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The False Problem of Urbane Design

Fredrik Torisson

Abstract
Urbane design concerns itself with promoting the *qualities* associated with the urban – dynamism, transversal networks, etc. – in places where these do not (yet) exist. Urbane design can be considered a neoliberal off-shoot of 'urban curating' and other contemporary forms of extending architectural practice into the social realm. The urbane designer is the creative manager of the creative city, whose specific task is *animating* or *activating* urban space.
Arguing that architectural theory needs to interrogate urbane design beyond the traditional confines of architectural theory, this article addresses three different aspects of urbane design in relation to the mixed-use flagship development *Studio* in Malmö, Sweden. This article makes the case that urbane design plays an important part of neoliberalism's attempt to portray itself as spontaneous, un-hierarchical and 'natural' and calls for a return to the underlying problems rather than focusing solely on their solutions. It is argued that this is a central task for a critical architectural theory at present.

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Introduction

Slick, curvaceous, and decidedly an aspirational budding landmark, the hulk that is *Studio* occupies a stretch of waterfront in what was formerly a heavily industrialised district of Malmö. Formally, Studio's appearance resembles a physical manifestation of the city of flows; this is manifested in what can – rather oxymoronically – be described as aerodynamic brickwork. Studio constitutes part of the latest round of resurrections in a city struggling to adapt to the hegemony of post-industrial capitalism. It is a development that nervously alludes to the canon of post-industrial port-scapes in cities across the western world that have been regenerated for the benefit of an elusive creative class.

Studio's location is auspicious and effectively blocks the views from a previous incarnation of the creative city – the university library, which had until recently enjoyed splendid harbour vistas – and replacing them with a tower where the sky bar is the prime viewing platform in what must be considered a symbolically loaded gesture on some level. This latest round of transition still largely follows the by now rather dated recipes of Richard Florida (Florida, 2002), going to great lengths to portray Malmö as Sweden's creative city *par excellence*; it should be noted that it is not entirely without success.

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The building itself consists of a five-storey podium from which the tower rises a further nine storeys. The façade curves and undulates, disclosing, it would seem, a few of the conceptual aspects of the project in its physical manifestation. The external walls fold in on themselves and turn the building inside out, enclosing the exterior into the interior and vice versa, perhaps symbolically eliminating the role of the building envelope as a divider between an outside and an inside.

The programme of the building is deliberately complicated. The ground floor is public, containing a series of services and restaurants, as well as an atrium whose central focal point is the bleacher-style seating that has become a compulsory component of any creative space, and a multifunctional 'black box' space with a separate entrance. The first floor contains meeting-rooms that are rented out by the hour by the agency Altitude Meetings (who also animate the

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ground floor). The eight floors above this level host a variety of offices, rented on short- or long-term basis. Studio is particularly noteworthy as the soon-to-be inaugurated office of the national architect (*riksarkitekt*) will be located here. The national architect's formal employer, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, is situated some three hours away in the decidedly less chic Karlskrona, a town most famous as the location of Sweden's foremost navy base. Studio's topmost floors contain Story Hotel, a boutique hotel crowned by the sky bar.

Studio should be considered simultaneously as a building and a concept (in the marketing-world's usage of the word). The building was designed by the Danish architectural studio *Schmidt Hammer Lassen*, while the conceptual aspects – covered by the concept of urbane design developed below – were established by the developer *Skanska*, a formerly local contractor and developer that has evolved into an international corporate behemoth over the last half-century.

This article is organised in seven sections, including this introduction, which constitutes the first part. The second part sets out to contextualise the idea of the 'social turn' in architecture, and how the social turn redefines the role of the architect. Furthermore, it opens up the question of the effects of the social turn on architecture in a neoliberal context. The third part introduces the concept of 'urbane design', a concept developed to analyse the practices of architecture in the neoliberal context of the social turn, these practices are the focus of the remainder of the article.

The fourth part discusses *anticipation production*: the manufacturing of fans, subjectivities and community who eagerly await and promote the coming development.[1] The focus here will be on the marketing manager, or 'concept owner' of Studio, employed by the developer, Skanska, and the campaign before and during construction to firmly establish the concept of Studio in the minds of its future users, and to form a community of like-minded people who identify as part of the Studio network and who promote the development.

The fifth part discusses the establishment of a private/public network dubbed 'The Line', a quango-like network organisation that drives development in the immediate context of Studio. The essay will discuss

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1 - I have previously written on the theme of anticipation production in architecture in collaboration, see (Runting, Torisson, 2017; 2018).

