

THE MEDIA AND THE SQUARE

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE MEDIATIZATION OF THE PUBLIC
SQUARE

MASTER THESIS

UNICA Euromaster in Urban Studies 4Cities

University of Vienna

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Submitted on September 1st, 2010

Year of Defense: 2010



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hereby I would like to thank everybody who supported me during the process of writing this thesis as well as during the last two years of the 4Cities program. I especially want to thank my supervisor Prof. Martin Zerlang for the great inspiration and the helpful advice he gave me while writing this Master Thesis. Furthermore I would like to thank Prof. Walter Matznetter for his help with my Vienna case study. I would also like to thank my interview partners for their time and their valuable insights for the case studies.

At last I want to thank my dear friend Mara for the great time we spent while writing our theses and for her endless support.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This master thesis aims at investigating the connection between public squares and the media throughout history. The focus of the research is directed towards the question of the design and socio-cultural meaning of squares in relation to the dominant media. The question of public space in the contemporary city is widely discussed in the field of research, especially in the light of a perceived dissolution of public space. Literature on the subject often refers to the agora as the ideal centre of community and bemoans the demise of the public space and of a localized community, induced by modern mass media and marked by a retreat into the private sphere (see Jacobs, 1961; Habermas, 1962; Sennett, 1976). The objectives of this paper are based on the assumption that the history of the square has always been the history of the media. In order to understand the significance of public squares in today's 'Mediacity' (see Eckhardt, 2008) and in order to suggest new ways of creating meaningful public squares that are adapted to our contemporary urban society, it seems necessary to address this topic from a historical as well as from an empirical perspective.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGY

The question of research is *how do the architectural configuration and the socio-cultural meaning of squares relate to the dominant media throughout history and consequently how do information and communication technologies affect public squares in our contemporary cities.*

The paper is divided into two main parts: Part I provides a historical analysis of public squares and Part II discusses two case studies, namely the Rådhuspladsen in Copenhagen and the Karlsplatz in Vienna.

Part I will present a detailed outline of the transformation of squares in relation to the socio-cultural evolution and the invention of new forms of media. The analysis of the architecture of public squares and the general concept of space in different historical periods is inspired by Paul Zucker's book 'Town and Square' (1970). It is crucial for the understanding of the meaning of public squares to analyze the architectural configuration of the space, since this space has always been an expression of social relations and psychological conditions. At the same time the space, or rather its limits, enable or disable, stimulate or discourage, direct or prohibit our movement within the space and influence our reaction to the space. Concerning the connection between the media and the square I drew my inspiration from Gerhart Schröder's articles 'Einleitung' and 'Dispositive der Öffentlichkeit - zur Entwicklung des öffentlichen Raumes'

published in 'La Piazza - Kunst und öffentlicher Raum' (Febel, 1992). Schröder notes that the square is a 'historisches Dispositiv der Öffentlichkeit' and thus only one form or architectural expression of the public. 'Öffentlichkeit ist angewiesen auf ein bestimmtes Dispositiv, in dem sich die Verständigung über die Fragen des Gemeinwesens realisiert [...] Der öffentliche städtische Raum ist die erste historische Form, in der Öffentlichkeit Wirklichkeit wird.' (Schröder, 1992: 11) *Historische Dispositive*, however, are not simply replaced by new ones, but are overlapping each other. Every time has its dominant *Dispositiv*. Schröder defines *Dispositiv* as follows: 'Mit "Dispositiv" sollen die materiellen Voraussetzungen bezeichnet werden, die die Möglichkeiten wie auch die Grenzen der jeweiligen Formen der Öffentlichkeit aufzeigen.' (ibid: 109) In the historical outline the different *Dispositive* of the public in relation to the dominant media will be discussed at the end of the respective chapters. I conceive media in a very broad sense: it includes modes of communication (like oral language, the written word, television, internet etc.) as well as modes of representation (like paintings, photographs, signs). For the analysis of the influence of media on the square (which will also be referred to as the process of mediatization) three levels are considered to be crucial:

- How do media influence the design of squares
- How are media represented on the square
- How is the square represented in the media

In Part II I shall discuss two cases in order to exemplify the interplay between modern urban squares and media: the Rådhuspladsen in Copenhagen and the Karlsplatz in Vienna. In my analysis of these squares I can benefit from having lived and studied in both cities. The selection of these squares is mainly based on the fact that both squares have been laboratories of modernity and are the biggest and most urban (in terms of frequency and heterogeneity) squares in Copenhagen and Vienna. For the analysis of the squares I consulted scientific literature as well as popular media sources like pictures, movies, newspaper articles etc. Furthermore I conducted six qualitative interviews with experts in the field. For the case of the Rådhuspladsen I interviewed Torben Ejlersen, a historian who worked for the city archive and who published a book about the square; Hans Ovesen, an architectural theorist who also published a paper about the square; and Ulla Weber, a cultural anthropologist who analyzed the square from an anthropological point of view. For the case of the Karlsplatz I interviewed Sabine Knierbein, an expert working at the Technical University of Vienna in the field of public space; Otto Mittmannsgruber, an artist working at the Technical University of Vienna; and Teresa Mar, a light-artist who performed a light projection on the Karlskirche. Additionally I rely on my own observations on the squares. The figures I refer to within the case studies can be found in the

appendix. Finally, I will compare the two cases and give an outlook about the possible future of the square.

2 PART I: THE HISTORY OF THE PUBLIC SQUARE AND THE MEDIA

2.1 THE BEGINNING OF THE SQUARE

Although conscious town planning already existed in Egypt and India as early as 3.000 B.C., the idea of a square as a three dimensional space devoted to social gatherings did not appear until 500 B.C. The earliest planned towns, with a gridiron layout, can be found in India (e.g. the town of Mohenjo-Daro), but nothing like a square can be spotted in these town schemes. One might argue that the history of the city, in the sense of an abstract idea and not simply a concrete assembly of houses, is the history of the square. In fact, Ortega y Gasset pointed out that the city begins with the demarcation of a public square. Thus the notion of the city does not primarily refer to its physical substance but originates from the idea of a community. 'Die polis ist ursprünglich nicht ein Haufen bewohnbarer Häuser, sondern ein Ort des bürgerlichen Zusammentreffens, ein abgegrenzter Raum zu öffentlichen Zwecken.' (Ortega y Gasset, 1931: 160) The public square emerges when man fences in the infinite space of the country and creates a finite, enclosed space. It is a space *,sui generis*, völlig neu, worin der Mensch, aus jeder Gemeinschaft mit Pflanze und Tier gelöst, ein in sich kreisendes, rein menschliches Reich schafft: den bürgerlichen Raum' (ibid: 161).

2.2 THE AGORA

2.2.1 The Socio-cultural Meaning of the Agora

The square is a phenomenon that came about with the process of democratization in Hellenistic Greece (see Schröder, 1992: 10). As it reads in Zucker: 'Only within a civilization where the anonymous human being had become a citizen, where democracy had unfolded to some extent, could the gathering place become important enough to take on a specific shape.' (1970: 19) The agora was not a concrete place originating from the crossing of two paths but it was an abstract space that embodied the community (see Schröder, 1992: 103). The Greek notion *Synoikismos* describes the growing together of the single families (the *oikos*) into a higher, more abstract entity: the city, where the urban community was spatially expressed in form of the agora. The development and the need for such a space originated from the fact that the Greek polis was composed of a heterogeneous population with different interests. Thus the agora was the place of discussions (*agoreuein* meant conversation) and opinion making, the place for assemblies

(the word agora even meant assembly) and a place for trading. With the concept of the polis and the agora as its communal centre also a new form of human existence evolved: the citizen, as an abstract and anonymous persona that was dissolved from the concrete person and from nature. Although until today the agora is sometimes regarded as an ideal conception for democracy and a discussing public, it was a very exclusionary space, since only a small part of society had the status of citizens. Only as politically acting and discussing citizen one could be a fully human being which possesses *logos*. This rationality could only be acquired in interaction with other people, thus in the agora. The public space was seen as a liberating force, whereas nowadays the private sphere is associated with freedom.

2.2.2 The Greek Concept of Space

In archaic Greece the agora had an irregular shape just as the whole town itself had not been consciously planned before Hellenistic times. Hippodamos is considered to be the father of town planning and it was him to theorize and realize a scheme based on regularity and symmetry, a scheme that for the first time integrated the entire city. This new idea of integrating the city to an organized system is closely connected to the idea of an urban community (in opposition to the emphasis on the individual). Consequently also the agora was designed as an integrated space, where individual buildings were architecturally subordinated to the whole (see Zucker, 1970: 37). Still the agora was not a regular space since the layout of the buildings had to be adapted to topographical conditions. Despite the aesthetical configuration of buildings and the emphasis on the relation of the masses to each other, the open space was aesthetically not considered, it was a by-product: 'Space proper did not exist aesthetically.' (ibid: 44)

2.2.3 The Media and the Agora

The dominant medium in Ancient Greece was still the spoken word and accordingly the architecture of the agora was based on hearing and being heard. Although the invention of the agora (as an abstract space) coincided with the invention of the alphabet (as an abstract code of communication), publicity was based on bodily presence and the possibilities and limits of the human body. The agora was seen as the ideal centre of the discussing public and the precondition for a functioning democracy was the presence of the citizens. According to Aristotle the size of the agora should be adjusted to the size of the polis, so that everybody could hear the speaker's voice. Publicity is thus equivalent with the visible and the audible. Because of this connection between the human body and the public, the technique of communication – the

techne rhetorike – as an art of persuasion was of central importance. The fact that communication was truly spatial is expressed in the technique called *ars memoriae* - the art of memory. According to this technique the speaker should use a temple or a similar monumental building as a physical aid in his memorizing of a speech. When he knew the temple by heart, he could – mentally – locate the different points of the temple and thereby use the columns and the statues as ‘reminders’.

The agora was also an expression of the collective memory. ‚Zunächst der Ort, an dem der Konsens in der Polis hergestellt wird, wird er zunehmend zum Ort des kollektiven Gedächtnisses des Gemeinwesens, zum einen durch die Gebäude, die ihn umgeben, zum anderen, und nicht zuletzt, durch die Skulpturen, die ihn mit der Zeit bevölkern, und an denen die Geschichte und das Selbstverständnis des Gemeinwesens ablesbar werden.‘ (Schröder, 1992: 106) It is thus a space that stored the collective memory in form of monuments and buildings, thereby creating a common identity.

Schröder notes that the agora evolved together with the synthetic space of the theatre and the synthetic space of the book (see *ibid*: 103). Just as the theatre is a stage where people play different roles, also the agora is a synthetic space where citizens could perform their roles as merchants, politicians, philosophers etc. In the agora citizens became aware of themselves and their roles: ‘Die *agora* ist als ideale Mitte die erste *theoria* des Gemeinwesens: Dieses wird in ihr seiner selbst inne; die *agora* markiert (nach Lacan) das Spiegelstadium der Gesellschaft.’ (*ibid*: 103) Therefore it was the first space where society began to reflect on itself and the individual became aware of himself. As mentioned before, the agora evolved together with the alphabet and the invention of the book. The written word was the first technical medium for storing information and dissolving communication from face-to-face contact. The alphabet was also the precondition for the development of analytic and abstract thinking (in contrast to the thinking in clichés in purely oral cultures). However, the dominant form of communication was still the spoken word. Orally mediated knowledge could only be remembered by constant repetition, namely by meeting and discussing in the agora (see Ong, 1987: 30). Plato, for instance, was very critical about the written word, as it would, according to him, destroy the memory and as it was located in an unreal world (see *ibid*: 82).

2.3 THE ROMAN FORUM

2.3.1 The Origin and Socio-cultural Meaning of the Forum

When the villages of neighbouring hills grew together to what eventually became the city of Rome, the forum was the symbol of their unity. The *Forum Romanum* served as a marketplace, a place for assemblies, public affairs, gossip and in the beginning also as an arena for athletic and gladiatorial contests (see Mumford, 1961: 221). In the square people from all over the world with differing interests came together and formed a truly urban and cosmopolitan Rome. It was here where the tolerant but distanced urban character has been shaped. Compared to the agora, the forum had a higher concentration of functions and a greater diversity of buildings like temples, basilicas, law courts, council houses, markets etc. The *Forum Romanum* during the Republican Era was a rather amorphous space, whereas the later *fori imperiali* belonged to the Roman Empire and were characterized by a monumental scale and spatial order (see Mumford, 1961: 223).

Newly planned Roman towns originated from the layout of the Roman *castrum* and basically shared the gridiron scheme with Greek town forms. In contrast to them, Roman towns were constructed around two main axes, the *cardo* and the *decumanus*, which intersected and created a square – the forum – at their crossing. Different to Greek conceptions, the two main axes cut into the forum, creating a straight axis and line of sight. The typical forum was characterized by regularity, axially and closeness. It was aimed at the connection of individual fora with the best example of the *fori imperiali* in Rome. The unification of the fora was achieved through the common motif of the porticoes, the alignment around an axis and through the delimitation of the space from the surrounding streets. This symmetrical connection of closed squares is an entirely new idea born in the Roman era (see Zucker, 1970: 56).

2.3.2 The Roman Concept of Space

In Ancient Rome architecture and urban planning became ever more important means for the expression of social relations and control. The whole town was designed around axes, which intersected at the centre and dominated the visual appearance of the town. Zucker argues that the straight line, as emphasized in the imperial axes, expresses a dictatorial character of society (ibid: 31). The straight line of sight basically connects the viewer with the centre and reminds him of the central power of the state.

With Roman architecture and city planning a whole new concept of space is introduced: Romans became aware of the shape of space and the possibility of aesthetically moulding and unifying it by the conscious configuration of structures and proportions around it. In Roman towns the space within the closed square was more important than the external appearance of volumes.

2.3.3 The Media and the Forum

The public in the Roman Empire shifted from a discussing public based on orality towards a more representative and visual public. 'Schon in der Antike wird die diskutierende Öffentlichkeit der *agora* nach und nach durch Formen einer repräsentativen Öffentlichkeit ersetzt, und eben in dem Maß gewinnt die visuelle Kommunikation an Gewicht gegenüber der mündlichen.' (Schröder, 1992: 105) Citizens took the role of a passive consuming public instead of a discussing one and thus the degree of the political public decreased.

Public spectacles like gladiator fights were all based on visual culture and passive spectators. Accordingly, the public square was designed as a theatre addressed the eye. Furthermore, representative buildings and public monuments that stored the collective memory were filling the cityscape. 'An jedes Gebäude und jedes Monument knüpften sich Traditionen und Assoziationen, so dass der Platz zum kollektiven Gedächtnis der Stadt wurde. Er festigte die Bande zwischen Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, zwischen Herrschern und Untertanen.' (Webb, 1990: 29) In difference to the Greek portraiture, Roman portraiture was predominantly designed for public monuments, a fact that indicates a shift towards a visual representative public. Moreover the idea of the axis as a visual concept dominated city planning in Roman towns. In Roman art the painting became the most popular medium of expression. 'Never before was there such a mass-production of pictures, never before was painting employed for such trivial and ephemeral purposes as in Rome. Anyone appealing to the public, informing it upon important affairs [...] was well advised to use pictures for the purpose.' (Hauser, 1951: 120) Pictures were used in every kind of public affair: in triumphal processions for displaying victories, in courts in order to illustrate the case etc. Trajan's Column could be seen as a picture book that is telling a story, whereas the continuity of the pictures resembles somewhat the modern medium of the film (ibid: 121). Pictures became as popular as movies nowadays, because they were more impressive and required less of the public than words.

The administration of the Roman Empire was based on the alphabet and the use of the written word. Only with the technologization of the word it was possible to invent a 'modern' form of

bureaucracy in order to organize such a huge city like Rome and eventually a whole empire. Just as the administration was centralized and uniform, also the forum was standardized, regular and axial. In the first known book on architecture ('De architectura libri decem') Vitruvius gave a definition of how a forum should have looked like: 'The size of the forum is to be proportioned to the population of the place, so that it be not too small to contain the numbers it should hold, nor have the appearance of being too large, from a want of numbers to occupy it. The width is obtained by assigning to it two-thirds of its length, which gives it an oblong form, and makes it convenient for the purpose of the shows.'¹ This shows that a certain degree of standardization and regularization stems from written and therefore reproducible rules. These abstract rules are not dependent on the locality, just as written words are detached from the concrete space. Thus with the book it became possible to reproduce uniform spaces. However, the word *publicum* is still spatially defined and not subject to the book: 'Was vor den Augen aller geschieht, ist für den Römer "öffentlich".' (Moos, 2004: 17)

2.4 MEDIEVAL SQUARES

2.4.1 The Medieval Town

The Fall of Rome in the year 410 also meant the demise of urbanity and cosmopolitan life and consequently social life retreated to protected spaces. The need for closure manifested itself in walls, fences and ramparts that enclosed and protected the cities. Because of the decline in population, also the scale of medieval towns was much smaller.

In contrast to the urban planning ideas found in the Ancient Greece or Ancient Rome, the concept of the town during the Middle Ages neither involved any kind of comprehensive planning nor did it consider the town as a whole. The diversity of different groups like craft and merchant guilds, fraternities, religious orders etc. and the lack of a central power prevented any overall planning and unity in the cityscape and thus resulted in a very diverse, irregular layout. The spatial diversity, so to speak, expressed the social diversity. Instead of imperial axes and lively public squares streets were crooked and narrow and public squares were small and hidden, almost disappearing. Open space had no spatial meaning other than isolating the dominant building (see Zucker, 1970: 65).

¹ Vitruvius: De Architectura. Book V. URL: http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Vitruvius/5*.html#Intro.1, consulted on August 10, 2010.

2.4.2 The Morphology and the Socio-cultural Meaning of the Medieval Square

To a great extent the origin of medieval towns defined the layout of the square. Regular closed squares could only develop in former Roman towns or in newly planned cities, whereas in other towns the squares would naturally be irregular just as the town itself. In general two different types of squares can be distinguished: the *parvis* in front of the church and the market square. The space in front of a church was not designed as a square as such, since it often served as a graveyard around the church. Generally there was no relation between the church and the surrounding houses except that the small houses should heighten the significance of the church. The development of actual public squares originated from market activities and can be related to a rising bourgeois culture within the city. The main market square fulfilled several functions: it served as a place for the market, political assemblies, jurisdiction and festivities (see Paul, 1992: 16). Often the square was just a broadened street.

Accordingly, medieval squares cannot be considered as aesthetically planned spaces, they rather originated from social practices. The city hall, as an expression of the rising bourgeois culture, was commonly placed on the market square from the 12th century onwards and became the first stable structure on the market, giving the space a frame and a definition. Shortly after that, other surrounding houses got representative facades as well. Consequently the market square turned from a heterogeneous and purely functional space into a shaped and framed space. The Piazza del Campo may serve as an example for illustrating the transition towards the concept of a square as an aesthetic unit: in 1297, the council ordered that all the windows around the Piazza had to look like the windows of the city hall (see *ibid*: 29). For the first time a square was defined by unified facades.

2.4.3 The Medieval Concept of Space

The medieval concept of the city was completely different from our modern abstract idea. We are used to overlook the city according to an abstract plan, whereas streets and squares represent the primary structure. In medieval towns urban space was of secondary importance whereas buildings were primary, which is expressed in how places were indicated, namely as 'bei' or 'hinter' something (*ibid*: 21). Squares usually grew organically from the erection and alternation of individual buildings but without any overall consideration for the open space.

The lack of consideration for the exterior space is sharply contrasted by the artistic commitment to the interior space. This is shown in the evolution from Romanesque finite space towards the indefinite interior space of Gothic buildings (see Zucker, 1970: 96). The focus on the interior reflects the general inward looking and spatially confined zeitgeist. People did not consider themselves as citizens, but as part of guilds and subject to feudal lords. Towns were not considered as communities but merely as an agglomeration of hostile groups and individuals which found some security in the walled city. And as long as the people did not consider themselves as a social and political community, there was no need for public centres in form of squares, 'which would refer to the town as a whole beyond the limits of an individual parish' (ibid: 97).

2.4.4 The Media and the Medieval Square

For the inhabitants of the city the *public* and *private* as distinctive spheres almost disappeared. There was no boundary between workplace and living place and even within the home the space was not functionally separated. Social public life only took place in the form of trade at the market. Habermas states: 'Öffentlichkeit als ein eigener, von einer privaten Sphäre geschiedener Bereich lässt sich für die feudalen Gesellschaften des hohen Mittelalters soziologisch, nämlich anhand institutioneller Kriterien, nicht nachweisen.' (1961: 18) This means that the public evolved out of the interaction and bargaining between people with private interests. This form of the public is again dependent on orality, whereas reading and writing was confined to closed spaces like monasteries.

Another type of public existed in the form of a representative public. While *publicus* for the Romans referred to something visible and commonly known, during the Middle Ages the term refers rather to the self-representation of the sovereign and the king (see ibid: 18). The display of his power, however, was still bound to visibility and physical presence.

2.5 RENAISSANCE SQUARES

2.5.1 The Rebirth of Space

Only with the beginning of the Renaissance, true city planning evolved. For the first time, theoretical and aesthetic considerations shaped parts of cities or cities as a whole. Instead of the importance of a picturesque quality of individual buildings (as during the Middle Ages) now structural clarity, order and unity based on mathematical principles dominated the thinking.

Theoreticians and artists believed that clear and rational forms would reflect the highest order of human life. The rules of perspective were discovered, so that the surrounding buildings would now articulate the open space and influence the perception of it.

According to Zucker, conscious city planning began with the works of Leon Battista Alberti from 1449 (see 1970: 99). He was the first theoretician of Renaissance city planning and it was him to write the second known book on architecture ('De re aedificatoria'), in which he gave exact advice for the proportions of the square and for the height of the surrounding buildings. His ideas of a centralized square with radiating streets and a central domed building as the dominating monumental structure of the city became the basic principles of Renaissance planning and architecture (see Zucker, 1970: 101). It provided the basis for succeeding conceptions of ideal cities, like those of Martini, Fra Giocondo, Cataneo, Ammanati etc. Even centuries later, Le Corbusier's *ville radieuse* will be based on this scheme. The fact that this period generated a great deal of utopias may be attributed to the fact that the city now was considered to be a symbol of social and political order. Furthermore the unified concept of the city with a central square reflects the centralization of power within the bourgeoisie.

2.5.2 Realizations of Renaissance Ideals

The theoretical plans were first realized in gardens and parks. One of the most impressive examples is the park of the Villa d'Este near Tivoli, designed by Pirro Ligorio in 1549 (see *ibid*: 106). The system of axes, geometrically shaped blocks, fountains, waterfalls etc. resembled a town with its various quarters. Consequently landscaping and town planning became two connected fields based on the same aesthetic considerations. Palma Nova, a Venetian fort built in 1593 by Vincenzo Scamozzi, was the first realized city based on a theoretical plan. It was a fortified city, conceived as a defensive post, with six streets radiating from the central square. 'In Palma Nuova it is no longer the delight in ornamental graphic play but the three-dimensional realization of the design that is the determining factor.' (*ibid*: 107) However, very few cities incorporating the pure ideals of the Renaissance thinkers were actually founded.

The appearance of the Renaissance Square is closely connected to the Renaissance concept of the city. Zucker identifies three common stylistic trends of Italian Renaissance squares: The desire for spatial unity; the use of arcades as connecting and unifying elements; and the use of monuments, fountains, sculptures etc. as space organizing elements instead of mere decorations (see *ibid*: 110). As one of the first complete Renaissance squares one could mention the Piazza Ducale in Vigevano built by Ambrogio di Curtis in 1492/98. It is a prime

example for a perfectly unified and closed square. 'The ideal of Renaissance *concinntitas* (harmonious balance) is achieved by complete spatial continuity and unification of all contributing elements, including even the pattern of the pavement.' (ibid: 113)

2.5.3 The Renaissance Concept of Space

The Renaissance period was determined by the ideal of defining three-dimensional space with clear structures and spatial limits. Instead of naturally and irregularly growing squares, space was now rationally planned and designed according to mathematical principals. 'The motivation for this was twofold: on the one hand, those revived Neo-Platonic ideas [...], and on the other hand, rational considerations of hygiene, traffic, and other functional demands, such as governed Leonardo da Vinci in his plans for a two-levelled ideal town (1484).' (Zucker, 1970: 142) The psychological shift from a dark inward looking Age towards a more outward looking society as well as the development of architectural theories led to the equal and connected treatment of exterior and interior space. Brunelleschi's *cupola* of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, for instance, has an outer shell - defining the exterior space – and a different inner shell – defining the interior space. Zucker argues that there has been a sharp contrast between the conception of the street and the square. Streets have not been treated as a unified space, but as a row of individual and isolated buildings (see for example Sebastianos Serlio's *Stage Setting for a Tragic Scene* in ibid: 120). The square, however, has been considered as a definite space to be articulated and unified by surrounding buildings with continuous arcades and other unifying elements. The Renaissance strived for a harmonious, balanced and stable configuration of space.

2.5.4 The Media and the Renaissance Square

The word *Renaissance* signifies the rebirth of Antique ideals and accordingly the basic idea of public squares as they existed in Ancient Greece and Rome is picked up again. City squares were considered to be forums for discussions and to be the ideal centre of the community. Leon Battista Alberti wrote that 'it is in the city one learns to become a citizen' (Alberti quoted in Boyer, 1996: 73).

However, the introduction of letter-press printing, which enabled the mass-production of knowledge, already initiated the shift of the public from the square into privatized spaces. 'Das Drucken war ebenfalls ein wichtiger Faktor in der Entwicklung einer Auffassung von persönlicher

Privatheit, wie sie typisch ist für die moderne Gesellschaft.' (Ong, 1987: 130) The precondition for this shift was the anti-spatiality of the medium that does not presuppose the physical presence of author and recipient. When publicity was based on orality in Ancient Greece and Rome, now publicity was slowly becoming based on literacy. This shift is already anticipated in the three architecture prospects of *Urbino*, *Baltimore* and *Berlin* (see Piper, 1992: 59), where the square appears to be emptied of actors and social interaction. The Piazza as a visual scene also indicates a rise of visual culture, which stands in close connection with the mass-production of books and pictures. Renaissance art and architecture rediscovered the perspective, which means 'die Kunst der Logisierung des Blicks und die Möglichkeit der Konstruktion des Bildes' (Schröder, 1992: 107). Accordingly, squares were designed to provide the right view and perspective towards buildings and monuments. Schröder argues that '[d]ie Interaktion im öffentlichen Raum beruht zunehmend weniger auf dem Wort als auf dem Auge – es geht um das Sehen und Gesehenwerden [...]' (ibid: 107).

On another level, book-printing and literacy made the standardization and reproduction of ideas possible. Alberti, for instance, based his architectural theory on Vitruvius' writings. The reproduction of abstract ideas about ideal squares and towns enabled the overcoming of the purely symbolic space of the Middle Ages and enabled the distribution of these ideas all over the world, thereby creating a European Renaissance.

2.6 BAROQUE SQUARES

2.6.1 From Equilibrium towards Movement

In contrast to the static concept of space during the Renaissance, the Baroque architecture and articulation of space is much more dramatic. Volumes and masses seem to move just like bodies in paintings and sculpture. In town planning squares and axes were the two most important instruments for realizing a dynamic movement of space. This Baroque ideal reached its perfection in the expression of the *arrested movement* - a movement which is alternatively stopped and released by various architectural configurations, like axes or accentuated individual parts. Michelangelo's design of the Capitol Hill and the Piazza del Popolo perfectly illustrate the transition from the static balance towards dynamic movement. Parallel to the described stream of Baroque architecture, a classicistic fashion based on Palladio and Vitruvius developed in Italy and especially in France. The architecture was dominated by a 'rigid formality' and 'heroic monumentality' with axes monopolizing the spatial configuration (ibid: 165).

2.6.2 The Place Royale

In the 17th and 18th century in France a particular kind of square evolves: the *Place Royale*. These royal squares as well as areal imprint of the monarchy as a whole complex onto the city reflect the extreme centralization and nationalization of power during this time (see Köstler, 2003:13). The squares ought to display the absolute power of the aristocracy, emphasized by the regularity and axially of the squares. Zucker identifies four common characteristics of *Place Royales* throughout the 17th and 18th century: mathematically regular layout; complete continuity of the framing facades; uniformity of these facades; and the accentuation of the centre, mostly by monuments of the king (see 1970: 173).

During the 17th century the archetype of the *Place Royale* was closed and detached from traffic. The Place de Vosges (1607/12) may be mentioned as the best example. The royal square of the 18th century, on the contrary, was open and integrated into the urban complex and the traffic system. The axis became the uttermost important instrument of spatial organization. Patte's plan for Paris published in 1765 shows several monumental star-like squares throughout the city, connected by a system of axes. The Place de la Concorde may serve as the best example for such an unlimited, open space that is only held together by axes. Not the buildings are framing the space (as in the case of the 17th century *Place Royale*) but the perspectives (see *ibid*: 186). This square also became the main stage for the royal representation and royal festivities. The French *Place Royale* of the 18th century served as a role model for similar developments all over Europe, as for example the Amalienborg Slotsplads in Copenhagen.

2.6.3 The Residential Square in England

England was one of the few countries that did not follow the French 'taste'. According to Zucker in England a true feeling for space in architecture has never developed and thus picturesque forms appealed more to the Englishmen than beautifully shaped spatial forms (see *ibid*: 196). Here, another type of square evolved: the residential square. These squares were completely closed entities without any connection to each other. The greens were often closed by a fence, only accessible to the owners of the surrounding houses. In contrast to the monumental French squares, which served for the self-representation of the reigning aristocracy, the residential squares mirrored the English bourgeois way of living, namely the desire for privacy and residential comfort. While the French aristocracy moved into Paris, the English upper class moved out of the city and created its own little closed and self-sufficient squares. The gaining importance of the private sphere is also reflected in English novels, as for example in those from

Jane Austen. Her stories mainly revolve around the family sphere and the dramas of the life of the gentry.

2.6.4 Baroque and Classicistic Concepts of Space

The Roman Baroque squares surprise the spectator through successive stages with different vistas evoked by accelerations and visual stops, so called *fermatas*. The architecture suggests movement - a new feature that added the dimension of time in contrast to the timeless Renaissance equilibrium (see *ibid*: 233). Due to the dramatic effects and changing vistas these squares caused an increase in nervousness and physical tension.

Classicistic architecture aimed at the opposite: the reduction of tension. A 'somatic equilibrium' (*ibid*: 234) was created by clarity, simplicity and geometric configurations. The axes with their long vistas make every next step predictable, in contrast to the surprise effect caused by Italian Baroque squares. The emphasis on the axis and the formalistic design expressed the centralized power of the absolutistic state. Grandiose public squares with their monuments were to display this power as well as the technological and scientific progress. Such symbolic common spaces with their unified spatial order had the objective to unify the city and to create a common national identity. One of the best examples of this unification and 'public picture making' may be Hittorff's project for Paris, namely the design of the Place de la Concorde and the axial connection with the Arc de Triumph as a celebration of national unity.

After the middle of the 18th century the conception of space became flat and two dimensional and the long imperial axis with its vistas became more important than the square itself. As Baroque conquered the limits of power, limits of wealth and limits of growth also the limits of space started to disappear. Zucker concludes that '[i]ntellectual rationalization triumphs over the baroque concept of spatial integration' and that the two-dimensionality leads to the 'total negation of the square as a structural element in town planning' (*ibid*: 195).

2.6.5 The Media and the Square in the 17th - 18th Century

2.6.5.1 The Aristocracy and the State

‘Das Barocke hat [...] an Öffentlichkeit im buchstäblichen Sinne schon eingebüßt. Turnier, Tanz und Theater ziehen sich von den öffentlichen Plätzen in die Anlagen des Parkes zurück, von den Straßen in die Säle des Schlosses.’ (Habermas, 1962: 22) The representative public in form of pompous festivities and demonstrations of power revolved around the protected space of the

court. At the same time the word *public* mainly referred to the sphere of the state and official functions. *Private*, on the other hand, meant the exclusion from the official sphere. It is here where the distinction between *private* and *public* in a modern sense appeared (see *ibid*: 23).

