Scaffolding Democracy

Democracy as the impossible
project of architecture?

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Abstract

The following thesis will address forms of citizenship and political expression – their architectural and urban implications – as possible outcomes of democratic manifestations. In the context of austerity measures and their corresponding movements of resistance, spatial agency and architecture will be evaluated for the potential to implement and design spaces that accommodate conflict and discussion.

Beginning with a study of the theories touching on democracy, activism and spatial justice, the argument will then be framed through notions such as dissensus, agonism, property, surveillance and citizenship, which will be evaluated against the context of Neoliberalism's crisis in the contemporary city.

The thesis will go on to evaluate different practices in architectural activism; a mapping of the approaches and typologies that could – potentially – promote civic engagement. Montreal's underground city will be evaluated as an infrastructure with which to imagine, design and implement nodes of participative spaces. The outcome will be a project proposal that addresses contemporary issues in Montreal, which could legitimize dissent and offer a socially driven architectural platform for urban action and expression. Can a public space be democratic by fostering plurality and inclusion? Can architecture promote civic engagement? Is democracy the impossible project of architecture? These are the critical questions this thesis will address.

Figure 1. *Montréal comme projet de résistance et d'indépendance* collage by author (2014). Studio project conceived during Helsinki DSA 2014. The collage accompanies a manifesto for architects to protest against gentrification processes, money-ruled policies and irresponsible decision-making by governance that damage Montreal.

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Abstract	2
Table of contents	4
Thesis narrative	6
Framing the argument	8
Introduction	10

1 THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY 13

Chapter 1. Neoliberalism's crisis and architecture	14
Chapter 2. Dissent and Agonism	22
Chapter 3. The architect as activist ?	26
Chapter 4. Towards a democratic architecture	30
Chapter 5. Typologies of insurgent actions in space	41

2 UNDERGROUND MONTREAL 50

Chapter 6. The Underground City	53
Chapter 7. Property and Surveillance	56
Chapter 8. Architectonic relations: above vs below, open vs close	59
Chapter 9. Montreal's socio-political context	62

3 DEMOCRACY AS THE IMPOSSIBLE PROJECT OF ARCHITECTURE? 64

- Site Analysis 66
- Victoria Square 68
- Finding a program 69
- Hints towards an architectural approach 70

4 SCAFFOLDING DEMOCRACY 71

- Implantation 72
- Leaking above, infiltrating below 74
- Learning and Sharing Centre 78
- Do-It-Yourself urbanism 84
- Scaffolding architecture/scaffolding democracy 85
- Adaptable and appropriable architecture 88
- A virtual world with a spatial dimension 100

POST-SCRIPT 105

- Acknowledgements 107
- Endnotes 108
- List of figures 113
- Bibliography 118

Neoliberalism's crisis and architecture

- Neoliberalism's crisis
- Emerging social movements
- The crisis of democracy
- Property and surveillance
- The role of the architect

Printemps Érablé in Montreal (2012)

manifesto by author

The Architect as Activist?

- The Right to the City
- Architectural activism
- Abandoning authorship

Civic City Cahier series

Spatial Agency database

Insurgent action in space

- raising the voice
- occupying the space
- providing visibility
- creating a barrier
- digging the way

1. THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY

Dissent and Agonism

- Dissent
- Agonism
- A dissenting and agonistic project

Towards a democratic architecture

- Cedric Price's Potteries Thinkbelt
- Arthur Erickson's Robson Square
- Lina Bo Bardi's MASP
- Teddy Cruz's Estudio Teddy Cruz

MASP by Lina Bo Bardi

Underground photo survey by author

The Underground City

Architectonic relationships

above versus below

interior versus exterior

2. UNDERGROUND MONTREAL

Place-des-Arts Metro Station

Property and Surveillance

Montreal's socio-political context

1968 protest in Montreal

Victoria Square

Hints towards an architectural response

3. DEMOCRACY AS THE IMPOSSIBLE PROJECT OF ARCHITECTURE?

Montreal's Nalli Map (above and below)

Site Analysis

Finding a program

Implantation

Learning and Sharing Centre

Scaffolding architecture, scaffolding democracy

4. SCAFFOLDING DEMOCRACY

Existing rotunda at Victoria Square

Leaking above, infiltrating below

Do-It-Yourself urbanism

Adaptable and appropriable architecture

A virtual world with a spatial dimension

Framing the argument

DEMOCRACY

A word originating in the classical Greek city states, and meaning the rule of the demos, the citizen body: the right of all to decide what are matters of general concern. The size of modern nation-states has meant that (apart from those which include provision for a referendum in their constitutions) democracy is no longer direct but indirect, i.e. through the election of representatives, hence the term representative democracy.

-The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought

NEO-LIBERALISM

An American hybrid of uncertain character, which may be more a label attached to a package of politically expedient positions than any important revision of liberal thought. [...] It purports to favour selective state intervention in the economy, mainly to assist the restructuring of production towards new industries and services, and to find forms of welfare provision which are neither excessively bureaucratic nor conducive to welfare dependence. Neo-liberalism demonstrates a concern for social pluralism and tolerance which represents less of a break with the liberalism of the 1960s.

-The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought

ACTIVISM

An especially vigorous attitude towards political action, an attitude resulting in particularly zestful political practice. It implies a special role for activists who form the active core of political parties. It is notable in revolutionary movements and particularly important in radical party politics. In its extreme form it is held to justify direct action and /or the use of force for political aims.

-The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought

CITIZENSHIP

Aristotle's Politics defined the ideal of citizenship – the conduct of civic affairs by all free men in the polis – for the ancient world, and it continued to exert great force down to the 18th century and beyond. The exercise of citizenship, in this view, was the supreme human activity, and was accordingly limited to those who had the leisure to take its requirements seriously. But increasingly, the modern industrial world demanded more than the purely political rights and obligations to citizenship. From the time of the French Revolution onwards it was declared that political citizenship was meaningless without the addition of social citizenship: the empowerment of members of the community as agents with sufficient social and economic resources to participate fully in social and political life. This broadening of the ideal of citizenship made it possible for many groups, hitherto excluded from active participation in society, to strive for full membership. These included women, foreigners, ethnic and religious minorities and even, most recently, children.

-The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought

AGONISM

A philosophical outlook emphasizing the importance of conflict to politics. Agonism can take a descriptive form, in which conflict is argued to be a necessary feature of all political systems, or a normative form, in which conflict is held to have some special value such that it is important to maintain conflicts within political systems. Frequently, the descriptive and normative forms are combined in the argument that, because conflict is a necessary feature of politics, attempts to eliminate conflict from politics will have negative consequences.

-Encyclopaedia Britannica

DISSENT

An unwillingness to cooperate with an established source of authority, which can be social, cultural, or governmental. In political theory, dissent has been studied mainly in relation to governmental power, inquiring into how and to what extent dissent should be promoted, tolerated, and controlled by a state. Dissent is often related to two other concepts, critical thinking and toleration. Both play into the problem of political legitimacy.

-Encyclopaedia Britannica

Introduction

The past years have been marked by an unforeseen number of manifestations of dissent that has shaken the urban realm around the world. The Indignados in Spain, the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States, the student protests in Chile...Neoliberalism and austerity measures have provoked outbursts of various types, most of which pertain to the notion of social justice. It might then be argued that democracy is losing its primary definition by contracting to forms of consensus determined by the political leaders. How can we explore the impact of this phenomenon on the architecture of the city? And how could the architecture of the city be approached differently if we think it could service or promote social justice?

As Erik Swyngedouw points out in his essay *Designing the Post-Political City and the Insurgent Polis* part of the *Civic City Cahier series*¹ "political dissent is virtually absent; few dissenting voices among 'official' political leaders, whether Left or Right, are heard. It seems that the only way in which real dissent can be articulated is by making the public spaces of cities as recurrent theatres of the impotent, violent, but passionate outbursts of radical insurgent architect."² This new manifestation and reception of dissenting voices into radical and violent forms such as riots and strikes, poses a crucial question regarding the potential of architecture and urban design to provide or provoke change in the way dissent is organized and perceived. Can architecture become a platform to legitimize activism in the city space and promote democratic discussions? Could architecture embrace the role of social catalyst

as the Greek agora once did accomplishing an open space that served as a meeting ground for various activities of the citizens, staging their daily religious, political, judicial, social, and commercial activity³? And why would this be the role of architecture?

We will first look at the context of Neoliberalism in the contemporary city and study its crisis, its consequent movements of resistance and their effects on the contemporary city. We will then explore the notions of *dissent* and *agonism* to help us debate and frame an argument on ways to revive democracy. The role of the architect as activist will be addressed to understand its relevance and Lefebvre's *Right to the City* will be assessed to help us re-imagine the city as a process of collective production that could accommodate difference and dissent. The thesis will then explore a variety of spatial agencies and architectural practices that suggest democracy or at least promote socially inclusive spaces through their projects. By exploring contemporary approaches at different scales, both formal and informal, common grounds in architectural activism will be identified. Finally, a selection of typologies of insurgent spatial actions will be put forward to inform the architectural project by providing strategies to facilitate citizen expression.

The thesis itself will then be transferred into an architectural and urban project by utilizing Montreal's underground network. Arguably Montreal's most capital-driven area, how could this site accommodate the urban presence of voices of dissent? A historical study and a contemporary analysis of the underground network will help us understand how to put forward and legitimize a new program and its impact on the socio-political realm. The creation of a new kind of democratic public space in Montreal's urban fabric will attempt –provocatively– to revive Montreal's citizenship by legitimizing conflict, and, possibly by doing so, to influence the

larger community in the city to become more involved in the urban and civic space.

Democracy as the impossible project of architecture? The subtitle of the thesis addresses what might be interpreted as a loss of social conviction in the architecture of public spaces. Can architecture reasonably be considered a platform for citizenship and democracy? Perhaps this kind of project is cancelled out, impossible because of its planned nature? Therefore, could it be more appropriate to speak of providing processes – or a framework – rather than imposing a finite project? It is in this context that we ask: is democracy the impossible project of architecture?

Figure 2. Inflatable cobblestone, action of Eclectic Electric Collective in cooperation with Enmedio collective during the General Strike in Barcelona 2012.

The crisis of democracy

Figure 3. Printemps Érablé student movement protesters carrying placards created by École de la Montagne Rouge at UQÀM School of Design (2012).

Chapter one: Neoliberalism's crisis and architecture

*"I think it's interesting to see how public opinion and some thinking in these circles is beginning to move towards an alternative economic and political framework that can do a better job of creating greater equality in the global system in the future."*⁴ – *David Harvey on Neoliberalism*

Neoliberalism's crisis

In the past decades, the urban fabric of our cities have been marked by the rise of Neoliberalism —understood here as an optimistic sociopolitical and economic ideology based on the liberation of markets from state interference and collective responsibilities, in favor of economic development, de-regulation and entrepreneurialism⁵. In their pamphlet *The Afterlives of Neoliberalism*, Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore, qualify Neoliberalism as being rooted in an idealized conception of competitive individualism and a deep antipathy to sources of social solidarity⁶. Transposed to the built environment, the principles of Neoliberalism have given rise since the early 1980s to the phenomena of the branding of cities in a race to becoming globally competitive metropolises⁷.

This favoring of individual interest at the expense of social ones seems to have generated a growth of cities based on market value instead of upgrading the quality of the space for citizens. A variety of architectural projects testify to this desire to express a strong economy, generate growth and investment and highlight this lack in providing sustainable social spaces for the inhabitants. Amsterdam's South Axis, Berlin's Potsdamer Platz or Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum are three examples amongst many, where architecture was used as a tool to showcase capital-driven interests. If

we take for example Bilbao's Guggenheim, the project over time proved to be unsustainable by creating touristic infatuation but not supporting citizen-led initiatives that would have a tangible effect on the community⁸. The 'Guggenheim effect' surely transformed the economy of the city but the building certainly failed as a public space by missing an opportunity to celebrate the city's community and cultural life. It can be defended that Bilbao's Guggenheim reduces the role of architecture to a mere icon that does not address the public realm in which it is situated. In fact, rather than being inscribed in their specific socio-political context, this kind of project relies on creating touristic infatuation through formal gestures. They do not respond to the local context or to the inhabitants' needs; they rarely are socially oriented projects that could range from gathering spaces to education facilities, but are instead landmarks that help to market the city.

Figure 4. Sony Center in Berlin opened in 2000 and was part of the Potsdamer Platz redevelopment project that took place after the German reunification.

Figure 5. Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao by Frank Gehry. The project had massive media coverage and impacted the economy of Bilbao through creating tourism infatuation but was also criticized for its effect of gentrification on the city.

These capital-driven projects in general are unlikely to promote public spaces of an open democratic nature, inviting instead to consumption and circulation through a form of retail space. Alternatively, urban revitalization projects could promote an engaging way of being a citizen by inviting individuals to gather, exchange, and express themselves. Projects offering a democratic essence could possibly empower the citizens and foster communities by allowing them to exist and be heard in a space that is not capital-driven and that promotes inclusion and equality.

The financial crisis of 2008 can now be seen as an event that confirmed Neoliberal ideology was reaching for an unachievable utopian ambition. The crisis has affected the urban fabric both in the way that land is managed, and

the way citizens inhabit the city. Is this proof that the Neoliberal model is toxic to cities, favoring the branding of cities at the detriment of improving the life of their citizens? It seems that some people think this model needs to be replaced.

Emerging social movements

Is it possible that the crisis of the Neoliberal model corresponds to the multiplication of social movements in cities? As Margit Mayer from the Berlin Free University explains: "The recession [of 2008] has highlighted the breaking points around which urban social movements have been rallying in the past, thus validating their claims and arguments about the destructiveness and the lack of sustainability of the neoliberal growth model."⁹

Indeed, as a domino effect to this crisis of Neoliberalism, various outbursts of discontent have marked the streets of cities around the globe in the past years to express concerns about the illegitimacy of the current model based on growth and generation of capital. Swygedouw makes the point that "rarely in history have so many people voiced their discontent with the political designs of the elites and signaled a desire for an alternative design of the city and of the world, of the polis. Yet rarely has mass protest resulted in so little political gain."¹⁰

The point could be made that what Swygedouw is getting at – the absence of legitimacy given to dissenting citizen voices – could be considered as a key element in the eminent crisis of democracy. If democracy is understood here by definition as "the practice or principle of social equality,"¹¹ the right to give an opinion and to discuss within the

physical public sphere may be considered an integral part of the design of public spaces in the city. Does the way disagreement is expressed and perceived necessarily have to be negative or could it be understood as part of a democratic discussion?

The crisis of democracy

The way disagreement is perceived today is something that philosopher Chantal Mouffe addresses in her work. The negation of what Mouffe identifies as antagonism in current political discourses seem to depict a growing detachment between the political apparatus and the citizen. In *On the Political*, Mouffe discusses liberalism's hegemony of consensus as being contradictory to modern democracy's recognition and legitimation of conflict. Mouffe speaks about the uniformity in political parties that differentiate themselves only through marketing techniques, and she explains the consequences are "a growing disaffection with politics and a drastic fall in participation in elections."¹² In other words, the crisis of democracy. It seems this hegemony of consensus also exists in the urban fabric, where the citizen is surveilled and has to follow a certain code of conventions. The citizen is not invited to express himself or to ask questions. Could architecture possibly operate as a void in the city where the citizen can think on his own and appropriate the space?

Figure 6. Protesters outside the European Central Bank in Frankfurt (2011).

Mouffe expresses her primary question of concern by asking "How long will it take before citizens completely lose faith in the democratic process?"¹³ The absence of pluralism in today's political apparatus is traduced by a suppression of individual expression that could hint to a loss of faith in democracy by citizens and therefore a loss of citizenship. If

we consider Aristotle's definition of the citizen as one "who partakes in the fact of ruling and the fact of being ruled,"¹⁴ is there any doubt that citizenship and democracy are endangered by Neoliberalism?

Mouffe's analysis of dissenting voices is interesting to consider within the scope of this thesis. Indeed, the following question can be put forward: Could architecture transpose notions of pluralism into the public realm by providing a legitimization of dissenting voices through programming and designing?

Can it be argued – by looking at urban projects that emerged from Neoliberal thought – that the *polis*¹⁵ as public space of democratic significance is dead; only staging occasionally radical forms of dissent and disagreement through – what Neoliberalism promotes as – illegitimate appropriation of the urban? This illegitimate *dissent* expressed through the appropriation of the urban represents the translation of the crisis of democracy into city space. Given the lack of a proper platform to articulate opinion and disseminate views in the physical public realm, dissenting voices operate as violent outbursts in the city. This is where architecture and urban design could possibly intervene to promote the possibility for democratic expression within the built environment, and thereby to reduce the violent outcomes of insurgency.

Property and Surveillance

When looking into designing public spaces of democratic significance in the city, the notions of property and surveillance are crucial to consider given the fact that they influence the possibility for appropriation and the individual's freedom in the space.

Figure 7. Surveillance cameras in public spaces.

In Pier Vittorio Aureli's collection of essays *The City as Project*, Hamed Khosravi describes the project of the modern city as one that "has become precisely about the process of de-politicizing or neutralizing space."¹⁶ Through policing and surveillance apparatuses, the Neoliberal state became a panopticon that forces citizens to follow an established order.

Figure 8. Metal studs on the ground near a building in Montreal to prevent people from occupying space acts as an exclusion apparatus.

Swygedouw also implies those state apparatuses mentioning that "the polis as a 'political' space is retreating while social space is increasingly colonized or sutured by consensual techno-managerial policies."¹⁷ Jesko Fazer, editor of the *Civic City Cahier* series, also refers to technocratic regulatory approaches, qualifying them as a technique of governance where social conflict and protest are replaced by promoted unanimity and consensus¹⁸.

The point could be made that the design and appropriation (or non-appropriation) of public space demonstrate how Neoliberal ideology undermines democracy through consensual and surveillance mechanisms. Architects could address these mechanisms carefully in the attempt to design spaces that are inclusive and open for appropriation of various forms, contributing to a just and socially sustainable built environment.

It is important to mention that appropriation – the action of taking something for one’s own use, typically without the owner’s permission¹⁹ – is meant here as a call for outcomes of various forms, to make the space inclusive for every citizen, which is to be nuanced from an appropriation from one group of individuals to the detriment of another group. Through the establishment of a design that allows for plurality, the architect might then contribute towards creating spaces that go against unanimity and consensus and favor a multiplicity of opinions in the public realm.

The role of the architect

German designer and author Gui Bonsiepe in his essay part of the *Civic City Cahier* series asks the following question: "How can the notion of democracy be recovered? How can the notion of democracy gain credibility again? How can one avoid the risk of being exposed to the arrogant and condescending attitude of the centers of power that consider democracy as nothing more than a tranquilizer for public opinion in order to continue undisturbed with business as usual?"²⁰

In the context of Neoliberalism's crisis, an opportunity emerges to imagine a reorganization of institutions through a political and spatial understanding of the city. A model that proved to be damageable to the urban fabric invites us to rethink new ways of building our cities. Could education now occur in the streets? Could public spaces promote freedom of expression? Could citizens be involved in the making of urban space?

The following chapter will go on to look at critical terms used— *dissent* and *agonism*, respectively by Rancière and Mouffe— that offer ways to rethink democracy today. Later we will explore how these can be interpreted as tools for designing public spaces of democratic meaning. In looking at new ways of thinking democracy, new ways of building the city in a more democratic way will emerge to help us frame a project that is socially sustainable and just.

Chapter Two: **Dissent and Agonism**

Figure 9. Student Strike of October 1968 in Montréal.

Various thinkers of the past decades have put forward alternative ideas on ways to revive democracy. Notions such as dissensus and agonism have been introduced as concepts through which we could rethink politics. How could we transcribe these concepts into the design of the city space and suggest new ways to inhabit democracy? Let's start by understanding those two key terms.

Jacques Rancière and Chantal Mouffe identify the era of the 'post-political' or 'post-democratic' as one where discontent or disagreement is excluded as legitimate from political discourse. They both situate their argument against the negation of conflict in Western democracy. Rancière

writes about the police in its current role as an apparatus that is characterized by the absence of a void, leaving no space for disturbance of the existing order²¹. The fact that the state does not allow for struggle acts as an exclusion mechanism for those who don't follow the established rules. Could the built environment allow for more openness by acknowledging the existence of a plurality of voices?

Dissent

For Rancière, *dissent* is the essence of politics and it is not a confrontation between interests or opinions, but rather a manifestation of the sensible from itself, making visible the invisible²². Rancière argues that individuals exist entirely within the act, and their acts are manifestations of *dissensus* because they impose an examination of things that were not 'visible'²³. This notion is quite interesting in the scope of this thesis because making visible the invisible could be the task of architecture if its intention is to allow for a democratic discussion and inclusive gatherings. In fact, it could be defended here that dissensus, by being integrated into a non-constraint architectural system, could give back to democracy its relevance as an expression where the citizen takes part.