Architectural theory has traditionally focused on the object of architecture, its production, and its representation, but over the last decade it has begun to make headway into what could be considered a parallel development to what art critic Claire Bishop called 'the social turn' in the art world.

Studio as one part of a larger development on an urban scale, where brand strategists promote the larger urban development project in a multi-pronged approach to define a playbook for how to build for the creative class. This ambition dovetails neatly with the municipal planning department's attempt to develop the brand of Malmö through the invention of the so-called '4th urban environment'; Swedish urban theorist Carina Listerborn has dubbed this a 'flagship concept' (Listerborn, 2017).
The sixth part focuses on analysing the day-to-day management of the private/public areas of Studio, where the event consultant Altitude Meetings organises i.a. public debates on social issues.
In the seventh and final part, I will broaden the analysis of Studio to encompass the wider context of Malmö and set out to discuss the overall implications of urbane design and the analysis of the above aspects. The focus is on how the curation of the life within Studio precludes all other social organisations and solutions than the neoliberal logic governing Studio, and how this logic is perhaps even more problematic as a doxa governing the future of Malmö.

Architecture in the Social Turn
Architectural theory has traditionally focused on the object of architecture, its production, and its representation, but over the last decade it has begun to make headway into what could be considered a parallel development to what art critic Claire Bishop called 'the social turn' in the art world (Bishop, 2012), which will be developed below. The focus is on practice rather than theory, and this practice is habitually oriented in opposition to institutions that are perceived as oppressive. Planning as an institution is oftentimes portrayed as heavy-handed and oppressive by practitioners in this social turn. The Berlin-based architecture and art collective Raumlabor, for instance, state that their projects 'set an ephemeral, soft, playful, flexible, mutant, eventful idea of space against an existing social and spatial ueber-determinacy' (Raumlabor, 2008: 3), or, in the case of the Paris-based *atelier d'architecture autogerée*: 'Issuing from an idea of "direct democracy" rather than "representative democracy", this transformation affects both places and people, who start to change their roles from mere users to citi-

zens, from mere residents to interventionist residents' (Petrescu, 2005: 50).

The social turn in architecture can be perceived as a shift of focus from the architectural object (i.e., the building) onto the social system generated through a participatory design process. Although they do not use the term, Awan, Schneider and Till have succinctly summed up the approach, writing that there is a need for a wider definition of architecture, where '[b]uildings and spaces are treated as part of a dynamic context of networks. The standard tools of aesthetics and making are insufficient to negotiate these networks on their own' (Awan et al., 2011: 27-28). Precisely these networks are the focus of this essay, to an extent at the expense of the architectural object, the building. My focus here however is not on 'agency', but on how the social practices play out in the context of a neoliberal project centring on the Studio development in Malmö. My aim here is not to lambast the practices and theories of the aforementioned theorists and practitioners; I merely want to suggest that the social turn is *not unequivocally* a resistance to the powers that be, and that appropriation and socially oriented design practices also contain a neoliberal impetus. This text is, in this sense, an attempt at widening the discourse of architecture in the social turn, trying to understand the implications of a social turn in a different context.

The Studio building itself should be understood here as a means to an end rather than the end in itself; it forms part of several networks that aim to develop communities – and subjectivity – that are highly instrumental in the production of a spirit of the creative city. Such practices are commonplace, and usually considered to fall outside of the domain of architecture and architectural theory. I argue that the social turn in architecture makes the analysis of such practices as the flipside of critical spatial practices an urgent task.

Introducing Urbane Design

Urban design concerns itself with the design of streets and squares managing the flows of the city, whilst what I call 'urbane design'[2] here concerns generating the *semblance* of an urban condition, generating the flows of a city in places where the coveted urban melt-

2 - The term 'urbane' is usually taken to denote a certain sophistication and metropolitan-ness, and these qualities are precisely what urbane design is attempting to translate into spatial production. The term 'urbane design' does not appear to be widely used.

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ing pot of synergies and exciting encounters does not yet exist. In short, urbane design is about the *quality* of the urban rather than the material condition. Urbane design in this sense is, as the word indicates, only marginally different from urban design, but the extra '-e' is not insignificant. Whereas urban refers to a situation, a material condition, of the city, urbane is a quality characteristic of the city. Urbane design concerns itself with the production of this quality that *resembles* an urban situation rather than actually being *similar* to it. Urbane design is, consequently, engaged in the production of the 'urbanesque'[3] rather than the urban, although the distinction is not clear-cut in any way, as the aim is for the urbane to develop into the urban.

