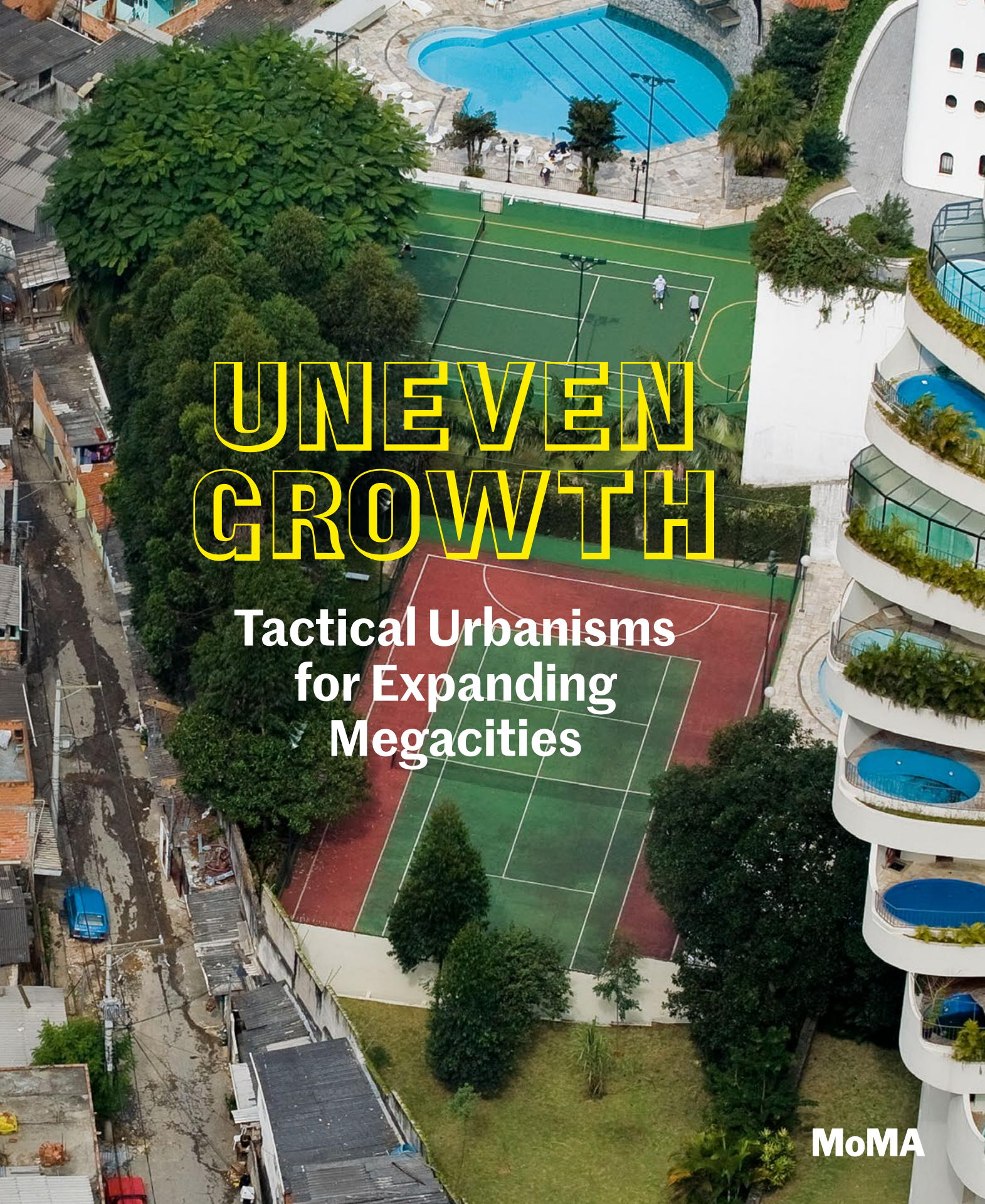

UNEVEN GROWTH

Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities

MoMA

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Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities

Pedro Gadanho

The Museum of Modern Art,
New York

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Preface

The Museum of Modern Art is a laboratory: in its experiments the public is invited to participate.
—Alfred H. Barr, Jr., in *Art in Our Time*, 1939[1]

From its founding, the Department of Architecture and Design has been associated not only with recording the changing face of architecture and the expanded capacity of the architectural profession, but also advocating for change. In the inaugural show, which coined the term "International Style," Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, along with Alfred Barr, set out to direct American architecture, not the least in a section developed by Lewis Mumford on the housing crisis of the early years of the Great Depression. In the late 1960s and 1970s again the museum experimented overtly with the laboratory metaphor, notably in 1967 inviting a set of university-led teams of architects to consider urban solutions that could be alternatives to the then reigning doctrine of urban renewal. Four areas of Manhattan and the nearby Bronx were chosen as test cases for working with existing fabric rather than wholesale bulldozing to provide a new way of looking, making, and thinking about the city, the results displayed in 1967 as *The New City*.

Initiated in 2009, the Issues in Contemporary Architecture series aims to revive that lapsed legacy, and to find again innovative ways for a museum to engage with some of the most pressing issues facing society today. The goal is to make manifest that the design professions have much to offer at the first stages of framing issues rather than only late in the game once other modes of thinking and planning have worked through a set of problems. In contrast with the more normative demeanor of exhibiting architectural practice, this is an activist curatorial mode, one that complements what I have elsewhere labeled the reactive mode of exhibition.[2] In such a mode, rather than waiting for others to take the lead, the museum instigates and takes risks, setting problems that the status quo or the marketplace do not formulate, committing to showing experimental results that do not yet exist. *Rising Currents: Projects for New York's Waterfront* was the first workshop/exhibition in that laboratorial series, of which *Uneven Growth*, presented here, is now the third iteration.[3]

With *Rising Currents*, the museum served in an all but unprecedented way as the incubator rather than the mirror of new ideas. These ideas were intended not only for instigating a debate on New York City's relationship to the sea level rise—something made potently evident almost two years to the day after the show's closing when Superstorm Sandy struck the region—but also to provide ideas and images that might help activate the debate for the millions and millions of people worldwide living in floodable zones. *Rising Currents* was the result of a three-month-long workshop held at a studio space at MoMA PS1, in which teams assembled for interdisciplinary collaborations alternating long hours of teamwork with critiques by invited experts in a range of disciplines from hydraulics to public transportation.

Two years later, in *Foreclosed: Rehousing the American Dream* (2012), the same approach was staged to address the challenges of the urban fringe of five American cities hard hit by the subprime mortgage crisis and the tsunami of foreclosures that came in its wake. Again interdisciplinary teams were tasked with thinking about an urbanization of older suburbs that might ameliorate specific places and reopen the debate on the place of housing and transportation in the privatized development economy of the United States. Borrowing a line from Chicago mayor Rahm Emmanuel, then White House chief of staff, it was important for the design culture of the museum never to let a good crisis go to waste.[4]

For the third edition in the series, Pedro Gadanho has turned to a crisis every bit as global, threatening, and daunting as rising sea levels, namely accelerated income discrepancy, a polarization of wealth and poverty that can be read in various ways in our rapidly urbanizing planet. By now everyone knows that a threshold was reached a few years ago when the UN reported than for the first time in recorded history more than half the

world's population lives in cities. By the mid-twenty-first century, a more recent UN report suggests, the urban population will swell to 67 percent of the world's population. As a recent report in *The Economist* notes, that means that "for the next 36 years the world's cities will expand by the equivalent of six São Paulos every year."[5] The last forty years too have seen a dramatic increase in what have come to be called the "informal city," a term intended to replace the negative connotations both of slums and of a centralized government-sponsored urban renewal often known as "slum clearance," with a valorizing frame of reference. In the face of this, inaction is not an option. With estimates that by 2030 some two billion people, or nearly a quarter of humanity, will be living in illegal dwellings,[6] the tactics for confronting the rising tide of the informal city is one of the most pressing and perplexing issues facing the planet.

Uneven Growth is a laboratory experiment devoted to the pressing issue not only of ameliorating life in the expanding informal city but—as in *Foreclosed*—to defining an effective and activist role for architects in the wake of two generations of disinvestment in public projects from housing to urban infrastructure. In recent years, a growing number of younger architects and designers have begun to act on the commitment to the idea that the informal settlement, or favela—borrowing the word coined many decades ago for the slums of Rio de Janeiro—are here to stay and require selective intervention rather than wholesale demolition so as to achieve better daily living and enhanced community ties. With their actions they have attempted to redress the results—if not the causes—of the ever-widening chasm in the distribution of wealth and access to services.

Tactical urbanism, a term that covers many of these practices, is a highly pragmatic movement that abandons all holistic and comprehensive planning as either failed in its historical record or doomed by the worldwide ascent of neo-liberal economy and politics. It is, however, an elastic movement in that it applies to a spectrum of designers, from those who perform guerrilla intervention of short-term change, often equivalent to the illegal settlements that are at the birth of many urban favelas, to those who seek to prod, provoke, or stimulate the political process toward incremental realization of fragments of what might be larger networks. Such, for instance, are the infrastructure projects of a group like Urban-Think Tank, whose fragment of a cable car extension to Caracas's public transportation system to weave dense informal quarters into the larger network of the Venezuelan capital was featured in MoMA's 2010 exhibition *Small Scale, Big Change: New Architectures of Social Engagement*.

This is a growing trend, in which local knowledge and global expertise might be combined. The novelty of the workshop framed by Pedro Gadanho resides precisely in this notion. As in previous iterations of the series, the results are brimming with fresh ideas, striking imaging and imagining, and approaches that are at once specific and adaptable. The enterprise, like tactical urbanism in general, is not free of paradoxes. It seems, for instance, hard to reconcile the gap between the modest scale of some interventions and the dimensions of the worldwide urban and economic crisis that so urgently needs to be addressed. But even as faith in systems, in blueprints, and in master plans has completely collapsed, the optimism of the projects developed here is best embodied in those that want to create paradigms, exemplars, open-ended interventions, and other actions that have at their heart the hopes of a multiplier effect. Strikingly many of the projects take to the roofscape to develop new spaces, new interactions, and new realms for a public zone in situations of dense family occupation. Alternative models not only of building but of ownership and cooperation among citizens are proposed as an invitation to think alternatively rather than as a set of blueprints; some can be realized ad hoc, others presuppose alterations to existing systems at a larger level of the financial, municipal administrative, or legal regimes.

It remains to be seen if the individual achievements of tactical urbanism's incarnations—of which there are more every month—can aggregate into an ever-larger impact. However, with *Uneven Growth*'s invitation to deploy such mode of operation in some of the most rapidly growing urban situations across the planet, a rich array of ideas, images, and new thinking and hopefulness has already been reaped.