The written word became the dominant medium for the organization of the empire. Only with an elaborate bureaucracy in the form of archives, registers, tax records, correspondence etc. the governing of a national territory and the creation of a unified national identity was possible (see McLuhan, 1968: 20). The wandering ruler of the Middle Ages was replaced by a fixed institutional bureaucracy and a centralized power (see Mumford, 1961: 354). The precondition for the development of an absolutistic, centralistic state is also to be found in the abstraction of economic trade in the form of a money economy. Only the abstract medium of the money made the controlling of a national territory possible. The uniformity of money finds its expression in the uniformity of space and public squares.

2.6.5.2 *The New Bourgeois Public*

In opposition to the aristocratic power, which monopolized the public functions, a bourgeois *publicum* evolved. This *publicum* was in the first place a reading public. Especially after the French Revolution the availability of books and the press helped to form a literary public, which led to the politization of the social life (see Habermas, 1962: 14). Consequently, the bourgeoisie public, which Habermas defines as a critically discussing public, evolved in private spaces like coffee houses and reading salons. The reasoning public was not congruent anymore with the 'Dispositiv des öffentlichen Stadtraumes sondern keimt in der Opposition zu dem herrschenden Gesellschaftssystem in den Nischen der privaten Salons der rasonierenden bürgerlichen Eliten' (Schröder, 1992: 105). The new mass media of the press enabled the discussion of ideas in the abstract space of the paper in the form of the *Räsonnements*, which means political discourse. The press first solely served as a medium for business correspondence and then became an instrument of a critically discussing public at the end of the 17th century. The press and the book store information and detach it from the necessity of physical presence of the sender and the receiver of information. Thus the public detached itself from physical space and liberated itself from time and spatiality. Victor Hugo claimed in 1833 that the invention of the book printing would initiate the end of city architecture (see Schröder, 1992: 11). At the same time the introduction of the mail service for commercial and private correspondence overcame the need of face-to-face contact for the transmission of information. The mail service was even crucial to the development of the French Revolution. Only with the possibility of interregional

communication an interregional community of intellectuals with a common political program could evolve.

2.7 THE SQUARE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

2.7.1 The Opening of Cities and the Victory of the Straight Line

The invention of new portable weapon systems thoroughly changed the concept of the city. Ramparts could not effectively protect cities from intruders anymore and thus became obsolete. Moreover the industrial revolution together with a massive growth in population and considerations for hygiene led to the necessary expansion of cities. All over Europe the city walls were levelled down and often transformed into boulevards for traffic circulation. Just as these traffic arteries opened up the city, the squares were opened up too and consequently lost their spatial unity and their function as social and political centres. In her work 'The City of Collective Memory' Christine Boyer (1994) distinguishes the image of traditional, modern and contemporary cities according to different 'aesthetic conventions': The city as a work of art, the city as a panorama, and the city of spectacle. Until the 19th century the city has been considered as a work of art, whereas the metaphor of the picture frame stands for a unified spatial order, 'for there was an urban story to be told within its bounded frame' (Boyer, 1994: 33). Symbolic common spaces with their unified spatial order served as theatres of memory that created a common identity. The beginning of the transition from the city as a work of art toward the city as a panorama is exemplified by the different ideas of Hittorff and Baron von Haussmann. Hittorff still imagined the Place de la Concorde and the Place d'Etoile as enclosed and unified spaces. Haussmann's redesign plan, on the contrary, was one of the greatest modernization projects of the 19th century and marked the victory of the straight line and the dominance of motion in the city. Consequently the avenue became more important than the square.

Camillo Sitte's book 'Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen' (2003 [1889]) represents a reaction to the dissolution of the city as a work of art. According to him modern city systems destroy the spatial unity of city squares and reduce them to traffic dominated surfaces. Sitte identifies a modern tendency of permanently broadening the streets, so that squares have to become larger and larger in order not to disappear within the streams of traffic. He argues that the bigness and emptiness of modern squares leads to a new kind of disease called *Agoraphobia*, which means the fear of open spaces: 'In jüngster Zeit ist eine eigene nervöse Krankheit constatirt: die "Platzscheu". Zahlreiche Menschen sollen darunter leiden, d. h. stets eine gewisse Scheu, ein Unbehagen empfinden, wenn sie über einen grossen leeren Platz

gehen sollen.' (Sitte, 2003: 53) Sitte discusses several principles of the 'beautiful square'. Above all the precondition for the aesthetic quality of a square is its closeness, a quality which these modern squares lack. Moreover squares should be irregular, whereas their irregularity reflects the historical continuity of the space. The planning of the modern square on paper instead of 'on site', however, would lead to absolute straightness and rectangularity and would therefore lead to the loss of a three-dimensional sense of space. Space is not artistically shaped anymore in the modern city but is a leftover from the geometrical placing of building blocks. Thus the parceling of the city and the subordination of the design to traffic considerations would deprive the city of any meaningful aesthetic space. Space becomes two-dimensional, which also reflects the rise of two dimensional media like pictures and movies as the dominant representational forms.

2.7.2 The Media and the Square in the 19th Century

During the 19th century the concept of space and time was fundamentally changed due to new technologies and new means of transport. According to Schröder the 19th century was the historical turning point at which the irreversibility of the mediation of communication and experience becomes visible (see 1992: 105). Habermas argues that towards the end of the 19th century a structural transformation of the bourgeois public sphere from a 'kulturräsonierenden' to a 'kulturkonsumierenden' audience took place (1962: 177). Responsible for this process was - according to Habermas - the expansion of consumption into all areas of life that were constitutive for public discourse.

2.7.2.1 The Railway

Railway stations became the new city gates and were the first modern buildings made of glass and metal. And it was the railway which first and foremost caused a new perception of space.

Because of the increased travelling speed, time and space shrunk and cities moved closer together. Cities were turned into points of departure and arrival, into spaces without boundaries. Distance was not anymore a function of space but a function of speed (see Rötzer, 1995: 65). In order to grasp this fact, one just has to imagine that at the beginning of the 19th century a letter travelled 80 hours from Berlin to Munich by mail, whereas at the end of the century it only took 11 hours by train. Industry became independent from its location and thus cities expanded along railway tracks and incorporated peripheral villages and the countryside. Just as the city opened

up also squares lost their spatial unity. Incidentally Haussmann laid out his wide boulevards as extensions of the railway network (see *ibid*: 67). Furthermore the exact measurement of time, induced by the internationalization of transportation, and especially the individualization of time in form of the watch truly changed our society by disciplining our actions.

2.7.2.2 Photography

The invention of photography coincides with the emergence of railway travel. The train window transforms the outside world into a series of fleeting images, into a two-dimensional surface, just like a photograph. Flusser writes that '[d]ie Bedeutung der Bilder liegt auf der Oberfläche' (1991: 8). This new two-dimensional form of representation corresponds with the loss of the plastic quality of the city and public squares. 'Modern urban space, as opposed to traditional "place", cannot be understood in experiential terms. The "exterior" is not only image but a picture, a photographic image.' (Colomina, 1994: 31) Camillo Sitte argued that sitting in a modern square was like posing for a photograph, just as modern urban space was like the photograph of a place (see *ibid*: 26). 'For Sitte, who hated photography and other abstractions that led to it, photography signifies that sense of unreality which creates the no-where of place.' (*ibid*: 51) Thus photography, in the light of its reproducibility and superficiality, deprives place of their qualitative dimension (see *ibid*: 50). Since it was now possible to reproduce reality, the arts moved from naturalism towards the representation of the inner psyche, just as modern man retreated from the public into the private home. The photograph also obliterates time and space and creates simultaneity of places, the past and the present. Additionally the invention of lithographic techniques induced a new advertising culture, which is linked to the transformation of the public sphere into a culture-consuming public, as described by Habermas.

2.7.2.3 The Telegraph and the Telephone

Even before the arrival of the railway the first optical telegraph lines were developed between Paris and Lille (see Rötzer, 1995: 70). It was the first attempt to code information in order to quickly transmit it over long distances. And for the first time it was possible to communicate almost simultaneously. The invention of international electronic communication enabled the development of global financial markets and therefore initiated the process of globalization. Moreover 'it seems clear that a sense of an enlarged, simultaneous presence became more common, especially as a result of the telegraph. This was not just a temporal but also a spatial sense' (Thrift, 2004: 40). When Daniel Bell registered his patent for the telephone in 1878

something qualitatively new was rendered possible: perfectly synchronized communication. The telephone represents the extension of the ear and the voice and disrupts any geographical meaning of space. Marshal McLuhan very prominently argued that our media are the extension of our bodies, and so is the telephone (see McLuhan, 1968: 13). For the first time simultaneous communication was completely dissolved from co-presence, a fact that had profound consequences for cities and public spaces. 'Obwohl es sich zunächst in lokalen Netzen und Stadtverbindungen ausbreitete, kam das Telefon besonders in den USA schnell auf dem Land bei den weit verstreut lebenden Famern zum Einsatz und zeigte so seine Funktion als Mittel, verdichtete Kommunikation von urbanen Räumen abzulösen.' (Rötzer, 1995: 74) This shows that the telephone was the precursor of urban sprawl and suburbanization.

2.7.2.4 Privacy and Publicity

The private home constitutes a gate between privacy and publicity, a gate that had to be physically crossed in order to enter public or private space. Public life was basically confined to public spaces and squares within the city. Media like the book, the press and the telephone, however, brought public life into the home. Thus during the 19th century the private home became an ever more important part of urban life. But the importance of private life could only evolve because of the intrusion of media into the home: 'Eine Tele-Öffentlichkeit, in Form von Briefen, Erzählungen, Bildern oder Büchern, war schon immer ein gewichtiger Bestandteil des Privaten. Das Massenmedium Buch und dabei vor allem der Roman bot in diesem Sinne einen ersten Einstieg in die privaten Räume, eine Art mentale Möblierung, mit der man es dort überhaupt nur aushalten konnte, indem man gleichzeitig woanders war.' (ibid: 76) The book, the press and the telephone gives the opportunity to be at home and simultaneously to be somewhere else in a fictive – a mediated – world. Later the mobile phone would entirely dissolve communication from location and would bring private life back to public space.

2.8 THE SQUARE IN THE 20TH-21ST CENTURY

2.8.1 The Modern City as Panorama

In order to understand the emergence of the modern city the whole socio-historical context has to be regarded. Modern society was shaped by openness and individualization due to democratization, progress due to industrialization, mobility due to the invention of the car and simultaneity due to the media. Modern architecture expressed and enabled these new social

conditions by openness of space, by dynamic constructions, by de-centeredness etc. Styles and symbols of the past were rejected, ornamentation was even related to crime (see Loos, 2000 [1908]). The city of art finally turned into a vast expansive panorama. Although this transformation already started during the 19th century, the radical shift happened with new modes of transport and new media during the 20th century. Boyer describes the modern metropolis of the early 20th century as 'an archaic visual arrangement' and as an 'open and expansive panorama' where the 'new experience of moving through the city tended to erase the traditional sense of pictorial enclosure as the cityscape was transformed into a series of fleeting impressions and momentary encounters' (1994: 40f). Instead of a unified whole the city now became fragmented and disrupted in its historical continuity and consequently one's attachment to place dissolved. Before, the city with all its buildings and monuments was regarded to be a theatre of collective memory. The material structure ought to display the city's history and identity and to transfer meaning and knowledge to future generations. 'By erasing historical references and linguistic allusions, the modernists constructed a disciplined city of pure form that displaced memory and suppressed the tug of the fantastic.' (ibid: 19) The spatial unity of the city was replaced by a functional division. Ebenezer Howard, for instance, in his book 'Garden Cities of Tomorrow' (1902), proposed smaller autonomous city units around a centre, separated by green recreational areas. Le Corbusier even proclaimed the death of the street and thus public spaces would disappear in his projects. In his *ville radieuse* housing would be concentrated in isolated residential towers connected by elevated motor highways. The street lost its experimental character and was being reduced to a mere transportation highway.

In addition, the bird's eye view from above, for instance from a skyscraper, enabled a whole different way of looking upon the city. The city appeared to be a juxtaposition of different fragments instead of a unified whole. The shift from centred space to a fragmented concept of space is also visible in paintings of Cubists, which resemble, according to Gertrude Stein, the view from an airplane upon the city (see Boyer, 1994: 42). The representation of public space in modern paintings will be shortly discussed, as it might indicate the significance and meaning of public space during this period.

2.8.2 Painting and Modernity

According to Hans Holländer the theme of the square is almost completely absent in 20th century painting (see 1992: 78). The paintings of Giorgio De Chirico mark the end of the depiction of squares in painting. His paintings of public spaces like *Angst vor der Abreise* (1913/14) or

Geheimnis und Melancholie einer Straße (1914) are characterized by the absence of a unified perspective. De Chirico's objects have no relation to each other and due to a multiplicity of perspectives, the space as a unified whole ceases to exist. The dissolution of the space in his paintings corresponds with the experience of modern public space as a fragmented, empty and non-communicating space. Holländer adds that: 'In einer totalen Mediengesellschaft hat der "Platz" als Medium keinen Platz und keine Funktion.' (ibid: 87)

Georg Grosz' *Metropolis* (1917) signifies yet another aspect of modernity. Also in his painting of a modern metropolis perspectives are blurred. What we see is a scene of a nervous mass on a street crossing. Hence, it is not the public square in which city life takes place, but a traffic junction. And it is not a *flâneur* strolling around on a city square or a boulevard, a popular theme in the 19th century, but a hectic clash of people. The backdrop of the picture shows illuminated signs of hotels, cafes etc.; these signs became the new signifiers of the metropolis and its pulsating (night)life and turned the three-dimensional public space into a flickering and dynamic surface. Simmel in his famous essay 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' (1903) connects a certain *Habitus* of the *Großstädter* with the overflow of impressions experienced in the modern city. According to Simmel, the intensification of stimuli in the city and the rapid changing images and encounters – in contrast to the slower and more stable conditions in small towns – would lead to a certain psychological condition, which is rationalistic and distanced. The *blasé* look is a reaction to the disruption called forth by the intensification of stimuli. In consequence of this emotional self control and detachment, 'one never feels as lonely and as deserted as in this metropolitan crush of persons' (Simmel, 1903: 76). Indeed the persons depicted in Grosz's painting do not relate to each other, they are individuals rushing by without taking notice of the other.

2.8.3 Suburbanization, the Car and the Privatization of Public Space

The fact that the square lost its importance is closely connected to the large scale suburbanization of cities since the 1950's - a process induced by the Fordist system and the mass production of cars.

Sheller and Urry point out that with the invention of the car the urban form has become a function of movement (see 2000: 740). The freedom of mobility would dissolve the spatialization of publicity and disrupt the civil society. As Habermas writes: '[The] meaningful ordering of the city as a whole [...] has been overtaken, to mention just one factor, by changes in the function of streets and squares due to the technical requirements of traffic flow. The resulting configuration

does not afford a spatially protected private sphere, nor does it create free space for public contacts and communications that could bring private people together to form a public.' (1992: 157f) Lefebvre criticizes that public space as a meaningful spatial unity and as a social space is eradicated by the automobile: '[C]ity life is subtly but profoundly changed, sacrificed to that abstract space where cars circulate like so many atomic particles [...] [T]he driver is concerned only with steering himself to his destination, and in looking about sees only what he needs to see for that purpose; he thus perceives only his route, which has been materialized, mechanized, and technicized, and he sees it from one angle only — that of its functionality: speed, readability, facility.' (1991: 312f) Consequently the car is a private space in which we dwell in. Because of this 'dwelling at speed' (Sheller & Urry, 200: 747) people lose the ability to recognize local details and the possibility to talk to strangers. The city scape becomes a fragmented surface that is mediated through the windscreen. Meanwhile shopping malls became the new public spaces and new centres of social life. Public spaces within the city are often abandoned for these new enclosed and fully climate-controlled spaces where urbanity is stimulated in a highly controlled environment.