What are, then, these urbanesque qualities that what I call urbane design seeks to emulate? The short answer is: the celebrated qualities that Richard Florida assured planners would attract the elusive creative class. In many ways, the creative class can be considered a zombie discourse, a debunked and refuted theory that continues to lumber onwards. The stupendously successful reception of Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) in planning departments around the world, in spite of the sustained criticism of Florida's ideas by a broad range of academics (Peck, 2005; Sager, 2011), has left planners with a problem. While *The Rise of the Creative Class* provides a manifesto-like description of what the exalted creative class are drawn to, it provides no manual for how to develop these conditions. Florida's work is not a design manual as such, and thus the aspirational city that seeks to re-launch itself as a post-Fordist pamperer of the creatives needs to generate the conditions, and also produce the creative class itself, and this requires the development of a strategy. This is where urbane design enters the picture. Urbane design, however, goes beyond the mere support or nurturing of culture: it actively designs it, curates the connections rather than enabling them. Urbane design straddles place-marketing, urban design, architecture, anticipation production, and a range of other activities.

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3 - Urbanesque has previously been used to denote a not-quite urban setting where '"urban" thinking or mindsets have supplanted more traditional rural lifestyles' (Hegner & Jan Margry, 2016). Here, I use the term somewhat differently to denote urban qualities without the undesirable aspects of this; in other words, a space consciously designed to resemble the urban, but without the risks associated with the urban.

domains traditionally associated with planning and architecture. Instead, it sets out to enable the formation of a community corresponding to the perceived demands of the creative class. Depending on how one views the architect (as a craftsperson, a scientist, or now, a curator) the task of the architect differs somewhat. Urbane design could readily be considered a 'spatial practice' that is entirely in line with what the Bishop called 'the social turn' in art (Bishop, 2012), here on the scale of the urban(e). One issue needs to be resolved right away: the art that Bishop associates with the social turn orients itself in opposition to neoliberalism, whereas the practices here discussed are decidedly neoliberal; is there a difference? Bishop suggests that the social turn emerged in part from New Labour's policies that sought to instrumentalise art in the service of society (Bishop, 2012: 13). The effect of the social turn, Bishop notes, is a conflation between art and creativity, which proponents of the social turn claim open up the artistic practices to more people. A similar problem exists in architecture, where the architect becomes an 'urban curator' whose practice architectural theorist Meike Schalk has neatly summarised, writing that the 'role of the architect has shifted from the creator of objects to the mediator between actors, forces, processes and narratives' (Schalk, 2007: 159). What I call urbane design here is the neoliberal flipside of the social turn in architecture; it uses the same tools to neoliberal ends. Bishop calls for artists to discuss what it means to do participatory artistic projects *as art*, and the corresponding question could be posed to the architect. What is interesting in the case that I will discuss in this text is that it is not the architect who is the curator or social relations. This role is taken by other disciplinary entities, brand developers, developers, event consultants and so forth, and thus would arguably fall outside of the scope of architectural theory. Here, I argue to the contrary, that if we take the social turn in architecture seriously, urbane design most certainly and urgently needs to be discussed *as architecture*. Architectural theory needs to understand and address the practices and forces at work, as well as their effects. Furthermore, doing so requires that we do not focus exclusively on the spatial practices of those architects who work with the social, but also how similar approaches

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are employed to instrumental ends in the deliverance of the creative city.

Another issue that needs to be addressed at this point is the production of subjectivity that is an effect of urbane design. One hypothesis that the essay will explore is that urbane design is not solely about attracting the creative class, but about *manufacturing* it in places where it is not-yet. The Italian architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri, following the philosopher Massimo Cacciari, argued that the capitalist metropolis at the turn of the 20th century not only served the interests of the Bourgeoisie, but also produced a blasé subjectivity, a consumer who accepted the visual shock therapy of the metropolis submissively and without questions, too distracted to understand its effects (Tafuri, 1976; Cacciari, 1993). This line of thinking could be discussed in relation to Foucauldian 'discipline', and, in a contemporary context, picked up by the philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato in relation to a society of control (Lazzarato, 2006).[4] It is not far-fetched to consider urbane design a manifestation of a neoliberal production of subjectivity, privileging *connections* as simultaneously means and ends.

Studio

The careful fabrication of Studio's conceptual presence commenced long before the building was constructed. Skanska is in this case both the developer and the manager of the completed Studio building.[5] Early on, Skanska appointed a 'concept owner' – Andreas Lundberg – whose role was twofold: first, he developed the brand, and then he managed its sustained success, which in turn depended heavily on the urbane qualities established.

