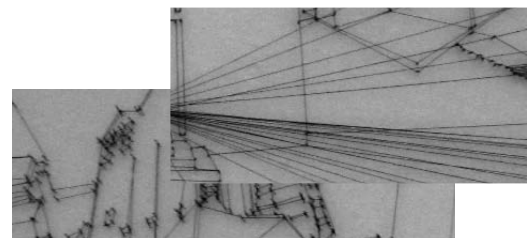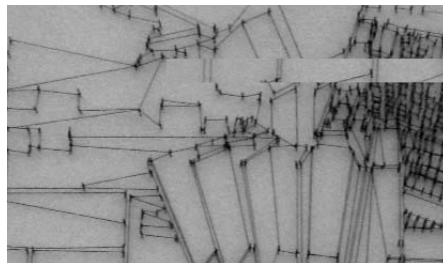# ARCHITECTURE ON DISPLAY

AN ANALYSIS OF ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITIONS AT THE VENICE   ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE 2010

BETWEEN ART AND URBAN EXPERIENCE

UNICA EUROMASTER IN URBAN STUDIES 4CITIES
CHRISTINA JUHLIN
SUPERVISED BY HENRIK REEH
SUBMITTED ON THE 1ST OF SEPTEMBER 2011
THESIS DEFENCE ON THE 23RD OF SEPTEMBER 2011

// "THE PERCEPTION OF SOMETHING IMPORTANT IN EITHER PARTICULAR WORKS OR IN THE ARTS GENERALLY MOVES PEOPLE TO TALK (AND WRITE) ABOUT THEM INCESSANTLY. SOMETHING THAT IS MEANINGFUL TO USE CANNOT BE LEFT JUST TO SIT THERE BATHED IN PURE SIGNIFICANCE, AND SO WE DESCRIBE, ANALYZE, JUDGE, CLASSIFY; WE ERECT THEORIES ABOUT CREATIVITY, FORM, PERCEPTION, SOCIAL FUNCTION; WE CHARACTERIZE ART AS A LANGUAGE, A STRUCTURE, A SYSTEM, AN ACT, A SYMBOL, A PATTERN OF FEELING;" //

(GEERTZ 1983: 95)

ABSTRACT

With a starting point in the Venice Architecture Biennale 2010 and the Danish, Belgium and Dutch national exhibitions, this thesis explores the genre of the architecture exhibition. How is the architecture exhibition distinct from art exhibitions and from an urban experience? The architecture exhibition lies somewhere in between the art exhibition and an urban experience because architecture ceases to be functional when it is moved into the exhibition. But the subjects it displays, and the experiences and narratives it creates, are often of an urban character. The medium of the exhibition traditionally belongs to the visual arts, and all existing theory on exhibiting and curating concerns the exhibition of art. However, the importance of the Venice Architecture Biennale in architectural culture points to the need for considering the architecture exhibition as an individual genre, which is establishing its own modes and meanings of display. The architecture exhibition is not a new phenomenon, but this thesis argues that it has gained renewed relevance in light of the emergence of the Venice Architecture Biennale in 1980, the increasing importance of exhibitions as a critical practice, and finally the increasing focus on how cities communicate themselves through their architectural achievements and aspirations. But how can the architecture exhibition contribute to experiences of architecture and the urban when architecture and the city, unlike art, can be experienced in a one to one relationship through daily use? Through the analysis of the three Biennale exhibitions, it is argued in this thesis that the architecture exhibition can stage experiences of architecture and the urban, which go beyond the building or city itself. The exhibition can be used to make architecture and the urban speak about not just functions but also meanings and visions. Hereby, the architecture exhibition can be used to shape urban identities. The analyzed exhibitions also show that by using the medium of the exhibition to display architecture in different ways, different images and ideas of architecture are conveyed – images that do not just reflect but also create urban realities. By outlining the components of the architecture exhibition and by shedding light on problems and potentials related to exhibiting architecture, and by analyzing three national pavilions in the context of the Venice Architecture Biennale 2010, this thesis is a contribution to an emerging research field at the intersection between exhibition studies and urban studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF CONTENTS

LIST OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 3 // ANALYZING INTERPRETATIONS
OF THE ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION //
PROBLEM STATEMENT AND PROBLEM FIELD

The architecture exhibition is at once part of the architecture world and part of exhibition practices, and yet does not belong fully to any of them. When architecture is exhibited it is not functional as in an urban context, but it is not art either. Neither in exhibition theory nor in architectural theory has this meeting between architecture and the exhibition been analyzed[1], and yet it holds potential in the crossing field between architecture, exhibition and urban studies.

How is the architecture exhibition distinct from the art exhibition and from an urban experience? Differences in representing, curating and experiencing art and architecture will be analyzed in order to answer the above question. This will develop a theory of the architecture exhibition with which to analyze the Danish, Belgian and Dutch national pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2010 with the aim of answering: How can the architecture exhibition contribute to experiences of architecture and the urban and be used to create urban identities?

Although the architecture exhibition is far from a new phenomenon, it is argued here that it has taken on a new life and new potential in the light of three circumstances that are related to respectively architecture, exhibiting and urbanity: The emergence of the Venice Architecture Biennale in 1980 as an indicator of how the architecture exhibition is slowly establishing itself as an independent genre within architectural practice, free of the art exhibition it emerged from[2]; The increased focus on the field of exhibiting as curation now concerns the choice of narratives and media necessary to build up an exhibition as a communicative act

---

[1] Only two books treat the subject directly: Levy & Menking's interview book 'Architecture on Display' 2010, which gathers interviews with previous curators of the Venice Architecture Biennale, and Kristin Feireiss' 'The Art of the Architecture Exhibition' 2001, a selection of texts based on exhibitions at the NAi (see reference list).

[2] This is dealt with in chapter one

whereas it used to be concerned with the static collection and maintenance of objects[3]; And finally the increased attention dedicated to the ways in which cities communicate themselves through their architectural achievements and aspirations as attempts to communicate architectural and urban identities[4]. These three circumstances call for a renewed view on the architecture exhibition and its potentials: The architecture exhibition can be seen as capable on a large scale of influencing architectural and urban culture and debate, and on a smaller but no less important scale of introducing an audience to new possible ways of experiencing architecture and urbanity by experiencing them through the exhibition.

INTRODUCTION //
THE CHOICE OF THE VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE

In the following, I elaborate my interest in the Venice Architecture Biennale as the scope through which the architecture exhibition will be subjected to theoretical enquiries and analysis. Following this I briefly elaborate on the problematics and potentials linked to exhibiting architecture.

I have chosen to look at the architecture exhibition in the context of the Venice Architecture Biennale (hereafter referred to as the Architecture Biennale) in order to broaden the scope of this thesis: By including the Architecture Biennale into the theory and analysis of the architecture exhibition, the architecture exhibition is seen as part of a larger tendency in which architecture and urbanity are increasingly subject to public interest[5]. My own interest in the architecture exhibition was developed when I visited the Architecture Biennale in 2010. I realized that these exhibitions and the ways I experienced them were different from both art exhibitions and from experiencing architecture in urban space. The growing popularity of the Venice Architecture Biennale (2010 had a record attendance of 170.801 visitors[6]) seemed to confirm the importance of conducting studies in the field. The

---

[3] This is dealt with in chapter two
[4] This is dealt with in chapter three
[5] It is important to note that the Architecture Biennale is not analyzed with regards to its institutional structure, but its role in initiating and continuing the development of exhibiting architecture as part of architectural culture.
[6] labiennale.org

Architecture Biennale has gone from a place where architecture was presented for architects (Portoghesi in Levy & Menking 2010: 37) to an attempt to engage with the real world rather than the internal world of architecture (Fuksas in Levy & Menking 2010: 83). The 2010 Biennale illustrates this point explicitly in its title 'People meet in architecture'. Fuksas sees the Biennale as a romantic memory of the last century – according to him, there are absolutely no reasons to have exhibitions of architecture today (Fuksas in Levy & Menking 2010: 91-92). But people don't just meet in architecture; they also still meet in architecture *exhibitions*. Choosing the Architecture Biennale as the framework around my case studies is thus also a way to discuss the function and role of architecture exhibitions in urban society.

When architecture is transferred to the exhibition, questions of boundaries between art and architecture arise. What is architecture doing in an exhibition when it can be seen in the "real world"? Unlike art, architecture can rarely be shown in an exhibition space 1:1[7]. It is difficult to create a spatial sense and reach the essential qualities of architecture without presupposing a one to one relation between the exhibited objects and architecture (Till 2009: 247). This risks reducing the spatial and tangible experience of material architecture into pure abstraction. But it also risks reducing the exhibition space into show room, forgetting to make use of the inherent qualities of the exhibition as medium: To create something new in and with the exhibition. In the architecture exhibition it is always necessary to make substitutes *approach* architecture; models, photographs, 3D films, texts and installations are evoked to create an architectural effect or an architectural narrative. Aaron Betsky, curator of the Architecture Biennale 2008, believes that the way to show architecture is not to show buildings, because architecture isn't buildings – it's everything *about* buildings (Levy & Menking 2010, Betsky: 144). What architecture then is, if not buildings, can only be answered by developing a language with which to talk about and analyze the architecture exhibition. Such a language will draw architecture out of the functional reading to which it is often subject because buildings are designed to function rather than to communicate (Eco 1987: 182), and place it in a system of signs and voices. Possibly then, the exhibition gives voice to architecture and makes it communicate rather than function. This is a displacement

---

[7] Some exhibitions do exhibit 1:1 architecture; this naturally changes the nature of the exhibition, as architecture here is exhibited along with its functional aspect – analyzing this necessitates a different theoretical framework than the one given here. This thesis mainly deals with the kind of architecture exhibition in which architecture is represented through architecture's artifacts.

of architecture from its primary functions but also a pregnant recontextualization, which will be further investigated in this thesis.

INTRODUCTION //
METHOD: THE EXHIBITION ANALYSIS AS APPROACH

The first part of my thesis has two parallel fields of enquiry as it concerns the meeting between the exhibition and architecture. These two fields of enquiry constantly meet: Each section of chapter 2 takes its starting point in art theoretical matters, where an established theory on the exhibition is present, and moves on to test their relevance and implications in architectural matters. The field of enquiry related to the exhibition as a medium takes its starting point in Canadian art curator Bruce Ferguson's semiotic reading of the exhibition, which then branches out into related theoretical and analytical questions of representation, curation and experience. The enquiry into architecture as an object of exhibition employs architects Herzog & de Meuron and OMA as well as various architects with experience as practicing curators. The development of the theoretical framework thus necessarily becomes analytical as it builds up a theory surrounding the architecture exhibition by letting these two fields of enquiry meet. The attempt is not to develop one model for the analysis of the architecture exhibition, which will then be applied to the case studies – the analysis must of course reflect the analytical object (Gade 2006: 36) – but to contribute with a systematization of the components of an architecture exhibition and with shedding light on problems and potentials related to exhibiting architecture (ibid: 16). These methodical considerations will be continued and specified in chapter 3 as an introduction to addressing the case studies.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1, <u>Architecture on display</u>, falls in three parts. The historical-thematic reading of the Venice Architecture Biennale sets focus on the importance of and potentials in displaying architecture (p. 6). The architecture exhibition will then in the context of the Architecture Biennale be established first as an urban phenomenon (p. 11), then as a cultural practice (p. 14). Chapter 2, <u>Approaching a theory of the architecture exhibition</u>, turns away from the Architecture Biennale in order to develop a theoretical framework with which to analyze the architecture exhibition. It falls in four parts: The first section, 'Utterance' (p. 17), is an art theoretical starting point which is elaborated in the context of the architecture exhibition in the following sections 'Representing' (p. 24), 'Curating' (p. 30) and 'Experiencing' (p. 36). In chapter 3, <u>Analyzing interpretations of the architecture exhibition</u>, I return to the Architecture Biennale by analyzing the Danish, Belgian and Dutch national pavilion. After establishing the exhibition analysis as a way to read urbanities (p. 41) and arguing for the methodical approach (p. 42), each of the three case studies will be analyzed (p. 45-67). Finally the analyses will be contextualized through a comparative discussion pointing to the implications of using the architecture exhibition and the Architecture Biennale as ways to communicate architecture and urbanity (p. 68). This will lead to a conclusion of the research conducted in this thesis (p. 72).

CHAPTER 1 //
ARCHITECTURE ON DISPLAY

ARCHITECTURE ON DISPLAY //
THE HISTORY OF THE VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE

This section introduces the Architecture Biennale as the framework around the theoretical enquiries in chapter 2 and the analysis in chapter 3. The architecture exhibition will be read as respectively an urban phenomenon and a cultural practice in the context of the Architecture Biennale.

Models of architectural display: The first years of the Architecture Biennale

> "Whatever you think about it [the Biennale] in moral or ethical terms, or even in terms of the truths of architecture, it is the *one* place where everyone in the world comes together to look at and think about what architecture is today." (Betsky in Levy and Menking 2010: 142)

The Architecture Biennale is an architecture exhibition that has taken place every second year in Venice since 1975, where it started out as an integrated part of the already existing Venice Art Biennale (founded in 1895), until it branched out as an independent section of the Biennale in 1980.

The Architecture Biennale is at once a large-scale architecture exhibition in itself, as well as the host of many smaller exhibitions of individual participants in the international part, the *Arsenale* and *Pallazzo delle Esposizioni,* and in the national part, the *Giardini.* Every second year since 1980, the Architecture Biennale is appointed a director/curator, whose understanding of the Architecture Biennale has changed with every new person, thereby also creating it anew every time.

The Architecture Biennale was a slow reaction to protests following '68, an attempt to create a new institution that would be more open to the public than the Venice Art Biennale, which was criticized for its exclusiveness during the protests. Artists turned their canvasses to face the wall and demanded that the Architecture Biennale showed more social responsiveness (Michelis 2010: 29). It is with this in mind that the first exhibitions at the Architecture Biennale should be understood.

In 1975 Vittorio Gregotti was appointed director of the Visual Arts section under the Venice Art Biennale. It was not an actual architecture section, but Gregotti was an architect and saw the possibility of introducing the subject of architecture into the Art Biennale. This naturally raised the question of architecture's affiliation with art: Some saw the architecture section as an extension of the Art Biennale, while Gregotti wanted to create a separate institution for architecture (Gregotti in Levy & Menking 2010: 24).

But it was not until 1980 with the 1st Architecture Biennale 'The presence of the past' that architecture became an independent section of the Venice Biennale with Paolo Portoghesi as director. Portoghesi contributed with a concrete extension of the Biennale, reclaiming the *Corderie dell'Arsenale* – a 316-meter long linear space divided into ten large bays – from the Italian military. This move seems to have further enhanced the independent importance architecture gained in the Biennale, not just as an extension of the arts section but as something which demanded a separate space and which, more importantly, had its own ways and premises of display; "without the space of the *Corderie* it would have been impossible to create an exhibition featuring three-dimensional architecture." (Portoghesi in Levy and Menking 2010: 36).

Figure 1. The Arsenale

Gregotti's exhibition *Molino Stucky* and Portoghesi's *Strada Novissima* became models of architectural display (Levy and Menking 2010: 35). These exhibitions are mentioned again and again in Levy and Menking's interviews as important reference points in ways to display and communicate architecture. *Molino Stucky* gathered thirty architectural teams, whom all proposed projects to deal with the future of an old factory in Venice. The exhibition brought a local issue – that of what to do with the architecture of the past – up to date and lifted it on to an international scale. The proposed projects were not meant to be realized but to be a pool of ideas to set focus on the difficult confrontations going on in the city of Venice (Szacka 2008: 28).
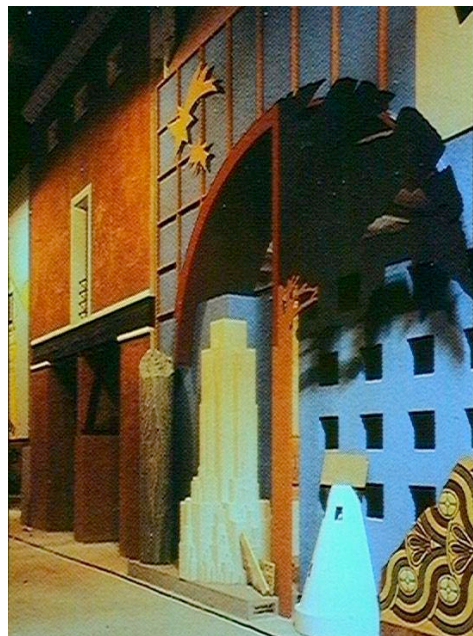
Figure 2. Strada Novissima

Paolo Portoghesi's *Strada Novissima* literally put the street into the exhibition space by staging a scenographical street consisting of life-size facades constructed by 20 different architects. Behind the facades each architect showed a monographic exhibition. The more traditional way of exhibiting architecture was displayed "behind the scene" but was still present as a bridge between new and old ways of exhibiting architecture. The exhibition was based on the radical idea "not to show images of architecture, but to show real architecture." (Portoghesi in Levy and Menking 2010: 36). As opposed to Gregotti's *Molino Stucky*, which was about urban dreams and visions, this exhibition consisted of a "real model" (an oxymoron to be developed later on) of a street, a social space like the one in cities where different architectural practices stood side by side.

The idea that the architecture exhibition is linked to the social and urban realm could be found already in Gregotti and Portoghesi's exhibitions and is further stressed in recent exhibitions of the Architecture Biennale. In particular the 7th 'Less Esthetics more Ethics' in 2000, and the 10th 'Cities: Architecture and Society' in 2006, dealt directly with urban issues. Fuksas's 7th exhibition was about working with the reality of globalization. The idea was to confront people with migrations, war and natural disasters because "information means the confrontation between architecture and the world" (Fuksas in Levy & Menking 2010: 81). Fuksas wanted to go beyond the specificity of architecture and engage with the real world rather than get into internal architectural arguments. This was reflected in the curation, as the exhibition consisted almost entirely of videos and cinematic projections. Like Richard Burdett's later exhibition, the 10th 'Cities: Architecture and Society', this rendered it possible to actually *not see* architecture (understood in a more narrow sense) in the exhibition, even though it was of course present. The subject of Burdett's exhibition was density, mobility and sustainability in global cities. Burdett stressed the link between the space we design and inhabit, and social well-being (Burdett in Levy & Menking 2010: 131).

Aaron Betsky's 11th Biennale 'Out There: Architecture Beyond Building' in 2008 was an exhibition that brought design, art, literature, film and landscape architecture into the Biennale. The simple statement in Betsky's exhibition was that the way to show architecture is not to show buildings, because architecture isn't buildings - buildings are buildings: "Architecture is everything that is about buildings" – "It's how we show buildings, how we draw buildings, how we design buildings, how we talk about buildings, how buildings appear to us;" (Betsky in Levy & Menking 2010: 144). This theme, like Portoghesi's, reflected one of the basic premises of the architecture exhibition: The role of representation in the creation and communication of architecture. By considering architecture through its representations in the shape of drawings and designs, discourses and representations, Burdett pointed to the architecture exhibition *as* architecture.

The 2010 Biennale 'People Meet in Architecture' was an exhibition about finding architecture and reconsidering its potential in contemporary society (Sejima 2010: 14). The president of the Venice Biennale, Paolo Baratta, referred to the choice of

Kazujo Sejima (a practicing architect in SANAA) as a return to "real" architecture[8]. Despite this, Sejima's way of conceptualizing architecture in her exhibition seemed rather ephemeral; she saw an affiliation between the new invisible networks created by the Internet, and the nature of architecture: "Although information society is invisible, I think that architecture must have some sort of relationship with such a society." (Sejima 2010: 14). That 'people meet in architecture' can thus both be seen as a fact rooted in time and place, and as an ontological condition (Blau 2010: 38). The exhibition dealt – similar to Burdett's Biennale – with the links between the physical and the social (virtual) world. This Biennale could be seen as a call to reflect on the social environments created by new media (Blau 2010: 38).

Can the Architecture Biennale be popular and critical at the same time?

The four newer exhibitions have in common an opening up of the understanding of architecture: Architecture is interpreted beyond buildings. This also means an opening up of the language used in the exhibitions, away from the traditional architectural exhibition with its accumulation of architectural artifacts (models, drawings, documents, photographs (Macken 2007: 84)) towards more digital and conceptual modes of display. Is this different from the Biennale's first two exhibitions sketched out in the above? Architecture critic Léa-Catherine Scazka argues in 'The Architectural Public Sphere' that the main difference between the early and the later exhibitions in the Architecture Biennale is that before, the public gathered in order to provide criticism, whereas they now gather to receive an accumulation of images and information. This "overwhelming collection of drawings, models, films and photographs" excludes the possibility of "reflection, critical judgment or even self-cultivation" (Szacka 2008: 32). This is interpreted as analogous to the shift observed by Habermas, in which the public shifts from a cultural-debating to a culture-consuming audience (ibid: 32). However, it is argued in this thesis that this shift simply reflects the developments in technology and techniques for visualization, which "have changed buildings from how they are fabricated, designed and perform in the end." (Blau 2010: 38). Szacka overlooks that what is on display is not just architecture, but architecture's representations. If the architecture exhibition is seen not just as its content but also as its modes of display, there is another space in which reflection and critical judgment can unfold. What is

---

[8] As opposed to perhaps Betsky's architecture *beyond* building. A comment that again reflects the desire to be able to express *real* architecture through the exhibition, as if attributing more importance to this than to its representations

criticized as a turn towards consumer culture is a critique of the Biennale's development towards spectacular modes of display. The record attendance of 170.801 visitors this year cannot simply be seen as the evil result of a "more economically driven and internationally oriented" (Szacka 2008: 32) Architecture Biennale. As "the *one* place where everyone in the world comes together to look at and think about what architecture is today", (Betsky in Levy & Menking 2010: 142), increased economic and global motives followed by increased visitor numbers – indicating a broader and less specialized audience – is a new challenge for the architecture exhibition and for the mega-event of the Biennale.

ARCHITECTURE ON DISPLAY //
THE ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION AS URBAN PHENOMENON

Édouard Glissant[9] describes a biennale as a contact zone capable of mediating between museum and city. Biennales have the potential to provide new complex spaces and temporalities through the coexistence of several time zones and places, with the result of achieving a *mondialité*: "a difference enhancing the global dialogue." The biennale thus holds the potential as "a reciprocal contact zone (…) between museum and city." (Obrist 2010: 45).

