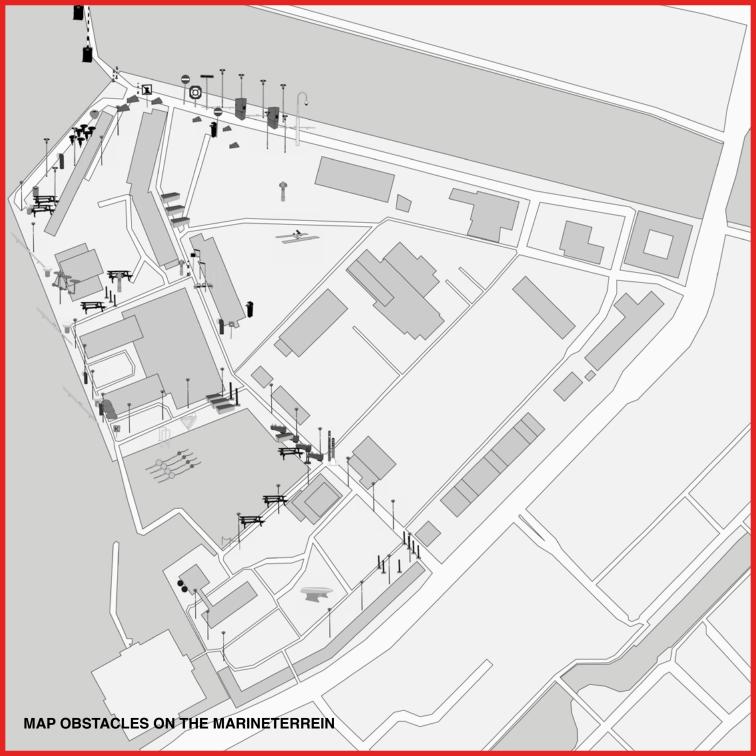
ON HOW TO CLAIM THE IN-BETWEEN

AN INQUIRY ON THE MARINETERREIN
AND ITS CHAOTIC ABUNDANCE OF OBSTACLES



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INTRO

This research paper deals with the question of 'how can communal actions temporary claim in-between spaces?.

The question considers and analyses the spatial reality of Marineterrein in Amsterdam, acknowledged as 'space in-between'.

This site has been for long time military base, but nowadays, it is slowly opening to the public, freeing different areas. The future plans¹ see the site transformed and divided into a residential area, a public accessible park, and a small section will still be Military base.

When my research group² and I visited the current Marineterrein, we perceived, around publicly accessible areas, an atmosphere that is still currently dictated by the military influence. We noticed that there is a clear division between the public and the private - military base and public accessible areas. This division is visible physically - by objects such as poles and signs and fences - and perceived atmospherically - by elements which are linked to a past marked by a military past, that today show a mark of order and division on the site, for instance old car parking lines on the ground. This chaotic abundance of objects and obstacles, not directly addressing the users gives a sense of overcrowded and unusable spaces, even if they are not directly owned by anyone - and shows a reality where the public feels controlled and guided by rigid elements, that symbolise a power structure.

We started our research with first personal observations, linked to the atmosphere we sensed around the area. Subsequently we conducted a series of interviews with users and occupants of the

terrain, that confirm the previously formulated perception of the Marineterrein.

The first part concludes with an analysis on Marineterrein, finalised by my definition of this space as 'inbetween space'. By 'in-between' space I Include the temporal and spacial aspect: between history and present, between present and future plans, between use and un-used, between temporary and permanent, between owned and un-owned.

After defining the subject and explaining what I consider as space in-between, my research takes in consideration one case study: 'Parking Day', an annual event taking place around the world, organised by individuals with one common goal to temporary claim public parking spaces. Analysed and dissected in 5 key guidelines answering the questions of what, where, who, when, how - claiming, public space. community. temporarily and open source. This second part reflects on characteristics and concepts that allow still today this event to

1 Marinekwartier, (2020). "Buildings plan Marineterrein announced" [Online]. Available: https://www.marinekwartier.com/2020/11/bouwplannenmarineterreinbekendgemaakt.html [2021, May].