—Barry Bergdoll
Curator, Department of Architecture and Design, The Museum of Modern Art

1 Barr, MoMA's founding director, was writing in the catalogue of the Museum's tenth anniversary exhibition.

2 Barry Bergdoll, "The Art of Advocacy: The Museum as Design Laboratory," *Design Observer*, September 16, 2011. The reactive mode, adapted from the practice of art curation, is one where the architecture curator culls from contemporary or recent production what he or she admires and thinks deserves contextualization and publicity. Such exhibitions have had enormous impact, from MoMA's inaugural show of 1932, with its promulgation of the International Style, to *Deconstructivist Architecture* of 1988.

3 See Barry Bergdoll, *Rising Currents: Projects for New York's Waterfront* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2010).

4 See Barry Bergdoll and Reinhold Martin, *Foreclosed: Rehousing the American Dream* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2012).

5 "Urbanisation: Roads of Redemption," *The Economist*, June 21, 2014, 59.

6 Cited in Justin McGuirk, *Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of a New Architecture* (London and New York: Verso, 2014), 109.

MIRRORING UNEVEN GROWTH

A Speculation on Tomorrow's Cities Today

Pedro Gadanho

The design scenarios in *Uneven Growth* presuppose that the anticipation of impending, plausible urban visions may prompt a critical understanding of present problems—thus contributing to fuel the public debate on the same issues.

Sze Tsung Leong. *Nan Shi, Huangpu District, Shanghai*. 2004. Chromogenic color print, 31⅞ × 40⅛" (81 × 101.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Fund for the Twenty-First Century

As urbanization continues to expand across the globe, the distribution of spatial and economic resources in cities is increasingly lopsided. As evidenced by numerous academic studies, inequality is growing. In spite of the promise of amelioration that urban migration once represented, life conditions deteriorate for large segments of expanding urban populations. Simultaneously, traditional, centralized urban planning seems to fail when faced with the rising presence of informal settlements, gentrification processes, and other urban phenomena of our days. Driven by ideology or economic incapacity, the ability of the national state to intervene in the contemporary city seems to recede everywhere.

As problematic urban conditions progressively become a subject of concern for specialists in various fields, cities also continue to be the most important sites for everyday struggles at the levels of political governance, civil rights, and social protest. Urban dwellers' claims for spatial justice and the right to the city appear in multiple forms of appropriation—from the Occupy movement to the Arab Spring, but also in the guise of do-it-yourself urbanism, bottom-up attempts at community self-management, and other tactical forms of urban intervention.

Despite the technological optimism that surrounds some recent urban developments—with its promises of smart management systems, utter social connectivity, and apps for every possible need—large cities around the world are also hotbeds of conceivable catastrophe. Within a gradually globalized order, megacities, megalopolises, and other large urban networks are crucial nodes for flows of information and people. Accordingly, they also contain the potential to rapidly propagate any crisis or collapse to the whole system. As large cities can no longer be seen as isolated, self-sufficient entities, their current and oncoming problems may be anticipated to bear massive impact at a global level.

With the planet facing dwindling resources, climate change, and other instabilities, the potential for human catastrophe contained in current urban development has been a regular subject of scholarly research. For sure, city authorities, urban thinkers, economists, and other world protagonists are already joining forces to understand and tackle this issue, having to ensure that over the next decades a constantly expanding urban realm will remain habitable, sustainable, and resilient.

Despite the urgency of these matters, despite the many initiatives that over the last years have sought to bring these problems to light, still the imbalanced growth of the contemporary urban realm is failing to trigger a broader public debate. This alone would make it reason enough for The Museum of Modern Art to join the ongoing efforts to address these problems in academia, in coalitions of cities, and in other international forums. Global museums no longer being exclusively seen as repositories of art, they may take advantage of their public visibility to assume a specific role in promoting awareness, cultural activism, and intellectual discussion at a wider scale.

Assuming the need to expand the responsibility of leading art institutions to new understandings of culture, it was decided that the third iteration of MoMA's Issues In Contemporary Architecture series should adhere to the international debate on the future of major cities, in collaboration with the MAK - Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art, in Vienna. Following previous initiatives by MoMA's Architecture and Design

26'10 south Architects. Taxi Rank No. 2, Diepsloot, South Africa. 2008–11

Department that had engaged interdisciplinary design teams to tackle the effects of rising sea levels in New York, or the impact of the foreclosure crisis in the United States, *Uneven Growth: Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities* brings together six "collaboratives" of local practitioners and international researchers to examine new design possibilities for six global metropolises: Hong Kong, Istanbul, Lagos, Mumbai, New York, and Rio de Janeiro.

As in previous instances, the curatorial process relied on the creation of unprecedented design proposals through the articulation of public workshops, an exhibition, and this publication. Given the transnational nature of the design teams invited to participate in the project, workshops were held in different venues around the globe, in New York, in Shenzhen, and in Vienna, over the course of one year of brainstorming and discussion. As part of their brief, participants were asked to come up with *design scenarios*, i.e., design solutions for future developments, which would simultaneously raise awareness of the prevailing inequalities in specific urban contexts and confront the changing roles of architects and urban designers vis-à-vis the evolution of cities.

At the heart of the project lies the optimistic belief that current design thinking can effectively contribute to the current urban debate. Early modern architects and urban designers were recognized for the sense of social responsibility to which they adhered in their the efforts of modernization and urbanization at the dawn of the twentieth century. The twenty-first century, however, presents us with new and overwhelming challenges in the urban realm. As such, it is urgent that, after much data has been collected on the uneven urban developments of the last years, architects and designers again attempt to address the urban problem with responsible, if tentative, propositions. In contrast to other forms of urban speculation, it is imperative that designers' visions for the future are deployed as a critical tool to reflect upon the problems of today.

1. State of the City

> In 2008, the world reaches an invisible but momentous milestone: for the first time in history, more than half its human population, 3.3 billion people, will be living in urban areas. By 2030, this is expected to swell to almost five billion. Many of the new urbanites will be poor. Their future, the future of cities in developing countries, the future of humanity itself, all depend very much on decisions made now in preparation for this growth.
> —City Mayors Society

In 2030, the world's population will be a staggering eight billion people. Of these, two-thirds will live in cities. Most will be poor. With limited resources this profoundly unbalanced growth will be one of the greatest challenges to be faced by societies ever more connected across the globe.

Contrary to popular belief and as experts have demonstrated, urban imbalances have been on the rise over the last three decades. Income disparity, socioeconomic divisions, and spatial inequalities have sharply increased in the most advanced world cities and in emergent megalopolises alike. As sociologist Saskia Sassen has pointed out, the time is long gone when manufacturing in and around cities "created the conditions for the expansion of a vast middle class."[1] Today, the escalation of the financial services industry in major cities has instead driven up the incomes of the top percentiles of urban populations while it has reduced the "real earnings of workers with the least education."

And while rural populations are still migrating to urban conglomerations and contributing to the growth of megalopolises around the globe, their drive no longer lies in the mirage of equal employment opportunities. As Mike Davis has noted in *Planet of Slums*, rural dwellers are rather pushed to cities—and more precisely to their expanding informal districts—because of a global deterioration of rural conditions.[2] As a consequence of rural-urban migration, urban poverty is on the rise. Due to decreasing upward social mobility and degradation of the lower middle classes, poorer populations in the bigger cities are progressively marginalized into "poverty regimes" that seem more and more to be inescapable.[3]

Even if contemporary cities rely heavily on the services of low-wage workers to sustain their economies, they lack the capacity to absorb the fast-growing numbers of new urban dwellers into their existing formal structure. Thus, informal urbanization expands and, in more or less visible fashion, furthers existing spatial and social segregations.[4] Often, the resulting urban slums develop their own productive structures, but their populations are nonetheless trapped in a state of chronic poverty: they are blighted by inadequate shelter and health conditions, divested of adequate means to improve their circumstances, and also often deprived of any political and civic rights.

The explosive urban condition sketched here reveals slight variations around the globe. While it may differ according to diverse states of development, it leads to the same question: How can these forms of social and spatial segregation be addressed? As specialists, benefactors, and institutions such as the World Bank struggle to define the policies and economical mechanisms that may contribute to any kind of improvement, is it even conceivable that such afflictions can be addressed from a design point of view? Can design thinking engage with policy makers and participative community forums,[5] as well as the latest technological leaps, so as to provide empowerment to urban dwellers who have been dispossessed of practically every resource and right?

This is the challenge that *Uneven Growth* presented to architects and urban designers practicing in local and international contexts. Teaming up with their respective research and design skills, they were prompted to contribute with critical reflection and a robust vision for how these problems are to be faced in different yet not completely dissimilar urban contexts. In the face of a chosen urban study case, each "collaborative" was asked to turn the potential for catastrophe on its head and explore how the state of urban emergency suggested here is to fuel new modes of design creativity.

With the majority of the planet's population transitioning to urban environments, and with the problems that arise from a diffuse, uneven urban condition, much attention has been dedicated to large urban structures in the form of books, exhibitions, and academic research. Concerns over the current city—and, in many cases, over the emergence of informal, so-called "shadow cities"[6]—became widely shared in experts' circles, and have prompted cultural institutions, professional bodies, governments, and gurus alike to discuss an increasingly daunting urban condition.[7]

To name only a few of the cultural endeavors dedicated to urban phenomena in the last fifteen years, the exhibition *Century City* was mounted in 2001 at the Tate Modern in London; *Mutations* was presented during the same year at the Arc en Rêve Centre d'Architecture in Bordeaux; and, under the direction of Ricky Burdett, the Architecture Biennale in Venice was entirely dedicated to the subject in 2006. These were large exhibitions presenting overwhelming analyses

"A cidade é nossa, ocupe-a" (The city is ours, occupy it). Avenida conde da Boa Vista in Recife, Brazil. 2013

Urban-Think Tank. Metro Cable, San Agustín, Caracas. 2007–10

and data on current problems in and cultural production out of global urban agglomerations.

Other urban researchers, as well as architects such as Rem Koolhaas, have undertaken countless studies on the nature and phenomena of exploding urban areas, namely in China, Latin America, and Africa. And more recently, while numerous agencies and organizations turned to urban issues, museums and universities joined efforts with global corporations to investigate specific urban transformations. Such was the case of the BMW Guggenheim Lab, launched in 2011, and the Audi Urban Future Initiative, hosted by Columbia University in 2013, to mention just two New York–based initiatives dedicated to the theme of future urban mobility.

Vis-à-vis such intense production of knowledge on urban development, *Uneven Growth* was always intended as a next step. Taking advantage of a museum platform with global reach, the project is intended to bring these topics to a wider and more mixed international audience, fostering a public debate beyond specialized discourse. Simultaneously, it seeks to present design proposals that reflect the urban conditions of different world regions, but also to disclose changing design attitudes toward unequal urban contexts.

2. Tactical Urbanisms and Changing Architectural Practices

> A practice of the order constructed by others redistributes its space; it creates at least a certain play in that order, a space for maneuvers of unequal forces and for utopian points of reference. [Innumerable ways of playing with] the space instituted by others characterize the subtle, stubborn resistant activity of groups which, since they lack their own space, have to get along in a network of already established forms and representations.
> —Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*[8]

Urban agglomeration continues to be seen as a sustainable form of human settlement, especially when faced with an inevitable dwindling of natural resources.[9] Yet, as we have briefly analyzed, social conditions in megacities deteriorate, inequality grows, and top-down urban planning fails when confronted with rising informality.

