Irritations and Unforeseen Consequences of the Urban

30 June – 2 July 2021

An online conference hosted by the Urban Environments Initiative

Detailed Program & Abstracts

To participate, please register in advance via Zoom:

https://lmu-munich.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcqc-uurDkvHtCdCh5wLik5hVjtUh9rJD8D

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Day 1 Wednesday, June 30 (CEST)

Whose Urban "Nature"?
The Politics of Aesthetics, Urban Ecologies, the Unintended and the Unwanted

13:00 -13:30   **Welcome & Introduction**
                              Conveners *Eveline Dürr*, LMU Munich
                                        Regine Keller, TU Munich

13:30 – 14:45   **Working Group Panel 1**

                              Un/Known Natures
                              Raúl Acosta, LMU Munich; *Joseph Adeniran Adedeji*, FUTA Akure;
                              Maan Barua, University of Cambridge; *Matthew Gandy*, University of
                              Cambridge; *Sasha* Gora, Ca' Foscari University of Venice;
                              Kara Schlichting, City University of New York

14:45 – 15:00   Break

15:00 – 16:15   **Open Panel 1**

15:00 – 15:20   **Living With Parrots. In a Novel Ecosystem: Urban Natures and the
                              Unexpected Consequences of a Species Reintroduction**
                              Cameron Boyle, Australian National University

15:20 – 15:40   **The Transformation of Green Zones in Yerevan (Armenia): The
                              Domestication of Nature, Times of Ruination and the Idea of New
                              'Hanging Gardens'**
                              Heiko Conrad, Goethe University Frankfurt
                              Susanne Fehlings, Goethe University Frankfurt

15:40 – 16:00   **From Nature to the Urban Environments: The Transformation of the
                              Istavros Royal Garden in the 1720s alongside the Incremental
                              Urbanisation of the Bosphorus Shores**
                              Nazli Songülen, European University Institute, Florence

16:00 – 16:15   Discussion

16:15 – 17:30   **Keynotes**

                              Debating Urban Climates
                              Hannah Knox, University College London
                              Anuradha Mathur, University of Pennsylvania

17:30 – 17:45   **Conclusion**
                              Conveners: Eveline Dürr and Regine Keller

Day 2 Thursday, 1 July (CEST)

Making Urban Environments
Planning, Agents, Voices, and Absences/Gaps, Livelihoods and Extinction, Power, In-/justice

13:00 – 13:15   **Welcome & Introduction**
                          Daniel Dumas, LMU Munich

13:15 – 14:30   **Working Group Panel 2**

                          Making Urban Environments: Infrastructures of Power, Resistance and Negotiation
                          Sonja Dümpelmann, University of Pennsylvania; *Robert R. Gioielli*, University of Cincinnati; *Stephan Pauleit*, TU Munich; *Anindya Sinha*, NIAS, Bangalore; *Katherine Wright*, LMU Munich; *Amy Zhang*, NYU

14:30 – 14:45   Break

14:45 – 16:00   **Open Panel 2**

14:45 – 15:05   **Cities as Floristical Islands: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Colombian Cities**
                         Diego Molina, University of Reading

15:05 – 15:25   **"Porcine Cities – Precarious Infrastructures and Caste Ecologies in Delhi's Informal Settlements"**
                          Sneha Gutgutia, NIAS, Bangalore

15:25 – 15:45   **Urban Duality in Nigerian Cities: Negotiating Rural Identities in Peri-urban Areas of Makurdi Town**
                         Patience Adzande, Benue State University

15:45 – 16:00   Discussion

16:00 – 16:15   **Conclusion**
                          Conveners: Eveline Dürr and Regine Keller

16:15 – 17:30   **Social Gathering at Wonder.me**

Day 3 Friday, 2 July (CEST)

Openness to or Foreclosure of Futures
The Ethics and Politics of Expectation and Modulation

13:00 – 13:15   **Welcome & Introduction**
                                    Carolin Maertens, LMU Munich

13:15 – 14:30   **Working Group Panel 3**

                                    **One and Six Times – About the Modulation and the Expectation of
                                    Timescapes**
                                    Benedikt Boucsein, TU Munich; *Karen Holmberg*, NYU New York;
                                    Simone Müller, LMU Munich; *Talitta Reitz*, LMU Munich;
                                    Dorothee Rummel, TU Munich; *Avi Sharma*, TU Berlin

14:30 – 14:45   Break

14:45 – 16:00   **Open Panel 3**

14:45 – 15:05   **Fabricating the Future: Making the Urban Environment in
                                    Contemporary Singapore**
                                    Jamie Wang, University of Sydney

15:05 – 15:25   **Marginal Ecological Aesthetics and the Future Health of a Chinese
                                    Steel City**
                                     Travis Klingberg, NYU Shanghai

15:25 – 15:45   **Beauty and Confusion in a Modern Cityscape, or Art versus
                                    Development in a Nordic Capital**
                                     Eeva Berglund, Aalto University

15:45 – 16:00   Discussion

16:00 – 17:00   **Closing of the Conference**
                                    Conveners: Eveline Dürr and Regine Keller
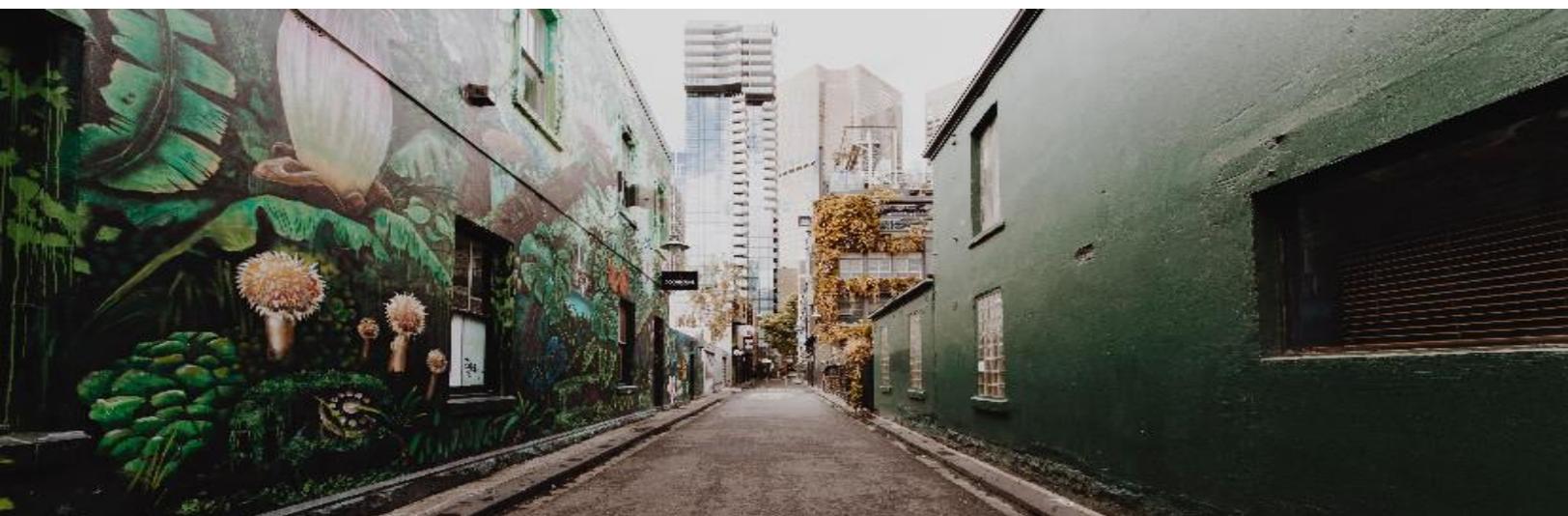
Abstracts

Day 1 Wednesday, 30 June

Whose Urban "Nature"?
The Politics of Aesthetics, Urban Ecologies, the Unintended and the Unwanted

The contributions to this theme address different concepts of what urban "Nature" is, could or should be, and the ways in which different actors advocate for these multiple understandings— for what purposes and to what effect. Often, the taken-for-granted idea of "Nature" and what it constitutes translates into forms of in- and exclusion. For instance, consider the selection of species that are welcome in urban green spaces and those that are not based on conceptions of "Nature" that favor the "green" and "beautiful" over the ecologically valuable (but to the human taste less appealing). This is further complicated by un-/intended consequences of a particular understanding or promotion of urban "Nature" and subsequent interventions.