2.8.4 The City of Spectacle

The postmodern city of spectacle becomes a play of signs, a pastiche of different styles and times, and a world of images in constant flow. 'By the 1980's, the transformation of the material world by invisible bands of electronic communication encircling the globe, by computer-simulated visual environments, and by theatricalised image spectacles seemed by extension to have decomposed the bits and pieces of the city into an ephemeral form. An art and architecture based on the recomposition and recombination of borrowed imagery appear to make reality and representation equivalent references in infinitely mirrored reflections.' (Boyer, 1994: 46) The visual models for the city of spectacle are the dynamic shots of cinema and television. Illuminated billboards, dynamic screens and other visual displays create simulated environments that change our perception of space and time by creating a 'new synthetic space-time' (ibid: 47). The new symbols of this condition are cities like Las Vegas or squares like Time Square, Piccadilly Circus and Shinjuku.

2.8.5 The Media and the Square in the 20th - 21st Century: The City of Bits

2.8.5.1 *The Virtual Agora*

(New) information and communication technologies (ICT's) like the radio, the television and ultimately the internet have finally dissected the public from physical space. First the radio and then the television brought the whole world of information and entertainment into the living room. Robert Venturi in his book 'Lernen von Las Vegas' (1979) argues that television can replace public space altogether. The problem, however, is the fact that the radio and the television degrade the listener or the viewer to a pure recipient without the possibility of interaction. If we think of the agora as a public forum, there you could respond to or disagree with somebody in an active discussion. Furthermore the idea of community had been connected with a certain place and physical proximity. But this spatial definition of the city and community is breaking up due to new ICT's. Consequently the sense of belonging to a community or a place is not necessarily defined by shared (public) spaces but by the accessibility to the means of communication. Webber notes: 'It is clearly no linguistic accident that "community" and "communication" share the Latin root *communis*, "in common". Communities comprise people with common interests who communicate with each other.' (Webber, 2004: 51). Since communication is being detached from physical presence, also the importance of public spaces for the cohesion of a community ceases to be important.

What evolves is a new electronic and virtual public space. Mitchell argues that the internet will play as a significant role in 21st century cities as the agora did in the Greek polis. But the new digital space radically differs from the physical urban space. The Internet negates geometry and is essentially 'antispatal' (Mitchell, 1996: 12). Before, it was necessary to go to certain physical places within the city in order to get certain kind of information, in order to work or simply to meet with other people. Now the common bodily presence is not necessary anymore for interaction, neither is time synchronization. If physical interaction has to be synchronized in space as well as in time, digital interaction can be asynchronous in time and space (see *ibid*: 19). Mitchell argues that this electronic asynchronicity has profound impacts on the shape of cities (see *ibid*: 20). The new city is not bound to a geographical place but is based on a digital network. Instead of flesh and stone, space is now made of bits and bytes. The connection between the home (and the private life) and the outside (and the public life) is not anymore the window or the veranda towards the streets, but the display. Privacy is not longer defined by walls, but as 'the right to "stay out of the picture"' (Colomina, 1994: 9). Meanwhile new technologies introduce media like the internet, information screens and interactive facades to public squares, creating a radically new and dynamic environment.

2.8.5.2 *The Digital Window*

'Wir sind heute alle Cyborgs. Die Architekten und Stadtplaner des digitalen Zeitalters müssen den Körper im Raum theoretisch neu fassen.' (Mitchell, 1996: 32) The body-environment relation profoundly changed as we turned into so called *cyborgs*. 'In historischen Behausungen der noch nicht technisch erweiterten Menschheit waren Raum und Zeit kontinuierlich.' (ibid.: 35) Back then our relation to our environment was stable and determined by our immediate surroundings made of physical walls, streets, windows etc. As one looks through the window of his house, he will always see the same place without any difference in time between inside and outside. But with the invention of the TV and later the Internet, we look into dynamic cracks in space, into windows that transcend space and time. Our environment is constantly changing; screens can alter their content within seconds, connecting us with different places in different times. These windows are not restricted to our home anymore but have become highly portable.

Due to the permanent connectivity of the cell phone meeting places within the city become fluid: 'By virtue of the cellular phone, meeting places have become indeterminate; fluid territories rather than precise spots.' (Carey, 2004: 136) The use of the mobile phone in public spaces also results in a privatization of public space. The speaker on the phone withdraws from the social situation into a virtual space. Very often such persons mark their withdrawal by walking in circles or stepping aside in a corner (see Kopomaa, 2004: 270). With smart phones it has become possible to navigate through the city as well as overlaying digital information over the real space. Equally digital screens in public spaces are turning facades into dynamic information displays. This results in a configuration which Lev Manovich calls the 'augmented space', a term that refers to 'physical space overlaid with dynamically changing information' (2005: 2). The traditional sense of space and time collapses as one's relation to the environment becomes ever more mediated by virtual reality. 'Die klassische Einheit von architektonischem Raum und Erfahrung hat sich aufgelöst [...].' (Mitchell, 1996: 48) This process of mediatization will be discussed in more detail in Part II and in the Conclusion.

2.8.5.3 *The Future of Public Space*

In a consequence of the digitalization of information the material city is being questioned as its functions and services are transferred to the immaterial cyberspace. Boden and Molotch, however, argue that despite new ICT's, physical proximity and co-present interaction is still the main form of human interaction: 'We notice no decline in this simplest and most basic human tendencies: people need to get together.' (2004: 102) Reasons for this need are certain features

of co-present interaction that are lacking in electronic communication, as for example facial gestures, eye contact, body language, the voice, physical contact etc. All these aspects convey much more information than just electronically transmitted information. They help to create trust and a social bond. Thus public squares in the 21st century do not primarily have political or economic functions but are spaces of urbanity and encounters. It is the staged spectacle and the need to see and to be seen that still draws people out of their homes into public squares. In times of the Football World Championship millions of people all over the world swarmed out to watch the matches on public screens in city squares or parks. As we will see later, the augmentation of space can reanimate public space by creating an open and interactive environment.

2.9 CONCLUSION PART I

The historical analysis provided a detailed picture of how public squares have evolved in terms of their architectural configuration and their socio-cultural meaning in relation to the media. In Ancient Greece the spoken word was the most important medium and thus the design and the meaning of the agora was determined by oral culture. The *Forum Romanum* represents a shift from oral to visual culture since the written word and visual representation became more and more important. The public square was designed as a theatre addressed to the eye. During the Middle Ages reading and writing was confined to closed spaces like monasteries while the general public was still based on an oral culture of bargaining. The squares of the Renaissance and Baroque were built as grandiose stage settings: perspectives and view-axes were the most important features of the square and expressed the centralization of power. At the same time, the invention of book printing and the press induced a shift of public life from public squares to salons and coffee houses, where a new reading public evolved. In the 19th century cities and public squares lost their spatial unity due to new modes of transport and the emphasis on traffic circulation. Physical space turned into a mediated two-dimensional surface. During the 20th and 21st century (new) ICT's like the telephone, the TV and the Internet ultimately de-spatialized communication and turned the city of stone into a city of bits and pixels. City squares are transforming into fluid spaces surrounded by a multitude of dynamic signs and urban screens that change our perception of time and space. The bodily relation to space becomes ever less immediate and ever more mediated by layers of virtual reality.

3 PART II: CASE STUDIES

In order to exemplify the above described trends and challenges for urban planning the two case studies will be presented in the following chapter. Both squares (in their modern form) evolved around the same time as a result of the destruction of the ramparts and consequently they have been a place and a laboratory of modernity. It has to be noted, however, that the Rådhuspladsen has been an entirely planned square, whereas the Karlsplatz slowly evolved as a patchwork of different plans and additions. But more importantly, the Rådhuspladsen and the Karlsplatz share the characteristic of being the biggest and the most urban squares in their respective cities. They are in constant movement and transition and they are both the main traffic hubs. Despite their similarities the connection between the media and the square becomes apparent in slightly different ways, as we will see in the analysis.

3.1 CASE STUDY I: RÅDHUSPLADSEN

3.1.1 The History of the Square

3.1.1.1 The Birth of Modern Copenhagen

The old medieval Copenhagen was a rather small and very dense city enclosed by ramparts. At the location of the current City Hall Square there was a small hey market, next to the Vestervold (the western part of the ramparts). Because of a rapid population increase it was soon necessary to expand the city beyond its borders. Since the ramparts lost their military significance around the middle of the 19th century, Versterport (the western gate) was pulled down in 1857 and Vestervold was levelled into a wide boulevard in 1867 (see Ejlersen, 1996). The city limits vanished and the view was now free towards Vesterbro. Ovesen writes: 'Byens rammer var sprængt i både fysisk, økonomisk, kulturel og psykologisk henseende. Det gamle og det ny blev forbundet [...] (The city limits were broken in both physical, economic, cultural and psychological terms. The old and the new one were connected, A/N).' (Ovesen, 1998: 4) In the famous novel 'Stucco', which broaches the issue of the new Copenhagen, Herman Bang writes: 'Der er jo ingen Provinser mere, sagde han og slog Haanden ud mod Passagen og Mængden. Det er jo kun ét eneste stort København [...] (There are no more provinces, he said, and held out his hand against the passenger and crowd. That is only one large Copenhagen, A/N).' (Bang, 1996 [1887] quoted in Ovesen, 1998: 3) When the railway station was built in 1847 the centre of Copenhagen already shifted towards the west. The train station marks the arrival of

modernity in Copenhagen, as it led to another, more dynamic and open concept of the city. Apart from the new transport hub, also the amusement park Tivoli was located in this area. Long before the construction of the New Town Hall there were vaudeville shows, theatres and cafes around the place, all of which contributed to the attractiveness of the place.

Since the city was growing and the old town hall at Nytorv simply became too small, it was decided in 1885 to build a new one at the former border of the city, close to the railway station (fig 1). 1894 the foundation stone for Martin Nyrop's new town hall was laid and about ten years after that, in 1905, it was inaugurated (fig 2). The birth of the Town Hall Square coincided with the birth of Copenhagen as a modern city.

3.1.1.2 The (Dis)Continuous Space

The title of Hans Ovesen's publication 'Det For(t)satte Rum' (1998) suggests a twofold character of the space. If you read the title including the *t* it means 'The Continuous Space', if you read it without the *t* it means 'The Discontinuous Space'.

The first meaning of the title describes the square as a place where the modern city started, as the levelling of the ramparts opened up the whole city. Ovesen argues that the fall of this restricting wall was the spatial expression of a psychological opening of the city (Interview Ovesen). All of a sudden citizens could look and go further as the city started to expand. The City Hall Square was built exactly on the old rampart system, where the old city stopped and the new one started. After the city opened up, the whole social dynamic of the square dramatically changed. One could say that the familiar, small-scale hey market (as the city was small-scale and familiar) turned into an urban square full of strangers (as the city expanded and turned into a metropolis). The square became the place where one could experience modernity in the form of new kiosks, posters pillars, Canon photographers, pedestrian crossings etc. (see Ovesen, 1998: 16).

The second denotation of the title - 'The Discontinuous Space' – refers to the impact of the opening of the city, which also caused the opening the squares. Ovesen argues that the City Hall Square is a 'No-Man's Land' dividing the old city and the new city (Interview Ovesen). By placing the new city hall on the free space of the old ramparts, politicians wanted to create a new centre in Copenhagen. Accordingly the City Hall Square is an entirely constructed and planned space, which has led to a strange direction of the City Hall: It is dedicated to neither side of the city but is a crossing in between (fig 3).

3.1.1.3 *The Design of the Square and its Transformations*

Martin Nyrop's design of the Rådhuspladsen was inspired by the Piazza del Campo in Sienna. He shaped the square in front of the City Hall like a 'sea shell', based on the shape of the Piazza in Sienna (fig 4). Unfortunately the square did not have the effect Nyrop had hoped for, it was simply too small in comparison to the giant City Hall. The citizens of Copenhagen jokingly called it the 'frying pan' (see Ejlersen, 1996). The original square was actually divided by a street into two parts: the sea shell and the northern part which was first defined by big chestnut trees but soon became a transport hub. Over the century the Rådhuspladsen has been subject to several transformations and re-design plans. During WWII shelter trenches were established on Muslingeskallen (the sea shell square). These so called 'molehills' were removed in 1947, but the sea shell shape of the square has never been reconstructed (see Ejlersen, 1996). In 1954/55 the Vestre Boulevard was widened and thus the basin of the Dragon Fountain was moved away. Also the little park besides the Town Hall was destroyed due to the widening of the street. After several competitions (in 1972 and 1979) the winning proposal of 1979 was realized by the firms *KHR A/S* and *Anders Nyvid A/S* in 1995/96, as part of the preparation for Copenhagen as the European Cultural Capital. The competition paper emphasized the objective of connecting the old and the new Copenhagen as well as the objective of reorganizing the traffic situation (see City of Copenhagen, 1979). In the course of the redesign the dividing street was removed and the square became a connected and coherent space. Moreover a new public transport terminal – the black HT-Terminal – was erected in front of the Helmerhus. Even after the redesign, the main traffic axis of Copenhagen still passes the square and defines it as a very open and fluid space (fig 5).

3.1.2 The Frame of the Square

3.1.2.1 *The City Hall*

Martin Nyrop designed the City Hall of Copenhagen in a national romanticist tradition. The reference to medieval castle architecture communicates a rejection of neo-classicism and neo-baroque (which suggested monarchical and aristocratic power) and expresses diversity and democratic ideals. Nyrop created a democratic and popular monumental architecture by using simple materials like wood and red bricks, which refers to the Danish building tradition (Nyrop even spoke of the 'honest red brick of Denmark'), by placing statues of firemen around the building and so on. In some spots the bricks are laid out irregularly in order to emphasize the crafts and the human touch of the building. The irregular layout and the asymmetry of the tower

very much correspond with Sitte's artistic principles and his critique of symmetry, and in fact Nyrop drew great inspiration from Sitte. However, the Town Hall is located within the streams of traffic as opposed to Sitte's idea of closeness. Moreover the sea shell square in front of the building was much too small regarding Sitte's rules for the relation between the proportion of squares and its dominant structures (see Sitte, 2003: 48). The square failed to provide the right perspective so that the City Hall could not unfold its full impact.

Having pointed out the romanticist and nationalistic features of the architecture, it has to be stressed that the building already incorporates many modern features, such as a functionalistic layout, modern materials like steel and glass and an electric clock, which reflected the new modern metropolis in which time synchronization was the basis of all human activities. Frederik Nygard's poem 'Rådhusklokkerne' expresses the significance of the clock for Copenhagen: 'Kald det ingen ting, og hvad du vil. Dette rådhusurets klokkespil, det er byens fine hjerteslag, pulsen i den københavnske dag.' (Call it anything, and what you want. This town hall clock chimes, the city's fine heartbeat, the pulse of the Copenhagen today, A/N) (Nygard quoted in Jensen, 1957: 40)

Ultimately the Town Hall is the dominant building on the square. It is the expression of community and of power, a historical monument that expresses national identity. At the same time this identity is not graspable on the square, it is an illusion just as the flickering surfaces create an illusionary space.

3.1.2.2 'Framing' Buildings

The City Hall Square is very loosely framed by its surrounding buildings. They include hotels and a number of commercial premises in five, six and seven storey story high edifices. On the ground floors are restaurants, some shops, two cinema centers, several banks and travel agencies. Before the turn of the century there were a lot of budget hotels situated at the Rådhuspladsen, offering low-price accommodation for farmers. With the construction of the square and the arrival of modernity they became modern hotels hosting people from all over the world. The building row on the Eastern side of the square, which forms the border to the historic city centre, predominantly consisted of hotels: The hotel Bristol (1901/02, today's Absalons Gard), the hotel Metropol (1896, today's Terracottabygningen) and the Palace Hotel (1909/10). The location of these hotels at the square is a direct result of the expansion of the city and the construction of the railway station as the new city gate to the modern metropolis. The square became a stage full of strangers from all over the world.

Towards the West the House of Industry (1978/80, Eric Miller), the Dagmarhus (1937/39, Kampmann) and the Richshuset (1938, Cock-Clausen) are neither defined by the square nor are they defining the square with their facades. They are not really facing the square, instead they are 'coming around the corner' (Interview Ovesen) and suggest movement towards the radiating streets. This spatial specificity contributes to the impression that the square is a very fluid and dynamic space, rather than being enclosed by buildings. The street is as important as the square - not the *being there* but the *being connected* dominates the space. The Richshuset is lifted from the ground and the lower structure is made of glass so that it seems that the building is floating away. On the corner a tower with two weather girls stands out and there is also a digital neon thermometer attached to the building. The facade of the House of Industry with its decor of neon signs make the square look like Times Square, where light, colours and advertising gives the place its character (fig 6).