2 Research Collaboration between Malte Sonnenschein, Georgina Pantazopoulou, Chen Liu and Caterina Tioli

INTRO

succeed and become worldwide possible, starting from the small reality of the studio REBAR³ in California, into the participation by singular groups around the world.

Following the descriptions of the five different points. conclusion investigate finally the role of designers in a context where everybody designs, according to Italian design critic Ezio Manzini4. The final questions trigger a possible approach on how to change the initial area taken in consideration: the Marineterrein of Amsterdam.

3 REBAR, (2012)
"Portfolio" [Online].
Available: https://
web.archive.org/
web/20120812002552/
http://rebargroup.org/
portfolio/ [2021, May]

4 E. Manzini, *Design,* When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation (The MIT Press, 2015)

PART I

MARINETERREIN BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

"We are never the first, never the last, never without a context." 5

Located in the city centre of Amsterdam, Marineterrein is 'a historic part of Amsterdam that fulfils a variety of functions: cultural. maritime and commercial'6. Ιt has existed for over 350 years as a closed military base, but in 2013 the Navy started gradually to leave the site and became more a public space for the city. It became partially owned by the military and by the Government, last one delegating the administration to the Marine Bureau, which rents buildings to innovative projects.7

Today Marineterrein is in a transitory state marked by a clear division between public and private. The two parts are defined by the sociologist Lyn H. Lofland as the public space accessible or visible to all members of the community. And, standing in sharp contrast, the private space, which is not open or accessible to the general public.⁸

MARINETERREIN AND ITS OBSTACLES

In the process of understanding this division between public and private, between military and public accessible areas, our research acknowledged that the division wasn't only physical but also, and mostly, atmospherical. not only objects that define a but space, it is how people interact with these

5 M. van Iersel, J. Ouburg, F. Alkemade, Rewriting Architecture:10+1 Actions for an Adaptive Architecture, in F. Alkemade, Introduction - The Written Page (Valiz, 2020), 21

6 IAmsterdam, "Marineterrein" [Online]. Available: https:// www.iamsterdam. com/en/see-and-do/ things-to-do/attractions-and-sights/places-of-interest/marineterrein [May, 2021]

7 Wikipedia, "Marineterrein (Amsterdam)" [Online]. Available: https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marineterre-in_(Amsterdam)#:~:tex:=Het%20Marineterre-in%20ligt%20op%20 het,de%20naam%20 Marine%20Etablissement%20Amsterdam [May, 2021]

8 L. H. Lofland, *The Public Realm*, (Transaction Publishers, 1998), 9

9 Public realm: the world of strangers and the "street" - L. H. Lofland, The Public Realm, (Transaction Publishers, 1998), 9

10 Private realm: the world of the household and friend and kin networks - L. H. Lofland, The Public Realm, (Transaction Publishers, 1998). 10

11 Parochial realm: the word of the neighbourhood, workplace, or acquaintance networks - characterises by a sense of commonality among acquaintances and neighbours who are involved in interpersonal networks that are located within "communities" - L. H. Lofland, The Public Realm, (Transaction Publishers, 1998), 10

elements and the field where they are placed. As a consequence, Marineterrein is currently in use by 'temporary users', because of its identity as a work/leisure area.

Within the public space, we identified public⁹, private¹⁰ and parochial¹¹ realms, essential to explain the change of "culturally or legally given designation

PARTI

(claiming, for example, this street is public space, this yard is private space)".¹²

The atmosphere we analysed was marked by division and hostility. What characterised this feeling was the presence of objects - such as signs, fences, poles, green areas, car floor lines, but also tables, benches, etc. - that because in high number and present all around the site, they would influence our experience, transmitting a sense of 'not claimable'.

We started to name these objects as obstacles, because the way they interacted with us, as 'human being' and as 'user of the terrain', acted as borders¹³ that we didn't feel entitled to cross.