Similarly, Chantal Mouffe points out that through time, those who challenge the established consensus have been perceived as enemies of democracy and she stresses that "few attempts have been made to elaborate the democratic project on an anthropology which acknowledges the ambivalent character of human sociability and the fact that reciprocity and hostility cannot be dissociated."²⁴

“The essence of politics resides in the modes of dissensual subjectification that reveal the difference of a society to itself. The essence of consensus is not peaceful discussion and reasonable agreement as opposed to conflict or violence. [...] Consensus is the reduction of politics to the police.”²⁵

- Jacques Rancière

“Antagonistic conflicts are less likely to emerge as long as agonistic legitimate political channels for dissenting voices exist; otherwise dissent tends to take violent forms.”²⁶

- Chantal Mouffe

Agonism

Throughout her book *On The Political*, Mouffe introduces the notion of *agonism* as a concept that allows for plurality versus the neoliberal antagonist model that puts forward a we/they conflict. By introducing *agonism* into the democratic system, she suggests it allows for a form of plurality rather than a dualistic model. Mouffe writes that “antagonistic conflicts are less likely to emerge as long as agonistic legitimate political channels for dissenting voices exist; otherwise dissent tends to take violent forms.”²⁷ Plurality implies to give legitimacy to difference and to recognize it as part of the political dialogue as an equal. Staying away from the left/right dichotomy and moving towards pluralism allows us to imagine a place where the citizen participates actively in democratic processes. When discussing the task of democratic theorists and politicians, Mouffe says “it should be to envisage the creation of a vibrant ‘agonistic’ public sphere of contestation where hegemonic political projects can be confronted.”²⁸ Even though this thinking relates to the political field, it would be interesting for this thesis project to imagine what spatial implications could this “vibrant agonistic public sphere” have and how could architects and urban designers dwell on this idea?

A dissenting and agonistic project

That kind of project for the city might be achieved using architecture and urban design as tools that render dissent visible as a legitimate discourse that stands on an equal foot as the political authority in place. *Dissent* and *agonism* as theoretical notions could be integrated into spatial practices as ways of promoting a democratic project for the city. If so, we must then ask ourselves, how could *agonism* and

dissent be translated to public space? Does an architecture project to create an agonistic public sphere imply the creation of new institutions or programs in public spaces? Could it be a void in the urban fabric, a space liberated from any constraints that would allow for it? Maybe the architect does not have a voice because by creating he is automatically prescribing a way to inhabit the space?

The following chapter will question the application of those concepts into architectural projects by asking the following question: Why should the architect play a crucial role in creating public spaces of democratic significance in the city?

Chapter Three: **The Architect as activist ?**

So far, do the previous readings revive our approach to democracy and if so, how can they help us explore ways to design our cities as meaningful democratic public spaces? Meaningful public space here imply that citizens would appropriate the space through a great variety of inhabitation types, events and activities so that it becomes a reference point, a significant beacon for gatherings in the city. By becoming such a space in the urban fabric, there would be a possibility for the public space to be appropriated by citizens for insurgency.

Figure 10. *Civic City Cahier* series edited by Jesko Fezer and Matthias Görlch and published by the Bedford Press. The series intends to provide material for a critical discussion about the role of design for a new social city. It publishes short monographic texts by authors who specialise in urban and design theory and practice.

But then, who has the responsibility to ensure the existence of such spaces in the city? According to Jesko Fazer, by having the state retreating from any intervention, the social interests are dissolved by the market in cities' polarization and segregation²⁹. This poses a crucial question regarding the role of architects: should architects attempt to address social interests when the state no longer seems to fulfill this role?

The Right to the City

Henri Lefebvre answers this question in a broader sense, highlighting the fact that imagining the city should be a collective project. In his 1968 book *Le Droit à la Ville*, he introduces the notion of the *Right to the City* as a "right to change ourselves by changing the city,"³⁰ urging to re-imagine the city as a process of coproduction by the collective. In the past years, Lefebvre's concept regained popularity among international NGOs, UN-Habitat and UNESCO as a way to create agreement among central actors about pol-

icies that are to guarantee sustainable, just and democratic cities. In 2005, the *World Charter on the Right to the City* was established to enforce recognition of human, social and citizenship rights within the urban realm³¹.

If we return to Swyngedouw, he makes the point that redesigning the urban as a political space necessitates the enunciation of dispute and rupture by opening up spaces for expression, therefore acting as a claim of equality in space³². He also writes that “reclaiming proper democracy and the insurgent design of proper democratic public spaces (as spaces for enunciation of agonistic dispute) becomes a foundation and condition of possibility for a reclaimed polis.”³³ Reclaiming the polis as he suggests, could be interpreted as a process in which both the architect and the citizen participate. If architects wish to see the city as a just and inclusive space of democracy, it seems that it would be their role to produce projects that address the citizens’ needs and that include them in the process of designing and building the city.

Swyngedouw invites architects to take action when writing “the only way in which real dissent can be articulated is by making the public spaces of cities as recurrent theatres of the impotent, violent, but passionate outbursts of radical insurgent architects.”³⁴ But we could ask ourselves, why should architects be involved in political discourse? Can it be defended that architects have a tangible power on the city’s social life by designing the urban space? Given the fact that architecture cannot be neutral and that it has a long-term legacy, is it the responsibility of architects to ensure the presence of just and inclusive public spaces for citizens?

Architectural activism

In his book *The City as Project*, Pier Vittorio Aureli reflects on the fact that seminal examples of urban research such as Robert Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown's *Learning from Las Vegas* and Rem Koolhaas's *Delirious New York* have mapped the urban condition without analyzing the political intentions behind market-driven urbanization phenomenon. Aureli claims that while we perceive the city as unplannable, it is rather the result of a specific political will and he explains that this phenomenon has made architects retreat within the mandate of their profession, simply answering demands of their clients³⁵. Aureli then nuances this notion by highlighting the rise of new discourses that emerged after the 2008 economic recession where the architect takes the role of activist. Both those new socially driven practices and the uncritical ones, he claims, underestimate the power of architecture in its traditional sense to influence our urban condition³⁶.

Figure 11. The online database Spatial Agency proposes new ways to look at architecture by expanding the traditional focus of architecture and looking at spatial opportunities in which architects and non-architects can participate. One of the categories of the website features a section Why? under which there is a Political section listing spatial practices with political agendas.

Figure 12. Hypotopia project produced by students from Technical University of Vienna as a protest to the country's 2014 bailout of Hypo-Alpe-Adria.

It is true that architecture does have a direct influence on the way the built environment is inhabited and perceived. Architects play a powerful role and therefore should be aware of the socio-political implications of their work and embrace their role with a holistic approach. But isn't the architect as ultimate author of a project the only voice heard? How can architects really promote a democratic project of architecture if they are the sole voice behind it?

Abandoning authorship

Concerning the voice of the architect, critic and artist Tom Holert, in his essay *Distributed Agency, Design's Potentiality*, considers that we should go back to design ethics and its responsibility in society. He asserts that going back to an absence of authorship would save time from marketing projects and reinforces the designers' responsibility³⁷. Holert also makes an interesting point by writing that designers are entitled to a desire to see things change for the better but they need to be conscious of the motives they exercise to build a meaningful aesthetic culture³⁸.

Along those lines, this thesis for a democratic project of architecture should now go on to consider that architects do have the power to promote change as long as they engage with the heterogeneous conditions in which they practice, abandoning in a way, their authorship – the branding of their practice or their formal uniqueness, for instance. By allowing a plurality of engagements with their architecture or urban intervention, the role of the designer as sole author would shift to reflecting citizen voices and could possibly allow for a democratic design of public space.

Clearly, these are notions that are difficult to assess given their relative nature and the subjectivity they imply. The next chapter will look into various projects and architectural practices that somewhat point towards a democratic project for architecture.

Chapter Four: **Towards a democratic architecture**

What is democratic architecture? Is it an architecture that translates openness and plurality to provide a space of citizenship? Is it an architecture that emerges from a collective shaping of the environment through the empowerment of people? If we now accept – from our earlier readings – democratic architecture as a space that allows for democratic discussion or that fosters new ways of being an involved citizen, some examples in architectural history offer further insight. Different architects have put forward seminal examples that start to dialogue with the idea of producing spaces of democratic significance.

Figure 13. Aerial view of Robson Square in downtown Vancouver. The three-block project was conceived by Arthur Erickson with an aim to give back the space of the complex to the citizens as a public space.

Cedric Price's Potteries Thinkbelt (1964)

“A greater awareness in architects and planners of their real value to society could, at the present, result in that rare occurrence, namely, the improvement of the quality of life as a result of architectural endeavour.”³⁹ -Cedric Price

Cedric Price's Potteries Thinkbelt project consisted of turning North Staffordshire Potteries into a new kind of high-tech University. The proposal was certainly in sync with the socio-political context of the time where education was being democratized. Price considered that architecture was too slow as a process to provide tangible changes, so he developed an architecture that could be quickly adaptable to unpredictable future uses of space⁴⁰. He was committed to “beneficial change” and “anticipatory architecture.”⁴¹

By looking at the drawings, we can conclude that by providing a multi-scale approach from the territory to the interior design details, Price was challenging existing educational institutions to incite societal changes. The Potteries Thinkbelt project outlined participatory ways of building where inhabitants would influence directly the outcome of their environment. As an example, the presence and visibility of building tools, such as the crane as a persistent element, testify to this desire to create a framework within which the inhabitants would participate in the making of space.

The program proposed by Price also conveyed notions of plurality by suggesting different ways of living, providing a diversity of frameworks such as the capsule housing, the sprawl, the battery and the crate. It is interesting to consider the approach of building a framework within which

various appropriations of space can take place according to the inhabitants' needs and expression.

The idea of providing tools without imposing the finite architecture could be transposed to designing public spaces of democratic significance where the citizens would play an active role. If the citizens play an active role in the making of a space, as they do in Price's Potteries Thinkbelt, maybe then we can start talking about a democratic architecture? One that is made in part by the citizens for the citizens.

Figure 14. Sketch of a building of the Potteries Thinkbelt project with a crane in the distance showing the project as a perpetual process of adaptation.

Figure 15. Diagrammatic axonometric showing the construction of basic and specialized units. Cedric Price's drawings seem to qualify the building as a kit of parts in which the inhabitant can participate to the assembly.

Figure 16. Typical segment in plan of the transfer areas of the Potteries Thinkbelt. The plan reveals a flexibility and adaptability through providing a framework in which units can be inserted.

Arthur Erickson's Robson Square (1979-83)

Figure 17. Interior of the Courthouse at Robson Square. Arthur Erickson's intention was to provide the symbolic aspect of 'transparency of law' for the new design of the courthouse.

Robson Square, located in downtown Vancouver, represents a seminal example of the influence of socio-political context on Canadian architecture. The three-block project consists of the existing courthouse that was converted into the Vancouver Art Gallery, provincial government offices sunk under a public park and a new courthouse. The political context of the time, at different levels of governance, had a great influence on the outcome of the project. Firstly, Arthur Erickson and Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau had a very close relationship that allowed Erickson to build many institutional buildings such as the Canadian Chancery in Washington, Simon Fraser University and the University of Lethbridge. Secondly, the NDP provincial government was newly elected in British Columbia in 1973 while the project of building new government offices was already in place. The young Barrett government requested that the initial tower scheme proposed years before by Erickson be redesigned to represent a new era of government that would place the people as first priority. Erickson decided to turn the tower on its side and create a public space that could be appropriated by Vancouver's citizens. This was also in sync with Erickson's values, as found in his writings where he relates the importance of sharing in the way we live today⁴². The architectural approach of Erickson to link the three blocks as a continuous public space expresses this will to create an inclusive space, as he was aiming to share the urban fabric.

Figure 18. Robson Square as the stage of the festivities during the 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

Through time, the urban megaform was appropriated in a variety of events such as the Occupy Vancouver movement, the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, New Year's cel-

celebration and everyday wanderings. Robson Square became a meaningful space for the citizens and shaped a social identity for the city. The execution of certain details could also be considered to testify a will to generate social changes through inclusion. The aesthetic of the new courthouse with its openness and transparency conveys ideals of transparency of the law and the new government. At a smaller scale, details such as the stramp, a hybrid between a ramp and stairs, also carry ideas of democracy through principles of fairness using universal design strategies⁴³.

Robson Square is an interesting example where the architect's ideals of creating meaningful public architecture were achieved because of specific architectural details. The space was appropriated by citizens of Vancouver for various types of events in part because of the architectonic expression of the building that is appropriable in various ways and at various scales. This suggests that the execution of details can help promote an active inhabitation of space that is inclusive and pluralistic. Can we conclude that the architecture of Robson Square was successful in creating a democratic space through providing inclusiveness in its design?

Figure 19. The 'stramp', a hybrid between a ramp and stairs designed by Erickson provides inclusiveness through proposing different ways of appropriating the space.

Figure 20. Robson Square sketch by Arthur Erickson demonstrates an intention to provide continuous pedestrian circulation throughout the three blocks of the project.

Lina Bo Bardi's Museum of Arts in Sao Paolo (1968)

“The artist’s freedom has always been ‘individual’, but true freedom can only be collective. A freedom aware of social responsibilities, which can knock down the frontiers of aesthetics...”⁴⁴—Lina Bo Bardi

Bo Bardi was a political activist and highly opinionated woman who insisted on addressing the socio-political context with her projects. Her work is characterized by the celebration of the everyday and ordinary spaces. In the case of the Museum of Arts of Sao Paolo, she chose to raise the gallery above the ground, creating an open public plaza, which was successful through time and housed a variety of events such as concerts, political protests, a circus and the everyday city life.

The detailing of the building was deliberately designed to be blunt and rough, to serve both, as a critique of cultural snobbery and to eliminate it. Ultimately, she was aiming for what she referred to as *arquitectura pobra* (poor architecture) in which the citizens could identify themselves to⁴⁵. She designed the museum using watercolors and drawings as representation tools, which allowed her to convey an informal quality to her building, bringing life in her design and inhabiting it with plants and people⁴⁶. In that way, she was illustrating the building as a backdrop to the activities and the people interacting with her work.

This goes back to Cedric Price’s approach where architecture becomes a framework where the inhabitation of space is what creates the architecture. Her attitude also

reflects a certain abandonment of authorship in the architecture, where the architect doesn't become the only voice but instead prepares the background for an architecture that responds to its inhabitants. With her strong will to have architecture as a backdrop of the activity occurring in her buildings, could we say that Bo Bardi produced democratic architecture?

Figure 21. The Museum of Arts of Sao Paulo by Lina Bo Bardi is elevated to create a public space at ground level.

Figure 22. Watercolour drawing by Lina Bo Bardi depicting the building as a backdrop to the activities occurring in the public space.

Teddy Cruz, Estudio Teddy Cruz (1991—)

“Today we should move from the neutrality of public institutions to the specificity of rights to the city”⁴⁷ - Teddy Cruz

Teddy Cruz is an architect who often plays within the margins of architecture. In his lecture given in April 2014 at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, *Where is Our Collective Imagination?*⁴⁸, he offers interesting insights into his marginal approach to architecture.

Figure 23. Images of projects from Estudio Teddy Cruz website.

Cruz describes his approach to architecture as being discursive and agonistic. He does not label himself as a political architect but rather one that creates the political discourse towards a transformation of inequalities through a sense of urgency. He makes an interesting point by mentioning that he is not designing space but rather establishing the protocols ensuring activity in the space. Cruz also talks about spatializing citizenship through evoking the input of citizens into architecture. His approach to architecture is compelling because he orients his practice towards processes rather than finite objects of architectural production.

Figure 24. Diagram from Estudio Teddy Cruz depicting the practice's critical approach to a given problematic through the integration of processes.

Could it be said that Cruz's approach to architecture is democratic through his integration of citizen input in his projects?

The above case studies offer us clues of the architectural gestures that could promote a democratic appropriation of public space. For Bo Bardi and Erickson, it is the provision of a large open space that acts as a platform for a great variety of activities to unfold within. For Price and Cruz it is more of providing a framework or processes to allow for citizens to get involved with the architecture. In all cases, it is about openness, either physical (openness in space) or conceptual (openness in processes), that can highlight the potential of the site as a social catalyst.

It is difficult to say if architecture could provide a true platform for democracy by allowing insurgency. Given the nature of protest, to circumscribe it would be to defeat its purpose of disrupting the urban realm. Another alternative would be to consider architecture as a tool to promote dissensus and agonism as part of the democratic discussion to reduce violent outbursts of dissenting voices. The creation of a meaningful public space for citizens would also consequently become the space of appropriation for insurgency when democratic discussions arise in more radical forms. Could the resulting architecture not be one that suggests a finite architectural form but rather, one that is shaped by processes that involve citizens? Seeking for more clues on how to physically articulate notions of *dissent* and *agonism* into the urban realm, the next chapter will look into typologies of insurgent action in space that could be carried into the architecture project.

Chapter Five: **Typologies of insurgent action in space**

This chapter touches on actions of insurgency that have defined the built environment through history. The actions consist of raising the voice, occupying space, providing visibility, creating a barrier and digging the way. This selection represents physical ways to manifest expression or defend a point or view in the urban realm. Some of them might come off as violent outbursts but they still inform a reading of dissenting voices within the political discourse. This selected taxonomy based on contemporary and historical means of expression will inform the integration of some of their defining elements into an architectural response for this thesis project.

1. raising the voice

2. occupying space

3. providing visibility

5. digging the way

4. creating a barrier

action 1: raising the voice

The action of raising the voice plays a crucial role in a very wide range of contexts, whether it's during demonstrations of protest through a megaphone or simply for one to express their opinions or ideas in the public realm. In this type of spatial disruption, the speaker uses the city space to stage his discourse and raise his voice.

Hyde Park's Speaker's Corner in London is a designated area in a park where citizens are invited to step up and to express their opinions or ideas to the passerby. The space was born from the tradition to congregate, about 250 years ago at the Tyburn Gallows for the hangings. Even though the gallows were dismantled in 1783 the place was used for gatherings and in 1872, the *Parks Regulation Act* was established through a series of rules governing the conduct of meetings, for the right to meet and speak freely in Hyde Park⁴⁹. The concept later inspired the implementation of similar spaces worldwide. In 2013 in Montreal took place an interactive installation by Moment Factory where the citizens were invited to speak in a giant megaphone, projecting their words and corresponding visual sound waves onto the facade of an adjacent building⁵⁰. The installation was a successful attempt to regain citizen participation and discussion in the city space using contemporary technologies to stimulate participation.

The idea of a Speaker's Corner could be integrated and revisited through the thesis project by possibly creating a platform for free speech that could exist both in the physical and virtual realm to promote contemporary interactions that are rooted in both realities.

Figure 25. Speakers' Corner in London's Hyde Park in Victorian Times where an individual could step up in a designated space to express his opinions or ideas.

Figure 26. Mégaphone interactive installation by Moment Factory in Montreal's Place des Festivals revisited the Speakers Corner typology through the integration of new technologies.

action 2: occupying space

Occupying symbolic or meaningful space to express dissent is an action embedded in the culture of protest. In 2011, the Occupy movement protesters had turned an entire city block into a campground, a sea of blue, red and orange tents dominated Zuccotti Park⁵¹. Riots and walking demonstrations of protest could also be considered as occupations of the urban realm but occurring in the space of circulation and disturbing car traffic in the city. The physical visibility gained through the occupation of space is meant to disrupt the urban realm and usually consists of a manifestation of dissensus in hope for discussions for other alternatives. In a way, the urban space becomes used as a stage for occupation and expression of dissent. The tent could be interpreted as a symbol of discontent that announces that the protesters will stay as long as it takes until they are heard. The architectural integration of spatial occupation could consist of the provision of a framework within which various components can be inserted to allow various occupations of the space.

Figure 27. Tents of the Occupy camp populating the Old Market Square in Nottingham, UK (2012).

action 3: providing visibility

Placards are defined as “paperboard signs or notices, as one posted in a public place or carried by a demonstrator or picketer.”⁵² They can be either very raw or polished, but they are usually meant to provoke through evocative and inventive slogans. An interesting example of creative effort with placards was the work of the École de la Montagne Rouge during the 2012 student protest movement. Inspired by the experimental Black Mountain School in the 1940s in the United States,⁵³ the student collective based at the UQÀM Design School in Montreal produced a variety of artworks to promote societal change and help protesters to express their claims through providing serigraphed prints. As simple as they are, placards today have a dual life, passing the message both physically during protests but also, they allow for uncensored opinion through the medias. In fact, by being filmed or photographed, the content perceived by the public is unprocessed or censored by the medias, allowing protesters to convey their true message.

This component could easily be integrated in the architectural outcome of this thesis through the provision of a screen on which different messages could be transmitted through an uncensored system of display generating messages from the citizens to the citizens.

Figure 28. Serigraphied placards created by École de la Montagne Rouge for the 2012 student movement in Montreal.

Figure 29. G20 protest banners in London (2009).

action 4: creating a barrier

Figure 30. Barricade in the rue Saint-Martin, Paris (1848). The barricade was constructed with found materials in the surroundings.

The barricade as a structure that blocks circulation has been used throughout history in contexts of urban warfare. In his historical review *The Insurgent Barricade*, Mark Traugott traces the appearance of the barricade in the late 16th century where "chains were reinforced with barrels (hence the term), carts, preferably loaded with heavy objects, paving and cobble stones, hefty lumps of furniture and whatever chunky material came to hand."⁵⁴ Used throughout the numerous insurrections occurring in France in the 1800s, the barricade was later used by protest groups worldwide to protect themselves from armed forces.

As an architectural device, the barrier could be a protection mechanism for protesters in cases of violent outbursts of authority. It would not be a permanent structure but rather a deployable one in the space in cases of threat.

Figure 31. Protesters construct barricades to block traffic in Moscow during the 1993 Russian constitutional crisis.

action 5: digging the way

“The insurgents who are involved in the manipulation of matter are material profaners who dig, cut, pierce, accumulate, throw, punch, push, pull, split, and patch hylomorphic matter, transforming it into an abject, allagmatic architecture.”⁵⁵

*- Léopold Lambert. **Abject matter: The Barricade and the Tunnel.***

In his essay *Abject Matter: The Barricade and the Tunnel*, Léopold Lambert proposes “two different operations on matter — aggregating and digging— can be seen as acts of creation towards two potentially resistive architectural typologies: the barricade and the tunnel.”⁵⁶ As a subversive circulation alternative, the tunnel proposes a concealed way of moving without being seen by the opponent. Closer to a warfare shaping insurgency, this technique was used for instance during the Vietnam War by the Viet Cong to launch attacks⁵⁷.