If the architecture biennale is a mediating contact zone, its exhibitions must be the voices that engage in this dialogue: "The exhibition can be seen as a medium of information and debate on the present and future developments, both here and elsewhere, of the city and the urban" (David 2001: 58). The architecture exhibition is deeply rooted in the city because both architecture and the exhibition (or the museum) are urban phenomena, which put together express a desire to communicate the city and its past, present or future contents[10]. If a biennale can function as a reciprocal contact zone between museum and city, this must be even more so the case for the Architecture Biennale whose exhibited objects are fragments of urbanity. The Architecture Biennale is thus both urban in its contents and in its function as a contact zone. The Architecture Biennale and its exhibitions are also

---

[9] Martinican writer and literary critic

[10] In 'The Culture of Cities' Lewis Mumford constructs an intrinsic relationship between the museum and the city.

urban seen in another light: Namely as a cultural production within the cultural industries of mass culture and, in more recent times, consciousness industries linked to postmodern urban life (O'Neill 2007: 14-15).

> "Event-exhibitions have shaped new social, cultural and political relations in a more globalized world, where the traditional biennial model is maintained through discourse on cultural policy, national representation and internationalism, thereby enabling cultural travel, urban renovation and local tourism." (O'Neill 2007: 17).

It is not only as an enhancer of intercultural dialogue then, that the Architecture Biennale and architecture exhibition can be seen as urban phenomena, but also as part of cultural industries, urban regeneration and urban cultural policies.

From the artistic architecture exhibition to the urban architecture exhibition

It is argued in this thesis that the architecture exhibition has developed increasingly in an urban direction. From one of the first "official" architecture exhibitions, MoMA's 'International Exhibition of Architecture' in 1932, where Philip Johnson framed architectural drawings and put models on pedestals covered with white cloths in order to make the transition from art exhibitions to architecture exhibitions as soft as possible, to today's exhibitions of grand urban schemes and exhibitions where urban planning is in focus rather than architecture as individual buildings.

Figure 3. Model of Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye on white cloth and photographs of buildings hung in a traditional way with captions – MoMA 1932

Figure 4. 'Fremtidens arkitektur er Grøn',
Louisiana 2009

This is clearly opposed to a more traditional and monographic way of exhibiting architecture, in which the works of one "almighty" architect are highlighted as individual works. While an exhibition will always be a kind of displacement, it is argued in this thesis that the architecture exhibition is increasingly embedded in and relevant for the urban. While architecture is taken out of its urban function and environment and put into the exhibition where it serves no evident architectural purpose, it can also be seen as a different kind of architectural and urban experience.

It is argued here that this urban direction into which architecture exhibitions – roughly since the emergence of the Venice Architecture Biennale – have gone, is also a development *away* from the architecture exhibition as art exhibition, towards architecture's own premises for and modes of display.

<u>Critical urban uses of the architecture exhibition</u>

French curator Catherine David points in 'Architecture in the Expanded Field' to an area within exhibiting architecture, which is still largely ignored in the dominant architectural and urban discourses: Those urban territories in formation or transformation in the city which doesn't consist of architectural projects as such but "the spontaneous proliferation of urban elements linked to the presence of populations in motion" (David 2001: 58). David argues that it is only by transgressing architecture's traditional relations with the visual arts that it can come

to include these broader aspects of urbanity too. The direction into which the architecture exhibition must move is towards a broader field of vision culture, "understood as the totality of critical analyses and strategies capable of interfering with – and disrupting – the hypervisuality of contemporary daily life, particularly in urban and megalopolitan circumstances" (ibid: 63). The relation between the production of (urban) space and its representations are at stake, and the architecture exhibition is at the heart of this battle.

David points to Russian constructivists Tatlin and Rodchenko and recent artists such as Gordon Matta-Clark and Robert Smithson as examples of artists who deal with architecture and its critical representations "of a new urban mobility and its effect on space, culture and subjects" (ibid: 63). David links the architecture exhibition's ability to function as an urban agent with the way architecture is displayed:

> "By rethinking the conditions in which the exhibition is capable of presenting the operational modes and ever more complex dimensions of an architecture that is today unthinkable without its urban implications on the global scale (..) it can be fairly easily seen how these representations could affect and transform traditional exhibition spaces as much as the experience of the urban spectator/citizen/consumer." (ibid: 64)

But although it can be "fairly easily seen" how architecture exhibited under the right conditions would be able to transform both the traditional modes of exhibiting as well as the urban experience, many questions are left open: How are these potentially transforming representations built up, how are the conditions of the exhibition to be rethought?

ARCHITECTURE ON DISPLAY //
THE ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION AS CULTURAL PRACTICE

The exhibition plays a more important role in the production of culture than is perhaps acknowledged. In the case of Biennales, they have become *the* medium

"through which much art is validated and acquires value on the international art circuit." (O'Neill 2007: 5) and a "prominent and diverse part of contemporary culture" (Greenberg et al: prologue). The Biennale or mega exhibition is increasingly seen as a means for the production of knowledge and debate, and as a catalyst for globalized urban culture and all that comes with it: Attracting financial investment and audiences, cultural tourism and cultural industry (Filipovic in O'Neill 2007: 6). If the architecture exhibition in itself is an urban phenomenon, reflecting an urban desire to communicate its progress, its manifestation at the Venice Architecture Biennale is urban on still more (neoliberal) levels. International exhibitions such as this has contributed to making architecture both local, of a place, and universal in the sense that it has been globalized (Chaplin and Stara 2009: 1) and made public in new ways through the exhibition. These large-scale international exhibitions happen in dialogue between the local and the global. Its public can be said to be "at once local and global, resident and nomadic, non-specialist and art-worldly." (O'Neill 2007: 16).

Two key periods in architecture – modernism and postmodernism – were set off by two legendary exhibitions: The 1932 Modern Architecture Exhibition in New York and the 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale (Till 2009: 247). Furthermore, the futurists in 1914 in Milan, the expressionists in Berlin in 1919 and the constructivists in Moscow in 1921 each initiated new movements within architecture through exhibition practices, which proves that "exhibitions have operated since the late 19th century as a major medium for the transformation of architectural culture" (Cohen 2010: 52). Exhibitions also influence historical research and criticism within architecture. Exhibitions have been curated in order to suggest new views on known architecture, pointed out areas that have been overlooked in urban or architectural discourses or by staging a metamorphosis of the place of the exhibition itself (Cohen 2010: 49). This confirms the hypothesis that the Architecture Biennale can be an integral part of contemporary architectural culture and that exhibitions should be acknowledged as cultural practices that are reflecting, but also creating, urban society. The Architecture Biennale can be seen as "a survey of architectural experimentation, how we imagine, represent and display that life" (Bret Steele in Levy and Menking 2010: 7). By juxtaposing imagination, representation and display, Steele points to the importance of the Architecture Biennale not just as a place where the newest in architecture is presented but where

things are actually created. Ways to imagine, represent and display architecture are thus made part of architectural practice.

ARCHITECTURE ON DISPLAY: CONCLUSION

The selected Biennales – from the earliest exhibitions to the latest more mediatized ones – showed that the architecture exhibitions essentially deal with the same questions. It was shown through the Architecture Biennale's history that by considering architecture exhibitions not just as their content, but also beyond this to the meanings that lie behind how architecture is displayed, it was possible to see the architecture exhibition as a cultural practice. This pointed to the importance of the Architecture Biennale not just as a place where the newest in architecture is presented and documented, but where architectural and urban realities are created. Ways to imagine, represent and display architecture can be part of architectural and urban practice if the conditions of the exhibition, which traditionally belongs to the visual arts, are rethought to incorporate architecture in a critical way. This in turn points to the importance of seeing the architecture as a category distinct from the art exhibition, a development which seems to be facilitated by the emergence of the Architecture Biennale. The next chapter elaborates on differences between exhibiting art and architecture and approaches a theory of the architecture exhibition.

CHAPTER 2 //
APPROACHING A THEORY OF THE ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION

THE EXHIBITION AS AN UTTERANCE

This first section of chapter 2 sets out to understand the implications of art critic Bruce Ferguson's concept of the art exhibition as an utterance. It aims to evaluate whether this semiotic reading can also be applied to architecture exhibitions, and with what implications for and contributions to the architecture exhibition. This art theoretical starting point will point to three aspects of exhibiting architecture, which will be further developed in the three following sections of chapter 2.

Exhibitions and semiotics

Bruce Ferguson borrows from semiotics when describing exhibitions as 'narratives' that use art objects to tell their stories. Exhibitions are also described as 'signs', which are communicated to an audience, who are lead to perceive these signs as true and important. Furthermore, the elements in the exhibition (exhibited artists, media, objects) are described as 'voices'. In short, he calls exhibitions "the central speaking subjects in the standard stories about art which institutions and curators often tell to themselves and to us." (Ferguson 1996: 175-76). An utterance always consists of three instances; a first person sender, a second person receiver and a third person message. The second person receiver is always implicitly present in the utterance because the receiver will always try to persuade the receiver into believing in the importance, truth etc. of the utterance (Karlsson et al 1979: 23). Exhibitions are hereby situated in a semiotic environment in which they can be read as narratives with senders, receivers and messages to be decoded (Ferguson 1996: 176).

Exhibitionary narratives

A narrative can be understood in the broad sense of the word to cover what historian Hayden White has called the translation of 'knowing' into 'telling'. Narratives are

considered as natural as culture itself (White 1980, Barthes 1975), and are seen as a way to translate human experience into structures of meaning (White 1980: 5). Narratives are thus closely linked with meaning and form, by which factual copies of events are translated into a "metacode" which transgresses cultures (White 1980: 6). There is a difference between narrating (inevitably done when representing something) and narrativizing, which is associated with a kind of storytelling (White 1980: 7). The desire to give events a causal and coherent form reflects the exhibition's attempt to persuade its audience into the "truth" of its contents. It can also help to explain what Ferguson means when saying that the need to build up coherent stories (of identity, nation, globalization etc.) risks forcing a narrative, which foregoes the artworks themselves. He sees a conflict between the essence of art – with its openness to meanings and truths – and the desire to create unities and heterogeneous narratives out of the exhibition by persuading the audience into one single understanding (Ferguson 1996: 187). Although White's subject is history and Ferguson's is artworks, the basis can be seen to be the same. The exhibition (or in White's objective, history) attempts a narrative closure or synthesis even though this totality is a fiction (Greenberg et al 1996: 1). Ferguson claims that where meanings are not given, representation will always be in crisis. This crisis of representation can be seen as a freedom embodying the potential to deconstruct some of the codes of the exhibition, with the ultimate aim of creating new kinds of exhibitions and new kinds of audiences (Ferguson 1996: 186).

The museum of the real

The museum has been characterized as a "narrative machine or performance", which is centered on the display and reenactment of cultural stories for the participating visitor (Bennett 1990: 179). "Exhibitionary narratives" (Lewi 2003: 57) are thus narratives that work with "the visual and spatial organization of real things and places" (Lewi 2003: 57). Cultural theorist Mieke Bal further argues that museums work through rhetorics with the intention of making things "real, true, present or otherwise reliable" (Bal 1980: 5). Mieke Bal makes this discursive view on the museum explicit:

> "If there is anything that would differentiate the "new" museology from the
> "old", or plain museology, it is the idea that a museum is a discourse, and
> exhibition an utterance within that discourse. (..) such a perspective deprives

the museal practice of its innocence, and provides it with the accountability
it and its users are entitled to." (Bal 1996: 214)

Bal uses rhetorics and narratology to understand how the museum speaks (Bal 1996: 208) and in particular to understand how the order of things in a museum is far from coincidental (Bal 1996: 214). Such an understanding works on two levels: Both on the level of the curation of an exhibition: "The discursive strategies put into place by the curators" – and on the level of perception: "the process of making meaning that these strategies suggest to the visitor." (Bal 1996: 208). The central questions to ask in any exhibition in order to find out which meanings it conveys and which audiences it constructs are according to Ferguson: "Who speaks TO and FOR WHOM and UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS as well as WHERE and WHEN the particular utterance occurs." (Ferguson 1996: 183). These circumstances are, according to Ferguson, central for the creation and maintenance of meanings and identities in an exhibition.

National and cultural identities

If "exhibitions are the primary site of exchange in the political economy of art" (Greenberg et al 1996: 1), museums are political institutions and thereby socially responsible (Ferguson 1996: 182). A whole discourse within museum studies addresses the imbalances in the museum's representations of racial, national, cultural or gender identities, and advocates for more nuanced representations (Preziosi & Farago 2004: 2). Sebnem Yücel Young, researcher in cultural identity in architecture, analyzes in 'Curating the nation: Turkish pavilions in world expositions' how world expositions have always been used for the construction of national and cultural identities (Young 2009: 195). While the expositions brought nations together in one place, it also made clear divisions between them conceptually: "From the placement of display grounds to the representations of other cultures, the world was hierarchically categorized into a modern, progressive West and its others" (ibid: 193). Analyzing representations of oriental identity, Young finds that "the binaries that oriental identity is built upon continue to affect representations of Turkey in world expositions (..) east-west, traditional-modern continue to be the keywords for or against which new representations are constructed" (ibid: 195). Her analysis is interesting as an example of how national identities are created and upheld through exhibition rhetorics. As will be seen later

in the analysis, not only world expositions but also the Architecture Biennale and its national pavilions continue to maintain the idea of constructing national identities in the exhibition. But the Architecture Biennale also holds the potential to challenge this idea: After all, the exhibition is a place in which "signification is constructed, maintained and occasionally deconstructed." (Greenberg et al 1996: 2).

Exhibiting architecture

The exhibition is contemporary art's main medium, its way of communicating itself since the exhibition is where a public encounters art. Furthermore, the way art is talked about, perceived and debated in criticism is to a great extent determined by exhibitions (Ferguson 1996: 176-177). And as exhibitions are located in the intersection between artists, art institutions and the public, they function as the place where the meaning of art and its relationship to the world is constantly defined and changed again through contemplation, education and aesthetic pleasure (Merincola 2006: 9). With this in mind let's try one of these sentences again, now with architecture: The way architecture is talked about, perceived and debated in criticism is to a great extent determined by exhibitions. Or: The exhibition is essential to architecture – it is contemporary architecture's main medium, its way of communicating itself since the exhibition is where a public encounters architecture. Why is this not true for architecture? First of all because architecture communicates itself: "A picture can simply be shown, but architecture is something that imposes its presence on people." (Portoghesi in Levy and Menking 2010: 38). There exists, at least potentially, a possibility of direct communication between people and architecture in a way that perhaps isn't possible in the case of art (ibid: 37). Why exhibit architecture when it (at least potentially) can be experienced in "real life"?

Exhibiting social responsibility

Architecture's close link with urbanity (as previously elaborated in chapter 1) makes it potentially more directly "political" than an art exhibition. Feireiss believes the architecture exhibition has both a cultural and a social mission (Feireiss 2001: 10). English art critic and architecture historian Jane Rendell argues that when art is moved out of the exhibition and into public space, it opens up for new exchanges between art and architecture; "Art has to engage with the kinds of restraints and controls to which only architecture is usually subject." (Rendell 2006: 4). This displacement from the exhibition to public space gives public art a critical potential,

which it lends from its new obligation to take on 'functions' like architecture: "…the arts have always been attracted to architecture because of its inherent socially responsible, functional aspects." (ibid: 3). Implicitly in this idea lies a differentiation between art and architecture, which is based on ideas of function as opposed to pure creativity. It confirms a view on architecture as "closer to society" given its functional, responsible and urban character. When the protests against the Venice Art Biennale in '68 resulted in the Architecture Biennale, this was also a statement that linked architecture to society and social responsiveness in a way that the Art Biennale – and thus art – presumably could not. But if art, when moved into public space, becomes public art, what happens to architecture when moved into the exhibition? Does it become exhibition architecture, aestheticized architecture to look at but not to touch or walk around in? However socially embedded, architecture exhibitions frequently exhibit architecture in a monographic and monumental way, which is often criticized for being frozen and sustaining a narrative in which the architect is seen as a hero or an almighty "creator" (David 2001: 59). The architecture exhibition in this interpretation approaches the traditional art exhibition[11] as the projects on display are elevated to a state of art (Lootsma 2001: 17). So while architecture is more commonly experienced as an integrated part of society than art given its functional character, there is a long way from this to understanding architecture *exhibitions* as related to social and political processes. In the best case, it is argued that "exhibitions can contribute to a re-reading of architecture and urbanism from the perspective of its (non-European) edges, margins and limits." (David 2001: 60), but this demands a repositioning of the task of the exhibition itself. By extending the method and analysis of the architecture exhibition, it could come to include other places where architecture and urbanity are about logics of occupation and exclusion (ibid: 60), rather than waterfront developments and new contemporary art museums. The 7th Biennale 'Less aesthetics more ethics', described in chapter 1, can function as an example of such an approach to exhibiting architecture where the narrative is structured around many voices and narratives rather than just one.

---

[11] Which, in this thesis, is considered indeed as traditional in order to juxtapose the art and architecture exhibition in a polemic way. Naturally, many artists and art exhibitions have for a long time left the tradition of seeing the artist as creator.

Historically architecture exhibitions were held in museums for visual or applied art. This influenced how architecture exhibitions were made, and that influence continues implicitly today (Lootsma 2001: 17). As mentioned, the exhibition is the primary communicative medium for the arts, whereas for architecture the use of and need for exhibitions is more complex. However in 1979, the year before the first Architecture Biennale in Venice, ICAM (International Confederation of Architecture Museums)[12] was founded. The reason was that an increasing number of architectural museums as individual institutions emerged. Today the organization includes architecture museums, centers and collections, all institutions with the purpose of promoting "better understanding of architecture." (icam-web.org). The increasing number of architecture museums and centers is a development that seems to run parallel with the emergence of the Architecture Biennale in 1980. It is essential for the development of architectural exhibition-practices that separate institutions for exhibiting architecture are emerging; they shape a new framework for exhibiting architecture as they remove it from the art-context, just as the Architecture Biennale did when establishing itself independently of the Art Biennale. With these independent institutions for exhibiting architecture, independent voices and utterances also occur. And independent ways to display and represent architecture occur independently of art exhibitions as the field of curating architecture is developing. Although less established than the narratives told in the history of art, architecture is building up its own narratives.

Conclusion leading towards the next steps

By considering the exhibition as an utterance, the above presented a critical approach to the exhibition. It outlines why it is of central importance to look at a system of senders, receivers and narratives. Although exhibiting art is different from exhibiting architecture, Ferguson's theory of the exhibition as an utterance can also help to read the architecture exhibition. To further understand how the architecture exhibition establishes itself independently of the art exhibition, the following sections will elaborate on the issues of representation, curation and experience in the exhibition. Representation is related to the exhibition as an utterance in a double sense: as institutional representation, as described in the above, but also on the direct

---

[12] ICAM is affiliated to ICOM (International Council of Museums)

level of the exhibition, where it raises questions about the relationship between architecture and its possible representations. Curation is essential to any exhibition's ordering of things, and as Mieke Bal showed, this order is far from coincidental: Where Ferguson is particularly interested in the exhibition's "who's", its voices, the element of curation introduces the exhibition's "how's". Finally, the level of experience is a central part of the utterance. Barthes argues that a narrative cannot take place without a reader or a listener (Barthes 1975: 260). In this case, an exhibitionary narrative cannot take place without a viewer.

REPRESENTATION:
ARCHITECTURE MODELS AND THE CASE OF HERZOG & DE MEURON

Figure 5. Herzog & de Meuron 'no. 250. Eine ausstellung' at the Tate Modern 2006

The starting point of this section is a comparison between the traditional relation between art and representation, and architecture exhibitions and representation. Although discourses on art have long ago left the idea of art as a copy of reality, the question of architectural representation in exhibitions is still establishing its autonomy from "real" architecture.

Mimesis and the relation with the real

Representation refers to the use of signs; that something stands for something else. It can be understood in a political sense, as elaborated in the previous section, but it can also be associated with the arts. In the arts, mimesis (or representation) traditionally relates to the relationship between art and reality (Hänsli 2008: 14). Plato sees art as an imitation of an imitation. Before the artwork, two levels of existence are more real: the Forms themselves, and the things of daily life. The latter are not ultimately real as they are not timeless or unchanging as Forms are – he distinguishes between the Form of the bed initially created by a God, the bed that the carpenter "reproduces" from this original bed, and finally the bed that the artist imitates as an imitation of appearance (the carpenter's version) rather than truth (the

god's version) (Plato: 14-25). Underlying this is the assumption that the purpose of art is to imitate reality. Aristotle also sees art as imitation. But rather than seeing art as imitating the real world, art in his conception represents the *possible*, things as they could be (Aristotle: 26-39). The realm of art is thus not to copy the real but to mark its difference from it: We can learn from artistic representation exactly because it is not real (Wartenberg 2007: 26).

Plato and Aristotle's writings mostly concern the art forms of painting, literature and sculpture. But also architectural representation is traditionally associated with the concept of mimesis (Gleiniger 2008: 31). The goal of architectural representation was traditionally to depict the concepts and ideas of a future building as true to reality as possible (Gleiniger 2008: 31). Today, visual simulation is no longer about the imitative reproduction of architecture but has taken on a life of its own. The expanded concept of mimesis includes depiction, representation, expression, and sensual visualization of reality – all of these describe the relation between artwork and reality. Not as a copy of reality, but as a production-creative relation (Hänsli 2008: 25). These new forms of representation "are concerned with communicating a vision, an experience of the prospective." (Gleiniger 2008: 31) The architecture exhibition seems to embody a form of representation capable of encompassing the communication of a vision, an experience of the prospective. This builds on Aristotle's view on artistic representation as a depiction of the possible and relates particularly well to the architecture exhibition, which in the prospective exhibition (of visions or unbuilt projects) creates new images of reality rather than copying existing one.

From function to representation

Contemporary art is no longer about accurately representing reality – the imitation theory was put out of play by abstract and conceptual art (Wartenberg 2007: 12). But how do architectural representations fit into this picture? Although it has long ago been acknowledged that architectural photography is more than just a depiction of a building, the same doesn't seem as acknowledged for the relation between architectural reality and the architecture exhibition, in which models are expected to look like the buildings they depict, places are supposed to have an equivalent in "reality" and proportions are expected to fit. Or are they? And if the architecture exhibition doesn't fulfill these criteria, what then is its relation to real architecture?

An exhibition at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, 'Architecture and Its Image', explored in 1989 the issue of architectural representation: "The exhibition invites viewers to look not only through these representations to the objects they depict but also at the representations themselves and the ways in which they convey information, ideas, and attitudes about architecture." (Lambert in Blau & Kaufman (eds.) 1989: 9) This exhibition looked critically at representation and took as its starting point the recurrent issue: That architecture itself cannot be placed inside the museum space.

When architecture is transferred to the museum, it ceases to be (living, functioning) architecture and becomes something else, a representation. Therefore, many architects and curators point in the interviews by Levy & Menking to the difficulty of exhibiting architecture and the inherent contradictions that lies in an architecture exhibition.