In issue OASE 77, Ana Luz analyses 'human-scale obstacles' in the article 'On Pavements and Other Public Groundscapes'¹⁴. She analyses the pattern of lines and geometric shapes on the ground we encounter everyday in our lives and how pedestrians measures their own body and movement according to them. She finally states that paving design can provide functional information such as hazards or boundaries, differences in programmes of use, and domains of private or public thresholds¹⁵. It becomes important than to consider these elements when designing public spaces.

Today, on Marineterrein, the variety of elements that constitute the group of obstacles are causing an atmosphere of crowdedness, limiting the public areas that could actually be used for public purposes.

To confirm our personal observations, we conduct a series of interviews.

users

Two

explained that they usually use the site as a walking path and very rarely they stop and sit. "The ground feels a bit 'occupied'. even if the military it's not so present here" explained one of them. However he very clearly stated afterwards that they felt the right to be there and wished for more possibilities to encourage them to rest on the terrain and enjoy the site. On the other end, two workers of Hotel Pension Homeland situated in Marineterrein drove our focus on the fact that the terrain is shared with the military, and that the situation of 'conflict' comes both ways. "A lot has changed: at the beginning it was a terrain the military took care of for 400 years, you were not allowed to walk on the grass for example, but everything was

so beautiful. And then we

came, and the first thing we

did was walking on the grass.

I think they thought that it was

terrible. We were breaking their rules, but they were not

- 12 Realms are social, not physical territories. -L. H. Lofland, *The Public Realm*, (Transaction Publishers, 1998), 11
- 13 Richard Sennett distinguishes borders from boundaries. While borders are permeable and thereby passable, boundaries are physical obstacles to prevent user flow. - Cambridge Law Faculty, "'The Edge: borders and boundaries': Richard Sennett", (2015), [Online]. Available: https://www.youtube. com/watch?v=1VM-9wqovghE&ab_channel=CambridgeLaw-Faculty [May, 2021]
- 14 A. Luz, "On Pavements and Other Public Groundscapes, Ground as Canvas for and Process of Urban Exploration in Design Processes", OASE 77, 91 Into the Open (2008), 91-101
- 15 A. Luz, "On Pavements and Other Public Groundscapes, Ground as Canvas for and Process of Urban Exploration in Design Processes", OASE 77, Into the Open (2008), 91-101

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ours to follow. So this was a big change. And then now, we are starting to be friends together. They eat in our shops, they sleep in our hotel's rooms."

MARINETERREIN AS IN-BETWEEN SPACE

16 Relating to time -Oxford Dictionary 17 Relating to space -Oxford Dictionary

What the workers at the Hotel Pension Homeland in Marineterrein repeated several times, was that there everything is temporary. Because of the future plan to transform the site in a

residential area, in seven years everything will be different again.

Marineterrein becomes then a space in-between, as temporal¹⁶ in-between and spatial¹⁷ in-between. Between past history and present, between present and future plans, between use and un-used, between temporary and permanent, between owned and unowned.

Since the site opened up to public use, physical changes applied

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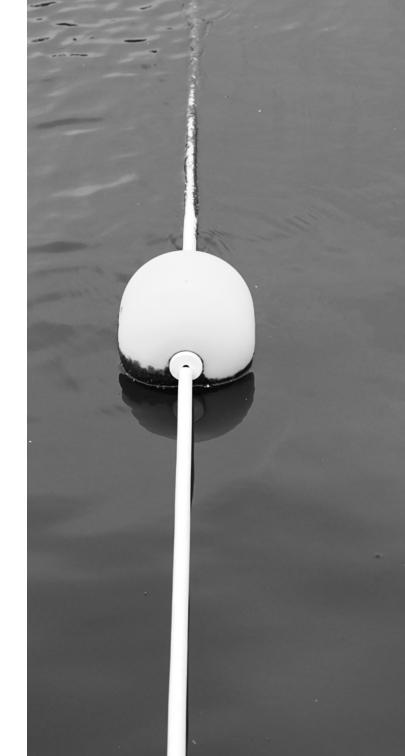
as well, leaving marks nowadays visible but without purpose, such as old poles marking a border which is nowadays receded, lines on the floor belonging to and old car parking, or signs addressing to previous areas to park boats. Many areas became in-between areas, because sometimes not owned or simply not maintained and today not claimed by anyone.