Contrary to state initiatives that during most of the twentieth century provided Western nations with heavy investment in mass dwelling and urban infrastructures, in developing countries today city and state authorities remain unable to confront the pace and extension of informal conglomeration in and around major cities.

In a not too distant past, industrialization and social motivations allowed the nation-state to tackle economic disparities within European and North American metropolises. Today, however, slum eradication in megacities with a global presence takes place only where market forces drive social displacement in the name of land value and gentrification. Similarly, as much as architects and urban planners have played a crucial role in addressing the need for affordable housing and an operative city, today they too seem impotent considering the speed at which radical urban inequalities settle in place.

Although attempts are still being made at municipal and regional planning, top-down action, particularly in developing megacities, is mostly entangled in inefficient politics, corrupt bureaucracy, and economic insufficiency.[10] Moreover, with a general turn to neo-liberal policies around the globe—coincident with cyclic financial crises, slowing economic growth, and the constantly impending collapse of any kind of welfare system—top-down urban management recedes even in the most advanced and stable urban centers. While mayors and municipal authorities have taken the lead in raising the profile of their cities in a competitive international panorama, urban inequities still flourish and discontent eventually reaches the streets. As a reaction, if not anticipation to some of these developments, tactical forms of urbanism carried out by varied urban actors have emerged as an attempt to take urban matters into their own hands.

As a counterpart to a classic, strategic notion of top-down planning, tactical modes of urbanism have arisen in the form of everyday, bottom-up approaches to local problems within unevenly managed contemporary metropolises. With a pure notion of "tactical urbanism" made difficult by the complexities of any consequent urban project, a plurality of interpretations and embodiments of this idea have emerged to respond to the failures of an urban planning exclusively imposed from above.

Tactical urbanisms may impulsively arise from the streets, but they also emerge from given creative practices and given domains of specialization. Spontaneous takes on the spatial reinvention and appropriation of existing urban environments have thus come to combine top-down initiatives with bottom-up ingenuity, with different degrees of mutual contamination. In the form of do-it-yourself actions, hands-on-urbanism and participative urban interventions,[11] artists, architects, designers, city authorities, community leaders, and even policy makers have progressively allied with communities and local populations to produce acupunctural interventions in difficult, often unattended urban contexts. Rather than large-scale transformations unable to effectively cope with the dynamics of current urban developments, smaller, but still impactful, "urban catalysts" have pervasively become a preferred, if crossbred, mode of city intervention.[12] Even if architects and city authorities were the instigators of referential case studies of tactical urbanism—such as the unexpected installation of cable cars in the slums of Caracas—still these responded in innovative tactical fashion to pressing bottom-up needs.

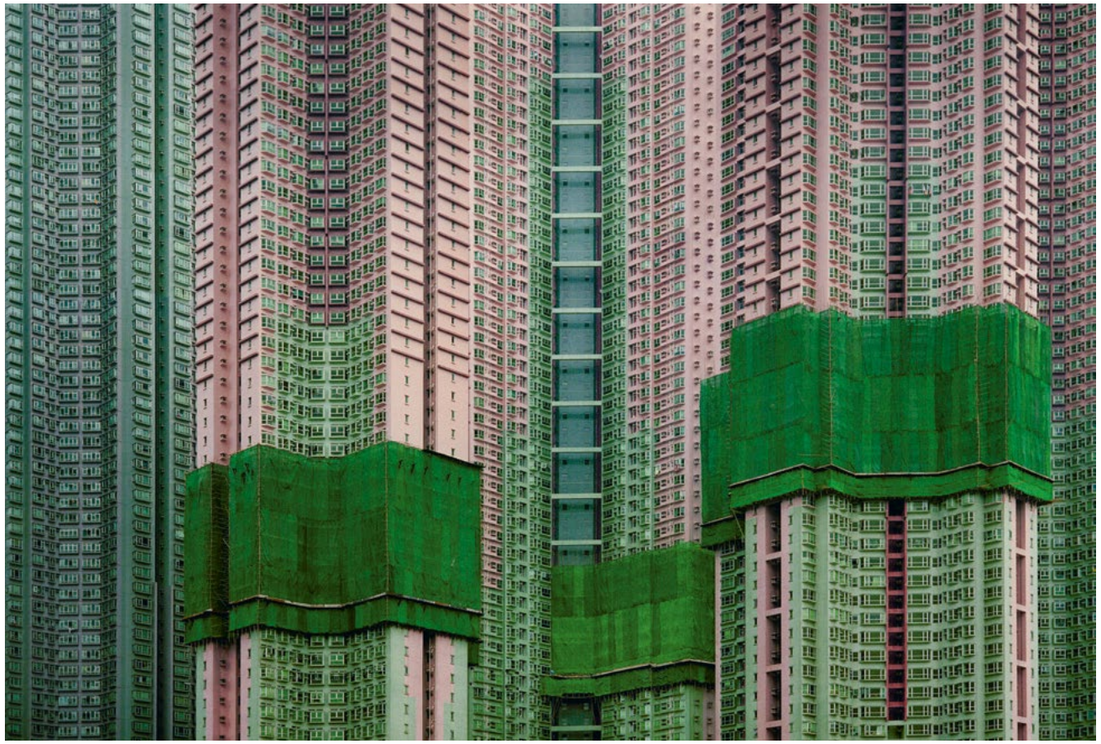
Against this background, a multifaceted, hybrid notion of "tactical urbanisms" is seen here as drawing on the ideas of the late French anthropologist Michel de Certeau, who suggested that urban dwellers engage in tactical actions when they appropriate urban space on a daily basis.[13] This offers a direct if sometimes unrevealed response to the strategies imposed on them by city planners and decision makers. As de Certeau puts it, the "rationalized, expansionist and at the same time centralized, clamorous and spectacular production" of the formal city is thus counteracted by "*another production*."[14] This "other production" is precisely what emerges in today's "tactical urbanisms": a creative and resourceful appropriation of the contemporary city's conflictual conditions, expressed in terms of informal urban objects, adaptive habitat, alternative forms of infrastructure, temporary and illegal uses of public space, and vehement claims to the "right to the city."

While contributing to map these emergent modes of tactical urbanism around the globe, the *Uneven Growth* project asks precisely how current practices of architecture and urban design can learn from such developments. While compiling some examples—presented within these pages as a sample of a broader online charting open to public participation—the curatorial intent did not, however, reside in the emulation of current forms of tactical urbanism. Rather, it proposed to understand how such practices are effectively altering the perception of the roles of architects, artists, and other urban practitioners in the face of a changing urban reality.

Atelier OPA. Cardboard Shelter 1, Tokyo. 2011

Most of the teams invited to participate in *Uneven Growth* had already previously revealed a changing notion of architectural practice, vis-à-vis the urban contexts in which they choose to act. Rather than serving the wealthier percentile of available private or public clients—in which much of traditional architecture takes refuge—their work often discloses how, when faced with radical city transformation, the urban designer must become an activist.[15] Further to their participation in the *Uneven Growth* project, they were invited to reflect on how tactical attitudes could inform design visions for the outcomes of contemporary urban inequality. Ultimately, this would constitute the essential drive for the creation of the exhibition's content.

Uneven Growth's curatorial project relies on the idea that tactical urbanisms provide inspiration for design tools that effectively mix top-down and bottom-up impulses.[16] Such an idea echoes what has been increasingly described as an *open-source urbanism*. While proposals for future "intelligent cities" raise eyebrows,[17] Saskia Sassen suggests that "multiple small interventions may not look like much, but together they give added meaning to the notion of the incompleteness of cities."[18] Responding tactically to this *incompleteness*—or, as others have suggested, to the city's untapped



Michael Wolf. *Architecture of Density #12*. 2003. C-print, 40 × 58" (101.6 × 147.3 cm). Collection the artist

resources[19]— an open-source, "hand-made urbanism"[20] may precisely mean that, as Sassen has it, cities will continue to enjoy "their long life."

3. Six Cities, Six Collaboratives

> You put together two things that have not been put together before. And the world is changed. People may not notice at the time, but that doesn't matter. The world has been changed nonetheless.
> —Julian Barnes, *Levels of Life*[21]

If one wants to conceive design scenarios in which tactical modes of urbanism come together to react on contemporary urban contexts, one needs to engage in concrete situations. If one wants to offer consequent, though perhaps site-specific, design visions for the future of the city, one needs to contemplate the diversity of the current urban condition. This implies that, contrary to previous editions in the Issues in Contemporary Architecture exhibition series, *Uneven Growth* should bear a global ambition. The juxtaposition of distinctive, yet comparable global megacities was essential to the curatorial endeavor.

Six megacities in six diverse world regions were selected as case studies. The choice of these urban conglomerations was essentially determined by the ways in which they display different degrees, stages, and conditions of urban inequality. While each city generally represents the level of development of a given region, similar situations were avoided. MoMA's home city, for example, stands as a case that bears comparison to relevant but absent metropolises such as London, Paris, Tokyo, or Los Angeles. While to some New York came as an unexpected example of inequity, research—not to mention the subsequent political debate of "two cities"—would soon reveal that the financial capital of North America represented only the most advanced stages of a common, if sometimes less visible, story in urban unevenness.

The cities in *Uneven Growth* were selected on the basis of their considerable size and their potential to generate encounters between a

Iwan Baan. Makoko, Lagos. 2013. Digital photograph. Collection the artist

given cosmopolitanism and emergent modes of informal appropriation. Still, there was a clear intention to circumvent megacities that had been overexposed in research projects produced during recent years. In this circumstance, cities such as São Paulo or Mexico City were sidestepped to the advantage of another Latin American city, one that has brought the clash between planned city and informal settlement to the very core of the urban ensemble. Currently undergoing profound transformations due to global events such as the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, Rio de Janeiro presented itself not only at the crucial intersection of future change and deeply imbedded spatial conflicts, but also at the forefront of practices of slum regeneration.[22]

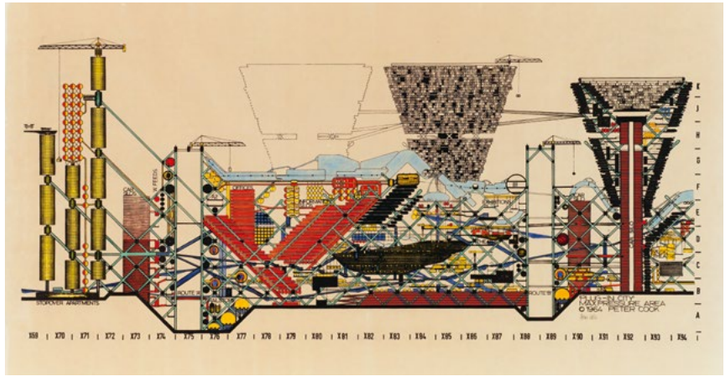
The existence of urban conflicts in more or less apparent form, along with a tendency to display borders and contrasts between two worlds, were also important criteria to chose the cities that would be the focus of research. Istanbul and Hong Kong are, in their own ways, essential connectors in the increasingly important global fluxes between East and West.[23] Together with Moscow, Istanbul is the only European megacity that is still developing at a furious pace, and it was recently one of two major epicenters of violent urban protests worldwide—the other being Rio de Janeiro.[24] And while Hong Kong is also known for its protest culture, as a borderline island between China and the rest of the world it is also representative of a unique, futuristic condition of urban density.[25]

Finally, Mumbai and Lagos are notoriously relevant when it comes to exemplify the most extreme urban disparities in developing megacities around the world. With both experiencing a relatively recent but explosive population growth,[26] they are paradigmatic of situations in which urban slums assume alarming proportions,[27] alongside immense mobility issues, public health crises, and general infrastructural needs.