Working Group Panel 1

Un/Known Natures

Raúl Acosta, LMU Munich; ***Joseph Adeniran Adedeji***, FUTA Akure; ***Maan Barua***, University of Cambridge; ***Matthew Gandy***, University of Cambridge; ***Sasha* Gora**, Ca' Foscari University of Venice; ***Kara Schlichting***, City University of New York

Abstract
Cities are ecosystems where life and matter continuously surprise their dwellers, human or otherwise. Whereas up until recently cities were considered as separate from 'nature', as places solely designed for human habitation, their role as centres where organisms survive or flourish is increasingly accepted. A key characteristic of urban areas also applies to their ecosystems: diversity. It is not simply green or blue areas, trees, or rivers within cities that host other-than-human life. It is everywhere; entangled with infrastructures and the built environment. There is, therefore, no single 'urban nature,' but many, with varying scales, complexities, and attributes. In public debates - in mass and social media - some of these multiple urban natures have become more visible partly due to the pandemic. In this panel, we shed light on various layers of urban nature - some better known than others - that coexist in cities around the world.

Open Panel 1

Living With Parrots. In a Novel Ecosystem: Urban Natures and the Unexpected Consequences of a Species Reintroduction

Cameron Boyle, Australian National University

Abstract
This paper considers the reintroduction of the kākā – a threatened parrot endemic to New Zealand – to the capital city of Wellington, after having been locally extinct in the area for over a century due to predation by exotic mammals such as rats, cats, and stoats. In 2002, six individuals were translocated to Zealandia Ecosanctuary, a conservation site bordered by a predator-proof fence located a few kilometers from the central city. The parrots were monitored and cared for in the predator-free sanctuary through the provision of food and nest boxes, and other management techniques, and by 2016, seven hundred and fifty individuals were recorded, at which point tracking was stopped. While the booming kākā population in the city is generally considered a conservation success story, it has a number of unintended consequences. Kākā are bothering some people with the noise they make and by nesting in the roofs of houses, sometimes suffering led poisoning as a result. To the dismay of some, kākā are also stripping bark from exotic Monterey pines at the Wellington Botanic Garden and in peoples' backyards. The kākā's unexpected adaption to, and reliance on, the Californian trees has thrown into question Zealandia and the Wellington City Council's plan to restore the forest at the sanctuary and around the city, by replacing the pines with native hardwoods. I argue this case necessitates a reconceptualization of urban environments as home to valuable novel ecosystems that can support the recovery of threatened species and enable viable multispecies futures.

The Transformation of Green Zones in Yerevan (Armenia): The Domestication of Nature, Times of Ruination and the Idea of New 'Hanging Gardens'

Heiko Conrad, Goethe University Frankfurt; *Susanne Fehlings*, Goethe University Frankfurt

Abstracts
The contemporary Armenian capital Yerevan is based on a master plan from 1924, designed by the Soviet-Armenian architect A. Tamanyan, who was inspired by the English concept of the 'garden city'. Yerevan is built into a natural amphitheater and it has a circular layout including several so-called 'rural belts' of small forests, parks, gardens, and alleys. These green zones of 'domesticated nature' were meant to have a positive impact on the local microclimate and were used for leisure time activities. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union three major developments unfolded in the city: a) the overgrowing of parks and abandoned buildings marking Post-Soviet ruination and the 'victory of nature over culture', b) the on-going destruction and 'misuse' of green spaces resulting from the need for firewood in the 1990s and from a new construction boom in the 2000s, and c) attempts for reestablishing green spaces demanded by

activist groups. Green spaces thus became a symbol for ideology, ruination and a new interest in environmental protection. We would like to discuss the transforming role of nature and gardens in Yerevan and our own proposal to expand the so-called Yerevan 'Cascade' into a blossoming 'terraced garden' structure that extends over the city's hill flanks to both sides of the edifice. Conceived in Soviet times, the Cascade complex was renovated after independence and is now hosting the 'Cafesjian Center for the Arts'.

From Nature to the Urban Environments: The Transformation of the Istavros Royal Garden in the 1720s alongside the Incremental Urbanisation of the Bosphorus Shores[1]

Nazli Songülen, European University Institute, Florence

Abstract
The transformation of natural areas into urban spaces are often discussed in the literature vis-à-vis the rise of Western-inspired modernisation that had started in the nineteenth century with the emergence of the top-down planning practices and the 'rational' decisions made by the 'modern' urban institutions. While it is certain that the nineteenth century saw the radical transformation and the spatial expansion of the cities worldwide alongside the industrialisation process, this research focuses on a rather peculiar case: the spatial expansion of eighteenth-century Ottoman Istanbul. In fact, it was over the course of the eighteenth century when Ottoman Istanbul had begun to expand spatially along the Bosphorus shores when many waterfront royal gardens transformed into the nuclei of new neighbourhoods, which would be later called the new modern suburban neighbourhoods of nineteenth-century Istanbul. Against this backdrop, this paper investigates a critical juncture in this long transformation of the royal gardens, which were often labelled only as recreational and pleasure gardens of the sultans. It focuses on one of the waterfront royal gardens, the Istavros royal garden in the 1720s in light of the archival documents and analyses a critical shift observed in the use of the Istavros royal garden because of both the increased importance given to the agricultural production taking place there and the re-distribution of some pieces of land in this garden to the new members of the ruling elite of the 1720s. This micro- historical survey intends to advance our knowledge on changing land use, distribution, and landholding policies by unfolding how and by whom such decisions, which induced a shift in the 1720s, were made along the process of urbanisation of the natural Bosphorus shores.

Day 2 Thursday, 1 July

Making Urban Environments
Planning, Agents, Voices, and Absences/Gaps, Livelihoods and Extinction, Power, In-/justice

Here, "making" is understood in the broadest possible sense, including not only the obvious top-down practices of designing and building by professional practitioners, politicians, and experts, but also everyday practices of humans and nonhumans creating their particular place within the wider context of an urban environment. It includes top-down as well as bottom-up processes of urban planning and making, resistance to them, or struggles to make a place at all. Contributions scrutinize how and by whom are decisions in urban planning made? Whose voices are heard, who is absent or not represented, who has the power to influence? Who does not? In this regard, Theme 2 also speaks to the broader issues of in- and exclusion, in-/justice, and power.

Working Group Panel 2

Making Urban Environments: Infrastructures of Power, Resistance and Negotiation

Sonja Dümpelmann, University of Pennsylvania; ***Robert R. Gioielli***, University of Cincinnati; ***Stephan Pauleit***, TU Munich; ***Anindya Sinha***, NIAS, Bangalore; ***Katherine Wright***, LMU Munich; ***Amy Zhang***, NYU

Abstract
This roundtable brings together scholars from the fields of history, anthropology and animal studies, as well as from landscape planning and management to discuss various urban infrastructures and their political entanglements. Questioning and illuminating how various actors and their practices build and shape urban environments, the roundtable will address topics ranging from the black soldier fly, used as biotechnological infrastructure to manage waste, to other nonhumans, like macaques, developing and negotiating their own urbanisms; from plants and community gardens, used as shade, food, and social infrastructures to endure and resist, to the transportation infrastructures that humans have built to both segregate and divide, as well as to live and unite.

Open Panel 2

Cities as Floristical Islands:[SEP]The Case of Nineteenth-Century Colombian Cities.

Diego Molina, University of Reading

Abstract
Urban ecologists have recognised in cities 'floristical islands' that are richer in plants species than their surroundings. However, although scholars have pointed out the introduction of plants as one of the main reasons for this pattern, few have been done to understand the social conditions that enabled the circulation and introduction of plants to cities. Aiming to understand the historical context that permitted the emergence of cities as floristical islands, this paper explores the creation of anthropogenic urban floras in the Colombian cities of Bogotá and Medellín as part of their nineteenth-century urbanisation. This study presents how in the context of urban growth, plants become symbols of power and ostentation that promoted a new transatlantic market of ornamental plants. This research shows how this market that rested in the asymmetric consolidations of urban life between Europe and Colombia engendered different attitudes to plants on both sides of the Atlantic. Thus, while plants labelled as 'exotic' were exploited in Colombian forest and exported to Europe by plant hunters, plants´ traders endowed with horticulture catalogues sold temperate plants to the newborn urban elites that consider those species suitable symbols of 'order and progress' for the cities. This paper proposes that this neo-colonial transatlantic ecological transaction produced a fragmented Pangea of ornamental plants formed by cities that, whilst undergoing a gradual transatlantic homogenisation of their floras, turned different to their surrounding environments. This investigation highlights how urban nature is the result of historical processes negotiated between human and non-human actors, which are immerse in asymmetric power structures.

"Porcine Cities – Precarious Infrastructures and Caste Ecologies in Delhi's Informal Settlements"

Sneha Gutgutia, NIAS, Bangalore

Abstract
Everyday practices of pig rearing in Delhi's informal settlements, reveal a fascinating story of precarity at the urban margins. Pigs are reared by members of the Valmiki or Balmiki community, also known as Dalits. While organic waste, discarded materials and derelict spaces are channeled as infrastructure to rear the pigs; the pigs themselves repurpose spaces and materials rendered useless as places to forage and live. Further ethnographic examination has unveiled a range of social, cultural and economic practices, in which the pigs are caught up, that enable Dalit communities to lead fulfilling lives. Pigs point to other ways in which metropolitan lives are both enabled and socially reproduced. This way waste become infrastructure for pigs and pigs become infrastructure for the poor to deal with urban precarity, whilst they continue to

lead precarious lives amidst the mangle of infrastructure. However, such infrastructures as well as the practices of the Valmiki community are associated with squalor in state centric views of infrastructure and untunes the aesthetic projections of Delhi as a global city. Citizenry lobbying with the state, on matters of public health, safety and animal welfare, further marginalize these practices. Yet animal life in city continues to flourish, and so does people's strategies to deal with urban precarity.

Urban Duality in Nigerian Cities: Negotiating Rural Identities in Peri-urban Areas of Makurdi Town

Patience Adzande, Benue State University

Abstract
Research on urban duality created through the process of urbanisation, which excludes sections of the population living in peri-urban areas of the city has received little attention in the extant literature. Thus, this paper examines the ways in which residents of peri-urban areas negotiate their rural identities in a rapidly urbanising city – Makurdi, situated in Central Nigeria. Specifically, how do these groups of people adapt to social and environmental changes that occur in their communities? What are the compromises made in the light of the resultant land use and lifestyle clashes that occur in peri-urban areas that were once dominated by agriculture? Drawing on interviews with residents of peri-urban areas in Makurdi town, the paper elicits information on the process of land acquisition by the government and individuals, differential effects of urbanisation on livelihoods and lifestyles and measures adopted to cope with the social and environmental changes that have occurred within the selected peri-urban communities. Though the study is still in progress, preliminary findings show that residents of peri-urban areas have lost their livelihoods as a result of the conversion of agricultural lands to other land uses. A significant percentage of these residents depend on menial jobs, often working at construction sites to earn an income. Other residents reported that they had established small scale businesses from the proceeds obtained from the sale of land. Overall, the study highlights the need for a holistic framework to address unintended consequences of urbanisation in Nigerian cities.

Day 3 Friday, 2 July

Openness to or Foreclosure of Futures
The Ethics and Politics of Expectation and Modulation

Planning, by default, demands forecasting the future by means of modulation; that is, a projection of the likeliest future. But what happens when this future refuses to realize? This and other questions concerning possible futures are adressed on this final day. Apart from the fact that it is often impossible to make "correct" predictions, modulations do not simply express what is anticipated but what is actually desired—and vice versa. In this regard, modulation actively reduces the range of future possibilities or possible futures because it is guided by particular expectations and ambitions, and thus by ethics and politics. Once more, this raises questions of in- and exclsuion, in-/justice, access to processes of decision-making etc. Finally, what does it mean if we, instead of forecasting, are open to various possibilities and re-imaginaries, open to emerging regimes and forms of polities, knowledge, citizenship, etc.? How open can the future be for us in the present; where lie the limits of openendedness?

Working Group Panel 3

One and Six Times – About the Modulation and the Expectation of Timescapes

Benedikt Boucsein, TU Munich; **Karen Holmberg**, NYU New York; **Simone Müller**, LMU Munich; **Talitta Reitz**, LMU Munich; **Dorothee Rummel**, TU Munich; **Avi Sharma**, TU Berlin

Abstract
This panel starts with the irritation of time in the urban and in different disciplines. Time is key to a lot of urban processes; among them: planning for the urban future, understanding the urban past, living with more-than-human urban ecosystems, risk prediction, hazard perception, and creative community building. At the same 'time', time is irritating as it cannot be pinned down to one teleological process anymore. Time is toxic, geological, more than human, old, unpredictable, always slipping into the future, and the driver of the ethics and politics of planning and the modulation of prediction. Time is also always connected to power. Timescapes overlap and yet historical processes look through the dominant power of human timeframes. We are now taking other timescales more seriously in the Anthropocene, which is messy as we thereby lose focus and add uncertainty. This panel includes six reflections from multiple vantages: history, archaeology, geoscience, architecture and urban planning, and the interstices between these disciplines.

