

LIVED SPACE

Architecture, like landscape architecture and urbanism, is a discipline that develops spaces that can last for a long period of time. Similar to landscape architects, I appreciate the way space changes over time. Whereas in landscape architecture it is nature that grows and changes, I am interested in the transformation of the public realm, generating spaces of encounter among people from multiple cultural backgrounds through the building process. This is what I consider as Lived Space. What roles do I play in order to trigger such Lived Space that expands from the ephemeral to generate a durational impact?

In 2012 I produced Lived Space in Brussels red light district. Based upon the observation of the needs of prostitutes that were asking for better clients, I intended to launch a pop-up flower shop in the rue d'Aerschot. As no flower shop in Brussels was interested to do so, I offered flowers to the bypassing sex-workers to improve the relationship between them and the sex workers. Unfortunately the project generated only impact for the duration of one afternoon.

In 2014 I initiated Lived Space as a co-curator of the Biennale Parckdesign 2014: Parckfarm. I enabled the local to co-produce and to co-maintain the space which lead to an appropriation of the public realm. Since then the community is welcoming the guest in the urban transformation process on the Tour and Taxis site. Because of its success the Biennale was expanded from an ephemeral event to a durational urban project that became officially permanent in 2018.

In 2017 we won the competition for a Master plan on a site of 13 ha on Brussels West station. While Taktyk is designing the public space and 51n4e the buildings on the site of 13 ha, my practice Alive Architecture has the lead to design the socio-spatial transformation up to 2040. As such, we are involving the local community to co-design, co-produce and co-maintain the park over the next 20 years, expanding Lived Space from ephemeral to durational.

To generate such durational Lived Space I am playing four different roles that I wish to share with my peers: The Observer of the social and spatial situation, the Engager with the local community and the Mediator between bottom-up and top-down actors that allows to play the role of the Enabler of the citizens. Similar to my work, the artist Jeanne van Heeswijk and the office MUF Art and Architecture play the role of the Observer of the existing social and spatial situation, of the Engager with multiple actors and finally the role of the Enabler of the local to co-produce the city. The added role that I play in my practice is the one of the Mediator between top-down and bottom-up actors. Having started my practice from a bottom-up approach of city making and now being involved in large scale top-down urban projects, I claim that we need to take responsibility within public tender in order to generate socio-spatial transformation with a long-lasting impact. It allows us to be present in the meetings where decisions are taken, to use our presence to play the role of the Mediator between bottom-up and top-down in order to enable the local to co-produce the city.

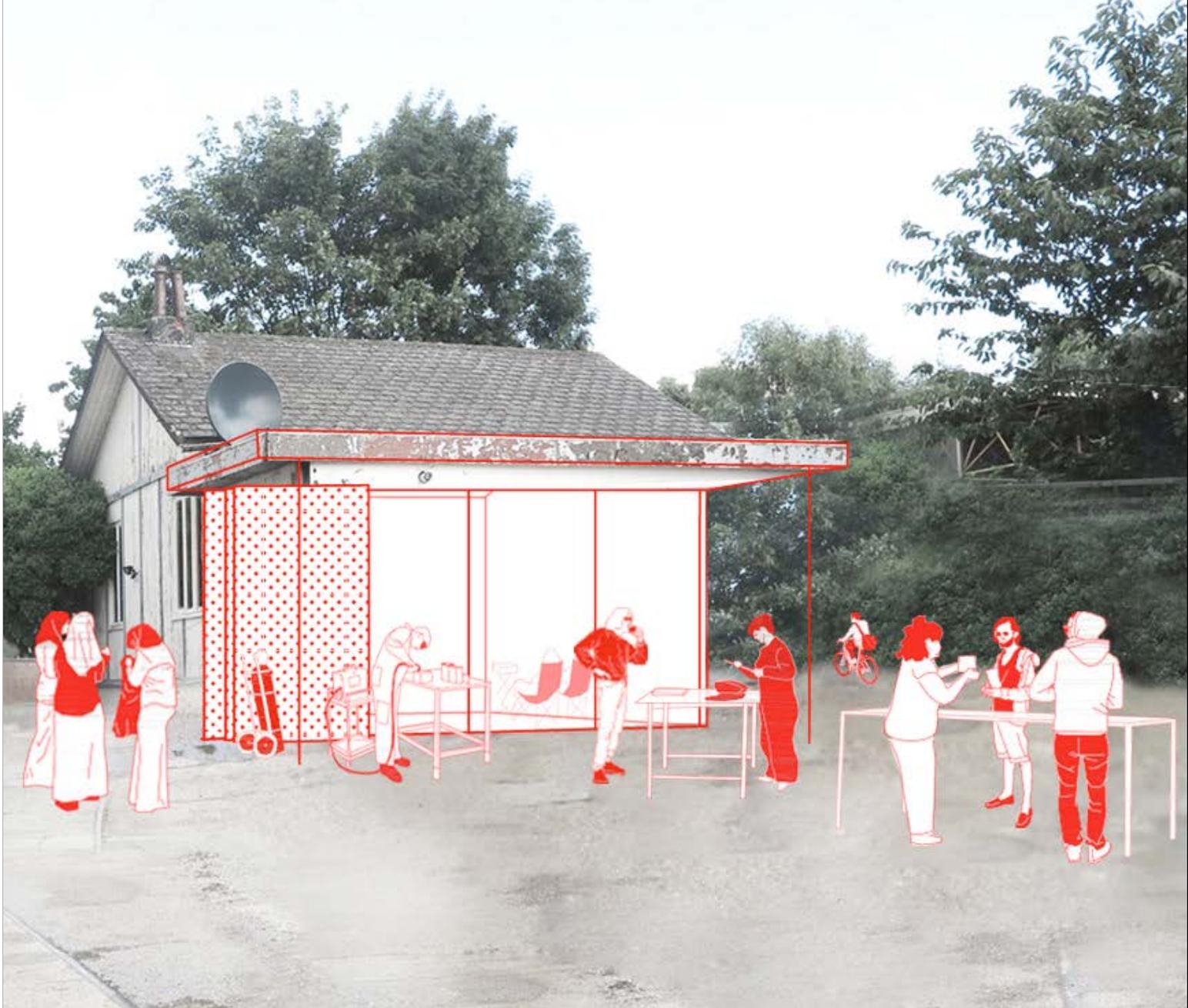
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HOW TO STIMULATE DURATIONAL APPROPRIATION OF THE PUBLIC REALM ?



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