Faced with the scope of problems presented by each of these specific urban conditions, it soon became evident that *Uneven Growth* participants should have an intimate knowledge of local circumstances, and should be already imbedded in their object of study. Their previous practices should be somehow be entangled with their city's realities while revealing changing stances toward the potential role of architects as urban catalysts and activists. From the participative work of Mumbai-based Urbz with Dharavi's slum dwellers to NLÈ's self-initiated, semi-illegal school project in the floating shantytowns of Lagos, from MAP Office's long-standing research into the tactical nature of Hong Kong's everyday uses to Superpool, Rua Arquitetos, and SITU Studio's reflections on how new design approaches may interfere with the changing urban contexts of Istanbul, Rio, or New York, these were all teams that combined political positions with audacious design capabilities.

Rather than only commissioning these teams to come up with proposals for their respective cities, though, it was also considered that their privileged viewpoints could benefit from confrontation with other external perspectives. Given the global dimension of the contemporary urban issues explored here, collaborations of a transgeographical nature seemed to be adequate for the project's goals. As I had proposed in previous stances, in dealing with such new realities one should overcome postcolonial dichotomies and indeed promote the crossbreeding of multiple knowledges and differentiated standpoints.[28]

As such, teams involved in urban studies at an international level, even if in very different contexts, were also challenged to unite their specific research approaches to the skill sets of the designated local architectural practices. The Network Architecture Lab, at Columbia



Peter Cook (Archigram). Plug-In City: Maximum Pressure Area. Project, 1962–64. Section, 1964. Ink and gouache on photomechanical print, 32⅞ × 57⅛" (83.5 × 146.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation

University, Ensamble Studio's POPlab, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the master's program for Advanced Studies in Urban Design, at ETH Zurich, all represented current university-based units dedicated to urban inquiry, either looking at future applications of architectural thinking, or, in the latter case, instigating design collaborations with the developing world. On the other hand, Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée, in Paris, Inteligencias Colectivas, in Madrid, and Cohabitation Strategies, operating from Rotterdam and New York, embodied independent practices that have adopted radical new approaches to tactical urbanism and bottom-up urban prototyping as well as a political understanding of the urban habitat.

By matching these diverse design approaches into new "collaboratives," the curatorial aim of *Uneven Growth* resided in the possibility that, besides the eventual "productive conflict" of any imposed collaboration, a design chemistry could emerge that responded adequately to the complexities of the themes described here.

4. Curating Design Scenarios

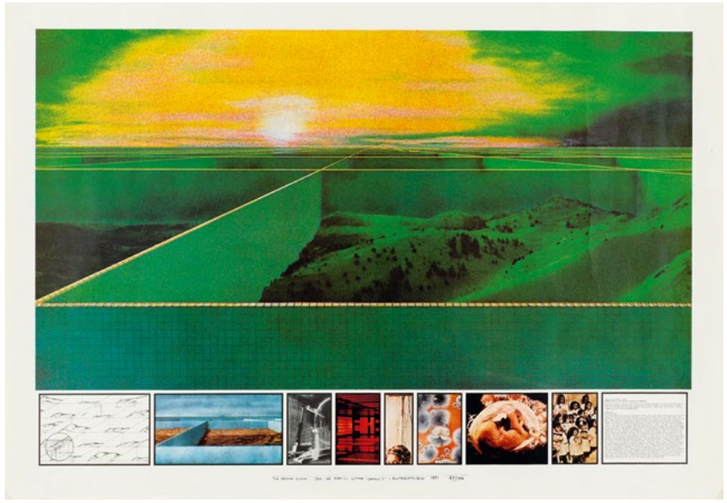
> It's all over the place, just termite mounds of poorly organized and extremely potent knowledge, quantifiable, interchangeable data with newly networked relations. We cannot get rid of this stuff. It is our new burden, it is there as a fact on the ground, it is a fait accompli. There are new asynchronous communication forms that are globalized and offshored, and there is the loss of a canon and a record. There is no single authoritative voice of history … This really changes the narrative, and the organized presentations of history in a way that history cannot recover from.
> —Bruce Sterling, *Atemporality for the Creative Artist*[29]

Making sense of the complexities involved in today's uneven urban developments is, in itself, a highly problematic task. In the wake of proliferating tactical urbanisms, the loss of "canon" and of "a single authoritative voice" in urban planning may well be embraced as a positive aspect. Nonetheless, this leaves us with an added difficulty when it comes to construct a clear vision for the upcoming city. In fact, it may be the case that such a cohesive foresight is now impossible. We may be destined to ascertain only a fragmentary, kaleidoscopic collection of cautionary scenarios. In response to this condition, curating architecture is nowadays conceivable as a practice of establishing unforeseen juxtapositions, if not instigating creative combinations of ideas that are destined to arouse a critical awareness of current issues.

It has not always been like this, of course. A more traditional view of curating implies only a rather conservative take on the preservation and display of collectible objects. However, with the notion that curating can itself be a critical practice, this activity may have a more palpable impact in the public perception of budding collective concerns. Through new connections that are produced out of a collection, for example, or through the association of themes and experiences that have not been yet considered together, juxtaposition allows for new insights. It allows for new critical perspectives to emerge.

In the case of *Uneven Growth*, the pairing of local practices to international research teams was deemed essential to produce unforeseen perspectives on urban inequality in contemporary global cities. Additionally, the adoption of the nascent idea of "design scenarios" was also deemed essential to tackle this urban problem.

Following a method of scenario planning developed by military intelligence in the 1950s,[30] the concept of design scenarios was conceived here as combining both a technique to describe a potential future and the design approach that can be imagined in response to such depiction. Acknowledging the role that fictional techniques are increasingly playing



Superstudio. Twelve Ideal Cities: The First City. Project, 1971. Aerial Perspective. Photolithograph, 27¾ × 39⅝" (70.2 × 100.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Given Anonymously

in architectural and design thinking,[31] the use of design scenarios in a curatorial context such as that of *Uneven Growth* presupposes that the anticipation of impending, plausible urban visions may prompt a critical understanding of present problems—thus also contributing to fuel the public debate on those same issues.

Over recent years, we have been presented with architectural speculations sprouting from the most respectable, if improbable, sources. In the 1960s and 1970s radical urban proposals from the likes of British architects Archigram, or the more critically minded Superstudio, in Italy, responded to alarming developments of the so-called consumer society. Now, as exemplified by recent projections around the skyscraper of the future by a most important global engineering and planning consultancy, architectural scenarios are resurfacing in much less avant-garde sectors. These are generally technological prophecies that may be regarded as optimistic utopias, or, otherwise, as perverse confirmations of a dystopian *dérive* in which the ultimate "sustainable" building becomes a fortified enclave for a wealthy minority.[32] Most importantly, however, multinational companies such as Arup now claim these design visions to be a direct reaction to processes of an unstoppable urbanization "faced with climate change, resource scarcity, rising energy costs, and the possibility of future natural or man-made disasters."[33]

The proposals included in this curatorial project are not that distant from such design visions, except in the point of view they adopt vis-à-vis a fundamental social imbalance that tends to remain stubbornly concealed. By way of design scenario tools, *Uneven Growth* participants were also invited to extrapolate from contemporary practices, current technological advances, and their own design and research experience. Their design efforts, however, were to be directed at devising situations in which tactical thinking was seen to provide social justice in the conception and appropriation of urban space.

The design scenarios presented in *Uneven Growth* counteract the dystopian outcomes that can be expected of the progression of current urban trends, both in terms of spatial segregation and of socio-economic inequality. Even if they offer only acupunctural outlooks on how change for the better could be induced in diverse urban contexts, they aspire to solutions that could be replicated in different contexts. Moreover, they carry the belief that architects may indeed address urban inequalities and espouse a more conscious, if provisional, posture toward the future of cities.

As science fiction writer William Gibson put it, the speed of current transformations makes it increasingly difficult to retain a "place to stand from which to imagine a very elaborate future."[34] We no longer benefit from the "luxury of stability," which we enjoyed not so long ago. The future no longer being "what it used to be," the proposals in this catalogue and exhibition do at least offer partial glimpses of a desirable alternative universe: an urban prospect in which architects, artists, and other urban practitioners again meld social ethics into their much-needed aesthetic endeavors.

Assemble. Folly for a Flyover, London. 2013

Mahatma Gandhi Road in Dharavi, Mumbai. 2009

1 See Saskia Sassen, *Cities in a World Economy*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles/London/New Delhi/Singapore/Washington, D.C.: Sage Publications, 2012). This and following quotes pp. 241–66.

2 As Davis underlines, cities "have absorbed the majority of the rural labor-power made redundant by post-1979 market reforms," sometimes because the urban agglomeration itself grew to absorb previous rural areas. See Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 8–15.

3 See, for example, Akin L. Mabogunje, "Global Urban Poverty Research Agenda: The African Case" (paper presented at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C.). In this paper presented at the symposium *Global Urban Poverty: Setting the Research Agenda*, Nigerian geographer Akin L. Mabogunje analyzes the problems of urban poverty in the context of sub-Saharan Africa, the region that "presently has the fastest rate of urbanization in the world."

4 As we will see in the case of New York, social disparities and informal spatialities can remain invisible under the guise of the formal city. On the other hand, as a researcher has recently put it, "the nudity of poorly built environments allows us to see, clearer than in other urban environments, the mutations in the nature of social operation." See Eduardo Ascensão, "Following Engineers and Architects through Slums: The Technoscience of Slum Intervention in the Portuguese-Speaking Landscape," *Análise Social* (Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon) 48, no. 206 (2013): 153–80.

5 As Mabogunje reports, some of the most successful attempts to deal with urban poverty have depended on the mobilization of local populations through participatory strategies, as happened in the case of the Advanced Locality Management Scheme, in Mumbai, India. As the author notes, "such mobilization, especially when promoted by non-governmental organizations on a sustained basis, is expected to mitigate the social exclusion and marginalization of the poor and reduce their sense of voicelessness and powerlessness." See Mabogunje, "Global Urban Poverty Research Agenda."

6 See Robert Neuwirth, *Shadow Cities: A Billion Squatters, A New Urban World* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006). This is only one example of many recent publications on informal settlements in the context of developing world cities.

