz, ZKM in Karlsruhe, FACT in Liverpool, Laboral in Gijón, numerous small centers around the world and alternative incubators (Hackerspace, The HUB) that connect art, design, technology and sciences in often playful and unexpected ways. The various functions these spaces have, from the more obvious like popularization and presentation to the more professional like investment in innovation and more creative and experimental, turn cosmopolitics into practice and connect politics with design. These DIY and alternative places perform, foster and accelerate the ability of science and technology to serve different purposes and connect various actors in new networks and ecologies. The very democratic form of these institutions that support bottom-up and citizen science projects defines them as true cosmopolitical laboratories and defines cosmopolitics not only as experiments with novel networks between actors but more importantly between various scales. The main issue of cosmopolitics for this reason is not a problem of the subject-object, animate-inanimate relations but issues of interaction between scales, relation between parts and newly defined wholes.

**Florian Kossak and Tatjana Schneider, University of Sheffield**  
**‘Spatial agency and the politics of locality’**

We propose a paper that is developed as a multi-faceted dialogue that alternates between theoretical (and ideological) discourses and a deliberation on specific but exemplary locale and historic moments in which the politics of design and the design of politics converge momentarily.

Specifically, this paper will draw on the notion of spatial agency and will refer to moments in the Glasgow Rent Strikes from 1915 and the Berlin Squatting Movement in 1981. By focusing on the more volatile aspects of buildings: the processes of their occupation, their temporality and their relations to and with society, this paper will investigate the sites and conditions that both created and shaped these instants of political action. In each case the paper will trace the consequences as well as implications of these moments on personal as well as policy level, on local as well as (trans)national level.

Along the lines of Donna Haraway we will be arguing for politics of location, positioning and situating, where, as she writes ‘partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims

**Adrian Mackenzie, Lancaster University**  
**‘Design in synthetic biology’**

Significant transformations in biological technique and biological work are taking place in the name of design. The paper analyses the movement of design processes into biology by examining how software, diagrams and forms of collaboration are intersecting in the production of biological constructs such as metabolic pathways, minimal genomes and biological standard parts. In characterising the design processes taking shape in synthetic biology, it develops the concepts of ‘meta-technique’ and ‘meta-material.’ The notion of design as a meta-technique shows how synthetic biology assembles techniques and renders them available via practices of collaboration and standardisation. The notion of meta-material suggests ways of thinking about the dynamism of living things infused by models, constructs and layered work-processes. The practical re-deployment of biological techniques we see in the design software, the development of increasingly extensive and interlinked biological constructs assembled by design, and the shifting enrolments of biological work associated with design as a workflow alter what counts as biological work and what counts as biological substance. The increasing salience of biological design has significant implications for the politics of biotechnology and biomedicine more generally.

**Alvise Mattozzi, Iuav University of Venice**  
**‘Semiotics and design’s roles in a non-modern constitution: the case of the Italian smart meter’**

Within Actor-Network Theory, semiotics has been used in order to account for artefacts and their articulations. In particular, Bruno Latour has widely used semiotics as a methodology to describe networks and mediations.

Description is still an issue when facing cosmopolitics. Through the case of the Italian smart meter, which shell has been designed by renowned designer Michele De Lucchi, I will try to illustrate which role can have semiotics, considered as a descriptive methodology, within a non-modern Constitution in relation to design

The semiotic analysis of the meter, and especially of its *script*, elicits that it neglects consumption and takes into account only commercial relations. Thus it plays a specific but

not so visible political role within the recently liberalized Italian energy market and ignores the environmental issues related to CO2 production.

Through this example will emerge that within a non-modern Constitution (Latour 1999), semiotics, which results complementary to design, takes part to “the power to take into account”, since it outlines descriptive categories which can be used to describe new members and new articulations of the collective, and takes part to “the power to put in order”, since through its descriptive categories it is possible to compare members and articulations.