The Helmerhus (1892/93, Petersen) faces the Town Hall on the opposite side of the square, but the long distance between these two buildings created a void. Hence, in 1996 the HT-Terminal was placed in front of the Helmerhus in order to give the square the right proportions. Instead of closing the square the building seems to be floating and to sail out along Vesterbrogade or Vestergade any moment (see Ovesen, 1998: 10). The terminal rather contributed to the spatial diffusion than defining the square as place (see Ovesen, 1998: 10). Recently it has been torn down in order to make place for the new metro ring line.

3.1.3 The Square as a Stage

In the perception of Copenhageners as well as in the intention of planners, the Rådhuspladsen is the centre of Copenhagen. It serves as a stage for all kinds of events, demonstrations, receptions etc. Whenever there are bigger happenings in Copenhagen, they will almost definitely start, end or take place at the Rådhuspladsen. In 1920 city counsellors departed from the Rådhuspladsen to the Amalienborg Slotsplads in order to install a parliamentary government (see Ejlersen, 1996). The City Hall Square, so to speak, was the point of departure for democracy. When the message of the liberation of Denmark from the German occupation spread, people streamed to the square, where Field Marshall Montgomery saluted to the Danes on May 12, 1945. Not only demonstrations but also royal receptions and birthdays are celebrated on the square. When Denmark won the Football European Championship in 1992, the team was received at the square with thousands of people celebrating on the square (see Ulla Weber, 1999). More recently the Rådhuspladsen was the main stage for the promotion of

the climate conference. The square was filled with several thematic pavilions, a music stage and a huge white globe (fig 7).

The aforementioned staged events fill the void as quickly as it is emptied afterwards. Only here and there one can observe spontaneous uses of the square. It is not permanently appropriated by a specific social group or bound to certain activities. In the first place the square is the main motive associated with Copenhagen and thus it is one of the main attractions for tourists. It is not a *place* as such, but a 'Heterotopia', to speak with Foucault, an unreal space where you are and where you are not at the same time, a mirror that projects you into a third space while you are aware of your physical presence at the same time (see Foucault, 1967).

3.1.4 Analysis of the Space

The whole dynamic of the square has always been dominated by traffic. A multitude of pictures and paintings indicate the perceived dominance of traffic on the square. A caricature by Alfred Schmidt from the year 1923 depicts Niels Nielsen, a professor of mathematics, studying the intricate tramlines on the ground of the Rådhuspladsen (fig 8). Indeed, before the tramlines disappeared and were replaced by buses in 1972, the square was perforated by them and the traffic inspector's guardhouse formed a kind of centrality on the square. Moreover two of Copenhagen's main traffic arteries run alongside the Rådhuspladsen, the H.C. Andersen Boulevard and the Vester Boulevard. The actual centre of the square is the line between Strøget and Vesterbrogade, the former street dividing the square, which is now an invisible path used by pedestrians to cross the square. The point I want to stress here is that the Rådhuspladsen has always been a place of transition and dislocation that draws people in and disperses them in the next moment. The zero stone on the square indicates distances to other cities and thus symbolizes the dynamic character of the place: it is not a square to stay but to move away from. Ovesen writes: 'Stedet hvorfra byen rækker ud til de nye tider, til resten af regionen, landet og verden.' (The place from which the city extends to the new times, the rest of the region, country and world, A/N) (Ovesen, 1998: 4) As a fluid space characterized by movement instead of boundaries it is the manifestation of Camillo Sitte's critique of modern squares where traffic considerations succeeded over the aesthetic and picturesque quality of the square. It is not a continuous three dimensional space, but rather a two-dimensional surface. Even the buildings around do not appear in their plastic quality but define the square with their mediatized surfaces and facades.

Also Ulla Weber (1999) characterizes the Rådhuspladsen as an amorphous and fluid space. Occasionally the place is defined by an event, but the next day the square already changes its face. The square could be seen as a shell that is constantly changing its content. Weber draws a picture where the space contains several niches that are defined by the actors - people chatting here, others roller skating there, a married couple that celebrates in front of the City Hall etc. But all those activities are very temporary and hardly graspable, the rapid movement and transition on the square makes it impossible to frame it. As the activities on the square are very diffuse, also the lighting, the neon-signs and screens reflecting on the ground immerse the square into a diffuse light (fig 9). Weber asks: 'Hvad er virkeligt og hvad er et spejlbillede?' (What is real and what is a mirror image?, A/N) Especially the postmodern HT-Terminal displayed this transparency of the space. It was not clear what it was and it seemed to float away any moment. Perhaps the most stable element of the Square is the invisible pedestrian path between Strøget and Vesterbrogade, a path that is created by the constant movement of pedestrians.

3.1.5 The Media and the Square

There has always been a concentration of media on the Rådhuspladsen. The same phenomenon applies to other capital cities and their squares like New York's Time Square. I define media in a very broad sense, including media in the traditional sense of the word like newspaper's and TV. But it also includes *signs* as such, which likewise mediate the experience on the square. In the following I will describe and analyze different forms of media that define and influence the perception of the space.

3.1.5.1 *Newspapers*

First of all it is remarkable that there has always been a high concentration of newspapers on the City Hall Square. It is *the* centre of the news media in Copenhagen. One of the most important and most present newspapers on the square is certainly *Politiken*. The newspaper was founded in 1884 and bought the house at Rådhuspladsen in 1912 (see Bramsen, 1990: 204). In 1915 also the newspaper *Berlingske Tidende* moved into Absalons Gard and stayed there until 1977. In 1984 the daily social democratic newspaper *Aktuelt* moved into the Absalons Gaard but closed in 2001 (see *ibid*: 210). The Politikenhus also hosts another newspaper called *Ekstrabladet* (which is owned by *Politiken*). *Ekstrabladet* used to put a banner with the latest information on the facade every morning and even now yellow banners with information are hanging on the facade. In 1924 the first continuous loop for *Berlingske Tidende* appeared on the

Town Hall Square (see Nielsen, 1994: 44). This loop was the first expression of mass media in form of a dynamic facade on the square – now not only advertisements but also information was displayed on the square (fig 10). In 1926 also *Politiken* followed with a continuous loop where the news would be lit in yellow and the ads in other colours. Nowadays the information is displayed on an electronic screen (fig 11).

At the turn of the 19th century daily newspapers evolved as a whole new kind of medium and radically changed society. Before that magazines had already existed, but the mass media was something entirely new. Now information from all over the world was made available for everybody. One could say that when the newspaper *Politiken* moved to the City Hall Square it brought the world to the Square. By being on the square one was connected with the globe (in the 30's there was even a huge globe placed on the roof of the Politikenhus). Before the invention of TV and Internet, people would go to the square to get the latest information from the banners and loops on the facades of the newspapers houses. The square served as an information forum, as a medium itself. The screens and banners create a dynamic mediated environment where one is present at the square and drifting away into a virtual space at the same time.

3.1.5.2 Neon-Signs

A square is always in some way or another delimited by built structures. These buildings to a certain extent shape the space and define its perception. Until the end of the 19th century the perception was influenced by the architectural and plastic quality of the delimiting structures. Although signs in form of plates or writings on the facades had been common before, it was not possible to alter them quickly and thus the perception of space remained relatively stable. The introduction of the light bulb around the turn of the 19th century and later the invention of the neon tubes enabled a whole new way of communicating information in the city. Suddenly it was possible to tell whole stories and to alter the signs very quickly. One of the first illuminated signs on the square was the one of *HASSEL & TEUDT* from 1924 on the *Berlingske Tidende* building (see Nielsen, 1994: 27). By the end of the 1920's the light bulb advertisement had to yield to a more durable material - the neon-sign. In the late 30's the Town Hall Square and Vesterbropassage became the centre of neon-signs (see *ibid*: 35). In 1924 the first continuous loop for *Berlingske Tidende* appeared on the Square, followed by *Politiken* in 1926. On the Richshuset from 1937 a neon thermometer has been attached, showing the temperature in quarter degrees. This building housed several film companies ever since and thus had *20th Century Fox* and *Warner Bros.* neon signs on it, giving the place quite an international flair. The

weather girls from Utzon-Frank are illuminated by a neon-circle during the night. The whole building is framed by a blue neon tube, creating one of the most remarkable neon effects around the Town Hall Square. During the night the building structure itself disappears, it becomes a mirage and only the neon-signs, like ghosts hanging in the air, are visible (fig 12). Due to stricter regulations from the 1940's onwards the Town Hall Square has not seen such impressive neon-signs ever since.

In 1950 Copenhagen was the home of 1200 neon signs (ibid: 109). In 1951 the newspaper *Berlingske Tidende* wrote that Copenhagen was the Neon-City number one in Europe, a kind of northern Paris (ibid: 99). A fact that certainly contributed to the creation of the term *Wonderful Copenhagen* - a notion that expressed the vibrant and flashing nightlife of the city. On a rainy night all the neon signs are mirrored in the wet streets, creating a mystic kaleidoscope of reflections. The street turns into a mirage (fig 9). But there was also some criticism to the neon-signs in Copenhagen: Vilhelm Bergsoes, in an article from 1951, suggested a reorganization of the neon sign jungle (see ibid: 118). He argued that this intricate jungle of neon-signs could have a depressing and confusing impact.

The welfare system in the 1960's brought new wealth and enabled a whole new way of living. The process of suburbanization influenced the dynamic of the city centre and thus the fate of the neon-signs. Instead of spending leisure time in the city centre people now isolated themselves in the suburbs and spent their time in front the TV. Accordingly, the incentive to place neon advertisements in the city centre decreased; instead they spread over the city and its suburbs, especially around suburban shopping malls (see ibid: 123). One could argue that the decrease of neon-signs point to a loss of importance of public space. Public space gets replaced by Internet and TV, which are the new platforms of communication as well as advertisement. Nielsen confirms that so called 'election-nights' on the Town Hall Square, where everybody would follow the event on the square, have been replaced by television (see ibid: 16). At the same time city centres started to look the same all over Europe due the internationalization of business. This internationalization and commercialization of public space led to a certain loss of a sense of place, since Coca Cola ads can be found everywhere, independently from the local context.

Until today the perception of the space has been highly influenced by these glowing signs and moving letters. Buildings turned into surfaces for multiple dynamic layers and thereby create a highly mediated and dynamic environment. The facade of the Industrial House, for instance, is fully covered with signs, whereas the individual signs are subordinate. Instead, a vast amount of signs are attached very close to each other so that they merge to a single work of decorative art

(see Nørhald, 1993: 23) (fig 6). The Rådhuspladsen is a universe of images and flashing lights that connect the city to a global imagery. However, the Town Hall itself has been left untouched due its historical significance and its public character. It helps to define the place and it creates a fixed point of reference.

3.1.5.3 Canon Photographers

Canon photographers showed up on the City Hall Square around the turn of the century (see Bramsen, 1990: 202). Until photo cameras were widely affordable, people (mostly tourists) would go to the square in order to have pictures taken of themselves and their fellows, with the Town Hall as a popular background. Several pictures of the Rådhuspladsen archived in the City Museum of Copenhagen show these Canon photographers on the square, which has an interesting implication (fig 13). The Canon photographers do not only take pictures and frame moments on the square, but they are also an integral element of the representation and the image of the square. Furthermore the two-dimensional medium of the photograph corresponds with our flat sense of space. With all the illuminated facades the City Hall Square becomes a mere surface, a picture itself. At the same time pictures eradicate the importance of space, as they create simultaneity of space and time. The need to physically go to a place vanishes.

3.1.5.4 Television and Cinema

The HT-Terminal used to host a TV-Show which was shown every evening on the channel TV2. For the show, the Rådhuspladsen is used as an animated background. Thus the square becomes a media image, a stylized picture for framing a certain scene. The square turns from a three dimensional space into an imagery and into a dreamscape. The animated image has always been closely connected to the City Hall Square. In 1896 the first public film show in Denmark took place on the square in a temporary wooden building, which was also used for panoramas. Since then the Rådhuspladsen has become a visual symbol of Copenhagen in Danish movies. In 1937 the Palladium cinema has been established in the old House of Industry and today the Dagmarhus hosts a cinema on the ground floor. One can argue that the perception of the city has become cinematic. If in the plastic arts space remains static and time without direction, then in the film space becomes dynamic, fluid, unlimited and time loses its continuity and direction (see Hauser, 1951: 941). Thus the dramatic time does not correspond with the empirical time. In the same way continuous time and space collapse in the film, the Rådhuspladsen is a fluid and dynamic space of simultaneity. Hauser argues that the experience

of simultaneity is the decisive condition of modern men: 'The fascination of "simultaneity", the discovery that, on the one hand, the same man experiences so many different, unconnected and irreconcilable things in one and the same moment, and that, on the other, different men in different places often experience the same things [...] at the same time [...], this universalism [...] is perhaps the real source of the new conception of time [...].' (Hauser, 1951: 944)

3.1.5.5 The Influence of TV and Internet

With spread of the TV set and later the Internet in every household, physical public space lost its significance. If one had to go to the Rådhuspladsen some 60 years ago in order to have the latest news from the posters hanging down the Politikenshus, this information is within the reach of a mouse click nowadays. Before the spread of television the Mayor would go out on the balcony of the City Hall to make announcements and to hold speeches. Nowadays politicians mainly present themselves on TV or in the newspaper. We do not have to go to the information anymore but the information comes to us in form of a window. Hans Ovesen concludes that there has never been less need to go out and still one never went out that much ever before (Interview Ovesen). Public space lost its function as a social and political centre of the city and has become a space of urbanity and celebration.

3.2 CASE STUDY II: KARLSPLATZ

3.2.1 The History of the Square

3.2.1.1 *From the Development of a Suburb to the Construction of the Karlskirche*

During the Middle Ages a small suburban village called Wieden developed in front of the Kärntertor (the southern gate). It flourished until the first Turkish Siege in 1529, when large parts of it had been destroyed. Consequently the old fortifications were expanded and in front of them the so called *Glacis* was created as a free area that should prevent further attacks (see Öhlinger, 2008: 72). This wide space was the precondition for the later development of the Karlsplatz (see *ibid*: 76). In 1716 the erection of the Karlskirche crucially determined the later development of the area. The church was commissioned by Emperor Karl VI and designed by Fischer von Erlach. Its monumental mix of Baroque and Antique architecture ought to express the claim to power of the Habsburgs over the Holy Roman Empire. In paintings from the 18th century the Karlskirche deploys its long-range effect as a heightened monument within the wild nature (fig 14). Due to advancements in military technology the *Glacis* as a protection system was soon devalued and lost its significance (see *ibid*: 77). In 1857 Emperor Franz Josef proclaimed the razing of the ramparts and the opening of the space for civilian uses. With the transformation of the *Glacis* into the Ringstraße and the regulation and covering of the Wienfluss in 1897/99, the foundations for the development of the square as a more or less delimited space had been laid out.

3.2.1.2 *The Ringstraße*

The destruction of the old ramparts gave way to the Ringstraße project, a wide traffic boulevard that exemplifies the transition to modern city planning. Here the street and the free flow of traffic absolutely dominate the space. Gerhard Curdes writes: 'Der Platz des 19. Jahrhunderts ist der Boulevard als Spiegelbild einer Gesellschaft, die pausenlos in Bewegung ist [...]' (1997: 130)

One of the most prominent critics on this project was the Viennese architect and city planner Camillo Sitte. He criticised that the aim of modern systems was always the regulation of the road network. 'Ein Straßennetz dient immer nur der Communication, niemals der Kunst, weil es niemals sinnlich aufgefasst, niemals überschaut werden kann, ausser am Plan.' (Sitte, 2003: 97) The subordination of the design to traffic considerations would deprive the city of any meaningful aesthetic space. Sitte's proposals for the improvement of the Ringstraße according to his artistic principles encompassed the unification and closure of squares in front of the Votivkirche, the

Rathaus, the University and the Parliament. Although he did not explicitly comment on the Karlsplatz (in fact the Karlsplatz was not directly part of the Ringstraße project), the square would eventually become the manifestation of Sitte's abhorred open, traffic-dominated and agoraphobic squares. In contrast to Sitte, the Viennese architect Otto Wagner emphasized the importance of traffic and circulation in his approach to the modern metropolis. In his book 'Modern Architecture' he laid out his theory, which was based on the motto: '*Artis sola domina necessitas*' (Necessity is art's only mistress) (see Schorske, 1979: 73). Wagner sharply criticized the historicism of the Ringstraße architecture and argued in favour of the dominance and independence of the circular street.