7 An interesting example of the current fascination with urban development is the attribution of the $100,000 Latrobe Prize by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to "The City of 7 Billion," a research proposal by Bimal Mendis, Joyce Hsiang, and Plan B Architecture & Urbanism. The authors will study the "impact of population growth and resource consumption on the built and natural environment at the scale of the entire world as a single urban entity."

8 See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 18.

9 See, for example, Vishaan Chakrabarti, *A Country of Cities: A Manifesto for an Urban America* (New York: Metropolis Books, 2013).

10 With the African context offering the most extreme of examples, Mabogunje refers to the disempowerment and economical lack of local and metropolitan authorities themselves as one of the reasons for the inability "to respond effectively and innovatively to the challenges posed by urban poverty and poor urban environment of slums and shanty settlement." See Mabogunje, "Global Urban Poverty Research Agenda."

11 The literature being already vast, see, for example, the catalogues of three recent exhibitions on these subjects: Giovanna Borasi and Mirko Zardini, eds., *Actions: What You Can Do with the City (Comment s'Approprier la Ville)* (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture; Amsterdam: SUN, 2008); Elke Krasny, ed., *Hands-on-Urbanism 1850–2012* (Vienna: Architekturzemtrum Wien/Verlag Turia + Kant, 2012); Cathy Lang Ho, Ned Cramer, and David van der Leer, eds., *Spontaneous Interventions: Design Actions for the Common Good* (New York: Architect Magazine, 2012).

12 Although this concept has been introduced by American urbanists Wayne Attoe and Donn Logan as a blueprint for interventions that take sizeable architectural structures as the catalysts for an urban renaissance—as can later be typically exemplified by the "effect" of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao—the notion of "urban catalyst" has been recently reassessed by other authors as referring to temporary interventions that reactivate urban voids and wastelands. See Wayne Attoe and Donn Logan, *American Urban Architecture: Catalysts in the Design of Cities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); and Philipp Oswalt, Klaus Overmeyer, and Philipp Misselwitz, eds., *Urban Catalyst: The Power of Temporary Use* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2013).

13 For a better understanding of the author's opposition of "strategy" and "tactics," see de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xix.

14 See de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xii.

15 Recently, British curator and writer Justin McGuirk has precisely explored the historical background of this proposition in the context of Latin American megacities. See Justin McGuirk, *Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of a New Architecture* (London: Verso, 2014).

16 This idea echoes British sociologist Raymond Williams's claims that high culture should embrace low culture in order to survive. We seem to be at a moment in which this type of conflation is again relevant. See Raymand Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Croom Helm, 1976).

17 As Michael van Iersel has voiced it, "technological innovation is rapidly changing architecture and urban planning." Yet, "in spite of the promise of more cost-efficiency, increased sustainability and improved esthetic quality, these new technologies can just as easily lead to the same kind of dull and dehumanizing spaces that emerged from the previous technological revolution called Modernism." See Michael van Iersel, "The City in Your Hands," *Domus* (August 2013).

18 The author critiques the current models of "intelligent cities" as missing the "opportunity to urbanize the technologies they mobilize." On the other hand, she proposes that "technologists, urbanists and artists are beginning to 'urbanize' technology" and this should be directed to "strengthen horizontal practices and initiatives." See Saskia Sassen, "Open-Source Urbanism," *Domus* (June 2011).

19 Urban strategist Scott Burnham proposes that, like computer games, cities "have their own unlock codes." As such, "resourceful planners and designers have begun discovering them" in the form of billboards repurposed as humidity collection systems, pavements wired for Wi-Fi, and other "increased capabilities." See Scott Burnham, "Design with Cities, Not For Them," in Architizer.com, accessed May 9 2014, <http://architizer.com/blog/design-with-cities-not-for-them/>.

20 This is the title of one of many recent publications portraying diverse incarnations of what is called here "tactical urbanism." See Marcos Rosa and Ute Weiland, eds., *Handmade Urbanism: Mumbai, São Paulo, Istanbul, Mexico City, Cape Town: From Community Initiatives to Participatory Models* (Berlin: Jovis Verlag, 2013).

21 See Julian Barnes, *Levels of Life* (New York: Knopf, 2013).

22 Rio de Janeiro was the stage of some of the earliest and most cited experiences in understanding the favela as an urban settlement with a potential for refurbishment while respecting the right of its inhabitants to remain in place. Consider, for example, the work of Jorge Mário Jaurégui, especially in his award-winning Favela-Bairro project. This Argentinean architect based in Brazil was also one of the participants in the exhibition *Small Scale, Big Change: New Architectures of Social Engagement*, organized at MoMA from October 3, 2010, to January 3, 2011.

246 Common Cafe. Food carts and farmers' market, Tokyo. 2013

23 As Saskia Sassen notes, "in a global age whose key axis is becoming the East-West rather than the North-South one that has dominated an older international colonial history," Istanbul's strategic location is "ascendant." Similarly, Hong Kong is presented as the "financial leader in China," due to "its open economy and its historical connection to international trade." See Sassen, *Cities in a World Economy*, 199–200, 203–4.

24 Shortly after Rio de Janeiro and Istanbul had been chosen as case studies for this project, violent mass protests erupted in both cities, triggered by government initiatives related to urban mobility and gentrification processes. In Istanbul, in particular, before protests assumed wider political implications, the population claimed their "right to the city" by contesting a plan to substitute a central urban park for a shopping mall.

25 Recently, an inflamed Internet debate on "slum-exoticism" and "favela-porn" was triggered by the fact that Hong Kong's infamous and now demolished Kowloon district remains a subject of research and utter curiosity about what was once the densest city neighborhood on the planet. See Guy Horton, "The Indicator: The Slum Exotic and the Persistence of Hong Kong's Walled City," ArchDaily.com, February 2014, accessed May 8, 2014, <http://www.archdaily.com/?p=481396>.

26 The two cities are between the four fastest growing megacities in the world, together with Dhaka, in Bangladesh, and Karachi in Pakistan. See "Urban Explosion: The Facts," *New Internationalist* (n.d.), accessed May 8, 2014, <http://newint.org/features/2006/01/01/facts/>. As the World Bank adds, the potential for growth in India's megacities is still explosive, as "less than ⅓ of India's people live in cities and towns." See n. d., "India's Urban Challenges," World Bank, accessed May 8, 2014, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/0,,contentMDK:21393869~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSite PK:223547,00.html>.

27 Again according to the World Bank, although major urban centers in India generate "over ⅔ of the country's GDP and account for 90% of government revenues," slums still "account for ¼ of all urban housing." As for Lagos, it is the most crowded urban enclave in sub-Saharan Africa, a region in which, according to UN-Habitat, almost ¾ of the urban population live in slums. See UN-Habitat, *Slums of the World: The Face of Urban Poverty in the New Millenium* (Nairobi: UN-Habitat, 2003).

28 See Pedro Gadanho, "Emergency s. Emergency, or How Knowledge Must Follow Fashion," in *Tickle Your Catastrophe*, ed. Frederik Le Roy, Nele Wynants, Dominiek Hoens, and Robrecht Vanderbeeken (Ghent: Academia Press, 2011).

29 Bruce Sterling, "Atemporality for the Creative Artist," *Wired* (February 2010).

30 The introduction of the term "scenario" into planning and decision-making is attributed to American military strategist and systems theorist Herman Kahn, in connection with work done at the RAND Corporation think tank in the 1950s.

31 See Pedro Gadanho and Susana Oliveira, eds., *Once Upon a Place: Architecture & Fiction* (Lisbon: Caleidoscópio, 2013).

32 For such a reading, see the first of the micro-essays contained in my "Taken to Extremes," in *Beyond #01, Scenarios and Speculations*, ed. Pedron Gadanho (Amsterdam: Sun Publishers, 2009), 9–11.

33 See Nicky Rackard, "Arup Envisions the Skyscrapers of 2050," ArchDaily.com, February 2013, accessed May 9, 2014, <http://www.archdaily.com/?p=333450>.

34 See William Gibson, quoted in T. Nissley, "Across the Border to Spook Country: An Interview with William Gibson," Amazon.com, August 2007, accessed May 9, 2014, <http://www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html?docId=1000112701>.

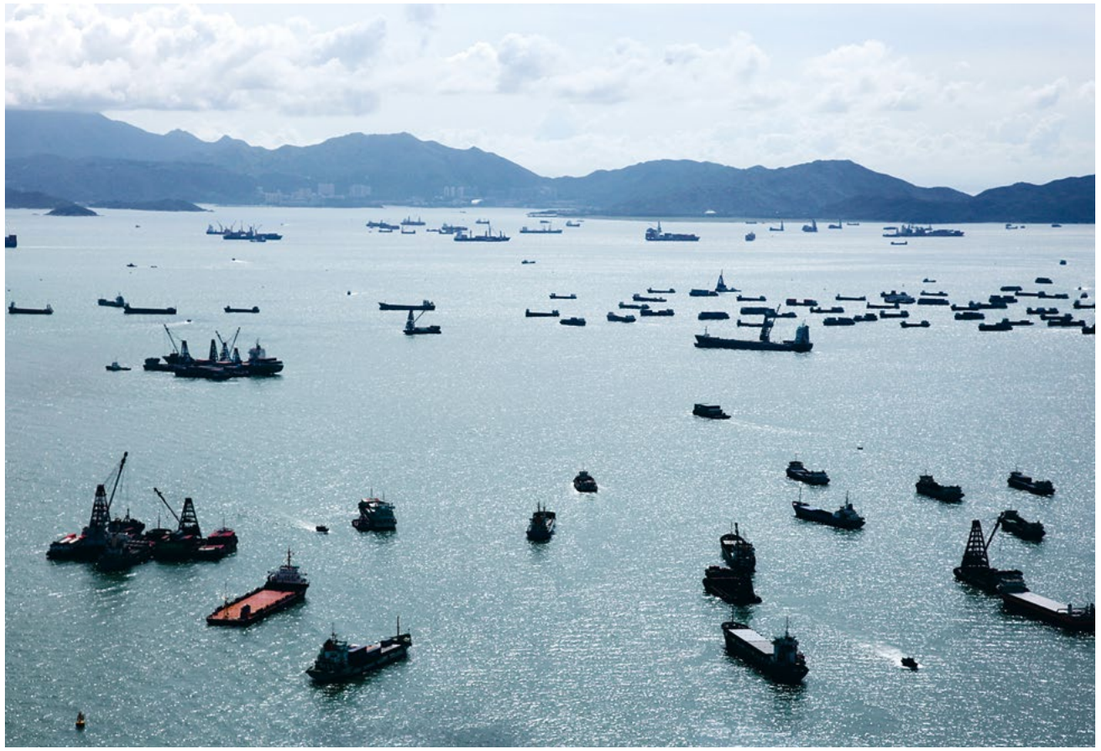
DESIGN SCENARIOS

and Tactical Urbanisms

HONG KONG

MAP Office, Hong Kong
Network Architecture Lab, Columbia University, New York

Swimming, floating, fleeing, sinking, how to absorb millions of climatic refugees?