The architectural artifact

Baratta's simple but central question – when you cannot show real architecture, what do you show? (Baratta in Levy and Menking 2010: 182) – is answered through the architectural artifact as representation. These artifacts can be everything from sketches, plans and models to artistic photographs, architecture books and 3D visualizations. Drawings and models are assumed to present architecture because they are taken to be architecture's representation (Benjamin 2005: 108). They are substitutes that contribute to the creation of an architectural effect or quality, a sort of reconstruction process where the curator and later the viewer puts all these substitutes together to form an understanding of architecture (Lootsma 2001: 16). Dutch architect Bart Lootsma argues that this process of putting together architecture-like fragments to create an image of a building or a piece of a city is similar to the process in which architecture comes into existence (Lootsma 2001: 16). This points to a similarity between the condition of the architecture exhibition and the architectural process in general. Architectural practice is always mediated: In every stage of the process the architect is working with another material, another scale and another context than the final building (Blau 2010: 38). Representation, in other words, is an essential element of producing, not just showing, architecture.

<u>Models in architecture exhibitions</u>

The model and its potential in conveying architecture is an essential part of architectural representation. Of all architectural artifacts, the model is the most accessible one due to its three-dimensionality and its seemingly objectivity, which gives the public the impression of "understanding" architecture (Cohen 2001: 32). But the model seen only as representation of the final state of a project undermines its potential: "Shifting the model from an elemental object within an exhibition to the structure of the exhibition itself, allows the model to operate autonomously. Rather than the model being presented as an artifact of a process, the installation as model offers far more to the exhibition of architecture." (Macken 2007: 84). Macken suggests an exhibition that does not depend on the model as direct miniature representation, but uses the idea of the model to create a full-scale installation, to offer more than just the illusion of understanding – through overlooking – architecture. This would offer an actual investigation into architectural space: "Rather than being a simulation or representation of a particular building, the exhibition can be a space of integrity separate from the object-like displays of architecture's by-products" (Macken 2007: 85). Using the "idea of the model", given that its object-like display method is transcended, also points to the importance of giving the viewer a spatial experience of architecture:

> "Unlike drawings, models allow one to get away from the geometric projections or fixed perspectival views (..). They offer the visitor a synthetic vision of the relations between inside and outside, between site and buildings, or between the different facades. They simulate, in a way, the interior circulation without which no architectural experience is possible"
> (Cohen 2001: 30)

In the light of increasing use of screens and animations, the model still insist on a tactile quality (ibid: 31). But its tactile qualities are only legitimized if the model exceeds the function of simple representation of a final state of a project; "Their [the models] future presence in exhibitions and collections will only be rewarding if they remain a three-dimensional interpretation of the founding principles of architecture and not a discourse closed in on itself." (ibid: 32) In the Danish exhibition, which will be analyzed later, an example of a model, which does not give more than an overview and documentation, will be highlighted.

Figure 6. Model of Ørestad in the Danish Pavilion 2010

<u>The example of Herzog & de Meuron</u>

In 'Natural History' art historian Philip Ursprung looks at ways of representing in the 1851 World Exhibition. He traces the roots of exhibiting and representing as a specifically capitalist system of representation, a system still present today, back to this event (Ursprung 2005: 25-27). He looks at this capitalist system of representation in the light of Herzog & de Meuron's architecture, trying to discover why their architecture exhibitions provide tangible alternatives to such a way of exhibiting (Ursprung 2005: 35). Ursprung sees the potential in the exhibition to explore alternative ways of representation. As opposed to the spectacle-like modes of representation, Ursprung analyzes how Herzog & de Meuron seeks "…a form of representation that can cope with the complexity and dynamism of the current situation and is thus, by definition, oriented towards the future." (Ursprung 2005: 25) According to Herzog & de Meuron, the reality of architecture is not built architecture; rather architecture creates its own reality and is therefore an autonomous entity comparable to painting and sculpture (Ursprung 2005: 35). "Because of its [the World Exhibition] obsession with the finished product, the spectacle makes no provision for exhibiting the 'reality of architecture'" (Ursprung 2005: 35) Herzog & de Meuron shifts the relation between representation and reality

by seeing reality as something, which can also be created in the exhibition. Daniel Libeskind similarly sees the architecture exhibition as "giving reality to architecture in its experimental form." (Libeskind 2001: 66). The exhibition is an investigative process "whose results are just as original and as precise as those some call 'real' architecture" (Liebeskind 2001: 66).

Conclusion: Turning representation upside down

The question posed in the beginning of this section - if the architecture exhibition represent portray architecture as it looks in reality, what is its relation to real architecture? – is counteracted by Macken and Cohen's theories about the architecture model, and by Herzog & de Meuron's exhibition practice. They stress the importance of creating something different from reality, or even another reality, in the architecture exhibition. The anti-thesis to representation is described as something, which comes into existence on its own. Hereby, literal representation with its object-like, dead exhibitions is transcended. Functional architecture becomes "reduced" to a sign when it is represented, but this representational sign in turn seeks to function in a way of its own.

CURATING:
THE ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION AS EXPERIMENT AND THE CASE OF OMA

Figur 7: OMA exhibition 'Cronocaos' at the Venice
Architecture Biennale 2010

This section takes its starting point in tendencies in the development of curating and the curator. Essentially, perhaps, the curator's task is to give people "some sort of alphabet for reading what they see, but cannot quite decide" (Bauman in O'Neill 2007: 24). In this lies also that the curator to some extent can decide what the audience is to see.

Etymological and practical changes in curating

It is only relatively recently that a theory on exhibiting and curating has emerged[13]. The words 'curation' and 'curating' have yet to enter the dictionary (Ferguson 1996: 176). Nevertheless, the etymological change from the passive 'curator' to the active 'curating' indicates a shift from collecting to interpreting: "new words, after all, especially ones as grammatically bastardized as the verb 'to curate' (worse still the adjective 'curatorial') emerge from a linguistic community's persistent need to identify a point of discussion" (Alex Farquharson in O'Neill 2007: 15). The word

---

[13] See Paula Marincola 2006, Paul O'Neill 2007 and Hans Ulrich Obrist 2010 who all write about curating as a field of enquiry within the arts.

curator is etymologically synonymous with *keeper* (the zoo and the museum developed simultaneously). This word emphasizes the functions and disciplines of collecting, not exhibiting, and the idea of possession, not interpretation (Ferguson 1996: 176-77). Today these tasks are only secondary whereas the issue of display, with all that it implies of creative interpretation and communication with the public, is central for the modern curator. O'Neill argues that the act of curating cannot be separated from the artistic production, as this would ignore the interdependence of these two practices in cultural production (O'Neill 2007: 14). The curator has thus gone from curator to creator or *auteur*, who represents the world through a wide scope of media (Chaplin & Stara 2009: 1). The curator also has an administrative role; he or she must set a conceptual framework, select specialists, direct and consult, publish a catalogue and perform various other tasks that are related to displaying today (Heinich & Pollak 1996: 233-235). With this emerged a curatorial criticism that focused on the role of the curator in creating an exhibition and on the subject of curating itself rather than the objects on display (O'Neill 2007: 13). This tendency established curating as "a potential nexus for discussion, critique and debate" (ibid: 13). This also extended the potential of the exhibition as a medium, which came to incorporate a more discursive geo-political discussion (ibid: 13).

Curating the architecture exhibition

> "A didactic concept is of paramount importance when presenting architecture, even more so than when presenting art." (Lootsma 2001: 17)

The field of curating architecture is an even newer branch of an already new field. There exists no real education in the field, and none of the curators of the Architecture Biennale have received formal curatorial training (Levy in Levy & Menking 2010: 16). More often than in the case of artists curating art exhibitions, it is architects themselves who curate architecture (Kossak 2009: 17), as if the field belonged more to an extended architectural practice than anything else. Rules that apply to curating art will have to be redefined and extended when displaying architectural agendas and interest, ambitions and obsessions. Two circumstances are here claimed to be particular for the curation of the architecture exhibition: The exhibition as an experiment and as a substitution of reality.

<u>Curating the experiment</u>

The architecture exhibition can roughly be curated either as documentation of a finished work or as an experiment in which the exhibition is used as a laboratory for future projects or possibilities[14]. In the case of the latter, the architecture exhibition can provide a testing ground for architectural research; it can experiment with un-imagined, un-tested and un-established architectural propositions (Kossak 2009: 17). The architects test the relationship between viewers and objects through material, scale and representation (Dean 2009: 130). It is especially as such that the architecture exhibition is previously argued to be of importance for architectural culture, both imagined and concrete.

For Herzog & de Meuron, the function of their exhibitions is summarized by Philip Ursprung: "They stress that for them exhibitions of architecture are like a test run." (Ursprung 2005: 21) A similar and yet different approach is found at Reem Koolhaas' office OMA. OMA posit themselves explicitly in relation to curating art: "a simple sequence of drawings or models (..) presented chronologically, for instance, probably wouldn't be an OMA project. That would be a work by a museum curator or an architecture critic. Our exhibitions, (..) want to go beyond a purely architectonic realm and incorporate, again like architecture, other significant factors that affect architectural work" (Kayoko Ota 2010: 142). Although not working explicitly with the laboratory-idea, OMA sees the exhibition as an opportunity to apply architectural thinking to nonarchitectural matters (ibid: 141). This makes the exhibition different from the art exhibition because it goes beyond the shown – it deals with architectural *thinking* and not explicitly with architecture – and thereby becomes an experiment with the boundaries and potentials of the exhibition as a medium.

<u>Curating the substitute reality</u>

Where art is today re-centered around the "event of the exhibition" (Bauman in O'Neill 2007: 24) which means that art is primarily experienced through temporary experiences and events, and only ex-temporally by the value of the art work it self (O'Neill 2007: 24), architecture finds itself in a totally different situation in which the exhibition is only a secondary mode through which architecture can be perceived. An exhibition – whether of art or architecture – is always a dislocation as it removes

---

[14] See Kossak 2009, Podrecca 2001 or the exhibition practice of Herzog & de Meuron as described by Philip Ursprung 2005.

objects from their original context. It will always be a non-reality or at best a different reality (Podrecca 2001: 54). What is particular about the architecture exhibition is that it must be curated in a way that acknowledges this, that goes beyond it by applying it to a new context to "test its extended resistance, its general significance" (ibid: 54). And despite this resistance, the exhibition is never capable of actually evoking the experience of the building or piece of city for the spectator. Instead the architectural effect is obtained through different techniques, each of which contributes to the reconstruction the visitor pieces together in his mind (Lootsma 2001: 16). The work of an architecture curator is thus also about creating this architectural effect, about reestablishing a relationship between architecture, the world and the visitor. OMA sees the architecture exhibition as a "medium for having the world engaged in its world" (Ota 2010: 141).

Figure 8. OMA exhibition 'Cronocaos' at the
Venice Architecture Biennale 2010

Concretely, some of the techniques the curator of an architecture exhibition can employ to "substitute" reality are factual information (texts and drawings), background information (cultural and social context of the project, also often communicated through text), and details and materials (models, "real" fragments of architecture, animations). Together, these might create an architectural effect

despite the absence of "real architecture". Herzog & de Meuron, in reflecting on these architectural substitutes, ask:

> "But even so, is there a way of presenting, exhibiting and putting things together, which would allow us to achieve more than a simple accumulation of documents? (…) is it possible in an exhibition room to constitute a place, which, similar to a building site as it exists outside in the town, might be a reality for itself, and which at the same time reflects the reality of the documented building?" (Zaugg 1996: 43)

If "visual effect, display and narrative are central to any curated exhibition" (O'Neill 2007: 25) these must be worked with excessively in the architecture exhibition where the exhibited object is first dislocated from its original/intended surroundings, then put in the exhibition through representations, and then curated in a way that can somehow re-invoke the spatiality of the building and its surroundings in order to constitute a place of its own.

As opposed to this stands the exhibition as a post-factum documentation. Although "..today everyone tries to avoid the boredom of using conventional media of an architectural exhibition (..) drawings, sketches, or models are actually tricky materials to deal with" (ibid: 147), this kind of exhibition is also frequently seen because "finding ways to turn 2D communication – drawings and other graphic representations – into a viable presence in the 3D space of an exhibition is not always easy" (ibid: note). So the architecture curator must work with a didactic concept, as pointed out in the quote by Lootsma in the beginning of this section, which is even stronger in the architecture exhibition than the art exhibition. This is perhaps also what led Baratta to say that the problem with the architecture exhibition is that the curator is often *too* present (Baratta in Levy & Menking 2010: 181).

<u>Conclusion: Curating the architecture exhibition as a place of its own</u>
If the art exhibition is curated as a coherent narrative that tells a story about or through art, the architecture exhibition is more often curated as an experiment on architecture's behalf, or as a reflection over the relationship between architecture as experienced in real life, and architecture as experienced in the exhibition. O'Neill

argued in the beginning of this section that new tendencies in curating has established curating as "a potential nexus for discussion, critique and debate" (O'Neill 2007: 13). It has been argued throughout this section that this is even more so the case for the architecture exhibition, which through its recent entrance into the field of curating has expanded both the field of curating and of architectural practices. If curating architecture exhibitions in particular ways can give rise to critique and debate, this can be used deliberately to make the architecture exhibition part of architectural practice. When curated as an experiment or a "substitute reality" in which architectural effects are evoked, the exhibition can come to constitute an architectural place of its own.

EXPERIENCE:
THE INSTALLATION AND THE SUBJECT MATTER OF ARCHITECTURE

Figure 9. A picture from 'Dutchville – Feel the city' an exhibition at the NAi from July 1st 2011, which invites its audience to explore their love-hate relationship to the urban environment

This section turns to the viewer's experience in the architecture exhibition. Based on theory relating to experience in art exhibitions, it will outline differences in experiencing exhibitions, experiencing real architecture and finally architecture inside the exhibition.

Exhibition analysis

As previously mentioned, any exhibition subscribes to the logic of a sender and a receiver (Ferguson 1996). An analysis must therefore also focus on what public the exhibition appeals to, and how it makes itself accessible to this. Is it authoritarian, a monologue, democratic, a dialogue, commercial? (Gade 2006: 22). Ferguson believes that exhibitions dictate which audiences they need in order to sustain their messages. The exhibition inflicts its audience by its mode of addressing (Gade 2006: 22), which can be seen as constituted by the selection of objects and the narrative constructed. The objects and the narrative are usually closely interlinked because the selection is made in order to communicate something (Gade 2006: 23). But a speech act is never complete in it self and is partly constructed by its receivers. The utterances depend on an audience to understand its significances (Ferguson 1996: 186). Meanings are only produced in context in a collective and consensual process (ibid: 186). But through informative material such as texts on the exhibition walls, titles as well as catalogues, the curator seeks to direct the individual experience. However, an analysis has to incorporate the sensing and moving body of the viewer,

which will perhaps also find its own trajectory (Gade 2006: 35). It is therefore also necessary to focus on the spatial dimension – there are other ways of experiencing than the purely visual one (Gade 2006: 35).

German philosopher Gernot Böhme questions in 'Atmosphere as the subject matter of architecture' whether seeing is really the true means of perceiving architecture? Is it rather feeling it? These questions relate to the fact that architecture, even more than shaping matter, shapes (invisible) space (Böhme 2005: 399). Thus, architecture cannot truly be a part of the visual arts because you cannot see space. If space is genuinely experienced by being in it, and if changes of perspective and focal point are those visual means that are best suited for experiencing space, there is only one problem: Seeing is not a sense that defines being-in-something; rather it defines difference and distance. The sense for being-in-something is, according to Böhme, mood. By feeling our own presence we feel the space in which we are present, we feel its atmosphere (ibid: 402).

The installation

In 'The art of architecture exhibitions', Feireiss comments on some strategies to engage the viewer emotionally: There must be an alternation between concentration and relaxation, entertainment and information. One of the purposes of providing such an experience is to "develop an awareness of architecture and to become interested in spatial issues based on their own physical experience." (Feireiss 2001: 13). The installation in particular offers this kind of direct spatial experience (ibid: 13).

The art installation is a genre within art, which has explicitly stressed another way to experience art than the purely visual one. Some basic characteristics highlight this (Kossak 2009: 118-119): The art installation is site specific: It works within a given spatial, institutional, cultural framework and often transforms these in one way or another. It is spatial: It functions in relation to the given space and creates new relations in it/to it. How it is perceived: The installation is based on subjective perception – one moves around freely, unguided as opposed to in more two-dimensional exhibitions. The perception takes the form of experience as the viewer is invited to move from spectator to participant. And finally its temporality: The installation (in contrast to the permanent nature of architecture) ceases to be an

installation when it is no longer installed. The art installation approaches architecture by essentially being about space and thus by inviting a spatial rather than visual experience. Florian Kossak shows how the art installation is indebted to architecture in its appropriation of architectural precepts (Kossak 2009: 118). But it is also possible to turn this around and look at how the art installation in turn has made architecture exhibitions aware of these architectural precepts. Building up an architecture exhibition as an installation, as will later be analyzed in the case of the Dutch exhibition, seems like a move *away* from displaying architecture as art, towards displaying architecture with architecture.

<u>Experiencing architecture in everyday life</u>

The Danish architect and theoretician Steen Eiler Rasmussen defines architecture as applied art in 'Experiencing Architecture'. The basic characteristic of architecture is that it serves a practical purpose. It shapes an outer frame around our lives, a frame that is shaped to be used and lived in, not "just" looked at (as opposed to art) (Eiler Rasmussen 1959: 10). Walter Benjamin describes two ways of perceiving architecture: Optically and tactically. The first is inscribed into human life through the visual; the latter is automatically inscribed through social every-day practice: Buildings are received in a twofold manner: by use and by perception, tactically and optically (Benjamin in Reeh 2006: 102). You orient yourself visually, but you treat space tactically as a matter of moving around.

Rasmussen compares architecture to art, but distinguishes architecture because of its functional character. Benjamin divides the perception of architecture into two modes, which are comparable to Rasmussen's. Where the optical mode of perception is visual, like most art is experienced according to Rasmussen, the tactical mode is defined by use and functions. Whereas vision is traditionally favoured as a mode of perception and architecture ascribed to the realm of visual arts by Hegel (Böhme 2005: 399), both Rasmussen and Benjamin stress the tactical relation with architecture, which is instigated by architecture's link with everyday life. Both point to ways of experiencing (real) architecture, which can be helpful in deciding what kind of architectural experience the architecture exhibition gives.

<u>Architectural effect on stage</u>

Exhibitions of architecture will naturally not be experienced like architecture, because the buildings are neither liveable nor functional. Furthermore, the exhibition as a medium points to the notion of reflection and contemplation (Gade 2006: 27), and an idealization of knowledge through vision (Ferguson 1996: 176, Böhme 2005: 399). The experience of architecture in the exhibition is thus likely to become more visual than tactical. Or rather, it is a mediated experience that places itself somewhere in between the optical and the tactical. Architect and curator Boris Podrecca mimics Benjamin and Rasmussen when he refers to two different cognitive systems that are activated in the exhibition: Simple observation and action, or conscious judgment and participation (Podrecca 2001: 54). One of the potentials of the architecture exhibition is thus to stage an experience of architecture that incorporates both the mind and the body.

The recognition of the space of physical presence as the actual *subject matter of architecture* brings Böhme to conclude that architecture is close to stage design, in which there has always been an awareness of the atmospheres it creates. The architect could learn from the stage designer to create a new awareness of his art (Böhme 2005: 406).

On the one hand, Böhme's analogy with the stage designer and his practice could just as well be made with the curator of an architecture exhibition. As such, an architecture exhibition could be seen as a place where this architectural effect, the subject matter of architecture, is made even more explicit in the process of staging an architectural experience. On the other hand, the atmosphere in the exhibition space is not equivalent with the atmosphere of an exhibited building. If architecture belongs more to life than to art, as Böhme claims, the staged experience of architectural use might be beyond the capabilities of the architecture exhibition – a question, which will be raised again in the analysis of the Belgian exhibition.

<u>Conclusion: Bringing the architectural experience into the exhibition</u>

The investigation of the building and its construction, its scale and shape, does not depend on our physical presence. But to adjust our mood to the atmosphere of a space it is necessary to directly participate in this space (Böhme 2005: 403). One of the important things to incorporate in the analysis of experience in an exhibition

was according to Gade the sensing and moving body. By allowing the experience to happen through free movement rather than linear guidance, and through an alternation of entertainment and information, it is perhaps possible that the viewer – by putting together all the pieces of architecture's representations – will register architecture's presence through experience in or *despite* the exhibition, by constructing individual narratives rather than being persuaded by the exhibition's rhetorics.

APPROACHING A THEORY OF THE ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION //
APPROACHING A THEORY OF THE ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION: CONCLUSION

With a starting point in a reading of the exhibition as an utterance, the architecture exhibition and its conditions have been approached from different sides: Representation, curation and experience. Besides from establishing the architecture exhibition as a genre with its own conditions for and modes of display, it also systematized some of the components of the architecture exhibition and shed light on problems and potentials related to exhibiting architecture. Although architecture does not depend on the exhibition to be experienced, strictly speaking, it is suggested that to the extent that the exhibition is capable of creating something new with the architecture it exhibits, it can add to the experience of architecture and the urban. The above theoretical considerations and enquiries will in the following be perspectivized in light of three exhibitions at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2010.

CHAPTER 3 //
ANALYZING INTERPRETATIONS
OF THE ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION

ANALYZING INTERPRETATIONS OF THE ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION //
INTRODUCTION: ANALYZING EXHIBITIONS, ANALYZING URBANITIES?

The Danish, Belgian and Dutch exhibitions were chosen for this analysis because of a spontaneous reaction to their apparent differences. Although they were all supposed to exhibit – or so was my expectation – the state of the arts of their respective national architecture, I was surprised to find that only the Danish exhibition was about new architecture, while the Dutch was about the creative reuse of old buildings and the Belgian was hardly about architecture. These differences made me wonder about how these exhibitions could be seen as "national", and how different modes of display could convey such different ideas about architecture.

When this chapter sets out to analyze these three exhibitions of the Architecture Biennale 2010, it is also essential that they have been chosen among the national pavilions. The national part of the Biennale is composed by 56 national pavilions in the *Giardini*. Barrata, president of the Biennale, questions whether this tradition – that countries show their architectural "products" – is obsolete today. The national aspect is often criticized for giving momentum to self-promotion (Young 2009, Karsten Ifversen in interview). By looking at this national aspect and how it is employed differently, I wish to see how the exhibitions create urban and national identities through architecture. Young argues that trying to capture identity in architecture is almost impossible, but it can help to understand how nations want to represent themselves (Young 2009: 204).

By comparing these exhibitions, nothing definitive can be said about differences or similarities between Copenhagen, Brussels or Amsterdam as cities. But something

can be said about the images and signs they use to depict architecture. Roland Barthes stresses the importance of signification of urban space by focusing not only on data but also on symbols. Barthes notices a growing awareness of the functions of symbols in urban space (Barthes 1997: 167). Analyzing architecture exhibitions in the context of the Architecture Biennale by keeping in mind the symbolic function of architecture can be a way to read these exhibitions as images of urbanity. If "use never does anything but shelter meaning" (ibid: 174), these exhibitions can be analyzed and compared to reveal architectural and urban (self)representations. Comparing the images evoked by each of the exhibitions will qualify the analysis as each exhibition points to different interpretations of the architecture exhibition.

ANALYZING INTERPRETATIONS OF THE ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION //
METHODICAL INTRODUCTION AND READING GUIDE TO THE ANALYSIS

The Danish, Belgian and Dutch exhibition in the Architecture Biennale 2010 will be analyzed in the following. The analysis will work through three interrelated approaches: A phenomenological approach, a narrative approach and a theoretical approach. The phenomenological approach meets a need for a bodily sensibility in analyzing the various levels on which the exhibitions function. The narrative approach binds the empirical material of this thesis – interviews and exhibitions – together, as it allows for a constructive structuring of meanings in the interviews, which leads towards new understandings of the exhibitions. The theoretical approach binds the theoretical section with the empirical material by focusing the exhibition and interview analyses on interpretations of architecture and its place in the exhibition. With these approaches it will be possible to go behind the architecture exhibitions to analyze the voices speaking through them and the ideas about architecture and exhibitions, which they hereby convey.

Phenomenological analysis
The exhibition is not only seen, but experienced with the body, senses and individual presuppositions (Böhme 2005, Gade 2006), which is why a phenomenological aspect of the analysis is productive when analyzing the various levels of functioning of the exhibition. Therefore, my own experience of the exhibition and subjective analysis

hereof will be the starting point for each analysis. I am not pretending to be representative of the average viewer, but am aware of my particular interest in the phenomenon of the architecture exhibition. This approach can also be termed a "subtle realism", an approach which maintains a trace of realism in its epistemology but which is aware of the subjective position and the construction, which takes place in the gathering of knowledge (Hammersley 2002: 74). Rather than interviewing other visitors about their immediate experiences in the exhibition – experiences that can be difficult to reconstruct in an interview due to limitations of language, level of reflection and the relation between the interviewer and the interviewee (Polkingthorne 2007: 480) – I will use this subjective position to create new knowledge about the experience (Spry 2001: 713). This method is useful when aiming for an analytical sensibility without being persuaded by the exhibition's rhetorics (Gade 2006: 36).

Narrative analysis

I conducted qualitative research interviews with the curators of each exhibition and an expert in architecture critique (see appendix for all four interviews). The qualitative research interview is among other things characterized by seeking qualitative knowledge, focusing on specific themes without strictly structuring the conversation, and by seeking to interpret the meaning of what the interviewee says about these themes (Kvale 1994: 41-46). By analyzing the interviews, I will trace the interpretations of architecture and the exhibition, which lies behind each exhibition. The interviews will be subjected to a narrative analysis, where the themes in the interviews will be further elaborated in order to analyze the exhibitions. Going beyond the interview in order to find new meanings and structures in the said necessitates a recontextualization in a specific conceptual context (ibid: 199). Therefore, the interviews will be analyzed with the same perspective as laid out for the whole thesis in a constant differentiation between finding meaning and creating meaning of the interviews and the exhibitions (ibid: 197-206). The "story" created ad hoc from the interviews will be structured around the issues elaborated in the theoretical framework.

Analyzing with the theoretical framework

The analysis is structured around the four concepts of utterance, representation, curation and experience. The different concepts are not necessarily all present or

present in the same way or to the same extent in each analysis. This reflects the fact that the exhibitions are analyzed *with* these concepts rather than developed from them. While the development of these concepts has provided me with a language with which I can speak about and analyze the architecture exhibition, each reading will also be guided by its particular conditions for exhibiting architecture as they appear through the interviews and the phenomenological analysis. The four concepts are thus no template for analysis of an architecture exhibition, but a way to focus the perspective on the images and experiences of architecture and the urban created in the exhibitions and how they are used to create urban identities.

<u>Reading guide</u>

Each analysis will begin with a section presenting my own impressions of the exhibition, whereby the reader is also introduced to the exhibition's main elements as they appear, subjectively but without interpretation. The next section establishes the conditions under which each exhibition has been created. Through this section, the particular contextual and thematic starting point for each exhibition, which conditions its further development and specific interpretation of the architecture exhibition, will be analyzed. Following these two sections, a sequence of sections will be structured around the concepts of utterance, representation, curation and experience – concepts developed in the theoretical framework – in the order that best structures the analysis of each exhibition in order to highlight their respective specificities. Finally a comparative discussion of the three exhibitions and their ways of representing architecture and using the exhibition will point to a conclusion, which draws on both the theory and the analyses to answer the research questions.
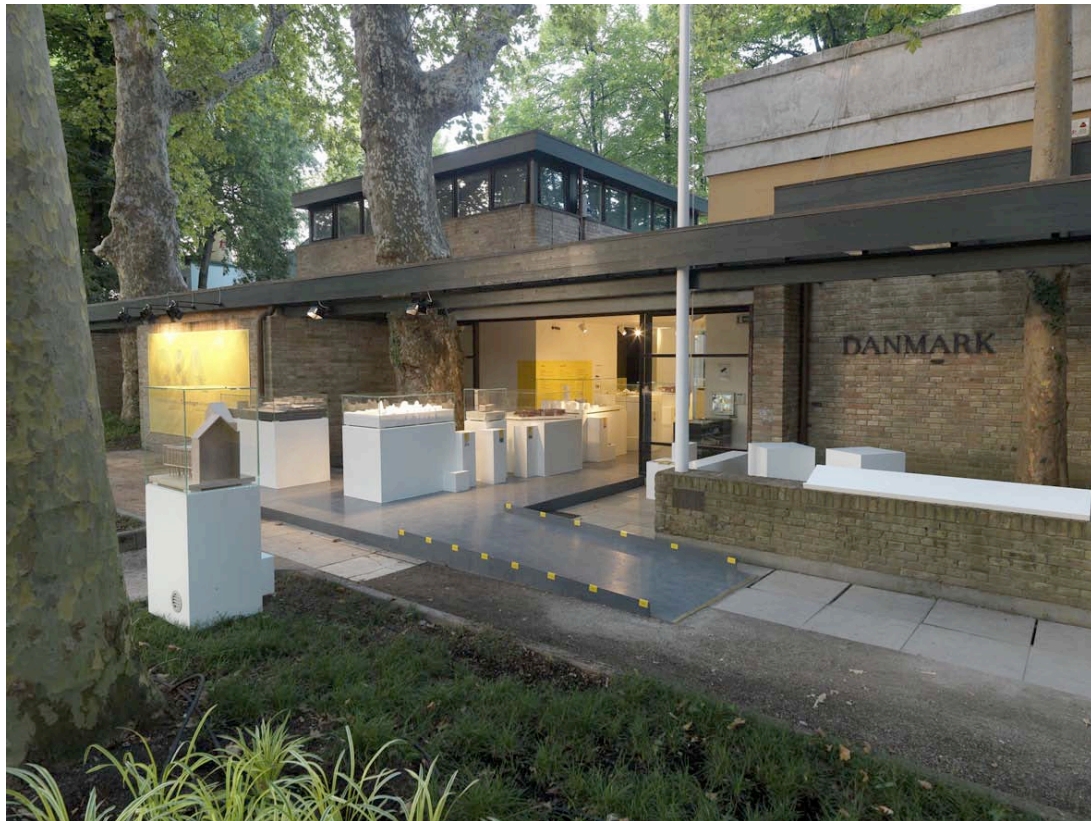
Figure 10. The Danish Pavilion

TITLE: Q&A: URBAN QUESTIONS_COPENHAGEN ANSWERS

COMMISSIONER: DANISH ARCHITECTURE CENTRE (APPOINTED BY THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE)

CURATOR: DANISH ARCHITECTURE CENTRE

Describing the first impressions of the exhibition

The first thing you meet in the exhibition is the 'catwalk' – a collection of models of new projects in Copenhagen by prominent Danish and international architects. Halfway along the catwalk, which goes straight through the building, you can either turn left to a room, which presents a 3D film, or turn right to a long and rectangular room with three large models of new city developments in Copenhagen, large photo prints on the walls and many screens. Large yellow captions mark the theme of each of the three projects as a question: "How do we create a completely new city district on the edge of nature_", "How do we transform a former industrial port into a dense and dynamic waterfront district_", and "How do we use a strategy of temporary interventions to create a new city within the city_". At a first glance it seems

difficult to understand the large city models as answers to the questions without any further information. Another row of screens on the left side of the room, not connected to the three models, poses further sub questions, which are answered by small movies about Copenhagen, portraying "normal" Copenhagen dwellers through questions such as: "How can we use architecture to add value to public space_" or "How can we stimulate the use of bicycles as an alternative to cars_".

Figure 10. Inside the Danish Pavilion – the three large city models

If you turn left instead of right at the catwalk, you find the 3D movie 'Loop City'. This movie presents yet another plan for the future development of Copenhagen as a 3D movie, drawing you into a spatial story. Finally the exhibition contains the "Digital Gallery" – an interactive platform from which the audience can dive into Copenhagen and all of its newest architecture. It is even possible to create your own e-magazine over architecture in Copenhagen. Like the 3D movie, this section of the exhibition has an engaging character, inviting you to go deeper into the answers given by Copenhagen.
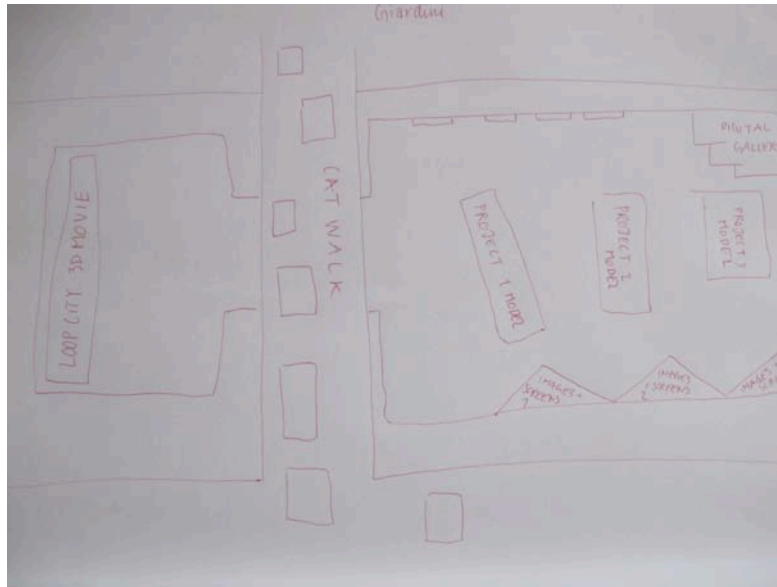
Figure 12. Draft of the spatial organization of the Danish exhibition

<u>Establishing the conditions for a Danish exhibition on architecture</u>

According to the press statement, the starting point for the exhibition is the drastic change that has taken place in Copenhagen during the last 10-15 years, where the city of Copenhagen has functioned as a "laboratory" for urban strategies and experiments. These drastic changes are made into material for an exhibition because they are seen as part of Copenhagen's "experience in how to create one of the world's most livable cities" (executive director at DAC Kent Martinussen in press statement[15]). The Biennale is seen as a platform to give an international audience insight into these Copenhagen experiences in finding "sustainable answers to how the city can create the framework for living in the 21st century" (Kent Martinussen, press statement). The press statement further explains that the ultimate aim of the exhibition is to inspire people to go to Copenhagen themselves to see the city with their own eyes, and to take the good examples with them home. The aim of the e-magazine is explained as creating an "inspiration guide" for visiting the city of Copenhagen (press statement). Based on the press statement the exhibition takes the shape of an introduction to the city of Copenhagen, its planning solutions and its architecture.

<u>Curating: Questions without question marks</u>

The Danish exhibition has the polemic title 'Q&A: Urban Questions_Copenhagen Answers'. The title indicates from the beginning that questions are raised but

---

[15] http://www.dac.dk/visArtikel.asp?artikelID=6536

answers also given. The title is divided into two: The more general part: Urban Questions – and the more specific part: Copenhagen Answers. We thus understand that the questions are of a general kind, whereas 'Copenhagen Answers' can be understood in two ways, as a noun or as a verb: Either that Copenhagen has *the* answer, or that Copenhagen proposes *a* possible answer. In the commissioner's statement, Kent Martinussen stresses that Copenhagen is not *the* answer to the questions posed, but that the exhibition promotes the concept of the "thinking city", defined as "a city that insists on responding to the new urban questions" (Commisioners statement[16]). However, the double meaning in the title can also indicate – perhaps contrary to the curator's intentions – that the questions serve to generalize what is actually specific.

Questions also seem to be the structuring element in the exhibition: Questions introduce each topic linked to the three city models and the other screens. All questions are posed without question marks but only with a _ between question and answer. A visual choice, which serves to confirm the second reading: That the questions are posed mainly in order to be able to give the answers. Where meanings are not given, representation will be in crisis – a crisis, which can be seen as freedom (see Ferguson in chapter 2 'Utterance'). This could easily be retermed as 'where answers are not given, representation will be in crisis'. But the Danish exhibition does give answers, and this makes the representation of Copenhagen very explicit.

Experiencing: How living is the lab of Copenhagen?

The exhibition is called "the living lab of Copenhagen"[17], and the three large city models are called "sustainable urban labs" (Press material). The use of the laboratory as metaphor indicates something, which is a work in progress but also something, which is new and exploratory. It was shown previously that the architecture exhibition could be curated either as documentation of a finished work or as an experiment in which the exhibition is used as a laboratory for future projects or possibilities (see chapter 2 'Curating').

The Danish exhibition seems closer to documenting than to experimenting. By presenting projects as answers, the exhibition makes finished works out of the

---

[16] http://english.dac.dk/visArtikel.uk.asp?artikelID=6486
[17] http://english.dac.dk/visEmneside.uk.asp?artikelID=6439

unfinished. In fact, two out of the three "sustainable urban labs" have hardly begun their construction, but this is not visible from the models or lively pictures. Furthermore, the exhibition does not give the visitor, who is not familiar with Copenhagen, a sense of the wide windy streets in Ørestad; and the model of Carlsberg does not distinguish between built and unbuilt, historic and new in its materials. The model freezes time and makes the urban a product of the plan rather than of the experiment. The buildings on the models "bear no vestige of time and weather. They are untouched by the gritty substances of urban life" (Busch 1991: 27). This makes them appear abstract and process-less. If the models presenting the city plans had been used in more experimental ways, the exhibition might have staged itself as a laboratory instead of just claiming to be one.

<u>Utterance: Who is the 'we' in the questions and who do they talk to?</u>

The Danish exhibition utters itself as a set of questions and answers, as explained in the above. The voices behind both questions and answers are the same: The Danish Architecture Centre and its curators. As an institutional voice, the Danish Architecture Centre's aim is to "disseminate information and share knowledge about the origins, present conditions and value of architecture, thus encouraging a broader recognition in society of the importance of high quality standards in the built environment". It is a national centre of architecture and a platform for professionals in the building trade[18]. As the commissioners and curators of the Danish Pavilion in Venice, it is perhaps not surprising that their exhibition focuses in a very direct sense of the word on *architecture*. In the press statement, the audience to which the exhibition aims is defined as architects, engineers, planners and developers.

But DAC is not the only voice, which utters itself through the exhibition. Tine Vindfeld explains that the Ministry of Culture appointed 75 percent less money than usual for the Danish contribution to the Biennale. Therefore they had to seek sponsors in order to make the exhibition. Among these were By og Havn, who are also the investors behind Ørestad. Carlsberg, the investors behind this development, also functioned as sponsors, as well as architects Polyform (responsible for the master plan in Nordhavn), who participated as co-curator. The exhibition was necessarily ripe with private interests: "There were many curators and many

---

[18] www.english.dac.dk

opinions about what the exhibition should encompass" (Interview with Vindfeld). By choosing the DAC as both commissioners and curators, it becomes difficult to challenge the idea of the national representation, but perhaps this was not even desired. By furthermore including the investors behind many of the projects on display as part of not just the financing but also the curation, the exhibition risks becoming very one-directional in its mode of display and messages.

Despite the strict definition of a professional target group in the press material, Tine Vindfeld points to another secondary target group: "The exhibition is also intended to work for "ordinary" people who stay in the exhibition for five or ten minutes." - "We asked ourselves how people are inspired, how inspiration works. In art exhibitions you distinguish between learning and experience as two poles. But people are slowly beginning to understand that you have to play in order to learn. If the aim is to inspire (as opposed to educate), which role does experience then play?" (Interview with Tine Vindfeld). For a non-professional audience, the exhibition thus aimed to inspire. The Digital Gallery can be seen as a way to engage this target group. By inviting people to gather an e-magazine of architecture in Copenhagen, which they could send to their e-mail, people were literally involved, although not to produce something *with* the exhibition but to consume something in it.

Utterance: National and urban identities

A central part of the utterance in the Danish exhibition is of course the staging of the national, the "Danish model of sustainability", as the press material identifies. Although DAC as an institution covers the national level, the title focuses on the urban level: 'Urban Questions_Copenhagen Answers'. In this way, the Danish Pavilion becomes the Copenhagen Pavilion. It can be argued that the Danish Pavilion finds a way to transgress the much-discussed national representation by essentially being about the city and not the country. One could even play with the idea of having City Pavilions in the Architecture Biennale instead of national, which would perhaps stimulate more nuances in the question of representation. The urban focus would stimulate more internationality than an attempt to delineate what 'Danish' architecture or a 'Danish' model of sustainability is. Rather than promoting a national identity, the Danish exhibition promotes an urban identity. It goes as far as to claim that many of the presented architectural solutions can be transferred to other urban realities. The 'Urban Questions' are staged as general challenges that

many cities meet. It further distinguishes itself by focusing on urban planning rather than on architecture as such. This reflects DAC's new strategy, which places city and landscape planning in focus[19]. Although the catwalk is a different narrative that points away from the urban planning focus (these models are gathered under the un-dialectical question 'How many masterpieces does a city need_'), the main room with the 3 city models, the screens, the big projected photos on the walls and the 3D movie almost stage a city within the exhibition space by focusing on liveability rather than simply on the physical infrastructure for living.

Representation: Exhibiting architecture's extra

A building is neither purely function nor art – it has a surplus of some kind. This particular double character of architecture makes Böhme conclude that architecture cannot be presented by visual means of display only. Architecture defines space, and space is experienced not by sight but by being in it, by feeling the atmosphere in it (see chapter 2 'Experience'). What Vindfeld refers to as architecture's extra can be seen in relation to what Böhme calls architecture's surplus. She expresses an interest in: "showing what cannot be seen out there but to communicate something *extra*" (Interview with Tine Vindfeld). Vindfeld divides this "extra" into what comes before architecture – the process of its creation – or what lies after – its perception. She is interested in communicating people's experiences with architecture and talks about this as a way to achieve polyphony in the exhibition (Interview with Tine Vindfeld). Therefore it is interesting that the Danish exhibition does not deal with architecture's extra – neither perception nor process is presented, only fixed models and screens.

Exhibiting Copenhagen as city or as exhibition: Conclusion leading to a final discussion

The Danish exhibition does little to represent architecture's extra or surplus. Where Vindfeld would have liked an exhibition with more voices about architecture's creation or reception in order to show aspects of architecture that could not be perceived when in direct physical contact with a building, Danish architecture critic Karsten Ifversen seems to believe that the architecture exhibition can avoid the paradox entirely by presenting architecture directly rather than representing it: "The ideal representation doesn't exist so if you know what you want to say, then

---

[19] http://www.dac.dk/visArtikel.asp?artikelID=5676

why not just present it instead of representing it?" (Interview with Ifversen). But this also seems ambiguous; for what seems not to work in the Danish exhibition is exactly the fact that it presents – and thus becomes too literal – instead of representing in the sense of creating something new. The projects in the Danish exhibition are so directly presented that it seems difficult both for the insider and the outsider to see what the exhibition *as exhibition* adds to the experience of Copenhagen or architecture in general. On the other hand, if the aim of the exhibition is to create an urban identity, the exhibition seems to work well as an urban strategy – in the commercial sense of the word – in evoking images of an ideal livable city. For the outside viewer these images become reality, and in that sense the exhibition creates an urban identity, which becomes reality to some.

THE BELGIAN PAVILION: USES/USURES

Figure 13. The Belgian Pavilion

TITLE: USUS / USURES

COMMISSIONER: MINISTRY OF LA COMMUNAUTÉ FRANÇAISE

AND WALLONIE-BRUXELLES INTERNATIONAL

CURATOR: ROTOR

Describing first impressions of the exhibition

The Belgian exhibition consists of displayed objects taken from existing buildings in Belgium; the handrail from a staircase, wooden seats from chairs in a public place, a piece of carpet from a hall, a piece of a stage. Besides from these architectural

objects, the exhibition also displays photographs of places where use is visible; "manmade" paths through a forest or worn signs on a street.

Figure 14. Photographs of wear displayed as part of the Belgian exhibition

Many of the fragments of materials, which are flat but seem 3-dimensional in their materiality, are hung in a way that resembles the presentation of paintings, and every piece is accompanied by a simple caption of black letters on white paper. As opposed to the gallery-like hanging of many of the fragments, the photographs are hung a bit out of sight so that from certain angles you only see the objects and not the pictures. Some of the fragments are also displayed in the middle of the floor, resembling very flat, minimalist sculptures. The largeness and the brightness of the rooms is striking, and the exhibition seems minimalist and poetic at a first sight, resembling a gallery with minimalist works of art on display. All of the exhibited objects and photographs seems to repeat the same point through their different materials so that there is no doubt that this exhibition is about wear as a result of use. It also seems clear that this exhibition stands out in the way it makes art-like objects out of what seemed to be real pieces of architecture. These are so carefully hung that their original contexts seem levelled out. How are you supposed to understand a handrail without its staircase?

Figure 15. Inside the Belgian Pavilion

Establishing the conditions for a Belgian exhibition on architecture

The Belgian Pavilion 2010 was curated by the architecture collective Rotor, whose project was selected by the Communauté Française among 42 other proposals. Rotor works with material flows in industry and construction, and expresses this work both through concrete architectural projects as well as through research in order to develop critical positions on material resources (rotordb.org). In a research study published prior to the exhibition, they link the interest in wear to an interest in the material world and changes within it. Furthermore, the research states that need is what makes wear interesting because wear is the reaction to use (Usus: 54). The interest in wear is also an interest in the social world: While a large amount of resources is invested in fighting wear, keeping things new and shiny, wear is clearly unavoidable (ibid: 55). Wear is seen as a social agent capable of acting on its environment (ibid: 85) and as a system of communication (ibid: 88). The research study states that it is not trying to judge wear as good or bad, but it clearly posits itself critical towards the battles to maintain perfection in urban and architectural society: "the intact state reveals the silence of use, the absence of a multitude of actions or users (..) the pristine state of an object can only appear at the price of great blindness to the labour that led to its production" (ibid: 102). In the exhibition, there is no clear national presentation of Belgium taking place; there are no models of buildings or pictures from cities linking the exhibition to architecture either. So how did this research in wear become an architecture exhibition, and how did it come to represent Belgium in the Architecture Biennale?