In the case of Studio, the 'concept owner' employed Instagram as a tool in the documentation of the anticipation-production.[6] The content of Studio's account is characterised by a cascade of hipster 'genericana', anxiously curated to project urban cool: Sky bar! Yarn bombing! Black box! Cargo bikes! Table tennis! Baristas! Food trucks! Pop-up-things! Start-up-culture! Industrial chic! etc.[7] Essentially, it reads like a roll call of the last 15 years' worth of pop cultural references. In addition to this, the account happily portrays inspirational images of The Barbican, Battersea Power Station, and Google, as well as featuring covers of

4 - It should be noted that elsewhere, Lazzarato is adamant that the attempt by proponents of 'human capital' to produce a new subjectivity of the entrepreneurial self failed, in part due to the financial crisis of 2007-08, and instead of the entrepreneur, we have indebted precarious workers without the glamour of the creative class. See Lazzarato, 2014: 52-54.

5 - It has since been sold to Kungsleden, another Swedish property manager.

6 - https://www.instagram.com/Studiomalmo/ [December 5, 2015].

7 - This generic quality to building for the creatives has been pointed out a long time ago, by, for instance, Peck, 2005: 749.

magazines like *Wired*, *Monocle* and *Fortune*. Interspersed with these images are photographs of smiling construction workers and engineers of Skanska in bright yellow hardhats giving 'thumbs up' to the camera. Studio is working very hard to tick all boxes of a contemporary work-life culture, which comes over as somewhat contrived, communicated as it were by the corporate giant Skanska. The outcomes of producing fans and anticipation are multiple. Firstly, there is a celebration of the entrepreneurial, the creative (even here where the path it follows is a standard formula), and, in extension, by attracting people to spend their leisure time in connection with what is, for all intents and purposes, an office hotel, serves to effectively blur the distinction between work and leisure. This is one key aspect of the neoliberal approach to labour, to the point where 'work on the self' becomes indistinguishable from labour, as Lazzarato puts it (Lazzarato, 2012: 33). In this case, the work consists of the act of building and maintaining the principal asset of the creative: personal networks.

In the completed building, Lundberg functions in a position that can perhaps best be understood in terms of a *curator of corporations* (my term) as opposed to a manager.[8] In this role, he is organising (or 'caring for', in the title's original meaning) the building's content – i.e. tenants – in order to produce the urbane quality of juxtaposition and unexpected encounters:

> When working in the Studio building, you will encounter and meet people you would never meet in a regular office building. A large multi-functional space serves as a Studio for film/TV recordings, concert venue, art gallery, theatre/show stage. Additionally, Story Hotel guarantees a lively stream of new, interesting people moving around the building.[9]

As it is presented here, it appears that the concept owner or curator picks tenants with consideration to the experience of Studio as an urbane environment, a form of urbane design. Somewhat counterintuitively, this could be regarded as a form of 'creative property management', thus, it can be surmised, adding 'property manager' to the list of creative professionals. While it is unclear from the material whether this is actually the case or standard marketing rhetoric, but there is no mistaking the ambition to create a specif-

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8 - The difference being that the curator is habitually understood as a creative professional, whose job it is to add (artistic) value to the sorting and relating of the works of art (here tenants) on display. The curator is valued for his/her connoisseurship of art, and in this case, corporations. The manager is the person who sees to the practical sides of the arrangement made by the curator, although the difference is certainly unclear at best. The curator here adds creative value, an instrumental form of value that arguably should be distinguished from artistic value.

9 - http://www.studiomalmo.com (under the heading of 'Play') [November 30, 2015, since removed]

10 - My translation.

ic, curated, whole where one encounters 'interesting people' that 'you would never meet in a regular office building'. Studio, the message is, is *different* from all of those 'regular' offices: it is *urbane*. In theory, such curating would invariably imply the exclusion of certain tenants who are judged unworthy, who do not fit with the conceptual alignment, and – again, this is speculation – it would serve to collectively form one vision or version of what the urbane quality is, at the expense of all other perspectives. The additional value on offer in Studio, as compared to other, similar buildings, consists of different and more valuable and unexpected connections. Together, the tenants of Studio allegedly form a highly specific community of entrepreneurs with its own social contract. Lundberg notes that: 'in the modern office, we are letting go of the term "my workplace" in favour of "our workplace", and the individual's freedom to choose the workplace best suited for the moment' (Lundberg, 2014).[10]

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As the concept owner works partially in the background, and as all of those encounters must have the semblance of chance in order to be perceived as unexpected, there is a process of naturalisation whereby the one vision of the city becomes the shared urban concept, and the place ends up an echo chamber where its own logic is repeated *ad absurdum*. Again, the aim is to provide the semblance of the urbane through active curation of the space, its users, and, as will be discussed, its context and ultimately politics; this is one distinction between urban design and urbane design, although the terms are intertwined at this point.

The Line & the 4th Urban Environment

Both as a building and a concept, Studio is a cog in a more extensive urban project to set the post-industrial wheels in motion. This larger project is here discussed from two different aspects. The first is its practical organization and purpose of the quango behind *The Line*, and the second is the municipality of Malmö's urban marketing of the 'flagship concept' (as mentioned above, I have gratefully borrowed this term from Carina Listerborn (2017)) of the '4th urban environment'. The Line is a collaboration between different actors along an imaginary line drawn through the redevelopment neighbourhood of the inner harbour

in Malmö. It is comprised of both municipal actors and corporate actors, as well as state actors such as the public broadcasting network *Sveriges Television* (SVT). Here, I will focus on how the network presents itself, through the publication *The Line Atlas* (in spite of its English title, it is in Swedish), which is sponsored by Skanska. Lundberg is listed in the somewhat unclear role of an 'inspirational profile' alongside the names of the editors. Lundberg has also authored one of the book's prefaces (Riisom, Uesson, 2014). On the municipal website for The Line, the project is introduced thus:

[The Line] is a competitive business environment with cooperation, community and network. The urban environment, the urban life, and the urban spaces are developed in a way supporting operations and working spaces. (Malmö Stad, 2015)[11]

That this is primarily a development for businesses rather than inhabitants is emphasised repeatedly. The appointed 'process leader' for The Line is Helena Uesson, from brand developing agency 'SHUHUU', which presents itself as follows: 'SHUHUU is an innovation studio working internationally with research, user dialogues and campaigns for cities, institutions & private organisations'.[12] In an interview with the local newspaper *Sydsvenskan*, she states: 'This [that The Line is about businesses, not the urban environment] is important to emphasise. The constitutive idea is to gather all the operations[13] based here, and increase cooperation, which will ultimately produce growth' (Stadler, 2014).[14] Furthermore, in the editors' preface of *The Line Atlas*, of which Uesson is one of two editors, a clear intention is expressed to blur any distinction between corporate territory and public territory. The editors write:

The new urban activity, the workplace of the future, will become part of the urban space and vice versa; the urban space will become part of the workplace. The emergence of new urban operations and innovative urban space is a continuous organic process taking place in our cities. (Uesson, 2014: 8)

To a similar effect, Lundberg, in his own preface, notes that:

11 - My translation.

12 - http://www.shuhuu.com [July 5, 2017].

13 - The Swedish term 'verksamheter' is ambivalent; it indicates operations or activities that are of either of public or commercial nature, or both, although it usually refers to commercial operations.

14 - My translation.

The modern work place is a natural extension of urban space. In many cases, work places are designed with urban planning as their point of departure, and 'streets' and 'squares' are incorporated to make navigation and orientation more comprehensible. This is also why it becomes natural to discuss The Line as an operational development project rather than an urban development project. (Lundberg, 2014: 6)

Urbane design is here the activation of this convoluted public/private space for the sake of the corporate interests rather than for the sake of the city, of the public, or anybody else. The corporate interests are here assumed to coincide with the public interest, and while such an assumption may very well be considered, mildly put, problematic, it is by no means uncommon. Interestingly, the urbane qualities of the creative city are pursued on different levels here, including both the community organisation, the design of the material environment, and the workplace in one larger project.

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The envelope and the open spaces inside the building play into the notion of the open, tolerant and creative city where anything could happen. Studio's envelope flips the building inside out, and quite possibly constitutes the material expression of a larger operation of folding space and programme across a largely immaterial space where the (reductive) categories of the urban and the architectural fold into one another, multiplying functions from both sides, seemingly eliminating the distinction provided by the building envelope between inside and outside. The foyer inside the envelope of the Studio building resonates with this urbane arrangement. Its centrepiece is one of the by now ubiquitous 'bleacher-style seating' units; a person entering finds herself on a stage (of sorts), a place where potential spectators may well be eagerly awaiting the new. The space is seemingly democratic, as the visitor figuratively speaking walks right onto the stage and could make her message clear in an ostensibly highly democratic fashion. However, here we have to consider the nature of The Line and the very narrowly defined interests who dominate the immediate context, limiting the almost provocatively declared openness.