Hong Kong's natural setting is composed of 60 percent water. From a historical perspective, Hong Kong waters have continuously attracted fisherman, pirates, and shipping activities and continue to do so.

Compressed between sea and mountains, Hong Kong appears as a chaotic, hybrid, and colorful urban territory with extreme forms of density. Informed by a complex geography, the typical urban idea of concentric growth and continuous spread is replaced by a nonlinear development of hyper-dense cores coexisting with a natural landscape accounting for more than 75 percent of the total land mass. Framed by the city of Shenzhen to the north and the South China Sea on three sides, Hong Kong, 60 percent of which is composed of bodies of water, is surrounded 360 degrees by China. A collection of more than 250 islands, mostly inhabited, the city/territory is now under pressure from Beijing to absorb new waves of urban sprawl in order to accommodate a 50 percent population increase to the existing 7.2 million inhabitants. With the historical struggle for and stress on land resources, Hong Kong's geography is a narrative that is defined and redefined, again and again, according to political intentions and social and economical variations. Contrary to urbanism, it fluctuates in a conflicting appropriation of recognized land and sea.

Following MAP Office's recent project *The Invisible Islands* (2013), Hong Kong's composite territory may be understood through a new perspective: the possibility of populating the sea. The Anthropocene dynamic and the rising sea levels induced by climate change now provide the opportunity to redraw the geographical atlas of the world by altering the coastline and creating new lands. Man-made islands are a valuable alternative to support a sustainable urban expansion with new modes of living, working, and entertaining. Islands are paradigms of the living condition and as such can exacerbate the logic and characteristics of existing modes of production and consumption of urban spaces. Artificial islands are territorial fragments, yet they are constructed and destructed in a cycle that concentrates many of the forces characterizing human civilization. This cycle of production and destruction is a way to escape the present and to project the future.

With only 30 kilometers of land border in the northern part of the territory, Hong Kong is surrounded by water representing 85 percent of its territorial boundaries. Surrounding it on all sides, China situates the city/territory as an integrated part of the motherland.

Myths, legends, fictions, stories, histories—as many narratives as possible are required to define the contours of a new territory.

Until 2047, Hong Kong faces many questions related to its unique condition as a Chinese city outside the contour of the motherland. The possibility of an exponential population growth is a main concern regarding its future stability. Hong Kong's limited land restrains possible population growth to three options: reclaiming more land on the water, urbanizing the protected country parks—two options that Hong Kong citizens have long fought against—and creating artificial islands in portions of the territorial water that are not yet exploited. In this context, Hong Kong could serve as a laboratory for an island scheme that could be extended to the Pearl River Delta and further along the coastline of China.

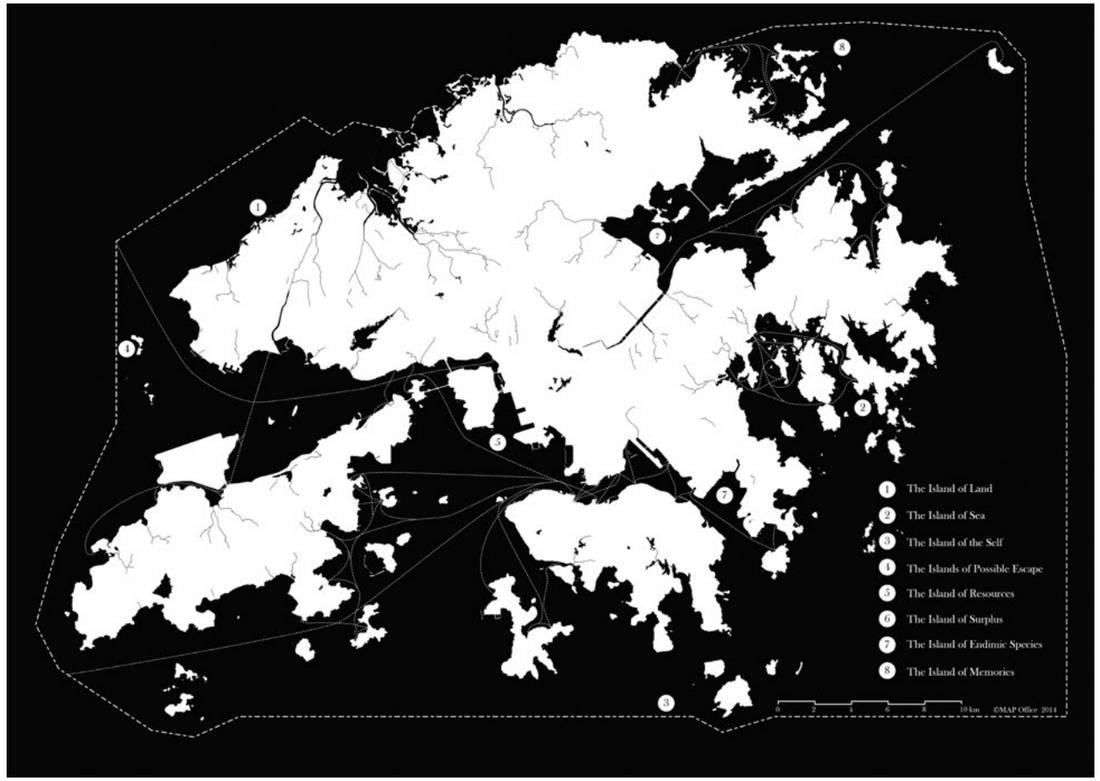
Hong Kong Is Land proposes to add eight new artificial islands to the existing landscape of 263 islands. In this way it addresses various needs and features of prevailing contexts as well as those of the near future. These artificial lands also provide distinctive hubs for tourism. Yet they cannot be recognized solely as islands nor generate maritime zones. More than a response to an unbalanced geography, the eight corresponding scenarios can be interpreted as a new language in which to promote universal values. At the center of this project, beginning in Hong Kong territorial waters, there is a global awareness of specific contemporary issues that aims to reach other parts of the world.

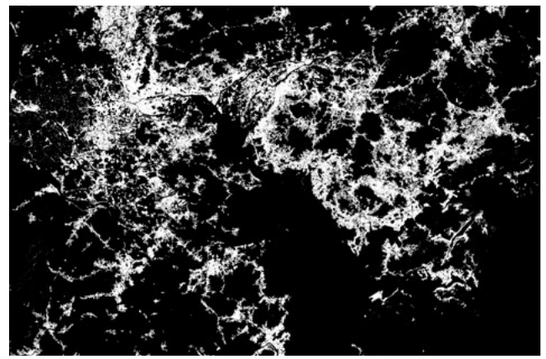
The strategy of reclaiming land over water has been the main principle for development and for absorbing various waves of migration. This mode of operation, shown above, is now very much under popular criticism.

Since the early 1970s, territorial pressure has pushed the authorities to develop "new town" scenarios. At left, Tung Chung New Town, serving Hong Kong International Airport, emerges from the countryside park of Lantau Island. The new town appears as a concrete island to supply the growing demand for housing facilities.

The coexistence of rural activities with high-density living imposes a system in which the territory experiences extreme pressure. Countryside communities are in danger of disappearing. Above, the Lau Fau Chan oyster farm exists in the shadows of Tin Shui Wai New Town.

Density of building is one of the main characteristics of Hong Kong's urban context. The verticalization of living has led authorities to develop subsidized housing typologies that are now inhabited by 45 percent of Hong Kong's population.