<u>Curating: curating wear, curating research</u>

The exhibition seems to be a by-product of this interest and research in material flows: the book 'État des lieux / How things stand' was published prior to the exhibition as the synthesis of the research of Rotor and a group of co-researchers, and never once mentions the words 'architecture' or 'exhibition'. The exhibition can thus be seen more as a research result than a curated exhibition. The curators of the exhibition did not even think of themselves as curators: Boniver says they did not curate, they just "worked with space", while Zitouni says "we didn't curate an exhibition, we made a project – the exhibition at the Biennale was an available framework and we turned it into a research of our own" (Interview with Boniver and Zitouni). Exactly because they see the exhibition not as the most important part of the process but as a "way to show research results in a gallery space" (Interview with Zitouni), Rotor cannot define their roles as curators. But how should the organization of the exhibition then be characterized? Experiencing the exhibition it is clear that it is no coincidental accumulation of research results but a carefully organized exhibition. Instead of curating, Rotor describes this organization as a visualization: "at a certain moment we knew we had to make a product for the exhibition (..) We knew we couldn't visualize the whole book; we had to extract something essential out of it. We chose a certain angle: Bringing materials as they are in normal life into the pavilion" (Interview with Ghyoot).

<u>Curating: exhibiting architecture with art's codes</u>

The Belgian exhibition resembles a minimalist art exhibition. This is partly due to the large bright rooms and the hanging of the objects and captions, which seems to confirm that this is indeed an art exhibition. Catherine David argued in chapter 2 'Utterance' that the architecture exhibition had to transgress the traditional relations with visual arts exhibitions in order to place itself in a broader field of vision culture and thus be able to display the urban and global reality of architecture. The Belgian exhibition seems to do the opposite: It uses traditions from exhibiting art as a deliberate way to display architecture and takes advantage of established codes for perceiving art: "The space [of the pavilion] was obviously made to show modern art – it was meant for two-dimensional paintings on walls and three-dimensional sculptures on the floors. We couldn't fight this quality of the room, so we just embraced it" (Interview with Boniver).

Rotor uses traditions from exhibiting art in order to stage an architecture exhibition in a specific way. This raises questions about the balance and difference between exhibiting art and architecture. Rotor claims it is a problem if the code of the art gallery becomes too strong, and that the art gallery both displays things, but also changes the way you see (Interview with Boniver). In this statement also lies an idea of a pure way to show things, a non-curated exhibition in which something is being said, but not said in any particular way. It almost seems as if they are saying that if only the codes of exhibiting can be made invisible enough, they will cease to exist and things will be exhibited as they are.

Catherine David pointed to the need for the architecture exhibition to distinguish itself from the art exhibition because of the danger of aestheticizing form and architectural drawings, turning the architecture exhibition away from architecture's social and urban obligations. Rotor does the opposite, and re-establishes a link between the architecture exhibition and the art exhibition without sacrificing the social and urban element. Rather than aestheticizing forms, they show "something you see everyday but which you don't see." (Interview with Zitouni). These everyday objects, which re definitely embedded in an architectural social reality, are subject to a sort of aesthecisation: "we wanted people to see wear; they shouldn't see the stairs but the wear, and sometimes the way to make this wear obvious was through the use of aesthetics" (Zitouni). But the way aesthetics is used here can be understood as a techniques in order to enhance the focus on materiality and finally on architecture.

Representation: Representing architecture through use or use through architecture?

Bringing materials into the pavilion is a choice that positions the Belgian exhibition in the middle of the paradox surrounding the exhibition of architecture: It is nearly impossible to display architecture 1:1. The exhibition plays with the possibility of exhibiting fragments of "real" architecture. Danish architecture critic Karsten Ifversen highlights the Belgian exhibition's direct relation to its subject as the fact that makes it such a good exhibition: "It deals with presentation rather than representation" (Interview with Ifversen). Yet, Rotor do not believe that showing architecture 1:1 is possible: "it's because we show wear that we can do it. Showing wear is something different than showing the building where we found the wear" (Interview with Boniver). The curators hereby suggest that their exhibition is not explicitly about architecture because it is about wear as the sign of use of

architecture. Therefore it is perhaps too naïve to see the real fragments of architecture as a transgression of representation.

Rather, representation is employed in the exhibition as the relation between the exhibited fragments and the message about wear. This is described when Rotor talks about how to remove the "staircaseness of a staircase". This can be understood as a comment on representation: Removing the staircaseness of the staircase is an attempt to remove the function of the staircase in order to set focus on the use that lies hidden in the traces on the handrail. By not displaying the steps but only the handrail, and by leading into nothing, the handrail is emptied of its functional signification and instead highlighted as an image of use. As such, the exhibited handrail can be seen as symptomatic of the entire exhibition, in which architectural objects are taken out of their original context in order to be reinstalled in the exhibition not as representation of a "real" staircase but as a new meaning in a narrative about use. While the exhibition does not seem to rely on representations of architecture because it presents actual fragments of architecture, these fragments are decontextualized in a way that makes them representative in a new way.

<u>Utterance: National and architectural identities</u>

There seems to be a reluctance towards creating one identity in the exhibition, and it is difficult at a first glance to see how the exhibition could be Belgium's national representation in the Architecture Biennale: "We didn't see national representation as a part of our task. We define ourselves as Belgium but we were commissioned by the Communauté Francaise, and some of us are Flemish, so we didn't want to take a flag." (Interview with Ghyoot). The fact that Rotor is a cooperative consisting of both French and Flemish makes the exhibition pluralistic in a way that disrupts the creation of one national identity.

This reluctance towards creating one definite identity is also reflected in the openness that the exhibition expresses in refusing to be an architecture exhibition as such – "We didn't want to take on an architecture flag either. There is an established discipline present and we didn't want to take their flag and speak about architecture in their name" (Interview with Boniver). According to Rotor, the exhibition explores *wear* as a reaction to *use* (rotordb.org). Although it is never made explicit in either the published book or in the interviews, the word 'use' can be seen as the link

through which architecture is related to the exhibition. But this absence of a clear link to architecture seems to set the focus on the meeting between the user and the building in its physical manifestation of wear rather than on the buildings themselves. As such, it is not intended as an exhibition about architecture (as buildings) but about the use of architecture.

Whether the exhibition creates architectural and national identities are interlinked questions. Can the exhibition represent Belgium if it doesn't represent Belgian architecture but rather an attitude towards architecture? This in turn becomes a question of the legitimacy of national pavilions in general. Clearly, Rotor sees their exhibition as a contribution to an architectural debate and not as a branding opportunity for Belgium. "For some reason, the Belgian pavilion has gained reputation for not doing branding" (Interview with Boniver). Boniver also says he saw an affinity between the Belgian and the Serbian exhibition because the Serbian "wasn't interested in 'starchitecture' but instead was playful"; "it felt like receiving something, not being forced into anything" (Interview with Boniver). By juxtaposing starchitecture and playfulness, receiving and forcing, he points to an essential attitude towards exhibiting, which can also be traced in the Belgian exhibition: That an exhibition with a narrative which is too strict, with an identity which is too homogeneous, and with a view on architecture which is presenting what is rather than experimenting with what could be, the exhibition cannot work or will work simply as branding. Instead, it seems like the Belgian exhibition expresses an entirely different need for open ends in the narrative structuring of their exhibition.

<u>Open ends: Conclusion leading to a final discussion</u>
Rotor points to the risk of phrasing a certain point because this point will then take away the focus from other readings: "if you see one political point, you don't see anything else." (Interview with Boniver). What is expressed here is a certain view on the experience of an exhibition, which allows for many readings and many interpretations. No *one* reading is closer to an intended meaning of the exhibition, but only described as a point the curators had not foreseen: "It seems like everybody had another reading than us." (Interview with Zitouni). But this openness also seems to detach the exhibition from the context of the Architecture Biennale, giving the impression that this exhibition could have been exhibited anywhere. On the other hand, this openness means that experiencing the exhibition does not depend on

understanding one narrative or on connecting the exhibition with neither the architectural nor the national aspect. Rather, the exhibition adds a contemplative and aesthetic layer to an aspect of architecture, which in everyday life is experienced through habit and therefore rarely noticed.
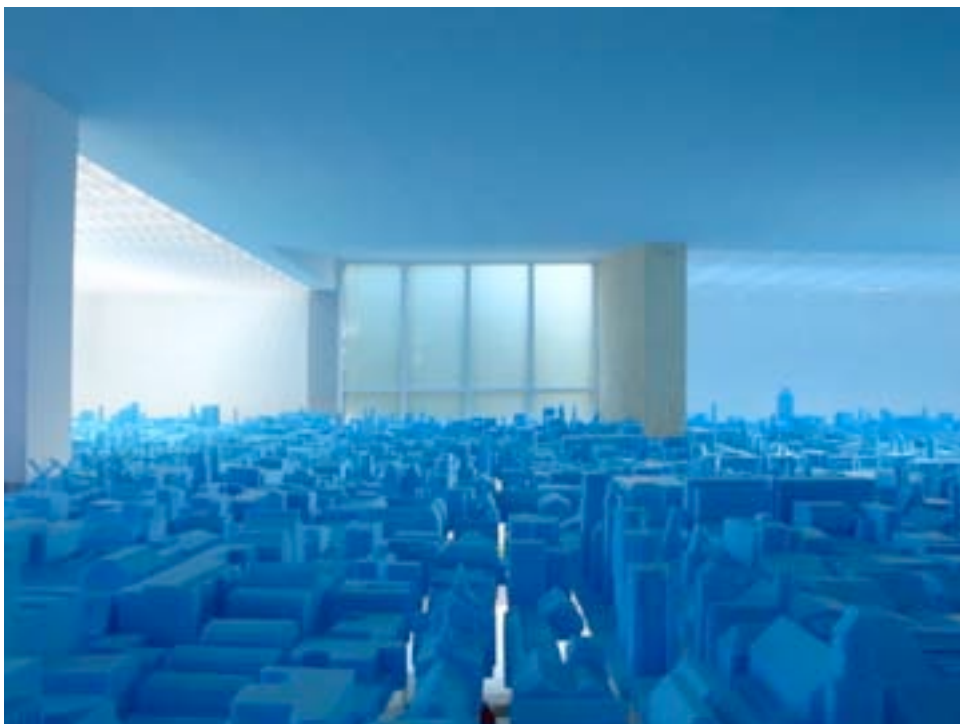
Figure 16 and 17. The Dutch Pavilion

TITLE: VACANT NL_WHERE ARCHITECTURE MEETS IDEAS

COMMISSIONER: NETHERLANDS ARCHITECTURE INSTITUTE

CURATOR: RIETVELD LANDSCAPE

'This building has been empty for more than 39 years' is the first text that meets the eye in the Dutch pavilion, after the title 'Vacant NL, where architecture meets ideas'. The room is completely empty and white besides from this text. The pavilion architecture stands out clearly in this empty room where windows allow parts of the garden to blend in with the emptiness of the room. The ceiling consists of a lot of blue squares with light coming out from in between. In the far end of the room, a white wall almost hides two white staircases, which at a first glance does not seem essential to the experience of the room. But when out of curiosity these stairs are mounted, a completely new room and experience presents itself. Instead of empty, this room is completely filled up with what turns out not to be blue squares but thousands of small models of buildings cut out in blue foam. The staircase in each side leads up to this platform, from which you can look out over a blue foam sea of models, distanced from you by a railing. You are closer to the foam sea than you were from below, yet still distanced from it, as you cannot walk around it but only look at it from afar. The book 'The Dutch Atlas of Vacancy', which elaborates the concept of the exhibition, is placed up here, as well as a leaflet and what looks like an art work on the wall behind the platform, consisting of strings carefully organized around nails to shape buildings and names in an extended network.

Figure 18. Upstairs in the Dutch Pavilion

With the title ('Vacant NL_where architecture meets ideas'), the statement ('This building has been empty for more than 39 years') and the 'Dutch Atlas of Vacancy', the exhibition makes a clear indication of a theme from the beginning. There is a

clear connection between the empty room below, the filled room above and the message in the title and the statement, centering around the words 'vacant' and 'empty'. The blue foam city, extended in the air by tracks of strings, is fragile and massive at once, and clearly doesn't portray new buildings or any particular city. As a model it seems rather conceptual than documenting. How is the relation between the title and the installation-like exhibition to be understood, and which interpretation of the architecture exhibition lies hidden in this blue sea of vacancy?

<u>Establishing the conditions for a Dutch exhibition on architecture</u>

Rietveld Landscape was commissioned by the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi) to curate the exhibition at the Architecture Biennale 2010 with a special task in mind: "to make a statement about the potential of landscape architecture to contribute to resolving the complex challenges that our society faces today"[20]. This task is in line with the NAi's present agenda called 'Architecture of Consequence' whose aim is to explore how architecture can play a role in finding sustainable solutions to global problems[21]. It was not an entirely open task that Rietveld Landscape was given: Both the form – an installation – and the subject – societal issues – were given: "they wanted to have an installation with societal issues" (Interview with Rietveld Landscape). The curatorial framework of the exhibition 'Vacant NL, where architecture meets ideas' as an installation was thus set up through the conditions of the NAi in the context of their 'Architecture of Consequence' agenda.

The concrete starting point of the exhibition is the Dutch Knowledge and Innovation Agenda's ambition to become a part of the top 5 knowledge economies in the world. The exhibition is shaped as a response to one of the aspects – the one concerning creative industries – of this national ambition. Rietveld Landscape identifies a potential in the large amount of unoccupied buildings to create the concrete and necessary foundation for meeting such an ambition (Curatorial Statement, Introduction (see appendix)). Rietveld Landscape describes the relation between the national ambition and their own response: "The government says they want to grow plants, but you cannot do it without ground. It is the basic condition." (Interview with Rietveld Landscape). The Dutch exhibition thus clearly situates it

---

[20] rietveldlandscape.com
[21] architectureofconsequence.nl

self in the middle of a political issue. The curators take their starting point in a national political ambition, which at first glance makes it at a very "commercial" exhibition. Their ground-metaphor, however, reveals that they define a gap between the national ambition and its realization. They hereby propose their statement as an alternative, an attempt to introduce concrete architectural resources into a more abstract political ambition.

Experience: The architecture exhibition as installation

That the exhibition takes shape of an installation was clear at first sight. This initial impression can be explained by returning to a characteristic of the installation as elaborated in chapter 2, 'Experiencing'. First of all, the Dutch exhibition gives an impression of being site-specific: The blue foam ceiling/city is adjusted to the exact shape of the space, and seems to work with the room rather than in it. At the same time, it changes the way in which the space is perceived; walking from downstairs to above the blue ceiling gave the experience of moving to a completely different room although it was actually the same space. Secondly, the perception of the Dutch exhibition seems conditioned by movement. Without the active seeking movement of the viewer, one would not mount the stairs and get the full experience of the exhibition. Experience potentially transforms the viewer from spectator to participant. While the room below stimulates movement through curiosity, the room above is more passive, as one watches the many models from a distance or stands still while reading the 'Dutch Atlas of Vacancy'. Finally, in contrast to the permanent nature of architecture, the exhibition is only an installation as long as it is installed. By using the installation as mode of display, it thus portrays a fragile architecture – dependant on the installation to exist – rather than a solid and permanent one.[22] The installation is seen as opposed to a more traditional way of presenting architecture: "We knew the traditional way of presenting architecture didn't work, people don't understand models and prints on the wall doesn't communicate anything. So we knew we wanted to create an experience – and ended up with an installation." The choice of an installation as a mode of display is connected to the desire to create an experience in the exhibition. Furthermore, the curators were guided by the idea of the "complete installation" or "Gesamtkunstwerk", an idea, which is not further elaborated but linked to "the

---

[22] In defining these 3 points, I am referring to Florian Kossak's characterization of the art installation in chapter 2, 'Experiencing'.

pavilion space, its emptiness and the fact that it is technically standing on Dutch soil" (Interview with Rietveld and Rietveld). The complete installation can be understood as a reference to the connection between the building of the Pavilion and the theme in the exhibition. By displaying the text which says the pavilion has been vacant for more than 39 years, they refer to the 8,5 vacant months a year since 1954 where the building is not used for the Art or Architecture Biennale. This statement links the Dutch Pavilion itself to the vacancy theme, but also points to the other dimension of vacancy: Potential. The pavilion as the viewer experiences it is not vacant but installed poetically to display vacancy.

Utterance: A message from whom to whom?

By stressing that the exhibition is a "statement in the form of an installation" (Curatorial statement, introduction), the exhibition does not try to hide the fact that it has a clear message: "Everyone understood that it was a message directed at the politicians" (Interview with Rietveld Landscape). As mentioned, they were asked by the NAi for an installation "which was immediately clear and had one clear message" (Interview with Rietveld Landscape). The idea of one clear message is described as opposed to previous exhibitions, which apparently had too many voices: "In the end nothing was striking. It is complex to make something very simple." (Interview with Rietveld Landscape). The NAi and Rietveld Landscape clearly sees the idea of one message as a strength, whereas the idea of the exhibition having one clear message can also be understood as problematic in the light of Ferguson's theory of the exhibition as an utterance (see chapter 2 'Utterance'), whereby the exhibition represents one rather than a variety of identities, and advocates for one rather than a variety of readings. As a political message, it is subjective in nature – the NAi and Rietveld Landscape believe that it would be best if the government realized the "truth" of their statement. As opposed to Ferguson's decoding of the exhibition's utterances, this exhibition makes its subjective utterance quite clear; there is no doubt about its political affiliation. The NAi and their 'Architecture of Consequence' agenda speaks through the curators Rietveld Landscape whose own interpretation is explicitly described as based on but an alternative to the government's policy proposal on cultural industries.

Who does this message address? The statement seems to work on two levels: "We hope that the installation will inspire people and set in motion a more ambitious way

of thinking about the potential of temporary reuse. At the same time we hope that the new Minister of Innovation will see that good spatial conditions are of inestimable value for innovation in the creative knowledge economy" (Curatorial Statement). To inspire people about reuse and the potential that lies in vacancy makes it a general point. To make the future Minister of Innovation understand the point of the exhibition makes it a very specific point directed specifically at politicians in the Netherlands. If the exhibition is an answer to the government's call, does the exhibition in reality only address people with the power to change things? Rotor, the curators of the Belgian exhibition, find it problematic that the message was so clearly directed towards people with power: "I didn't feel like it was addressed to me, I couldn't project myself into it." (Interview with Boniver) – "It's for politicians, architects, for people who feel in charge." (Interview with Zitouni). Rotor points to the importance of addressing the exhibition to a variety of audiences. To do so, it is perhaps also important to speak with a variety of voices. But the Dutch exhibition deliberately takes the shape of one voice in order to clearly communicate their message.

Curation: Subversive uses of the architecture model

The Dutch exhibition uses the architectural model in an alternative way. The blue foam is characterized as the "material that architects use to experiment" (Interview with Rietveld Landscape). Seen from below, Rietveld describes that it looks like microchips, a resemblance which refer to scientific innovation (Interview with Rietveld Landscape). The blue foam models have a double meaning, which transgresses their functions as models of actual buildings; they refer to experimentation in creative industry, and to scientific innovation. That the many models are a condensation of public vacant buildings in the Netherlands, gathered in the installation as one crowded city, makes the reading of the model a conceptual rather than a representational one. The alternative use of the model is also inscribed into the intention of creating an experience in the exhibition: "It is different from a model because it is not literal (…) It communicates a message by making an experience, inviting to move through it. And the fact that it is 3D also makes it an experience." (Interview with Rietveld Landscape). The model as literal is opposed to the model as message and experience. This allows for the model to transcend its function as miniature representation to become something in itself: The sea of vacancy literally creates its own space by gathering buildings from all over the

Netherlands into one condensed city. But does the fact that it is 3D make it an experience as Rietveld Landscape claim? Rather, the vacant city is separated from the viewer, who stands statically while overlooking the surprising blue landscape from afar. By using the model not in order to present certain buildings or places with an equivalent in "reality", but to make a statement about the potential hidden in the enormous vacancy in the Netherlands, the model is used rather as part of the installation and the creation of a message than as representation. The model is often used because of its tactile qualities (see Cohen in chapter 2, 'Representation'). However, the Dutch exhibition seems to subvert this: By displaying the models floating in the middle of the room, by making the empty space below into the concrete space of movement, and the filled space above into the more static part of the exhibition, the model is devoid of its tactile qualities and transformed into a vision.

Testing the use of architecture: Conclusion leading to a final discussion

Macken argued in chapter 2 'Representation' that "Shifting the model from an elemental object within an exhibition to the structure of the exhibition itself, allows the model to operate autonomously" (Macken 2007: 84). By highlighting the blue foam as the material architects use to experiment with, the sea of vacancy becomes an experiment in itself – not with the buildings, but with the idea of using all these buildings as laboratories for creative purposes. As such, the Dutch architecture exhibition itself is used as a laboratory or testing ground not for architecture but for a possible use of architecture. The model both represents what is and what could be, since the central statement of the exhibition is that what could be should come from what already is. The model is not, then, used as an object within the exhibition but as the very structure of it. By staging an architectural installation, the exhibition shows how architecture can be displayed on its own terms – even though the expression of the exhibition is artistic, it remains very architectural as well. The exhibition makes it possible to either stay on the surface of this experience or to go deeper into it by exploring the exhibition's message. In any case, the exhibition manages to create an urban identity – not of an existing urban reality, but of a vision for what the Netherlands could do to create new urban identities.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION //
COMPARATIVE DISCUSSION OF THE ANALYSES

The three exhibitions display differences and similarities in their interpretations of the architecture exhibition. But this does not reflect concrete differences or similarities in the respective countries or cities. Rather, it reflects different uses of the Venice Architecture Biennale as context and of the exhibition as medium to create architectural experiences, urban strategies and architectural utterances. These four conditions under which the exhibitions work in different ways will be discussed in the following.

The Architecture Biennale as context for exhibiting architecture

The experience of the Biennale automatically generates a comparative reading of the exhibitions. You see the Belgian exhibition's absence of architecture in contrast to the Danish exhibition's literal presentation of architecture. Different ways of displaying architecture are also on display as you walk from pavilion to pavilion. Glissant described a biennale as a contact zone because biennales have the potential to provide new complex spaces and temporalities through the coexistence of several time zones and places (Obrist 2010: 45). It is as such a contact zone that the Biennale implicitly influences the architecture exhibitions it hosts.