This arrangement can be considered an exemplar of what Malmö's planners refer to as the '4th urban

environment'. Interestingly, this concept, developed by the city of Malmö and Per Riisom of Gehl Architects, is itself part of the efforts to attract the elusive auspices of the creative class as a tool for marketing Malmö as a city where new spatial concepts emerge. Carina Listerborn's 'flagship concept' is intended to travel and attract attention as it becomes picked up (Listerborn, 2017). The concept was thus not primarily invented to describe something, but to be effective in a specific way, and it is consequently highly possible that this very text promotes the concept by adding to its renown. As Listerborn points out, the 4th urban environment can readily be considered the neoliberal space par excellence, and is defined in distinction from other urban environments by Per Riisom, director of Nordic City Network (NCN):

> The 1st urban environment is the home, the 2nd urban environment is the workplace, the 3rd urban environment is the traditional urban environment (the public environment) and the 4th urban environment is a transitional environment, one that connects the public and private environments. (Riisom, Beier Sörensen, 2009: 190).[15]

The delineations between Studio, The Line and the city at large are not marked out, but rather multiplying outwards in a way where Studio multiplies into the urban perhaps more than the urban into Studio – the 4th urban environment constitutes the medium that permits this operation to take place, at least according to the marketing material. Studio's approach is actively mirrored by the urban design/planning project, which is a project of the municipal planning office of Malmö, and explored through the association Nordic City Network, which has published extensively on the subject.[16] The relationship between the urban context, The Line, and the components that are situated along the line, including Studio, is perhaps most accurately described as a sequence of spaces folding into each other, almost, just almost, erasing – or rendering invisible – distinctions. This is the point of Malmö's particular tool for building the creative city, the so called 4th urban environment that is an intentional exercise in folding the spaces, turning them inside out and blurring the borders. Drawing heavily on Florida, Landry and others, The Line con-

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15 - It should be noted that the publication referred to here has been updated on the website of NCN, and the version currently available has omitted the English summary to which all quotes of this document refer.

16 - http://www.nordiccitynetwork.com/publications/ [July 4, 2017].

stitutes part of an ambitious attempt at reforming the former industrial centre into a thriving community of the creative class that has yet to arrive in the area. The 4th urban environment is the key space in this. The specifically interesting aspect of the 4th urban environment is that it is conceived as a space of pure relationships:

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This effort is more about encounters and networks between individuals than alterations to the physical urban landscape. The people already using The Line have a knowledge and a potential that can be developed further with a more intimate connection to other activities in the vicinity. Corporations can find inspiration and collaborative possibilities where they perhaps would otherwise not think of looking for it. (Dock, 2013)

In this sense, the conception of the 4th urban environment goes beyond any lingering ideas of the agora – it is a far cry from the empty heart envisioned by Claude Lefort (1988). Instead, it is a space that was never intended to serve civil society, only economy (although the two are easily conflated these days). In this sense, the 4th urban environment is not a passively ordered space where law constitutes the protocol, but an actively ordered one with perpetually shifting protocols of varying intensity. The objective is to produce surplus value according to the logic of the networked economy: building relationships and connections that result in projects and profit. As a space, this 4th urban environment is actively ordered, which here means managed, mimicking curatorial practices from the art world adapted for the purpose of producing relationships and, in extension, subjectivities, that can inhabit these spaces.

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Both Studio and the '4th urban environment' are portrayed, not in managerial terms, but using metaphors from chemistry, bringing back the modern conception of the architect as physicist yet again (Choay, 1997), but here architecture's role is to 'catalyse' the productive relationships of the creative city:

A metaphorical picture of the 4th urban environment could be that of a chemical fusion, in which a new combination of known elements creates elements that have completely new properties and qualities. The 4th urban environment is

exactly such a 'chemical', or rather a social/physical fusion or maybe even a mutation whereby a completely new urban mechanism emerges, with new properties and features. (Riisom, Beier Sörensen, 2009: 192)

In other words, the point is to build new and productive relationships, to enable meetings or encounters, events and other aspects that may ignite the creative spark that is the surplus value of this endeavour. The role of the curator is carefully downplayed; note for instance the metaphors using chemical compounds above, with no mention of the chemist who mixes them, thereby making the process appear natural rather than produced.

The point is to build new and productive relationships, to enable meetings or encounters, events and other aspects that may ignite the creative spark that is the surplus value of this endeavour.

Essentially, this is a managerial approach to spatial production, actively building relations rather than providing a setting for relations to develop. This is a change that the planners see as necessary in the knowledge society: 'The 4th urban environment is driven forward by new requirements in the knowledge society – including the need to build relationships.' (Riisom, Beier Sörensen, 2009: 191). It is clear in the definition that it reads also as a manifesto for Studio and other concept/buildings along the line:

The multi-functional 4th urban environment is qualitatively different. Instead of simple crowding together, it is rather about a three-dimensional, spatial compression of original urban elements. In short, individual building mass and urban environments blend together in a fusion. They pervade each other, thus creating a completely new hybrid form of environment and building, which is both open and closed, public and private, indoors and out, well-defined and non-defined. A form of urban relativity theory in practice. (Riisom, Beier Sörensen, 2009: 191)

Essentially, this is a managerial approach to spatial production, actively building relations rather than providing a setting for relations to develop.