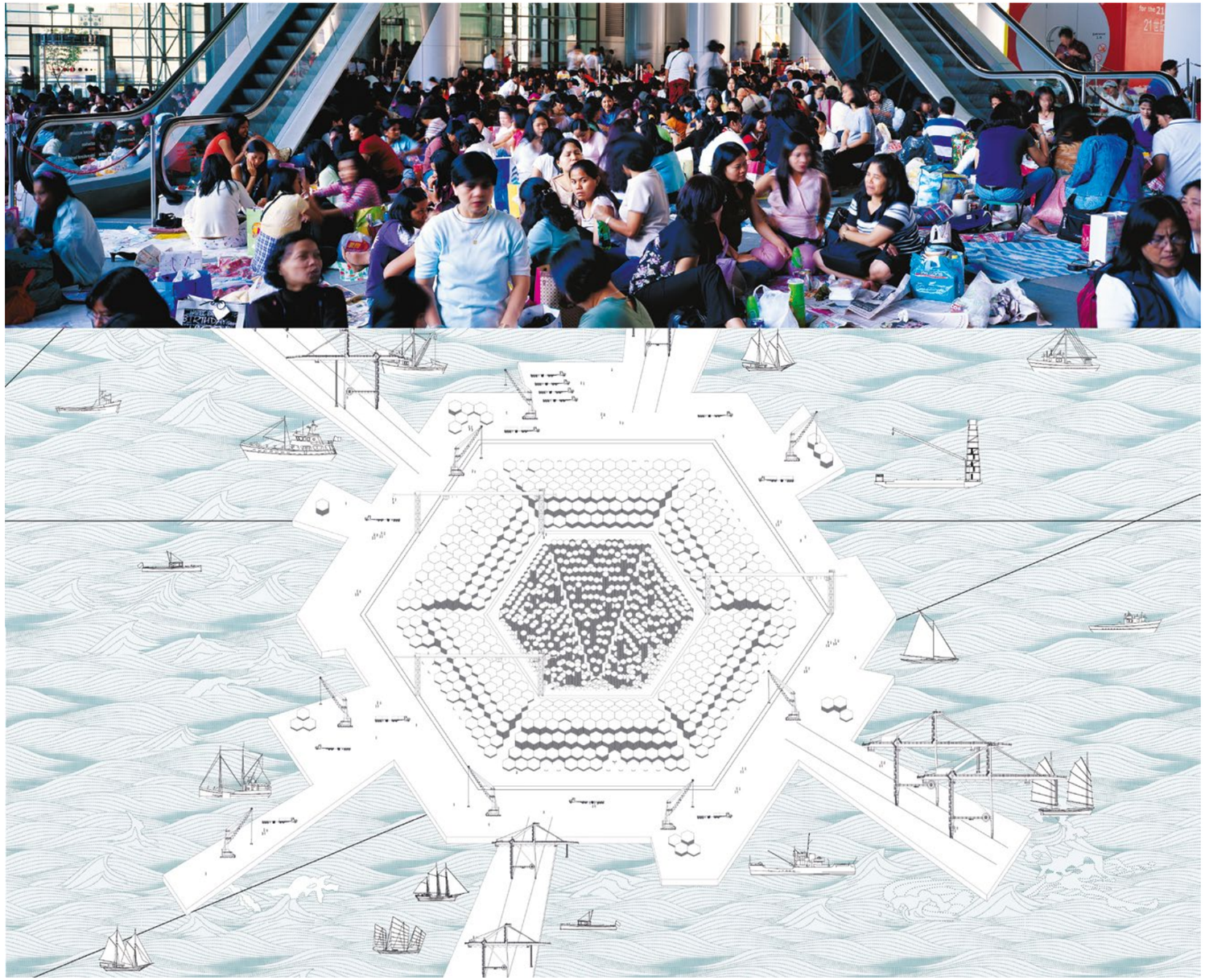


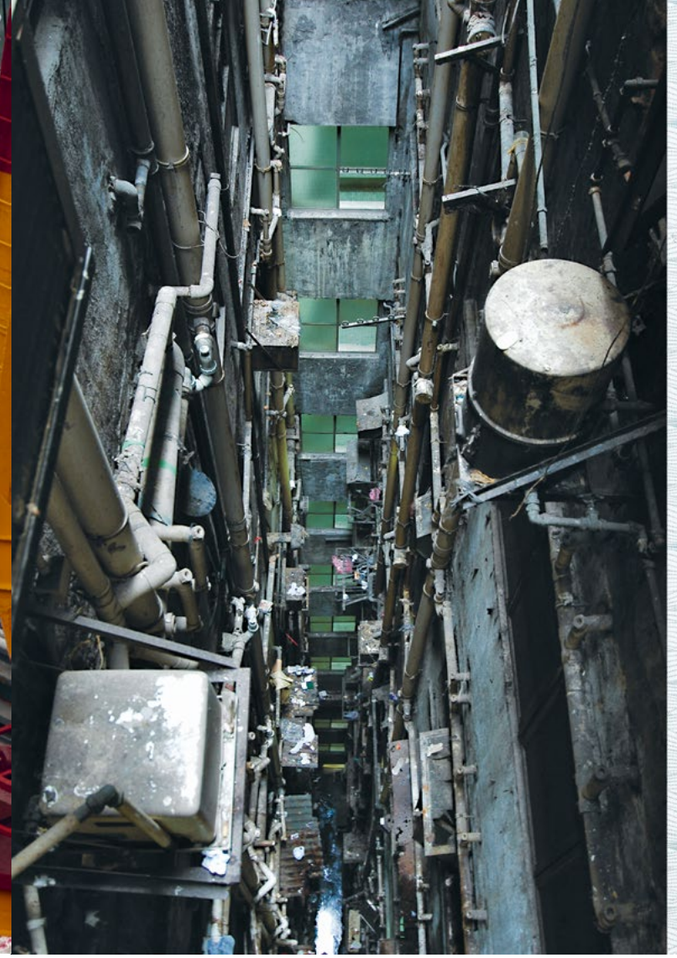
The Pearl River Delta Region, natural setting of Hong Kong city/territory, is among the most populated conurbations in the world. With one of the most important and productive global economies, the region remains dominated by its liquid geography.

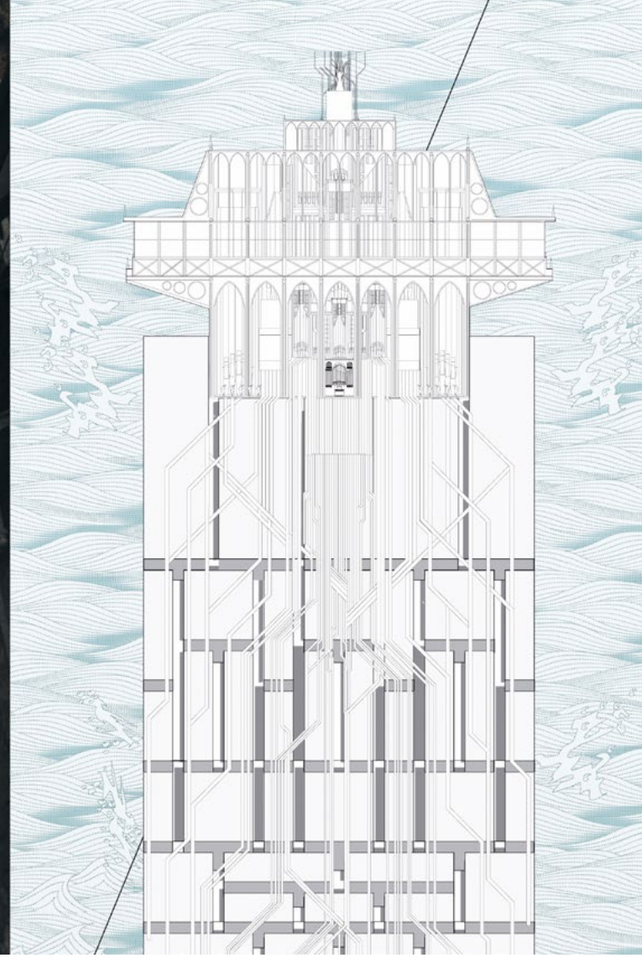
The location of the eight proposed artificial islands across Hong Kong territory is based on a process of decontextualization and reterritorialization of existing life scenarios. Each island epitomizes one of Hong Kong's characteristic values from a territorial, social, economic, and futuristic perspective.

Water is an essential source of life and its access is a basic human right. “The Island of Sea” is a living organism merging an aqua-structure with a fishing community. Made of Asian vernacular architecture layered together, the organization of the floating village is directly inspired by the condition of its liquid environment. Here the water is the source of economic survival. This mode of aquaculture offers the possibility of a new economy and food production. Set directly under the house or to either side, seaweed and fish replace the fields the polluted land has lost.

“The Island of Resources” relies on the strong networking capability of the expatriate Filipino community. Through the collection and distribution of basic resources, the island is an asset to nearby emergency zones in case of natural or human disasters. Inspired by the form of a trading pit, it is an organic geometric structure suggesting a multi-faceted relationship between inside and outside, surface and volumes. At the center a crater—a dense place sheltering the most precious resources—defends its treasure like a giant safe.

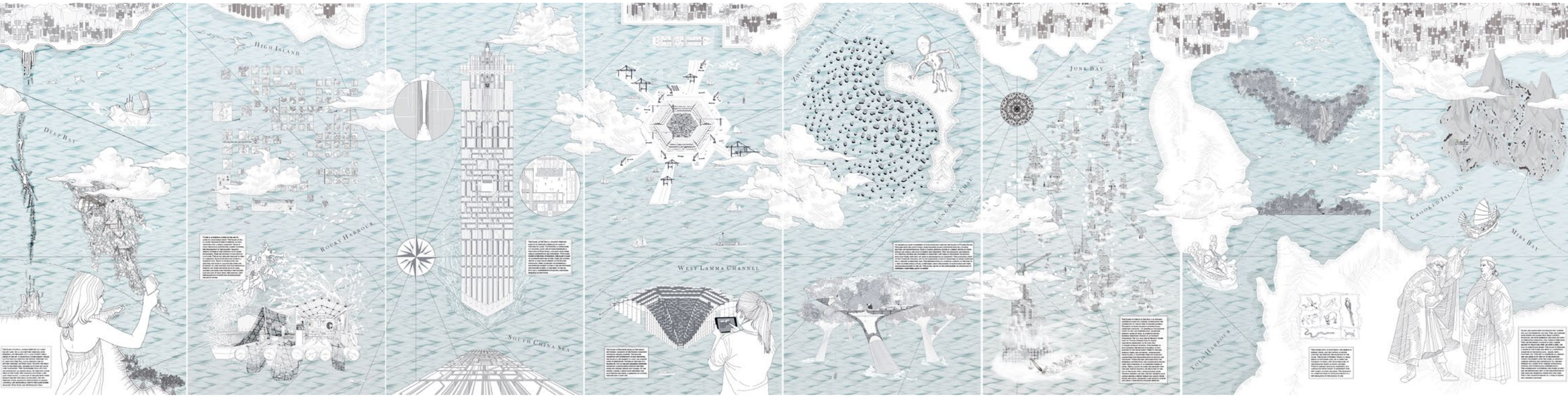






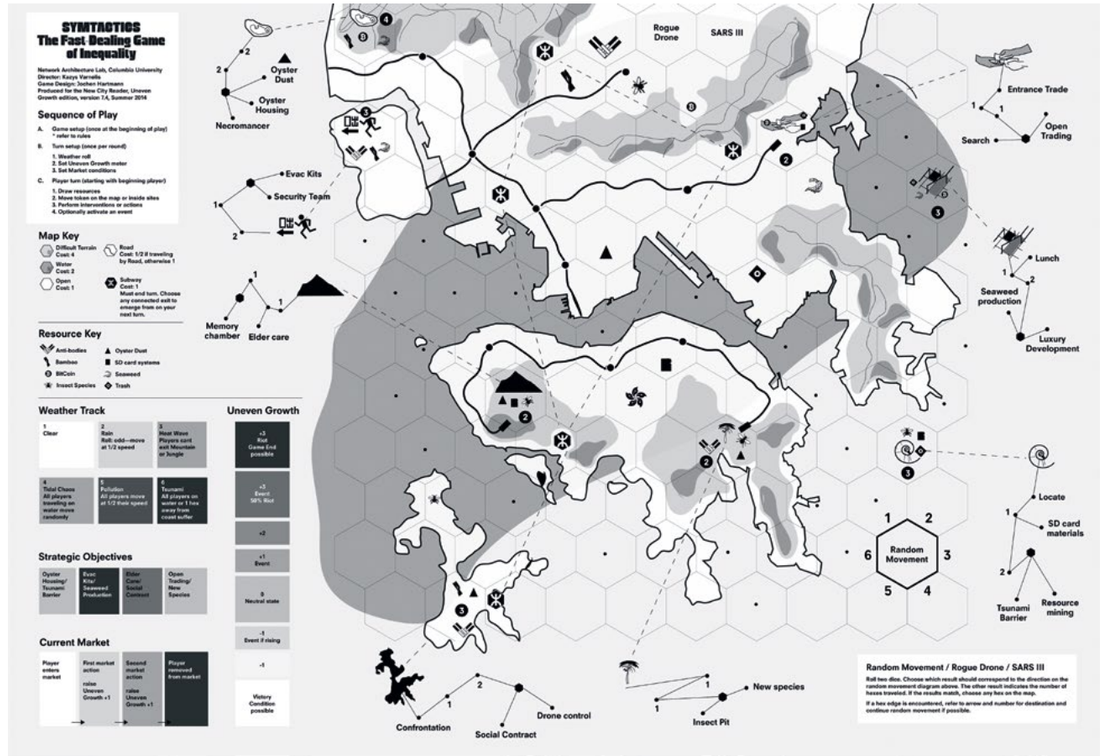
“The Island of Surplus” in Junk Bay is an unstable archipelago made of a complex accumulation and compression of various types of discarded material. Fragments of trash collide in an entropically generated landscape. Abandoned detritus shaped by years of accretion resemble prehistoric vestiges of an ignorant civilization. Yet it is also one of the most visited parts of Victoria Harbor, with its unique silhouettes reminiscent of Ha Long Bay.

“The Island of the Self” is a floating territory made of an intricate assemblage of alleys in the form of a maze. Constructed as a supertanker, it floats along the invisible borderline to the south of Hong Kong, a no man’s zone where illegal consumption is authorized. With tanks shaped in the form of buildings, the island is made of an infinite network of pipes, wires, and gutters that serve as the main organs feeding an intoxicated population. Dark and wet, the labyrinth offers a secretive feast of drugs, adventure, and sex.