Integrated to the project, the tunnel could be understood as a mean of escaping the site subversively. Its existence would allow for multiplicity of escapes in case a group (for example protesters) in the space would be circled by another group (for example police officers) and could be carried out through an extension and multiplication of the existing network.

Figure 32. Chu Chi tunnels used by the Viet-Cong during the Việt Nam War.

These various typologies of insurgent action in space reveal physical strategies that could be used in the architecture project to allow for expression and appropriation of space. It has to be understood that the object of this thesis is to create a public space that is democratic through allowing freedom of expression. It might allow insurgency but it is not conceived specifically for insurgency. If this space for expression can exist and become a significant platform for citizens to express their ideas and discontents within the urban fabric, violent outbursts of discontent would probably diminish. The same way those previously mentioned tools of insurgent actions could be integrated in more formal ways in this architecture project, the manifestations of dissent organized within the space would take place in a more formalized context, which would provide them more legitimacy.

We now have explored the crisis of democracy in the city as one that is the result of a specific socio-political context. We have studied thinkers that have proposed new ways to look at democracy and we reflected on how those notions – specifically *dissent* and *agonism*— could be translated into an architectural project. We also looked at the role of the architect as activist and how various architects have addressed this issue with a socially oriented approach. We finally have looked at typologies of insurgent action in space that can help us to frame spatial articulations of action and expression. As we are questioning ourselves about the possibility of creating a public space of democratic significance, we will look into Montreal—more specifically Montreal’s underground city—as a site for the implementation of the project.

Underground Montreal

Figure 33. Photograph of the Bonaventure Metro Station in Montreal (1970).

Neoliberalism's hegemony of capital seem to have transposed the notion of power that we usually associate with spaces of political power to spaces of economic power. Consequently, protest in the past decades has been demonstrated where the wealth is concentrated in cities. The Occupy Movement that culminated on Wall Street 2011 was a social movement to denounce social and economical inequalities. The mapping of the Occupy Movement reveals that protesters chose to address their message to the mighty economic forces by pitching their tents facing buildings of capital might⁵⁸. When considering the urban context of Montreal, the downtown area located between the Mount Royal and the St-Lawrence River is without doubt the most capital-driven area of the city. It is traditionally where protest happens in Montreal, whether it was in October 1968 or during the Printemps Érablé of 2012.

In Montreal, the urban fabric cannot be studied without taking into account the underground city, a circulation path running below ground that covers most of the downtown area. We will now take the previously studied notions of democracy in public space and try and map these against the context of Montreal's underground city. Through its history and its use today onto notions of ownership and surveillance we will evaluate the relevance of the underground as 'public space'. The architectonic relations found in the network will be studied to understand the relationships between exterior versus interior and above versus below. Finally we will look at Montreal's specific socio-political context and its culture of protest to help frame an argument on the relevance of implementing a space of democratic significance in the downtown area.

An introduction to Montreal's Underground

main activities of the users of the Underground City

500 000 people

use in the network everyday

150

accesses to the Underground

10K

parking spaces accessible

Chapter Six: **The Underground City**

The underground city in Montreal is a must-see destination according to every tourist guide available, yet the Montrealers that use it every day seem to forget its existence. According to urban storyteller Ivan Drouin, the 32-kilometers long network, branded RÉSO, is used by over half a million people every day to get from one point to another, sheltered from the elements⁵⁹. The underground covers more than 12 km², connecting together 10 metro stations, two train stations, two bus terminals and 10 000 parking spaces through 150 entrance points⁶⁰. The historical point of departure of the underground was Place-Ville-Marie, a cruciform skyscraper designed by architect I.M.Pei. The architect collaborated with urbanist Vincent Ponte in 1954 to create an innovative urban integration of the building through the segregation of vehicular and pedestrian circulations⁶¹. The context of the 1967 Universal Exposition created an infatuation that accelerated the creation of the underground with the inauguration of the city's first Metro system in 1966 and the development of great projects such as the Tour de la Bourse, Place Bonaventure and Place du Canada⁶². This quest for modernity that Montreal pursued at the time was in sync with the era's philosophy of free circulation of individuals and merchandise. The underground extended its tentacles under the downtown core through time in a very chaotic yet pragmatic manner, pushed by private owners pursuing private interests and promoting commercial activity⁶³. The result is a rambling assemblage of corridors and merchandise galleries of very different aesthetics and (sometimes) awkward proportions. This is where the underground becomes an interesting site

to latch on when thinking of implementing public spaces of democratic meaning in the downtown core. The thesis project will provide a project of democracy integrated to the existing network, attempting to provide a different kind of institution in an area driven by capital-generated activities.

The name 'underground city' seems to imply that it is a city of its own within the city, yet the civic quality of the subterranean space is discussable. When the metro was inaugurated in 1966, Jean Dumoutier, director of the architecture division at the metropolitan transportation bureau was imagining the underground as "a real city, with its traditional components: its streets with cafés and boutiques, its squares and its neighborhoods. A city as animated as the one above the surface, one that has its local dwellers and it's meeting spaces."⁶⁴ In reality, the Montreal underground today is rather a series of corridors in which it is difficult to orient itself and within which the citizen is not invited to stay and inhabit the space. In the underground, you are invited to circulate and consume, sheltered in a conditioned weather. Could we address those issues by providing an inclusive platform whereby a multiplicity of uses of the space become possible? The following chapter will look at the notions of property and surveillance given the implicit impact they have on appropriation (or non-appropriation) and inclusiveness (or exclusiveness) of space.

Figure 34. Plan of downtown Montreal and the Underground City by Agence Métropolitaine de Transport.

Chapter Seven: **Property and Surveillance**

Figure 35. Artist Graham Caldwell's *Compound Eyes*, in Montreal's Underground network near the Square-Victoria Station. The piece was featured for the 2015 edition of the Art Souterrain Festival under the theme *Security in our society: What remains of our personal freedoms?*

Evaluating the notion of public space as being defined as accessible by all, the underground network is a grey area between public and private nature. Most of the spaces of the network are accessible to the public, yet they are private properties. Environmental psychologist Perla Korosec-Serfaty considers the city as a civic space, a public property that pertains to a collective authority, led by citizens, which she thinks does not apply to the case of the Montreal underground⁶⁵.

Korosec-Serfaty points out that it is a network of commercial galleries, a pure concentration of private capital in a society of free ownership that simply follows an underground circulation network⁶⁶. Being a continuity of the street above ground, citizens perceive the underground as part of the public realm. This implies that the project of implementing public spaces within the network would probably be successful through citizen appropriation, given the public perception that the users already have of the underground.

In the thesis *Montréal Souterrain, une étude de perception et de comportement* – Montreal Underground's perception and behavior study – (1995), Evelyne Dumitrescu Lacatus sampled a number of users of the underground and inquired about their perceptions of the network. Surprisingly, all of the people interviewed perceived they were standing in a public space, even given all of the surveillance apparatuses deployed in the underground around them⁶⁷. Again, it could be defended that for the network to truly become characterized as public, the underground city should be punctu-

ated by spaces that are not capital-driven and that allow for 'true' citizenship.

Figure 36. Map of the surveillance cameras in the Complexe Desjardins section of the underground network produced for the Canadian Centre for Architecture by Surveillance Camera Players (2009).

For the project to become a space of 'true' public appropriation, the notion of surveillance in the network is one that needs to be addressed. Being a collection of private properties, the underground in Montreal is under the constant surveillance. A great number of cameras and security agents punctuate the network under the control of the Réseau Info Sécurité Montréal (RISM), who is in charge of keeping order in the RÉSO network. These measures were established in 1984 after criminality and graffiti started to increase in the interior city⁶⁸. At the time, Pieter Siljkes, architecture critic from *The Gazette* newspaper pointed out that to fight against any security threat, the Montreal underground should be animated rather than what it was doing, criminalizing the flaneur⁶⁹. Siljkes' intervention went unheeded and the establishment of high security measures led to the estrangement of the individual from the network, rendering a space where the individual was simply tolerated and isolated⁷⁰. This leads us to propose that surveillance apparatuses could be eliminated in favor of a return to open 'civilian' security that encourages self-regulation.

The underground today is a space of exclusivity for the conforming individual, the undisturbing one – the passerby, the worker or shopper. Being an important part of downtown core's public space, the City of Montreal could promote inclusiveness and facilitate the appropriation of space for the citizens, by changing the way security is ensured and by providing a better access to the underground. We will now look at the architectonic relationships found in

the underground network to evaluate how a new type of architecture could intervene within the network and with what consequences.

Figure 37. OACI section of the underground where citizens are highly invited to circulate by security agents.

Chapter Eight:
Architectonics: Above versus below,
Open versus close

The architectonic articulation of the network segregates the surface above and the network below. As soon as one enters the underground, the visual landmarks seen above ground are lost and the inconsistent and unclear signage makes it difficult for users to orient themselves. There are however some interesting exceptions within the network where an attempt was made to create a relationship between the above and the below.

Figure 38. Atrium of the Complexe Desjardins opens up the Underground network.

At Place-des-Arts, the art work by Claude Bettinger entitled *Glass Ceiling* resembles a telescope, kaleidoscope and periscope all in one, with an angel pointing to the sky⁷¹. This creates a unique skylight that shifts one's perspective depending whether one stands above or below. Another interesting space between the above and the below is the large atrium of the Complexe Desjardins. According to Ivan Drouin, "the building's design, with its two immense glass windows that flood the space with natural light, reflect the wish of former Mayor Jean Drapeau that someone standing in the middle of the complex should be able to see both the Place-des-Arts and the Notre-Dame Basilica."⁷² The open atrium of the underground has a strong relationship with the surface through its visual connection, direct sunlight and the dilatation from the intricate shopping corridors scale to the large opening of space on multiple levels. This dilatation of space works well in the underground network and would be interesting to implement within the thesis project because it opens up the underground and therefore provides the individual a better understanding of the space through visual connections.

Figure 39. Photo series through the underground network by author (2015).

If we return to Evelyn Dumitrescu Lacatus' behavior and perception study, the specificity of an underground city is the presence of a physical barrier towards the exterior, the envelope, which is due to the sum of structural elements necessary for the depth of construction of buildings and infrastructures⁷³. As a matter of fact, it is this loss of transparency that provokes this rupture of visual understanding of space for the users. This is where the relationship between open public spaces above ground and the underground network below offers us interesting opportunities. Given the relative freedom from structural elements, open spaces can convey an opportunity to create interesting openings within the existing underground network. We will now look at Montreal's specific socio-political context and attempt to situate the architectural project's relevance.