**A.M. (Hanneke) Miedema, Wageningen University**

**‘Opening up engineering design to the politics of sustainable animal husbandry’**

In animal husbandry – a highly contested practice in the Netherlands – political issues play an important role. Addressing these issues during the design process could lead to more sustainable and less contested animal husbandry systems. Therefore a new design approach is developed, called Reflexive Interactive Design (RIO). The RIO approach combines a structured engineering design method with insights from Science and Technology Studies (STS) in order to integrate technical, social and political issues of animal husbandry in the design process.

STS literature shows that engineering design is a thoroughly social process and that technology and society are indissolubly connected and interwoven. Engineering design methods, however, do not leave much room for other than technical issues. During the design process engineering designers deliberately disconnect the intended design from its socio-political context. The RIO approach tries to reconnect the intended design to its context by starting from the needs of several stakeholders, including animals.

RIO projects have led to the design and development of innovative and sustainable animal housing systems. I will show how the design process is opened up for the range of normative, social and political issues attached to livestock production and how this is manifested in the newly designed animal husbandry systems.

**Kathryn Moore, Birmingham City University**

**‘Design expertise: connecting aesthetics, tectonics, and culture’**

All of the major political parties currently have quality of life as a major political concern, but the role design plays in this agenda is compromised by an unwillingness to discuss physical materiality in deference to explorations of concepts of meaning or dwelling, archetypes or essences. The same philosophical paradigm, making it inevitable that we undervalue the social, cultural and social implications of appearances, disables attempts to understand the impact the quality of the real, tangible environment has on the quality of life. Compounded by the belief that our responses to material things are innate, sensory or subjective, the political dimension of design is often focused on the processes of participation rather than content. Designing as an activity, wrapped in a metaphysical shroud of creativity, makes it seem a rather haphazard, opportunistic activity that needs little investment of time or money. It just happens.

A radical new interpretative view of perception moves debate into the real world informed by knowledge and ideas. The philosophical argument, examined in *Overlooking the Visual* (2010) changes the nature of the discourse, not by discovering a new language as such, but by fusing, overlaying and cutting across concepts that have up till now, been compartmentalised and segregated by a collection of psychological and philosophical beliefs



packaged, promoted and sold so successfully over time that they have become part of our way of life. Examining the ways in which this new approach extends design right into the political/social arena, this paper calls into question the current vogue for the public to be involved at every level of decision making and thinking and makes the case for the measure of design expertise needed to match society's aspirations to create well imagined and properly sustainable environments. Considering the role of language, ideas and the need to encourage, demonstrate and ultimately provide a persuasive and imaginative view of the future, it argues that the wider remit of the designer is about connecting aesthetics, tectonics and culture to the social and physical context of our lives, helping coordinate questions of politics, governance, health, profit and other issues relating to the quality of life.

**Leon Morenas, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**

**'Design and consequence: politics and "neotechnics" of Delhi's Master Plan'**

A common working definition of design is Herbert Simon's: "action[s] aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones." This definition raises more questions than it answers. What are the means by which actions performed? Whose ends determine their preference? The modern world is rife with examples of design objects contradicting the "preferred" situations of designers because the ends they effect and the means by which to achieve those ends were narrowly considered.

My paper emphasizes design politics, specifically the consequences of design. I use the case study of the Delhi Master Plan of 1962 (DMP), promulgated post-independence by Indian leaders with the modernist vision of American planners and formative support of the Ford Foundation. Albert Mayer, leader of this post-colonial planning endeavor, saw the region as the new scale for planning. The 'neotechnic' garden city—a product of deliberate industrialization— was chosen to create new sensibilities for modern Indians.

Drawing upon archival documentation related to the DMP, video and audio interviews of Delhi's planners and historians, this paper explores the technological idealism undergirding the DMP and its consequences forty years later. Rather than the "preferred" self-contained metropolis, Delhi is today a sprawling imbroglio, rife with inequality. In the 'techno-city' model as a means to this regional plan, we also see the rise of "particular institutional patterns of power and authority" like the draconian Delhi Development Authority, which routinely acts against the interests of Delhi's inhabitants.