The introduction of a constitutional government in 1860 had a significant impact on the Ringstraße. While the inner city was dominated by symbols of the monarchy, the Ringstraße 'celebrated in architecture the triumph of constitutional *Recht* over imperial *Macht*, of secular culture over religious faith. Not palaces, garrisons, and churches, but centers of constitutional government and higher culture dominated the Ring' (ibid: 31). The area of the Karlsplatz served as an experimental ground for the future architecture of the Ringstraße (see ibid: 115). The first public building (Handelsakademie) of the city's extension was built here as well as the first cultural institutions originating from civil initiatives (Künstlerhaus and Musikverein) (see ibid: 115). The spatial configuration of the Karlsplatz and the Ringstraße itself also indicates the rise of the middle class and the victory of liberal ideas: during the Baroque period squares have been stages for the representation of aristocratic power, but now boulevards became the symbols of the rising bourgeoisie.

3.2.1.3 The Karlsplatz emerges

At the end of the 19th century architects started to be interested in designing the square. In a competition for the redesign of the area Otto Wagner's project *artis sola domina necessitas* came first, ex aequo with Josef Stübgen's plan. Otto Wagner's plan more or less negated the question of the square and focused on the traffic situation. Clearly Wagner's modern vision of the square already conceived the space as a transitory one, which is experienced while driving by. Although these plans have never been realized, the General-Regulierungsbureau (general regulation office) under the direction of Karl Mayreder had been founded in 1894 in order to further develop the plans for the square. Both the idea of a modern square as well as the conservation of the old city scape was included in the planning. Especially the vistas of the church played a significant role. Finally Karl Mayreder worked out a plan that would become the basis for the design of the square (fig 15).

In 1899 the Stadtbahn (city railway) ran for the first time at the Karlsplatz. It transformed the square to a hub for local and regional transport as well as it transformed Vienna into a modern metropolis. The new way of moving through the underground changed the perception of the city. Instead of panoramic views from the Gürtelbahn (railway at the belt), the trip was being reduced to sheer movement where the passenger lost his orientation (see Békési, 2008: 131). The two Stadtbahn pavillions (city railway stations), designed by Otto Wagner, mark the beginning of modern architecture in Vienna. From now on the urban character of the square dominated the depiction of the Karlsplatz (fig 16). The church was now woven into the modern urban fabric made of technology and movement. From 1900 onwards aerial views of the Karlsplatz almost completely disappeared, indicating the fragmentation of the space and the impossibility to grasp the square as a unified space.

In 1901 the plan to build a new city museum at the Karlsplatz according to Otto Wagner's concept was heavily discussed in the media and in the public and it turned out to be a fight between conservatives and modernists. After a model of the facade was placed at the square heavy protests, newspaper articles and petitions forced the mayor Dr. Karl Lueger, in the light of upcoming elections, to dismiss the project. This shows that the development of the square was highly influenced by discussions in the media.

3.2.1.4 The Karlsplatz between 1918 and 1970

After WWI and the end of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, the time of monumental representative buildings was over, mainly because of the economic crisis during the Inter-War period. Several projects for the building of cinemas as well as the construction of the Zentralgebäude des Österreichischen Verkehrsbüros in 1922/23 indicate an important shift in the meaning of the square: instead of cultural buildings and schools, now edifices for leisure, consumption and business became important (see Feller, 2008: 156).

After WWII the Karlsplatz moved into the spotlight of the planning interests as a flood of redesign concepts for the square showed. Especially the problematic traffic situation was a major concern of the plans for the square. However only two individual projects were realized: The Winterthur-Haus and the Vienna City Museum. The latter, built in 1955/59 by Oswald Haerdtl, closed the square at the East side of the Karlskirche.

From the 1960's onwards also the design of a park landscape seized attention. The overwhelmingly monumental plans right after WWII have now been replaced by the emphasis on the traffic and the recreational space (see Hirner, 2008: 163). Plans from *Gruppe M* or *FHW*

have never been realized but indicate the changing meaning of the square. Instead of traditional and representative conceptions of the square after WWII, the square was now conceived as a communicative space which should integrate a multiplicity of functions like consumption, culture, recreation etc. As Hirner concludes: 'In ihrem hybriden, kombinatorischen Ansatz sollten die Planungen der späten 1960er-Jahre zukunftsweisend für gegenwärtige Entwicklungen am Karlsplatz werden.' (ibid.: 167)

3.2.1.5 Redesign in 1971

The beginning of the construction of the Metro in 1969 constituted the starting point for the second overall redesign of the Karlsplatz. Only after the traffic concept for the area was fixed, an international competition for the redevelopment of the Karlsplatz was held. In 1971 the Jury decided for a project from the Copenhagen based Swedish architect Sven-Ingvar Andersson, who also designed the Sankt Hans Torv and the Trinitatis Kirchplatz in Copenhagen. He and his colleagues designed the Karlsplatz as an urban park landscape consisting of several oval surfaces with trees planted on them (see Bacher, 2008: 169) (fig 17). Andersson wanted to create a balance between the dynamic aspect of the square and the square as a place to stay (see Andersson et al., 1971 quoted in Oliwa, 1981: 126). Therefore the Resselpark offers numerous possibilities to pause and stay, like benches, playgrounds and little tranquil islands which are visually and physically protected from the traffic. Interestingly a central axis towards the Karlskirche is missing. Anyhow the Karlskirche was, once again, the reference point for the redesign. 'Zum Festhalten des heroischen Ausdrucks sind die großen Dimensionen in der unmittelbaren Nähe der Kirche notwendig, aber der Spiegeleffekt des Wasserbeckens ist auch ein wichtiges Mittel, um die Pracht und Würdigkeit zu unterstreichen.' (Atelier Karlsplatz, 1974 quoted in Oliwa, 1981: 161). The planning process was accompanied by a flood of newspaper articles and controversies in the media, which influenced the final shape of the square. The Kurier described the square as 'Ewige Baustelle' and 'Verplant in alle Ewigkeit' (Bina, May 29, 1977). Eventually the park design was slightly modified and the original size of the basin was reduced by a third (critics claimed that the basin would turn the church into a 'garden house of romanticism' (Oliwa, 1981: 165)).

The new Karlsplatz reflects the de-concentrated, accelerated metropolis: it is split into a recreational square and a traffic square. This double character is also apparent in the vertical dimension: underneath the square the largest metro hub of Vienna is located and thus the Karlsplatz is as much associated with the underground as it is with the surface area (fig 18). Békési describes the effect of the metro on the city and the perception of space as follows: 'Die

U-Bahn gilt als ein paradigmatischer Ort der Moderne und der Großstadt. Das transitorische Moment der Begegnung, Geschwindigkeit, Flüchtigkeit, Anonymität und Fremdheit erfasste auch den Karlsplatz vollends mit dem Ausbau des U-Bahn-Knotens [...] Damals schon begann die Wahrnehmung des Platzes sich von seiner tatsächlichen Erfahrung vor Ort abzukoppeln.' (2008: 137)

3.2.2 The Frame of the Square

Squares are usually defined by their delimitation, a feature that the Karlsplatz almost completely lacks. The square is very weakly defined by its surrounding buildings and thus is a very open and fragmented space. No one really knows where it starts and where it ends.

3.2.2.1 Karlskirche

The Karlskirche (Fischer von Erlach, 1715/37) is certainly the most significant landmark at the Karlsplatz and the only building that gives the square some orientation. The rather odd direction of the church (diagonal to the city) probably results from the idea that the facade should face the residence of the emperor (Hofburg). From the beginning the church was planned as a symbol of of the Habsburg Monarchy. Vienna was seen as the 'New Rome' (see Vancsa, 1983: 39) and therefore the emperor wanted to legitimize this claim with monumental and triumphal architecture referring to the Antique Empire. The church served as a symbolic backdrop for several festive processions over the centuries, as for example the entry of Emperor Franz I after the Treaty of Paris in 1814 (fig 19). Since the Karlskirche represents the most outstanding baroque church in Vienna, it has dominated the planning of the square until today. It constitutes a magnet, though very hidden in the back, which prevents the space to finally fall apart.

3.2.2.2 'Framing' Buildings

The South side of the square is delimited by the Polytechnic Institute (1816/18, Schemerls v. Leytenbach) and the Evangelic School (1860/62, Theophil Hansen) and the postmodern library of the Technical University (1984/87, Justus Dahinden and Reinhard Giesermann). While the monumental Karlskirche expressed the idea of Vienna as the capital of a world empire, the Polytechnic Institute is much lower and elongated and thereby expressed canniness and functionality (see Haiko, 2008: 116). In 1872 it was transformed into the Technical University. The Evangelic School already incorporates modern ideas: The break room is a glass covered

courtyard allowing a maximum of sun and air. The style is very much in line with the Polytechnic Institute (Hansen saw it in the tradition of the Italian Renaissance) and the portico creates a sequence with the ones of the church and the Polytechnic Institute. This building marked a further step towards the spatial unification the area.

Towards the Northern side the Handelsakademie (1860/62, Ferdinand Fellner the Elder), the Künstlerhaus (1865/68, August Weber) and the Musikverein (1865/68, Theophil Hansen) are limiting the square (although it is the street which actually creates the real border). The Handelsakademie represented the first public building within the Ringstraße. Beginning with the Evangelic School, the Künstlerhaus and finally the Musikverein, the architecture became more and more monumental. With the design of the Musikverein, Theophil Hansen defined the style and architectural standard for the ring street architecture. Interestingly only the Künstlerhaus is actually facing the square, the others are both facing the former, which aggravates the spatial diffusion.

Towards the West, although not really part of the square anymore, the Secession (1898, Olbrich) leaves its impression on the area, in terms of architecture as well as the cultural impact. After several artists were discontent with the *Genossenschaft bildender Künstler Wiens*, which had its headquarters in the Künstlerhaus, they created their own association called *Vereinigung bildender Künstler Österreichs - Secession* in 1897. Gustav Klimt, who was a great inspiration for Otto Wagner, was elected as their first president. The Secessionists radically broke with the tradition and opened Vienna to the international arts. The edifice had been located at the Friedrichstraße in a direct line of sight with the Künstlerhaus, which intensified the conflict between the two parties. The white cube stands in sharp contrast to the colossal museum architecture of the 19th century and represents a model for modern, functionalistic exhibition space (see Storch, 2008: 145).

Between the Künstlerhaus and the Secession at the corner Operngasse / Friedrichstraße Adolf Loos built his Café Museum in 1899, which was described as 'Café Antisecession' in the Wiener Rundschau (see Storch, 2008: 146) or as 'Cafe Nihilismus' (Vancsa, 1983: 94) because of its formal modernistic character lacking playful ornamentation. The Café became a meeting point for artists and intellectuals like Robert Musil, Oscar Straus, Leo Fall, Otto Wagner etc.

Towards the East the Winterthur-Haus and the Vienna City Museum close the square. The modern and functionalistic architecture of both edifices creates a counterpart to the historical dominance of the Karlskirche.

3.2.3 The Square as a Stage

During the Inter-War period the Karlsplatz turned from a backdrop for festive processions into a popular stage for mass rallies and demonstrations of both the left (Schutzbündler) and the right (Heimwehr). Thus the square was used as a public political forum. The religious meaning of the church was neutralized since also anti-clerical politicians used its stairs as a speaker's desk. The November-Kundgebung (November rally) of the Social Democrats in 1927 and the demonstration of the Nationalists in 1932 count as the most startling events on the square (see Rapp, 2008: 452).

After 1945 the Karlsplatz became a border area between the inner-city zone of occupation and the Russian zone of occupation in the fourth district. These conditions were very favourable for the flourishing of the black market, where all kinds of goods like sugar, tobacco and food were traded. The underground and black market scene in post-war Vienna is taken up as the main theme in the movie 'The Third Man' (UK, 1949), where dodgy personalities and criminals dominate the cityscape. After WWII the square lost its function as a political arena to a large extent, as it became more and more dominated by traffic.

At the end of the 70's the Karlsplatz became a hotspot for drug trafficking. Especially the underground system at the Karlsplatz provided perfect conditions for drug dealing (see Rapp, 2008: 199). In 1988 there were 300 drug users per day at the Karlsplatz (see *ibid*: 201) and the same year several newspapers coined the term 'Die Kinder vom Karlsplatz' (referring to 'Die Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo'). 'Erstmals wurde damit der Karlsplatz publizistisch als Drogenplatz festgeschrieben.' (*ibid*: 201) The theme is also picked up in movies like 'Halbe Welt' (AUT, 1993), where the Karlsplatz appears as a drug trafficking spot in an ecologically ruined world (the drugs, however, are not chemical substances but postcards with motives of sunny places). During the last 20 years the drug scene in Vienna has changed tremendously and drug addicts are more socially controlled than ever (in February 2005 a protection zone around the Evangelic School was created where drug addicts are not allowed to stay and in April 2006 a new police station was opened at the Karlsplatz). However, the media reception has not changed and the Karlsplatz still serves as a synonym for social conflicts. But at the same time it serves as a synonym for Vienna as a modern metropolis.

Beside the drug problematic the Karlsplatz is used as an urban recreational area. Especially on the church square and around the water basin people hang out, lounge, read books or, if they are tourists, admire the Karlskirche and take pictures of it. Political speeches in front of the church have been replaced by people enjoying themselves. Since the 70's the Karlsplatz has

also been the site of innumerable interventions, installations and other participatory projects, which turned the square into a communicative space and also constantly transformed the meaning of the square. These projects stand in close relation to the mediatization process and will therefore be discussed in the corresponding chapter.

3.2.4 Analysis of the Space

The Karlsplatz is very difficult to define spatially (see fig 20 for an aerial view). Otto Wagner once said that the Karlsplatz is not a square but a landscape (Gegend) (see Hajós, 2008: 45). In that sense, the Karlsplatz is *the* manifestation of the fragmented, heterogeneous and traffic-dominated modern square, which is difficult to grasp as a coherent space. It is an anarchic square without clear boundaries, a diverse mosaic of in-between spaces, and a pastiche of several islands that are separated by traffic arteries. The square also symbolizes the modern, anonymous, fast moving metropolis. The falling apart of the modern square could be seen as an expression of the fragmentation and individualization of society and the city. Moreover the dissection of the public sphere from the physical space and the dissolution of a community are manifested in the dissolution of the public square as a unified, communitarian space into a highly individualized, fragmented space.

The square brings together cultural institutions of the bourgeoisie, the Bohemian world, students, school children and the socially excluded like drug addicts and the homeless. The mass of people crossing and using the square creates a high density and heterogeneity of people. 'Und gerade diese Differenz ist es, die den äußerst hohen Grad an "Urbanität" ausmacht, von dem dieser Ort gekennzeichnet ist.' (Zinganel, 2008: 211) As we have seen in the historical analysis of the development of the square, only the Karlskirche always dominated the planning and the perception of the square. To this day it frames the square and serves as an anchor that holds the space together. However, as we will see in the next chapter, its static architecture and historical continuity is slowly breaking up.