The planners are explicit that this is not a public space: 'The 4th urban environment is therefore not the public environment. On the contrary, it is physically seen as something in between, a transitional environment, a hybrid between the public and the private.' (Ibid.). What is omitted, but what I want to discuss here is the role of the curator: how this environment is activated, and what the wiggle room is here.

17 - http://altitudemeetings.se/samhallsdebatt/ [July 21, 2017]; my translation.

18 - http://fores.se/about-fores/ [July 21, 2017].

19 - My translation.

20 - My translation.

Studio: Lab

In addition to the areas managed by the 'concept owner', Lundberg, there are other spaces in need of animation within Studio itself: the central ground floor space, the public arena that seamlessly blends with the urban fabric of The Line, and the multi-functional 'Black Box'. The public and meeting areas in Studio are managed by the meeting consultancy Altitude Meetings. Altitude Meetings present themselves as a meeting- and event consultant 'driven by a strong urge to change society for the better'.[17] Altitude Meetings provide an infrastructure for meetings and consider themselves politically independent, although their website notes their collaboration with Fores, a liberal-green think tank whose name is an acronym of 'Forum for Reforms, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability'.[18]

Altitude Meetings have two roles in Studio: they manage the conference facilities, and they animate the space on the ground floor; in connection with this, they have formed the 'problem-formulation-laboratory',[19] Studio: Lab. This is a laboratory with the purpose of providing a forum for unprejudiced public debate on social issues. Altitude Meetings argues that while Studio: Lab may be analogous to a think tank, it is essentially different. In an interview, also in the local newspaper, one of the heads of Altitude Meetings, Andreas Mildner, explains the difference:

> We do not promote the answers, but instead focus on what the problems are that need to be resolved, which permits us to act in an apolitical way. It reminds me of journalistic approach: what precisely is the problem that we need to discuss? (Mildner in Gillberg, 2016)[20]

The claim here is that the questions are apolitical, it is the answers that are political, which is problematic on several different levels.

First, as French philosopher Gilles Deleuze argued, drawing on Henri Bergson – any problem gets the solution it deserves. In this sense, it is the *problem* that is political, rather than the *solution*. Deleuze reminds us:

> [I]t is the solution that counts, but the problem always has the solution it deserves, in terms of the way in which it is stated (i.e., the conditions under which it is determined as

problem), and of the means and terms at our disposal for stating it. In this sense, the history of man, from the theoretical as much as from the practical point of view is that of the construction of problems. It is here that humanity makes its own history, and the becoming conscious of that activity is like the conquest of freedom. (Deleuze, 1991: 16)

From the perspective of Studio: Lab, the question is in itself considered apolitical, which in turn is a statement that evidences what Spencer refers to, drawing from Dardot and Laval, as neoliberalism's 'truth game'; the transformation of the starting points for thought and problematizing (Spencer, 2016: 2-3). In the case of Studio: Lab, this is further exacerbated by the very consciously narrowed down and instrumentalized place in service of the creatives. Ultimately, as Claire Bishop discussed in relation to Rikrit Tiravanija's work *Pad Thai*, those who feel compelled to attend the session will in effect be those who already belong to the same class, in spite of the event ostensibly being open to all (Bishop, 2004). This is one of the central tenets of urbane design; it is not about borders but intensity, a demarcation of territory that is imperceptible to those on the inside.
The result is a homogenisation that is exclusive of all those who do not belong to the creative class, thus creating an echo chamber for the elitist consumers of this class without input or dissensus. Jamie Peck notes in his critique of Florida that the creative city is 'about nurturing and rewarding creativity, not compensating the creative have-nots' (Peck, 2005: 762). In this sense, the social discussions of Studio: Lab become an educational forum, establishing the 'real' problems, and, implicitly, how to solve those problems. As those in attendance will most likely belong to the same societal group (creative professionals), the solution is not given, but it is presumed that the question is.