The exhibitions use the Architecture Biennale as a platform to communicate national problems (the Dutch exhibition) as well as national solutions (the Danish exhibition) in an international forum. The Dutch exhibition makes explicit use of this by addressing their exhibition directly at the Dutch government. The Danish exhibition does the same by focusing on Copenhagen and inviting an international – and professional – audience to look at the solutions Copenhagen has come up with in order to create a livable city. That the Biennale constitutes a new and complex space,

as Glissant says, manifests itself in the way the Danish and Dutch exhibition stage meetings between the local and the global.

The Belgian exhibition seems less linked to the Architecture Biennale. It largely ignores the idea of the national pavilion. Although transgressing the national can be a way to transcend a simple representational way of exhibiting architecture, it also seems that the exhibition looses by not linking itself to the Architecture Biennale which, in the best of worlds (in Glissant's world), has the potential to foster global dialogue. In order to participate in this global dialogue, perhaps a (critical) national anchor is necessary.

How can the architecture exhibition give a different experience of architecture and the urban?
The analyses show that by exhibiting architecture, architecture's functions are expanded. Instead of being perceived through use, it is perceived through contemplation or at least an abstract kind of use, as analyzed in the case of the installation in the Dutch exhibition or the exhibited traces of use in the Belgian. In contrast to Benjamin and Rasmussen's considerations over the importance of a tangible everyday-life relation with architecture, the architecture exhibitions make abstract what is otherwise functional. The objects are taken out of their functional context – a staircase leading to nothing and a carpet exhibited vertically as in the Belgian exhibition – in order to focus on an *aspect* of architecture. Use (in the Belgian case) and vacancy (in the Dutch case) exemplify two concrete aspects of architecture, which add a social contemplation over use to the experience of architecture and the urban.

Both exhibitions tell a story, which is based on the tangible experience of architecture, but both exhibitions abstract this concrete message by blurring it with art-like curatorial moves. Is it possible that this artistic expression, which these two exhibitions have, is necessary in order to make an exhibition of architecture, which goes beyond architecture as it is experienced in everyday life? This question is positively confirmed when analyzing the Danish exhibition, which shows architecture exactly as it is. Through perfect models and images on screens and walls, the Danish exhibition resembles more a "traditional" architecture exhibition. But by presenting the city of Copenhagen and its architectural solutions, the

exhibition becomes a substitute for experiencing the real city of Copenhagen rather than creating something new within the exhibition.

How can architecture exhibitions create urban identities?

The Dutch exhibition is explicitly used as an urban strategy: "Even if we use just 10 percent of these buildings for the purpose of creative industries we have reached the goal." (Interview with Rietveld Landscape). The exhibition is meant to reach beyond its boundaries and have direct effect on urban society as a political statement. Similarly, the Danish exhibition can be seen as an urban strategy, only in a more commercial sense of the word. This exhibition explicitly aims to promote Copenhagen as a livable city. It presents itself as a series of urban strategies, each one shaped as an urban question and a Copenhagen answer. Like the Dutch exhibition, the Danish exhibition also expresses a wish to reach beyond the boundaries of the Biennale by inspiring people to go to Copenhagen and experience these solutions themselves. Thereby both exhibitions point to a direct link with the urban realities they come from.

As urban strategy, the Belgian exhibition places itself as a disrupting exception with its reluctance to create architectural or urban identities, not to mention strategies. Architecture is present as fragments and materials rather than wholes and strategies. If this exhibition works as an urban strategy, it is in order to turn the user of architecture's senses towards these signs of use, which inscribe themselves in the urban. The exhibition posits itself critically towards the battles to maintain perfection in society. This is an "urban strategy" which is very different from the two others, and which reflects the curators of the Belgian exhibition who, as the only ones, did not have an affiliation with a national architecture centre but worked more independently.

The exhibition as an architectural utterance

By reading the exhibition as an utterance, and by relating the architecture exhibition to the art exhibition, the theoretical section developed a framework to understand the relation between the objects on display and the narrative created by the voices of an exhibition. All three analyses show that it lies in the nature of the architecture exhibition to produce meanings of what is on display because architecture as such

doesn't "mean anything". It has to be narrativized in order to speak about other than its functions. Architecture is made into the sign of a livable city, as in the Copenhagen case, or a vacant city, as in the Dutch case. But this does not mean that architecture is suppressed in favor of a "grand narrative", as Ferguson criticizes in the case of art exhibitions. Rather, it points to differences in curating, representing and experiencing art and architecture. When architecture is exhibited it is given a voice or an utterance, which is otherwise suppressed by architecture's more pressing duty to function in urban society. That the architecture exhibition can be read as an utterance thus becomes a possibility to read architecture and urbanity, a way to here them speak and to understand and experience them in different ways through the exhibition.

FINAL CONCLUSION

The architecture exhibition is essentially different from art exhibitions because it exhibits architecture through architecture's representations, as the real thing can not be exhibited. The architecture exhibition will always implicitly be a reflection over the relationship between "real" architecture and exhibited architecture. The architecture exhibition and the images it conveys of architecture are also essentially different from an urban experience because architecture inside the exhibition ceases to be functional. Rather, it is given a voice through the exhibition with which to speak about itself as symbol and signification. Therefore, experiencing architecture and urbanity through the exhibition can provide new insights that the direct experience of architecture and the urban cannot give. Through the medium of the exhibition, architecture is given a contemplative space in which it can be experimented with. But it is also because architecture is embedded in the social and urban realm, and brings this with it into the exhibition, that the architecture exhibition can come to have a direct effect on architectural and urban practice. The architecture exhibition and the Architecture Biennale are shown to be integral parts of architectural practice. The analyses show that cities can use national pavilions as urban pavilions in which architecture exhibitions are used to create images of cities; images that both reflect what already is, but more importantly that can generate new visions of what could be. Developing and researching ways to display architecture in a way that avoids national branding strategies but can generate a global dialogue on the Biennale grounds will renew the relevance of the National Pavilions as well as of studying the architecture exhibition as a genre in between art and urban experience. By outlining the components of the architecture exhibition and shedding light on problems and potentials related to exhibiting architecture, and by analyzing three national pavilions in the context of the Venice Architecture Biennale 2010, this thesis is a contribution to an emerging research field. It is possible to conclude that the architecture exhibition is far more than documentation: It actively creates architectural and urban realities by on a large scale creating urban identities through the exhibition and on a smaller but equally important scale by providing alternative experiences of architecture and the urban.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Aristotle 'The Poetics' translated by Stephen Halliwell in Thomas E. Wartenberg *The Nature of Art*, Thomson Wadsworth 2007: 28-39

Bal, Mieke 'The Discourse of the Museum' in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne (eds.) *Thinking about Exhibitions,* Routledge 1996: 201-218

Bal, Mieke 'Double Exposures: The Subject of Cultural Analysis', London and New York: Routledge 1990

Baratta, Paolo in introduction to '*People Meet in Architecture - Biennale Architettura 2010',* Marsilio 2010: 12-13

Barthes, Roland 'Semiology and the urban' in Neil Leach (ed.) *Rethinking Architecture*, Routledge London and New York 1997: 166-172

Barthes, Roland 'The Eiffel Tower' in Neil Leach (ed.) *Rethinking Architecture*, Routledge London and New York 1997: 172-180

Barthes, Roland 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative' in *New Literary History* Winter 1975 Vol. 6: 237-272

Benjamin, Andrew 'On Display. The Exhibition of Architecture' in Hitoshi Abe (ed.) *Flicker*, TOTO Shuppan 2005: 108-116

Bennett, Tony 'The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics' London and New York: Routledge 1990

Blau, Eve 'Agency in Atmosphere' in *People Meet in Architecture - Biennale Architettura 2010,* Marsilio 2010: 38-45

Blau, Eve; Kaufman, Edward (eds.) 'Architecture and its Image: Four centuries of Architectural Representation: Works from the collection of the *Canadian Centre for Architecture* exhibition catalogue', CCA; Montreal, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1989

Böhme, Gernot 'Atmosphere as the subject matter of architecture' in Philip Ursprung (ed.) *Natural History, Herzog & de Meuron,* Canadian Centre for Architecture - Lars Müller Publishers 2005: 398-406

Busch, Akiko 'The Art of the Architectural Model', Design Press, New York 1991

Celant, Germano 'A visual machine: art installation and its modern archetypes' in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne (eds.), *Thinking about Exhibitions,* Routledge 1996: 371-386

Chaplin, Sarah; Stara, Alexandra 'Introduction' in Sarah Chaplin and Alexandra Stara (eds.) *Curating Architecture and the City*, Routledge 2009: 1-5

Chatman, Seymor, 'Elementer af en narrativ teori' in Stefan Iversen and Henrik Skov Nielsen (eds.) *Narratologi*, Aarhus Universitetsforlag 2004: 99-103

Cohen, Jean-Louis 'Models and the Exhibition of Architecture' in Kristin Feireiss (ed.) *The art of architecture exhibitions*, NAi Publishers 2001: 25-33

Cohen, Jean-Louis 'Mirror of Dreams' in *Log* Fall 2010 no 20: 49-53

David, Catherine 'Architecture in the Expanded Field' in Kristin Feireiss (ed.) *The art of architecture exhibitions*, NAi Publishers 2001: 58-64

Dean, Corinna 'From flast art to flash mob: how have new gallery spaces informed the nature of contemporary display?' in Sarah Chaplin and Alexandra Stara (eds.) *Curating Architecture and the City,* Routledge 2009: 129-144

Eco, Umberto 'Function and Sign: The Semiotics of Architecture' in Neil Leach (ed.) *Rethinking Architecture,* Routledge London and New York 1997: 182-201

Feireiss, Kristin 'Introduction – It's not about art' in Kristin Feireiss (ed.) *The art of architecture exhibitions*, NAi Publishers 2001: 8-14

Ferguson, Bruce 'Exhibition Rhetorics' in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne (eds.) *Thinking about Exhibitions,* Routledge 1996: 175-190

Forster, Kurt W. 'Pieces for four and more hands' in Philip Ursprung (ed) 'Natural History, Herzog & de Meuron', Canadian Centre for Architecture - Lars Müller Publishers 2005: 41-62

Gade, Rune 'Hvad er udstillingsanalyse?' in *Udstillinger – mellem focus og flimmer*, Multivers 2006: 15-39

Geertz, Clifford 'Art as a cultural system' in Clifford Geertz *Local Knowledge; Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*', New York, Basic Books, 1983: 94-120

Gleiniger, Andrea 'Of mirrors, clouds, and platonic caves: 20th-century spatial concepts in experimental media' in Andrea Gleiniger and Georg Vrachliotis (eds.) *Simulation, Presentation Technique and Cognitive Method*, Birkhäuser 2008

Greenberg, Reesa; Ferguson, Bruce W.; Nairne, Sandy (eds.), 'Thinking about Exhibitions' Routledge 1996

Hammersley, Martyn 2002: "Ethnography and Realism" in A. Michael Huberman and Matthew B. Miles (eds.) *The Qualitative Researcher's Companion*, SAGE Publication USA: 65-80

Hänsli, Thomas 'Parrhasius's curtain – visual simulation's mimesis and mediality' in Andrea Gleiniger and Georg Vrachliotis (eds.) *Simulation, Presentation Technique and Cognitive Method*, Birkhäuser 2008

Heinich, Nathalie; Pollak, Michael 'From museum curator to exhibition *auteur*: inventing a singular position' in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne (eds.), *Thinking about Exhibitions,* Routledge 1996: 231-250

Iversen, Stefan & Nielsen, Henrik Skov (eds.) 'Narratologi', Aarhus Universitetsforlag 2004

Karlsson, T. (ed.) 'Tekstteoriens udsigelse og diskurs' in *Litteratur og Samfund* 30 København 1979: 22-49

Kossak, Florian: 'Exhibiting architecture: the installation as laboratory for emerging architecture' in Sarah Chaplin and Alexandra Stara (eds.) *Curating Architecture and the City*, Routledge 2009: 117-128

Kvale, Hans Steinar 'InterView - En introduction til det kvalitative forskningsinterview', Reitzels Forlag 1994

Levy, Aaron and Menking, William 'Architecture on Display', Architectural Association London 2010

Lewi, Hannah 'Exhibiting antipodean narratives: tracing the Perth museum site' in Michaela Giebelhausen (ed.) *The architecture of the museum – Symbolic structures, urban contexts*, Manchester University Press 2003: 54-74

Libeskind, Daniel 'Beyond the Wall, 26.36' in Kristin Feireiss (ed.) *The art of architecture exhibitions*, NAi Publishers 2001: 66-69

Lootsma, Bart 'Forgotten Worlds, Possible Worlds' in Kristin Feireiss (ed.) *The art of architecture exhibitions*, NAi Publishers 2001: 16-24

Macken, Marian 'Beyond Simulacrum: The Model as Three-dimensional *Post Factum* Documentation' Master of Architecture (Research) 2007 available on: http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/handle/2100/608/01front.pdf?sequence=1 (visited August 2011)

Merincola, Paula (ed.) 'What makes a great exhibition', Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative, the Pew center for arts and heritage 2006

Michelis, Marco de 'Architecture Meets in Venice' in *Log* Fall 2010 no 20: 29-34

Mumford, Lewis 'The Culture of Cities', New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1938

O'Neill, Paul 'The curatorial turn' in Judith Rugg & Michèle Sedgwick (eds.) *Issues in Curating Contemporary Art and Performance,* Gutenberg Press, Malta 2007: 13-28

Ota, Kayoko: 'Curating as Architectural Practice' in *Log* Fall 2010 no 20: 141-149

Plato 'Republic' translated by G. M. A. Grube in Thomas E. Wartenberg *The Nature of Art*, Thomson Wadsworth 2007: 14-25

Polkingthorne, Donald E. 2007: "Validity Issues in Narrative Research" in *Qualitative inquiry* 13 (4): 471-486

Preziosi, Donald; Farago, Claire (eds.) 'Grasping the world', Ashgate Publishing Limited 2004

Rasmussen, Steen Eiler 'Experiencing Architecture', The MIT Press Cambridge 1959

Reeh, Henrik 'Walter Benjamin: blik i brug - Walter Benjamin og erfaringens arkitektur' in Carsten Thau (ed.) *Filosofi & arkitektur i det 20. århundrede,* Kunstakademiets Arkitektskoles Forlag 2006: 83-124

Rendell, Jane 'Art and Architecture, a place between', I.B. Tauris London New York 2006

Rotor 'Usus / usures – État des lieux / How things stand' Éditions Communauté Française Wallonie-Bruxelles 2010

Sejima, Kazujo in introduction to '*People Meet in Architecture - Biennale Architettura 2010',* Marsilio 2010: 14-15

Spry, Tami 2001: 'Performing Autoethnography: An Embodied Methodological praxis' in *Qualitative Inquiry* (76): 706-732

Szacka, Léa-Catherine 'The Architectural Public Sphere' in *Multi* Volume 2 Number 1 (Winter 2008): 19-34

Till, Jeremy: 'Afterword: please do not touch' in Sarah Chaplin and Alexandra Stara (eds.) *Curating Architecture and the City*, Routledge 2009: 246-248

Ulrich Obrist, Hans 'Biennial Manifesto' in *Log* Fall 2010 no 20: 45-47

Ursprung, Philip (ed) 'Natural History, Herzog & de Meuron', Canadian Centre for Architecture - Lars Müller Publishers 2005

Ursprung, Philip 'Exhibiting Herzog & de Meuron' in Philip Ursprung (ed.) *Natural History, Herzog & de Meuron*, Canadian Centre for Architecture - Lars Müller Publishers 2005: 13-40

Wartenberg, Thomas E. 'The Nature of Art', Thomson Wadsworth 2007

White, Hayden 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality' in *Critical Inquiry* Autumn 1980 Vol. 7: 5-27

Young, Sebnem Yücel 'Curating the Nation: Turkish pavilions in world expositions' in Sarah Chaplin and Alexandra Stara (eds.) *Curating Architecture and the City*, Routledge 2009: 193-106

Zaugg, Rémy 'Herzog & de Meuron *Art and Architecture: A dialogue,*' Cantz Verlag 1996

Online references

Commissioners statement DAC:
http://english.dac.dk/visArtikel.uk.asp?artikelID=6486 (last visited August 2011)

Press statement DAC:
http://www.dac.dk/visArtikel.asp?artikelID=6536 (last visited August 2011)

THE BIENNALE
labiennale.org (last visited August 2011)

ICAM
http://www.icam-web.org/about.php (last visited August 2011)

NAi
architectureofconsequence.nl (last visited August 2011)

RIETVELD LANDSCAPE
rietveldlandscape.com

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 16 and 17, p. 61: The Dutch Pavilion
Photos: Christina Juhlin October 2010

Figure 18, p. 62: Upstairs in the Dutch Pavilion
http://www.e-architect.co.uk/venice/venice_biennale_dutch_pavilion.htm

1 // INTERVIEW WITH BENEDIKTE ZITOUNI, TRISTAN BONIVER AND MICHAEL GHYÖT (IN INTERVIEW REFERRED TO AS B, T AND M).

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON THE 29TH OF FEBRUARY 2011:

In my thesis, I am going to analyze and compare different ways of displaying architecture. I see the architecture exhibition as something that acts as a cultural agent to change architectural realities as much as they reflect these. In choosing different ways to display architecture, a reflection over the nature of architecture also takes place simultaneously. In my opinion, two relationships become obvious in the architecture exhibition: the one between architecture and representivity, and the one between architecture and art.

To begin with: What were your roles in the making of this exhibition?

T: Member of ROTOR Discovered the word curator one month ago but we just worked with the space. To talk about roles is difficult because people were more active on writing, researching, working in the pavilion, setting things up, but defining roles has never been deliberate, not useful. Architect but it doesn't matter – complicated relationship with architecture.
M: We like to work as a collective so no one has more to say than others – essential in Venice.
B: Academic – if I had more of the say on the book but that was it. Its become an issue.
Martin has no academic background. Autodidact.
Benjamin: theatre and scenography
Melanie:
Lionel:
M: arrived later in ROTOR – switched from the question of reuse to more general question about waste and especially construction and demolition – material flows. At
this time I was making my thesis about the topic.

Structure of process
M: First weeks we build up the general structure etat de l'art – but inexistent, not so many studies about wear. Contacted co researchers and linked them
Later: started the catalogue as a synthesis of the catalogue
Later: started to think about the exhibition – competition – 42 participants, won it

B: Being collective and not accepting that one person could decide for all. And to keep it open, we knew where we were going.
T: Exhibition in Germany : demand to make an instalment in the gallery – the best way to approach was to find a subject we wanted to work on and then present the results in the gallery space. What do we want to work on – when we found the subject - a vague idea of what it would end up with in the exhibition. A risk from the jury - research wasn't done, no concrete proposal. No reason to believe in it but no reason not to either! The jury: Walloon region is there fourth participation – the money departement de l'architecture de l'infrastructure de la communauté and wallonie Bruxelle International – promotion for artists.
Very free hands – was followed by a small administrative unit but we took the liberty to have free hands, rather. They told us at the biennale you have people who come for 1 minute, 5 minutes and ine half hour – a challenge but useful to hear. Another think they said to us was that a lot of students would be visiting. As part of what it means to come in the pavilion.

We didn't curate it we made a project – you see an available framework and turn it into a research of your own – ceasing the occasion and accepting the limitations.

Difference to make an exhibition in the biennale? Germany: it was in abuilding. In Venice you are among many buildings in a particular perception context, certain public, the space is different, the mediatisation. More a feeling of being put to the test. If there is a debate in architecture it takes place in Venice, and you feel responsible for taking up that space. But still: we just give it a try, but what take the whole responsibility.

Article in A+ Jean Didier Bergilez – about the competition.

CONNETIONS BETWEEN THE RESEARCH AND EXHIBITION
I read the book that was published about your research. It was really interesting but what struck me was that it didn't mention architecture once (except indirectly), so I am of course curious to find out how this study ended up as an architecture exhibition in Belgium's national pavilion.

How do you think the research works as an exhibition, is it suitable for the medium of exhibition?

M: Yes, at a certain moment we knew we had to make a product for exhibiting – letting it be known, how do you do it. We knew we couldn't visual the entire book, had to get something essential out of it. We chose a certain angle: bringing materials as they are in the normal life into the pavilion but that means that we would take this table into the exhibition –
The quality of the place itself – the room is tamisée – light is perfect, we can actually show material. Then I started thinking exhibition wise – when the space came into the picture. The space is made to shown modern art – two dimensional on walls or sculptures on the floor – in this case we couldn't fight it – we embraced it. If you transferred the object in the space you could really take it seriously as an object. A machine to see and observe
B: I was reluctant to see the result in the beginning, so gallery like
 Connection: laboratory and art gallery – that was my personal background – still in the end the art gallery overcodes the stuff - what is it to show explain and abstract. A risk that the code of the art gallery can be too strong. We used the technical part – placed it in the right light etc – people who know all this will only see this. If Donald Judd was exhibiting something you would come and see it's a Donald Judd – recognizing the codes and the concept. So it does say something about the art gallery as a machine to see and osbserve.
M: a cut off, an abstraction, but a connection between those pieces and the city of Venice – when you look at wear you see it everywhere, something which is worn, that is something we invite people to look at, it's the best school for architecture to see wear. In abstraction you replace something into another system of reference, the city, the booklet. Connection between our cut off and other exhibitions. A possible reading.

How was the mode of display chosen, the materials? (Photographs and fragments of real buildings where use is visible.) The use of actual elements from buildings, 1:1, is unusual in an exhibition and interesting in the light of representation → approaches actual architecture although displayed.

On the other hand the photographs displayed in a gallery-like manner approaches art and something removed from architecture.

Ended up with only objects and pictures. You could see the whole space without seeing the picture – only the object. The pictures were ways to show something we couldn't have brought, more complex situations. But we still would agree that to show 1: 1 architecture is impossible – it's because we show

wear. Showing wear is something different than the building where we found the wear. The pictures were to use some of the material of the co-researchers, we wanted to them to be represented, through the photos in the way.

T & M: A lot of indirect influences. It was a way to give credit to the co-researchers. But they knew that it was influences. The pictures was a way to point out the research behind it. Some of the pictures were sometimes to strong —you wouldn't see the wear. If you put the picture in the central space you don't see the object. Exception is the red picture, it became a signature.

How does it (if it does) represent Belgium / Brussels in any architectural sense? In other words, (how) is it a Belgian exhibition?

Didn't put it in our task. We define ourselves as Brussels but we were commissioned by the C F, difficult to deal with because some of us are Flemish so we didn't want to take a national flag. But not an architecture flag either — there is an established discipline present and we didn't want to take their flag and speak about architecture in their name. at one moment we realized the word wasn't there. Both relevant for an architect and a gardener.

B: something missing for me: the material flows, of you take that serious you understand rotor and the relationship to architecture; why did we not talk about architecture? Because we talked about wear. Naïve but a very simple interest. Now I suddenly realized — I never had the impression that I was exhibiting architecture. If we had known we would have been talking about architecture we wouldn't have believed it — we do want to place it in the field of architecture but we were talking abut wear.