Figure 40. Section showing the relationships of the buildings above and below ground part of the *Métro/Éducation* proposal by Michel Lincourt and Harry Parnass to create an education infrastructure based on the existing metro system (1970).

Chapter Nine:

Montreal's socio-political context

Figure 41. Election of Jean Lesage as Quebec's Prime Minister in 1960. Jean Lesage is known as the father of the Quiet Revolution in the province of Quebec.

Relating activism and democracy to the urban context of Montreal is quite pertinent given Montreal's specific socio-political context. The Quiet Revolution — or *Révolution Tranquille* — was a profound social, political, cultural and economic transformation of the Quebec province that occurred in the 1960s. Within a decade, the province that had been through three decades of Great Darkness awakened through the secularization of society and the creation of a welfare-state⁷⁴.

Figure 42. Children going to school using the metro, Place-des-arts Station (1970).

Since the Quiet Revolution, a certain culture of protest remained in the province and the downtown core of Montreal's urban fabric has often been the theatre of insurgents for social and political claims. In 1968, the student movement protest for a free education system as well as political reform⁷⁵ took the form of large demonstration in the downtown core; the place where power is concentrated. The same approach was taken several times to manifest discontent by disturbing the street and its adjacent ivory towers. In 2011, the Occupy Montreal movement took place at Victoria Square in the International district part of the downtown core. The two-month occupation of space renamed the square as 'Place du Peuple'⁷⁶ and was inscribed as part of the Occupy Movement's claims.

The recurrence of outbursts in the most capital-driven area of the city reveals the ongoing importance of the downtown core as a platform for political manifestation. Given the important layer of the underground Montreal as part of the downtown core, it would be opportune to evaluate how public spaces could promote meaningful spatial relationships between the surface above and the ground below.

Figure 43. Student protest during the 2012 Printemps École in Montreal.

Figure 44. Occupy Montreal at Square Victoria (2011).

Democracy as the impossible project of architecture?

Figure 45. First interpretation of the site and a possible architectural intervention. The yet undetermined project acts here as a canvas, a void or a cut-out in the city where processes of democratic discussion have the opportunity to occur and be visible.

Is democracy the impossible project of architecture? If the architect is the sole author of the project, does this not necessarily prescribe ways to inhabit the space? Therefore, how can the architect allow for inclusiveness and plurality? Perhaps democracy is the impossible project of architecture, for to be possible it would surely need to take a finite form, which would defeat its purpose as a space for expression. As we have progressed through this thesis, we have asserted that we might need to embrace the fact the democracy is the impossible project of architecture and therefore must be ever changing and generated by the citizens. In the following part we will look at Victoria Square as a specific site of implementation and will explore architectural interventions that speak to the previous questions.

Site analysis

When analyzing Montreal's underground network, it is interesting to look at the relationships (or the absence of relationships) between the grid of streets above ground and the organicity of the network below the surface. The following analysis shows the downtown core of Montreal as a Nolli map – the black poché indicates private spaces while the white shows publicly accessible spaces. The layer above shows the public/private relationships above ground while the layer below shows spaces accessible below-ground. The middle layer represents the meeting of the two layers to provide a reading of the spatial relationships between both layers.

Figure 46. Nolli Map of Montreal's downtown core in three layers, the above ground, the below ground and their intersection.

Victoria Square

The zoomed-in analysis shows a close-up of Victoria Square, a green park adjacent to a metro station located in the International District. The photo survey points in red to outdoor views while the pink ones point to the spaces of the Underground. The analysis renders a disjuncture between the above and below spaces and an absence of dialogue between the two surfaces.

Figure 47. Nolli Map close-up of Square Victoria and photographic montage of the various above and below ground views.

Finding a program

The mapping below presents various actions that could be addressed by a program for this architectural project. They are various ways that the space could be inhabited to promote an engaging way to be a citizen. Spaces will be provided such as a micro-library to provide information and organization space for protest and discussion. A framework will also be put forward for the space to become a platform for gathering, citizen activities and discourses. The program provided will consist of both indoor and outdoor publicly accessible spaces to allow for shelter from the elements and to provide a continuous transition between the underground network and the surface above.

Figure 48. Programmatic diagram.

Hints towards an architectural response

The intention of this project is to create an open framework within which opportunity is provided. As a new civic beacon and for the space to promote inclusive appropriation, the architecture put forward will be a backdrop to a wide range of urban activities and gatherings. Providing openness and flexibility, the proposal will hopefully become a public space that allows for *agonism* and *dissent* through civic action. If democracy is the impossible project of architecture, maybe democracy is re-tuned through the contribution of citizens as active players in the building of the city? Could we say that inviting citizens to be actively involved in the space might become a project of democracy inscribed in urban space? The architectural response to this thesis, *Scaffolding Democracy*, will attempt to answer this question within the specific context of the underground city in Montreal.

Figure 49. Schematic design diagrams showing a variety of spatial appropriations.

Scaffolding Democracy

In light of the concepts and precedents studied previously, the project will address three major issues. First, the proposal will open up the underground by trying to blur the limit between above and below, as well as the one between inside and outside. The architecture put forward will offer a variety of ways – some discursive, some obvious– to get in and out of the underground network. This architectonic language will reveal a stronger relationship between the two circulation surfaces of the city and allow for natural light to penetrate the underground network.

Second, the proposal will act as a platform for the activity happening within. To do so, the architecture put forward will be a muted framework that allows for transformation by citizen initiatives. The idea is that the space becomes appropriable and can adapt to a variety of programs and events.

Third, the proposal will integrate a network of recording and listening stations through which people can share their thoughts and contribute to a democratic discussion platform. Those stations will bridge physical and digital dimensions to allow for a holistic interaction that is in sync with contemporary realities.

Implantation

The implantation of the project at Victoria Square is located at the southwest end of the square where it can dialog with the park on the other side of St-Antoine Street. The proposal brings together two parts of the square that are divided by Square-Victoria Street, by interrupting the street traffic one block before its current dead-end. Locating the new proposal centrally and eliminating part of the traffic passing through the site would allow for Square Victoria to be more accessible and appropriable.

As seen on the following implementation map, the project takes the neutral shape of the square. The intent here is to create what Pier Vittorio would describe as «Architektur ohne Eigenschaften – or architecture without qualities, freed from image, style, obligations of extravagance, useless invention of new forms, or even from architecture's history."⁷⁷ The approach is to highlight the potential of the site by reducing the architecture form to its essential nature, allowing for what unfolds within the space to be made visible.

Figure 50. Implantation map of the project on Victoria Square. Map showing the Ville-Marie Highway passing underneath the downtown core.

Leaking above, infiltrating below

The project seen in plan reveals an agora-like public space, stepping down into a wide arena from where different accesses to the underground are found. The plan also shows a large ramp leaking out onto St-Antoine Street towards the green park on the northeast side of the square. Another ramp also links the large arena directly to Victoria Square Park's North block under the street. A double colonnade holding the roof above also frames the recessed space. Seen from above ground, the project allows for fluid movement of great masses of people in and out of the space as well as urban seating on the agora-steps.

Figure 51. The existing rotunda below ground at Victoria Square.

Seen in plan from below ground, the project reveals another architectural language; one that is discursive through the access of different underground tunnels that link to the surrounding buildings and the metro station. Replacing the small access with escalator access and the inefficient underground rotunda, the arena becomes a large meeting space from which different accesses are provided. An additional access is also added to link the agora with the southeast strip of buildings. The circulations found above are straightforward and fluid while the one below are more discursive but the large recessed space below the canopy mitigates the relationship between the two by allowing for gathering.

Figure 52. Schematic plan of the public space above ground.

Figure 53. Schematic plan of the public space below ground.

Figure 54. Exploded axonometric of the proposal showing above and below interventions. The existing rotunda in white is outlined in black below ground and replaced by the large agora space that provide various accesses to the underground paths.

Learning and Sharing Centre

Programmatically, the core component of the project is an outdoor public space, but there would be an urban Learning and Sharing community Centre that would be integrated below ground on the periphery of the square. The two-level space would consist of a series of spaces for community gatherings as well as accesses to both physical and virtual knowledge – books, magazines, newspapers and Internet. The spaces would be highly adaptable through the use of foldable panels and movable furniture to allow for a multiplicity of uses. On the metro level, two stories below ground, the space leaks outside through operable doors to permit a permeable relationship between the indoor public space – the Learning and Sharing Centre—and the outdoor space – the Square. The relevance of such a space integrated to the square pushes for a democratization of knowledge and allows for gatherings of various communities to allow a constant occupation of the adjacent square.

Figure 55. Plan at level -2 (Metro level)

Figure 56. Plan at level -1

Figure 57. Plan at Ground level

Figure 58. North-East to South-West section through the ramp descending from Rue St-Antoine Ouest.

Figure 59. Perspective from inside the Learning and Sharing Centre.

Figure 60. Perspective from inside the Learning and Sharing Centre looking into the Square.

Do-It-Yourself urbanism

A crucial aspect of the project is the creation of a base on which citizens can add on. *Volume magazine's* issue 43 entitled *Self-Building Cities*⁷⁸ was published in April 2015 to highlight the rise of urban self-building. A spread in the issue put forward a 'Dictionary of Confusion' where new urbanism theories were defined. The term 'Do-it-yourself urbanism 2' relates to this thesis "as a strategic approach adopted by municipalities to develop the city by empowering inhabitants to build certain areas of the city themselves."⁷⁹ This goes back to the previously mentioned work of Teddy Cruz, where existing top-down processes and policies are challenged to favour bottom-up initiatives. As a proposal that would have to be conceived for the City of Montreal, the Do-It-Yourself urbanism approach would be applied here through the integration of citizen initiative, scaffolding architecture.

Scaffolding architecture/ Scaffolding democracy

Being a project that emerges from the intention to offer a platform for expression, the architecture acts as a framework within which the citizens can build. The double colonnade found at street level would be in fact a system on which scaffolding could be attached to.

Figure 61. Three days assembly process of Mark Fisher's stage set for a music concert.

Figure 62. Mark Fisher's set design constructed with repetitive elements for easy transportation and assembly.

Various precedents can demonstrate the potential for scaffolding. British architect Mark Fisher is known for his stage set design for famous rock shows ranging from Pink Floyd to U2. Fisher's stage architecture consisted of massive structures that had to be assembled in three days and disassembled as quickly to travel from city to city and therefore necessitated a large amount of repetitive components that had to be assembled easily⁸⁰. The standardized systems developed by Fisher were designed to fit within transportation equipment⁸¹. In this case the system was very easy to assemble and disassemble, but the main difference between Fisher's standardized elements and the scaffolding proposed here is that Fisher's components were exclusive. The idea to use scaffolding is that it is easy to assemble and disassemble, it is easily available and can be added freely to the existing framework by the citizens to create the structures they would need.