If, according to Michiel van lersel in the introduction of 'Rewriting Architecture', we as designer should work on developing new layers assenting what is already existing¹⁸, my main question reflects on the concept of how to repurpose what is already present on Marineterrein. We as 'designers are trained to imagine a specific space for a given programme' but instead we 'should be able to imagine a specific programme for a given space.' And together with users 'find beauty and purpose in under-utilised, ignored, and abandoned spaces.'¹⁹

How can communal actions, taken by current users, allow the temporary claim of in-between spaces, defined as obstacles, because elements of an hostile atmosphere?

18 M. van Iersel, J. Ouburg, F. Alkemade, Rewriting Architecture:10+1 Actions for an Adaptive Architecture, in M. Van Iersel, Introduction - Heavy World (Valiz, 2020), 30

19 M. van Iersel, J. Ouburg, F. Alkemade, Rewriting Architecture:10+1 Actions for an Adaptive Architecture, (Valiz, 2020), 170



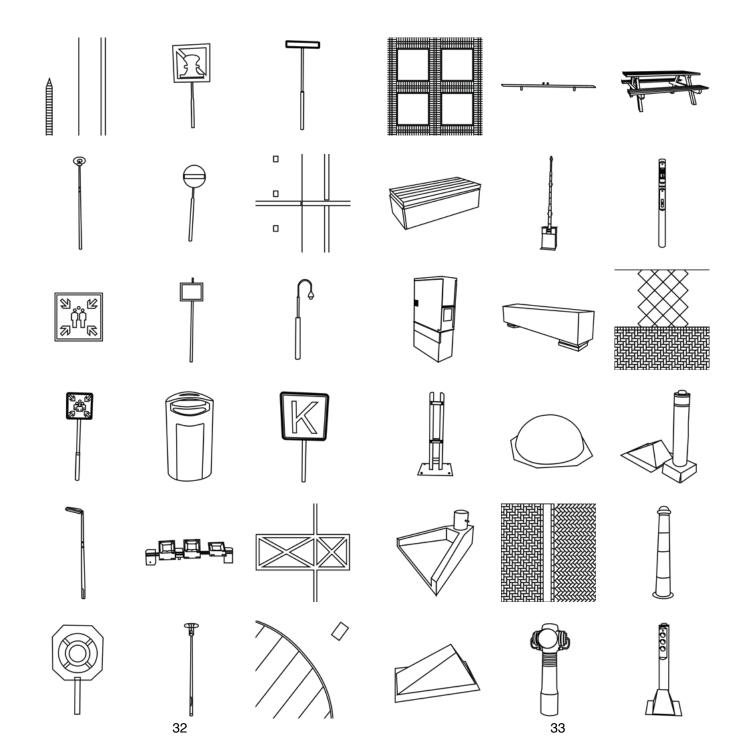












PART II

CASE STUDY PARK(ING)DAY

To find an answer to this question, my research paper examines the reality of "Park(ing) Day". Park(ing) day is an annual event where people temporarily transform parking spaces worldwide into 'people spaces'. Park(ing) Day is an opportunity to reimagine how streets can be used by the public.²⁰

It started in November 16th, 2005 as an initiative taken by REBAR²¹, a design studio based in San Francisco. They converted a single metered parking space into a temporary public park in the SOMA district of San Francisco. The installation was a response to the fact that at the time 70% of San Francisco's downtown outdoor space was dedicated to the private vehicle. Feeding the meter for the limited two-hour slot, Rebar installed a patch of grass, a park bench, a tree and signs for passers-by to sit and relax, in order to make their statement.²²

Rebar created a how-to manual²³ with guidelines on how others can create their own public spaces out of existing urban-use space. PARK(ing) Day has expanded and today it includes interventions organised by people around the world, ranging from free health clinics, urban farming and ecology demonstrations, political seminars, art installations, and free bike repair shops. In 2009 more than 700 Park(ing) Day events were organised 140 cities, in 21 countries on 6 continents.

I analysed this event according to 5 key elements, answering

the question what, where, who, when, how and why, this last determined in the conclusion.

20 Seattle Department of Transportation - Sam Zimbabwe, Director, "PARK(ing) Day", [Online]. Available: https://www.seattle. gov/transportation/ projects-and-programs/programs/ public-space-management-programs/ park(ing)-day#:~:text=Annually%2C%20 on%20the%20third%20 Friday,be%20used%20 by%20the%20public [May, 2021]

21 REBAR, (2012)
"Portfolio" [Online].
Available: https://
web.archive.org/
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22 Benjamin Schneider, (2017). "How Park(ing) Day Went Global - One tiny DIY parklet became a model for reclaiming streets around the world" [Online]. Available: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-09-15/a-brief-history-of-parking-day [May, 2021]

23 REBAR, "The PARK(ing) DAY MANU-AL" [Online]. Available: https://www.asla.org/ uploadedFiles/CMS/ Events/Parking_Day_ Manual_Consecutive. pdf (May, 2021)

WHAT CLAIMING²⁴

"Uncovering these acts of control, breaking the rituals that society has installed, becomes one of the main goals".²⁵

REBAR initiated the project with one goal to temporarily claim public spaces - precisely parking lot - as a statement against the high number of cars. In order to claim, they studied the rules, which allowed to use the parking lot for a minimum of two hours, and deceived them.

24 To demand or ask for something because you believe it is your legal right to own or to have it - Oxford Dictionary

25 In 'Questions of Space' Tschumi underlines that 'architecture seems to survive only when it saves its nature by negating the form that society expects from it'. [...] Referring to the Situationist notion of détournement, taking an existing element or institution and using it for something other than its intended purpose - T. Avermaete, K. Havik, "Accommodating the Public Sphere", OASE 77, Into the Open (2008), 53

WHERE PUBLIC SPACE²⁶

"Being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. This is the meaning of public life".²⁷

It's not accidental that the location where the event occurs is the street. the public most space. Here. participants are exposed to the citizens that casually happen to pass by. The action is noticed and acknowledged by others, and the message, if clear and incisive is accessible to everyone.

26 Open to people in general - Oxford Dictionary

27 For Hannah
Arendt the essential
aspect of public life
is its plurality, which
reveals differences
- H. Teerds, C.
Grafe, C. Koekoek,
"Four Themes for
Architecture in The
Writings of Hannah
Arendt", OASE 106,
Table Settings,
Reflections on
architecture with
Hannah Arendt (2020),
16

WHO COMMUNITY²⁸

"A human being is never alone on this earth: the world always concerns a plurality of people."²⁹ It is in the power of more people coming together, creating a community and acting as one, that endorse and empower the simple act of claiming a public space. Acting together enables them to 'share the control, the authorship of the result' activating a system of co-creating and co-owning.³⁰

28 The feeling of sharing things and belonging to a group -Oxford Dictionary

29 H. Teerds, C. Grafe, C. Koekoek, "Four Themes for Architecture in The Writings of Hannah Arendt", OASE 106, Table Settings, Reflections on architecture with Hannah Arendt (2020), 16

30 F. van Westrenen, M. Lauwaert, Facing Value: Radical Perspectives from the Arts, (Valiz, 2016), 301

WHEN

TEMPORARILY31

"Temporary is not supposed to belong to architecture, because transformation is immanent and this ephemerality is at variance with the qualities of architecture. But if we admit that, eventually, transformation is permanent, ephemerality could also be one of architecture's qualities."32

Time becomes an essential aspect of these interventions. Not only in the action of reinterpreting the rules, but also, and more importantly, in association to the event, that because unusual and condensed, it becomes memorable and significant.