Open Panel 3

Fabricating the Future: Making the Urban Environment in Contemporary Singapore

Jamie Wang, University of Sydney

Abstract
Singapore is widely considered to be a significant model for the future of sustainable urbanism. Yet, in its urban development turned future-making model, some of its projects manifest a troubling way in which the city- island-state attempts to prepare for the future, and in the process, simultaneously stymie or hinder the possibility of other kinds of futures, and with them the diversity that might ultimately be needed to adapt to different futures.
In this presentation, I will explore some of these issues through the notions of future and futuring, in conversation with the critical strand of more-than-human studies. In particular, I will look at two sites in Singapore, the technological waterscape, from seawater desalination to recycled NEWater, and the rise of urban farming aiming to operate in a controlled environment that is pest-free, soil-free or dust-free. In navigating these eco-futurist imaginaries, I am interested in how the common response to uncertainty about the future as a result of climate change and geopolitical uncertainty becomes a response that seeks to cultivate a sense of invulnerability. As the development of sustainable and liveable cities is gaining traction, what kind of sustainable futures are we calling forth in the midst of the intensifying effects of climate change? What are the consequences, dangers and ethical implications of pursuing a singular version of future that enables ongoing unevenly distributed precarity among humans and non-humans? And how might we imagine differently?

Marginal Ecological Aesthetics and the Future Health of a Chinese Steel City

Travis Klingberg, NYU Shanghai

Abstract
In recent years, the environmentally-degraded steel city of Panzhihua in southern Sichuan Province has billed itself as a "Health Land in Sunshine." The transformation of this aging city of resource extraction into a modern city of sustainable health is not happening as a uniform, green project, such as a new- build eco-city or the recovery of an existing brownfield. The transformation underway is happening within, among, and between the existing spaces of Panzhihua's mining, smelting, and waste. While Panzhihua keys its future of sustainable health to high-profile projects and national discourse, the actual ecological project unfolding is happening at the margins of the city's industrial geography. This paper argues that, while the showcase aesthetics of major eco-development projects seen across China certainly inform the city's imagined future, a marginal ecological aesthetics — along edges of minor importance — are more important for understanding the actual ecological transformation of Panzhihua. A marginal ecological aesthetics, in other words, serves to temper grand civilizational claims for

ecology and better anticipate what possible futures current practices will bring, healthy, ecological, or otherwise.

Beauty and Confusion in a Modern Cityscape, or Art versus Development in a Nordic Capital

Eeva Berglund, Aalto University

Abstract
Urban controversy feels like a growth industry in Helsinki, with large-scale construction plans regularly creating political flashpoints. While controversies are integral to planning, I suggest what is going on currently may significantly challenge some fundamentals of modern life and thought. This interpretation has suggested itself since protests around Helsinki's new City Plan of 2016 inspired novel ways of thinking about natural and cultural heritage and about the urban. The paper concentrates on a case where artists, local residents and others joined forces to defend Vartiosaari, an island within city-limits but with an exceptionally lush, largely pre-modern landscape. Dismissing its cultural and natural history, the city envisioned future Vartiosaari as a high-end, "green" neighbourhood. Protesting with the help of art, activists explored alternatives, generating new collective imaginings (from Moira Gatens' and Genevieve Lloyd's book of that name, 1999) in which technology, science and art mix in new and consequential ways. The paper draws from documentary sources and personal involvement. I show how the situation inspired activist art and generated new alliances, while surfacing unintended and spatially uncontainable consequences of taken-for-granted policy goals and presumed collective aspirations, notably urban growth and competitiveness. It also provoked a self-conscious embrace of contingency and mess, mirroring the way the city's own actions were full of contradictions. The varied activists' work, I argue, highlighted the multiple powers of place, including local legislation (through which the plans were overturned), while also connecting with internationally networked efforts to reimagine and prototype ways of being human in changing landscapes.