The paper concludes with a proposed theory for design praxis, drawing from subaltern studies and Langdon Winner's theory of the politics of technological artifacts. Designers can be reflexive and deliberate about their design practice and its consequences, fostering culturally appropriate ideals of human freedom, social justice and democratic rule. This requires carefully choosing means that can foment and sustain these ends.

**Maria Prieto**

**'Immaterial architectures for a new material world'**

Behind the apparent efficacy of urban policies, the representation of citizens in interaction with physical space remains today unaddressed. At the same time, new media artistic engagements are challenging our understanding of time and space. How could our urban experience be realized and expanded by ubiquitous computing? How could we enhance urban space through the use of pervasive technologies? And, what kind of citizen could emerge from the interplay of mobile technologies with physical space?

Thus, how could augmented, immersive spaces be instrumental in forwarding urban regeneration and social change? What changes and challenges could we trigger through the Net in the mutual configuration of public space and of spatial planning and policy-making practices, in the way of an open, participative instrument to manage and redesign the spaces and emotions of our cities?

This paper explores the creative potential of the spatial applications deployed by mobile, embedded, and distributed “sensitive architectures,” where the physical becomes immaterial, atmospheric, and the spatial experience becomes more intense, felt as material, as well as the role of network communities in interweaving social space and social change.

**Charles Rice, University of Technology Sydney**  
**‘Atrium effects: John Portman’s Hyatt Regency Atlanta’**

This paper will deal with the question of architecture’s relation to politics through a case study: John Portman’s Hyatt Regency Atlanta of 1967, the first ‘reinvented’ atrium hotel. The Hyatt presents a particularly difficult object with respect to disciplinary structures of analysis and evaluation. Portman is barely studied in architecture due to the perceived low quality of his buildings, their supposed ‘anti-urban’ characteristics, and his active participation in the development industry. Urban geography has positioned his work as ‘mutely symbolic’ of late capitalist development, especially with respect to the changes wrought in downtowns of North American cities including Atlanta, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Detroit, and the passivity and bewilderment of spatial experience produced therein.

Rather than accept or perpetuate this account of ‘postmodern’ architecture and urbanism—however valid it might be on its own terms—this paper will attempt to develop an account of the particular ‘appearance’ of the atrium in Portman’s Hyatt, and how this can be understood in terms of a politics of design. The atrium cannot be explained particularly well through precedent, type, or a rational projection for its success, either in economic or design terms. Rather, the atrium will be seen to have produced a topological inversion of the façade condition of the building. The effect of this is not simply to produce a protected inside as distinct from a hostile outside. Rather, all the conditions of urbanism, and urbanity, are ‘pulled through’ the atrium in its inversion. This in turn produces the need for new kinds of urban devices such as above-grade skywalks, which in turn lead to new kinds of political alliances in how this kind of interiorized downtown development is enacted. This is not a causal chain of relation, however. The atrium in its appearance and proliferation, enacts a relational condition where new kinds of urban objects come into being and proliferate alongside new kinds of alliance and interaction in the management and governance of urban development. What develops is an historically and geographically particular kind of urbanism which has remained significant in present-day architectural and urban strategies. Rather than see it as the failure or cynical refusal of a more authentic urban form, or simply as the logical outcome and expression of capital’s mysterious though all too obvious operation, this paper will be a step towards developing terms appropriate to the complexity of the ‘thing’ that is the atrium and its urban attachments.