Hong Kong Is Land is a map of possible islands comprised within Hong Kong territory. Each island exacerbates a condition through which the city/territory can be embraced from its past, present, and future; each island focuses on a specific economy, ecology, and community.

Uneven growth can only be solved through politics, but politics is broken when left in the hands of poll-driven politicians and screaming extremists. The *New City Reader* is a tactical newspaper installed in a public space that asks us to slow down, stop looking at our electronic devices, and once again read and discuss matters civilly in public. Based on the Chinese *dazibao*, handmade newspapers posted in public during the Cultural Revolution, the *New City Reader* is intended to be hung throughout the city—it is a tactical intervention that anyone can do.



Included for free in the Hong Kong edition of the *New City Reader*, SYMTACTICS is a board game that teaches individuals to explore the relationship between strategic and tactical thinking as players race around a dystopian Hong Kong of the near future. As in other games, players are able to explore and work through the concerns of a given social setting.

Just as "The Landlord's Game," patented in 1904 and a precursor to Monopoly, taught people about the problems generated by accumulated wealth, SYMTACTICS allows anyone to try their hand at lowering inequality through the completion of tactical interventions while fending off challenges from outside forces.

TACTICAL URBANISMS: EAST ASIA

thecaveworkshop. Wave of Growth, Hong Kong. 2012

Didier Faustino. *Double Happiness.* 2009. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Architecture & Design Purchase Fund

HK Honey. HK Farm, Ngau Tau Kok, Kowloon East, Hong Kong. 2012

Dai Haifei/standardarchitecture. Egg House, Beijing. 2010

ENCORE HEUREUX + G.studio. Room-Room for Paris, Beijing, Barcelona, Munich, and Strasbourg. 2008–14

Daiken-met Architects/Nawakenji-m. Sugoroku Office, Gifu, Japan. 2011

Eltono. 1/1 Project, Caochangdi, Beijing. 2012

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William Lim of CL3. West Kowloon Bamboo Theater, Hong Kong. 2013

WEAK! Architects (Hsieh Ying-Chun, Roan Ching-Yueh, and Marco Casagrande). Bug Dome, Shenzhen. 2009

For more information:
http://unevengrowth.moma.org

Project Credits

Hong Kong

MAP Office

Based in Hong Kong since 1995, MAP Office is a multidisciplinary platform devised by Laurent Gutierrez and Valérie Portefaix that works on physical and imaginary territories using a variety of media to critique spatio-temporal anomalies. Both teach at the School of Design, Polytechnic University. www.map-office.com

Project Directors: Laurent Gutierrez and Valérie Portefaix

Project Supervisor (Cartography): Gilles Vanderstocken

Project Manager: Henry Temple

Project Assistants (Cartography): Jenny Choi Hoi Ki, Xavier Chow Wai Yin, Hugo Huang Jiawu, Venus Lung Yin Fei, Winson Man Ting Fung, Tammy Tang Chi Ching, and Vivienne Yang Jiawei

Network Architecture Lab

The Network Architecture Lab is an experimental unit at the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, established in 2006 by Kazys Varnelis. The Netlab investigates the impacts of digital technology, telecommunications, and changing sociocultural conditions on architecture, the city, and society. www.networkarchitecturelab.org

Director and Editor, *New City Reader*: Kazys Varnelis

Game Design, Symtactics: Jochen Hartmann

Graphic Design, *New City Reader*: Neil Donnelly

Design and Managing Editor, *New City Reader*: Brigette Borders

Editor, *New City Reader*: Robert Sumrell

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Istanbul

Superpool

Superpool, founded by Selva Gürdoğan and Gregers Tang Thomsen in 2006, critically investigates Istanbul through exhibitions and temporary projects including *Mapping Istanbul* (Garanti Gallery/SALT, 2009), a two-year project examining the city through maps, comparative research, and essays. www.superpool.org

Nikitas Gkavogiannis, Selva Gürdoğan, Gregers Tang Thomsen, Zehra Nur Eliaçık, Derya İyikul, and Betül Nuhoğlu, in collaboration with Memed Erdener, Asbjørn Lund, and Fahri Özkaramanlı

Vienna MAK Workshop Participants: Matthieu Floret, Zoe Georgiou, Christiane Hütter, and May Krivanish

Shenzhen Workshop Participants: Chu Hou San and Tiago Guilherme Cheong

Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée

Founded by Constantin Petcou and Doina Petrescu in 2001, Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée conducts actions and research on participative architecture, developing tools to enable collective appropriation of temporarily available spaces by city dwellers and their transformation into self-managed urban commons. www.urbantactics.org/

Constantin Petcou and Doina Petrescu, in collaboration with Marguerite Wable, Jeremy Galvan, Beste Kuşçu, Augustin Reynaud, and Kim Trogal

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Lagos

NLÉ

NLÉ is an architecture, design, and urbanism practice based in Lagos and Amsterdam focusing on city development research and strategy advisory service; conceptualization and creative structuring; architecture, products, and infrastructure design; and arts and cultural urban interventions. www.nleworks.com

Uneven Growth Team: Kunlé Adeyemi, Farooq Adenugba, Marco Cestarolli, Berend Strijland, and Olina Terzi

Collaborators: Tunji Badejo, Olalekan Jeyifous, and QCP Television

Zoohaus/Inteligencias Colectivas

Inteligencias Colectivas is an open free database of nonstandard architectural and urban solutions developed by Zoohaus. Zoohaus is an ever-evolving meta-studio of individuals and collectives working together from different parts of the world. www.inteligenciascolectivas.org

Uneven Growth Team: David Berkvens, Juan Chacón, Manuel Domínguez, Maé Durant, Esteban Fuertes, Luis Galán, Elisa de los Reyes García, Juanito Jones, Manuel Pascual, Luis de Prada, and Lys Villalba, with the contributions of Alfredo Borghi, Miguel Martinez, Daniel Morcillo, Julia García, Aintzane del Río, and Monk Jones

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Mumbai

URBZ: user-generated cities

URBZ, founded by Matias Echanove, Rahul Srivastava, and Geeta Mehta in 2008, learns from its environment while contributing to its improvement. With offices in Mumbai and Goa, URBZ organizes participatory planning and design workshops in multiple countries. http://urbz.net/

Founding Partners: Matias Echanove, Rahul Srivastava, and Geeta Mehta

Uneven Growth Team: Matias Echanove, Rahul Srivastava, Yehuda Safran, Ishan Tankha, Sameep Padora, Diane Athaide, Ismini Christakopoulou, Jai Bhadgaonkar, Bharat Gangurde, Shyam Kanle, Aki Lee, Itai Margula, Shardul Patil, and Aditi Nair

Ensamble Studio/MIT-POPlab

Antón García-Abril and Débora Mesa, principals of the multidisciplinary Ensamble Studio, founded POPlab (Prototypes of Prefabrication Laboratory) at the Massachusetts

Workshop, MoMA PS1. October 2013

Institute of Technology (MIT) in 2013 as a research laboratory bridging the gaps between architecture, science, urban design, infrastructure, and people. www.ensamble.info; poplab.mit.edu

Ensamble Studio Principals and Founders of POPlab at MIT: Antón García-Abril, and Débora Mesa

Ensamble Studio/POPlab Team: Antón García-Abril, Débora Mesa, Javier Cuesta, Ricardo Sanz, Marie Benaboud, Simone Cavallo, José María Lavena, Massimo Loia, Borja Soriano, and Erin Soygenis

New York

SITU Studio

Founded in 2005 in Brooklyn, SITU's workspace is split evenly between a fabrication shop and a design studio, reflecting its commitment to interrogating design ideas through physical and material experimentation at a wide range of scales. www.situstudio.com

SITU Studio Principals: Basar Girit, Aleksey Lukyanov-Cherny, Westley Rozen, and Bradley Samuels

Project Manager: McKenna Cole

Team Members: Jennie Bernstein,

Zoe Demple, Kristine Ericson, Hayrettin Gunc, Derek Lange, Gabriel Munnich, Charles-Antoine Perrault, Nina Phinouwong, Katie Shima, and Xiaowei Wang

Consultants: Jesse M. Keenan, Center for Urban Real Estate (CURE.), Columbia University; Michael Amabile, Arup; Sarah Watson, Citizens Housing Planning Council; Seema Agnani and Drew Goldsman, Chhaya Community Development Corporation; David Giles, Center for an Urban Future; Kevin Findlan, NYU Furman Center; Alex Washburn, Center for Coastal Resilience and Urban Xcellence (CRUX) at Stevens Institute of Technology; John Szot, Brooklyn Digital Foundry; Minkwon Center for Community Action; and MFY Legal Services

Cohabitation Strategies (CohStra)

CohStra is a nonprofit cooperative for socio-spatial research, design, and development founded in the wake of the 2008 financial crash by Lucia Babina, Emiliano Gandolfi, Gabriela Rendón, and Miguel Robles-Durán and based in New York City, Rotterdam, and Ibiza. www.cohstra.org

Founding Members: Lucia Babina, Emiliano Gandolfi, Gabriela Rendón, and Miguel Robles-Durán

Uneven Growth Team: Raquel de Anda, curator; Guillermo Delgado, urbanist; Juan Junca, urban planner; Jonathan Lapalme, urban strategist; Phillip Lühl, architect; Juan Pemberty, design thinker; Santiago Giraldo, urban ecologist; and Rajesh Bhavnani, animation director

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Rio de Janeiro

RUA Arquitetos

Rua is the word for "street" in Portuguese. Founded by Pedro Évora and Pedro Rivera in 2008, RUA Arquitetos is interested in how architecture can mediate and promote space for social exchange through projects in the informal areas of Rio de Janeiro. www.rualab.com

Coordinators: Pedro Évora and Pedro Rivera

Collaborators: Aliki Kostopoulou, Fabiano Pires, Natalia Winnika, Mariana Albuquerque, Mariana Meneguetti, and Roberto Costa

MAS Urban Design, ETH Zurich

MAS Urban Design, chaired by Professor Marc Angélil, is a research and design laboratory that prepares participants for an active role within the interdisciplinary agenda of city planning. Since 2010, classes have investigated new models of urban development for Brazil. www.angelil.arch.ethz.ch

MAS Urban Design Program Chair: Marc Angélil

Coordinators: Marc Angélil, Rainer Hehl, Julian Schubert, Elena Schütz, and Leonard Streich

Students: Yevgeniya Bevz, Andreas Boden, Mengxing Cao, Ondrej Chybík, Andrea de Guio, Marija Gramc Milivojevic, Heechul Jung, Minami Nagao, Theodora Papamichail, Georgios Papoulias, Artemis Pefani, Theodoros Poulakos, Konstantinos Stoforos, Henrik Syversten, Maria Fernanda Tellez Velasco, Alexander Daxböck, Zoi Georgiou, Gianmaria Socci, Fani Kostourou, Natalia Michailidou, Gerhard Ungersböck

Collaborators: João Salsa, Filipe Serro, and Tobias Müller

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