Article in Co-production A16: came out a few years befre the proposal: speak about people who are in charge of matters; an engineer and architect, a designer, we see them as a whole responsible for matter. When we in the new book speak about the concepteur we see this entity of all these different professions. Whoever has to take matter and transform it.

The literature I've encountered about architectural exhibitions almost all point towards the fact that architecture can hardly be exhibited. The previous curators of the biennale all state in interviews that it is impossible. As opposed to art exhibitions, in architecture you can never exhibit the "real thing". It seems that the Belgium Pavilion deals with this theme a lot and actually does both: exhibits actual architecture while also just exhibiting its traces. Do you have any comments on this difficulty attached to displaying architecture and how the Belgium exhibition has dealt with this (examples of successful exhibitions)?

I didn't think about art until people came out of the exhibition and commented. Some people saw beyond that, he knew we had borderlined the codes of art and seen a specific way of talking about architecture.

Article of Betsky:

We didn't give any keys, there was a leaflet, and the book, but almost no key. Friends of mine or people had total different interpretations. Financial times: carpet represents Brussels eurocratic bordom. The connection in his mind, Brussels for him is boredom and bureaucracy. The life in offices is not something were not aquinted with so I wouldn't have seen it. Those are moments when something see something that's true, but we didn't think of it.

T: We had to show something that you see everyday but don't see. Do we keep the disgusting, is it interesting disgusting. Many of the items had a complex about dirt, we didn't want to seen just as that. So the idea was to go to another extreme — an aesthetication of what we were showing. Some people answered all the time; aesthetics — we learned to be affected and in that sense. Affection as part of the learning process — how we used aesthetics — at least have people see wear; they shouldn't see wear, they shouldn't see the stairs- sometime we had surfaces that we could only make obvious

B: really felt the discrepancy with the tags, the exhibition was that when I went as a visitor then you go to the caption then it worked. Part of the discussion was a lot about the captions. What is there to see, what do we give what don't we give. Maybe too minimalistic, I don't know.

M: we worked by subtraction: draft goes through every body – in the end it becomes smaller and more dense and many choices on the way. Caption version 1-15. The size of the caption in the way played a role in the art codes – ended up with small pieces next to the art work – did it like everybody else because it's what works. Another time try to go beyond the code. It's a question of size – we printed the photos before going so we decided here two sizes. Shows part of the working process with many choices.

The relationship between art and architecture is interesting in the architectural exhibition because the exhibition traditionally was used for art and not architecture. Even here in the Biennale, the first architectural exhibitions were just branches of the art biennale.
(To see the architecture exhibition as something that borders on art is also to take it out of its "real" context – some see this as a liberation; the exhibition lets you play with unreal possibilities, lets you experiment. On the other hand architecture is, you could argue, a more socially responsive field than art.)
Does the Belgium exhibition deal with the relationship between art and architecture?
Answer:

In my interview with the Danish Architecture Centre the curator I talked to said, slightly self-critical, that an architectural exhibition shouldn't deal directly with the building, but either with what went before (process) or what came after (reception) the building. Another aspect the exhibition can focus on is that of laboratory for experimentation with the not yet-existing. In all three cases we talk about a kind of indirect architecture, architectural questions. Could you place the Belgium exhibition somewhere in this spectrum between direct and indirect architecture? (Paradox: Your exhibition is very material.)
Answer:

T: The Belgian pavilion has gained repitition for not doing branding. Affinity with the eastern pavilions – Serbian – that was my favourite (T) _ not interested in starchitecture, very playful. I felt like receiving something, not being forced into anything. The reflection goes on what is visiting a biennale, what do you want, what would you like to have know, something more playful and light. That was also in our thoughts – benches outside, offering a place to sit. Pay attention to the physical straining of the exhibition. We took that seriously. Amount of information – choice not to have any text. A reference to a Japanese pavilion, a nice aesthetic exhibition with drawings on the walls.

The book is about the social implications of use and so also the social implications of architecture. Is this an important point to have represented in an exhibition like this? I see it as a comment on the second lives of buildings, as Peter Zumthor talks a lot about.

M: We are aware of a lot of political questions but we did not want to show the explicitly so people who are looking for a political point of you can find them but we don't have to
T: if you see one political point you don't see any other of it. It wasn't about wear, it was more taking samples from buildings. The red stairhandle, we actually took from a building, we made replacement. Even in the text it counts, when you put something the rest disappears. When you see the political message, like a Donald Judd,
B: Ethical and political requirement – Nietzsche – demanding on every step you take, there is no excuse, what we've helped establish or not. Invent things to stay demanding, everything you do will come back. The responsibility of what are we establishing if we do this here – you can't say you are at the biennale.

The jury in choosing us – they knew there was a political sense in our projects, they also has responsibility. If we do the best they can it can carry itself. You can't do politics without knowing it – and then I would say no we haven't done politics. Nothing is set.

Your exhibition seems to be a comment on sustainability in a much less explicit way than many other exhibitions. The exhibition isn't branded as being about sustainability, and yet as I see it, it is about the essence of sustainability? Is this a response to an architectural reality in Belgium (limited new building, reappropriation of old buildings etc?)

The question of use and wear came at the moment that the fact that you throw something away just because it isn't aesthetics. I agree about your idea of our ex but we didn't mean it. What you say about realism – let's start with what we have.

Dutch: B: Not anthropological to say we have churches, now we have square meters. Embeddedness. T: Didn't feel like it was addressed to me, I couldn't project myself into it. B: It's for politicians, architects, for people who feel in charge. We in our exhibition don't feel in charge. Much more of a brain project, no craftsman.

Shifting the context – somebody saw just the fact that we shifted it but it was just a tool to take away the staircaseness of the staircase. But maybe the decontextualization overcodes this.

Seems that almost everybody had another reading than us. I quite like what you said about the disabling. You can only disable as many things – not the art codes, not the. The fact of disabling is a code.

Considering showing the users, but that means that the good comes from the users, the vision already made from the architect. Do the best you can means thinking process as collective work where you can get lost. Users, bottom-up, we know this result. But it's not fun.

We succeed in living one month in an apartment

La liberation: uses the Belgium to prove what they could have done. As opposed to choose. The members of the jury are previous candidates who were awarded. We are selected by the people who are
Impression that some countries have big budgets and that participation is very important. In eastern countries; no budgets, no importance. It's still quite small and artisanale – but it has money and

Glorious expenditure, prestigious, the means weren't prestigious.
'Not prestigious: we knew what we were doing, we did put things on walls etc, you're so modest etc – that's why I don't like non-prestigeous.

There is a field in architecture interest in phenomenology – they have a very heideggerian approach. It's about perception, how can the architecture make you think and feel. Thing by Certeau – there is part of that heritage that can come into play but it's not the interest point. It's not what connects us in the material flows – not an interest in perception.

2 // INTERVIEW WITH ERIK AND RONALD RIETVELD, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS IN RIETVELD LANDSCAPE AND CURATORS OF THE DUTCH EXHIBITION IN THE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE 2010.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON THE 17TH OF JUNE 2011:

Generally I am interested in Architecture Exhibitions and how these are curated and what they mean in an urban and architectural context. I study Urban Studies and planning, and I work at the Danish Architecutre Center with education. What interests me about your exhibition in particular is two things; first of all that it has a clear political scope. And second of all that it is a very urban exhibition as it deals with planning and use of architecture rather than architecture in itself. My main focus is on the architecture exhibition as a way to communicate architecture and urbanity.

The National Pavilions in the Architecture Biennale in Venice seems to me like the perfect place to look at this. So I have some general questions about the Biennale, and more specifically your exhibition.

To start from the beginning: why were you chosen as the curators of this exhibition, why landscape architects and why such a critical project instead of "show off"?

New director of the NAi – architecture of consequence – societal issues. Exhibition with 7 architects – then we joined the Rotterdam Biennale about the Free State of Amsterdam – we made an installation Free Port Amsterdam – temporary spaces (more space than architecture because of lack of space). Because of this they knew they wanted to have an installation with societal issues. Formulate our own questions – they were very clear but it was very free. Something with relevance for society and then a total installation – gesammtkunstwerk – and something that was immediately clear, one clear message. As opposed to the exhibition before with two many voices. In the end nothing was striking. They wanted the image was up to you. Complex to make something very simple. The concept we developed quite quickly.
Installation: different from a model because it is not literal, a model on scale which represents a future city. It communicates a message by making an experience, inviting to move through it. And that it is 3D – decided that it should be an experience.
You have to deal with the architecture of the building. Makes it tempting to move. We thought a lot about presenting the message in stages. First the pavilion, then the ceiling, then the stairs.
Blue: microchip – refers to innovation, then coming upstairs to sea the sea of vacancy and discovering of it. The conditions of use – not the architecture itself but the use it offers.
The text: not so happy about it but it links to Venice. Booklet was also important because here was the message clear. On the other hand we were happy there was not too much text.

What were your roles as curating architects? Did you have any thoughts about curating architecture as such?

Our theme was multi disciplinary. We were curating, someone else was building it and making it. And an advisory role.

The title of your exhibition, Vacant NL: Where Architecture Meets Ideas. Can you explain this title briefly?

Vacant is better than empty. Architecture meets ideas: new functions within the knowledge agenda. We just ask for a key from the government. That s why we focus on public buildings – often the most inspiring places, used to be part of the city, good positions. Vacancy has a dimension of potential. Architecture are the buildings, the ideas are the occupants, the ideas, not just nice creatively but innovatively. Not just designers and architects but also scientists to solve complex societal issues. Why innovation: economic crisis so it should be priority, and secondly, societal problems ask for innovation. Belief in multidisciplinary themes.

First to forget the general theme and think about what you want to say, then when you know what you want to say you can go back to the theme. Much more meetings could happen and people would meet in architecture.

You've said that your exhibition is "A statement in the form of an installation" – it's clear that your exhibition has a message, and even a political message. How crucial is it for your exhibition that this message is understood, received? (Does or should it work in other ways too?)

Many people don't know what innovation is so in that sense it is interpreted differently – we just started a platform for 25 temporary projects in the Netherlands – and everybody thinks he's doing innovation. Do we need all these buildings? Our goal is that even if we use just 10 percent for this purpose of creative industries – and that is the goal. Showing the potential.

I think it happened when people for instance didn't go up – it's true that people were very much directed. Everyone understood that it was a message directed at the politicians.

Different levels : the surprise effect is already a goal, and just seeing the sea of vacancy. Just visiting is level one. Level two is understanding the message. Level three is understanding the whole message relevant for you.

Material that architects use to experiment. Was necessary that it was very light. And fascinated but the light in the pavilion reflected in the pavilion. Exactly the right blue of this foam

You say at some point that temporary locations are excellent laboratories – why are laboratories important? In some ways, can the architecture exhibition also be seen as such a laboratory?

Multidisciplinary teams getting together. Possibility to allocate buildings for themes of societal issues. Problemoriented approach but in the end we thought the best way to link people to a building was more open call – innovative, relevant, should be done here. Mix of bottom up and top down but it has to deliver the the national ambition. Do that with local energy. Open call in national media to get the best people and then select the best.

Government: you can say you want to grow plants but not without ground. Basic conditions. Affordable and inspiring.

Rotterdam: muc more about underground. Many people don't think this is necessary – so we thought of a more proactive approach to make them digest it. Important that we could

Context: of the Biennale, the national stage, the international stage as well. The whole architecture world gathered on one day so you have to use it as communication and also on national level.

It seems that your exhibition is directly aimed at implementation – this project is something you would want to happen, right? How does this effect the exhibition – is it also something in itself, or does it depend more on a realization? Do you think the exhibition will change something in the urban landscape? (Should it?)

New master is launched – the exhibition continues, it is gathering theory and practice and solutions for temporary use. Documentary maker, journalist

The relationship between art and architecture is interesting in the architectural exhibition because the exhibition traditionally was used for art and not architecture. Even here in the Biennale, the first architectural exhibitions were just branches of the art biennale. Do you think the Dutch exhibition deals with the relationship between art and architecture, or somehow plays with this crossing field?

We knew the traditional way of presenting architecture didn't work, people don't understand models and so on. So we knew we wanted to create an experience – and ended up with an installation. Guided by the complete installation, that idea we liked a lot because of the pavilion space and connected to its emptiness and its Dutch soil.
The national government pays for it and invites you and they will be present – of you point out something national it also has an international meanings. It must mean something in Europe and so on.

How did it influence your exhibition that it was set in the Biennale and not here in Amsterdam in the Arcam, for instance? Did you consider the context of the Biennale a lot, and if so how?

You invest a lot of time because it is one of the best in the world, it's a beautiful places and related to the arts biennale, that's in your head, then you have the beautiful pavilion of the Netherlands with the light that you adjust to. Also somebody who doesn't like architecture should be interested-
Don't understand the prints on the wall, doesn't communicate anything. If you know you are in the biennale and every one is doing the same, so you should do something else.

What we learned is that it has to work on all these levels and for all people.

3 // INTERVIEW WITH TINE VINDFELD, CURATOR AT THE DANISH ARCHITECTURE CENTRE AND ONE OF THE CURATORS OF THE DANISH PAVILION IN THE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE 2010.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON THE 9TH OF FEBRUARY 2011:

Hvad er din mening om Arkitektur Biennalens betydning for arkitekturverdenen?

Tilbage til tilbagemeldingerne: en ting der gik igen fra den internationale presse var hvor befriende det var at se realiserede ting. Det var vores kuratoriske greb, oplægget var at det skulle være realiseret. I virkeligheden var Batteriet den eneste ikke opførte bygning vi viste. Med de fleste andre var det første spadestik taget. Det var en god tilbagemelding at få. Tidligere biennale udstillinger har meget været visionære, så for Kent var det vigtigt at vi viste noget, der fandtes.

I forhold til biennalen: jeg oplever den ikke som et dokumenterende arkiv, måske retrospektivt. Problematikker hvis det bliver ren vision; derfor de positive tilbagemeldinger på vores pavillon. Visioner kan man jo altid lave.

Hvad ville du sige er de nationale pavilloners funktion? Er det konkret at repræsentere lande/byer, eller snarere koncepter/idéer?

De nationale pavilloner har deres berettigelse på biennalen. Men man kunne godt udfordre det nationale koncept mere – kunne være sjovt at gøre det. Som fx sidste gang med Elmgren og Drachse, der slog de to pavilloner sammen. Næste Biennale har de haft det i udbud hos 4 kuratorer, en græker har vundet, og idéen er noget med ytringsfrihed og at sammenlægge pavilloner.

Kritikken i artiklen i Arkitekten; men det er holdning og ambitionen at bruge den nationale pavillon som en national tolkning. Det er jo en tolkning i modsætning til andre, noget med historie at gøre måske, en del som er administreret af de samme som kunstbiennalen; fx kulturministeriet. Ender med at være arkitektoniske installationer.

Har du nogen mening om titlen "People Meet in Architecture"?

Glad for titlen, gik fint i spænd med DACs projekt. Gjorde ikke så meget mere for at tilpasse udstilling til det. Nogle gange har man forsøgt at vinkle det anderledes efter titlen, som kommer ud meget senere, efter man er gået i gang med at planlægge. Første udkast fra Sejima var totalt løst, noget med modsætningspar. Men der ligges da op til en sammenhæng mellem de internationale og nationale pavilloner. Der er mange af de nationale der også forholder sig til det kuraterede tema, men det er også en efterrationalisering. Det hænger sammen med tidsperspektivet.

Meget af det, jeg har læst om arkitektur og repræsentation, peger på det væsentlige problem, at man aldrig kan udstille "the real thing" – at man på en måde skal finde substitutter for selve arkitekturen. Mange af kuratorerne for Biennalen har endda sagt, at det er umuligt at udstille arkitektur. Er du enig her? Er det en problematik, du har arbejdet med?

Den problematik sidder jeg med på daily basis; er mere frustreret over det end så mange andre fordi jeg kommer fra kunstbaggrund og er vant til at have *the real thing*. På dårlige dage er jeg utrøstelig, men så må man lære at betragte det som en frihed. Vi skal ikke vise arkitektur. Vi skal formidle det. Vi

skal koncentrere os om at vise det man ikke kan se derude; vi skal ikke forsøge at gengive det man kan se derude. Det vi skal formidle, det er virkeligheden, det *ekstra*; det kan være det der ligger før: processen. Eller det der ligger efter: perceptionen. Jeg er interesseret i at formidle folks oplevelser. På den måde kan man få en nuancerethed ind i det. Vi planlægger at lave en close-up med Lene Tranberg. Alle hendes ting står under en kilometer væk, så der er ingen pointe i at gengive skuespilhuset, som man kan se herfra. Hvis man formidler oplevelsen af arkitektur så er der ikke én oplevelse. Hvis man fx sætter en fotograf til at fotografere nogle bygninger, så er det vedkommendes fortolkning i stedet. Jeg synes bare, at det er mere spændende når det bliver flerstemmigt. Niedermayrs billeder af SANAA. Filmmediet er underrepræseneteret i arkitekturrepræsentation, ex Wim Wenders. Også Rem Koolhaas film. BECA. De har lavet mange film. **Wim Wenders**: Lavet en udstilling på AROS med ham. Rædsom på en elskelig måde. Wim Wenders er meget patetisk.

I min opgave er jeg interesseret i forholdet mellem kunst og arkitektur på biennalen, fordi måder at udstille arkitektur på tit trækker på kunstudstillingers metoder, for eksempel installationen. Hvad har arkitekturudstillinger med kunst at gøre, hvis noget, synes du?

Tit er arkitektur biennalen en "dårlig" kunstudstilling. Jeg er ikke arkitekt, jeg er kunsthistoriker. Jeg har været på 2 arkitektbiennaler og 8 kunstbiennaler. Arkitekturbiennalerne har skuffet mig fordi de prøver på at være kunst, og så er der nogle få gode i blandt. Den internationale illustrerer det godt. Den første lange havde et forløb; rum der blev dannet af lyd, damp, snore. Det fungerede som forløb selvom alle de kunstværkerne der var der ikke var nye værker. Både Olafur og Cadif var gamle værker.

Det virker måske oplagt, men hvorfor er det DAC, der står for Danmarks repræsentation på Biennalen?

Kulturministeriet udpeger DAC: Før udpegede de bare nogle. 2002 Juhl Christiansen som kurator, CPHx var involveret. 4. gang at DAC laver Biennalen. Bygger meget på samme metode som handler dels om at have så mange virksomheder repræsenteret som muligt og sætte fokus på nogle dagsordener. At promovere dagsordener som danskerne har været gode til at løse. Modsat at sætte fokus på det man *ikke* kan. Kritikken er at det bliver en reklamesøjle. Kent ville sige en platform for branchen.

Har du kurateret udstillingen som arkitekt eller som kunstner? Eller, hvordan har din rolle som kuraterende arkitekt været?

Eva fra CPHx: Københavner ekspert.
Mig selv: ikke arkitekt fagligt men ved noget om at lave udstillinger
Kent: direktøren og kommiser.
Jan Geipel: mellem dig og Kent rent fagligt? Ja. Tungere arkitekt fagligt.
Er der blevet fokuseret mest på kurateringen i selve *udvalget* af projekterne (altså Nordhavn, Carlsberg og Ørestaden), eller i ligeså høj grad i selve opsætningen/præsentationen?

I henhold til mit tidligere spørgsmål om at man ikke direkte kan udstille arkitektur, men må udstille det igennem mediatorer, substitutter: Var det noget, I forholdt jer til i den danske udstilling? At skabe en rumlig følelse, en "arkitektonisk" følelse?

På en måde mindre relevant fordi udstillingen handler mere om byplanlægning, overordnet skala

Jeg kunne godt tænke mig at høre noget om selve valget af visuelle virkemidler; altså blandingen af modeller og skærme, som jeg ser som de to primære elementer i udstillingen. Hvad skal de hver især fremhæve, og hvordan spiller de sammen?

Der hvor bølgerne er gået højest: fx om der skulle modeller med eller ej. Kent synes modeller skal med; argumentet var at arkitekter godt kan lide modeller, de fortæller noget mere end andre medier kan. Spørgsmålet er hvor meget de giver fra sig?

Kan du fortælle lidt om idéen med det digitale galleri, den interaktive del af udstillingen. Hvad var idéen bag det? Virkede det efter hensigten?

Fremvise København, hvad det er der er sket der. Bruge CPHx's arbejde og materiale. Der har været mange kuratorer og forskellige holdninger og ønsker til hvad udstillingen skal kunne. Fx de tre store bymodeller blev et fokuspunkt, men det var et punkt vi ikke var helt enige i. Måske på bekostning af det interaktive element. Giver mere mening når man er i den by, man taler om. Når man kommer ind som gæst i Venedig har man ikke en holdning til Kbh og får det ikke nødvendigvis heller; måske har man faglige holdninger.

Hvad var idéen bag alle de mindre modeller, der blev udstillet i gennemgangsrummet? Umiddelbart tager udstillingen meget brug af modeller – især til at vise endnu ikke opførte bygninger, eller visioner. Kan udstillingen også bruges til at lede vejen og til at vise, hvordan arkitekturen *forestilles*? (Hvad er forholdet mellem de 3 hovedprojekter og de mindre modeller?)

Idéen med konceptet Urban Questions_Copenhagen Answers er vel på en måde at give udstillingen generel relevans. Altså at sige, dette er universelle spørgsmål, og dette er Københavns bud på nogle svar, men ikke almengyldige svar? Er det rigtigt forstået? Hvor åbne synes du spørgsmålene/svarene er, kan de også bruges på andre byer?

Hvis man gerne vil diskutere, sådan rigtigt i maven, skal man jo ikke diskutere København, men bare urban questions og ikke nødvendigvis komme med svarene.

Den Danske Pavillon er i virkeligheden den Københavnske pavillon, eftersom der er fokus på København – er der nogle tanker bag dette?

Var jo fordi der er sket så meget i KBH at det var værd at vise frem. Ret bevidste om at få inviteret de jyske virksomheder med i Catwalken, fx schmidt hammer lassen der er på Bryggen men baseret i Århus. DAC som helhed prøver at være landsdækkende. Catwalken som udtryk for at repræsentere så mange som muligt.

Det er desuden en udstilling der i høj grad sætter fokus på byplanlægning snarere end enkelte bygninger, synes jeg. Er det rigtigt opfattet? Hvorfor har man valgt dette?

Helt klart og helt bevidst: Hænger sammen med at DAC har fået en ny strategi hvor byer og landskabsplanlægning er et nyt fokuspunkt. Det er der det sner når man taler om København, det er det der fungerer. Selvfølgelig også enkelt bygninger men især sammenhænge. Havde på et tidspunkt en idé om at vise hvordan de bygninger, der har succes, fordi de gør noget for deres omgivelser, og vise dem der får skæld ud, fordi de får det fordi de ikke gør det.