The Karlsplatz separates the inner district from the outer districts, physically as well as psychologically. There is no clear path to pass from one area to the other; one has to study the traffic flow and distribution of zebra crossings in order to be able to get from one side to the other (just as Nils Nielsen had to study the intricate tramlines on the City Hall Square in Copenhagen). Wolfgang Kos, from the perspective of a citizen living at the Karlsplatz for 25 years, writes: 'Man hat beim Überqueren auch dann das Gefühl, verweht werden zu können, wenn Windstille herrscht.' (Kos, 2008: 51) In this scenario the figure of the square as part of the mental image of

the city (according to Lynch, 1989) disappears. The notion Karlsplatz equally signifies the space above as well as below ground, one being an agglomeration of islands fragmented by traffic, the other being a mere passage way only comprehensible by decoding the signs. Thus we are faced with a horizontal as well as vertical segregation of the space. In several movies, like 'Ortem' (AUT, 2004) or 'Drop Out Rate' (AUT, 2001), the square also disappears and dissolves in the underground space.

An additional definition of the square is given by the cultural and art institutions, which also led to the creation of the notion *Kunstplatz Karlsplatz* in 2005. But in the first place, the Karlsplatz is a space of temporary activities, interventions and installations. Depending on those temporarily defining moments the Karlsplatz quickly changes its meaning. It is a shell that can be filled with multiple layers of codes and meanings.

3.2.5 The Media and the Square

Compared to the Town Hall Square in Copenhagen the process of mediatization is not as visible at the Karlsplatz. There are no newspaper companies located at the square, there are no neon-signs framing the space and there are no permanent screens or media facades. The link between media and the square appears to be rather subtle at the Karlsplatz since new media appear in the form of temporary projects at the Karlsplatz. In no other public space in Vienna have there been so many artistic activities, interventions and temporary installations in the last 25 years. Several examples of how the square has been transformed by these interventions and how media installations have changed the perception of space at the Karlsplatz will be presented below.

3.2.5.1 *Dynamic / Abstract Architecture*

In 1968 *Coop Himmelblau* installed a pneumatic housing unit, consisting of eight inflatable balloons which could change the volume of the inhabitable space (see Krasny, 2008: 179) (fig 21).² Through a pneumatic construction the balloons could vary the size from the one of a suitcase to the one of an inhabitable room with a bed. The experience of the space was also manipulated by projections, sound and smells. The architecture resembled a cloud, with air as the most important building material. This project already shows the trend towards fluid and variable architecture, changing its size, sound and smell. It is no coincidence that this kind of

² See the homepage of *Coop Himmelblau*. URL: <http://www.coop-himmelblau.at/site/>, consulted on July 17, 2010

idea was realized at the Karlsplatz, since the square itself is not a fixed space but always in transition.

In 1978 the sculpture *Hill Arches* by Henry Moore was installed in the water basin in front of the Karlskirche. *Hill Arches* is an abstract sculpture in the modernist tradition (Interview Mittmannsgruber) (fig 22). Its dynamic and moving organic forms are penetrated by open spaces, just as the Karlsplatz itself is perforated by openings. The placing in front of the church creates an interesting duality: on one side the church with all its historical significance, on the other side an abstract sculpture that does not imprint a definite meaning onto the space. In that sense the abstract object achieves to break up the predominance of the church and the historical definition of the square.

3.2.5.2 Participatory / Social Projects

The Karlsplatz has been the site of several projects that turned the square into a participatory space. In the 1980's the project *Kaorle am Karlsplatz* transformed the church square into a beach with sand, parasols, palm trees and deck chairs (see *ibid*: 179) (fig 23). The conceptual paper reads: 'Nicht nur eine soziale Skulptur oder ein sinnliches Projekt, sondern eine Riesenbühne, von uns selbst bespielt.' (Margot Pilz quoted in Groiss & Pacher, 2008: 501) Additionally artificial flowers were 'planted', which everybody could pick and thereby participate in public space. Part of the project was a seven meter long whale swimming in the pond and transmitting whale songs. One's senses having travelled from the inner city square towards an Italian coast. In the year 2000 a temporary stand for the Advent market was designed from the TU Vienna. It was a mobile, dismountable unit that served as a bar, a kitchen and a DJ desk. Also this temporary installation turned the Karlsplatz into a participatory space (fig 24).

3.2.5.3 Public Space Art / New Media

When the new metro line opened in 1978, Robert Adrian X, a pioneer of media art, shot a movie called 'Surveillance/Überwachung I' (AUT, 1979), using only the security cameras in the underground. His intention was to reveal new forms of social control, but at the same time the movie also showed how one's presence in the space is mediated by screens. The movie made aware that people become actors on screens while they are walking through the underground.

From 1982 until 1984 Helmut Mark temporarily used the information screens of the Viennese transport company to show audiovisual works of unknown artists (see Groiss & Pacher, 2008:

192). These electronic screens on the metro platform created a dynamic and moving environment. As quickly as passengers were drawn into the world of moving images, the metro already moved them away.

1992 the Kunsthalle Wien was opened as the first urban exhibition space for international contemporary art in Vienna (see *ibid*: 194). The yellow-blue container was heavily criticized as looking like an IKEA department store. But from 1993 until 2001 the plain facade served as an exhibition surface for a project called *Großbild*, where a total of five large-scale displays from Ed Ruscha, Walter Obholzer, Gerhard Richter, Douglas Gordon and Ken Lum were exhibited on the facade (fig 25).³ Thus the facade changed its appearance every now and then, thereby also changing the appearance of the square as a whole. In 2002 the Kunsthalle, which had been relocated to the Museumsquartier, was replaced by a transparent glass pavilion called *project space*. The new cube combines exhibition space with a café and a rolling text at the facade informs about current exhibitions and events.

At the beginning of the new millennium the Karlsplatz became the site of a protest culture (see Groiss et al., 2008: 500). In 2003 several free radio stations like *Radio Orange 94.0* and media initiatives like *t0/Public Netbase* initiated a media camp at the Karlsplatz. The initiative was designed as a symbolic act for the freedom of expression and a call for the involvement of the free media sector into media-political decision processes. In 2003 a Nike container at the Karlsplatz proclaimed the change of the name of the square into *Nike-Platz*. This intervention was performed by the media art platform *t0/Public Netbase* and the Italian artist group *0100101110101101.ORG*. A spokeswoman of the artist group explained the intention as follows: 'Wir wollten die Stadt zur Bühne eines Theaterstücks machen und durch eine hyper-reale Inszenierung die Wahrnehmung dieser Stadt verändern.'⁴ This project satirized the commercialization of public space and triggered strong reactions in the media. Only through the media reception of this installation a public consciousness about the questioned processes could arise.

In 2006 Ken Lum realized his project *Pi* in the west passage of the metro station. 14 reflective panels with LED screens show constantly changing statistical numbers. These so called *Factoids* depict enumerable facts like HIV infections since January 1st or eaten Schnitzel since January 1st. While looking at these factoids one can see its own mirror image on the reflective panels. Apart from the socio-political intention, the installation creates interesting effects for the

³ See the homepage of *Museum in Progress*. URL: <http://www.mip.at/de/projekte/22.html>, consulted on July 17, 2010.

⁴ *t0/Public Netbase*, Pressrelease. URL: <http://www.t0.or.at/nikeground/pressreleases/de/002>, consulted on July 17, 2010.

spectator. The reflection of one's own body in the mirror makes aware of the bodily presence in the space, while at the same time the mirrored image of one's appearance is overlaid with abstracted global facts (fig 26). The Jury described it as follows: 'Durch die in Form von Headlines eingeblendeten statistischen Daten erzeugt Ken Lum eine Vorstellung von der Welt außerhalb der unterirdischen Wegsituation. Die stetige Veränderung der Daten erinnert an die Situation in einem Newsroom [...].'⁵ While being physically fixed in a locality, one is surrounded by a dynamic 'newsroom' and is confronted with the de-spatialized media of the number, which is putting the spectator into a global reality. The static of the passage is broken up and the passenger is connected with the outside world. Just as the Karlsplatz is constantly changing, so do the numbers, thereby creating a dynamic media environment.

In 2006 and 2010 the facade of the Karlskirche became the screen for light and video projections. In 2006 the artists Heiko Höfer and Alexander Nickl transformed the church into a light sculpture by projecting rectangles with different patterns onto the facade (fig 27).⁶ In May 2010 Teresa Mar projected moving images with changing symbols, patterns and colours onto the church.⁷ By such media projections the square becomes a fluid and ever changing space. The historical dominance of the church is broken up and a second code is written onto the facade. Through this creation of new layers, our relation to the space becomes mediated by different layers of a fluid reality. Teresa Mar explained in an interview that people were drawn into the water basin in order to physically experience the reflections. In doing so they became part of the projection. Furthermore Teresa Mar argued that the church gained additional depth and turned into a communicative object. In respect to the experience of time she noted that by being drawn into the play of forms and light, time slowed down. And indeed people were staying in front of the church for a long time, watching the spectacle. All this shows that such projects can turn a static space into a dynamic and communicative one that brings people to stay and interact with the space.

During the summer the square in front of the Karlskirche turns into a free open-air cinema. For one month people gather around the screen and watch movies under the sky. Movies have been an urban phenomenon from the very beginning, with regard to its origin, its audience and most importantly its depicted contents (see Fröhlich, 2007: 127) Moreover, the cinematic depiction of the city resembles the real experience in the city to a certain degree due to the

⁵ Kunst im öffentlichen Raum. Pressrelease: 'Die künstlerische Gestaltung der Westpassage Karlsplatz'. URL: http://www.publicartvienna.at/picts/presse_westpasage.pdf, consulted on July 19, 2010.

⁶ See ORF press text about the projection. URL: <http://oesterreich.orf.at/wien/stories/149235/>, consulted on July 20, 2010. Also see the homepage of Heiko Höfer. URL: http://www.heikohoefer.net/de/03_installationen_01.html, consulted on July 20, 2010.

⁷ For a video see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67NyHAb6naU>, consulted on July 21, 2010

dynamization of urban perception. In other words: cities become like movies, reality and media representation converge (Dear, 2000: 176). Thus the screen is a hole in the square that draws us into an imaginary world, which in return generates our perception of reality. While being physically on the square the experience is mediated by the floating images on the screen. This year's theme of the movies was *Wien im Film*, which resulted in a constellation where one could be at the Karlsplatz but at the same time projected into some other place in another time in Vienna (fig 28). Also the famous movie 'The Third Man' (UK, 1949), where the final scene is set in the underground of the Karlsplatz, was shown in the course of the program. Time and space collapsed into a collage of the present and the past, reality and image melt in our perception of space. From a sociological perspective, the open air cinema attracts people to squares and enables interaction in public space.

3.3 COMPARISON OF THE CASE STUDIES

As we have seen the Rådhuspladsen and the Karlsplatz are two squares that exemplify the meaning of squares in the modern / postmodern metropolis. Both squares are located within the streams of traffic and are thus very open and dynamic spaces. The traffic as a medium dislocates and disperses people and finally leads to the dissolution of place. In the case of the Karlsplatz the experience of space is equally shaped by the space above the ground as well as by the underground space. The metro profoundly changes the perception of city, as it fragments it into dots without distances. The surrounding buildings only very weakly frame and define the squares. Both square are amorphous and fluid spaces, whose perception is highly mediated.

The Rådhuspladsen concentrates a variety of different forms of media in one space. Newspapers like *Politiken* or *Ekstrabladet* brought the world to the square, so to speak, and made information from all over the world available for everybody. By being on the square one is connected with the globe. At the same time dominance of newspapers mark the shift of the *Dispositiv* of the public into the abstract space of the paper. Before the invention of TV and the Internet, the banners and rolling texts on the facades of the houses provided citizens with the latest information from around the world. These screens and banners create a mediated and dynamic environment that eradicates the stability of place. Moreover the neon-signs around the square turn the space into a two-dimensional surface: not plastic architecture is defining the perception of the square but moving and flickering layers that project the spectator into a virtual reality. The City Hall Square becomes a mirage of kaleidoscopic reflections. One could say that the perception of space becomes cinematic, just as the TV-Show in the HT-Terminal turned the

square into a stylized media image. Eventually the Rådhuspladsen is hardly graspable: first of all it serves as a stage for temporary spectacles that fill the shell as fast as it is emptied, and secondly the square is highly mediated by dynamic surfaces.

The analysis of the Karlsplatz has shown that the mediatization of the square becomes apparent in slightly different ways – instead of newspapers and flickering signs, the Karlsplatz is mediated by mostly temporary media installations. The described interventions illustrate that the Karlsplatz is a heterotopic space that changes its appearance and meaning with every new intervention. The perception is thus not only dependent on the permanent structure of the buildings but it is influenced by temporary projects and media installations. Sabine Knierbein argues that these temporary projects lead to the perception of space as process (Interview Knierbein). Some examples of temporary uses of the Karlsplatz demonstrate how the square has been transformed into a participatory space. Thus interventions have the quality to turn a fragmented and dispersed space into a communicative forum. Projects like the light projections on the Karlskirche or the open-air cinema turned the square into a highly mediated space where image and reality melt. When looking into the water basin in front of the church, one is drawn into an endless world of reflections and mirages of the church and its surroundings. As a projection surface and a mirror image the church becomes fluid, as it moves, bends and blurs on the water surfaces. The static of the place is broken up and is turned into a space of movement and fluidity.

Foucault defines Heterotopias as spaces that are like a theatre stage, where different places and settings appear at once in one space. The mirror is the best example for such a Heterotopia: 'In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not [...]' (Foucault, 1967) Equally when standing on the Karlsplatz or on the Rådhuspladsen, I am there, where I am not, since it is not a defined place but a theatre stage that juxtaposes different settings and meanings. The mentioned media installations like *Pi*, the projections on the Karlskirche or the open-air cinema and the flickering surfaces at the Rådhuspladsen create a dynamic space of floating images that project me in a space where I am and where I am not. Reality and Image collapse into one augmented reality, into a mediated experience of time and space. 'Mitten am Karlsplatz sein und zugleich ganz woanders: Das geht leichter, als man denkt [...]' (Kos, 2008: 53).

4 CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK: PUBLIC SPACE IN THE MEDIA AGE

The question that arises from the presented subject is how the mediatization of public squares affects the meaning of public space in the city and how public spaces can be adapted to our contemporary condition of life in order to become centres of urban life again.

The agora and its discussing public still seem to be regarded as the ideal model of a public square. However, the historical analysis has shown that the invention of new forms of media has necessarily changed the meaning of squares as it introduced new forms of communication and new *Dispositive* of the public. The introduction of new media has always been accompanied by fear and mistrust. Platon, for instance, criticized the invention of the written word for having a bad influence on the memory and consequently he expelled all poets from his ideal state. In the same way the dissection of the public sphere from public space is accompanied by the fear of the dissolution of public space. Additionally the intrusion of media into public space and the development of highly mediated environments are accompanied by the fear of the loss of a sense of place and the transformation of space into a mere surface.

New ICT's have radically transformed the city and public space. Communication is not bound to specific places anymore and time and space implode in the 'augmented' city. We are now living in an urban environment of simultaneity and connectedness. Thus the meaning of place profoundly changed as the bodily experience is not bound to a certain place but mediated by cracks in space in the form of digital windows. If we assume that the *Dispositiv* of the public has moved away from the public squares into the media, and that the modern metropolis of rapid movement and displacement has led to the dissolution of public spaces, then the question arises how public space can be transformed into a meaningful space of the city again.

Since my generation and even more so the next generation grew up in a highly dynamic and rapidly changing environment where new forms of placeless communication shape our social interactions, it is necessary to design public squares that reflect our mediated environment. I argue that the implementation of urban screens, dynamic facades and temporary installations could revive public squares and turn them into spaces that stimulate the 'modern eyes', as Le Corbusier called them (see Colomina, 1994: 5), and therefore create meaningful public space. Gilda Berruti argues that electronic media 'are not simply eroding places but they are creating – beyond places – a new "sense of place" (Meyrowitz 1985).' (2008: 9) Public Squares should become interfaces between the real and the digital world. Traditional architecture always

included ornamentation and visual narratives, but as the narrative windows of the Gothic cathedrals were static and reflected the dominant ideology, today's media surfaces can quickly change their content, 'making the information surface a potential space of contestation and dialog, which functions as the material manifestation of the often invisible public sphere' (Manovich, 2005: 24). Thus augmented space could break up the one dimensional symbolic domination of historical architecture and could create a multi symbolic space that, by its changeability, reflects the hybrid and heterogeneous urban population. Since the creation of identity is not bound to locality anymore and since the city is diverse in its composition, public squares have to be open and hybrid spaces for the creation of an urban identity. By becoming a 'space of flow', to speak with Emanuel Castells (2004), an interactive and open 'space of place' can be created

If our perception of space is highly influenced by images of the television and the cinema, then the space of the city should incorporate this cinematic experience and satisfy our need for the imaginary and the spectacle. The urge to escape reality has always existed, be it in forms of the theatre, stories, poems, books, TV, internet etc. and thus this possibility has to be provided in public space. The building is already becoming a surface for the moving image and therefore resembles the perception of a cinema screen. The city has to be understood as a medium itself and as such it has to communicate with its citizens by means of mediated environments – 'architecture as communication', to speak with Robert Venturi (1996).