Scaffoldings are literal and symbolic appropriations of the space that allow for a variety of different uses. The project 24/7 by Fra.Biancoshock for the 2015 Memorie Urbane Street Art Festival in the city of Gaeta in Italy turned a scaffolding into a vertical living space⁸². The artist wanted to make a statement about the artist's public/private life but the

Figure 63. 24/7 project by Fra.Biancoshock for the 2015 Memorie Urbane Street Art Festival in Gaeta, Italy.

installation also highlighted the potential of using scaffoldings for inhabitation. Another interesting project is *KAMP47* by Malka Architecture, consisting of using scaffolding to insert vertical tents⁸³. The installation for homeless people acts as a shelter from the elements and from vandalism while bringing awareness of their presence in the city.

For this project, the scaffolding has a practical and symbolic significance. As an existing system that is standard and easily found, it would become the point of departure for multiple adaptations. As a symbolic gesture, the scaffolding acts like a veil, a curtain behind which a renewal or upgrade occurs. At Victoria Square, the scaffolding wrapped around the public space would act as the veil of democracy's renewal.

Within the new Square's framework, scaffolding would be inserted within the double colonnade through various configurations: as is, as kiosk, as restaurant, vertical campsite, etc. The existence of the permanent framework at Victoria Square would allow for small-scale elements to be plugged-in such as power sockets, Wi-Fi, furniture and bathrooms, to serve people's contemporary daily needs and to create a habitable environment. The scaffolding is understood here as the element that allows for diversity in the civic appropriation of the site.

Figure 64. KAMP47 project for homeless people. Vertical tents inserted in a scaffolding by Malka Architecture.

scaffolding as is

scaffolding as kiosk

Figure 65. The figure above shows where there is the system of insertion for the scaffolding, between the perimeter's double colonnade.

Figure 66. The figures on the right show a variety of déclinaisons possible for the scaffolding.

scaffolding as vertical camp site

Adaptable and appropriable architecture

The project flexibility aspect through the ephemeral architecture of the scaffolding can be understood by looking at it in three moments in time. First, there is the everyday space when the large canopy covers the recessed public square where people can meet, hang out and pass through to access the metro. Second, there is the event space when screens are deployed, stages can be installed and the slope and steps of the square invite people to sit. Such events could be for instance a debate, public discussion, screening, festival, etc. Food, toilets, kiosks and other facilities would be deployed from the scaffolding system. The third moment is the insurgent space, where it gets occupied to give visibility to a cause. Vertical campsite and services can be provided with the scaffolding, screens can be deployed. The space becomes a platform to voice dissent and agonism.

Figure 67. The everyday space.

Figure 68. The event space.

Figure 69. The insurgent space.

Figure 70. The roof would consist of a series of translucent ETFE pillow louvers. ETFE is a lightweight and durable membrane fabric that would to cover the whole square while requiring less structural support. By being inflated on a rotating steel frame, the ETFE pillows would act as louvers that could be opened to allow direct light in or closed to shelter from the elements.

Figure 71. The three diagrams on the right present three configurations of the roof that respond to the weather to shelter space, allow sunlight or allow ventilation.

The new Square must be understood as a point of departure for the appropriation of the city by the citizens into a new kind of manifestation of the relationship between people and power. If democracy today has lost its connection with the urban life and is mostly sustained without people's involvement, the given proposal invites for spontaneous appropriation of the new Square, an appropriation that then extends to the whole city's existing infrastructures, using scaffoldings through additive process to create new spatial conditions. The expected appropriation – the creation of a new locus– would trigger people's creativity and create the premises for a new exercise of democracy that is intertwined with everyday life. Starting from the new Square, the new locus created through scaffolding would spread in the city, attaching to existing buildings, bridges, public spaces and parks as physical manifestations of citizen activity. Opening up the underground, the new Square also invites for an appropriation of the underground through the use of the scaffolding to create new discursive ways of inhabiting the corridors of the subterranean network. The ever-changing citizen-generated locus would evolve through the city's ongoing civic discussions and be a translation of the exercise of democracy by the citizens in space.

Figure 72. Appropriation of the underground through the use of scaffolding.

In conclusion, the project is an attempt to provide a democratic public space in the city by allowing for different modes of expression both through an architectural platform and through providing an initial framework that allows for citizens to participate in the creation of space. The proposal is understood as two architecture languages: one that is permanent and muted – the framework, whether it's the new Square or the existing city infrastructure– while the other is ephemeral and a direct expression of citizen input –the scaffolding. The following perspectives will show four different scenarios in which the Square and the city would be occupied and appropriated according to fictional civic events.

Figure 73. Perspective approaching the agora.

Scenario 1.

The Square stages the everyday life of Montreal's citizen. Some people are going to work, others are having a picnic. A musician plays near the Square and his echoing in the space gives the feeling that the Montreal Jazz Fest is not over yet...

Figure 74. Perspective looking inside the Square.

Scenario 2.

Tonight takes place the screening of Fellini's La Dolce Vita during Montreal's Film Festival. Hundreds of people gathered at Victoria Square to sit on the slope and do the 'dolce farniente'. Meanwhile, many other screenings occur in different parts of Montreal where temporary theaters made of scaffolding have been constructed for the festival.

Figure 75. Perspective arriving from the underground.

Scenario 3.

This morning, Quebec's prime minister has announced he will carry on with the major cuts in universities' funding he has planned. Students and professors have started to gather at Victoria Square to discuss protest methods and to install banners. The deans of four major Montreal universities have announced they will allow students to install scaffolding on campus to create temporary installations for gatherings and for symbolic occupations.

Figure 76. Perspective of the Square from the South-East corner.

Scenario 4.

After hearing the news of a new large-scale development near the waterfront, many Montrealers are scared to lose accessibility to a precious site by the water in favor of another condo tower. The Victoria Square screen projects the civic debate on the matter and citizen movements have started building scaffolding by the waterfront to appropriate the space as public and to make the space more accessible through the provision of various services.

A virtual world with a spatial dimension

Given the strong presence of media and technology today, it seems the virtual public sphere has replaced physical public space. As Joop de Boer and Jeroen Beekmans highlight it in their book *Pop-Up City*, "We use Facebook and WhatsApp as communication platforms over the town square, we shop on Amazon and leave behind empty shopping streets, and kids prefer their digital playgrounds over physical playgrounds."⁸⁴ An opportunity emerges where this omnipresence of virtual space should be addressed in the design of this new public space. The project then also proposes a design where the virtual space and physical space become inter-related and seamless.

A series of 50 pairs of recording and listening stations would be scattered in the downtown core at specific points, one above the ground on the street, the other one in the underground network. The stations would be located at specific points where the underground streets cross the public street above, giving awareness of the relationship between the two surfaces. The station above ground would have an interactive luminous floor while the one below ground would have a luminous ceiling to emphasize the connection between both surfaces.

The stations would be spaces where one can communicate with the user above or below him or her, could record him or herself about an idea or an opinion he or she has or could listen to videos by other users. Those videos would then be shown by trending topics filters on the screens in the new public space at Victoria Square. The result would be a democratic platform that is inscribed in both the physical and virtual spaces, also physically establishing a strong relationship between the underground and the above ground.

Figure 77. Location of the speaking and listening booths throughout downtown Montreal. The booths are located where the underground network passes below a street above to highlight the relationship between the two surfaces.

Figure 78. Exploded axonometric showing above and below ground Speaking and Listening stations' relationship.

Figure 79. Collecting data to produce a virtual and physical civic discussion.

Figure 80. Perspective of a station above ground.

Figure 81. Perspective of a station below ground.

Postscript

The present thesis can be situated and understood through four key points that bridge the research and the architecture project.

First, the project starts from providing a muted framework that celebrates urban gatherings and everyday urban life through a large sheltered open space recessed to create an agora and open up the underground network. Through its architectonic language, the project allows for inclusiveness and plurality.

Second, a crucial element is the customizable add-ons made possible through the insertion of scaffolding on the existing structure. The principle is to welcome citizen involvement through democratizing the architecture. The scaffolding would then take advantage of the city as an existing infrastructure on which to attach. The Square is only a point of departure from which citizen-driven architectures could emerge, invading the underground network and extending their tentacles in the city space, responding to the socio-political climate. Through this apparatus, *dissent* and *agonism* have the possibility to co-exist.

Third, the access to information and the right to gather and to organize are provided through the implementation of the Learning and Sharing Centre below the steps. This gesture also helps to blur further the relationship between above and below ground and between inside and outside.

Fourth, citizen-civic expression is encouraged through the creation of a space for discussion—the Square— and also through the integration of sharing and listening stations, both underground and below ground throughout the Downtown core. The data gathered by the stations is then redirected for diffusion to the square.

It is important to understand that the space is not designated for protest but rather it allows it. This nuance is important to ensure the project doesn't defeat its purpose. By allowing for conflict, discussion and dissent to exist, as Mouffe has framed it, it is less likely that conflict will emerge as violent outburst. The idea here is to create a meaningful public space where democratic discussion happens and where conflict has the possibility to exist.

The question of this thesis might be left unanswered. Maybe asking the question was being too optimistic. Or naïve. Democracy may or may not be a project of architecture. Is democratic architecture about democratic decisions on making space or is it about making space dedicated to democratic decisions? It seems like the first might never be architecture while the second defeats its purpose through circumscribing the exercise of democracy.

Hopefully, without being an absolute answer to the thesis question, this project is a step forward towards a democratic building of our cities. The crisis of Neoliberal thought has highlighted how problematic was the way we have lived and built cities in the past decades. Now the future is ours and we must be optimistically naïve and keep on dreaming of that 'better world'.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my Grand-father René who passed away in January for teaching me to be a hardworking person and for his constant encouragement throughout my academic journey. Merci.

Endnotes

Introduction

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List of figures

The figures are the property of the author unless stated otherwise.

Figure 1. *Montréal comme projet de résistance et d'indépendance* collage (2014). Studio project realized during Helsinki DSA 2014.