**Kristine Samson, Roskilde University**  
**‘Performative process designs: the case of *The Wharf City*’**

Recently, the masterplan has been contested by process designs inviting the user to participate in urban development and regeneration. Thus process designs open up for negotiations among a multiplicity of interests ranging from various user groups, inhabitants, private development and commercial interest to subcultures and the everyday practices

inherent at the existing urban space. This heterogeneous way of dealing with urban planning and development is highly in contrast with the materialistic and fundamentally rationalistic planning concept of the masterplan. Here urban space is defined through the drawing pen of the architect as urban development is regarded as the physical end goal of the architect's creative practice. It is an ideology hailing back to modernism where whole cities were envisioned as a comprehensive plan. Here the plan was a closed unit where functional parts in all scales were developed and represented – from the living unit to the broader city plan. The ideology of representation were thus manifested in the stylistic coherence between the building and the plan, between part and whole. In recent urban planning practices, the functionality and linearity from plan to space is contested by the process. Process designs, by which various perspectives negotiate the functionality and use of urban space, is one way of addressing and changing the representational ideology of the master plan. However, these process designs and their cross-disciplinary organization challenge the working methods and medias by which the architect works.

The paper will discuss the role of process design as a performative planning tool where various design approaches enact their perspective on urban space throughout the design process. Cross-disciplinary processes in urban planning are becoming gradually more common. For instance, in the recent Scandinavian competition format, the parallel commission, collaboration between different notions of plans unfold in a timely process. Thus stakeholders at the same time *share* their design visions in common and *enact their* specific vision of the future of urban space throughout the process.

The paper will give an example through the proposal 'The Wharf City', a Parallel Commission and redevelopment of an old industrial wharf site in Malmö, Sweden, proposed by JUUL FROST Architects. The case illustrates how the notion of 'plan' travels between perspectives and design approaches throughout the architectural competition process.

Drawing on these forms of performative planning, these complex situations of cross-disciplinarity intend to reverse traditional masterplanning in terms of its way of drawing perspectives and divergent design approaches together in new 'pragmatic regimes' (Thévenot 2001).

Finally, and with reference to the case, the paper will question the medium by which architects suggest urban designs. For instance, how adequate are the use of spatial scales in the masterplan when spatial scaling is not capable of showing changes over time? What ideologies and representations does the scaled plan impose on urban reality and how can architects and urban designers assemble existing values and ideologies in the plan drawing without losing the vast diversity of urban space?

**Robert Schmidt III, Dan Sage, and Toru Eguchi, Loughborough University**  
**'Who's got the most pull?: the micro-politics of building design'**

Architecture is best thought of as a verb not a noun – always on the move –responding to a micro-political milieu of provocations and parameters, or suffering premature obsolescence and decay. This position moves us beyond the aesthetic fixation of the object as a static construct and relates the building to a set of transient influences that the building needs to respond to in various ways. Buildings can, inter alia, co-ordinate, juxtapose, stabilize, accelerate and transform conflicting political, economic, social, technological and environmental demands. For this reason, good design encourages cognitive processes that are necessarily as dynamic, relational and emergent as the building itself. Moreover the capacities for designers to be mindful of such complexities are themselves folded into the building's generative social life. Questions such as what is it, how it is constituted, what can

it do; are not just asked by human actors (designers, users, clients etc) but also by the building itself.

The research is inspired then by the propensity not to capture the building as a finished product, but in its quotidian process, as it moves through the iterative phases of work subject to a myriad of cyclical contingencies. The arduous design process unveils the practice as an arena for the interplay between the network of human and non-human agencies. The work hypothesizes that design translates and is pulled by three distinct 'sites' – the practice (ethos, protocols, tools, mediums), the project (site, client, materials, plant, labour, brief), and various absent presences (policies, regulations, standards, users, social agendas).

This paper offers a glimpse into the nuances of the design process as the building's generative social life reveals, transforms, rescales and stabilizes its influences. Ethnographic observations provide traces in which to investigate the elasticity and malleability of design concepts as the micropolitics of design play out.