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The Wider Context of Urbane Design
We could discuss the three practices outlined above as the definitional work of the group, the space, and the discourse for the urbane project aimed at animating the project in a highly specific way. The urbane designers – the agents of animation – play several roles in different practices. In this sense, urbane designers come across as figures of a certain authority in one

practice, and simultaneously present themselves as concerned participants of the community, lending their activity a certain democratic legitimacy and promoting the notion of self-organisation and spontaneous urban qualities in others. In effect, the spaces are continuously curated; there is a structured team of urbane designers behind it all, *éminences grises* who manage the urbane. Neoliberalism has been characterised as an 'ideology without ideology' (Spencer, 2016), which is part of its 'truth game'. Here, this comes across through various interwoven territories of animation that provide the semblance of the urban, the urbane qualities sought after in the creative city.
The reading I have provided here would fall outside of architectural theory, yet I want to repeat that if we take the 'social turn' in architecture seriously, we need to soberly analyse how organisation of social space is also instrumentalized to neoliberal ends. Yet, it is difficult to delineate such a theoretical approach; architectural theory has been focusing either on the architectural object, its representation, or the work of the architect herself. In the situation discussed here, the architectural objects are considered instrumental in urbane design, and none of the agents of animation are architects; there is thus very little provided in the way of a foothold for architectural theory. An analysis of the Studio building, its drawings or critical reception would provide very few insights into the broader picture, and a focus on the architects' work here would presumably leave us discussing the role of the architect (which here appears to be as an 'expert' rather than a 'manager' or 'curator').
To me, this is essentially the crux; in the newspaper articles, in architecture journals, and in other media, this is, with few exceptions, invariably addressed in a celebratory fashion, affirming the 'spin' of the narrative promoted by the dynamic city of Malmö and its entrepreneurial spirit. When this narrative clashes with other, darker, narratives of Malmö – e.g. Malmö is a city with rapidly growing inequality and the highest levels of child poverty in Sweden[21] – the 'natural' response is to extend the practices of urbane design to the impoverished areas, thus purportedly helping the inhabitants, as Jamie Peck illustratively puts it, 'to pull themselves up by their creative bootstraps' (Peck, 2005: 757).

Urbane designers come across as figures of a certain authority in one practice, and simultaneously present themselves as concerned participants of the community, lending their activity a certain democratic legitimacy and promoting the notion of self-organisation and spontaneous urban qualities in others.

21 - See https://www.raddabarnen.se/Documents/vad-vi-gor/Barnfattigdom/barnfattigdom-i-malmo-till-agg-till-arsrapport-2015.pdf [July 22, 2017].

There is a plethora of problematic aspects to this. Here, at the end, I will briefly discuss two aspects of what the practices of urbane design mean when they are exported as the solution to other parts of Malmö. Firstly, as Peck reminds us, the theories of the creative class are actively 'unthinking' the not-creatives. In requiring cities to exert themselves and focus their attention on the well-being of the creative class, the whole point is to focus on what is perceived as positives; the success of the creative class is the whole point of the discourse, thus rendering everybody who does not fit this 'spin' of success invisible. Put mildly, this is a problematic way of addressing social inequality that serves to hide problems rather than addressing them.[22]

Secondly, even if the plans to export the creative city to the housing estates are followed through, the spontaneity and self-organisation are at least partially mythical, as discussed above, the presence of curatorial elements to provide the 'right' kind of dynamism has been considered essential, and the urbane designers are necessary elements. This homogenous dynamism will surely be the recipe for the housing estates, thus requiring conformity to the established models of creative expression rather than any free-for-all creativity.

Social democracy's recipe for poverty alleviation has then, a little pointedly, become to simply produce creatives in the housing estates.[23] Rather than addressing the systemic issues of poverty, of social injustice, of rapidly rising inequality, a recipe is prescribed that actively renders invisible all of those 'uncreatives' who do not manage to embrace the entrepreneurial spirt, and who have no place in the creative city. The problem stated as *'how can we integrate the impoverished parts of Malmö in the creative knowledge city?'* is – referring back to Mildner and Studio: Lab – what Deleuze would call 'the false problem' (Deleuze, 1991), and it is by no means an 'apolitical problem'. It is the nature of the *problem*, not its solution that urgently needs to be discussed, and this is also a question for architectural theory.

22 - The response from proponents of the creative discourse would be that the creative city aims to de-stigmatize urban areas. While this is indisputably important, it needs to be accompanied by efforts to curtail the negative effects of gentrification, which appear to be tertiary to growth and creativity – especially since rising house prices are considered an indicator of successful urbane design.

23 - It should be noted there are many examples of more relevant social work; however, the recipes of the creative city are currently being rolled out with great fanfare in Rosengård, a large housing estate in Malmö with high levels of poverty, through a Private/Public Partnership that comes at the price of the municipal housing corporation selling off a fair percentage of its assets in the area. See http://culturecasbah.com (accessed July 22, 2017) and (Baeten et al., 2016).

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