Figure 2. Inflatable cobblestone, action of Eclectic Electric Collective in cooperation with Enmedio collective during the General Strike in Barcelona 2012. Photograph: Oriana Eliçabe, taken from: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/disobedientobjects/tools-for-action-interview-with-artur-van-balen>

Figure 3. Printemps Érablé student movement protesters carrying placards created by École de la Montagne Rouge at UQÀM School of Design (2012). Taken from: <http://ecolemontagnerouge.tumblr.com>

Figure 4. Sony Center in Berlin opened in 2000 and was part of the Potsdamer Platz redevelopment project that took place after the German reunification. Taken from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potsdamer_Platz

Figure 5. Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao by Frank Gehry. The project had massive media coverage and impacted the economy of Bilbao through creating tourism infatuation but was also criticized for its effect of gentrification on the city. Taken from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guggenheim_Museum_Bilbao

Figure 6. Protesters outside the European Central Bank in Frankfurt (2011). Photograph: Arne Dedert/EPA, taken from: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/nov/20/peter-beaumont-democracy-in-crisis>

Figure 7. Surveillance cameras in public spaces. Taken from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Closed-circuit_television

Figure 8. Metal studs on the ground near a building in Montreal to prevent people from occupying space acts as an exclusion apparatus. Photograph: Pedro Ruiz, taken from: <http://www.ledevoir.com/societe/actualites-en-societe/410545/des-pics-anti-itinerants-a-montreal>

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Figure 10. *Civic City Cahier* series edited by Jesko Fezer and Matthias Görlich and published by the Bedford Press. Taken from: <http://www.bedfordpress.org/ebooks/civic-city-ebooks/>

Figure 11. The online database Spatial Agency. Taken from: <http://www.cca.qc.ca/fr/le-cca-propose/1346-spatial-agency>

Figure 12. Hypotopia project produced by students from Technical University of Vienna as a protest to the country's 2014 bailout of Hypo-Alpe-Adria. Photograph: Armin Walcher. Taken from: <http://www.archdaily.com/568263/hypotopia-architecture-as-a-vehicle-for-political-action>

Figure 13. Aerial view of Robson Square in downtown Vancouver. Taken from: <http://searcharchives.vancouver.ca/robson-square-800-robson-street-5>

Figure 14. Sketch of a building of the Potteries Thinkbelt project with a crane in the distance showing the project as a perpetual process of adaptation. Photo taken by author looking at the Cedric Price Archive at the CCA.

Figure 15. Diagrammatic axonometric showing the construction of basic and specialized units. Cedric Price's drawings seem to qualify the building as a kit of parts in which the inhabitant can participate to the assembly. Taken from: <http://upsampeinadobuendi-apablo.blogspot.ca/2011/10/blog-post.html>

Figure 16. Typical segment in plan of the transfer areas of the Potteries Thinkbelt. The plan reveals a flexibility and adaptability through providing a framework in which units can be inserted. Photo taken by author looking at the Cedric Price Archive at the CCA.

Figure 17. Interior of the Courthouse at Robson Square. Arthur Erickson's intention was to provide the symbolic aspect of 'transparency of law' for the new design of the courthouse. Photograph taken from publication: Crespín, Thaly, Laura Fiset, and Kevin Murray. *Megaform as Public Project: Investigations on Robson Square*. Montréal: CCA, 2014.

Figure 18. Robson Square as the stage of the festivities during the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Photograph taken from publication: Crespín, Thaly, Laura Fiset, and Kevin Murray. *Megaform as Public Project: Investigations on Robson Square*. Montréal: CCA, 2014.

Figure 19. The 'stramp', a hybrid between a ramp and stairs designed by Erickson provides inclusiveness through proposing different ways of appropriating the space. Photograph taken from publication: Crespín, Thaly, Laura Fiset, and Kevin Murray. *Megaform as Public Project: Investigations on Robson Square*. Montréal: CCA, 2014.

Figure 20. Robson Square sketch by Arthur Erickson demonstrates an intention to provide continuous pedestrian circulation throughout the three blocks of the project. Photo taken by author looking at Arthur Erickson archive at the CCA.

Figure 21. The Museum of Arts of Sao Paulo by Lina Bo Bardi is elevated to create a public space at ground level. Photograph: Pedro Kok, taken from: <http://www.archdaily.com/537063/ad-classics-sao-paulo-museum-of-art-masp-lina-bo-bardi>

Figure 22. Watercolour drawing by Lina Bo Bardi depicting the building as a backdrop to the activities occurring in the public space. Taken from : <http://jardimdecateia.com.br/editorial/querem-transformar-o-masp-em-um-elefante/>

Figure 23. Images of projects from Estudio Teddy Cruz website. Taken from: <http://estudioteddycruz.com/index1.html>

Figure 24. Diagram from Estudio Teddy Cruz depicting the practice's critical approach to a given problematic through the integration of processes. Taken from: <http://estudioteddycruz.com/index1.html>

Figure 25. Speakers' Corner in London's Hyde Park in Victorian Times where an individual could step up in a designated space to express his opinions or ideas. Taken from: <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/oct/13/freedom-of-speech-extremists-katharine-whitehorn>

Figure 26. Mégaphone interactive installation by Moment Factory in Montreal's Place des Festivals revisited the Speakers Corner typology through the integration of new technologies. Taken from: <http://filmmakermagazine.com/76381-the-interactive-mic-etienne-paquet-alexandre-lupien-on-megaphone/>

Figure 27. Tents of the Occupy camp populating the Old Market Square in Nottingham, UK (2012). Photograph: Lewis Stickley/PA, taken from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/9218547/Occupy-camp-to-disband.html>

Figure 28. Serigraphed placards created by École de la Montagne Rouge for the 2012 student movement in Montreal. Taken from: <http://ecolemontagnerouge.tumblr.com>

Figure 29. G20 protest banners in London (2009). Photograph: Reuters, taken from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/g20-summit/5065721/G20-summit-thousands-start-protest-march-through-London.html>

Figure 30. Barricade in the rue Saint-Martin, Paris (1848). Taken from: <http://www.cliomuse.com/les-miserables-3-guide-to-some-historical-references.html>

Figure 31. Protesters construct barricades to block traffic in Moscow during the 1993 Russian constitutional crisis. Photograph: Vladimir Filonov, taken from: <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/black-october-revisited/487053.html>

Figure 32. Chu Chi tunnels used by the Viet-Cong during the Việt Nam War. Taken from: <http://invisibel.net/zoopolitik/capitulo-iv/>

Figure 33. Photograph of the Bonaventure Metro Station in Montreal (1970). Photo taken from book. Lincourt, Michel, and Harry Parnass. *Métro/éducation*. Montreal: Université De Montréal, 1970.

Figure 34. Plan of downtown Montreal and the Underground City by Agence Métropolitaine de Transport. Taken from: <http://www.stm.info/fr/infos/reseaux/plans-des-reseaux>

Figure 35. Artist Graham Caldwell's *Compound Eyes*, in Montreal's Underground network near the Square-Victoria Station. The piece was featured for the 2015 edition of the Art Souterrain Festival under the theme *Security in our society: What remains of our personal freedoms?* Taken from: <http://imgur.com/gallery/PljXw>

Figure 36. Map of the surveillance cameras in the Complexe Desjardins section of the underground network produced for the Canadian Centre for Architecture by Surveillance Camera Players (2009). Taken from: <http://www.notbored.org/2feb09.html>

Figure 37. OACI section of the underground where citizens are highly invited to circulate by security agents.

Figure 38. Atrium of the Complexe Desjardins opens up the Underground network.

Figure 39. Photo series through the Underground network.

Figure 40. Section showing the relationships of the buildings above and below ground part of the *Métro/Éducation* proposal by Michel Lincourt and Harry Parnass to create an education infrastructure based on the existing metro system (1970). Photo taken from book. Lincourt, Michel, and Harry Parnass. *Métro/éducation*. Montreal: Université De Montréal, 1970.

Figure 41. Election of Jean Lesage as Quebec's Prime Minister in 1960. Jean Lesage is known as the father of the Quiet Revolution in the province of Quebec. Photograph by: PLQ, taken from: <http://www.lactualite.com/societe/les-turbulentes-annees-de-la-revolution-tranquille/>

Figure 42. Children going to school using the metro, Place-des-arts Station (1970). Photo taken from book. Lincourt, Michel, and Harry Parnass. *Métro/éducation*. Montreal: Université De Montréal, 1970.

Figure 43. Student protest during the 2012 Printemps Érablé in Montreal. Taken from: <https://lesindignesduquebec.wordpress.com/2013/01/10/le-budget-de-leducation-2013-selon-pecul/>

Figure 44. Occupy Montreal at Square Victoria (2011). Taken from: <http://www.trolettphoto.com/blog>

Figure 45. First interpretation of the site and a possible architectural intervention. The yet undetermined project acts here as a canvas, a void or a cut-out in the city where processes of democratic discussion have the opportunity to occur and be visible.

Figure 46. Nolli Map of Montreal's downtown core in three layers, the above ground, the below ground and their intersection.

Figure 47. Nolli Map close-up of Square Victoria and photographic montage of the various above and below ground views.

Figure 48. Programmatic diagram.

Figure 49. Schematic design diagrams showing a variety of spatial configurations.

Figure 50. Implantation map of the project on Square Victoria. Map showing the Villermarie Highway passing underneath the downtown core.

Figure 51. The existing rotunda below ground at Square Victoria.

Figure 52. Schematic plan of the public space above ground.

Figure 53. Schematic plan of the public space below ground.

Figure 54. Exploded axonometric of the proposal showing above and below interventions. The existing rotunda in white is outlined in black below ground and replaced by the large agora space that provide various accesses to the underground paths.

Figure 55. Plan at level -2 (Metro level)

Figure 56. Plan at level -1

Figure 57. Plan at Ground level

Figure 58. North-East to South-West section through the ramp descending from Rue St-Antoine Ouest.

Figure 59. Perspective from inside the Learning and Sharing Centre.

Figure 60. Perspective from inside the Learning and Sharing Centre looking into the Square.

Figure 61. Three days assembly process of Mark Fisher's stage set for a music concert. Photo taken from book: Holding, Eric. *Mark Fisher: Staged Architecture*. West Sussex: Wiley-Academy, 2000.

Figure 62. Mark Fisher's set design constructed with repetitive elements for easy transportation and assembly. Photo taken from book: Holding, Eric. *Mark Fisher: Staged Architecture*. West Sussex: Wiley-Academy, 2000.

Figure 63. 24/7 project by Fra.Biancoshock for the 2015 Memorie Urbane Street Art Festival in Gaeta, Italy. Taken from: <http://popupcity.net/from-scaffolding-to-private-skyscraper/>

Figure 64. KAMP47 project for homeless people. Vertical tents inserted in a scaffolding by Malka Architecture. Taken from: <http://popupcity.net/from-scaffolding-to-private-skyscraper/>

Figure 65. System of insertion for the scaffolding, between the perimeter's double colonnade.

Figure 66. Possible declinaisons for the scaffolding.

Figure 67. The everyday space.

Figure 68. The event space.

Figure 69. The insurgent space.

Figure 70. ETFE pillow louvers roof axonometric.

Figure 71. Configurations of the roof that respond to the weather to shelter space, allow sunlight or allow ventilation.

Figure 72. Appropriation of the underground through scaffolding.

Figure 73. Perspective approaching the agora.

Figure 74. Perspective during an evening event.

Figure 75. Perspective arriving from the underground.

Figure 76. Perspective from the South-East corner.

Figure 77. Location of the speaking and listening booths throughout downtown Montreal. The booths are located where the underground network passes below a street above to highlight the relationship between the two surfaces.

Figure 78. Exploded axonometric showing above and below ground Speaking and Listening stations' relationship.

Figure 79. Collecting data to produce a virtual and physical civic discussion.

Figure 80. Perspective of a station above ground.

Figure 81. Perspective of a station below ground.

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