Obviously this conception of public space also bears a number of problems. Media facades usually function as a sender and not as a receiver and thus one cannot communicate with a screen and is therefore exposed to its message (Interview Knierbein). This is especially precarious in a society where advertising overflows the whole city. Already Rousseau pointed out that modern public life increasingly turns into a gathering of passive spectators (see Kohn, 2008: 467). According to him the theatre would create the illusion of a public but is in fact marked by an absence of any real interaction among the audience. 'For Rousseau the theatre is emblematic of a general characteristic of modernity: the growth of the society of the spectacle and the decline of participatory public life.' (ibid: 469). Other theorists like Guy Debord and Habermas also interpret the decline of public life as related to the 'society of the spectacle' (Debord, 1995). Debord argues that spectacles are a new form of social relationship – one that separates subjects from one another and only links them through the relationship to a shared object (see Kohn, 2008: 477). Equally, Habermas argues that the public sphere has transformed from a culture-debating to a culture-consuming public due to the influence of mass media. Watching the same spectacle would obliterate any need for discussion. All these interpretations

of the modern public suggest that participatory public life gave way to the passive consumption of spectacles. However, commonly experienced spectacles can provide a basis for discussion and interaction. Kohn argues that public spectacles provide the opportunity for discussion because the spectators 'have a shared text in common' (Kohn, 2008: 480). If public squares should become participatory spaces they have to be designed in opposition of Rousseau's definition of the theatre: they have to foster inter-subjectivity rather than passivity, equality rather than hierarchy and civic orientation rather than commercial orientation (see *ibid*: 480).

Miriam Struppek emphasizes the social potential of urban screens and argues that they can 'help to create local identity' by 'providing local orientation and identification through joint experiences' (2006: 174f). Therefore '[w]e need to create screening platforms that citizens can appropriate and start to consider as their own' (*ibid*: 177). There are several examples of interactive media facades, which allow citizens to create their own environment. The project *Blinkenlights* (Berlin, 2001/02), for instance, allowed people to create their own animations, play pong or send love letters to a large pixel screen at the Alexanderplatz, Berlin.⁸ Another participatory project, called *Body Movies*, was first staged in 2001 at the Schouwburg Square in Rotterdam⁹. When people were walking across the square, portraits were projected onto a screen. Scott McQuire points out that such projects emphasize the 'physical presence of participants' bodies' (2010: 578) and turn the abstract space into an interactive one. They foster playful encounters among strangers and lead to a consciousness about the possibility of collectively altering the ambience of the space (see *ibid*: 579). In this way public squares could become spaces that can be directly shaped and designed by people. The idea of *open source* programs, where everybody can change and further develop the source code, could be an inspiring model. Finally, architecture could become democratic and open to change. Berruti points out: '[S]pace becomes place when people organize it and attach a meaning to it (Tuan 1977).' (2008: 12)

The analysis of the Rådhuspladsen and the Karlsplatz has shown that modern public squares have become fluid spaces that reflect urbanity in the sense of a heterogeneous mix of people, meanings and functions. Projects like the film screening at the Karlsplatz demonstrate that by the implementation of media in squares, possibilities for interaction and appropriation of space are created. In the same way temporary events at the Rådhuspladsen and temporary installations at the Karlsplatz are able to create place, not a fixed one though, but a 'place of flows', as I would call it. Also the projections on the Karlskirche or the flickering signs at the

⁸ *Blinkenlights* by Chaos Computer Club, URL: <http://blinkenlights.net/>, consulted August 22, 2010

⁹ *Body Movies* by Lozano-Hemmer, URL: http://www.lozano-hemmer.com/body_movies.php, consulted August 22, 2010.

Rådhuspladsen create a new sense of place, namely one of a dynamic, heterotopic place that opens the boundaries of traditional architecture and of traditional space. If the private home could only gain its importance due to the fact that the media came to the home, then public spaces can only be attractive again if the media comes to them.

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Drop Out Rate, monochrome, Austria, 2001

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Interview with Sabine Knierbein, Vienna, July 20, 2010.

Interview with Otto Mittmannsgruber, Vienna, July 29, 2010

Interview with Teresa Mar, Vienna, August 17, 2010.

6 APPENDIX

Figure 1: The City Hall Square situated at the old rampart system. Source: Linvald, Steffen (1950): Rådhuspladsen I fortid og nutid. Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gads Forlag.

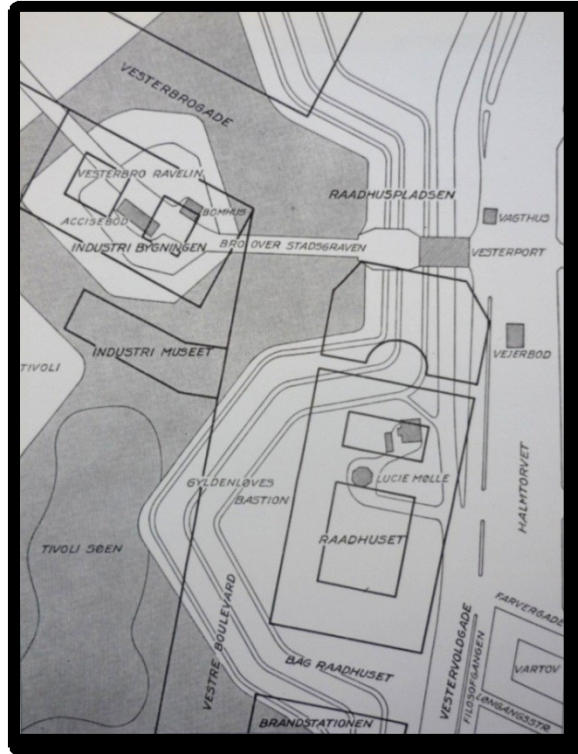


Figure 2: Rådhuspladsen, 1913. Photographer: Holger Damgaard. Source: Royal Library of Copenhagen.



Figure 3: **Aerial view of the Rådhuspladsen**, 1944. Photographer: Rugaard Tage. Source: Royal Library of Copenhagen.



Figure 4: **Muslingeskallen and the City Hall**. Source: Royal Library of Copenhagen.



Figure 5: View from the City Hall after the redesign, 2008. Source:
<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/8283359>, consulted on August 30, 2010.



Figure 6: View towards the House of Industry and the Richshuset. Source:
http://www.metropolzonen.dk/images/Metropolzonen_06-0001.jpg, consulted on August 30, 2010.



Figure 7: **The Rådhuspladsen during the Climate Conference, Dec 12, 2009.** Source: Own picture



Figure 8: **Prof. Niels Nielsen studying the intricate tramlines.** Alfred Schmidt, 1923. Source: Ejlersen, 1996.



Figure 9: **Reflections of the Richshuset.** Photographer: Sven Türck. Source: Royal Library of Copenhagen.



Figure 10: **The newspaper Berlingske Tidende with its information screen.** Photographer: Sven Türck. Source: Royal Library of Copenhagen.



Figure 11: Screens and banners on the Politikenhus, Dec 7, 2009. Source: Own picture.



Figure 12: Richshuset covered by neon signs, 1960's. Source: Copenhagen City Museum.

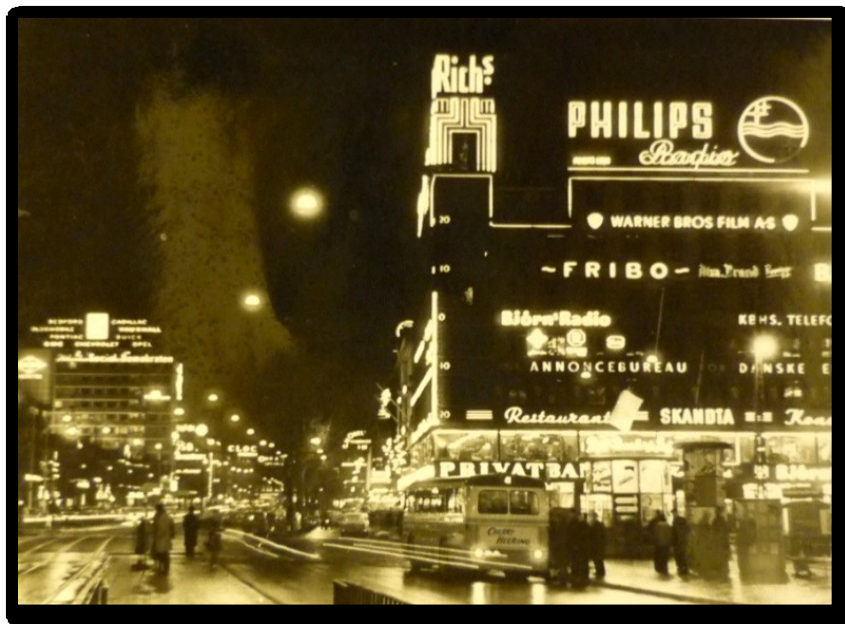


Figure 13: **Canon photographer at the Rådhuspladsen**, around 1955. Photographer: Bror Bernild. Source: Copenhagen City Museum.



Figure 14: **„Ansicht der Karlskirche“, Bernardo Bellotto 1759/60.** Source: Doppler, 2008.



Figure 15: Approved regulation plan for the area around the Karlskirche, 1897. Source: Oliwa, 1981.

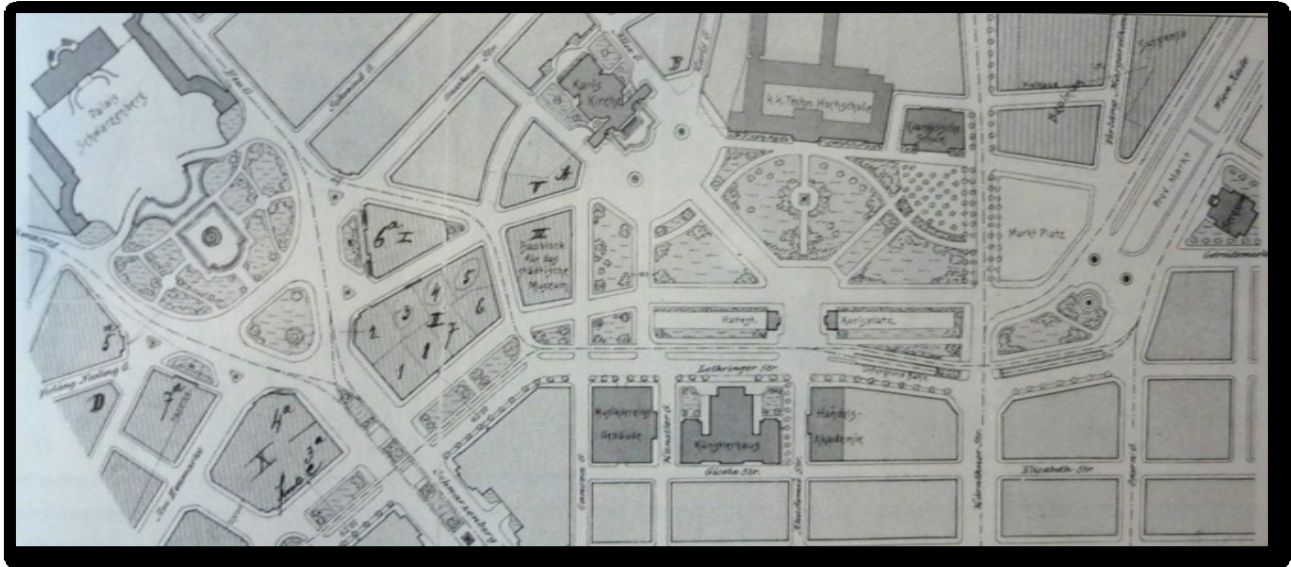


Figure 16: Postcard of the Karlskirche and Otto Wagner's city railway pavilions, 1909. Source: Doppler, 2008.



Figure 17: Executed park design, Atelier Karlsplatz. Source: Oliwa, 1981.



Figure 18: Folder und Perspektive 'Der U-Bahn-Knoten Karlsplatz', 1969. Source: Doppler, 2008.

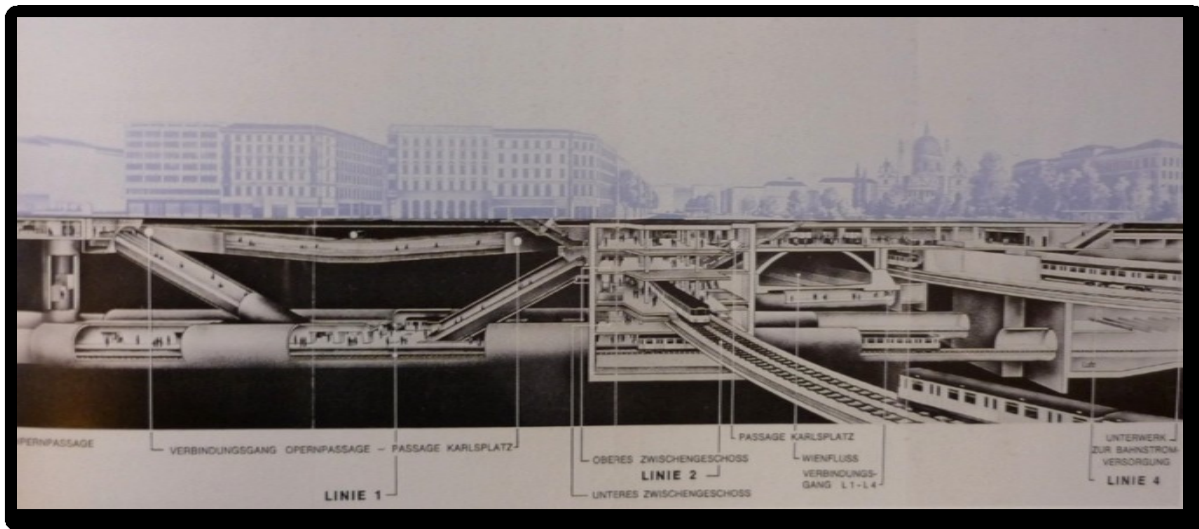


Figure 19: 'Rückkehr des Kaisers nach Wien am 16. Juli 1814', Peter Krafft 1833/37. Source: <http://media.kunst-fuer-alle.de/img/41/g/4>, consulted on August 23, 2010.



Figure 20: **Aerial view of the Karlsplatz, 1981.** Source: Oliwa, 1981.



Figure 21: **Project 'Wolke', Coop Himmelblau, 1968.** Source: <http://www.coop-himmelblau.at/site/>, consulted on August 23, 2010.



Figure 22: **Henry Moore in front of his sculpture 'Hills Arches', 1978.** Source: Doppler, 2008.



Figure 23: **'Kaorle am Karlsplatz'**, 1982. Source: Doppler, 2008.



Figure 24: **Multifunctional kiosk 'KEKS'**, 2000. Source: Doppler, 2008.



Figure 25: **Gerhard Richter's 'River' for 'Großbild'**, 1995/96. Source: Doppler, 2008.



Figure 26: **Ken Lum's 'Pi'**, 2006. Photographer: Joerg Autzinger. Source: www.publicartvienna.at/picts/Ken_Lum_Pi_16.jpg, consulted on August 30, 2010.



Figure 27: **Heiko Höfer's ,Bildanagramme & Alexanderkreise'**, 2006. Photographer: Walter Henisch. Source: http://www.heikohoefer.net/de/03_installationen_01.html, consulted on August 24, 2010.



Figure 28: **'Kino unter Sternen'**, 2010. Source: <http://www.squidoo.com/wien-karlsplatz>, consulted on August 30, 2010.