Synes du udstillingen ville have haft mere vægt hvis den også viste hvad der ikke fungerede i København?

Helt klart: Især Ørestads delen. DAC lever i en virkelighed. Projektet startede med at kulturministeriet havde afsæt en fjerdedel af normalt. Vi fik BY og HAVN som partnere pga. det, derfor flere kompromisser omkring Ørestaden. De kom med model og film fra Ørestaden og fandt selv på det.

Nordhavn er nemmere fordi det ikke er bygget endnu. Foreløbigt er det sympatisk. Carlsberg er interessant. Grundlæggende får folk ting at vide. De 3 projekter er udvalgt fordi de har hver deres starting point, industri, tomt og infield. Med de 3 områder gav det hurtigt sig selv at lave nicherne. Modellernes skala gav også lidt sig selv; koncept med visualisering kom fra Polyform som var hyret af BY og HAVN.

Det virker lidt på mig som om man har haft svarene og så stillet spørgsmålene? Hvad siger du til den oplevelse?

Vi har helt klart har haft materialet, vi vil vise, først. Vi ville vise svar og ikke stille spørgsmål. Det er en kendsgerning. Men vi ville jo stadig gerne undgå bare at vise noget frem, uden dialektik – så hvad er alternativet? Bare at vise det Københavnske svar, så bliver det bare pral. Vi ville gerne forsøge at holde det åbent. Glad for at vi havde den struktur, ellers kunne vi ligeså godt have kaldt udstillingen Wonderful Copenhagen. Men der blev ikke så meget plads til andre svar i sidste ende. Der ligger i udstillingen en grundholdning i at forstå byudvikling som noget, der aldrig slutter. Måske om 10 eller 20 år virker svarene ikke. Dagsordenen her er klart bæredygtighed.

Den første udstilling fra DAC: Seven new Denmarks; upcoming generation.

Den Danske Pavillon er blevet kritiseret, så vidt jeg forstår, for at være noget af et reklamestunt for København/DK – er det en kritik, du kan forstå, eller er det i virkeligheden hvad alle de nationale pavilloner er? Kan/bør den nationale pavillon overskride dette?

Målet har været at promovere dagsordener som danskerne har været gode til at løse. Modsat at sætte fokus på det man *ikke* kan. Kritikken er at det bliver en reklamesøjle. Kent ville sige en platform for branchen. Nogle pavilloner vælger en anden tilgang, og nogle gange fungerer det, andre gange bliver det bare dårlig "kunst".

Er der andre nationale pavilloner på udstillingen, som du har bidt mærke i, som enten minder om eller adskiller sig fra den danske?

Japanske var interessant; skrupskøre skala forhold som var sjovt.
Hype omkring Canada; dansk fyr som har arbejdet på den, hedder Martin.
Hovedudstillingen, Arsenalet, er hovedattraktionen.
Polen skal man holde øje med, de laver virkelig noget spændende. Bahrain; super fint projekt. Interview med kuratoren. Den havde en autencitet, den brugte jo faktisk den *rigtige* arkitektur.

Hvad er ellers dit indtryk af udstillingens reception (anmeldelser, omtale etc.)?

De tilbagemeldinger vi har fået er dels fra åbningsdage, pressefolk og journalister og andre fra andre pavilloner. På mange måder en lukket fest. Italienske studerende som har givet tilbagemeldinger. Tilbagemeldingerne har været ret enslydende, bla. Touch skærmene. Det at man kunne sætte sig ned og finde så meget materiale; let aflæseligt og umiddelbart inde i pavillon, ikke for meget tekstmæssigt. Det var noget af det vi gerne ville opnå; på et tidspunkt havde vi 4 typer gæster: dem der går ind, igennem og ud. Dem der er der 2 minutter, 7 minutter og dem der bliver hængende. Der skulle være noget for alle målgrupper. Det vi høre fra Biennalen selv er at det er et overvejende fagligt publikum, så det var vores primære målgruppe. Men en biennale oplevelse skal fungere på den hurtige. Ellers bliver man ikke. Folk bruger typisk 2 dage. Så man shopper jo selv; også selvom man er der som fagperson.

På et tidspunkt lavede vi en øvelse hvor vi prøvede at sætte os i de besøgendes sted. Det der gik igen var at vi ville inspirere. Hvad er inspiration? Man bliver også inspireret af en vision men på en anden måde. Hvad er inspiration? På kunstudstillinger skelner man mellem læring og oplevelse som modpoler. Men så er man begyndt at forstå, at for at lære skal man også lege. Hvad sker der hvis vi som formål har at inspirere? Hvilken rolle spiller oplevelsen så her?

Jeg har hørt at udstillingen også kommer til at blive vist på DAC; i den forbindelse synes jeg, det er interessant at se på Biennalen som kontekst. Hvordan har det præget udstillingen, at den er kurateret til Biennalen og ikke fx til DACs udstillingsrum?

Biennalen: International, primært fagligt publikum. På DAC bliver der dtadig de tre byområder og spørgsmålene holder vi fast i. Der kommer et større CPHx element, mere interaktivt. I København udstillingen kommer der også mange aktiviteter ude i byen; podwalks og nye ruter og ture. I den del kan vi gøre meget. Alene derfor vil det blive mere nuanceret. Vi kan ikke vise Ørestaden så ukritisk til et dansk publikum, men bliver måske nødt til det pga. samarbejdspartnern By og Havn

(Jeg har indtryk af, at man på biennalen kan inddele de nationale pavilloner i tre overordnede kategorier: **historiske** (fx den israelske og brasilianske der viser arkitekturens historiske udvikling i takt med landet), **informerende** (fx den danske og amerikanske der viser konkrete projekter, status quo) og så de mere **konceptuelle** (fx den hollandske og den belgiske, der viser *måder* at opfatte byer og arkitektur på, snarere end selve byerne eller arkitekturen.)

Er du enig i det, og hvor ville du placere den danske udstilling?

Ja, mere didaktisk belærende, det tror jeg helt klart du har ret i.
Lyder som en god idé at sammenligne Danmark, Belgien og Holland. Det er tre lande der ligner hinanden arkitekturpolitisk.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON THE 15TH OF MARCH 2011:

Hvad er en vellykket arkitekturudstilling? Hvad skal den gøre for dig, kan du give nogle eksempler?

Yes is More på DAC: en overlæggende fortælling, du var hele tiden klar over hvor du var i den fortælling, struktureret af princippet om idéens overlevelse, arternes overlevelse, på tegnestuen der blev fremvist som fortælling – et godt fortællegreb som driver igennem hver eneste projektbeskrivelse som et dramatisk kneb – mørklægningen, det der lyser frem er idéerne. Flere udgaver af det samme projekt. Også i Forster med Reichstag, næsten 40 forskellige eksempler af visionen - udviklingshistorie som forklarer intentionerne, som kan være svært at udlæse af en model.

CPH x ret fantastisk formidlingsprojekt – problemet er at der er alt for mange emner og vinkler.

Nuværende udstilling på DAC (Man Made Environment): designet overdøver emnet, prøver på at mime det. DAC laver af og til gode udstillinger.

Den danske udstilling igen stiller Retoriske spørgsmål – ikke bare åbne spørgsmål. Symptomatisk at Ørestaden var en helt anden skala end de andre – endnu mere grotesk. Det der kunne havde gjort den danske udstilling god: den skulle have inkluderet problemerne.

Arsenaledelen bruger arkitekturudstillingen som forsøgsmaskine, laboratorium; skyen. Har langt videre – virker som en kunst udstillingen, kunsten er et indslag i en on-going diskussion.

En udstilling der fokuserer så kraftigt på en vis følsomhed overfor den der rummelige atmosfære, den ting der ligger mellem den sansende og rummets rammer. Det synes jeg den udstilling bedre end noget andet påpeger er en væsentlig del af arkitekturen – tænker mere over fokusset på atmosfæren, kan være med til at flytte fokus, det handler det også om, det handler ikke bare om mursten, arkitektur er også det der i mellem mig og den bygning.

Den hollandske udstilling; det er et udmærket projekt, det er ikke rigtig godt vel? Det er en meget lille pointe, der er masser at tale om, hvordan skal vi udnytte det her, spildet, men det er et ressource spørgsmål, Holland har sparsom plads, det er interessant, men det er en forholdsvis lille pointe som der rumligt bliver gjort meget ud af at repræsentere, det illustrerer ikke fordi det er så abstrakt alligevel at samle de der blå udstilling.

Du skrev i din mail, at det var et spændende og vigtigt emne, jeg havde taget op, ved at beskæftige mig med arkitekturudstillinger. Jeg kunne godt tænke mig at indlede med at spørge dig hvorfor det er et vigtigt emne? – hvad kan arkitekturudstillingen bidrage med, hvad er dens rolle i arkitekturformidling?

Biennalen i år: nogle helt helt andre greb på Arsenalen, i hovedudstillingen, end i den nationale del. Anne Marie Endrio siger, at dansk arkitektur er alt for fokuseret på funktion; det samme gælder vores udstillinger i DK. Kjeld Martinussen gør meget ud af at alting skal forklares – hun siger derimod at mennesker har andre behov; skønhed og generøsitet skal ikke forklares. Også for den måde vi forholder os til skønhed i dag – der er stadig et funktionalist fokus vi har her selvom vi strengt taget er udover funktionalismen, det er formålsorienteret. Der er ikke noget der er selvindlysende.

Forskelle ml. den danske pavillon på Biennalen i år og Arsenale udstillingen: Arsenalen er stort set fri for tekst. Det var et klart valg fra udstillingens side at arkitekturen fortæller sig selv – emnet var atmosfære, min egen fortolkning. Ligger meget i iscenesættelserne – fra beskyttelsesrummet som er stort set et kunst projekt. Og låner aktører – der var flere kunstnere. Som primært kommer fra kunstverdenen. Men ikke desto mindre sætter det et vigtigt fokus for arkitektur at arbejde med arkitektur og kunsten - der arbejdes med rum og rummelighed i en til en størrelse – der arbejdes med præsentation og ikke repræsentation. Det er det der er så svært, at det ikke er der. En af de stærkeste er Olafur's – det er jo bare kunst . Men det er ikke bare kunst, det er sådan en struktur som et hus. Hele det der sensormotorisk, hvordan man forholder sig til det der gør det til arkitektur. Også det med lyden – inddragende, repræsentation af lyd og musik – men det her med at man har en forestilling om den ideelle repræsentation: en gengivelse af et rum i et andet rum. Der bliver lavet et nyt rum i repræsentationens rum som ikke er et forsøg på at genskabe, den situation findes ikke i virkeligheden.

Meget af den litteratur, jeg har læst, peger på umuligheden i at udstille arkitektur; Hvad siger du til det, er det et problem for arkitekturudstillingen at den skal benytte sig af de her virkemidler? Eller er det dens vilkår, eller endda mulighedsrum?

At komme ud over repræsentationens forbandelse – at blive henvist til at henvise – der opstår en kunstighed, man henviser til et andet rum. Hvis du alligevel har fat i det du gerne vil formidle, hvorfor så ikke lade det være præsenteret på stedet i stedet for at repræsentere?

Et andet eksempel er BIG's pavillon i Shanghai – som transformerer et stykke rigtigt byrum – tage det derned. Og så lave *the real deal*. Belgiske lægger fuldstændig i forlængelse ved ikke at forklare – der er ingen forklaring. Det er en af de meste interessante pavilloner på udstillingen og det er igen en sammenhæng man udstiller i – hvis du alle steder skal læse 3-4 sider, se lange videoer, man står bare fra på et tidspunkt, der skal være en umiddelbarhed. Går ikke hvis det er en mur af tekst.

Belgiske udstilling: the real deal, hele aspektet omkring slid og industrielle materialer, personlighed og mangel på personlighed i industrielle materialer – en stor diskussion som de får antydet.

Man kan ikke udstille et helt byrum men det påstår BIG så alligevel at man kan – de påstår det i hvert fald, det har elementer af det Københavnske byrum, deri har du ret.

Hvad har arkitekturudstillinger med kunst at gøre, hvis noget, synes du? Er det mere eller mindre abstrakt, fx, at udstille arkitektur end kunst?

Kunst og arkitektur: interessant at man trækker den ud af det cerebrale og ind i det sensomotoriske felt. Det er et problem med langt de fleste udstillinger at de anskuer arkitektur som primært intellektuel disciplin. Langt mere håndværk end billedkunst – selvfølgelig har det nogle funktionelle opgaver men den oplevelse vi har af det – selv når det funktionelle ophører og vi overvejer det æstetiske er selv dét mere praktisk end kunsten sædvanligvis er, med mindre at kunsten forsøger at komme ud over de her felter og faktisk bliver til arkitektur. Hele det fænomenologiske aspekt er svært for mange arkitekturudstillinger.

Det er en intellektuel pointe fra min side – en almindelig beskuer føler sig måske rimelig lost fordi man ikke ser arkitekturen, mangler den der formidling. Der er ingen tvivl om at det er for fagfolk, men også rigtig rigtig mange turister. Hvad gør den? Noget for oplevelsen – sikkert nogle repræsentationer som de fleste forbinder arkitektur med; arkitektur, og ikke med mellemrum og landskaber. En udstilling der

handler om alt det andet, som udstillingen *architecture beyond buildings*, men Sejima's udstilling indfrier den vision. Hun har selvfølgelig valgt folk, kunstnere og arkitekter, der ligger tæt på hende selv.

Hvad ville du sige var de nationale pavilloners funktion? Er det konkret at repræsentere lande/byer, eller koncepter/idéer, er det et system der stadig giver mening? Og hvordan forholder den sig til den internationale del?

Hele det nationale er altid det kedeligste ved Biennalen, og det er det fordi det er bundet til den nationale selvrepræsentation – Danmark vandt på et tidspunkt for bedste pavillon, og det gjorde de fordi den rakte ud over det nationale, samarbejdede med Kina og Dk. Hver gang man rækker ud over sin egen navle, stiller noget helt alment op, bliver det bedre. Den danske udstilling i år er meget selvforherligende. En salgslignende udstilling. Det gode ved Biennalen er, at lige dér er der en mulighed for at komme ud over branchen som gør, at der er plads til selv kritik (modsat en messe). Bahrain er selvkritisk. Bahrains problemer er internationale i forhold til den oprindelige kultur. En forbilledlig pavillon – at kunne bruge muligheden til at diskutere, overføre rum 1:1. Lige så god som den Belgiske – det kommer jo uventet, i forhold til selvkritikken.

Det nationale er et uinteressant projekt – det er den økonomiske struktur under biennalen, det siger noget om verdensøkonomien – men den verden der er interessant er den, der går ud over sine egne grænser. Den danske gør sig selv og sit emne til en vare – på den måde åbner de ikke op for den frie udveksling af idéer, det er udveksling. Det er fint hvis man kan *vise* men det skal have et formål.

Yes is more *kunne* have været en national udstilling – det ville være en god udstilling med nogle klare idéer og noget, der bliver givet videre.

Vacant NL, where architecture meets ideas

Curatorial statement by Rietveld Landscape

Authors: Ronald Rietveld & Erik Rietveld

Introduction

Rietveld Landscape has been invited by the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAI) to make a statement in the form of an installation about the potential of landscape architecture to contribute to resolving the major challenges facing society today.

The installation 'Vacant NL, where architecture meets ideas' calls upon the Dutch government to make use of the enormous potential of inspiring, temporarily unoccupied buildings from the 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st centuries for innovation within the creative knowledge economy. Our starting point is the political ambition of the Netherlands to attain a position among the top five knowledge economies in the world. Last year the Dutch parliament supported this ambition unanimously. The transition to a knowledge economy of that kind calls not only for excellent research, education and cherishing of talent, but also for specific spatial conditions. Partly due to a one-sided focus on traditional economic parameters, so far little attention has been paid to the spatial conditions for innovation.

Five 'key sectors' have been identified in the widely supported Dutch Knowledge and Innovation Agenda: water, high-tech systems, creative industry, chemical industry, and food & flowers. We focus on the specific conditions for what the government calls the 'key sector creative industry': architecture, design, digital media, games, fashion, graphic design, etc. The creative sector can make a relevant contribution to the complex challenges facing society. Cooperation between creative industry and scientists is crucial in this respect.

Design and architecture have remained isolated from other disciplines for too long, and science was on an island too. Innovation stands to gain from cross-fertilisation and face-to-face contact between pioneers from the creative industry, science and technology. After all, innovation often results from considering the same challenges from different perspectives together with other people.

Moreover, the availability of affordable, inspiring places of work is very important for young talent precisely now. As a result of the current economic crisis, many of our colleagues have lost their job, students of design and architecture graduate without any prospects of employment, many freelances have started to use up their savings, and the government is preparing unprecedented spending cuts.

How can we invest in innovation at a time of scarce resources? The large number of vacant public buildings means that the government is failing to make use of an enormous potential. These vacant buildings are costing society a lot of money at the moment, while they can also be used to accommodate the next generation of innovators. The large variety of empty heritage offers all kinds of possibilities for use. Especially in combination with related more flexible regulations, interim use can challenge creative entrepreneurs who are starting out to come up with innovative experiments. Temporary locations are excellent laboratories for a government that wants to try out non-regulated zones in which there is maximal scope for innovation.

Vision on vacancy

Although vacant property is often left unutilised, interest in the recycling of existing buildings for a different purpose is growing in the Netherlands and elsewhere. In some cases, such as Tate Modern in London or Westergasfabriek in Amsterdam, that is highly successful. However, as far as temporary reuse is concerned, as a property owner the government opts only too often, for instance in the case of vacancy (or "anti-squatter") management, for a defensive way of filling the void. We call for a more socially relevant and innovative use of these public assets. A few key points of our vision:

- Top 5 ambition for the Dutch knowledge economy

A novel feature of our project is its link with the Dutch Knowledge and Innovation Agenda. We take seriously its aim to attain a position among the top five knowledge economies in the world. If you set out from that national political ambition and strategy, you make different choices. With respect to reuse this could mean, for instance, not just filling up spaces that are empty, but using attractive vacant places first of all for people who are stretching the boundaries of the design and architecture disciplines, or for creative initiators who are dedicating their efforts to excellent education in digital media or resolving an urgent societal issue. 'Vacant NL, where architecture meets ideas' is thus a call to the national government, and in particular to the future Minister of Innovation, to make use of vacant property for our creative industry's Innovation Programme.

- First use vacant government property

Since the innovation ambition emerged from national politics, we primarily target government property that is vacant for a period between one week and ten years. Of course we hope that the good example (vacancy for innovation) of the government will have a spin-off towards the market. A special feature is that there is a vast number of spaces that are not monotonous, but are very diverse because the buildings were once designed for a specific purpose: lighthouses, hospitals, water towers, factory buildings, airports, hangars, offices, forts, bunkers, schools, swimming pools and many more.

Thousands of vacant buildings are not privately owned but are state property. In principle they belong to us all. It is often forgotten that vacant property costs the taxpayer a lot of money: the case of Radio Kootwijk in Apeldoorn cost around € 200,000 a year. The former Government Advisor on Cultural Heritage, Fons Asselbergs, estimates that the number of inspiring, vacant buildings with a government or public function is between 50 and 80 per medium-sized local authority (of which there are about a hundred in the Netherlands). That means a total of thousands of vacant buildings, not counting around a thousand military objects and hundreds of state-owned vacant lots. And Vacant NL is growing: 'A farm a day, two churches a week, and a nunnery each month. They are all becoming vacant.' (Frank Strolenberg, *Trouw*, 19 June, 2010, p. 4). Temporary reuse can yield exciting labs for innovations, paid for with the money that the taxpayer is now paying for vacant property.

- Temporary use as strategy

We focus on the period (or "meantime") between when a property becomes vacant and its renovation, reallocation or demolition. We primarily target buildings that are vacant for a period between one week and ten years. If the right people are in the right place, even a project that lasts only a week can make a difference. At the moment reallocation takes up an enormous amount of time because of endless consultations and a change in the zoning plan. For example, an unusual location like the Hembrug site with more than 100 buildings in Amsterdam has already been "waiting" many years for reallocation. This is an unnecessary waste of time: there is a "waiting period" for the buildings and a "waiting period" for young creative entrepreneurs, often with scarce resources and limited networks, who are looking for inspiring space.

- Cross-fertilisation and space for experiment

Given the current complexity of cities, landscape and society, the urgent societal challenges call for an integral and multidisciplinary approach. That is why we are explicitly calling for cross-fertilisation between young creative entrepreneurs (or more generally, initiators of projects) and breakthrough science because it is at this interface in particular that innovation is to be expected. Online social networks have by no means made face-to-face contact redundant; on the contrary, the two forms of interaction complement one another. By offering young, creative pioneers and scientists joint spaces for work and experiment, it becomes easier for them to work together and to share their knowledge, creativity and social networks.

- Interim use as test bed for reallocation

The interim and experimental reuse of buildings can offer valuable insights into the longer-term potential of a location, as the interim use of the Westergasfabriek in Amsterdam, for instance, has demonstrated. So the interim can be deliberately deployed as an exploratory stage.

NAI Architecture of Consequence agenda

The link with the societal themes that the NAI is targeting with its Architecture of Consequence agenda is fourfold. First, our proposal is about finding new economic value. Vacancy has an enormous potential for society and for the (creative) economy that is barely used at the moment. We focus on the transition to a creative knowledge economy. Moreover, a flourishing creative ecology leads to a lively climate for the setting up of small businesses, which is important for attracting and holding on to talent. Second, from the perspective of sustainability, the reuse of vacant property is often a wise option. Third, more of the scarce open space in the Netherlands is left untouched and the quality of the urban public domain will benefit. Finally, the urgent issues call for innovation, and not just a little, but plenty of it – in fact, for a culture in which design and innovation play a key role. An important question is: How we can activate very many talented individuals from various backgrounds, including young craftsmen, within the creative knowledge economy?

Site-specific team

The Rietveld Pavilion is the ideal location for the Dutch submission. The building itself has stood vacant for more than 39 years. Built in 1954, it stands on Dutch territory and is vacant for around 8.5 months a year. As curator we have put together a multidisciplinary team to design the installation, consisting of people with an interest in the innovative potential of vacant property and international experience in the creative industry: Jurgen Bey (designer), Joost Grootens (graphic designer), Ronald Rietveld (landscape architect), Erik Rietveld (philosopher/economist), Saskia van Stein (curator NAI), and Barbara Visser (artist). Landstra & De Vries and Claus Wiersma (designer) are responsible for the construction of the exhibition.

Ambition

We hope that the installation will inspire people and set in motion a more ambitious way of thinking about the potential of temporary reuse. At the same time we hope that the new Minister of Innovation will see that good spatial conditions are of inestimable value for innovation in the creative knowledge economy.

E-mail: info@rietveldlandscape.nl

Website: www.rietveldlandscape.nl