

Organising Discourse Workshop 20 - 21 October 2015

Re-visiting Open Form - Workshop

With Axel Wieder

"How would space look if it were inspired by an open, processual, micro-political, interventionist, communicative, and participatory approach that relates to everyday urban life? Would it be destined to be merely an element in the commodified colonization of social spaces, or could it be a



Game of the individual steps on the terrain model in Oskar Hansen's Studio, 1972.
Courtesy of KwieKulik archive

strategic tool with a political and social character that can make an essential contribution to a social city? Or are design and the visual representation of urban issues themselves the

key means by which alternative or utopian spaces may be created upon the ideological ruins of existing cities?"

Jesko Fezer

The workshop will use the theory of Open Form, introduced by the Polish visionary architect, artist and urban theorist Oskar Hansen, as a starting point to investigate the potential for design and pedagogy to create new relationships to architecture and the city. Some of the most remarkable outputs of Hansen and the artists he collaborated with include games and educational tools in which the roles of participants are actively negotiated. The documentation and discussion of processes was treated as a feature for analysis and knowledge production. It seems an interesting task to re-visit experiments with Open Form as a specific approach to participation and to deal with hierarchies in the production of space and knowledge.

In a first step, we want to ask about factors that we consider crucial for the structure for the contemporary environment, the city - Stockholm. What are the frontiers, borders and spatial hierarchies that regulate access in the contemporary city - flows of capital, income inequality, consumer preferences, cultural differences, building regulations, public transportation - and what are power relations of concern? What are areas that we think require critical analysis?

In a second step, we aim to develop ideas for new tools that help to explore, negotiate - and possibly challenge - the existing condition of the city. These tools might be analytical, activist or playful, and may connect with methodologies developed by Oskar Hansen and his students, for example through a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach. Index is running a busy pedagogy program with children and young people, for which we work with schools from all over Stockholm. We aim to use some of the ideas developed in the workshop for further projects in our educational program.

In advance of the workshop, participants are asked to think of one area or topic that will be interesting to discuss current spatial power relations, and identify one specific place or "object" for study and intervention that is significant for the chosen topic. Please keep suggestions as concrete as possible, so that we can enter a discussion and select examples for further discussion quickly.

Schedule

20-21 October, 9:00-16:00

Day 1:

9:00: Introduction and structure of the workshop

9:30-12:30: Presentation of chosen objects

13:30-16:00: discussion and selection of chosen objects, first thoughts about possible interventions

Day 2:

9:00: Recapitulation from Day 1, setting up teams

9:30-12:30: Practical exploration: tests and documentation

13:30-16:00: finishing documentation and writing of instructions and suggestions for further use (tool kits)

Literature

Claire Bishop: Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship, London/New York: Verso 2012, Introduction

<https://selforganizedseminar.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/bishop-claire-artificial-hells-participatory-art-and-politicsspectatorship.pdf>

Jesko Fezer: Design for a Post-Neoliberal City, e-flux Journal Nr. 17 (2010)

<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/design-for-a-post-neoliberal-city/>

Axel Wieder: Works-for-Film and Open Form, in Axel Wieder and Florian Zeyfang: Open Form. Space, Interaction, and the Tradition of Oskar Hansen, Sternberg Press 2014, p. 52-61. (PDF attached)

Axel Wieder is a curator and writer living in Stockholm. He has been director of Index - the Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation since 2014, and was head of program and curator of exhibitions at Arnolfini Center of Contemporary Arts in Bristol. His work has frequently focused on the history and theory of exhibitions, architecture and social space, and issues of political representation. Recent exhibitions include "The Promise" at Arnolfini (2014), involving works of artists

and offsite projects alongside urban planning and architectural models, and solo exhibitions with Joëlle Tuerlinckx, Willem de Rooij and Ian Hamilton Finlay. He also initiated exhibition and performance series on Maryanne Amacher, shown with DAAD, Berlin in 2012 and in 2014 at the Bonner Kunstverein. As artistic director of Künstlerhaus Stuttgart from 2007 to 2010, he developed an interdisciplinary program aimed at forging closer links between theoretical formats and exhibition presentations, repositioning the institution both regionally and internationally. Since 1990 he has taken part in numerous exhibitions in collaboration with Jesko Fezer, including the 3rd Berlin Biennale in 2004 and the 9th International Istanbul Biennial in 2005. In 1999, together with Jesko Fezer and Katja Reichard, he founded the bookstore Pro qm in Berlin, which is also a venue for experimental events in the field of art and urbanism. Among his many other projects, Wieder curated the exhibition "Now and Ten Years Ago" at KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin. He has also held lecturing posts at various universities and art academies, including the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar and the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste.