THE ARTISTIC PLANNER AND
THE PLANNING ARTIST
IN PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES
IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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CONTENT

ABSTRACT

A brush of paint on a grey compound wall can mean so much more than simply an addition of colour. It can mean an appropriation of public space, a shared public space enclosed by a wall now 'owned' by someone. It can mean an arisen conflict leading to debate about the right to use public space.

The Wall Project is a Mumbai based beautification project that uses paint and outdoor walls to brighten up their city. The Urban Typhoon workshop is an activity set up in self-evolving neighbourhoods where municipal interference is scarce. During the workshop urban practitioners – such as architects, planners, designers and foremost artist - from outside are invited to "brainstorm collectively and produce new projections, alternative visions, ideas and solutions for the neighbourhood".

In the contemporary discourse of participatory art practices and participatory and collaborative processes in urban development insights of the two projects above can be gained. Critique raised against both practices are short-term engagement, tokenism and an authority position seemingly impossible to avoid.

Perhaps a way towards an understanding can be found in hybridity and thoughts of third ways when discussing participatory and collaborative practices in unequal environments?

Key words: urban development, art, planning, participation, collaboration, India

SAMMANFATTNING

Ett penseldrag på en grå vägg kan betyda så mycket mer än enbart ett färgstarkt tillägg. Det är ett övertagande av offentligt rum, ett gemensamt rum inramat av en vägg som nu "ägs" av någon. Det kan betyda uppkomst av en konflikt som leder till debatt om rätten till det offentliga rummet.

The Wall Project är ett försköningsprojekt baserat i Mumbai som använder färg och väggar för att göra sin stad vackrare. The Urban Typhoon workshop utspelar sig i självutvecklande områden där kommunal inblandning är sällsynt. Under workshopen bjuds urbanister – som arkitekter, planerare, designers och framförallt konstnärer - utifrån in för att "kollektivt brainstorma och producera nya föreställningar, alternativa visioner, idéer och lösningar för grannskapet".

I den samtida diskursen om medverkande och samarbetande konst- och stadsplaneringspraktiker kan förståelse för de två projekten fås. Kritik som riktas mot båda fälten innefattar kortsiktigt engagemang, skenbart inflytande och en auktoritär ställning till synes omöjlig att undvika.
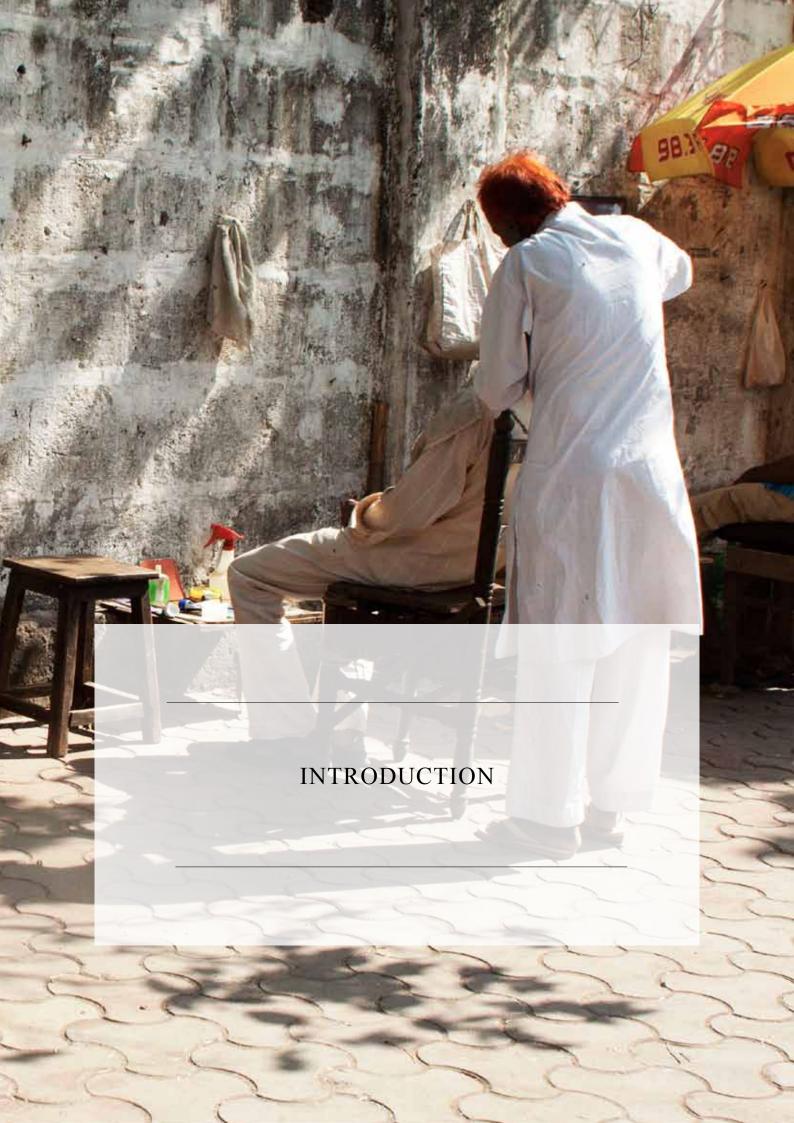
Kanske en väg mot förståelse kan hittas i hybriditet och tankar om tredje vägar, när medverkande och samarbetande praktiker i ojämställda miljöer diskuteras?

Nyckelord: stadsplanering, konst, planering, medverkan, samarbete, Indien

INTRODUCTION

My main interest when writing my Bachelor's thesis in landscape architecture was how a city is *perceived and experienced* by its citizens, inhabitants and visitors (Andersson, 2008). The initiating interest for my Master's thesis, the essay you are now about to read, was how a city is *created and produced* by its citizens, inhabitants and visitors.

This means not just a change in focus or interest, but demands other theoretical references and another perspectives of the urban system where the relationship between people's actions and the urban environment is studied.

A few years ago a Swedish television show made a documentary of Indian youngsters painting walls in a seemingly deprived area in Mumbai, India. Grey walls of flaking plaster were transformed by buckets of paint and brushes into paintings of vivid colours. According to the people in the feature the bright colours had a positive affect on the area as well as on its inhabitants. I was intrigued by the initiative taken by these young people and the easy way that they transformed the urban setting of which they were a part themselves. They painted as The Wall Project, a Mumbai based initiative with the simple aim of making their urban environment more beautiful by caring for it themselves. Since then I have followed the project's facebook page and stayed in tune with their doings, interested in following their work of urban transformation by art.

When I reached the part of my education where a Master's thesis is to be performed my interest in The Wall Project was still alive. With the funding of the scholarship Minor Field Study provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, SIDA, I was able to go to India during November and December in 2010 to study the thoughts and makings of The Wall Project on site. The initiator, visual and video artist Dhanya Pilo, welcomed me to Mumbai and during my pre-travel research I came in contact with the Mumbai based urban think tank Urbz, a non-profit organisation interested in self-developing urban areas. Our correspondence lead to me taking part in a workshop, the Urban Typhoon workshop, they were about to organise in an urban village in Delhi. The urban village of Khirkee correspond to the self-developing neighbourhood's of Urbz's interest and as

the workshop was organised in partnership with Khoj, a local art centre, it also corresponded with the aim of my journey to India. Along with The Wall Project the Urban Typhoon workshop came to be my point of departure for further investigations of public participation in urban landscape development.

My pre-research of the two projects I had been to study was thorough, in contrast to my knowledge of public art and collaborative urban planning, when I left for India in early November 2010. The reason being that I did not want to commence my investigation with preconceived notions but use my findings and questions raised in India as a departure point for the further discursive investigations presented in this thesis.

The excitement I felt previous to my departure for Delhi and Mumbai alternated with worry. Was I going to be able to study what I went to this to me foreign country, these foreign cities, to study? Was I going to be able to meet the people I intended to meet, was I even going to be able to speak to them? How do I perform this study in a respectful manner, without loosing my focus, and avoid being taken advantage of due to my vulnerability as a lonely foreigner? Once in India the excitement and worry kept leading parallel lives in my confused mind. Some of the questions were answered, others not. Some of the worries were justified, though most were fortunately not.

The projects I was to study, The Wall Project and the Urban Typhoon workshop, may not have unfolded the way I thought they would, the direct outcome of them may not have been as direct as I had imagined in advance. The persons involved did not appear as I thought they would and the sites approached had different status and structure than what my previous understanding informed me about.

At the mandatory course given by SIDA prior to the departure, we were told that a plan for the trip is good to have, but what is yet more important is a backup plan and to be prepared for a trip where nothing turns out the way we planned it to. These words of wisdom were constantly in the back of my mind during my stay, consoling and pushing me as my experiences did not always correspond with my expectations.

India was everything and beyond what I had imagined it to be. It appears difficult to me now to describe India without using worn out clichés such as the constant crowds of people, honking of horns, strong colours and spices. I experienced all that and more. I found myself in a country, or rather in two cities, with physical structures that varied from rigid as stone to soft as a cloud and where social hierarchies were present in everything.

The two projects serving as departure point and case studies for this essay – The Wall Project and the Urban Typhoon workshop - were not chosen because of their great similarities. In organisation and methods they are quite different, the respective initiators do not share many common features. But they do have one important qualityin common; the belief that citizens are able to and should be allowed to transform the physical reality they inhabit. With little relation to municipal planning and development departments the feature of activism is present at different levels in both projects.

They were studied in a foreign setting with the hope of gaining insights I would not have been able to gain in familiar surroundings. Sometimes you may need to travel to the far side of the world to be able to see what you have in front of you. A cliché that is nonetheless true.

AIM

As stated above the initiating interest intriguing me to write this thesis was a curiosity in how a city is *created and produced* by its citizens, inhabitants and visitors[1]. And as a student in landscape architecture I want to gain deeper understanding of the professional role of a landscape architect in this collective forming of urban environment. When I retire at the end of my career, I may be able to give hundreds of answers to this quite wide question. Now, in the very beginning of my career, as a newborn landscape architect, I will settle with investigating one, or perhaps a few, of the many roles a person with my education can enter.

The purpose of my master's thesis is to deepen and concretise my understanding of collaborative and participatory initiatives in urban development. By relating collaborative and participatory practices in urban development to similar practices in public art my aim is to gain further knowledge in the field of urban planning where my academic training is pursued. I want to investigate the meeting between public art and urban planning, in discourse as well as in practice. The understanding of how public participation can be implemented is fundamental.

1. *"The production of space" as a notion often refers to Henri Lefebvre (2011), author of the book with this title written in 1974. One of its aims is to deconstruct the conception of a dualism between the physical and the social environment, by claiming the citizens as producers of the city.*

MAIN QUESTIONS

Landscape architecture is a broad field. The different scales a landscape architect is trained to cope with range from a local flowerbed to a regional landscape and may even expand a global context. The two main fields constituting landscape architecture is design and planning, one not possible without the other, yet owning significant differences. While design within landscape architecture lies close to public art, urban planning is connected to political societal policy.

   As public art and urban planning has emerged as collaborative practises the previous role of professionals as single experts has altered. Or perhaps a rearrangement of that statement is more correct; as the previous role of professionals as single experts has altered; public art and urban planning has emerged as collaborative practises. The postmodern project has rejected the idea of specialisation in favour of generalised professionals[2]. Collaborations and participatory processes initiated by artists and planners occur, that include other professions, organisations and private enterprises and, most importantly, the public.

   Can the loss of the image of the professional as single expert be a gain in democracy?

   Can a vertical hierarchy truly be smoothed out in favour of horizontal collaborations and participatory processes?

   What is the role of the planner and the artist when such including methods of work is used is unequal urban environments?

2. Even if the majority of planning projects still go on as experts assignments, or just because of this, it is important to observe, formulate and elaborate on the new trends. The bureaucracies being inert, the pushing from 'external activities' is very important to accomplish a change.

CONDITIONS
AND LIMITATIONS

This thesis will not present a formal discourse analysis and thus do not claim to give a comprehensive representation of contemporary discourse. Instead I have read and referred to articles I believe are fundamental for achieving a consistent understanding when discussing the questions posed above.

A complication with great impact on my work has been the distance between India and Europe.

The physical distance demanded a separation of the work; case studies conducted in India and literature studies in Europe. Thus no follow-up of the case studies was made; the essay is based on the facts and observations collected only during my stay in India.

The cultural distance meant a gap between Indian and European planning, and between Indian and European discourse.

The cases studied have to a great extent formed the direction of the investigation, the literature read and thus the final result of the essay.

COLLABORATION
AND PARTICIPATION
-
ROOTS

Up until the major shift in urban planning around the end of WWII the professions of architecture and urban planning were the same, and architecture was seen as an 'applied art', much like industrial design (Lindholm, 2006; Taylor, 1997). Art and architecture was taught at the same institutions, producing a profession of expertise. For art the separation from modernism was a questioning of the relation subject – object, and the status and autonomy of the work of art. In the case of architecture the separation from modernism was an abandonment of architectural space, the traditional architectural room.

But where art evolved into a critical movement the architectural discourse was, and still is, forced to find answers due to the functional demand inherent in the practice (Gabrielsson, 2006). And at about the same time as art and architecture split up, urban planning separated from architecture to form its own discourse and practice looking towards social science (Healey, 1997).

Then public art and urban planning transformed over the years to follow, due to societal shifts and emerging modes of thought. The professional role of the practitioners took on new ways of performing its tasks. In recent years communicative, collaborative and participatory practices have emerged in the two fields, providing an artist and a planner in new positions. The role is now foremost mediating and by that its formerly given authority is altering in favour of more horizontal processes.

The trends of 'collaboration' and 'participation' are broad and included in the concept of 'sustainable development'. They also have slightly different connotations, 'collaboration' meaning simply 'involving' while 'participation' mean to 'take part in something initiated by someone else'.

METHODOLOGICAL
CONSIDERATIONS

The work behind this essay were conducted based on quite a few methods suiting different purposes, purposes that have clarified during the process. The case studies served as a base for understanding the theoretical discourse, simultaneously the reading helped in the understanding of the cases. In the same way my mind has constantly wandered back and forth, from case to discourse, from practice to theory, from India to Sweden.

   According to Michael Bassey the purpose of research is to "make sense of something that seems problematic" (2004, p. 111), to gain further understanding in fields or of issues that lay uninvestigated, by relating them to ideas within some form of theoretical understanding with a critical eye. I do not aim to make evaluations of the projects studied or aspire to alter them in any way. In this sense my work lies closer to what Bassey calls 'discipline research' than 'educational research', the latter concerned with improving an action through theoretical understanding and the first with increasing theoretical knowledge of the discipline. Though I may not with this essay be able to present any revolutionary findings taking my discipline huge steps forward, I would be pleased to awake only a few new thoughts in the mind of this paper's reader.

CASE STUDIES

A case study is neither an experiment nor a survey, but an "investigation in considerable depth into one or a few cases in naturally occurring social situations" (Bassey, 2004, p. 114). The purpose is to gain a generalised knowledge by expressing findings of one context that might hold in others, to gain general insights and understandings by looking at the particular where similarities as well as differences may help illuminating the subject in hand.

   By the case studies I aim to understanding foremost the projects, not the persons involved in the projects. Of course the individual persons are a significant and thus important part of the projects; yet no focus has been placed upon internal relations. The aim of the case studies is not to make an evaluation of the projects or to gather data to present a critique against them, but to use my observation as a ground for further discursive investigations. Therefore no data in a scientific sense was collected or analysed.

The methods used for observing The Wall Project are not the same as the one used for the Urban Typhoon workshop. In the latter I was an active participant in a single event; I was what in psychology studies would be called a 'complete participant' performing a 'participant observation' (Bouchard, 1976, p. 385) where I during the study became a member of the group. In my participation in the Urban Typhoon workshop I did not hide my intentions or the purpose of my taking part in the event but was perfectly open about the study I was making.

The study of The Wall Project had a more 'from the outside-approach'. In this case I did not study nor take part in an actual event, rather I studied the results of several events. I visited sites all over Mumbai where paintings had been made. My understanding of the project came from studying paintings, walking in the areas and talking to residents and by-passers about the work of art.

INTERVIEWS

To gain further knowledge of the projects, the thoughts around them and their effects, interviews were made where the most important ones were with the initiators of the two projects; for the Urban Typhoon the founders Rahul Sravistava and Matias Echanove and for The Wall Project Dhanya Pilo. The interviews were executed with the aim to further understand the observations of the case studies as well as the intentions behind the projects. The interviews were conducted by me and lasted for approximately one hour each.

The interviewer (I) asked questions to the interviewees (Sravistava, Echanove and Pilo) based on previous observation of and participation in their projects. The theoretical knowledge in the field was gained after the interviews; hence I did not place myself in the traditional role of 'expert' based on my competence as a researcher. Instead the interviews were based on the knowledge of the situation possessed by the interviewees and my unstructured questions posed (Bouchard, 1976).

LITERATURE STUDIES

The case studies and interviews constituted a ground of knowledge guiding me in the literature study where the discourse of the relevant fields of public art and urban planning were scanned. Not focusing on one specific theory I aimed at localising contemporary collaborative and participatory practices in public art and urban planning to present a varied discourse serving as a base for my understanding of the cases as well as any conclusions drawn. My approach to the literature has been 'theory-seeking', as opposed to 'theory-testing', where I seek to form an understanding of the practices by literature and not to test the literature by investigating practice (Bassey, 2004, p. 117).

A fair amount of the literature that guided me through the work of this essay was initially unfamiliar to me.

I am not an art student and never before have I dug deeper in neither the history nor the theory of the field. I have not studied political science, yet more than a few of the articles grounding this essay are written within that field, investigating art in relation to politics. The field of urban planning is my area of competence, yet a generous amount of the literature even on this topic was new to me, hence gave me a difficult but interesting time along with a lot of new knowledge.

DISPOSITION

The following essay is divided into three parts corresponding to its periodical chronological production. The two first parts are exploratory and descriptive, presenting the case studies and literature studies constituting the base of the discussions and the conclusions drawn in the merging part three.

PART ONE:
POINTS OF DEPARTURE

My experience of the projects and a presentation of them are narrated in this introductory section. The departure point is two projects that are alike in some aspects, and differ in others; the Urban Typhoon workshop and The Wall Project. The projects are chosen neither for their similarity nor for their difference, but for the way they state a global example of how artists work as mediators, facilitating public participation in urban transformation of local neighbourhoods by engaging local inhabitants and communities.

Beatriz Colomina means that the narrative creates its object as it is being described (in Gabrielsson, 2006, p. 147). In the same way I have described the projects according to my personal observations, hence created, or perhaps *re-created*, them with myself projected upon them. Thus my observations are not to be read as a comprehensive report of the projects but as an experience building a base for a proceeding discursive investigation. The descriptions of the projects have not received approval of the initiators; they are fully based on my observations, which I do not claim possess objectiveness.

The Urban Typhoon workshop I participated in was organised in the urban village of Khirkee in Delhi during ten days in early November 2010. The workshop was the most recent edition in a series of three up until then. It was organised by the urban think tank Urbz, based in Mumbai, in partnership with the locally situated art institution Khoj with the aim to "brainstorm collectively and produce new projections, alternative visions, ideas and solutions for the neighbourhood" (Urbz.net, 2011).

Invited to this collective brainstorming were urban practitioners from all over the world that believe creativity and imagination are important qualities when addressing issues of urban development. The networks' of Khoj and Urbz to a great extent consists of artist, thus artist were the dominant profession taking part in the workshop.

In this initiating part of the essay Khoj and Urbz as the organising partners are portrayed, the concept of the workshop is clarified and the physical setting, Khirkee, is described through my experience of it. Also my experience of my participation in the workshop is narrated, and the way it was conducted, the themes addressed and the interaction between foreign workshop participants and the local residents is pictured.

In Mumbai the urban beautification project The Wall Project keeps on decorating the walls of the city. Within the given frames - no politics, no religion, no sex - any theme for a painting is allowed. With no attention paid to your previous skills you are invited to take part in this instant fix of deprived walls enclosing urban space.

Visual artist Dhanya Pilo initiated The Wall Project as she painted the first painting on a compound wall outside her house. Since then many walls have been transformed by colour, now the project organises workshops and painting sessions where their network is invited to join. The aim is to beautify while empowering citizens by encouraging them to participate in the remake of their own neighbourhoods.

Though The Wall Project is visible all over Mumbai, two sites of paintings were of greater importance to my study. The first, the area surrounding Bazaar Road in the suburb Bandra, is where Dhanya Pilo made the project's first paintings. Here an abundance of paintings can be seen, some repainted, others fading. The second site is along the wall often called 'the Great Wall of Mumbai' due to its length. A large amount of paintings cover the wall for some kilometres, paintings made during a large event where more than four hundred Mumbaikers participated.

PART TWO:
DISCOURSES TOWARDS
A MEETING POINT

Public art and urban planning are the fields of interest where I search in literature for a deeper understanding of the projects and the ideas presented in the previous part. Public art because both of the projects explicitly work with artists and art, and urban planning because of the transformative features of the projects found in urban development alike, and of course as planning is my door to enter this investigation.

From avant-garde art and social activism of the 1960's and 70's a 'collaborative community based art practice' emerged. A socially aware and engaged artist typically concerned with issues addressing society's socially excluded works in deprived areas or with communities on the fringe of societal norms. This artist redefine public

art, its audience and emphasize the value of art in projects aiming at social change and amelioration by including the public in the making of public art. Concepts like 'art in the public interest' and 'new genre public art' are introduced as this avant-garde practice is institutionalised in the 1990's.

In a related manner the communicative turn in urban planning altered the former role of 'single expert' inscribed in the planning profession in favour of collaborative and participatory processes. The vertical hierarchy is smothered out in favour of horizontal collaborations where the urban planner focuses on local cultural recourses rather than exclusively physical structures. In the 1960's Sherry Arnstein draws the "ladder of citizen participation" as a tool to separate true public participation from simple tokenism. In the recent decades creativity has entered as a buzz word (to a great extent through Richard Florida's 'creative city), focusing on city marketing by participatory and collaborative models to brand cities on a global market.

This artist and planner take on roles of mediation and facilitation as they are no longer recognised as absolute authorities. The collaborations of artists and planners include other professions, organisations or private enterprises, but most important is the participation of the public.

PART THREE:
RETURNING TO POINT OF DEPARTURE
WITH DISCURSIVE AWARENESS

Artists and Planners initiating collaborative and participatory processed share many beliefs and methods in their engagement in urban development. In spite of good intentions both practices are criticised.

Architects Bavo calls the practices 'NGO-art' as they find more features in common with activism than with public art, criticizing the lack of political and long-term engagement. Lia Ghilardi agrees and means that a large-scale and long-term focus is crucial when addressing social issues.

According to critic Hal Foster a horizontality can never be achieved when an artist or a planner engages in deprived neighbourhoods as the former ones inevitably possesses as cultural authority.

Perhaps a way towards an understanding can be found in hybridity and thoughts of third ways, when discussing participatory and collaborative practices in unequal environments?

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PART ONE

POINTS OF DEPARTURE

THE URBAN TYPHOON
WORKSHOP IN KHIRKEE

Before my arrival in Delhi in November 2010 I had never been to India. My hosts in Delhi and a taxi driver greet me at the airport and we go for a high-speed ride through the pitch-dark Delhi night. Bumpy roads carry us from the centrally located airport. The roads are all wide and divided into driving lanes by white marks on black, mended asphalt. Yet the cars, rickshaws and bicycles, all mixed up, all in a hectic speed, use every inch of the road. The bicycles use the advantage they have over cars and rickshaws – their slimness – to squeeze in between other vehicles and seem to always get in front of waiting crowds at traffic lights.

The honking of horns never ends; all the rickshaws have "horn please" painted in squiggly letters at their back.

Our taxi does not leave the large roads until we are right at my accommodation, a tiny flat above a non-paved street. On the balcony evidence of the recent Diwali festival is still present in form of yellow and red lanterns. On our way we have passed gated communities, large villas and institutions. We have passed neatly cut trees, embassies, a plenitude of stray dogs and people living on the streets. We have been guided through an urban landscape of Indian traditions merged with British imperial planning, a landscape to which I am foreign.

DELHI

During the British Raj New Delhi was added to the existing Delhi, and was assigned capital city of imperial India and the imperial power was placed in New Delhi around the central circular Connaught Place (Kumar, 2000). The surrounding area consists of low-rise buildings in a low-density structure. Large plots and few buildings, often bungalows, much different from the neighbourhoods of Old Delhi, house the people of power. The neo-classical buildings of New Delhi, white and large, are supported by columns and surrounded by huge gardens and roads. In Old Delhi you will find a different structure, gates and doorways open up from the streets into private residents and courtyards, houses stand close to each other. The segregation by income group is evident; many of the neighbourhoods in New Delhi have the word 'enclaves' in their names and are accessible only for legitimate

residents. New Delhi is juxtaposed to the Old Delhi, almost making the older parts a suburb of its newer twin.

Delhi, including both its newer and its older parts, is a rapidly growing city. The city in all is not particularly dense in Indian measures, in contrary its non-denseness is often stated as a problem resulting in heavy traffic and thus high rates of pollution. The densest habitats are 'urban villages', former rural villages now absorbed in the expanding city. Their denseness is due to their rural history and the present lack of planning control; the urban villages serve under the 'Lal Dora bylaw', excepting the villages from strict planning and construction norms and regulations under the Delhi municipal act.

Most of these villages have seen their agricultural land being built upon by settlers who come to Delhi in search for employment (Kumar, 2000). In these villages the distinct division between rural and urban is blurred, sometimes even erased, as the new urban surrounding alters functions and occupations within the villages and among their inhabitants (Davis, 2007).

Tradition and history has made Delhi a truly cosmopolitan city where all India is represented in religion and in region, the urban village of Khirkee being no exception.

KHIRKEE VILLAGE
AND
ITS EXTENSION

When arriving at Khirkee you travel along the large Press Enclave Road. The two broad lanes are separated by an elevated traffic island, planted with bushes doing their best to cope with the dryness and the heat. The rickshaw pulls over and you get out on the left side of the road, just in front of a modern building shaped as a large box. The road is busy, dusty and drowned in the ever-ongoing noise of honking from numerous mopeds, cars, bicycles and rickshaws. The newly erected building is the latest addition to Delhi's commercial supply; The Select City Mall, containing shops of international as well as Indian fashion chains in an architecture perhaps more associated with global commerce than with traditional India. Some of the garments presented for sale are decorated with handmade embroideries made of pearls and glass. Many of them are produced locally on the opposite side of Press Enclave Road in Khirkee village and in its extension, not more than a stone throw away.

The first morning I was going to Khoj's office in Khirkee I showed the rickshaw driver a note with the address I needed to go to. After some conversation we could agree on the nearest landmark, the Select City Mall. We started driving.

As I could not speak or understand the language, or was in any way familiar with the area I was to visit, I was

completely in the hands of my driver. The driver asked any man whose attention he could get for directions. Still as we left Press Enclave Road and entered the denseness of Khirkee, we were lost. We went right and left, turned back, and turned again.

In Khirkee, a structure much different from the large-scale mall appears. Khirkee presents a varied small-scale environment spatially, socially and economically different from the one across the road. The uneven narrow streets are filled with carts selling colourful, fresh vegetables and wandering domesticated animals. A tapestry of multicoloured fabrics and houses unfolds. The air is thick with multiple scents of spices, cooking fumes and generously sweetened, hot chai.

Khirkee village, the oldest part of the area, has been substantially transformed due to the rapid urban growth of Delhi. It has an ancient history as it originates from the 14th century when Khirkee Mosque, then in a central location in the village, was built. Today the mosque is protected and enclosed by fences several meters tall, making the settlings keep a good distance. The large stone monument provides a quietness, whose counterpart cannot be found in the surrounding area. The former agricultural land providing food and occupation for the citizens of the village is now a mere memory; during the last decades it has been colonised by migrants moving to Delhi in search for work and residence. Khirkee extension has unauthorised emerged in this process of urbanisation and grown without planned provision.

Due to municipal absence, the facilities are poor and the streets flooded every rain season. In the extension the buildings build as much as four stories and constitute a heterogeneous collection of neighbourhoods with a cosmopolitan setup of inhabitants, due to the influx from the region and beyond. The buildings are built in varying geometries according to location, often with service facilities such as restaurants, shops, cobblers, carpenters and barbers on the ground floor. The upper floors are occupied by families of all generations by a population predominantly Muslim or Hindu. From the basements the repeating sound of sewing machines is often heard.

The original village of Khirkee is today an urban village, included in the Lal Dora classification (Proposal for Khirkee, 2011; Community aspirations vs. metropolitan megadreams, 2011). As the extension is unauthorised it has a complete lack of regulations and a total absence of municipal influence. Due to this lack of regulation the streets and the houses do not possess official names or numbers. A postman in Khirkee told us that the houses do carry numbers, newly built houses or stories added chronologically get the next available number. As a consequence the numbers are scattered all over the houses and apartments of the village.

After some driving back and forth and several questions for directions asked later, I see two girls about my age with blond hair and clothes by Scandinavian brands. In this setting they are unmistakably foreigners. I approach them and they confirm that they are here for the same reason as I, and they know where Khoj is located. Pleased, I pay, tip my driver far too much, and thank him for the trouble.

KHOJ INTERNATIONAL
ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION

In a street in Khirkee extension, not far from the mall, the art incubator Khoj is located in a white plastered building. Since 2002 the organisation has occupied the generous building (Khojworkshop.org, 2011), just above the local chai walla, containing office space, studios for artists and a gallery, all linked by winding stairs and centred round a shaded courtyard. Khoj welcome international as well as Indian artists to their residency program, providing workshops and accommodation.

Since the establishment of Khoj in 1997 the organisation has presented a program of various forms of art practices. They serve as an incubator for art and ideas, focusing on artistic exchange and the building of a network of artists predominantly active in south Asia. Khoj aims at actively supporting and promoting emerging artists and experimental art practices while constantly raising critical discussions on contemporary art. Their practice has resulted in an active Indian network setting up workshops and projects across India.

Khoj's location in Khirkee influences the projects conducted by the visiting artists. The organisation's connection to the neighbourhood serves as a base for many of the projects executed; community and public art programmes are actively supported. The children of Khirkee are frequent visitors and active part takers in workshops in dance or theatre arrange by Khoj.

In tune with Khoj's spirit of collaboration and networking, they invited Urbz to bring their Urban Typhoon workshop concept to Khirkee with hopes of new objectives and insights when the networks of the organisations join with the local community for some intense days of civic engagement.

URBZ

The philosophy of the urban think tank Urbz is based on the notions that residents are experts in their own neighbourhoods and that a city is best developed by its inhabitants (Urbz.net, 2011). They believe that the expertise of the residents is fundamental knowledge for planning and urban development. To properly access this knowledge there must be an acceptance for people's control of their own neighbourhood.

Urbz, based in Mumbai and Goa, was founded in 2008 by Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava as a result of shared interests and exchange of ideas. Echanove is a researcher doing his PhD in urban studies and activism, and Srivastava an anthropologist with several years of research and lecturing on his CV (Interview Urbz, 2010). Urbz have an activist approach towards urban development and citizen participation and engage in what they call 'user generated cities' and 'cities in formation' of which Khirkee and the extension is a proper example (urbz.net, 2011).

A 'user generated city' is a neighbourhood where participatory development is very much alive; where the urban

landscape is not simply a collection of architectural objects, but a flexible structure able to quickly transform in response to its users. These areas are often complex, contested and threatened but Urbz argue that they are vital learning grounds for new social practices. The term 'neighbourhood in formation' is a word play, altering the negative tone of 'informal neighbourhoods', which is not negative per se, but through the connotation with 'slum'.

These are areas in constant transformation as their users develop them. Their values derive from the way they are being used, not from a speculative market. If the neighbourhood is able to develop in its own pace it will constantly improve, in many cases evolve into a creative hub. It provides a space outside the grid and is often popular with and populated by artist and creative practices.

Urbz is located in their office in Dharavi, a neighbourhood in Mumbai corresponding to the concept of both 'user generated' and 'in formation', where they offer space for international as well as national interns. Their global network includes among others professions architects, anthropologists, economists and information technicians. The practice is action based and by organising workshops and seminars they emphasise the importance of sharing information (khojworkshop.org, 2011; urbantyphoon.com, 2011; urbz.net, 2011).

THE
URBAN TYPHOON
WORKSHOP

Urban Typhoon workshops are events where urban practitioners – such as architects, planners, designers and foremost artist – who are engaged in urban issues are invited to a specific neighbourhood for a collective effort at urban transformation, together with the local community (khojworkshop.org, 2011; urbantyphoon.com, 2011). The workshops are set in sites corresponding to Urbz's notion of 'user generated' and 'in formation' with the aim of giving the residents the authority to conduct the process of developing the urban environment.

The purpose is to strengthen the voice of the neighbourhood by localising existing networks, bringing people from different parts of the neighbourhood and beyond together in a respectful and constructive way. The work during the workshop focuses on strategies of engagement, yet the aim is rather to understand ways of participation that already exist and to develop these further, than to propose new participatory methods.

An Urban Typhoon workshop is organised by Urbz in partnership with a local organisation – in this case Khoj – that is deeply rooted in the neighbourhood and has good connections to the local communities. The connections on site are essential for the credibility as well as the possibility to collaborate with the local residents, according to Urbz.

The event runs for ten intensive days where both the network of Urbz and of the organisation on site is invited

to participate. The participants invited are all asked to bring their own "tools and methodologies and put them in the service of the neighbourhood and its residents" (khojworkshop.org, 2011-08-25).

With the purpose of minimising regulations limiting the participants the workshop is open-ended. At the beginning of the workshop a common base of issues to address is set up for the proceeding work. The participants are free to form groups based on their interest and they work independently in these formations during the workshop. The resource team provided by, and to a large extent consisting of, Urbz and the local organisation provide guidance when needed and facilitate the contact with the local community. Daily gatherings with the entire group, consisting of feedback from the other participants and the resource team, serve as a platform for constant evaluation.

The work is documented during the week in order to do a presentation at the end of the workshop for the local habitants as well as for the workshop participants. All the projects are compiled into a report, which serves as an evaluation of the work made, summarising the workshop and its outcome. The concept of the Urban Typhoon workshop is in constant transformation, evolving during and after every event.

Since the outcome is open, the participants have the full responsibility of conducting projects valuable to the local community and hopefully some of the projects conducted will continue after the end of the workshop, prolonging the outcome of the event (interview Urbz, 2010; khojworkshop.org, 2011).

The Urban Typhoon set in Khirkee is the third edition, following Shimokatazawa, Tokyo 2006 and Koliwada, Mumbai 2008 (urbz.net, 2011).

URBAN TYPHOON KHIRKEE,
NOVEMBER 2010

At the first day of the workshop we were welcomed to Khirkee by an introduction to Urbz, Khoj and the village. We gathered in a square room on the second floor at Khoj, a brown broadloom carpet covered the brick floor. We sat on it, forming a circle, as we learned more about the workshop's structure and participants.

The attendants were from all over the world, although most of us came from India and Delhi. We were a multifaceted group of researchers, architects, urban planners, photographers and artists. The participants from Delhi were part of Khoj's network and on different levels familiar with the organisation and with Khirkee. For us arriving from other parts of the world, Khirkee provided a new encounter that we approached with different sets of mind.

Not present in this enthusiastic crowd were any of the local residents.

In order to prepare us for the work ahead we had been suggested readings on Khirkee, the village's history

and its current state. Despite this effort to provide a shared knowledge we all arrived with our personal mindsets, background knowledge and subjective aims. Some of us were very familiar with areas as Khirkee, for others it was the first encounter. Some of us were academics trained in urban studies, others artists. Some spoke Hindi, others only English. Some had a strong agenda for their participation, for others the workshop was a new experience.

The introduction was followed by a walk without direction or given presumptions in the area, as a way for us to investigate and discover the neighbourhood by ourselves. For those who for the first time attended an area like Khirkee, this first encounter with the village's narrow streets and buildings, shops, restaurants and small-scale manufacturers located in numerous basements and of course its people, was confusing. To understand what to make of it all and how to filter these impressions was a challenging, and at this point, a somewhat overwhelming task.

The second day themes were suggested and working groups formed. The list of themes included a broad spectrum from loose questions to rigid proposals. The themes were on various levels, addressing various issues. Some focused on improvement of physical infrastructure, others on social issues and yet others on methods of participation.

The questions asked to form themes were among others "How do local news spread here?", "What would happen if the streets were to get official names?", "How would the children of the village present it by photography?", "How does the water system appear when present and past waterways are localised?" "Where are the women of the village, how can they be addressed?".

After forming groups the weeklong work commenced. During the week some participants were added and some left, some new themes were developed and some rejected as the relationship between the participants from outside and the residents from within Khirkee, grew both deeper and broader, along with our understanding of the village

I teamed up with a Delhi based artist aiming at investigating the role and place of the women of Khirkee. To our advantage my partner spoke Hindi and possessed high quality social skills, which made it easier to approach the local women of which only a few understood some words of English. Thanks to my partner's language skills I avoided the evident language barrier my lack of knowledge of Indian languages builds.

Our work started by an investigation of how the female public space had altered over the years. Due to loss of agricultural land and improved facilities providing running water in the houses; the reasons to leave the home was reduced significantly, hence also the opportunities to interact with women from neighbouring households. This development had made the women increasingly tied to their homes.

As we met women, got to enter their homes and private spheres, we realised that the important issue was to

tell a story *by* the women and not *about* them. Not identifying them as a uniform community but as individuals with personal histories, experiences and knowledge. The final result of our work was the 'Khirkee Cookbook' with recipes by some of the women of Khirkee and its extension, along with photographs of them in their local environment and an illustration of the spatial relation between them all.

The question of the naming of the streets where answered by a resident with: "We are a village, the streets of a village don't need names". Only for foreigners, unfamiliar with the area, the maze-like systems of streets need names. For the resident the local shop or the barber tells the location and direction. Naming the streets also means formalising the area and mapping means authorising, actions that are not necessarily wanted, and definitely not uncontested, in an informal and unauthorised area like Khirkee.

   The photographs by the children of the village resulted in a treasure hunt; the localised water systems resulted in a discussion on possible ways of communication.

   The work with the women of the village resulted in 'Khirkee Cookbook' with local recipes using vegetables from the carts all over the village. The recipes were all connected to a specific place in Khirkee, aiming at giving a voice to the skills of the women living here.

The final day of the Urban Typhoon workshop in Khirkee the outcome of the projects were presented for the residents. Invitations were made as flyers and posters in English, Hindi and Urdu. The street outside Khoj filled up with people and as the day turned into evening and darkness fell, the projects were presented to the crowd. The presentations were presented as murals, interactive posters, video screening, book launching or any other form suiting the project in hand.

Each day started and ended with a common meeting where the projects were discussed with the participants of the workshop. Unfortunately all the participants did not attend these meetings, which made it difficult to satisfyingly grasp what was going on during the week. For the participants present the conversations raised a lot of questions and the gathering of the group provided important input and a frame for the otherwise loosely structured workshop.

   During the week the participants were asked to post daily thoughts of their work on a virtual forum, to make the process transparent. This task was performed with a varied engagement; some projects and participants posted notes every day, others made a few contributions. Some failed to post anything.

After ten intense days the workshop had reached its end and the participants left Khirkee. Khoj provided by their residency program a chance for the participants to follow up their started projects if they were engaged in doing
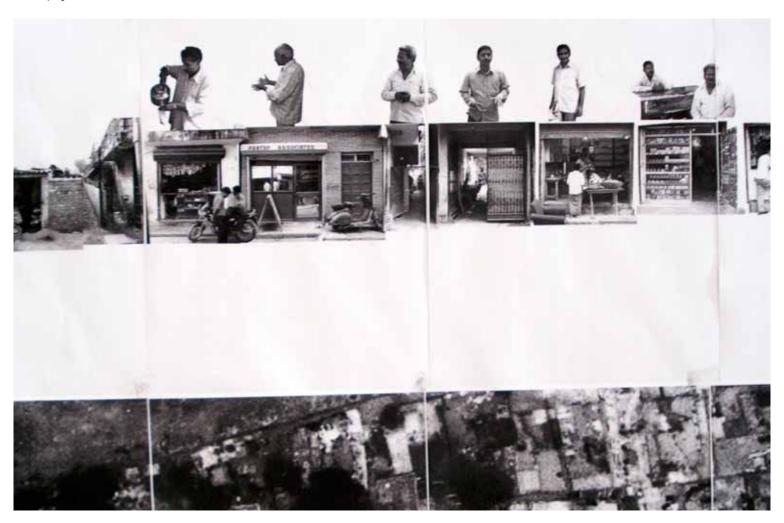
so. But the major part of the projects ended with the partition of its conductors. Remaining to be done was a summarising report acting as evaluation of the work conducted during the Urban Typhoon workshop in Khirkee.

Workshop participants.

Work in progress.

Women sharing recipes and local stories.

Streetscape Khirkee.

Presentation in the street outside Khoj.

THE WALL PROJECT

With the experience of the Urban Typhoon workshop, the participants and the people of Khirkee still fresh in mind I leave Delhi for Mumbai to continue my search for public participation. In Mumbai I am to get familiar with the beautification and empowerment project The Wall Project and to meet its initiator, local artist Dhanya Pilo.

As the plane approaches Mumbai the city unfolds as a scattered patchwork of settlements in shifting scales. Tall yellow and white multi-storey buildings seem to be squeezed in between irregular patterns of settlements covered in black and blue tarps. The air is humid and heavy with moist. Again a bumpy ride takes me to my accommodation. A rickshaw driver guides me and lets me off at Sion Railway Station, a crowded place next to a huge traffic intersection. On the other side of the traffic the small studio that is to be my home for the coming weeks, as I get to know Mumbai and The Wall Project, is situated. South of my tenement building is the middle class neighbourhood of Sion, northward Dharavi, often referred to as 'Asia's largest slum', unfolds.

MUMBAI

Mumbai is the financial and commercial centre of India as well as the nation's most numerous city. It has the highest population density in the world, and hence the land is very expensive and coveted. Mumbai, today constituting a peninsula as a result of land reclamation and causeways uniting the former seven islands, cannot grow due to lack of land. The 'twin city' New Mumbai, east of the bay separating Mumbai from the continent, is being developed as an answer to the shortage of land.

On the walls of this constantly expanding, cosmopolitan city The Wall Project paint in their urban beautification and local participation initiative.

ORGANISATION OF
THE WALL PROJECT

The start of The Wall Project was a white compound wall in the neighbourhood of Bazaar Road in the northern sub-urb Bandra where the initiator Dhanya Pilo then lived. The landlord gave permission for a painting to be executed on the wall, an initiative to add visual elements of colour, form and texture to an urban space used by a large number of people. The initial painting lead to several more and as the interest for the paintings grew, thestructure of The Wall Project started to emerge (interview Pilo, 2010; thewallproject.com, 2011).

According to Pilo, the idea behind the project is two-parted. One aim is to beautify a neighbourhood by engaging the local residents; the other is to make art accessible for an audience unfamiliar with art as it appears in galleries and museums. The core members of the project are trained artists using the walls of the city as canvases for their art, covering them with murals. They see the street as a common place, accessible for all social and economical layers of society, and displaying their art here makes it accessible for everybody.

The empowering feature of the project is the engagement of residents that are encouraged to paint in their own neighbourhoods. The Wall Project means that the action of actively altering your physical environment builds connections to it and generates a will to keep it attractive. The action of painting is in itself the primal part, the appearance of the actual painting is not as important. You can keep repainting it until you are satisfied (interview Pilo, 2010; thewallproject.com, 2011).

One important feature is a positive atmosphere. To keep the project a middle ground for painters, professional as well as non-professional, all social messaging is to be avoided and all sexual and political themes are asked to be excluded.

The structure of The Wall Project is organic and open, aiming at providing a platform for artists interested in performing in public. Anyone is invited to join and take part in the workshops and painting sessions executed. The core members of the project are facilitating the events but the participants are responsible for the themes, designs and the final outcome. The network is global and floating, based on civic engagement kept active by the project's facebook page frequently updated with news and upcoming events. By this network the project is constantly in progress, altering large events with paintings of single walls.

The basic aim of The Wall Project is to create awareness of a neighbourhood, awareness both among the local residents and among by-passers who come in contact with the visual art. The Wall Project encourages people to take responsibility for their neighbourhoods, as they recognise that the municipality fails to do so (interview Pilo, 2010; thewallproject.com, 2011).

The Wall Project visions a future were other art practices – such as dance, theatre and music – are included in the project's repertoire. They want to continue their practice of liberating the potential they find in public space, using all the space not and just the walls enclosing it, to create places of interaction between artists and non-artists, breaking down the social distance to art (interview Pilo, 2010; thewallproject.com, 2011).

EXECUTION OF
THE WALL PROJECT

The Wall Project grows by both active initiatives by its members and by invitations from organisations and housing cooperatives interested in getting their walls transformed by colour. When a blank wall is found, The Wall Project asks for permission from the wall's owner, if the answer is positive they bring their own paint and material and start painting. If the wall is large others are invited to join. The network is always on search for new sites, new walls to transform and The Wall Project has been exported to other Indian cities in search for walls to colourise.

Often when an organisation or housing cooperation requests paintings The Wall Project offers support and assistance in setting up a workshop to help the members and local residents to paint by themselves, bridging over the perceived gap between art and the average citizen. These workshops are often executed in partnership with the local organiser, that often has a social agenda in engaging local residents. Workshops have been organised at schools, hospitals and orphanages, often with the aim of engaging children in the transformation of their environment (interview Pilo, 2010; thewallproject.com, 2011).

The first paintings in the neighbourhood around Bazaar Road have multiplied and now cover many walls also around the neighbouring Chapel Road. The neighbourhoods are former fishing villages with prominent features of the Portuguese origin. The villages are now incorporated in the wealthy suburb Bandra, home to many of Bollywood's celebrities. The villages offer an irregular small-scale landscape with wooden houses and bungalows in various colours, mixed with more recent additions of brick and plastered buildings, often a few stories taller.

Walking in the area around Bazaar Road and Chapel Road is like entering a maze. The narrow streets are winding, constantly turning corners around houses. Many of the streets lack official names and are represented on maps as a massive, unidentified settlement lacking details. Low compound walls enclose some estates; others are directly facing the street. The wooden details of the houses are painted in bright colours, sometimes faded and flaked, marked by time. The grey plastered walls are left to face their fate, constantly loosing parts. The area is friendly with a welcoming atmosphere. Many of the walls here have paintings performed within The Wall Project, most of them by the core members of the network. If the paintings are not appreciated they are repainted or simply removed. Some of the paintings are appear to be recently made, still in shiny colours with distinct details.

Some are painted over or destroyed when a wall has been mended or broken; others have simply lost their colour due to sun and rain.

Along a purple wall three full sized Zebras run as if chased by a predator. The last one apparently did not make it, it is partly painted over, missing its behind and legs. A freestanding wall is covered by green faces, popping up over a red brick wall, saying "life is all about expressions". The faces looks unconcerned about the fact that the lower part of the painting has faded and received the same colour as the paved sidewalk underneath it. A stencil painted girl with a dotted skirt wears glasses, embraces a book and measures over two metres. The red wall behind her looks as if it has not yet dried.

The paintings around Bazaar Road and Chapel Road are made during a stretched time period and are not the result of one specific event; rather they represent the process and the growth of The Wall Project. The themes of the paintings as well as the styles, the techniques and the tools used vary. Some of the themes seem very well connected to the site, as the ones painted on shops, and others appear to lack any relation to the area. Some are humoristic aiming at making people smile; others are merely an act of beautification. For some paintings wall paint is used, for others spray cans. Some are sprayed by stencil, others graffiti paintings of the artist's name. But most paintings are made with brushes and wall paint in various colours.

From the neighbourhood of Bazaar Road and Chapel Road the paintings have wandered into the rest of Bandra, colouring subways, flyovers and walls across the area (nterview Pilo, 2010; thewallproject.com, 2011).

The largest wall painted by The Wall Project is also the longest wall in Mumbai. It is separating the western suburban railway from Senapati Bapat Marg, one of the main link roads of Mumbai, connecting the southern part of the city with its northern. The wall measures a bit above two and a half metres and is often referred to as the 'Great Wall of Mumbai', due to its length. From Mahim Railway Station in the north to Dadar Railway Station further south is a healthy half hour walk. Mahim station separates the informal settlement of Dharavi on its east side, from a residential area westwards. Senapati Bapat Marg, before the altering of names in Mumbai called Tulsi Pipe Road, is a wide, moderately used road with sidewalks on both sides, enclosed by the wall on one side and apartment buildings on the other.

A weekend in 2009 more than 400 people invited by The Wall Project gathered along Senapati Bapat Marg in a massive event about to make a radical visual change to the grey wall. Mr. R. A. Rajeev, at the time Additional Municipal Commissioner for central Mumbai, took the initiative. He appreciated The Wall Project's work and had a strong conviction of their act of beautification as a means for preventing littering and nuisance behaviour. The municipality provided a wall and paint and The Wall Project brought their network of painters and artists. The

painting sessions lasted for several days (Interview Pilo; 2010; Interview Rajeev, 2010).

Walking along the road with the Great Wall of Mumbai today shows the result of the passing of time and interaction with weather. As with the paintings in Bandra, the paintings on Senapati Bapat Marg are in various styles, techniques and themes. One painting portrays hands in colours of the rainbow reaching towards the sky, another asks for not cutting down a tree. As a reference to Banksy[3] someone has drawn a black and white nurse bending down and lifting up the wall as if it was a white sheet, revealing a painted red brick wall behind it. Red letters declare "Banksy" at the top.

   The surface of the wall is quite uneven and do not allow for detailed paintings. Most paintings are colourful patterns, abstract figures or random people portrayed in a naïve style. Around Dadar Railway Station, further down the road, the inspiration seems to have faded and messages that smoking is dangerous and even lethal covers the wall.

Even further south the road separates from the railway, it elevates into a couple of flyovers and finally reaches the more expensive southern Mumbai. Still a few walls confine the road, separating it from residential and commercial buildings on its sides, and again painted sections of the walls appears. The paintings here are a more recent addition, in brighter colours made with what appears to be higher artistic ambition. A person lacking facial expression holds a sign declaring that you can "keep your coins" because what he wants is "change". Black capital letters on a yellow background write the wordplay "Wall street".

The paintings along Senapati Bapat Marg are examples of how a grand manifestation can create an impressive collection of paintings and expressions, executed by a collaborative event where taking part in urban transformation is the key feature. Yet the expressions will fade if not repeated and demonstrate that the city is far from static but needs constant updating to keep evolving.

   Many of the paintings made as part of The Wall Project displayed all across Mumbai lack some parts and are slowly fading away. The missing flakes of paint shows that The Wall Project is not a monument that can be preserved, but an active process that needs to be repeated to exist.

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3. Banksy *is the one of the best known street art artists, now beeing sold at well known auktion houses around the world. The person behind the name is still unknown.*

Paintings at Bazaar Road, Bandra.

Paintings at Bazaar Road, Bandra.
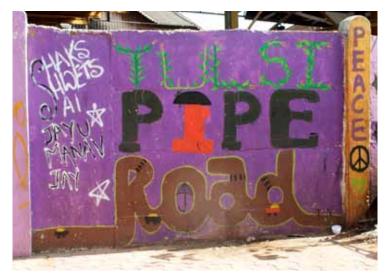
Paintings at Bazaar Road, Bandra.

Paintings at Senapati Bapat Marg.

The northern part of the wall at Senapati Bapat Marg.

Senapati Bapat Marg.
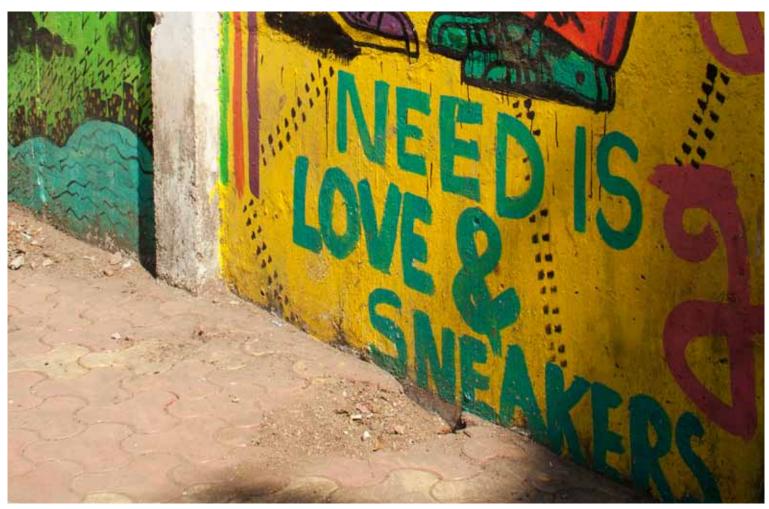

Building at the opposite side of the road.

The wall at Senapati Bapat Marg.

The southern part of the wall at Senapati Bapat Marg.

The southern part of the wall at Senapati Bapat Marg.

PART TWO

*DISCOURSES TOWARDS
A MEETING POINT*

PUBLIC ART

FROM PIECE
TO PROCESS

Art has since modernism posed questions and had societal relations, questions and relations driving its evolution. The practice of art has developed through self-criticism, by a search of contemporary notions and by problematising context, artist and audience, all at once, or one at a time.

During modernism the white walls of the gallery was considered to be free of connotations; to be a 'tabula rasa'. The walls were absent of meaning and hence did not interfere with the pieces of art placed in it.

But the artists of the artistic genre minimalism disagree. They leave the institutionalised inside of art galleries and museums in the late 1960's as an escape from the 'white cube'. They search for art's place on the outside, in the real world where the artwork can merge with everything else. They have their focus on the real world (Kwon, 2002).

According to minimalism[4] the white walls of the gallery cannot be perceived as absent of meaning; they affect the audience's experience of the artwork (Kwon, 2002). The artists mean that a certain way of viewing art is inscribed in the gallery, the institutions present an exhibition hall of bourgeois norm addressing a depersonalised viewer (who, according to the norm, is a white middle-aged man) (Sheikh, 2008). Art needed to get outside of these halls to escape this inherited meaning. The aim was a practice relating to reality, which formed a critical

4. The minimalist movement in art is not to be confused with the architectural style carrying the same name. Where minimalist architecture rather is described as a visually ascetic appearance, minimalist art is an 'approach to form' and not the actual form itself, and thus opposed to design. The minimalist movement in art turns towards the common and the trivial, the non-elevated piece of art, aiming at demolishing the idea of an artistic genius, the idea of the artist as a superior subject (Kwon, 2002).

movement recognising that any environment affects the meaning of the piece of art placed in it, regardless if the artwork may be a painting or a sculpture (Kwon, 2002).

COLLABORATIVE ART

Minimalism moved the piece of art from the architecturally determined room in the gallery to a 'site' in the society. This migration made the notion of the role of the piece of art, the site and the artist transform simultaneously. The artwork goes in this transformation from an object and a noun – *a being*, to a process and a verb – *a doing*. The work of art is no longer an object separated from the audience; rather the audience is an integrated and necessary part of the process that constitutes the work. This genre of public art is engaging the public in various levels in a collaborative process of making art (Kwon, 2002).

If the site specificity in minimalistic art was thought of in terms of geographical site, a physical *location*, it later evolved further into a context, rather described as a *placement*. This 'site as context' carries specific political, social and economic connotations, making the audience also specific, relating the audience's personal backgrounds to the artwork and thus affecting the experience it gets (Kwon, 2002).

This artist is significantly socially conscious addressing issues of societal importance (Kwon, 2002). It turns towards everyday discourses outside the traditional frames of the art world, and away from a traditionally exclusive audience (von Osten, 2007).

The artist also discarded the elevated role of the 'artist as a subject' in favour of the 'artist as a social agent', performing collectively staged actions in public space. In this collaborative practice the responsibility of the artist decreases, since the artist no longer single-handedly determines the outcome of the artistic process. (Kwon, 2002)

The importance is now what the artwork *does* not what it *means*. Focus is placed upon how the artistic action makes a difference (Bavo, 2008). The role of the artist is here a 'cultural-artistic service provider' rather than a 'producer of aesthetic objects'. The aim of the artist has altered, the artist has stepped out of its studio, left its traditional materials and tools behind along with its ego and self-reflection, and entered a social urban realm which the artist puts itself in the service of (Kwon, 2002, p. 4).

For this new artist working in the public with the public, the collaborative method comes first, the outcome second. The practice is mostly referred to as 'community based public art' (Kwon, 2002).

The aim of the artist is to provide a voice for a community by addressing, intervening, and engaging in public life of the city and politically empower people by transforming them from passive spectators to active art makers, building a sense of ownership, while demystifying the creative art process (Kwon, 2002).

The social issues addressed in community based art lead the artists of this field to communities identified in relation to a social problem, often in marginalised or disenfranchised neighbourhoods or among people assumed to share a sense of common identity based on for example ethnicity, gender or social status. Often projects are conducted in deprived areas with an agenda of countering these groups' lack of social viability and political power. The community in hand can be either an existing one or be a created one. Sometimes the community may not even exist until the artist constructs it to make its voice heard (Kwon, 2002).

Previous collaborations by artists acting in public space had been with architects and urban designers. Now the professional designers were set aside on behalf of the public, the common citizens in form of communities. The average citizen on the street is now to be empowered by being involved in the very production of public art, and this involvement is celebrated as a powerful tool for social change. The aim is said to be to "push the limits of art as we know it and engage the public in a dialogue about the place and meaning of art in our daily lives" by exploring the space between 'public' and 'art', narrowing that gap and ultimately closing it altogether (Kwon, 2002).

Hence the art institutions' proclamation of community based public art in the 90's was simply an institutionalisation of a collaborative art practice that emerged already in the 60's. For more than three decades a marginalised socially responsible and ethically sound art practice had been conducting collaborative and participatory projects within the context of communities, without broader recognition from the elite within the field of art.

The participatory public art institutionally recognised in the 90's built on two parallel traditions: the institutionalised investigation of site specificity in public art by foremost minimalism and a social and political avant-garde activism (Kwon, 2002).

The latter emerged in the post-war era as an international politicised avant-garde scene of culture producers, artists, musicians, actors and filmmakers among others. Active in this field were foremost marginalised groups who either were not recognised within the institutionalised art scene or did not want to be so, such as feminists or ethnic minorities, who acted within self-organised spaces and collaborative projects, thus presenting an alternative to the institutionalised discourse of art (von Osten, 2007).

Suzanne Lacy (in Kwon, 2002) calls this collaborative form of art that focuses on public strategies of engagement 'new genre public art' and describes it as a contra-practice to modernistic public art. She recognises a shift of focus from *artist, object, and production* to *audience, process, and reception*. The hitherto specialised privilege of both making and appreciating art is to be democratized by this shift of focus. The artists within the 'new genre public art' do not associate themselves with the mainstream public art movement but place themselves in the

tradition of vanguard groups as feminists, ethnic minorities and social activists engaged in redefined audiences and collaborative methodologies.

Art critic Arlene Raven coins a similar term for the newly institutionalised practice – 'art in the public interest' (Kwon, 2002, p. 105) – and lifts forward the movement's approach to disassociate themselves from traditional public art, instead aiming at a truly public art. The artists are corresponding with the public through direct involvement in social issues. The pursuit of social justice is fundamental for the movement that is activist and communitarian in spirit.

In conformity with 'new genre public art', 'art in the public interest' build on the history of avant-garde art practice and a socially conscious and political activist art, apparent in the 60's activist art and in the alternative art movements of the 70's initiated by grassroots artist (Kwon, 2002). Both traditions 'new genre public art' and 'art in the public interest' use the classical space of art for debates, meetings, workshops or community projects, questioning the official art market and the traditional bourgeois publicity with the white male spectator as norm. These new groups and informal networks contested the abstract publicity of the white cube with a collectively formed knowledge. (von Osten 2007)

The various traditions within the community based public art actualise multiple significant and shared features, thus making it possible to discuss and question contemporary public art practices focusing on community.

The collaborative methods of engagement are framing features in every project; and the issues approached always have a social or political aspect related to the community in hand (Kwon, 2002).

The projects are often collective and social interactions in a process free from a given outcome, the outcome is not an important feature. Instead the process of interaction between the community and the artist measures the value of the work. Even the relationship between the two can in itself be the actual artwork. The artist's assimilation into a given community can in that case be the same as the artwork's integration with the site (Kwon, 2002).

In most community art projects three agents are involved in the process – curator/funding organisation, artist and community. The initiator of the project varies, as do the hierarchy among the agents; the identities are in constant negotiation. Yet the process typically starts with an initiative from a curator or a funding organisation inviting an artist of their liking, third comes the search for a community suiting the artist and the wanted project. The hierarchy often follows the same trajectory (Kwon, 2002).

The role of the artist varies based on the project and the method used for participation as well as the artist's previous relation to the community. If the community is chosen by the curator, who is then both matchmaker and mediator, and the artist has no connection to it, the artist usually stays an outsider. But if the artist is local and

has a functioning relationship with the community or is already a part of it, the artist takes the mediating role between curator and community. In both cases the artist is given a dual identity as it is collaborating both with the community and with the curator.

In the latter situation yet another duality is evident as the artist is at the same time a part of the community as it is its spokesperson. In all cases the artist is a social agent, an active social force working for an issue related to a community (Kwon, 2002).

For the community based public art, regardless what the artists and theorists name it, the large battle is always ideological. When aiming at reducing the distance between public and art, public art was transformed from an aesthetic function to a social function, and addressed issues of social and political concern and directed the practice towards communities. By using traditional as well as non-traditional media the artist has invited audiences to be a part of the production of the artwork. This collaborative artist is at its best rather a facilitator and mediator than an authority (Gabrielsson, 2006; Kwon, 2002).

URBAN PLANNING
DEVELOPMENT

FROM ART TO DISCOURSE

According to Nigel Taylor (1998, p. 167), town planning is a "social action or practice", concerned with intervening in the world to protect it or alter it in some way. This intervening requires *sound judgement* about what may be the best thing to do to make the world we live in as good as it can possibly be. In this sense town planning is neither art, nor science in the strict meaning of the terms, although of course aesthetic and scientific understanding is fundamental for a person engaged in physical urban development.

The amount of art, science and sound judgement composing town planning has varied over the years and recently communication and collaboration has been thrown into the pot.

The same shifts of thoughts that altered the practice of art in the twentieth century also altered the profession of urban planning. The European and American planning practice and theory is divided by two shifts of thinking – around 1945 and 1968 – the former being the end of the second world war and the latter the time of intellectual leftist multinational protests for citizen rights. Prior to 1945 town planning was conceived as an art practice conducted by architects and engineers concerned with physical design forming cities; town planning was as architecture an applied art. During the years following the end of the war planning was conducted on a scientific level, seen as science dealing with social life. During the 60's town planning turned into a discursive action, focusing on negotiating methods and processes. (Lindholm, 2006; Taylor, 1998)

From the formal "town planning as art" the practice became "society planning as science" in the post war era (Lindholm, 2006, p. 121). A criticism against the shape driven planning lacking "social scientific understanding" of the dynamics of a city had been raised (Healey, 1997, p. 19) and the new planning was to incorporate concepts from social science and economics to create a city suited for everyone. The modernistic idea of social housing forms a large scale city aiming at shaping a "community of togetherness" where everybody is assumed to share the same needs. This is a generalisation that provides the same standard in every apartment designed by

'society's healing experts' (Pløjer, 2006, p. 390). A view of the city as a system and of planning as a process is combined in this departure from the design based view of the planner (Taylor, 1998).

The view of the city as essentially physical, consisting of physical and aesthetic items, hence is replaced by a view of the city as a system of related social and economic activities in constant flux. Space is no longer a passive physical geographical concept but a sociological conception of space, determined by human and human activity. In this living city, always changing, always in process, the former static planning as an end-state represented in a plan was no longer possible (Taylor, 1998).

THE COMMUNICATIVE TURN

The second shift of planning theory and practice in the previous century, the 'communicative turn' (Healey, 1997), is a turn from '"society planning as science" to "planning as discursive action" (Lindholm, 2006, p. 121). Planning is leaving the modernistic view of society as a healing structure based on sense and produced by experts (Gabrielsson, 2006), instead emerging as a participatory practice where citizens are acknowledged as subjects with specific needs instead of as a large homogeneous group (Landry, 2008).

In 1969 Sherry Arnstein draws the 'Ladder of citizen participation', where each of its eight rungs represent a degree of citizen participation, organised in the three categories 'Nonparticipation', 'Degrees of Tokenism', and at the top 'Degrees of Citizen Power'. Only the three top rungs organised under 'Degrees of citizen power' are to be considered true participation in the sense of redistribution of power to citizens (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217).

At the same time the student revolts in Paris forever altered the institution of des Beaux-Arts that put form first and construction and function second (Svedberg, 2003, p. 12).

The communicative turn in planning lead to the emergence of a wide range of practices within urban planning with various focus and amount of participatory and collaborative aims, more or less concerned with spatial planning. The collaborations and participatory processes that are the base of interaction and communication appear in different ways according to different approaches with different agendas.

The communicative turn is closely linked to postmodernism's individualism and integrates social and economical policy in urban planning. Policy analysis was integrated, aiming at making public administration more efficient by identifying objectives, and developing and implementing means to achieve them (Healey, 1997). From driven solely by experts planning opens up towards the possibility of a multidisciplinary practice and a dynamic society planning (Lindholm, 2006). As the expert role of the planners is abandoned several possible roles for the planner unfolds. The planner is no longer only to hand over objective facts to decision makers but can act as facilitator, mediator or initiator to development projects (Innes, 1998).

CULTURAL PLANNING
AND CITY BRANDING

"Cities have one crucial resource – their people." The quote is written by Charles Landry in his book 'The creative city' (2008, p. xii). The idea of the creative city emerged in the late 1980's when many European cities were in an economical, social and cultural shift due to altered production methods that forced cities to rethink their strategies and review their assets. The leading concept is no longer *labour* but *creativity*, as the creative people are emerging as a social group with great purchasing power, thus a group that every city would want to attract (Landry, 2008). This new 'creative class' is described by Richard Florida (2005) as young adults with autonomous, well-paid jobs as engineers, scientists, architects, designers, artist or even company leaders. The creative class is global and very mobile. And if these are the people you want to attract to live in your city, then these are the people you should invite to participate in creating the city, if it shall be able to profile itself on a global economy.

The planning of a creative city is a collaborative action involving far more than the traditional planners and decision makers. Not only the ones concerned with land-use should have mandate to participate when this city of today is produced (Landry, 2008). For Landry the idea that "ordinary people can make extraordinary things" (p. xxi) is central, and he aims at making citizens active agents of change instead of passively being victims of change, by fostering their imagination, competence and capabilities.

According to Landry (2008) creativity is context-driven; location in place and time generate specific needs. Therefore the creative city is in constant change, always adapting to new needs and trends. Florida's (2005) three T's of economic development are present in the creativity; technology; talent; and tolerance. Landry (2008, p. xxiv) defines creativity as "the ability to think afresh; be enquiring and flexible; see unusual connections; not be frightened with ambiguity, paradox or contradictions". He ends with "be original". As artists are trained to be creative they can come to serve as a useful resource in the "ideas-driven knowledge economy" (p. xxi) of the creative city, thus Landry urge other 'creative' people as planners, engineers, business people and social workers to interact with artists to gain knowledge from their artistic thinking.

Landry makes a distinction between hard and soft infrastructure, and means that modernistic planning dealt with the first one, while this planning dealing with cultural expressions, focuses on the latter and is planning for places for people to meet, interact and network in what Landry calls 'third places'. These places that are not home, nor work, but may be cafés, restaurants or perhaps even a public plaza (Landry, 2008).

For Lia Ghilardi (2001, 2008), urban researcher and consultant engaged in 'cultural planning', the existing culture of a place is crucial, hence in focus, when designing a brand or marketing approach for a city.

Cultural planning is not "planning of culture" but a cultural approach to urban planning and policy making, where

culture is to be understood in the very broad, anthropological definition as "a way of life" (Ghilardi, 2008, p. 4). The cultural planning approach is interdisciplinary and lateral, focusing on long-term solutions for regeneration of a city or a region. The approach derives from a tradition of radical urbanism and humanistic management of cities from the 1960's. The significant features of the local culture are identified and serve as a base for the proceeding teamwork, a planning process where private, public and voluntary sectors interact in a collaboration of policy-makers, urban historians, sociologists, artist and who else that may be able to contribute to a holistic image of the identity of the place. As culture is understood as a way of life, everybody's lives should be included and all sections of a population involved in the process, not just the ones with the strongest voice (Ghilardi, 2008).

Similar for the approaches above are the cultural recourses needed. A cultural resource can be many things. The city's historical, industrial and artistic heritage of buildings, landscapes and monuments are cultural resources. Traditions linked to a certain place, language, food and cooking are cultural resources. Artists, musicians and entrepreneurs are cultural resources. Landry defines a cultural resource as "the raw material of the city" (2008, p. xxxi). Healey (1997) sums it up by categorising cultural resources as produced by our ways of thinking, ways of organising and ways of conducting life.

THE INSTITUTIONALIST APPROACH

Patsy Healey is one of the United Kingdom's most renowned professors in theoretical and practical planning. Her 'institutionalist approach' is based on a collaborative planning with focus on regional development and strategies, as she believes a project based community focus only owns the ability to present short-term solutions often altered as a new project is initiated. She criticises the narrow focus of such a local approach as she believes it fails to acknowledge the city as an entity (Healey, 1997).

Healey's institutionalist approach grows out of social theory and philosophy, the first field represented by Anthony Giddens and the latter by Jürgen Habermas.

Healey's interest in Giddens concerns his theory of 'structuration', which describes the relation between a society's structure and the active agency of its citizens. The structures are culturally constructed, hence constructed by the citizens of a society. The structures make up complex webs in which we act in multiple simultaneously. They embody technique but maybe most importantly they embody modes of thought and sets of values forming our thought-world and how we look upon society. The structures can be altered, and they are constantly altered by the people acting within them. By being agents we alter the structures, thus altering power relations and norms. As much as we are shaped by the structures, our active agency shapes the structures. Healey concludes that

active agency means power to the people (Healey, 1997).

In Habermas' theory Healey (1997) finds his ideas of how to reconstitute the public realm – 'the public sphere' – through a public and open debate, affecting the conceptions of planning processes. Habermas divides society in the opposed concepts of 'abstract systems' and 'lifeworlds' (p. 50). The abstract systems are the structures of economical and political order constraining the everyday life lived in our personal lifeworlds.

For Habermas, and Healey, the tendency of the abstract systems to penetrate the lifeworlds needs to be reversed and the systems redesigned by a reconstitution of the public realm; in contemporary public debate the reasoning about issues belonging to the abstract systems is prevailing on behalf of issues concerning the lifeworlds.

To avoid this intrusion the language we use for public discussions in the public realm must evolve to also be able to express concerns of issues of the lifeworld, to make it possible for everybody to participate in these discussions. For Healey this conception means that planning can become an including process of interactive collective reasoning, if a language for the interaction is constructed (Healey, 1997).

The institutionalist approach, as presented by Healey (1997), aims at providing consultation and collaborative methods to facilitate the interaction between differing cultural communities and recognising the potential cultural dimensions of differences to make the process of planning a multicultural one. Once the differences are recognised and stated, a shared system of meaning can be built by making new cultural conceptions. In tune with Habermas' theory as much focus is placed upon *how* issues are discussed, as on *what* is being discussed in the planning process. Pursuant to Giddens focus is not on class or social status, but on the various cultures and larger networks we are part of (Healey, 1997).

PART THREE

RETURNING TO
POINT OF DEPARTURE
WITH DISCURSIVE AWARENESS

So, how are the Urban Typhoon workshop and the doings of The Wall Project to be understood? Is it public art? Is it urban planning? The non-profit movements may not be possible to categorise as either or, rather their social agendas would label them as dealing with urban development on a social level rather than on a spatial one.

And how can the roles of socially engaged planners and artist be understood in the light of the two Indian projects?

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CITIZEN
INVOLVEMENT

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When Arnstein constructed her 'Ladder of citizen participation' in 1969, foremost concerned with public participation in societal issues, she also gave words to thoughts existing within a non-institutionalised artistic practice. A collaborative artistic practice, perhaps with more features in common with activism than institutionalised art, focusing on minority groups and projects often executed by members of these groups aside of the societal norm. The collaborative feature was the backbone of the practice, and still is, as this practice with activist characteristics is incorporated in institutionalised public art (Arnstein, 1969; Healey, 1997; Kwon, 2002).

The basis for Arnstein's ladder is the recognition of tokenism in participatory planning processes and the sometimes total lack of citizen participation in urban development, even when the planning and development directly affects people's lives. The citizen Arnstein is concerned with is the powerless citizen, the 'have-not citizen', who is excluded from political and economical processes, excluded from the public sphere, be it women or slum dwellers. For Arnstein the corner stone of democracy – citizen power – can only be truly provided when the power is redistributed to include also the 'have-nots'. If the power is not truly redistributed the participation can never alter a status quo (Arnstein, 1969).

When Urbz act in collaborations and other involving projects it is always in an activist mode. According to founder

Rahul Sravistava, planning can never be a truly participatory practice. The hierarchy is inscribed in the very process of planning, urban planning is an implementation of superior decisions, and can never, in its current state, be completely horizontal. The power can never be truly redistributed. Therefore, Urbz do not deal with planning.

Instead, in their practice, they emphasize the importance of true citizen engagement. Their role is always mediating and facilitating, their object is to start processes and provide a knowledge base and inspiration for citizens to engage themselves in their neighbourhoods (nterview Urbz, 2010).

The city, according to Urbz, is a vast and complex mosaic of neighbourhoods held together on a macro level by central control, yet self-evolving on a micro level (Sravistava and Echanove, 2010).

The urban village of Khirkee is a neighbourhood of this self-evolving character; also the slum of Dharavi where Urbz have their office is a neighbourhood alike. Both areas lack intensive governmental control which gives place for a development internally lead by the inhabitants themselves, in both cases possible to label as slum dwellers due to the unauthorised development of their habitats.

For Urbz, the intention of interaction is to give something back to the neighbourhood. The intention is not to expose it to an 'outside', it is not to 'summarise' it in an exhibition, or foremost gain personal experience or knowledge of working with neighbourhoods. Even though artists are the main participants of an Urban Typhoon workshop, the aim is never to create a piece of art or end the workshop with an art exhibition with the local citizens as the artistic object.

Rather the intention is to empower the citizens of a seemingly degraded neighbourhood, by giving attention and raising an internal awareness of the neighbourhood's potential (nterview Urbz, 2010).

LACK OF
LONG-TERM
ENGAGEMENT

The community-based art practice as it appears today is far from embraced in everyone's book; critique is directed towards the practice.

The Dutch architects Bavo (2008) calls the practice "NGO art" (p. 110) as they do not recognise it to be critical but aiming at finding solutions, creating toolkits and helping disadvantaged social groups, much like the work of a non governmental organisation or a humanitarian organisation. The community-based art, according to Bavo, fulfils traditional activist tasks, such as creating awareness of a certain issue, but accuse traditional activists of lacking a *creativity* possessed by artists.

But the worst fault, according to Bavo, is the lack of political and long-term engagement.

The short-term project based engagement characteristic of the practice puts focus on diminutive issues, thus ignoring underlying political and economic structures. The will to make a direct impact gets in the way of big political questions, and may even lead to a denial of politics in order to actualise the actions of the project. For Bavo, the risk of artists being used by the power, by authorities, as tokenism is obvious as most public community art projects are subsidised by the state. The art practice as Bavo describes it is thus far from autonomous (Bavo, 2008).

Neither the Urban Typhoon workshop nor The Wall Project can distance themselves from this critique. The characteristics of "NGO art"; creating toolkits for disadvantaged social groups using activist methodology; are mostly applicable on Urban Typhoon. Urbz critisize architects and planners for their "lack of creativity" (Interview Urbz, 2010).

For Urbz the engagement of artists in the making of new objectives within urban development is fundamental. The innovativeness and creativity among trained artists are valuable to the work of the think tank as well as in their belief in how a city must be developed, though they miss the ability among planners to engage in communities. Trained in spatial issues planners and architects lack social ability to relate spatiality to people and social issues, accosring to Urbz (Interview Urbz, 2010).

The long-term engagement may be possessed by Urbz themselves, without a doubt in the neighbourhood of their office, but it can never be assured to exist among the external participants of their arranged Urban Typhoon workshops. The aim is certainly to start a long-term engagement that will remain in the neighbourhood. Yet of course, Urbz can never guarantee that the engagement will remain. And it needs hardly to be stated that ten days is a far too short amount of time if large-scale societal, political and economical structures are to be fully understood and addressed.

According to The Wall Project's program they want to avoid the trap of short-term engagement by encouraging people to start painting in their own neighbourhoods, in their own backyards, on their own compound walls. The reason being the personal relationship to the wall you decorate, and the assurance of a long-term commitment as you are sure to pass the painting of yours on a regular basis (thewallproject.com, 2011).

But as The Wall Project grows and accepts commissioned work the responsibility may be shared among more people. Another, perhaps more important aspect, is that the paintings are no longer in your backyard but on a public wall, appropriating public space.

As the painter does not pass by the painting daily and as the provided paint was only sufficient for one layer of paint, a long-term engagement will be difficult to achieve.

The Wall Project must constantly be repeated to exist. When the paint fades, the image of engagement fades along with it.

According to Lia Ghilardi (2008), working with cultural planning, the risks of a single focus, such as local culture and creativity, in place shaping and city marketing are many. A local focus may be disadvantageous, even dangerous, as large-scale structures; physical as well as social, economical and political may not reveal themselves on a small scale. Instead life style rather than civic engagement is promoted leading to short-term commitments.

Healey (1997) agrees. Project based initiatives with a local focus can never address the city as a whole, which is a fundamental view if substantial changes are to be accomplished.

Ghilardi (2008) sees a shift from a view of the city as a whole, as an entity, towards short-term solutions and quick, cosmetic forms of regeneration. The process of this short-term regeneration inevitably leads to segregation and a concentration of already marginalised groups.

CULTURAL
AUTHORITY

Critic Hal Foster (in Kwon, 2002) argues that contemporary artists conducting community-based art in collaboration with deprived communities inevitably possess a cultural authority.

This is a critique applicable on the invasion of artists and alike in Khirkee during the Urban Typhoon workshop. From other parts of India and abroad came a (somewhat varied but still rather homogeneous) group of academics and artists to interact with a local community, to a large extent consisting of labourers and where the level of education is low.

Foster argues further that the collaboration between artist and community, an intended division of power, may unintendedly "aid in the colonisation of difference" (in Kwon, 2002, p. 139) as the division of power may not be as easy to achieve as intended. Instead of a decentralisation of the artist's power the collaboration emphasizes or even remakes the community's location outside of societal norm, objectifying it and making it again 'the other' of dominant culture.

He means that the artists' authority often goes unquestioned, even unacknowledged, and that projects often stray from collaboration to self-fashioning of the artist. 'The other' becomes objectified in the artist's desire to engage 'real' non-art people in community based art projects which may lead to installing new forms of 'urban primitivism' over socially neglected minority groups.

Even the best intentions of democratisation can have effects of colonialism.

DIVISION
OF POWER

A collaborative process per se divides power; when collaborating the responsibility is shared. This sharing is diminishing the authorised role of the artist and the planner, as other actors get involved (Kwon, 2002; Ghilardi, 2008). At least in theory, one may add. As stated above the artist or the planner has a cultural role inherited in their professions that is not easy to set aside.

For the workshops organised by The Wall Project as well as the Urban Typhoon workshop series, the shared responsibility is evident in the preset programs. Urbz aim at providing a platform for others to use and state that the outcome of their workshops is depending on its participants. If the participants want to continue the work they have commenced during the workshop they are encouraged to do so with the facilitating help of Urbz. By inviting adult, responsible persons to take part they aim to assert a responsible engagement by the participants (thewallproject.com, 2011; urbz.net, 2011).

The openness of the Urban Typhoon workshop, derived from good intentions based on thoughts of equity, may also be its curse.

During the workshop Sravistava and Echanove guide the external participants by conversation and debate. They are advisers but never police any projects conducted within the frame of the workshop.

Consequently some of the projects turn out to lack obvious benefits for the visited neighbourhood. The important social aspect is in some cases missing, along with the artist's engagement in the people the workshop is to address. It is not a far question to wonder how a project focusing on the abandoned stone mosque of Khirkee and its spatial relation to its built surroundings can possess any relevance for the current social life of the village. Yet this project with mostly artistic ambitions, and other similar, was conducted during the Urban Typhoon workshop by its participants.

In the same way the workshops and painting sessions set up by The Wall Project have an open end where the responsibility for the final result is placed upon the painters taking part. The rules are easy – no drugs, no sex, no religion – nothing that could upset the viewer. Still the paintings are far from non-controversial. The aim may be to paint in the 'conflict free living room' (Habermas, see below) but as soon as a paintbrush is drawn upon a public wall the public space is appropriated and privatised, thus a conflict raised.

And as soon as The Wall Project accepts the municipal invitation to do paintings on a municipal wall, thus a public wall instead of a private one, they are no longer a completely autonomous movement but performing on commission from the authorities.

Municipal Commissioner Mr. R. A. Rajeev calls the collaboration between the municipality and The Wall Project 'participatory execution' (interview Rajeev, 2010), an act where the public is used for execution of centralised decisions. Would Arnstein (1969) file this action as tokenism, an action where the municipality provided a wall and paint to beautify a wall in an attempt to decrease the amount of littering and nauseas behaviour on the site?

ARTIST
AND PLANNER
IN A HYBRID

Critic Rosalyn Deutsche (2007) believes collaborative community based art involved in new social movements to be an important public practice. However, she questions this practice, to her more associated with activism than with art, to be labelled 'public art' due to the connotations the term produces and the need for public art to be "suitable and tasteful" and posses a certain "quality" (p. 94).

In many cases the artworks are affirmative rather than critical, since the central objective in community based art is the creation of a work together with the community members reflecting the community. And as the community members are simultaneously audience, producer and artistic reference, the critical aspect is often lacking, hence a traditional critique of the artwork is difficult to apply in an adequate manner. Instead the projects are often addressed from a strictly ethical point of view, simplifying both the specific projects and the potential impacts of artistic practice as it is not recognised and valuated as such (Kwon, 2002).

Likewise Basualdo and Laddaga (2009) mean that for many community based art projects it is unfair to place them completely in the domain of art as their social agenda often makes the projects result in modified local conditions. This is why art performed within the field of community collaborations often lack a proper critique. Since the process of the art is seen as "self-sacrificial", the evaluation of the final piece of art often fails, according to Claire Bishop (in Basualdo and Laddaga, 2009, p. 209).

This artist is rather a 'hybrid' that "bridge and recombine the traditional domains of art, activism, urban planning" (Basualdo and Laddaga, 2009, p. 210).

Yet Gabrielsson (2006) is critical towards this contemporary interest in disciplinary renegotiations forming hybrids. The aim is to reach an exchange between the practices that will generate new objective along with new possibilities. But the exchange often results in a takeover where material from one discipline is incorporated in the other, where the stronger part benefits. According to Gabrielsson, hierarchies and prevailing privileges remain rather than being replaced by hybrids. Instead of forming a new discipline, one of the two former benefits on behalf of the other.

COUNTERPUBLICS

As Healey (1997) reads Habermas redistribution of power is achieved by allowing minority groups into the public sphere to a common forming of a togetherness achieved by negotiation. But for curator and art critic Simon Sheihk (2008) the very notion of Habermas' public sphere is excluding, as he recognises it to be based upon a division of power and an unequal distribution of the same. Citizens outside the norm are not included in the public sphere.

Sheikh presents 'counterpublics' as a recent reaction to Habermas' political public sphere. The counterpublics are excluded from the norm and political public debate and can thus be compared with the avant-garde practices that 'new genre public art' and 'art in the public interest' rests upon.

The public sphere, as it is constructed by Habermas, is a sphere *in-between* individuals and the state, between the personal and the power, a sphere where *political* issues, therefore not issues concerning the *private* such as children care or labour, was debated. The public sphere is a political space for criticism of power that is neither private nor state, making all issues belonging to the private sphere non-political.

The theory of the public sphere is based upon Habermas study of bourgeois men forming public opinions where these men also constitute society's norm, consequently forming an 'other' where, for example, women and labourers are placed.

Counterpublics were formed as a criticism aiming at revealing the people of society excluded by the norm appearing in the public sphere (Sheihk, 2008).

The collaborative art practices, today criticised for exploitation and repression, derive from a counterpublic traditionally lacking power, traditionally society's 'other', such as women or ethnic minorities. They are thus *simultaneously* the oppressor and the oppressed; manifesting power and at the same time set aside of it.

This places the practitioners of community art in a position where their heritage situates them as subaltern but their critics as authorities.

TOWARDS A CONCLUSION

THE PUBLIC SPACE
AND THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE

The question of how a city is created and produced by its citizens, inhabitants and visitors puts focus on public urban space. How are we to understand public space and who is allowed to create and produce it? Are we to understand it as a 'meeting place' or a 'living room', two notions particularly popular in today's urban planning discourse? According to Gabrielsson (2006) this is the bourgeois model growing from foremost Habermas' ideas and, as we would prefer our living rooms, this is an idea of a public space free of conflicts. On the opposed side we find a model steaming from a Marxist perspective where public space is a 'war zone' where antagonistic forces are allowed to be expressed.

The idea of a public space free of conflicts is criticised by Gabrielsson (2006). She means that a corner stone of democracy is a public space open to everybody. And 'everybody' is not a homogeneous group; we do not all think alike, we do not all share beliefs. Thus public space must be filled with conflicts. A public space free of conflicts is a space where not everybody is allowed, where people outside societal norms are excluded.

A public space free of conflicts is a space forming an 'us', the norm, and a 'them', the other (Gabrielsson, 2006).

THIRD WAYS

This ambivalent public space is the scene where our socially aware artist and collaborative planner perform. It is here Rahul Sravistava, Matias Echanove and Dhanya Pilo set their projects, dealing not only with their personal relations to people they interact with, but also with ideas of how public space is to be addressed, spatially and socially. The Urban Typhoon sets out to create new objectives for social and physical upgrading and The Wall Project aims at beautifying their city, actions that all take place in a shared public space.

The forming of the opposed binary terms 'us' and 'them' - the norm and the other - is sought to be demolished

by a number of theorist and practitioners in various ways. The critique against community based public art focuses on a colonialism of people and places where the aim of the artist is prevailing and the community and its citizens are exploited. Many suggest the solution to this problem to be found in a *third way.*

Indian born professor Homi Bhabha (in Hernández, 2010) creates a hybrid of the 'us' and the 'them' – the coloniser and the colonised – in his post-colonial thinking. The colonised is not to become as the coloniser, it can never be, but the concept of 'cultural hybridity', looked upon as a process, has multiple theoretical effects. It unsettles the idea of one culture as superior, pure and homogeneous but recognises that any culture is always in transition, constantly being transformed. In this theoretical thinking no cultural authority can be recognised.

For Bhabha a third space is both a physical space and a temporal one, a passage in time. If the first space is the physical setting as it actually *is*, how it is *experienced*, the second space is a *representation* of this setting. 'Third space as a passage' is the space that appears when cultural differences for one moment are set aside, polarity reduced and equity arisen between the people and cultures who form it. The 'third space as a passage' is a space of negotiation, contestation and rearticulation. It is unrepresentable (Hernández, 2010, p. 93).

Geographer Edward Soja (in Hernández, 2010) explains 'third space as a physical space' as where societal norms are absent. Examples given are areas of squatted houses, unauthorised settlements and housing for the poor, "spaces of encounter where peoples understanding of 'city', its meaning, proves insufficient to subsume the proliferation of antagonistic lifestyles and spatialities" (p. 98).

The third space provides a possible path towards understanding the complexity of participatory and collaborative public art and urban development. The same path may also provide a possible way of finding a space, not a vertical hierarchical line, nor a horizontal plane, but a mix of the two where the professional expertise of the planner and the artist may mix with the local knowledge of a neighbourhood's citizens.

For Healey (1997) Habermas' public sphere is to be understood as a 'third sphere' that is neither private, nor state.

The meetings of the people of this public sphere are located in places described by Landry (2008) as 'third places', that are neither home, nor work.

The artist is by Ranciere (in Bavo, 2008) provided a 'third way' where art can be both autonomous and heteronymous, simultaneously. Art can keep its "distinct, independent place in society" and at the same time interfere with society and "fuse with social reality" (p. 112). This means that art is in a constant negotiation.

CITIZEN, ARTIST AND PLANNER

In a sense the 'third ways' above is a discursive turn. The frame in which we perform within our profession's

various practices is set by the prevailing discourse. These third ways may be an important mode of forming a deeper democracy within urban development, a kind of re-start where former rigid boundaries can be avoided if not taken down altogether.

But as the hybrids are formed and the horizontal plane established, it may be important not to forget the expertise of both the artist and the planner. The knowledge and experience possessed by the professions should not be ignored or set aside.
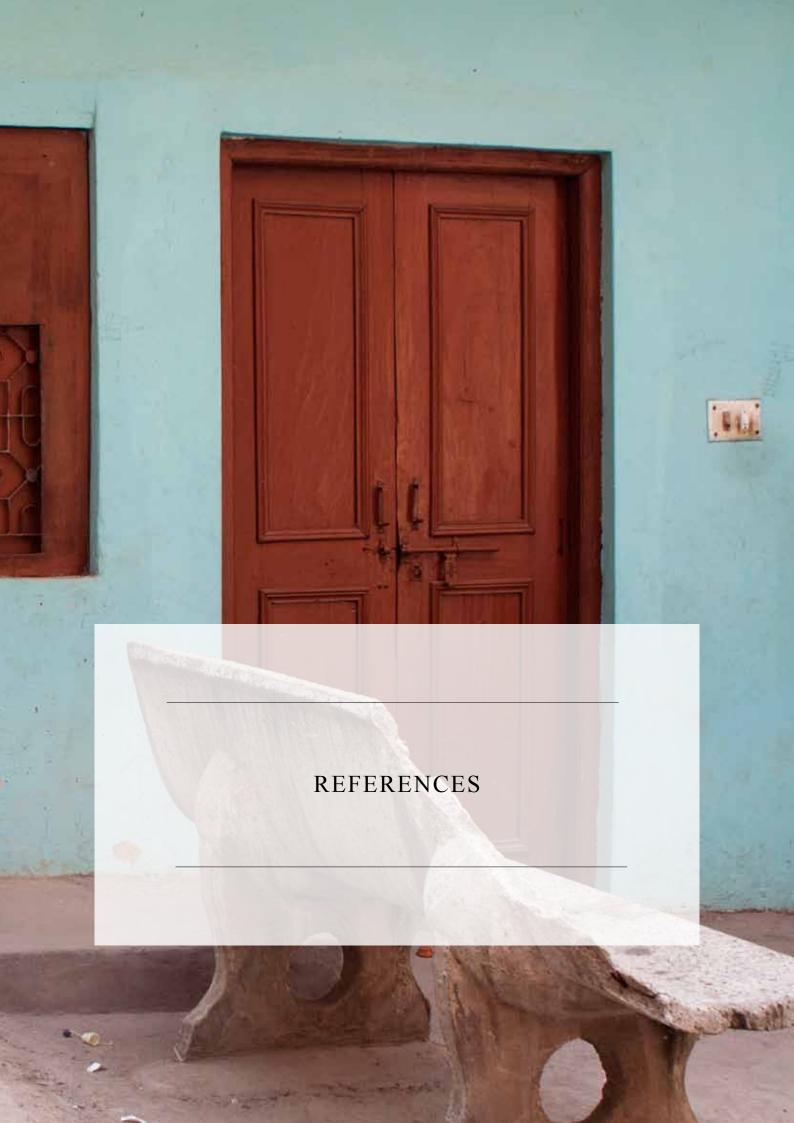
The citizens of a neighbourhood may be the experts on how that particular neighbourhood is functioning, what it needs and what it does not need.

The artist can help by providing methods to investigate and elucidate the situation in hand, situations for *the planner* to improve. Planners can learn a great deal from collaborating with artists; the critical vein in art can be an important asset in urban development processes. If included at an early stage in urban planning, participatory artistic work can help to form new objectives and new insights can be gained.

The collaboration between the two professions, artist and planner, have great potential to be fruitful, as long as it is not a collaboration on behalf of public participation in urban development.

Between an integration of society and its others, and a further separation of two, lies a fine line. Not to fall on the wrong side of that line demands a focused balancing act.

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