

re-appropriation

2010

workshop

architecture

international

milano

mia w



## **re-appropriation**

is the cultural process by which a group reclaims re-appropriates terms artefacts or public spaces that were previously used in a way disparaging of that group. The term re-appropriation can also extend to counter hegemonic re-purposing, such as citizens with no formal authority seizing unused public or private land for community use. The term re-appropriation is an extension of the term appropriation: a deliberate act of acquisition of something, often without the permission of the owner.

(source: wikipedia.org)

The erasure from the collective memory of the image, presence and vitality of an urban space is a painful act. Reasons for such dissolutions are multiple: ideology, alteration, progress and, in general, change.

Architects artists and policy makers have the mission to properly question this erasure. They can develop the capacity to turn this erasure into a powerful source of creativity. Over the time, the way of cities development made appealing zones to slide on the surface of human settlements.

A prosperous and attractive place in a distinct time started to loose glamour, got shabby and had been forgotten. Old factories have been swallowed by the city in its impetuous development, squares and promenades turned into places occupied exclusively by cars, other public places, urban or outside the city domain, not even found other values becoming simply forgotten spaces, terrains vague.

The urban and metropolitan landscape is no longer defined as "secure and stable place of contemplation, but presents itself as a mobile device and continually altered". Looking at our cities is possible to see weak but constant upheavals that tend to make explicit and visible forms of resistance and other urban activities. Of such practices is historically possible to identify a cultural model in the initial appropriation of public spaces of the Parisian flâneur and his walks through the labyrinthine passage, which converted the streets into intérieur, and in the Situationist International drifts which used maps and topography of the transitional spaces, not just to "fix" the territory, but to change it radically, transforming the essential structures such as architecture and city planning basing on the subjective perceptual experience. In the contemporary age, the city is increasingly seen as an experiential field and these processes have become more mature and culturally aware, and sensitive as well as to read, interpret and implement the system of opportunities offered from the urban context, taking both meta-design actions, aimed at the recognition of the value and potential of public spaces, through a descriptive approach in reading, decoding and context providing of opportunity, and more properly planning actions aimed at activating these spaces: in this sense, dismissed space and abandoned places, unused areas, from being "swamped places" outside the official maps, become

the paradigmatic example of urban spaces to be filled with meaning, value and shape; become the opportunities for creative re-signification and re-appropriation of the city. These occupation, re-appropriation and activation actions often tend to draw in the urban fabric a "minor geography" capable of giving visibility and responses to the needs and forgotten desires of an "insurgent" city looking for structures.

Participants to MIAW workshop are invited to identify spaces that in Milan either have an unexpressed potentiality either lost their characteristics, importance for the community and have been, for several reasons, marginalized and excluded from the everyday life. From the smallest corner in the urban fabric to the large areas on the city margin, from the closest site of Piazza Leonardo da Vinci to the Milanese Hinterland, the Workshop wishes to illustrate possible scenarios of re-appropriation capable to revitalize the dormant identified places. In a 21st Century that is overwhelmed by image, information and dynamism, it is particularly important for architects and policy makers to assume the special role of the creative recovery of forgotten spaces.



ws01

sami rintala

**business time  
or reappropriation  
of real value**

Sami Rintala, architect and an artist, founder of Rintala Eggertsson Architects (Oslo), his work is based on narrative and conceptualism. Resulting work is a layered interpretation of the physical, mental and poetic resources of the site: Sixty Minute Man (Venice Biennale 2000), Land[e]scape (1999).

The concept is to discuss and criticize the western capitalist winning philosophy of measuring all human activity in economic value, and in this way leaving many interesting and meaningful ideas unused/unstudied as they do not possess the seemingly necessary idea of short-term gain or maximum productivity. Our cities have become a no man's land of nonpersonal corporate buildings, sterile commercial spaces and oversized traffic systems; something to pass by or to consume. We live in a series of spaces of no special interest, a non-place. It is time to reclaim the human environment from the uncivilized hordes of money-makers. We need a good business plan.

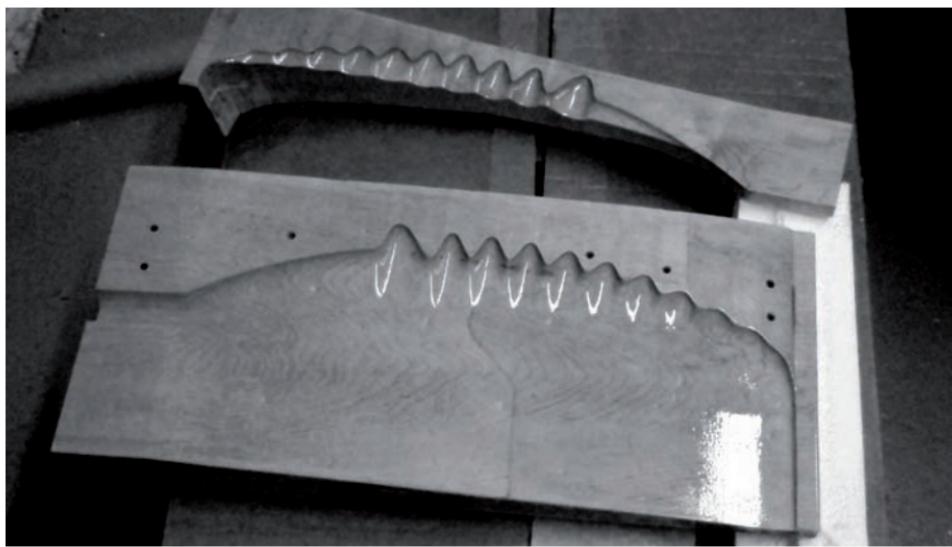
1.Day

We try to find the best 'business idea' for a specific site in the university area. We will create a 'business plan' that is rooted on other deeper and more real human needs, and to make a small 'gas station' or 'shopping mall' or 'kiosk' for selling these values, for everyone's gain. A good business needs a logo, a name and market strategy as well, so these will be exploited.

2.Day - 5.Day

Construction of the space/ building, opening 2.10. where the 'business' starts running and selling the 'products' for passers-by. The idea is of course to expand the business on other countries, continents and finally other planets.

The workshop is based on Dalai Lama's statement: 'The Western Civilization has done the greatest input to our smallest needs.'



ws02

john nastasi

#### **custom variable components**

John Nastasi is the Founding Director of the multi-disciplinary Product-Architecture Lab at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken. Recipient of Harvard's Rice Prize for advancement in Architecture and Engineering and visiting professor at the GSD where he teaches digital design and fabrication.

The workshop will be focused on development of custom variable building components. Using a reference surface as a point of departure, students will define a skeleton framing system with a multiple series of constructive elements, designed and developed during the week. The work will progress from wireframe geometry to the definition of a robust parametric structure and ultimately to the detailed development of a parametric building component. Potential instantiation of the component across the system will be discussed. The components and the structure will be developed using parametric modeling methods starting with points, lines and planes and ultimately arriving at automation methods such as user features and the Catia based Power Copy. Scale models will be constructed using laser cutting technology while further development will result in the development of 1:1 components utilizing direct 3D printing technology. In parallel to design development, several case studies will be shown to introduce projects and prototypes of advanced fabrication technologies and technological transfer from other industries

to architecture using examples from Milan region. The aim of the workshop is to develop a direct connection between rule-based digital design (computation) and materiality (fabrication). This will ultimately lead to a fusion between geometry, craft and understanding of space that will recall in the contemporary context the quality of production achieved by the tradition of Italian design culture.



ws03  
alexander römer  
**the constructLab**

Alexander Römer has started the idea of ConstructLab due to the professional background as carpenter, journeyman and architect. He is involved in collective EXYZT's projects: Southwark Lido (London), City Eco Lab (Saint Etienne Design Biennale 2008), Metavilla (Venice Biennale of Architecture 2006).

The constructLab is in situ. It is a collaborative construction practice established with the students during the MiaW. Unlike the conventional architectural process in which the architect designs and the builder builds, in constructLab we bring together conception and construction: the designer builds, and continues to design on site. The construction site is no longer the place of uncertainty where the design contends with reality, but the context in which the project can be enriched by the unexpected opportunities that occur on site. For this constructLab at MiaW we'll collaborate with Esterni from Milano, during the Milano Film Festival we propose the students to participate on the setting-up of the festival as a "learning by doing" option. The idea behind constructLab's practice is also to rediscover a constructive intelligence in materials themselves, to design at the same time as we handle the material. It is not about technical prowess but rather finding a common sense approach whose building techniques can be appropriated and used by everyone. ConstructLab is more about the approach to, rather

than the method of, building. ConstructLab's work integrates environmental awareness from conception to realisation. Projects includes recycled materials and are designed and built with future re-use of the raw materials in mind. We re-use materials employed for the Milano Film Festival in order to elaborate and experience 1/1 scale "indoor shelters" for Esterni. This shelters will be moved to Esterni Headquarter and host artists in residency or nomadic collaborators of Esterni during their stay in Milano.



ws04

silja tillner

**re-connecting  
individual pieces  
of the fragmented  
city fabric**

Silja Tillner studied Architecture at the TU Wien and Urban Design at UCLA Los Angeles. Since 1995 she runs her own office in Vienna partnership with Alfred Willinger. Among her recent projects in Vienna: 'Urbion', the redevelopment of the Gürtel area and the 'Skyline Spittelau' Office building. Website: [www.tw-arch.at](http://www.tw-arch.at)

The situation: a neighborhood where the urban pattern has been separated by infrastructure (railways, highway, river,...) and has suffered as a consequence. Deterioration of buildings and open spaces as well as an abundance of left-over spaces in the vicinity of the dividing line are usually the visible results of these inner-city borders. Usually, these infrastructural elements are bordered by a buffer zone that even widens the interstice. Vacancies in adjacent buildings and low-value uses have come to reflect the problems of the area. The task: to question the purpose of the infrastructure to date, possibly realigning or abandoning it, then re-connecting the separated urban fabric. The goal is the re-appropriation of left-over spaces along the infrastructure and their re-programming and redesign, thereby allocating possible sites for buildings, open spaces, parks and connecting elements. Design solutions for these areas shall be developed. Research on comparable international situations: Madrid Rio, Glendale Freeway, L.A. River, High Line in New York, Big Dig in Boston, Vienna Gürtel, IBA-Stadtumbau 2010... Strategy: An intense site analysis

preceding the actual planning and urban design: the workshop begins with observation and research of the site.

Build on strengths: Identification of existing strengths, so that a concept for new and appropriate uses shall be developed accordingly. Based on the use concept and depending on the size of the actual sites a building typology and scale will be defined. Open spaces are a design element of their own and accompany the building sites.

Development of design ideas and image transformation: a story shall be told that identifies the unique and special character of the area.



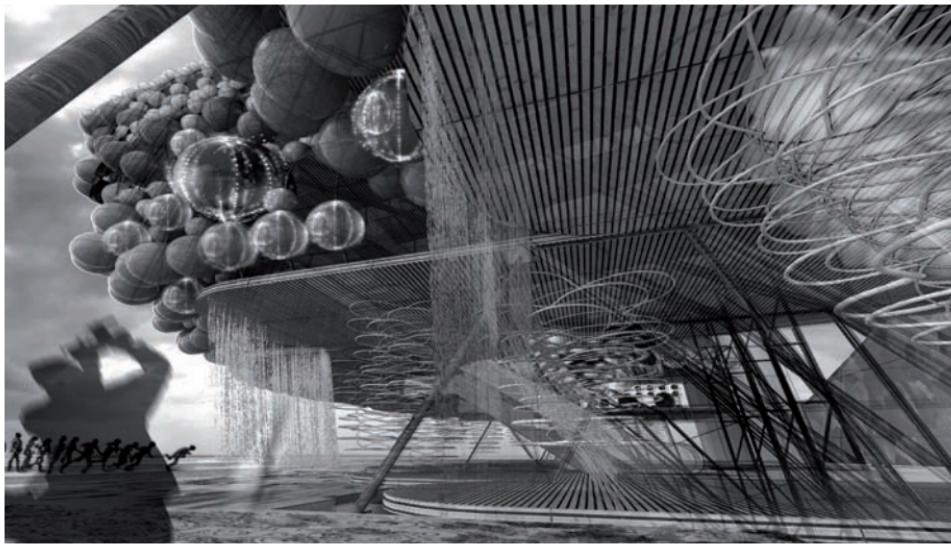
## ws05 enric massip-bosch

### urban reappropriation guidelines for a workshop

Enric Massip-Bosch  
Barcelona, 1960. Associate  
Professor, Architecture  
Design Department D UPC.  
Guest Professor in Barcelona,  
Madrid, Amsterdam, Venice,  
Bucharest and Tokyo.  
Established EMBA\_Estudi  
Massip-Bosch Arquitectes  
in 1990, with which he has  
developed projects and won  
competitions in several  
countries in Europe and Asia.

The progressive urbanization of societies around the world runs parallel to another critical phenomenon: the progressive privatization of public space. This phenomenon is not linked to any specific social situation and affects all sorts of political structures: from Arab countries where land is originally held by an elite, through Chinese cities where in theory all land belongs to the people. Even European democracies suffer the increasing influence of the market on spatial planning which, together with a common social disaffection from politics and civic life, prepare a fertile ground for private interests to push forward and shape our cities uncontestedly. But architecture has to have a say and fight for the common good. How can a week-long seminar address such deep issues? We start from the need to restate the importance of creating an open-standard city for everybody by orientating our work towards urban reappropriation strategies. And we propose a bold approach in which we feel confident enough in this partis-pris to use 100% traditional architectural instruments such as intuitive prognosis, anecdotal evidence-gathering and sixth-sense

intelligence in order to produce a non-rationalized proposal to metabolize segregated, privatized areas of Milano into the larger body of the public sphere.



## ws06 izaskun chinchilla

### **an abstract for a philosophy doctorate acknowledgements**

Izaskun Chinchilla, Studio Professor in the University of Alicante (2002 to 2007), in Madrid University and in Barcelona. She claims for strong professional compromise towards social circumstances and innovation. She took part in 8th and 10th Biennale di Venezia, V Bienal de Arquitectura (Sao Paulo).

The belief that scientific and humanistic subjects can be separated into clearly different and detached areas of knowledge makes no sense any more. Links and connections spontaneously join distant disciplines. The architectural project demands a dominating panoptic position above all over groups of information. Population statistics, sociology data, cultural information, meteorological and geographical conditions, urban context, territorial claims, economical management, technological arrangement or aesthetic coherence must be simultaneously taken into account. Multidisciplinary work has become a kind of compulsory practice for those concerned with contemporary and future directions of architecture. Environmental concerns renewable energy, passive means usage and new technical requirements now become essential agents for architecture. Architecture no longer consists simply in making buildings. We no longer trust in abstract objects whose existence does not require a site. Ecological consciousness involved in the appearance of technical attitudes is generated as a social pulse.

Landscape concerns, ecological solutions, demand of material efficiency, arise as a political program.



ws07

anouk vogel

**the re-appreciation  
of subtle beauty**

Anouk Vogel was born in Geneva, Switzerland. She studied landscape architecture at the Metropolitan University of Manchester. She has been living in different countries and has worked for West 8, Bureau B+B, and Petra Blaisse. In 2007 she founded her own practice for landscape architecture and design in Amsterdam

Through carefully considered architectonic interventions in the landscape or in the city Anouk Vogel is searching for sustainable answers to questions related to a continuously changing perception of the public domain. The interventions are often poetic in nature and can be either temporary or permanent. Through small or large scale interventions the potential of existing qualities in a given context is explored and given a new meaning. The power of natural processes is combined with authentic design solutions in order to trigger change in the use and the experience of a place. The re-appreciation of subtle beauty, excellence in craftsmanship, and the sensual understanding of a location represent key factors in Anouk Vogel's work. The forces of complementary disciplines are joined to enlarge the designer's vision where multi-layered ideas simultaneously form large gestures.



ws08

adam kurdahl

### **appropriating milan milan appropriated**

Adam Kurdahl is partner in Space Group Architects. Space Group Architects is an international Norwegian practice working in large scale urban planning, urbanism and large projects in the public realm. Adam Kurdahl and Space Group has won numerous prizes for their work, among others first prize in Archiprix International. Prior to Space Group Adam Kurdahl worked with OMA, Rotterdam.

Milan is an anomaly among Italian cities. Milan doesn't suffer under the clichés of the archetypical picturesque Italian city. Milan is the one city in Italy, which not burden with its historical past, has managed to rethink itself. It has since the rebuilding been the engine of Italy for good and bad.

1 million people live in Comune di Milano, 7 million people around the city; Milan reveals for us the collapse of the European centric city model. It has become inherently unsustainable. Originally as a statement of its strength within art and design Milan has become known for its fairs and venues. Commerce has turned the city from a producer of ideas to an importer and display of ideas. The furniture's are no longer designed in Milan, its star architects are imported ("New International Style"), the new peers in fashion are educated in London. We no longer travel to Milan, we travel to its fairs. Milan is ripe for a second rebirth.

In pure opposition to the modernist radicals, architects and planners have decided for complete preservation of our historic (European) cities. Italy is at the forefront, involuntary turning her cities into vernacular

[retail driven] theme parks. Architects obsession with representation through building production has forced us out. We are mindlessly exporting ideology deprived projects to distant deserts.

Dare we look critical at the current reading and functioning of our own city centers? Dare we imagine an Architect that doesn't practice through production but through erasure?

program

monday 27.09

- 09.15 opening and wellcoming (aula Rogers)
- 10.15 keynote Speaker
- 11.15 coffe break
- 12.00 starting of the Workshop
- 14.00 / 15.30 lectures by  
Sami Rintala  
and John Nastasi (aula Gamma)
- 20.30 school closing

tuesday 28.09

- 09.15 / 20.30 workshop
- 14.00 / 15.30 lectures by  
Alexander Römer  
and Silja Tillner (aula Gamma)
- 20.30 school closing

wednesday 29.09

- 09.15 / 20.30 workshop
- 14.00 / 15.30 lectures by  
Enric Massip-Bosch  
and Izaskun Chinchilla (aula Gamma)
- 20.30 school closing

thursday 30.09

- 09.15 / 20.30 workshop
- 14.00 / 15.30 lectures by  
Anouk Vogel  
and Adam Kurdahl (aula Gamma)
- 20.30 school closing

program

friday 01.10

9.15-13.30 workshop

14.30-20.30 arranging group-work exhibition (spazio mostre)

20.30 school closing

saturday 02.10

09.15 workshop presentations (aula Rogers)

14.30 lunch break and exhibition opening  
'MIAW2010: re-appropriation' (spazio mostre)

16.00 closing remarks (aula Gamma)

aula r1 ws01 Sami Rintala

aula q1 ws02 John Nastasi

aula q1 ws03 Alexander Römer

aula u1 ws04 Silja Tillner

aula j1 ws05 Enric Massip-Bosch

aula IIIa ws06 Izaskun Chinchilla

aula IIIc ws07 Anouk Vogel

aula IIIa ws08 Adam Kurdahl

curated by

massimo bricocoli

antonella bruzzese

fabrizio leoni

ingrid paoletti

matteo poli

gennaro postiglione

luigi spinelli

andrea tartaglia

matteo aimini

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[www.miawblog.wordpress.com](http://www.miawblog.wordpress.com)

from 27.09.2010  
to 02.10.2010  
school of architecture  
and society politecnico  
di milano

the 'milano international  
architecture workshop' 2010  
is the first edition of  
a teaching programme  
that will take place every  
year at the school of architecture  
and society, politecnico di milano.  
Miaw aims are to stimulate  
cross-over thinking and  
researches in the design  
field and to stimulate students  
to achieve an interdisciplinary  
approach towards design  
problems. Miaw provides  
an international forum  
for schools, teachers and  
students exchange, but  
is also an informal platform  
to discuss the issues  
and share the ambitions  
that education implies.  
The overall theme of  
Miaw 2010 is 're-appropriation'.

ws01 sami rintala  
ws02 john nastasi  
ws03 alexander roemer  
ws04 silja tillner  
ws05 enric massip-bosch  
ws06 izaskun chinchilla moreno  
ws07 anouk vogel  
ws08 adam kurdhal