**Cristiano Storni, University of Limerick**

**'On the politics of design and designed artifacts: the notion of things and the case of self-monitoring technology'**

In my presentation I outline a possible contribution to the discourse about the politics of design and designed artifacts. In particular, I first warn against two possible traps in the traditional conceptualization of the politics of design and of designed artifacts. In order to provide an alternative conceptual framework, and in the attempt to overcome the reductionist pitfalls of traditional understandings (that are based on modernistic oppositions such as the ones between subject and objects, agency and structure, mind and body and so on), I introduce the twofold notion of *thing*. Drawing on Heidegger, Latour and Harman, the notion of thing is rendered as both a heterogeneous gathering of actors and as an issue in-the-process-of-definition in mutual shaping.

However, the introduction of the notion of thing in design shows another risk in the conceptualization of design politics and politics throughout design that concerns the (uncritical) separation between design and use. I argue that to focus on the politics of design without appreciating how these are re-configured at use time fall short to support our understanding. Moreover, there is the risk to reaffirm some modernistic assumptions and separations, thus compromising the attempt to understand the political dimension of design practices and designed artifacts in society.

In order to support my argument, I will discuss an illustrative case study concerned with the politics of design and of designed artifacts in the growing area of self-care. Self-care technology represents an interesting case because it is currently supposed to facilitate a much-needed transformation in the traditional delivery of Health Care services in Western countries that nowadays struggle with lack of resource.

However, as these technologies (traditionally belonging to institutionalize places such as clinics and hospital, characterized by normative and biomedical assumptions and originally designed for expert users) migrate into different contexts they become something different that does not necessarily meet the original expectations. By discussing different instances of appropriation of self-monitoring technology by lay people I will argue for the need to study the *thing* and its politics at both design and use time in order to gain a deeper understanding of their political dimension of design and design artifacts in society.

**Ann Thorpe, Open University**  
**'Design as political resistance'**

In an effort to understand design's role in political resistance, this presentation addresses the gap between how scholars in the sociology of technology/social movement arena treat "design" and how designers treat "political activism." By bringing these two disciplines together, the presentation argues we can describe design as political resistance in terms that resonate with conventional political resistance and social protest.

The presentation begins with an understanding of "politics" as the distribution of power, where power's "end" is to make decisions about competing visions of the future. By considering power relations, we can articulate a role for design in counteracting "dominant" modes of power. This role, in terms of design's particular capacities for influence, is illustrated with a range of cases.

Sociological literature finds that conventional social protest and political resistance rely on a few key elements, and this presentation considers the element of disruption. Arguably, design as political resistance also works through disruption—*spatial* disruption that differs, in terms of duration and scale, from activists conventional event-oriented disruption. Lefebvre's trialectics of space, applied to a "worked example" help to investigate the mechanisms of spatial disruption, and its implications for design's political resistance.

**Marc Tuters, University of Amsterdam**  
**'Forget psychogeography: locative media as cosmopolitics'**

In contrast to the locative paradigm in media art, which has looked at *the city* as site of contestation, designers and creative technologists have developed visions for ubiquitous computing which contest *the social* by literally giving voice to the environment. The STS paradigm of networks between humans and non humans can relate to HCI practices in the the design for ubiquitous environment. This connection between practice & theory, knowledge and experience provides better model for ethical action rather than the media arts insistence of the social contestation.

**Stefan White, Manchester School of Architecture**  
**'Species of affect: architecture and users'**

This paper discusses the interlocking 'diagrams of affect' active in the architectural practices of the 2007 RIBA bat house competition. I employ the concept of 'diagrams of affect' through a reading of Gilles Deleuze's Spinozist epistemology, in order to construct a non-representational account of design process in a project that composes 2 architects with an especially indeterminate user. From the perspective of a participant, I trace limits and potentials of the 'diagrams of affect' created out of a number of relationships: between the submission and competition criteria/panel; the submission and the submitters/team; the competition subject (bats), the submitters, and the competition criteria. I propose that the creation of 'diagrams of affect' (through compositions between bodies), should be understood as the concrete, critical power or potential of architectural expertise rather than an indeterminacy which would aim to destroy its boundaries of control and devalue its social and commercial bond.