31 Connected with or limited by time -Oxford Dictionary

32 H. Verkerk, Events. Situating the temporary, (Birkhäuser, 2017). 5

HOW

OPEN SOURCE³³

"The value of letting things grow, develop, run their course rather than planning everything in advance leads to a form of invitation and corresponding possibilities for participation that are open to reality, complexity, the messy humanness of humanity."34

Finally, after a series of first tryout. REBAR created manual where advices and rules are clearly indicated, in order for users to take over. This allowed for different individuals to participate. in order to empower their statement and enrich the message, making the project fully open source.

33 Used to describe software for which the original source code is made available to anyone-Oxford Dictionary

34 F. van Westrenen, M. Lauwaert, Facing Value: Radical Perspectives from the Arts, (Valiz, 2016), 307

CONCLUSION

THE ROLE OF DESIGNERS

In the five previously explained guidelines, the role of designers is ambiguous and unclear.

The action is taken by individuals that, gathering and working together act as communities in the collaborative process of designing new purposes and realities for public spaces.

What is the role of designers then, when everybody designs ³⁵?

Ezio Manzini, Italian design academic and author, tries to answers this question. He explains that in the past 10 years design has shifted attention away from "objects", such as products, services, systems, to "ways of thinking and acting", new methods, instruments, design approaches and cultures.

Today design is acting in a "new arena", where every individual has access to it. Manzini, in his book "Design, When Everybody Designs", distinguishes between diffuse design, the one performed by everybody, and expert design, the one performed by those who have been trained as designers. In the new reality, the experts do not disappear, on the contrary, they have to redefine their action, that needs to be more incisive. Their role becomes essential: it implies awareness and a study of the cultural background of each project. Designers become part and at the same time promotors of social change. It is the life itself of humans, who are faced everyday with problems and opportunities, that becomes the protagonist of design.

What I think is important to understand is how can the designer contribute to stimulate and nourish changes by producing project-oriented knowledge, in a clear and communicative way, building scenarios, creating prototypes in order to concretely verify the implications of the ideas proposed. Finally, he/she can use his experience and sensitivity to introduce and disseminate new valuable ideas.

In the case study of Park(ing) designer Dav. the is the initiator of a project, which today is working and growing without his participation. His capability to creatively think of new interpretations of parking lot, by twisting the rules; the production of a manual, acting as a communication tool, which allows accessibility by different and worldwide spread and share crowds: these are all elements that makes me state that designer has a role, which is very clear and its very essential. My role as designer doesn't becomes necessarily linked to directing, organising, curating, but instead it aims to start a discussion where everyone can access and take part in, in order to open up possibilities and increase the level of potentiality of a space, or a system, rather than solving the entire problem.

My role as designer in a context such as Marineterrein is to follow the five guidelines - claiming, public space, community, 35 E. Manzini, Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation (The MIT Press, 2015)

36 R. Poletti, (2016), "Designs for life" [Online]. Available: https:// www.domusweb.it/en/ reves/2016/07/15/ designs_for_life.html [May, 2021]

37 MadeTV, (2015), "Ezio Manzini - Design, When Everybody Designs" [Online]. Available: https:// www.youtube.com/ watch?v=Ap-vE53Cd-Fl&ab_channel=MedeaTV [May, 2021]

38 R. Poletti, (2016), "Designs for life" [Online]. Available: https:// www.domusweb.it/en/ reviews/2016/07/15/ designs_for_life.html [May, 2021]

39 M. Mainieri, (2011), "Intervista al prof. Ezio Manzini" [Online]. Available: https://collaboriamo.org/intervista-al-prof-ezio-manzini/ [May, 2021]

40 MadeTV, (2015), "Ezio Manzini - Design, When Everybody Designs" [Online]. Available: https:// www.youtube.com/ watch?v=Ap-vE53Cd-Fl&ab_channel=MedeaTV [May, 2021]

CONCLUSION

temporarily, open source - and change this atmosphere of division that characterise the area, allowing accessibility to past, present and future users around the entire area. The tools I have, as a designer, can help me to provoke a change.

Manuals, events, placed objects are possibilities within a bigger aim of claiming the in-between spaces.

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